

10/27/19

God Commanded To Build His Temple
Ezra 5:1-17

The people were back in the land on the seventh month of the Jews, Sept.-Oct. of 536 B.C. Ezra 3:1
* The holiest month due to the three feast they celebrated, the Feast of Trumpets or New moons, Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. Ezra 3:4-6

The next date is the second month of the second year as they came to the temple sight to have the Levites start and oversee the work of the temple. Ezra 3:8

1. The date is May, 535 B.C.
2. They laid the foundation of the temple. Ezra 3:10
3. The adversaries of the Jews in the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus wrote accusations against those of Judah and Jerusalem. Ezra 4:6
* Ahasuerus is Cambyses 530-522 B.C. Ezra 4:6, 21
4. The letters of accusations lasted till the days Artaxerxes king of Persia. Ezra 4:7
* He is Artaxerxes, Guamata (pseudo-Smerdis) that reigned in 522 B.C. for only 9-10 months.
5. The temple work ceased for 15-16 years until the second-year reign of Darius king of Persia. Ezra 4:24: 5:1; Hag. 1:1
* The second year of Darius king of Persian is 520 B.C. he is Darius I (Hystaspis) 522-486 B.C. who confirmed the decree of Cyrus to continue the work on the temple, not Darius of Daniel. Ezra 5:6, 6:1, 3

We want to look at the resumed building of the temple by God's command, characterized by three things.

Ezra 5:1-17

- I. The proclamation to return to build the temple came through the prophets of God. vs. 1-2
 - II. The confrontation to stop the building of the temple by the adversaries God. vs. 3-5
 - III. The accusations against the Jews for returning to build the temple of God. vs. 6-17
- I. **The proclamation to return to build the temple came through the prophets of God. vs. 1-2**
 - A. The revelation came through the two prophets, "Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem." vs. 1a-b
 1. The name Haggai "Chaggay" means "festive" or "feast" and a shortened form of festival of Yahweh, perhaps he was born on one of the National Feasts. 1Chron. 6:30
 - a. No coincidence he prophesied Sept.-Dec., at the time of the major feasts.
 - b. He is one of twelve Minor prophets, the tenth who spoke in chronological order and first of the post-captivity of Babylon followed by Zechariah and Malachi.
 - 1) The temple construction has ceased for 15-16 years, it is 520 B.C.

- 2) Darius king of Persian, Darius I (Hystaspis) 522-486 B.C. gives the decree to continue the work and finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign. March 3, 516 B.C. in four years. Ezra 6:1-15
- c. The book of Haggai has 2 chapters with four messages delivered in four months, Sept.-Dec. 520 B. C. , in the second year of Darius. Hag. 1:1; 2:1, 10, 20
 * The dating is no longer by Jewish kings, but Gentiles, the “Time of the Gentiles” begun with Babylon. Dan. 2; Lk. 21:24
 * But the months are the Jewish religious calendar in Haggai and Zechariah.
- 1) The first, September the first. Hag. 1
 - 2) The second, the twenty-first day of October. Hag. 2:1-9
 - 3) The third, the twenty-fourth day of December. Hag. 2:10-19
 - 4) The fourth, the twenty-fourth day of the same month, December. Hag. 2:20-23
- d. The people were rebuked by God through Haggai as they had become spiritually complacent and indifferent, even saying that it was not time yet to build the house of the LORD and instead

- they had built themselves paneled house, while the temple was in ruins. Hag. 1:2, 4
- e. God had judged them, their corps were not producing, they did not have enough clothes to be warm, their wages were like putting them in a bag with holes. So God told them to consider their ways and go up to the mountains to bring wood and build the temple that He may take pleasure in it and be glorified. Hag. 1:6-8
2. The name Zechariah “Z@karyah”, means “Yahweh remembers”.
- a. He is the son of Berechiah which means “the Lord blesses”, he was the grandson of Iddo the prophet and priest of the family of Aaron.” Zech. 1:1
 - b. The prophesies of Zechariah are dated different, not all by date, first the ones before or during the building of the temple, they are vision prophecies, the first three are all dated. Zech. 1-8, 1:1; 7, 7:1
 - 1) The first date is Nov. 520 B. C., two months after Haggai’s first prophesy and one month after his second prophecy. Hag 1:1, 2:1
 - 2) The second date is of several vision on Feb. 24, 520 B. C. , three months after the first prophecy. Zech. 1:7
 - 3) The third date is the 4th year of King Darius on the fourth month on

