

Dr. Tiberius Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7, God as Restorer

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7, God as Restorer, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Rata's Old Testament Theology session focuses on God as the Restorer, highlighting the prophetic cycle of Israel's sin, God's judgment leading to exile, and His subsequent promise of restoration. The lecture traces this theme through various Old Testament prophets, emphasizing God's faithfulness to His promises despite Israel's disobedience. **The return from Babylonian exile under leaders like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah is presented as a partial fulfillment of these prophecies.** However, the session also explores the New Testament perspective, suggesting that the complete restoration of Israel, as envisioned by the prophets like Isaiah and Zechariah, was not fully realized in the Old Testament and awaits a future fulfillment in the eschatological reign of Christ. **The teaching posits that Jesus' ministry marked the beginning of the end of this exile, with a more comprehensive restoration anticipated at His second coming.**

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → OT Theology, Rata).



**Rata_OTTheology_S
ession07.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7, God as Restorer

Briefing Document: God as Restorer in Old Testament Theology

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Tiberius Rata in Session 7 of his Old Testament Theology course, focusing on the concept of "God as Restorer." The session explores the consistent prophetic message of sin, judgment (often through exile), and ultimately, restoration for the people of Israel. Dr. Rata emphasizes that while a historical restoration occurred after the Babylonian exile, the prophetic promises of complete restoration find their ultimate fulfillment in the coming of Christ and the eschatological future.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. **The Prophetic Cycle: Sin, Judgment, and Restoration:** Dr. Rata highlights a recurring pattern in the Old Testament prophets. When the children of Israel sinned, God sent prophets to warn them of impending judgment, often culminating in exile from the promised land. However, the prophetic message never ends with judgment; it always includes a promise of future restoration.
- **Quote:** "Actually, when we read the prophets, there are these three themes that keep coming over and over again. Sin, judgment, and restoration. So the children of Israel have sinned, and God sends prophets and tells them, thus says the Lord, you have sinned. And because you have sinned, God says, I'm going to judge you. And one of the judgments was the exile... But when you read the prophets, you have to read to the end because there's also the language of restoration. God always promises that he'll bring his people back and that there will be a restoration."
1. **Biblical Definition of Restoration:** While a simple definition of restoration is "bringing back to a former position or condition," biblical restoration specifically refers to "the renewal of the fortunes of God's people after they experience exile." This renewal is not just about physical return but encompasses a broader sense of God's favor and blessing.

2. **Prophetic Promises of Restoration Across Centuries:** Dr. Rata chronologically examines the promises of restoration through various pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic prophets:
 - **Joel:** Promises a return from exile and the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, including judgment on the nations.
 - **Quote:** "For behold, in those days and at that time when I restored the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I would gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat."
 - **Amos:** Foresees a complete restoration where the people will rebuild cities, plant vineyards, and live in prosperity.
 - **Quote:** "I will restore the captivity of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will also plant vineyards, drink their wine, make gardens, and eat their fruit."
 - **Hosea:** Speaks of an appointed harvest when God restores his people's fortunes.
 - **Isaiah:** Highlights the restoration of the preserved ones of Israel and their role as a light to the nations, extending salvation to the ends of the earth.
 - **Quote:** "It is a small thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel. I will also make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
 - **Jeremiah:** Explicitly prophesies the Babylonian exile and its 70-year duration, along with a promise of return and restoration to their land, including the "Book of Comfort" (Jeremiah 30-33) which speaks of the new covenant.
 - **Quote:** "They shall be carried to Babylon, and they shall be there until the day I visit them, declares the Lord, then I will bring them back and restore them to that place."
 - **Ezekiel:** Promises the restoration of the fortunes of Jacob and mercy on the whole house of Israel.
 - **Quote:** "Therefore, thus says the Lord God, now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel..."
1. **Historical Restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah:** The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe the actual return from the Babylonian exile in three phases

under the leadership of Sheshbazzar/Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. This period saw the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.

