

Jesus, B.C.

A Sermon Series

By Pastor David Schroeder

Exile and Post-exile History and Prophets November 8, 2015

Anyone listening to and believing the Judaic prophets Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah in the 7th and 6th centuries BC were not surprised when the Medes and Babylonians rose to power, overthrew the wicked Assyrian empire, and proceeded to invade Judah to conquer Jerusalem. Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, had been destroyed in 711 BC by the Assyrians, who were not able to penetrate Jerusalem because of God's miraculous intervention (see Isaiah 36, 37 and 2 Chronicles 32).

The Prophets repeatedly warned Judah that their fate would be no better than their northern brothers because they also followed the unfaithful and sinful practices of Israel. 2 Chronicles 33-36 describe the descent of Judah and destruction of Jerusalem, and the exiling of Judeans to Babylon.

And, so they went – in stages, under different leaders, and for different reasons. The mission God had given to the gentile king of Persia, Cyrus, to build a temple for The LORD, the God of heaven was begun with enthusiasm and then ran into various problems. The

books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell that history. Meanwhile, back in Persia, under a different king, Ahasuerus, an evil anti-Semitic movement threatened complete Jewish genocide until God intervened through Mordecai and his niece Esther.

Three prophets spoke and wrote to the post-exilic community: Haggai and Zechariah addressed the lethargy of the people in completing the temple, and fifty years later Malachi strongly denounced the spiritual apathy and admonished the people to return to the Lord and his ways.

Pre-incarnation hints of the Messiah are found in these selected passages:

1. Esther's story typifies the world's attitude toward Jesus, and God's plan to thwart the enemy's plan to destroy the anointed one. Esther 4:12-16
2. God showed Zechariah several glimpses of the Messiah. Zechariah 9:9; 12:10-14
3. Daniel's visions of end times were clearer than the earlier prophets as the royalty of the Messiah came into greater focus. Daniel 7:13-18
4. God's last revealed words to Israel for 400 years were Malachi 4:5-6, which introduced the Messiah's messenger.