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SPEAKERS

Intro Voice, Baruch Korman

Intro Voice

Shalom and welcome to Vehafta Yisrael, a Hebrew phrase which means "You shall love Israel. We hope you'll stay with us for the next 30 minutes as our teacher, Dr. Baruch, shares his expository teaching from the Bible. Dr. Baruch is the senior lecturer at the Zera Avraham Institute based in Israel, although all courses are taught in Hebrew at the institute, Dr. Baruch is pleased to share this weekly address in English. To find out more about our work in Israel, please visit us on the web at loveisrael.org. That's one word, loveisrael.org. Now, here's Baruch with today's lesson.

Baruch Korman

Well, what we're going to do tonight is to look at one scripture. Open up your Bibles, as I said, the same place as we had our call to worship. Look with me to the book of Ezra, and chapter four again. The book of Ezra, and chapter four. We're going to look at the first 11 verses, and again, what is really this passage about? One thing, about opposition, and again, I want to underscore what we taught in our call to worship, and that is this: you can be in God's will, you can be doing God's will, and there will be false accusations made against you. Why? Because the enemy does not want you to serve God. That's what it comes down to. So when you are faithful, when you are obedient, when you are doing what God has commanded you to do, realize that this can lead to difficulties, difficulties in your life. That's okay. Why? Because God will manifest His faithfulness. So let's begin. Look with me, if you would, to the Book of Ezra, chapter four, and we're ready now for verse one, where it says, "The enemies of Judah and Benjamin or Benjamin heard that the offspring of the exile are building and literally, if your Bible says the temple, it's incorrect. It's not the word temple, which would be Betha Magdash or buy it for the house, but rather we look here, and it's an entirely different word. And so many times, and I know I'm critical, but rightly so, because this is not the word temple; it is the word hechal, which refers to the sanctuary, more specifically, the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God dwelt during the time of the tabernacle, and of course during the first and second temples. So it says here, the sanctuary of the Lord, the God of Israel. So we see here that there's an emphasis on this sanctuary, and again, we're speaking of the holy of holies. Let's move on to verse two, where it says, "These same enemies. What did they do? It says here, they approach to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the fathers, meaning the leaders, and they said to them, "We will build with you, because as you we seek your God. But notice it says this in a wrong way, because it says as you, this is not true. What's the difference? There was a

unique call upon the children of Israel, and how did that call manifest itself? Very simply, in a covenantal relationship. If we are going to be acknowledged as the people of God, we need to have a covenantal relationship with Him, and let me share with you. I've said this many times previously. The best covenant that you can have is what's known as the New Covenant. It is a covenant of forgiveness. It is a covenant of forgetfulness, meaning God has promised. What does the text say? I will remember your sins no more. So God forgets all of our sins previously. He forgives all of our sins, and the best thing about the new covenant is that we are imputed with the righteousness of the Messiah. Why is that so important? It gives us assurance, because when a believer stands before God at the judgment seat of God, we don't have to worry about where are we going to spend eternity. That has already been decided. Everyone, hear that carefully. Everyone. Recently, I was listening to a person that said something that was false. They looked at a word from First Thessalonians chapter four, when it talks about those who are still alive. Now we know something: those who are dead in Messiah will be raptured first, and then the Scripture says, "Then we who are still alive. Well, the problem was this: the individual who was sharing was saying that this word for life means a vibrant life. That's not true. It is simply the very basic Greek word for having life. Now, of course, in this context, if we're talking about believers, we should live a vibrant life. But here's the problem: what this individual was saying was this: those who are going to be raptured are only those who are living vibrantly in faith. If you're not, you're going to be left behind.

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There's nowhere in the Scripture that says that every believer, whether you have died in faith or whether you are still alive at the time of the rapture, if you are a believer, meaning if you're part of that new covenant, meaning you've accepted the gospel, you will take part in the rapture, even if your faith is small like a mustard seed. Understand what the scripture is saying. So this individual was sharing something that the word of God and the Greek word of God does not teach. We see that this word simply means to have life, and in this context, as believers, we have an eternal life, and we are going to receive that eternal life at the time of the rapture. Now we should live according to the kingdom truth. Now the moment you believe, but we are going to experience that eternal life, and the word eternal can relate to the kingdom. Meaning this: the moment that we believe, we should be individuals that demonstrate kingdom faith, and that we should have a commitment to the kingdom of God. Well, look again at verse two. It says here, and these meaning these enemies of of Judah and Benjamin, the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, it says here they approach Zerubbabel, and the leaders of the fathers, and they said to them, "We will build with you, for as you we inquire to your God, and we to Him are offering sacrifices from the days of Esar, Haddon, the king of Assyria, who brought us up here. Now it's true that historically it was the king of Assyria who brought these enemies to that location. We'll talk more about that location in a moment. But notice these were not people of faith; they were not people who acknowledged the true King over Israel, meaning Messiah. What were they acknowledging? Says it right here in the Scripture, and that is the King of Assyria, which was an idolatrous empire. Well, let's move on now to verse three, where it says, "And Zerubbabel said to them, and Yeshua, that is the high priest, and the rest of the heads of the fathers, to Israel, not to you, but to build the house of our God. Now, here again, house. We see it's a different word. It relates to the temple here because the term Bet, as in Betha Magdash, means the temple. Betha Magdash means the holy house, which is referring to the temple, so again it says, "But to us to build, meaning God's commanded us to build the temple to our God, for we together we will build unto the Lord, the God of Israel, just as he has commanded us,