- Chislev, Nov.-Dec. of 518 B. C. 23 months after the previous visions. Zech. 7:1; 1:7
- c. Then the prophecies after the completion of the temple are all undated. Zech. 9-14
- 1) These center on the Messiah's First Coming and rejection with inferences to His Second Coming. Zach. 9-11
 - 2) These center on the Messiah's Second Coming and enthronement with inferences to His First Coming. Zach. 12-14
 - a) These last three chapters will all be fulfilled during the 7 years of Great-Tribulation and Kingdom Age, with few exceptions. Zech. 12:10; 13:6-7
 - b) Both sections are depicted by the phrase "burden" implying judgment.
 - 1)) The burden against Israel's enemies. Zach. 9:1
 - 2)) The burden against Israel. Zach. 12:1
- e. Again though the people were back in the land, they were not back with God, so Zechariah called the people back to God by repenting from their sins. Zech. 1:1-4
- * When Ezra returned in 457 B.C. 63 years after the two prophets, the people and leaders had married pagan women and had children, both had to be put away. Ezra 9-10

- B.** The two prophets revealed they were sent by God, "in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them." vs. 1c-d
1. The two prophets spoke in the covenant name of God is Yahweh.
 2. The authority over the lives of the Jews that had returned to rebuild the temple was God.
 3. "Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. "For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men

and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.” Hag. 1:5-11

C. The response of the two leaders to the prophet’s revelation was to be revived to the rebuilding of the temple, “So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem.” vs. 2a

1. The leaders stepped out in faith and obedience, “Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD.” Hag 1:12
2. The encouragement to the people, “Then Haggai, the LORD’S messenger, spoke the LORD’S message to the people, saying, “I am with you, says the LORD.” Hag 1:13
3. The hand of God stirred their spirits, as He did the spirit of Cyrus, “So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in

the second year of King Darius.” Hag 1:14-15

* October 24, 520 B.C.

- D. The two prophets partnered with the two leaders reviving the rebuilding of the temple, “and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.” vs. 2b
1. Haggai and Zechariah worked with their own hands to rebuild the temple.
 2. They were instruments and examples of servants of God!
 3. The prophet Zechariah prophesied 7 months after Haggai, “In the eighth month, November, of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, “The LORD has been very angry with your fathers. “Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. “Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.”’ But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says the LORD.” Zech. 1:1-4

Illustration

The prophets were not always received, but rejected and stoned. Amos the sheep-breeder and fruit picker was sent to declare judgment to the Northern kingdom. Amos 7:14

Application

1. Like the prophets of old, Pastors are called to warn and plead constantly with believers that have gotten sidetrack from the commitment and service to God.
 - a. Once they were excited about being saved and serving Jesus, now not so.
 - b. Once they were consistent in gathering with the church and served God with the gifts imparted to them, but no longer.
 - c. Once they lived in the world, but not of the world, now they look and sound like the world.

* Jesus told the church of Ephesus that that in spite of her great works, labor, patience and faithfulness to doctrine she was not right with God, “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.” Rev. 2:4-5
2. Like Haggai and Zechariah, Pastors are to do the work of ministry that God is directing with the people.
 - a. To be an example to the flock.
 - b. To let the people see they are just like them.
 - c. To revive the hearts of the people in God’s work.

* “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” 1Pet. 5:1-4

The proclamation to return to build the temple came through the prophets of God!

