

Post-Exilic Era, Part II

In this lecture we will deal with the last three books of the minor prophets, the last three books of the Old Testament. As I have said, it is a period of mixed experiences and mixed emotions, and a period that is not well understood. Much of Zechariah is quoted in the New Testament in various ways: “And they will look on him whom they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first-born son.” That is in Zechariah and is quoted by John when it is said that when the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. The garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said. Later we read that in the death of Jesus after He had cried, “It is finished,” He was pierced. John 19:37 says, “And, as another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they have pierced.’” The New Testament has some unique ways of quoting the Old Testament, especially when it comes the prophecy of Zechariah. I wish we had more time to deal with this prophecy of Zechariah because it is apocalyptic, messianic and eschatological, and some eschatologists have thoroughly misapplied Zechariah. It is very difficult to work with some of those passages. Let’s pray.

Lord, our God, we thank you that we have Your Word, given in the circumstances of the days of the prophets. May we in our day and in our circumstances realize that this is an infallible, unchanging Word, but nevertheless very meaningful for us. Help us to see that today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

I entitled this lecture, “Part Two of the Revelation of the Post-Exilic Era.” In the previous lecture, we looked at the historic work, mentioning I and II Chronicles, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah. We looked at the four characters in Esther and took a good look at two men, Ezra and Nehemiah. We saw the three events that were taking place: the building of the altar, which was immediate, and then the building of the temple, which took a few decades, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem which took a century. We saw too that these events tied in with the past, with Abraham, with Moses, and with David as they stressed Yahweh’s covenantal faithfulness. In that respect too we saw how the character of Yahweh (Exodus 34:6) was repeated by Ezra and Nehemiah: “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...” Thus we see that Yahweh’s character remains steadfast just like His covenant. God kept His remnant.

Now we will turn to the prophetic messages. What we often do not realize is that Daniel lived to see the return, but he himself did not return. The people were allowed to return at about 530 B.C., or 536 at the very latest. Daniel lived to at least 530, and Haggai came on the scene by 520 or earlier. Daniel was in the palace and Haggai came to the fore in Jerusalem. There was not a lack of a prophetic word from Jeremiah to Ezekiel to Daniel to Haggai to Zechariah, but the long break comes between Zechariah and Malachi. Zechariah’s last six chapters of prophecies may have been given at about 480 and then Malachi did not come until about 420. Thus there was the 60-year period of silence between Zechariah and Malachi. There was a continuity of prophetic voices through that whole period of the exile and the return.

Now Haggai comes on the scene. The context is temple building and his emphasis is, “Yahweh is with His people. People, be faithful to Yahweh, you are a covenant people.” He begins his prophecy by reminding them of the covenant curse under which they have suffered and still are suffering, in 1:10-11: “Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands.” Turn to Deuteronomy 28:23-51, and you will see that Haggai is summarizing that passage. God’s covenant curse was still in effect and was still

being executed after the return from the exile in those first 15 years – the people were sowing and they were not reaping. They were doing business and they had pockets with holes in them. They were not able to save any money. There were hard times in those first 15 years from 538 until about 523. They were having difficult economical times and Haggai says, “Well, what else did you expect? You are not doing the Lord’s work. You are building your own houses. You are out here for yourself. You have your houses with ceilings and God’s house lies in ruins. The curse of the covenant is upon you.” Leviticus 26:19 said the same thing.

Does all this mean that they are bound for curse only? No. In 1:12 and 13 they have the assurance, “Then Zerrubabel sent Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.” Then, “‘I am with you,’ declares the LORD.” Now the covenant promise comes into effect. God is with His people when the people obey. Notice I said “when.” There is this contingency aspect but not a condition. When people obey, when people fear the Lord, love Him and serve Him and carry out His work, God is with His people. When God is with His people, there are innumerable blessings, all the blessings that were promised in Deuteronomy and in Exodus, the blessings that were promised to the patriarchs, become realities, not because the people merit them, but because God is faithful when people obey.

