

THE STORY  
The Return Home  
Ezra 1-6 Haggai 1-2 Zachariah 1; 8  
Chapter 19 February 4, 2024  
Pastor Mike Popovich

Nothing is right until it is right with God.

God needed to be held in a place of honor in their society.

The only cure for idolatry is the worship of the one true God

*“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:*

*“The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.*

*<sup>3</sup> Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. <sup>4</sup> And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.”*

*<sup>5</sup> Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.*

Ezra 1:2-5 NIV

The Temple is the visible reminder that God wants to be with His people.

*Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. <sup>3</sup> Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening sacrifices.*

Ezra 3:2-3 NIV

*Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.*

*<sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.*

Revelation 2:4-5 NIV

C. S. Lewis said “If you put first things first, you get second things thrown in. But if you put second things first, you lose both first and second things.

*<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: <sup>4</sup> “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”*

*<sup>5</sup> Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>6</sup> You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”*

*<sup>7</sup> This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways.*

*<sup>8</sup> Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Haggai 1:3-9 NIV*

### Three Traits of the Modern Temple Person

1. God is present in His Temple
  - a. Why don't we worship only in Jerusalem anymore?
  - b. Why do we gather together as the Church?
2. Godly Prayer
3. We are God's People

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?*

I Corinthians 3:16 NIV

In place of distraction:

**Pray – persevere – seek Him**

God is still writing your story...