II. The confrontation to stop the building of the temple by their adversaries of God. vs. 3-5

- A. The confrontation to enquire about the present construction on the temple. vs. 3-4
 1. The authorities of the region hearing of the resumed construction went to Jerusalem, “At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them.” vs. 3a
 - a. This was the second attempt to stop the building of the temple. Ezra 4:1, 5
 - b. Tattenai “Tatt@nay” means gift.

- c. Shethar-Boznai “Sh@thar Bowz@nay”, means star of splendour.
 - 2. The question was by what name had they resumed the construction of the temple. “**Who** has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?” vs. 3b
 - a. The person that gave permission to continue the construction.
 - b. The wall is of the temple not the city.
 - 3. The Jews gave the names of those working on the temple, “Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building.” vs. 4
 - a. Chapter two contains all who returned.
 - b. The list is stated or stipulated.
- B.** The commentary about the protection of God over His people is stated. vs. 5
- 1. The Jews were under Divine oversight, “But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews.” vs. 5a
 - a. The phrase “the king’s eye” was used of governors and inspectors for the king.
 - b. The eye of God in Scriptures refers to watchful care of God for His people. Ps. 33:18; 34:16; Job 36:7
 - c. The hand of God or LORD. Ezra 7:6, 9; 7:28; 8:18; 22, 31
 - 2. The authorities were not able to stop the work of the temple, “so that they could not

- make them cease till a report could go to Darius.” vs. 5b
- a. God was dealing with His people’s complacency and self-absorption, rather than building the temple.
 - b. God was going to direct Darius or knew Darius would search the record?
- 3. The matter needed to be reported to Darius, “Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.” vs. 5c
 - a. The governor and inspectors sole motive was to stop the construction sight.
 - b. They possibly were looking to be rewarded for their loyalty to to king.

Illustration

The work of God is always opposed without exception. 75 year after when Nehemiah returned you had Sanballat and Tobiah opposed the work. Neh. 4

Application

- 1. Stop and think of the many ways Satan is always opposing and trying to destroy the work of God, many times through government and laws.
 - a. To be able to preach the gospel freely without emending it with “Political Correctness”.
 - b. To be to give people the only objective truth to benefit their lives in this culture of relativism that permits everything and calls it good.
 - * “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light

for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!” Is. 5:20-21

2. Stop and think of how Satan attempted to keep you from coming to Jesus to be saved.

- a. The friends you hung out with and what would they say.
- b. The drinking, drugas and sexual promiscuity that seemed like the greatest, while it was destroying conscience and health.

* “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” 2Cor. 4:3-4

3. Stop and think how the enemy, the devil tries in every way to hinder the work of God in you and through you.

- a. To not read the word of God daily and study.
- b. To not be a doer, but to compromise and not reckon the old man dead, daily, hindering transformation.
- c. To not be the husband, wife or parents we can be in Christ Jesus.

* “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Gal. 2:20

The confrontation to stop the building of the temple by the adversaries of God!

III. The accusations against the Jews for returning to build the temple of God. vs. 6-17

- A. The allegations in view of the confrontation written in the letter. vs. 6-10
 - 1. The representatives of the accusations come first. vs. 6
 - a. The identification of the one sending the letter is stated, “This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent: The governor of the region beyond the River.” vs. 6a-b
 - 1) Tattenai “Tatt@nay” means gift, a governor of the king in the region west of the Euphrates River.
 - 2) Some have argued that such letters would not have been sent to the king, but the Elamite text from Persepolis discovered in 1933-34 verify that such inquiries as this one were so.
 - 3) Two-thousand fortification tablets were published in 196 by Harnoc, dating from the 13th to the 28th years of Darius, 509-494 B.C.
 - b. The other men standing behind the governor, “and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who were in the region beyond the River, to Darius the king.” vs. 6c-f