- **Quote:** "All the promises of restoration are fulfilled in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah."
 - **Quote:** "So the first one that is described in Ezra 1-6 is about 50,000 Jews coming back under the leadership of Shesh Bazar, Zerubbabel, and Yeshua. The second one is described in Ezra 7-10: about 2,000 Israelites return under the leadership of Ezra. Then, the third one, under the leadership of Nehemiah, is returning, and an unknown number are."
1. **The Significance of the Remnant:** Dr. Rata introduces the concept of "remnant theology," noting that not everyone went into exile, and not everyone returned. God worked through a faithful remnant to bring about the initial restoration.
 - **Quote:** "And here, we get the idea of the remnant theology. Again, not everybody went into exile, but not everybody came back. But God speaks about a faithful remnant that will come back. So, remnant theology is very important in the prophets."
 1. **Lessons from Ezra and Nehemiah:** Dr. Rata highlights the leadership of Ezra (spiritual leader, teacher of the law) and Nehemiah (political leader, governor, man of prayer and action). He emphasizes the importance of both piety and preparation, and the inevitability of opposition when doing what is right.
 - **Quote:** "And sometimes, he fights with the word in one hand and with the sword in the other, which we learn that sometimes a leader needs to plan and pray... piety, as someone said, is no substitute for preparation. And neither is preparation a substitute for piety. You need both."
 - **Quote:** "Remember that opposition is not necessarily a sign that you're doing something wrong. Sometimes opposition is a sign that you're doing something right."
 1. **The Question of Full Restoration in the New Testament:** Dr. Rata raises the question of whether the restoration promised by the prophets was fully accomplished with the return from Babylon. He points to Jesus' reading from Isaiah 61 in Luke 4 as the proclamation of a new phase of restoration.
 - **Quote:** "So, is the restoration of Israel, was it completed as Isaiah prophesied it?"

1. **NT Wright's Perspective on Ongoing Exile:** Dr. Rata introduces the view of N.T. Wright, who argues that the restoration of Israel was not completed in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and that, in a sense, Israel remained in a state of exile, still under foreign rule and awaiting God's full redemption.
 - **Quote:** "The scholar N.T. Wright suggests that the restoration of Israel is not yet completed, that in a sense Israel is still in a state of exile... although she had come back from Babylon, the glorious message of the prophets remained unfulfilled. Israel still remained in the thrall to foreigners. Worse, Israel's God had not returned to Zion."
1. **Eschatological Fulfillment of Restoration:** Dr. Rata connects the idea of future restoration to the end times and the second coming of Christ, referencing Paul's statement in Romans 11:26 ("all Israel will be saved"). He suggests a future mass conversion of Jews and a more complete fulfillment of the prophetic promises.
2. **Jesus' Ministry as the Beginning of Restoration:** While acknowledging the historical restoration and the future ultimate restoration, Dr. Rata concludes that Jesus' ministry marked the beginning of the end of Israel's exile, offering an "immediate historic fulfillment" and a "Christ fulfillment." However, the "ultimate fulfillment" awaits Christ's return.
 - **Quote:** "So, Jesus understood his message and ministry as the beginning of the end of Israel's exile; however, the complete restoration will not happen until Christ comes again. So, there is in a sense an immediate historic fulfillment. There was Christ fulfillment when Christ was here, but there is ultimate fulfillment when Christ comes again."

Conclusion:

Dr. Rata's session effectively outlines the Old Testament theme of God as Restorer, emphasizing its cyclical nature of sin, judgment, and eventual restoration. He clarifies that while a significant historical restoration occurred after the Babylonian exile, the full scope of the prophetic promises points towards an eschatological fulfillment in the context of Christ's coming. This understanding highlights God's faithfulness as both a judge of sin and a merciful restorer of his people.

4. Study Guide: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7, God as Restorer

God as Restorer: A Study Guide

Key Themes: Sin, Judgment, Restoration

Quiz:

1. According to the lecture, what are the three recurring themes found in the Old Testament prophetic books? Briefly explain each theme in the context of Israel's history.
2. What is the basic English definition of "restoration"? How does the lecture define "biblical restoration" specifically in relation to God's people?
3. Name the three leaders who oversaw the returns from the Babylonian exile, and briefly describe the primary focus of their respective efforts as mentioned in the lecture.
4. Explain the concept of "remnant theology" as it is presented in the lecture. Why is this concept important when discussing the restoration of Israel?
5. According to the lecture, what did the books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe concerning the promises of restoration found in the prophets?
6. Describe the opposition faced by Ezra and Nehemiah during the rebuilding efforts. What lesson does the lecture draw from this opposition?
7. When Jesus quoted Isaiah 61 in Luke 4, what aspect of restoration was he highlighting? How does this passage relate to the broader theme of God as Restorer?
8. According to N.T. Wright, why was the restoration of Israel not fully completed even after the return from Babylonian exile? What evidence does the lecture provide to support this view?
9. How does the appointment of the twelve disciples by Jesus potentially relate to the restoration of Israel? What statement by Jesus in Matthew 19:28 connects to this idea?
10. How does the lecture interpret Jesus' allusion to Zechariah's prophecy in Mark 13 regarding the ultimate fulfillment of restoration?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. The three recurring themes are **sin, judgment, and restoration**. Israel repeatedly sinned against God, leading to God's judgment through exile, but the prophets also consistently promised future restoration after this judgment.
2. The simple English definition of restoration is **bringing back to a former position or condition**. Biblical restoration refers specifically to the **renewal of the fortunes of God's people after they experience exile**.
3. The three leaders were **Sheshbazzar/Zerubbabel**, who led the initial return focused on rebuilding the temple; **Ezra**, a spiritual leader focused on teaching the Law; and **Nehemiah**, a political leader and governor who oversaw the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.
4. "Remnant theology" refers to the idea that **not all of Israel went into exile, and not all returned; however, God promised to restore a faithful remnant**. This highlights God's faithfulness to a portion of His people who would carry on His promises.
5. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe **the actual fulfillment of the promises of restoration**, detailing the return of the exiles, the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, and the re-establishment of community life.
6. Ezra and Nehemiah faced **significant opposition from surrounding nations and internal enemies** who tried to thwart their rebuilding efforts. The lecture suggests that **opposition is not necessarily a sign of doing wrong; sometimes it indicates that you are doing something right**.
7. When Jesus quoted Isaiah 61, he was highlighting the **spiritual and social aspects of restoration**, such as bringing good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor. This connects to God's restorative work beyond just physical return to the land.
8. N.T. Wright argues that the restoration wasn't complete because **Israel remained under foreign rule, and more importantly, God's full glory had not returned to Zion in the way the prophets envisioned**. The lecture cites the continued subjugation and the longing for a greater fulfillment of prophetic promises as support.
9. The appointment of the twelve disciples could symbolize the **reconstitution of the twelve tribes of Israel**, hinting at a future restored Israel. Jesus' statement in

Matthew 19:28, promising the disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes in the new world, further supports this connection, suggesting a future judicial and restorative role.

10. The lecture interprets Jesus' allusion to Zechariah in Mark 13 as indicating that while Jesus' ministry was the **beginning of the end of Israel's exile and the start of restoration**, the **complete and ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies will occur at Christ's second coming**, accompanied by cosmic events and the gathering of God's elect.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the cyclical pattern of sin, judgment, and restoration in the Old Testament as presented in the lecture. How does understanding this pattern inform our view of God's character?
2. Compare and contrast the immediate historical fulfillment of restoration in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah with the future, eschatological fulfillment discussed in the context of Jesus' ministry and later New Testament writings.
3. Analyze the significance of "remnant theology" in the context of God's promises of restoration. How does this concept demonstrate God's faithfulness and purpose for His people?
4. Explore the various facets of restoration described in the Old Testament prophecies (e.g., return to the land, rebuilding, spiritual renewal). Which aspects do you believe were most emphasized in the post-exilic period, and why?
5. Consider the implications of N.T. Wright's argument that Israel remains in a state of exile. How does this perspective shape our understanding of the present age and the ultimate hope for God's people, both Jewish and Gentile?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Exile:** The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political reasons or as a punishment. In the Old Testament context, it refers specifically to the forced removal of the Israelites from their land by the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.
- **Restoration:** The act of returning something to a former condition, place, or owner; the rebuilding or renewal of something that has been destroyed or damaged. In a biblical context, it refers to God's act of bringing His people back from exile and renewing their fortunes and relationship with Him.
- **Prophets:** Individuals chosen by God to speak His message to His people. In the Old Testament, the prophets often warned against sin, announced impending judgment, and offered hope through promises of future restoration.
- **Remnant Theology:** The theological concept that God always preserves a faithful minority (a "remnant") of His people through periods of judgment and uses this remnant to carry out His purposes and promises of restoration.
- **Eschatology:** The branch of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity and the universe. In the context of the lecture, it refers to the future and ultimate fulfillment of God's promises of restoration, particularly in relation to the coming of Christ.
- **New Covenant:** A new agreement between God and humanity, established through Jesus Christ, which replaces the Old Covenant mediated through Moses. The lecture mentions the promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah as part of the language of restoration.
- **Eschaton:** The final period in the history of the world, often associated with the second coming of Christ and the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom.
- **Pre-exilic Prophets:** Prophets who ministered before the Babylonian exile (before 586 BC), such as Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah (partially).
- **Exilic Prophets:** Prophets who ministered during the Babylonian exile (586-539 BC), such as Ezekiel and Daniel.
- **Post-exilic Prophets:** Prophets who ministered after the return from the Babylonian exile (after 539 BC), such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