And so Haggai gives them that great assurance of the covenant. “I am with you.” I want to repeat that. “Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: “‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.” That is the great covenantal formula. That is the heart of the covenant: “I am your God, I am with you, I will never leave you nor forsake you, I will bless you.” But all that is summarized in, “I am with you.” You are not on your own. You are not alone. But God has covenant mediators there too. They represented the priestly line and the royal line and Haggai was the prophet. Thus the three mediatorial offices, the three covenantal mediatorial agents, the three types of Christ were present on the scene, Haggai and Joshua and Zerrubabel. So often when we stress Joshua and Zerrubabel, who were of the Davidic line, we forget to mention that Haggai the prophet is there stirring these two people up. Notice how the prophetic word is used to stir up: “So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerrubabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people.” That prophetic word was powerful, the Word and the Spirit combined, and see what actions took place! The people began to work: “They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.” We see that the two men who had to be stirred up along with the prophet were the leaders, the royal representative of the Davidic line, Zerrubabel, and the priests. The three covenantal offices had to function in tandem, the three together. And then the community follows. The Spirit moved the community and their work began.

Now, as you look at the prophecy of Haggai, I want you to notice that the covenant of Sinai is very specifically there: “This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.” This is what Haggai says as the people are working and as he calls Zerrubabel and Joshua to be strong and to give good leadership. “For I am with you, I am keeping My covenant that I made with Israel in the days of Moses.” He stresses that, but the “I am with you” refers specifically to the Abrahamic covenant. Thus you can see how he draws on these past covenants to which God remains faithful and which continue to be in effect and to be a source of strength. In fact it is the administrative means for the people in those days.

I want to draw your attention to the reference to the wealth of nations that we have in Haggai 2:6-9. “This what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth,

the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty." This wealth of the nations, this desired of the nations has been often interpreted as a typological Messianic message. "The desired of the nations, is the Lord Jesus Christ because He fills the house of the Lord with glory"—I hope you never try to preach or teach that, because while the term there can be interpreted "the desired," what is desired is not the Messiah. The nations do not desire the Messiah; they desire wealth—gold and silver. That is what the nations desire, and if the temple is to be built, the Israelites will need gold and silver, they will need the means by which to build it. How will the Lord supply it? Look what happened when God shook Egypt, with the tenth plague. The children of Israel were loaded down with all the means they needed so that they had more than enough to build a tabernacle in the wilderness. When God shook Egypt, they had all they needed. And here God says, "And I will shake the nations and the wealth of the nations is yours." Also, in the New Testament we are told that all things are ours because Christ is Lord of all. Therefore even today we should have no concern as to whether or not the Lord will supply our every need. It takes faith. It takes trust. It takes courage. The Lord says, "I will give you what the nations desire and what you need. I promised it to you and I will give it you."

The Lord knows how to test us, there is no doubt. Yesterday morning I was listening to a radio speaker, but I could not bear to listen more than five minutes. He said, "When I pray, everything I ask for God has always given me. He has never failed me. But we together cannot pray for something that I want, because some of you may pray in unbelief and then you would stop me from getting what I want." This was preached on the radio here yesterday! That is *not* the way God works covenantally. God says He will supply and then He tells us to pray. And in His own way and His own means, He will supply. Not because I pray and therefore I merit it, because I say, "I believe You can do it and You will do it." When we pray, God says, "In My way I will surely supply you," and that is the promise here.

