

Restoring the Fortunes of Zion

The first wave of exiles arrived in Jerusalem, soon after King Cyrus allowed them to return to rebuild the temple. Psalm 126 was written around this time and describes the emotions of this surreal return: “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy” (Ps. 126:1-2, NIV).

But the joy of the return soon became weariness with all that needed to be done. The people had become discouraged and upon completion of the temple foundation, it was hard to distinguish the shouts of joy from the sounds of weeping. Those who remembered the splendor of the first temple cried over the pitiful temple they were building out of the rubble.

The temple was not the only construction project—the entire city had been destroyed and most of Judah. So the temple was put on hold to allow the people to rebuild homes, repair farms and plant gardens.

Weeks turned into years and before they knew it, 16 years had slipped by. So God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to bring correction to His people and encourage them to rebuild His house—the temple. His words echoed those spoken to Moses and Joshua hundreds of years earlier: “Be strong, for I am with you.”

Haggai told them not to be discouraged—there was a day coming when the glory of this temple would be even greater than that of the previous one. What an encouragement this is for all of us. We should not think too little of what God has called us to do. We must be obedient and do what He has required and leave the rest to Him. He is weaving a beautiful tapestry and

we each are just a thread. The final design is up to Him. He is restoring the fortunes of Zion.

Join me for this week's Out of Zion podcast on "Restoring the Fortunes of Zion." Walk Thru the Bible with me each week by downloading our Bible reading plan and get started reading right away! Invite your friends and family to join us! I can't wait to Walk Thru the Bible with you! {eo}

Dr. Susan Michael is USA director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the Out of Zion podcast.

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