who are we talking about? The king, the king Cyrus, the king of Persia. So remember something: when we look back, we see that it was Cyrus, known in Hebrew as Koresh, the king of Persia. Who uniquely was moved in faith to call the children of Israel to go back to the land in order that they might build the temple of the Lord, this house of God. This is what we're talking about. Never do we see these idol worshippers from the empire of Assyria, they were not called to build this house. What they were saying is true, and we're going to see that their true colors are going to come out in a moment. Well, let's press on. Look, if you would, to verse four, where it says, "And it came about, the people of the land. Now, here again, we'll talk more in a moment about what land we're referring to. We'll speak clearly of this in a moment. But it says, and it came about the people of the land. What were they doing? Well, we have a word here. Most Bibles will say discouraging, but what it's really about is letting your hand go, and that's literally what it says: to cause the hands of the people of Judah to let go, and not only that, and to be fearful of them in regard regarding to build. So, what we see here is that these enemies they did not want the house of God, that is the temple, to be built in Jerusalem. They were trying to undermine that and discourage the people and to cause the people to be fearful to do exactly what God had commanded them to do.

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Notice the end of verse four, and bring about fear unto them to build. They didn't want this temple. Verse five. What did they do? Well, again, if you pay close attention, we see something. The word that begins verse five is a word for hiring, and it's in the present. So many times we find that translators are careless. Now we find that this is a present. Many Christians will say a present participle. That's fine, but if we look at it, it's simply in the present tense, in the plural meaning they. So it says, and they are hiring unto them counselors. Now, why do they handle hire counselors? Well, it says here to laffer. What is that? Might be translated to frustrate their council, all the days of Koresh, that is Cyrus, the king of Persia, and until the kingdom of Dariovesh or Darius, the king of Persia. So we see something. This wasn't just a few generations. We see that much time had elapsed, and we see a new king coming into ruling Persia, and we see that this was King Darius, or in Hebrew Dariavesh, became the king and the one who took over after Cyrus or Koresh. Look now to verse six. Now, verse six we've already alluded to when we had our call to worship, but I want to emphasize exactly what is being said here. Look at verse six where it says, "And in the kingdom of who, Achashverosh. Now, Achashverosh is well known because he is the primary king during the book of Esther, and we find that Achashverosh, although he did some foolish things in the end, he supported the decisions of both Mordecai and Esther, he learned from his mistakes, and therefore, in the end, he did what he should have done. But notice what it says. Look at verse six. And in the kingdom of Achashverosh, at the beginning of his Kingdom. They wrote, "Who's they? These enemies of of Israel, these enemies of both Judah and Benjamin. It says here they wrote, and what did they write? Well, it's simply the word for an accusation, and it's in the singular. They wrote an accusation against those who dwell in Judah and Jerusalem, and again, why were they dwelling there? Because God had brought them back to the land, and why were they empowered to come back to the land? Well, if you read and remember earlier. It was because of Cyrus, that is Koresh, the king of Persia. God had put it into his heart that he would make the temple built. And what did he do? He supplied all the material. He supplied all the necessary resources, meaning the funds, in order that the children of Israel might do that, and what do we find? We find that these false servants, and that's what they were. They were not servants of God. They were false servants. What did they want to do? They wanted to discourage. They wanted to frustrate. They did not want that temple to be built in

its proper location. That's what we see. So they wanted to make an accusation against those who dwell in Judah and Jerusalem. Let's press on now to verse seven. We have a new king. It says, and in the days of Artaxasta, wrote Bishlam and Mitredat Tavi and the rest of his colleagues concerning Artaxasta, the king of Persia. So we see a new king at this time, and notice it says, and he wrote a letter, and it says written in Aramaic, and translated into Aramaic. Now this is odd, and we need to understand why, primarily, even though the children of Israel were indeed in Babylon, what language they speak, Aramaic, and we find something, even though they were there for 70 years, a good number of the people never learned to communicate, and now we find that even though the language of that place was Aramaic, we find that they did what? They did not want to write it in that language, but rather it was written in Aramaic, and then translated into Aramaic. Why? Because they wanted to conceal their objectives from the children of Israel. They did not want this evil plan that they had to frustrate the will of God. They did not want it to be made known publicly to the children of Israel.