The Israelites did not see the wealth of the nations instantly, but it was not long before the Lebanese came. Can you imagine Lebanon supplying Jerusalem with all that cedar wood and many other precious things to rebuild the temple? In Solomon's day, God had supplied all the means. The gold came from Ophir and the cedar came from Lebanon. In Haggai's time, God says, "I will shake those nations again, you will get that temple built. Start working, and do not wait until everything is handed to you. Start working, and I will supply. That is the way Haggai deals with the wealth of the nations in this historical context. But at the same time, there is an emphasis on sanctified living in 1:5-6: "You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm." Following that, in 2:10-19, there is a lesson given: if a man has pure clothes and he starts mingling with people with all dirty clothes, will the man with the clean clothes miraculously make the other peoples' clothes clean? No, it does not work that way. He will become dirty too. Haggai gives them a very down-to-earth lesson there. In 2:14, "Then Haggai said, "'So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,'" declares the LORD. 'Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. Now give very careful thought to this from this day on – consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD'S temple.'" And in verses 18-19 he says, "Give careful thought: Is there any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. 'From this day on I will bless you.'" That is in the context of, "Do not try with your own ways and your own means to achieve holiness. I am the God of holiness, and I have shown you the way of covenantal obedience, the way of covenantal service. Get to work, trust Me, worship and I will sanctify you." This does not come by some magical means; this comes by God cleansing His people.

There are two more points I would like to make about Haggai. The assurance of blessing in 2:19, "From this day on, I will bless you." All these blessings, God's presence and all the things that come with

God's presence, this assurance of blessing is so great. The last section deals again with the Davidic house, saying, the Davidic house will be the victorious house:

“I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. On that day,” declares the LORD Almighty, “I will take you, my servant Zerrubabel son of Shealtiel,” declares the LORD, “and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you.”

He does not say, “I will put you on the throne,” but rather, “Zerrubabel, you are my seal, the signet ring.”

I once felt sorry for a young man who was partially paralyzed and he could only sit in his wheelchair, working very carefully with tools. He started a jewelry shop and he sat there for three days and no one came into his shop. I felt sorry for Oni when I heard that he was sitting there, and he was almost weeping because he was hoping that the community would come in. So I walked in there and I saw this ring. I was 19 years old and only had \$80 from all my earnings, but I walked out of there having paid Oni Hook the \$79 for a ring. I am 69 now and I have worn that ring constantly for 50 years, the seal of a friendship. In antiquity rings were given as a seal, proving that the deal was final.

Zerrubabel was the signet ring, the seal of God keeping the Davidic covenant. No, He does not say that Zerrubabel will go to the throne, and many critics make a big deal of this. They expected Zerrubabel to become the king, but he was governor. What eventually happens to Zerrubabel we do not know, but the fact that Zerrubabel was there and was the governor of the community indicated that God was still aware of the Davidic line. But there would not be a Davidic throne until Christ would come as the reigning King.

We will move on now to Zechariah. Zechariah developed Haggai's ministry in the temple building setting. You cannot separate these two, Zechariah and Haggai. In fact, Zechariah begins his ministry before Haggai is finished with his. And now we really get into the eschatological discussion. Vos, in his last pages on the prophetic message, deals with the eschatological perspective. He takes us into the New Testament indications of a future glory to come as he interprets the prophets. He deals with Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Hosea primarily. Reading Vos, you will never know if he was a postmillennialist, an amillennialist or a premillennialist. He did not get into the argument between the eschatological schools. But he gives a great outline and he finishes with the fact that the future glory in Isaiah is all wrapped up in the Messiah and what He would do, not in the kingdom or in the people. The Messiah brought people to Himself. He did not bring people to an institution; He brought people to Himself.

Zechariah 1:2 says, “The LORD was very angry with your forefathers. Therefore, tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to Me,’ declares the LORD Almighty.” “It is an imperative. “Turn completely around,” says the LORD.

“Return ... and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. “Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the early prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen and pay attention to me,” declares the Lord. “Where are your forefathers now?”

The call to repentance—“Do not be like your fathers”—is such a judgment on fathers. That is what we often have today; fathers who are not the leaders, the examples, the powerful forces that they should be. The ancient fathers surely had not been the great examples they should have been. “Do not be like your

fathers, where are they?" They died by pestilence, they died by sword, they died in exile. "There is only a remnant of you left. Return to the LORD, and in fellowship with the LORD there will be your blessing."