- 1) Shethar-Boznai perhaps an inspector?
- 2) Some unnamed companions, but all serving the King Darius.
2. The greeting of the letter comes next, “They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus-- To Darius the king: All peace.” vs. 7
 - a. The phrase “written thus” is a technical term in Aramaic used in legal documents.
 - b. The greeting follows, “All peace” is a typical of that day, including health and well-being.
3. The report of their objection to the resumed construction of the temple. vs. 8
 - a. The attestation to the personal inquiry about the construction, “Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea.” vs. 8a
 - * This was no rumor Tattenai had heard.
 - b. The identification of the God of the temple is stated, “to the temple of the great God.” vs. 8b
 - * “Who will you liken Me and make Me equal to?” Is. 46:5
 - c. The description of the sturdy structure, “which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls.” vs. 8c
 - * The phrase heavy stones “g@lal”, means rolling, possibly to indicate how the large stones were moved, on rollers.

- d. The declaration of the progress, “and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.” vs. 8d-e
4. The direct conversation with the leaders, “Then we asked those elders, and spoke thus to them: “Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?” vs. 9
 - a. The elders would be the leading men.
 - b. The question to them was to find out the name of the person that authorized the work on the walls of the temple.
5. The request for the name of the men responsible for the resumed construction, “We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who were chief among them.” vs. 10
 - a. The second question was for the names of those in authority, the leaders.
 - b. The phrase chief “re’sh”, refers to them.
- B.** The confession of their sin against God and commission by the decree of Cyrus. vs. 11-17
 1. The Jews gave their identity, “And thus they returned us an answer, saying: “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth.” vs. 11a-b
 - a. The fact that they said they were, “the servants of the God of heaven and earth”, meant God created and ordered in both places and had commanded them to build the temple.

- b. They had obeyed God through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.
 - c. The phrase “God of heaven” remember is a key phrase also. Ezra 1:2; 5:11, 12; 6:9, 10; 7:12, 21, 23 (2x’s)
2. The Jews gave their goal of the construction, “and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed.” vs. 11c-d
 - a. We are building the second temple to replace the first that was destroyed.
 - b. The great king that built the temple was King Solomon, the son of David. 1Kings 7:13-45
 3. The Jews gave the reason God had punished them. vs. 12
 - a. They sinned against their God, “But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath.” vs. 12a
 - b. They were allowed to be conquered, “He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean.” vs. 12b-c
 - c. They witnessed their temple leveled and were carried off for 70 years of captivity, “name who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon.” vs. 12d
 4. The Jews declared the end of their 70 year captivity. vs. 13

- a. The date and name of the Persian king, “However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon.” vs. 13a-b
 - 1) Cyrus calls himself the “king of Babylon” in the Cyrus Cylinders.
 - 2) Cyrus is called the king of Persia eight times. Ezra 1:1, 2. 8; 3:7; 4:3, 5; 6:14
 - b. The proclamation of the Persian king was the authority behind the present construction, “King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God.” vs. 13
* The parallel passages. 2Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4
5. The Jews reported the benevolent help of Cyrus for the temple. vs. 14
 - a. The spoils of the temple taken by Nebuchadnezzar were in the possession of Cyrus, “Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that was in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon.” vs. 14a
 - b. The spoils were returned to Zerubbabel, “those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor.” vs. 14b-d
* The total was 5,400 articles of silver and gold. Ezra 2:11
 6. The Jews reported the orders Cyrus gave to Zerubbabel. vs. 15

- a. The first order was to return them to their proper place of origin, “And he said to him, ‘Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem.’” vs. 15a-d
 - b. The second order was to construct the temple again to house the vessels, “and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.” vs. 15e
7. The Jews reported the obedience of Zerubbabel to the decree of Cyrus. vs. 16
- a. The foundational slab was laid for the second temple, “Then the same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem.” vs. 16a
* The parallel passage. Ezra 1:7-11
 - b. The project to the present was not yet completed, “but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished.” vs. 16b-c
8. The governor Tattenai requested Darius to search the for the decree of Cyrus. vs. 17
- a. The request was presented respectful, “Now therefore, if it seems good to the king.” vs. 17a-b
 - b. The request was to examine the archives of Babylon to verify the decree of Cyrus, “let a search be made in the king’s treasure house, which is there in Babylon, whether it is so that a decree