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So that's why the language was translated, written in Aramaic and translated into Aramaic in order to conceal their true intentions from the children of Israel. Well, let's press on to verse eight where it says another individual, Rachum. Now, this man Rachum relates to mercy, but he was anything other than merciful. It says, "And Rechum, a commander, and Shimshai, the scribe, they wrote a letter, one letter, concerning or against Jerusalem. Now we get to the real heart of what's going on here. They wrote against Jerusalem. Why? Well, Jerusalem is known as the holy city. Again, I say this frequently, but so many times people, when I ask that question, if I'm at a conference or teaching, I ask this question, and people are silent. I want us to understand the meaning of the word holy. When you hear that word holy, what should come into your mind? One thing, and what is that? The purposes of God. What is holy? God's purpose. What is very unholy? My desires, my plans, my wants, what pleases me. So, what are we called to do? Very simply, we're called to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah. Meaning this, we're called to submit. We're called always. Did you hear that? If you want joy in your life, if you want victory in your life, understand what it requires. It requires that you recognize God's authority over your life. You will never be someone that God is pleased with, that God is using, until you recognize God's absolute authority over your life. This is what the scripture is saying. So look again. It says Rahum, a commander, and Shimshai, the scribe, wrote one letter against Jerusalem. And who did they write it to? We'll just keep reading. Middle of verse eight, to Artashasta, the king, and then it says, and so forth. Meaning this, they begin this, but we see that it carries on. Then look now to verse nine. Then Rahum, a commander, and Shimshai, the scribe, and the rest of their colleagues, and then we have a list of different people that were living there: the Danites, and the Apharsatais, and the Tarpalites, And the Apharsites and the Archivites, the ones being in Babylon with the Shoshoneites, and it says, of who are, and we have the term Elamites. So we have different people that are listed here. If we go, we find 1234567, and why seven? Very simply, because these were not interested in the purposes of God. In fact, they were all working against the purposes of God, and this is something that constantly we should ask ourselves: Am I committed to the purpose of God? Now, if you are, it's a very simple way to answer this: You will be conducting yourself with the fear of the Lord, what is that Hebrew word fear? In Hebrew, it's the word y'rah, which means priority. When you are living under the fear of the Lord, God's priorities will become your priorities. We can say it differently: God's purposes will become your purposes as well, so there's going to be a unity between God, His commands, His authority, and us being submissive, being obedient to His priorities and His purposes. That's what God

expects from His people. Well, move on. Look, if you would, to the next verse, verse 10, and the rest of the nations who are exiled, exiled by Osnafer the Great and Honorable. It says, and dwells they dwell there, in the cities of. And now we have the answer. What place are we talking about? Shamron. That is also known, perhaps in your Bible, as Samaria. In Hebrew, we say Shamron, but in most Bibles, it will say Samaria, and the rest on the other side of the river, and then it says and so forth. So we see something here. It's emphasizing that there is this group of people who are in opposition to the purposes and the priorities of God, and where are they? They are from the other side of the river. Now it's true, we see that they were made to dwell there by the king of Assyria. That's who brought them into this place. But again, he is not a faithful man. He is an idol worshiper, and therefore, by nature of that, he's against the purposes of God.

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One of the things that every believer should be committed to are the purposes of God, and when we are committed to His priorities and purposes, we are inviting joy into our life. We are going to have access to God's provision. We will experience His presence in our life, and we will know His power. And the best thing is that we will also see things from His perspective. Why is that so important? Because when you have the perspective of God, you will also have the ability to behave and make decisions with, and this is huge, with discernment. That's what we're called to do, to demonstrate discernment. And when we look, this discernment is an outcome of God's counsel, God's stewardship over us, providing words of knowledge, words of understanding, words that lead us into His will. But if we're not committed to the will of God, we're not going to receive that discernment. We're not going to have that understanding. We won't have that knowledge, so it's very important that we approach God in a specific way, saying to God, God, whatever you reveal to me, I am going to do. I am going to submit to whatever you tell me. I'm going to recognize your absolute authority over my life, and I'm going to obey your word. I'm going to put into action what you reveal to me, so that I am found faithful. That is what a true disciple of Messiah wants to do and wants to accomplish. Well, let's look at our last verse. Look, if you would to verse 11, where it says, "And this is a copy of the letter which they sent unto him, unto who? Unto Artashasta, the king, and it says your servants. Now understand, they're saying that they are his servants, but in actuality, they are not serving this king. They're not interested in his will, his purposes, or anything. They are idolatrous. They are committed to a false truth. They are committed to that which is against the will of God. So everything they're saying is a lie. So look again. Look at verse 11. It says, "This is a copy of the letter which they sent unto him, unto Attachasta, the king. And then they say your servants, and then we have men on the other side of the river, and so forth. So what we find here is this: they are foreigners living in the land that God had given to. And hear this: when we look at the scripture. We see something very important. We find it so many times. I hear people, and this is very problematic. They talk about the sons of Abraham. Well, being a son of Abraham does not necessarily put you in a very good position. Why do I say that? Well, who were some of the sons of Abraham? Well, we have, for example, Ishmael. Ishmael was not blessed by God. Now, God did some positive things in his life. He did that because of his mother, and he did that because of Avraham. But we need to understand that Ishmael, although God provided, it was not that He was pleasing. And notice something else: we find that Isaac, that is Yitzchak, was the child of promise, not Ishmael. And then we find something else in that next generation. We know that that Yitzchak married Rebecca, and we find something. There were two sons, twins, and we're talking about Yaakov or Jacob, and Esau. Again, we find that the descendants of Esau, and I'm talking about the

