

The Big Picture: the House of God over the Ages

Separation from the nations is a key theme in Ezra/Nehemiah. The House of God doesn't reach fulfillment until all parts—Temple, people, and city—are fully separated from the nations and purified of sin.

Ezra 1-6: Focus on building a holy Temple

Ezra 7-10: Focus on building a holy people

Nehemiah 1-7: Focus on building a holy city

Nehemiah 8-12: Grand celebration of completion of the House of God (Feast of Tabernacles)

Nehemiah 13:30 House of God completely purified and sanctified

Ezra 3: Worship begins with just an altar

Ezra 4: Overview of the greater House of God

Celebration of completion of the Temple
Those who have been separated from the uncleanness of the nations celebrate the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ezra 6:20-21)

Ezra's Judgment (Ezra 10)
Separation of Israel from pagan wives (first purging)

Nehemiah's Judgment (Neh. 13)
Separation of Israel from pagan wives (second purging)

Exodus

Babylonian Exile

Christ's Death & Roman Dispersion

Judgment Day at Christ's return

Great White Throne of Judgment

Old Testament

Inter-testamental

Gospel

New Testament

Millennial Kingdom

New Jerusalem

TEMPLE

No Temple
Worship at an altar only

Tabernacle replaced by **First Temple**
The physical building is God's dwelling place (Shekinah glory).
The term "House of God" is always a name for the Tabernacle/Temple.

Solomon dedicates Temple during celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles
Temple destroyed by Babylonians

Second Temple
Not God's dwelling place. The Shekinah glory is absent; Christ as the Glory visits the Temple but doesn't dwell there.

This Temple will be profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, and finally destroyed by the Romans.
The "House of God" in Ezra/Nehemiah broadens to include Temple, people, & city

No Temple / End Times Temple
In the End Times, the Temple will be rebuilt and worship at that Temple will resume, (but I don't think at God's direction). It will not be His dwelling place.

This will be the Temple in which the Antichrist sets up his image.

Ezekiel's Temple (?)
Physical Temple is God's dwelling place. Temple practices reinstated, facilitated by priesthood of the sons of Zadok. The Law of Moses back in practice.
Zechariah's prophecy of the Millennial Kingdom (Zech 14:16-21) emphasizes the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles - a picture of God dwelling among His people (fulfillment of the picture).

No Temple
Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple (Rev 21:22)

PEOPLE

Abrahamic Covenant sets Israel apart from the nations but no Law governing physical separation.

The Exodus separates Israel from Egypt. God dwells among His people yet apart from them - people must go thru the priesthood

Points of separation:
Giving of the Law and rules for separation. Physical Israel is supposed to maintain its separation from pagan nations—no intermarriage.

Separation is not achieved. Even Solomon fell into sin on account of his pagan wives. Neh. 13:26

God dwells apart from His people - people must go thru the priesthood
Christ dwells among the people for a short time.

Points of separation:
Ezra's reform (judgment) separates the first generation of returnees from their pagan wives. People return to intermarriage in succeeding generation (Neh. 13).

Nehemiah's reform (judgment) separates the latter generation from pagan wives.

Roman dispersion sends the Jews back among the nations.

Spirit of God indwells believers (Jew and Gentile); people become living stones of a spiritual Temple. Some functions of the Levitical priesthood taken on by a royal priesthood of believers.

Points of separation:
Christ's death effects the separation of the people from sin and bondage to the Law. Gentiles are brought into the House of God. Separation between Israel and Gentile nations now translates into separation between spiritual believers and unbelievers, including the issue of intermarriage.

God and the Lamb dwelling among the people
God dwells in Temple; Lamb on the throne.

Points of separation:
Judgment Day at Christ's return purges unbelievers from first generation of those entering the Kingdom.
No Canaanite is found in her (Zech 14:21). The "Wedding Feast" of the Lamb and His Bride.

Potential for sin and falling away remains. When Satan is unbound, Gog/Magog Rebellion takes place.

Great White Throne of Judgment fully purges unbelievers from the congregation.

God and the Lamb dwell with the purified Bride (there is no more sin requiring the separation of God from His people).

People of God are fully separated from unbelievers.

CITY

No city

Earthy city of Jerusalem intact; houses Israel and God (in the Temple) until destroyed by Babylonians

Earthy city of Jerusalem is rebuilt; Nehemiah initially establishes its "set apart" status, but later it is overrun and occupied by foreign nations (Greece and Rome)

Earthy city of Jerusalem occupied by Israel and foreign nations (modern day)

Earthy city of Jerusalem restored
God's reputation re-established

Heavenly city of Jerusalem

Timeline of the Kings

Cyrus II (550-529 BC)

1st year of Cyrus, Word of the LORD comes to Cyrus
Zerubbabel and 1st wave of exiles go to Jerusalem

1st year of Cyrus, 7th month, 1st day
Build altar/worship resumes

2nd year of Cyrus, 2nd month
Began laying Temple foundation

Approx. 28 years separates the the time Israel began laying the Temple foundation to the time it was completed.
After Cyrus, Cambyses II (529-522 BC) reigns a short while.

Darius I (522-486 BC)

2nd year of Darius
6th month, 1st day
Haggai 1st prophecy

2nd year of Darius
6th month, 24th day
Resume work on Temple

2nd year of Darius
7th month, 21st day
Haggai 2nd prophecy

2nd year of Darius, 8th month
Zechariah 1st prophecy

2nd year of Darius
9th month, 24th day
Haggai's third prophecy
Finished laying foundation

2nd year of Darius,
11th month, 24th day
Zechariah 2nd prophecy

4th year of Darius, 9th month, 4th day
Zechariah 3rd prophecy

6th year of Darius
12th month, 3rd day
Temple completed

Xerxes I (Ahasuerus), (485-465 BC)

Approx. 57 years elapses between the Temple's completion and Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem.

Artaxerxes Longimanus, (465-425 BC)

7th year of Artaxerxes, 1st month, 1st day
Ezra & 2nd wave of exiles begin return
(3 days fasting & prayer)

7th year of Artaxerxes, 5th month, 1st day
2nd wave of exiles comes to Jerusalem
3 days, camp; 4th day, accounting

9th month, 20th day
Ezra calls all men to gather in Jerusalem

10th month, 1st day
Ezra begins examination/purging of pagan wives

1st month, 1st day
Ezra finishes Israel's separation

20th year of Artaxerxes, 9th month
Nehemiah receives news of Jerusalem

20th year of Artaxerxes, 1st month
Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem as governor (stayed 12 years)

5th month, 3rd day
Began work on city walls

6th month, 25th day
Jerusalem's wall was finished

7th month, 1st day - Ezra reads the Law

32nd year of Artaxerxes
Nehemiah returns to Artaxerxes,
then returns to Jerusalem



Preparation for Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread

Passover (14th)

Feast of First Fruits (16th)

Feast of Unleavened Bread (15th-21st)

Feast of Weeks (6th)

Fast of the 4th Month (17th of Tammuz)

Daily offering ceased in the First Temple

Fast of the 5th Month (9th of Av)

Destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians

Preparation for Day of Atonement

Feast of Trumpets (1st)

Fast of the 7th Month (3rd of Tishrei)

Fast for the death of Gedaliah

Day of Atonement (10th)

Feast of Tabernacles (15th-22nd)

Chanukah (25th of Kislev - 2nd of Tevet)

Fast of the 10th Month (10th of Tevet)

Fall of Jerusalem