- was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem.” vs. 17c-d
- c. The request was for Darius to inform him of his answer after searching the archives, “and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter.” vs. 17e
* The law of the Medes and Persians could not be altered, Tattenai did not believe such a decree had been declared by Cyrus! Dan. 6:9, 12, 15

Illustration

The accusations against the Jewish is nothing new, in 1903 the infamous “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” written by Russian anti-Semites in Paris claimed to expose a conspiracy of the Jews to take over the world. Lies!

Application

1. There will be people who are going accuse or slander your name.
 - a. Some unbelievers because you are a Christian.
 - b. Others because they believe the lies or misinformation about you from others without verifying it.
 - c. If people really want to find out if what they have heard is true they will come to you probably because what they heard about you contradicts your character.
 - d. The others who believe rumors, lies and misinformation, they deserve to believe the

* Peter says, that our responsibility is to live in such a way to prove them wrong.

2. The history of Jewish and Christian persecution is well recorded for anyone to confirm.
 - a. The progromes of Nazi Germany that not only fuel the hatred of the Jews, but stripped them of all their wealth and attempted to exterminate every Jew in the concentration camps by gassing them, executing them, ending up in the crematoriums under Hitler's "Final Solution".
 - b. The old Soviet Union persecuted, imprisoned and executed countless Christians for their faith.
 - c. Mao under his Cultural Revolution mocked, humiliated and killed many Christians and others he sent to re-educational camps to indoctrinate to his Godless worldview.
 - d. Muslim countries encourage and permit the persecution and killing of Christians, today Christian persecution is at a very high level.
 - 1) Paul told the new converts that we must enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations. Acts 14:22
 - 2) Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." Jn. 15:18
3. There is a present-day lie being perpetrated in our Universities, students, the media, politicians, Christian leaders and certainly the Arabs and all Muslims, that the land belongs to the modern day "Palestinians" because they are the original inhabitants and descendants of the promise land. And

that the state of Israel has no right to exist, in fact most of them believe that Israel is the problem and if all were removed, the world would be better.

- a. The teaching that a Palestinian people and state was the original one in "so called Palestine", is a modern idea and a twisting of Biblical and secular history.
- b. The land given to Abraham was the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, not Palestine. Gen. 17:7-8, 1Chron. 16:15-18
- c. The land is called Canaan, 46 times in the book of Genesis, the last time by Joseph at the burial of Jacob his father in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham was buried. Gen. 50:5, 13
- d. God made His covenant promise to Isaac, and everlasting covenant and Ishmael was sent away by the command of God, at age 14, arriving at the wilderness of Paran and settled in Arabian Peninsula and took an Egyptian wife. Gen. 16:19, 21:12, 21
- e. How do you come up with a "Palestinian", having an Egyptian mother, a Jew for his father, moves to Arabia and marries an Egyptian?
4. The land and the people, the Jews and the land of Canaan, go together.
 - a. Three times in Scripture God says Israel is the apple of His eye. Deut. 32:10, Ps. 17:8
 - b. The third says, "For thus says the **LORD of hosts**: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the **apple** of His eye." Zech. 12:8

- c. Ezekiel is clear God would bring His people back to the land and pour out His spirit on the remnant, the Valley of dry bones and will save them at the end of the Great-Tribulation. Ezk. 36-37; Matt. 24; Rom 9-11

The accusations against the Jews for returning to build the temple of God!

Conclusion

We have looked at the building restoration of the temple resumed.

- I.** The proclamation to return to the building of the temple came through the prophets of God!
- II.** The confrontation to stop the building of the temple by the adversaries of God!
- III.** The accusations against the Jews for returning to build the temple of God!