Edomites. These are enemies of God. Just read the prophecy of Ovadia, that is Obadiah. We find that they were not faithful individuals, and we find that Esau was not a faithful individual. He conspired against his agreement. He wasn't a man of truth, and we find that he conspired to once again gain what he should not have done. And let me just be very clear about something: the birthright goes to the firstborn. But what did what did Esau do? Well, you look going back to Genesis 25. He sold his birthright. In fact, the scripture says here again. This is not interpretation. The scripture says that Esau despised his birthright, and he says, "Why is this to me? Meaning, what good is this for me? If you read it carefully, for me, he was selfish. What was that birthright?"

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The birthright was to be a blessing. This was God's purposes and God's plan. He wanted to set apart a people unto Himself that would be a blessing to who? What does the Scripture say? To all the families of the earth. That is that heritage, and what we find, we find that Esau wanted to steal the birthright from Yaakov, from Jacob. Jacob purchased that birthright. It was Esau who wanted to renege and try to get that blessing, which he was not in. Titled too, and one last point about this: what we see something is this. Everything that Jacob did, hear that. Everything that Jacob did, he did because his mother had instructed him what to do, even how to put a goat skin upon his body. Why? So his father would understand that he was indeed the one who was proper to be blessed. And what do we see? Well, we see very carefully in the scripture that because Jacob obeyed his mother, and what was his mother a recipient of? God spoke to her. God gave to her prophetic truth, and she submitted to this prophetic truth, and she behaved in a way in order to bring about the blessing upon Jacob, rather than on Esau, Esau biologically was the firstborn, but because he sold that birthright, it went now to Jacob, and with that birthright also comes the blessing. See, people, we look at this and we consider things from a human standpoint, rather than listening to what the Word of God says, Esau despised his birthright. He says, "Why is this birthright for me? Meaning, if I'm not going to get a benefit, I'm not interested in it, and that's why we see God moving against some of the sons of Abraham. Abraham had faith. The problem is that some of his descendants, like Ishmael and Esau, did not have faith. What does the Word of God say about Esau? Calls him in the Book of Hebrews. It says that he was a perverse and immoral individual-that's what the New Testament says about Esau. And so many times I hear people teaching about Esau as though he was this innocent victim, and that he was a good man. No, read what the Book of Hebrews says. The Book of Hebrews says he was perverse and immoral. God's not going to bless perverse and immoral people. This is a fact that we need to submit to and understand how God rewards faithfulness. Be faithful. Walk with God. Do the things that God has commanded. This is what faith is. I'll close with this. I've said so many times to you that what is faith? Well, the Hebrew word for faith is emunah. It is related to another Hebrew word emet, which is truth? What is faith? Faith is when we obey the truth of God. Are we saved by our obedience? No, we're saved by grace. We're saved by faith. But being people of faith, what should we do? We should submit to the instructions of God. What does that mean? That we should take God's truth and apply it to our life if we want to be found faithful, if we want to be a person who is a recipient of God's provision, His power, His presence, and if we're going to know God's perspective. This is the change that God wants to bring into your life. I'll make one last statement, and it's this: When you are serving God, be assured there will be an accusation against you. Why? Again, because the enemy hates obedience. The enemy will attempt to discourage you and thwart your counsel, so you live a faithless life rather than walking in the truth of God. While close with that, until next time, may our Lord and Savior bless you greatly, and may you

submit to the truth of God, so that you demonstrate faith and have a witness that is pleasing to the Lord God, the God of Israel. May He be blessed now and forevermore. Shalom.

Intro Voice

Well, we hope you will benefit from today's message and share it with others. Please plan to join us each week at this time and on this channel for our broadcast of loveisrael.org. Again, to find out more about us, please visit our website loveisrael.org. There you will find articles and numerous other lectures by Baruch. These teachings are in video form. May download them or watch them in streaming video. Until next week, may the Lord bless you in our Messiah Yeshua, that is Jesus, as you walk with Him. Shalom from Israel.