

I have read:

1. Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra
2. The Syllabus
3. Attended all but one of seminar lectures last week.

WHAT HAPPENED: The way these chronologically allied books are separated in the bible is another answer to the "end of all scripture" thesis. As I understand it, John (which "ended" the scriptures) is really not the "last" of the scriptures. And what are these critics to say when more and more scriptures come to light? Essentially what happened is that Cyrus the Persian allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Ezra reads like the Exodus. One can imagine the huge caravan, tribe by tribe, returning. It is interesting that the tribes are not named the same as the original exodus tribes were named, but are all tribes within the tribe (at least I presume such is the case) of Judah. When they arrive the Samaritans want to help build the temple and are repulsed by the Jews. This results in constant harassment from the non-Judaean faction of their society all during the time of the building of the temple and the walls of the city. One attempt to stop the building from the top by the Satrap to Darius invited an investigation into the records to see "if, indeed Cyrus ordered the rebuilding of the temple" backfired on them, because not only was the reference found, but Darius ordered that there was not to be "any" hindrance "whatever and even sent further aid and support to the temple. Indeed, he told them that all the tribute that would ordinarily go to the King from Jerusalem be given to help build the temple. "And whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up let him be hanged thereon."

(Ezra 6:11) When Ezra left to go to Jerusalem from Babylon, Artaxerxes allowed any of the Jews who had remained in Babylon to go with him if they desired, and ^{also allowed them} to solicit any aid from his own or the people of Babylon which he could get ^{and} with the King's encouragement. "And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the King's treasure house."

(7:20) He also decreed that it should not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom upon the priests, or anything connected with the temple. It was amusing to me that when Ezra got down at the river Ahava, Ezra got a little worried about the safety of the caravan on its way to Jerusalem but says "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king saying, the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and wrath is against all them that forsake him. I think Ezra had done a little

friendly Jewish persuading.

2.7.(Points to ponder) Reforms which Ezra found urgent in Jerusalem-- how he commenced to accomplish these reforms etc?

These reforms are discussed mostly in Chapters 9 and 10 of Ezra. The one which was most serious and which was fraught with the most trauma for those involved was the taking of wives from the gentiles among them. Ezra called an assemblage of "every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, " at the evening sacrifice. My impression is that he then makes this impassioned prayer to the Lord revealing the sin mentioned, accompanied with sackcloth, tears, mourning, and the whole bit. And when he arose from this impassioned prayer"there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children; for the people wept very sore." And then Ezra lets the "solution" come from the people themselves, and they make a covenant before God to put away these wives (and their children) and whosoever did not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away." The miraculous thing, at least as the account gives it, that somehow he is able to make them feel the weight of the transgression so that they "willingly" do this. Then the scribe who is recording the instance names all the names of the priests who were involved. Afterwards, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass. I think Ezra was a prophet who knew how to manipulate (or manage) public relations.

3. 8. In reading D & C 133 as suggested by the syllabus in explanation of some of the verses in Chaps 12,13,&14 of Zechariah, one verse caught my eye which gave me some comfort about the "great day of the Lord". D&C 133: 11: Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour. 12: Let them therefore, who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion. 13. and let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem unto the mountains of the Lord's house." I have heard it said that all will be destroyed here and that we will gather in Missouri at the end-- but this made me wonder if this is not so, but that ^{Zion, here,} we will still be a refuge, a place of safety for all the saints (and probably many others) to gather at that day of destruction. An Island, so to speak, of peace and safety in the midst of chaos. Probaby it all depends upon our righteousness--but it's nice to know that it looks like "This is the place" ^{for Operation} as is Jerusalem "the place" for those of Judah.

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Some (brief, I hope) comments concerning the Symposium.

I took notes Friday on the talks which were to my way of thinking, perhaps the deeper of the two-days discussions. But Saturday I gave up. I did not want to take my eyes off the speakers one minute. I am anxious to get copies of the talks and to reread them and see if my second hand impressions are the same as my first hand ones were.

Saturday's speakers really did the comparisons which the symposium program indicated would be done. Some of Friday's speakers did--I understand I missed one of the best--the last speaker, but most of the speakers on Saturday really got down to brass tacks.

I was interested in your observations about Stendhal. Mine were a little different. If he ever listens to the video tapes of his talk he has got to realize that by his own observations he really said the obvious (to us) fact that the Sermon on the Mount as given by the Savior in Palestine, and the Sermon on the Mount as given to the Nephites were different because the circumstances were different. When the sermon on the Mount was delivered to the Jews (as he pointed out) it was in the context of "teachings". But remember that Christ when he was given the sermon to the Jews was "playing down" his "Messiahship". He was avoiding direct confrontation with those who were seeking his life. His time had not yet come. He was not yet ready to say "I AM." However, as you mentioned in class, and as HE mentioned in his talk, when he gave the sermon to the Nephites, He was speaking as the "Savior," the "Redeemer," The "Son of God," the "great I AM." I think that his perusal of III Nephi is going to give him a little trouble from now on, because he is a thinking man. He was obviously moved by the scene of Christ with the children, even though he wrote it off "as the equivalent of Christ blessing the children" in the New Testament. And when he said: "there is a danger in having to know too much." I thought, "Yes, because with KNOWING comes commitment!" *He missed the "poor in spirit who come unto me" difference*

The last speaker, the Sociologist, who had spent time as a grad. student in Rama, New Mexico, hit the nail on the head, too. The answer to society's problem is the gospel. We just need to convert everyone. The problem is that "our" society cannot just be transposed to "all" society. The society is the "end" of the religious philosophy. For society in general to try to "adopt" the Mormon idea of social organization would be like a Protestant Minister deciding that "marriage for time and all eternity" sounded like a nice idea and then proceeded to include it in his marriage ceremony. It's not that easy. Again, Commitment is required.

Thank you for inviting us to your open house. I was very anxious to see these men in an informal meeting where they were all exchanging ideas. This didn't quite amount to that--most of them were busy in discussions with a "Mormon" but all that I noticed seemed to be "asking for it", so to speak.

From the time that you introduced us to the Cherbonniers (I can't find my program at the moment to check that spelling), ~~XXXXX~~ until we were separated, W Macy and I were literally deluged with questions about the church. They were particularly interested in the temple--they were dying to know about the ordinances of the temple, ^{but} ~~and~~ were very discreet. "We understand that you can't talk about what goes on in the temple----" I told them some of it we could not discuss, but to "fire away" and we would answer wherever we could. This led us (don't ask me ~~xx~~ how) into a discussion of the talk (I NEED THAT PROGRAM) on the temple by your Jewish friend. I told her that I was dying to ask him "Why Blood?" and she said that she had the same desire and insisted that we find him so that "I" could ask him that question. (You got in on that discussion, I believe). They just could not seem to get enough information and seemed to agree with everything we said. I have only known one family who was as interested and inquisitive about the church as they were, and that family called within the year to tell us that they had joined the church. I don't know that they are "about to join the church" but they are "in danger."

Excellent!

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