



EZRA

▶▶ THE RETURN

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Ezra 5: “Back to Building”

Judah / Lincoln Logs... → **Have I ever been so discouraged I thought about quitting?** → **Ezra 5:1-17**

Ezra. 5:1-2 → **God uses people to encourage people to get back to God’s work.** → 15 years had past...

- A prophet is a person who speaks for God under the authority of God for the purposes of God.
 - Haggai 1:2-10 - “You are focusing on yourself, not God! You are apathetic!”
 - Zechariah - Grace. Love. Forgiveness. → God still uses people to encourage people.
- Scripture should be used not to beat people down, but to bring people back. → 1 Cor. 14:3 = strengthens, encourages, and/or comforts.
 - Forthtelling = “This is what God has done and is doing!! = Interpretive in nature.
 - Foretelling = “This is what God is going to do in the FUTURE!! = Predictive in nature.
- God wants to encourage us to get BACK to the purposes of God THROUGH: listening to sermons, reading God’s Word, engaging in small groups that study the Bible and pray, individual prayer with each other, giving & receiving spiritual gifts. **THESE ENCOURAGE US TO BUILD.**
- Dandelion → Ann → Loren Triplet kept calling me! → Who have I not seen lately? → Who is God putting on my heart?
- Get back to building! → What will happen? We can be confident that...

Ezra. 5:3-17 → **God will oversee the continuation of the work.** → Tattenai’s Letter to King Darius

- People take notice when a work is flourishing. → We will have an opportunity to give an account.
- Are we ready to give account for what God has done despite our weaknesses?
- “Son...lets build something together!” = God wants to build something WITH us.

→ **Let’s encourage each other to get back to building!** → **Elder Quotes**

- “What do you feel, as an elder, is God’s message for Mesa and me in this season?”
- “It was very simple, you and I were in a kitchen cooking a very large frying pan of meat. The pan was so big it took two hands to stir what looked like ground meat to me. It was tiring and you kept working and wondering if it would be enough. When the meat was cooked you began to put it in a large ice chest to keep it warm; however, you were surprised to find the chest was full of packages of uncooked meat. You worked so hard to prepare what was in the pan, worried it was not enough, but when the chest was opened more than enough was waiting. This was so real I expected to find a large pan of meat in my kitchen when I got up.” - Elder

→ **PRAYER: Father, help us get back to building by building up others!**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. Have I ever been so discouraged I thought about quitting? What brought me back?
2. What are the names of my biggest encouragers? How does Scripture encourage me?
3. What are the names of 10 people I haven’t seen lately that may need my encouragement?
4. What would a church filled with Biblical encouragers feel like? How can I be part of the move forward?
5. **PRAYER:** “Father, help me to get back to building by building up others.”

Chronology of Ezra

Event	Year	Reference
Cyrus king of Persia captures Babylon	539 B.C.	Dan. 5:30-31
First year of King Cyrus; issues proclamation freeing Jewish exiles to return	538- 537	Ezra 1:1-4
Jewish exiles, led by Sheshbazzar, return from Babylon to Jerusalem	537?	Ezra 1:11
Altar rebuilt	537	Ezra 3:1-2
Temple rebuilding begins	536	Ezra 3:8
Adversaries oppose the rebuilding	536- 530	Ezra 4:1-5
Temple rebuilding ceases	530- 520	Ezra 4:24
Temple rebuilding resumes (2nd year of Darius)	520	Ezra 5:2 ; compare Hag. 1:14
Temple construction completed (6th year of Darius)	516	Ezra 6:15
Ezra departs from Babylon to Jerusalem (arrives in 7th year of Artaxerxes)	458	Ezra 7:6-9
Men of Judah and Benjamin assemble at Jerusalem	458	Ezra 10:9
Officials conduct three-month investigation	458- 457	Ezra 10:16-17

Chronology of Nehemiah

Event	Month/Day	Year	Reference
Hanani brings Nehemiah a report from Jerusalem (20th year of Artaxerxes I)		445- 444 B.C.	1:1
Nehemiah before King Artaxerxes	1	445	2:1
Nehemiah arrives to inspect Jerusalem walls		445	2:11
Wall is finished	6/25	445	6:15
People of Israel gather	7	445	7:73-8:1
People of Israel celebrate Feast of Booths	7/15-22	445	8:14
People of Israel fast and confess sins	7/24	445	9:1
Nehemiah returns to Susa (32nd year of Artaxerxes I)		433	5:14 ; 13:6

LINKS / RESOURCES:

Bible Project Ezra/Nehemiah Video: <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>

Ezra Chronology: <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart-15-03/>

Chronology of Nehemiah: <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart-16-01/>

Elder Prophetic Encouragement:

“What do you feel, as an elder, is God’s message for Mesa and me in this season? I am sending this to each elder individually.” - Jordan Hansen, September 20, 2021

ELDER: *I see this as a period of transition...by that I don’t mean in the physical sense. I see God taking the body down to a core number and preparing those hearts for the direction He want us to go. I see a fire that has started through our group. The Holy Spirit is blowing in that fire and slowly lightning up others. Many don’t even know where the fires coming from. I can see the embers blowing and change is happening. I believe God is prepared us for that building. We see in the natural that is taking more time than we want but God has work to do and needs that time to accomplish it.*

As for you, I believe God is strengthening you. He is impartation a new level of wisdom and discernment that will be needed for the next season. I know it’s been hard and painful but God placed you in an area that has very rocky soil. It takes strength and perseverance to be used to break through. I see that breakthrough starting to happen. Light is coming at the end of the tunnel and there will be a big celebration for those who endure. But intense warfare is all part of the process.

