

# Returning From the Captivity

by C.I. Scofield

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*The sermon highlights the immutability of God's Word, specifically the prophetic word, and its fulfillment in the return from captivity.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:8, Jeremiah 25:11, Jeremiah 29:10, Hebrews 12:26

**Topics:** "Biblical Prophecy", "Divine Sovereignty"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the return of Israel from captivity, highlighting the divine imperative and immutability of the written Word of God, specifically the prophetic word. The lesson focuses on the fulfillment of explicit prophecies, emphasizing the literal fulfillment of predictions with exactness and the certainty of future events coming to pass as foretold in Scripture.

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## Transcript

(Ezra i:1-11.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The proclamation of the King (verses 1-4). 2. The response of the Jews (verses 5-11).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

It is right and logical that in arranging a series of Sunday school lessons which tells of the captivity of Israel, there should, in due order, be a lesson recording the return (in part) of Israel from that captivity. But why, in all the wealth of historic material concerning that return, these particular verses should have been selected, must remain, to most Bible students, one of the inscrutable mysteries of the lesson committee. But, though infelicitous as a selection, it is yet Scripture, and therefore infinitely precious.

Though not strictly germane to the heart of this lesson, it may be well to remind the scholar that the return from the captivity was partial, the ten tribes which had formed the northern kingdom having never, to this day, been restored. Also that the return of the remnant was in three detachments, at three different times, and under three different leaders. In B. C. 535 a company returned under Zerubabel and laid the temple foundations; B. C. 458 Ezra returns and restores the law and ritual; B. C. 445 Nehemiah led up a company and restored the walls, and the civil authority. Our lesson has to do with the first of these. Sheshbazzar was the Persian name of Zerubabel.

It is not, therefore, the fact of the restoration which is peculiar to this lesson, nor may we find its heart in the fact.

Is it not to be found in something out of which the fact of the return grew--something which made the return a more absolute necessity than a law of nature, or the cosmic order? The latter will undergo, as it has undergone, great changes, but there is one thing in the universe which never changes, which is immutable and inevitable, and that is the Word of God.

Henry Drummond said that the one stable thing in the universe was a law of nature--a seeming-wise but really foolish saying. For Who is this Nature, personified continually in the writings of skeptical "scientists," so-called, who makes laws? It is God. And the power to make involves the power to unmake: "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying. Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made" (Heb. xii:26, 27), among which are these "laws of Nature." It is the Scripture "which cannot be broken." It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

Seventy years before the events recorded in this lesson, God had said by the prophet Jeremiah: "This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer. xxv:11). "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. xxix:10).

And now the seventy years are accomplished and by a divine imperative the thing spoken must be done.

The heart of this lesson then is, generally, the immutability of the written Word of God; and, more specifically, of the prophetic word. At no other point is unbelief or doubt so little excusable. For already a great number of explicit prophecies have been literally fulfilled. And these predictions were uttered so long before the event--usually centuries--that no human foresight could have anticipated them; and they were so specific as to time, place and circumstance that no accidental combination of circumstances could have fulfilled them. When, therefore, we turn to predictions whose fulfilment is yet future, we are sure of two things: first, the thing spoken will come to pass; and, secondly, it will come to pass, not figuratively or allegorically, but with exact literalness.

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