In the next section there are the seven, some people say eight, visions. These visions are apocalyptic and anything that is apocalyptic cannot be taken strictly literally. It is difficult to deal with apocalyptic prophecies because it uses the language of that day, a unique type of language. It uses symbols that were known to the people then that may not be known to us. It also takes biblical pictures and images and puts them into an idealized, glorified and expanded setting and presents them in such a way that it would never be possible except miraculously. Some of these visions would not work out on earth because they defy earthly dimensions and earthly methods.

Can you imagine vision two, where the plumb line has to be drawn and Jerusalem is going to be built according to a plumb line? Who is going to have that plumb line? Today we use levels when we want something level and straight across. In those days, you used a plumb line for making something straight. According to this vision, they are going to use a plumb line to make Jerusalem straight and square. Do you think they actually had to pull a plumb line that reached higher than the temple and higher than the walls of Jerusalem and stretched all the way across the city? No. The plumb line is used figuratively to indicate that Jerusalem will be built according to God's specifications, and it will be an upright city, a well-built city. But is Jerusalem as such the most important factor? No. We have apocalyptic features there; have you ever seen a woman in a basket floating on a rug flying through the sky? That is in vision seven. Did you ever see a woman in a basket trying to get out, and winged creatures come along and put her right back in that basket? Read vision seven or what some people call number eight. It has these unique presentations, but the point of that seventh vision is that wickedness, represented by a female, is being taken out of the lion. God will sanctify His people, but in a strange, unexpected way. This point is presented: wickedness is going to Babylon, where the people of Israel had been in captivity. The call is, "Come out of that place where evil resides and where evil is being transported to, come and join God's covenant people."

These seven visions have a pattern to them. The first vision introduces us to the nations and the Messiah. In an apocalyptic way, vision one, in chapter one, introduces the visions. One phrase that is very, very important in the first vision, when Yahweh says in 1:14, "I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion."

Vision two has a craftsman, but it is presented with animals coming in with horns. What do these craftsmen represent? What do these horns represent? They represent builders. Not armies, not swords, not catapulting machinery, but the craftsmen are the ones who are used to destroy the nation. How do you undo the work of the evil nations? How do you undo the work of the parasite kingdom? You do it by being builders - craftsman. So vision one: the power of the nations that are at rest and the angel of the Lord, the Messiah to come, who stands there and who shows great concern. That is followed in vision two by these nations that were at ease being disturbed and overthrown.

Vision three tells us that Jerusalem is being rebuilt, in chapter two. The plumb line is there. What is interesting is that the figure of fire changes. Fire had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, and the glory cloud which was like a great big majestic ball of fire had gone out of the temple (Ezekiel 8, 9, 11). Ezekiel had seen the tremendous glory cloud coming. But now what does Zechariah say? Is it still a cloud? No, it becomes a wall of fire, a great protecting fire. Yahweh is not just above His people. He is not just with His people, in their midst, but He is around them, He is their great protector. So as they built Jerusalem the power of the nations would be disintegrated. Jerusalem, God's people, God's kingdom, will be established and the Lord will be a wall of fire around them. This is the same Yahweh

who was the guiding light, who was the fire that speaks of presence. He will be the great protector. So we have had the nations at peace, the nations destroyed, and Jerusalem rebuilt.

Now in the fourth vision, what do we have (chapter 3)? There stands Joshua with very dirty clothes before the judgment seat, before the court. And the devil is standing there saying, “You want *those* people?!” Joshua represents the people of God. They are dirty, they are foul. But God says, “Get away from here, devil. I rebuke you.” And the angels are told to give Joshua a pure white garment. God supplies their righteousness and sanctification. Joshua even gets a clean hat. He is completely cleansed. Sanctification, reconciliation is fully and completely accomplished by God’s mercy, by God’s grace, by God’s command.