5. FAQs on Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 7, God as Restorer, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: God as Restorer in the Old Testament

1. What are the three central themes that emerge when reading the Old Testament prophets regarding God's relationship with Israel? The three recurring themes found in the Old Testament prophetic books are sin, judgment, and restoration. The prophets consistently address Israel's disobedience (sin), announce God's impending consequences (judgment), often exemplified by exile, and ultimately promise a future return and renewal (restoration) for God's people.

2. What is meant by "restoration" in the context of Old Testament theology, and what historical events illustrate this concept? Biblical restoration refers to the renewal of the fortunes of God's people after they have experienced exile. It signifies a bringing back to a former position or condition, but in a theological sense, it encompasses the return from captivity and the re-establishment of the community in their land. The return of the northern and southern kingdoms from Assyrian and Babylonian exile, respectively, under leaders like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, serves as a primary historical illustration of this restoration.

3. How did the Old Testament prophets articulate the promise of restoration, and are there variations in their prophecies? Across various centuries, prophets like Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel conveyed God's promise of restoration. While the central theme remained the same—a return from exile and renewal—the specific details varied. Some prophecies emphasized the return to the land, the rebuilding of cities, and agricultural prosperity, while others, particularly in Jeremiah's "Book of Comfort," pointed towards a new covenant and a deeper spiritual restoration. Despite the different historical contexts and specific emphases, the consistent message was God's faithfulness to bring his people back.

4. What is "remnant theology," and how does it relate to the restoration? Remnant theology highlights the idea that not all of Israel went into exile, and not all returned. God speaks of a faithful remnant that would survive the judgment and form the core of the restored community. This concept is crucial because the restoration was not envisioned as a complete return of everyone who had been exiled, but rather a return of a faithful portion through whom God would fulfill his promises. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe this "escaped remnant" returning to rebuild and revive.

5. How was the restoration from Babylonian exile accomplished historically, and who were the key figures involved? The return from Babylonian exile occurred in three main phases under different leaders. The first return, around 50,000 Jews, was led by Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Joshua, focusing on rebuilding the temple. The second return involved about 2,000 Israelites under the spiritual leadership of Ezra, who emphasized the teaching of the Law. The third return was led by Nehemiah, a political leader and governor, who oversaw the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Both Ezra and Nehemiah played crucial roles in the spiritual and physical restoration of the community, facing significant opposition in the process.

6. How does the New Testament, particularly the teachings of Jesus and the book of Acts, relate to the Old Testament concept of restoration? Jesus, in his ministry, alluded to the restoration prophecies, reading from Isaiah 61 in Luke 4 and proclaiming liberty to the captives. However, the New Testament suggests that the full scope of the Old Testament restoration prophecies was not entirely fulfilled in the return from Babylon. Acts 3:19-21 speaks of a future time of refreshing and the restoration of all things, which would occur when Christ returns. N.T. Wright argues that Israel, in a sense, remained in exile even after the return, awaiting a more complete redemption.

7. According to the sources, is the restoration of Israel considered fully complete, or is there a future aspect to it? The sources indicate that while there was a historical restoration following the Babylonian exile, the complete fulfillment of the prophetic promises is still future. Jesus' own words and the writings in Acts suggest that a more comprehensive restoration is tied to his second coming. Scholars like N.T. Wright argue that Israel's exile was not fully ended by the return from Babylon and awaits a final redemption when God fully restores his people. Passages in Zechariah and Jesus' allusions to them in Mark 13 further point to an eschatological fulfillment of restoration.

8. What does the theme of God as Restorer reveal about God's character and his relationship with his people? The theme of God as Restorer reveals several key aspects of God's character. Firstly, it demonstrates his seriousness about sin and his justice in enacting judgment. Secondly, and more profoundly, it highlights his unwavering faithfulness to his promises and his enduring love and mercy for his people. Even after judgment and exile, God initiates and orchestrates their return and renewal, showing that he is not only a God who judges but also a God who actively works to bring about reconciliation and restoration. His commitment to restoration underscores his desire for a renewed relationship with his people, driven by his steadfast love and covenant faithfulness.