Then in chapter 4 there is a very unique vision. I have read unbelievably strange interpretations of this vision. We have the candelabra and there is a pipe that goes into a bowl and this bowl stretches all the way across. Oil comes from the trees into here and drops oil into the pipes. Oil comes from the trees to the candelabra in the temple. This represents the light, the power, the direction that the people will have. It will always be there because there will be a constant supply of oil. These visions are interesting because Zechariah can communicate with the Lord. The Lord shows him the vision, and he asks, “I understand the oil, I understand the candelabra, but I do not understand the two trees. What do these two trees represent?” “Oh, do you not know? The one represents the royal house and the other represents the priestly house. If you look only to the Davidic house as the royal one, you will only get a half supply of oil, and the candelabra will not be able to function fully. And if the Davidic house is eliminated and you have only the priestly house, you again will only have a half supply of oil. The candelabra will not function properly without both houses. But between the royal and the priestly, there is a full supply of oil. Joshua and Zerubbabel, you represent the royal house and the priestly house. The people need the king and the people need the priests. The people need the work of the king and they need the work of the priests. They need a shepherd who will shepherd his people. They need the shepherd who will suffer and die.”

Years ago when I had to go to Canada to preach one Saturday evening, I arrived in a town in western Ontario. When I got there, I found out they expected me to preach a sermon in Dutch the next day, which would be difficult for me. The first thing I did was go for a half-hour walk. I was walking down the street when I noticed there was a little place that said, “Jesus saves.” There was a man standing in front, and he said to me, “You look troubled. Don’t you know Jesus saves?” I said to him, “I need the power of a reigning Lord, because I need to preach a sermon in Dutch tomorrow morning for Dutch immigrants.” He just looked at me. I said, “Why don’t you have written, ‘Jesus reigns and Jesus saves.’” The man replied, “Because He is not reigning now, He will reign in the millennium.” But we have seen in this vision that the way to get the temple built was to look at the reigning and atoning One together. We see in a later vision that the royal crown goes on the atoning priest’s head and the two offices are brought together. You cannot separate the two. They are one and the same in the same person, the Messiah. That is how Zechariah finishes his prophecies here, and in that way he brings in the eschatological emphasis too. The emphasis is on the king, on the priest, on the covenant mediator. Look to Him and Him alone.

When we look at Zechariah seven and eight, there is the emphasis again on covenantal living, which you can read for yourself. In prophecies nine to 14 there is an emphasis on a Messiah and the kingdom. There is much that could be said here about different eschatological paradigms, but I cannot go into detail. There are six basic concepts. Chapter 9 starts with the nations again. In 9:9-17 there is the king on the donkey coming into reign—“Rejoice, o daughter of Jerusalem!” Chapters 10 and 11 deal with the shepherds: the false shepherds and the true shepherd. Chapter 12 deals with the Davidic house that will

continue to be the dominant feature in the following visions. Chapter 13 begins with, “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.” A fountain for sanctification, for atonement and refinement and cleansing. In Chapter 14 we learn that when the kingdom is established even the horses will have harnesses, with bells, that say “Holiness to the Lord.” We see these concepts here, and they will be presented again in prophetic language 20 to 30 years after he proclaimed these visions. The nations are under God’s control; the king will come in humbly but reigning. There will be false shepherds but this king will be the true shepherd. The Davidic house will be dominant. There will be atonement through the fountain that is flowing and the kingdom will be established. The basic concepts that we see throughout the Old Testament are right there.

We have to move on to Malachi. Malachi does not stress the kingdom. And he does not put a great emphasis on the Messiah either. Yes, he refers to the son of righteousness. He refers to the messenger of the covenant. But Malachi is coming in about 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah initiated their teaching, after the temple had been built, after Jerusalem had been built. He came because of the influence of the administrator Nehemiah and the Law or Torah teacher, Ezra.

There must have been a tragic falling away in Malachi’s time, particularly amongst the priests. And so he refers to the covenant with Levi, the priestly role, in 2:4-8. There is a terrible, terrible judgment expressed there upon the priests, who were to be the representatives of the great atoning sanctifying work. A very disturbing picture is presented of smearing dung on the eyes of the priests. You do not see clearly when you have dung in your eyes. That is the picture Malachi uses to show how falsely those priests were operating. But he also reminds them that the covenant of Levi is a standing covenant, that they have a mediatorial role in the covenant that God has made. The covenant of Levi is a subset, a minor subset, but a real one within the broader covenantal framework. He refers to God keeping the covenant with the Patriarchs in 2:10. He refers to the covenant as a marriage. That brings in Moses, where the marriage was consummated at Mt. Sinai. Then he deals with the messenger of the covenant in 3:4. In chapter 4 we have the word:

“Surely the day of the LORD is coming: it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.”

To present this idea of the desired one I have been reading from chapter 4, but I should have started with chapter 3: “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire.” Yes, these people were wanting a Messiah. They wanted the covenant mediator. He is coming, he is absolutely sure to come. God will keep His work and when He comes, He will be a purifier. Who can stand that day? He will purify the community. Christ will come as a judge and He will come as John the Baptist said, with fire: cleansing, sweeping away the grass, purifying. He will come.

The people had to have that message: “You desire Him, but He will come purifying and demanding obedience to the covenant.” The tithe is used there as a specific act of obedience, to indicate the faithfulness of God’s people in the way they give their tithe. What do you do with your money? Haggai says, “You people are using your money for your own houses; you are not trusting the Lord.” And now Malachi addresses this issue by saying, “What are you doing with your tithe? You are robbing God.

You are not faithful to the Mosaic covenant. You are not faithful to the Abrahamic covenant. You are not faithful to God.”

But God is faithful. As we read in chapter 3, the desired one will come: “I will send my messenger.” Then in chapter 4, “Surely the day is coming... Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise.” This is “sun.” Many people write “son,” but that is not correct. It is the sun, the sun with all of its brilliance, the sun with all of its brightness, the sun with all of its power. He will give righteousness to his people, throughout the world, where His people remember the law of His servant Moses (4:4). Before the sun of righteousness comes, Elijah will come. In that way Malachi prepares for the coming of Christ and the forerunner, John the Baptist. We will talk more about this when we go to the New Testament next time, but John the Baptist is the one who comes. He is that second Elijah who comes to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children, and he is the one who will prepare the way. Thus the second Elijah is sure to come.

You may notice that there is no reference to the broader concept of the kingdom here. It is the Messiah and the covenant that are emphasized. But when John the Baptist comes, he preaches: “The kingdom is at hand.” When Jesus begins His preaching, he also says, “The kingdom is at hand.” Malachi draws the people’s attention to God’s covenant and the mediator of the covenant because at the very heart of the kingdom is the mediator of the covenant. This is God’s administrative relational means that function within the kingdom. And so I repeat: Malachi draws the people right back to Abraham and Moses and David, though in a different way than Zechariah does. He says, “People, you have to be a covenant people. There will be no kingdom and no future unless you turn to the mediator of the covenant and become a faithful covenant people.”

The Old Testament concludes with a covenant community. It is a remnant, but the seed concept has been preserved; the seed is represented. The mediator Himself is there within that community. He is promised. He is represented by His prophets. He is represented by the priest and the king, and by the certainty of God’s faithfulness to His covenant. Haggai stresses it, Zechariah stresses it and Malachi stresses it. God will keep His covenant. He will never leave His people. His way with His people will not change. Time may change, ways of working this out may change, but at the very heart of all this the covenant relationship and the way God relates to His people is unchanging. It is there to remain, and since the covenant is there, the kingdom abides. The kingdom was established at creation and was severely attacked by the parasite kingdom. That kingdom however, will triumph, as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi tell us. Zechariah particularly, in the last part of his book, speaks of the triumph of that kingdom. Thus the Old Testament ends. Now begins a 400-year period during which the inter-testamental, apocalyptic writings were written. And then the Gospel comes.