ELDER: *“I see the times as a season of refinement. God is at work preparing us for an uncertain future. As for you, it is a season of learning that steady plodding has its merits, but you also have to be ready to move quickly when He beckons. Flexibility is the theme I keep coming back to!”*

ELDER: *Good morning Jordan. This is what I believe God impressed upon me. Focus on spiritually strengthening the core of the church. As you know when the core is not healthy and strong it does not support anything well. This is a time to be concerned about pouring in to the core to create a solid foundation for Mesa. It seems we are to parallel the process we are going through with the building. Spending time planning (blueprints) how do we walk alongside people to spiritually strengthen the core in this season, receiving teaching/correction (city comments) in the things that need to be learned or changed, then seeing transformation (breaking ground/construction) doing hard work to prepare a place for all to come to meet and grow in Jesus. We must be prepared and equipped for whatever is coming in the future. The people of Mesa Church must be challenged and guided to go deep to meet with Jesus in ways we never have before. The model of one pouring into a few keeps coming up. Ensuring the “one” is also being poured into so it creates a healthy foundation.*

I pray God’s abundant wisdoms over you today and in this time. May you walk in faith with such confidence in the Lord that it radiates and all will see.

ELDER: *This is the scripture that immediately welled up in me when I read your question yesterday.*

I’ve always thought of it as a call to acknowledge God’s sovereignty and simply (quietly) trust Him. I read some where a long time ago that striving is the counterfeit of yielding and I often think of that when I’m wrestling with anything. And if I’m wrestling then most likely I’m striving. . . hopefully trying to find my way to yielding! I know some Christians that have tried to use this to advocate “do nothing”! Umm, I don’t think so. I believe it pleases God when we remain actively faithful to whatever He has called us to trusting that He is our strength.

The Passion Translation says:

“Surrender your anxiety! Be silent and stop your striving and you will see that I am God.”

Just look at how He has advocated for us thus far. And I can’t wait to see how He will bring forth renewal and revival in His Mesa Church sons & daughters. Praise our Mighty God, He is on our side and by our sides,

ELDER: *I prayed about this Jordan and while I’m not quite saying “God told me” the impression I got was this: “Push while you can push, then stand still and see the salvation of God.” I think that is a word to the entire church, encouraging us to push on in prayer, and in sacrifice, and in giving, then having done all we can do, stand still and watch what God does as He takes it from there.*

Along the same line, I think He would encourage you to keep feeding the sheep you have, remembering the name He gave our church, and remembering that the table He’s given you is expandable and that just as Luke said in Acts, “The

Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved." As we continue being faithful I am completely confident He will continue giving an increase.

ELDER: To my friend Pastor Jordan,

You have asked each of the elders to write what they believe the Lord is saying to you and our church. This is a bold move on your part. After the last Board of Elders meeting I started an email that became very lengthy with what I believed should happen with the church. While writing it I received a strong impression to not send it as it was not just ideas from the meeting but could be taken as criticism. It has weighed on my heart and mind. I discussed your request with my wife and she simply asked, "well what has the Lord said?" At the time not much.

Early this morning I was awakened with a dream that would not go away, maybe a vision. It is so strong I'm up and writing this to you.

It was very simple, you and I were in a kitchen cooking a very large frying pan of meat. The pan was so big it took two hands to stir what looked like ground meat to me. It was tiring and you kept working and wondering if it would be enough. When the meat was cooked you began to put it in a large ice chest to keep it warm; however, you were surprised to find the chest was full of packages of uncooked meat. You worked so hard to prepare what was in the pan, worried it was not enough, but when the chest was opened more than enough was waiting. This was so real I expected to find a large pan of meat in my kitchen when I got up.

At your direction many of us in the congregation have been reading the Bible Project this year. One of the things that impressed me was how the kings and leaders of Judah and Israel relied on their armies and treaties with other nations to protect them and their kingdoms. Time after time the Lord sent prophets to tell them He was their protector and to trust in Him, obey His commands and have the people do what was right and turn their hearts to Him and He would do great and mighty things to protect and keep them. This promise always came with the proviso that they worship only Him and destroy the idols, personal, and within the nation. The Lord wanted the kings and people to know, rely on, worship Him and He would do great and mighty miracles for them.

I think of Gideon, a lowly, somewhat timid man hiding to get enough food for his family who the Lord turned into a mighty warrior, leader, and judge. Even though Gideon doubted and even argued with God, he was used to do great and mighty things in a manner that proved he was being led by God. Also, with Elisha while under siege followed the Lord's direction and blinded the eyes of the Arameans which led to the withdrawal of the army that came to conquer Israel. Later on while Samaria was under siege by the King of Aram, God confused Aram's entire army and a great victory was won without a fight. Elisha predicted this would happen, which was against all odds. Another miracle. This occurred time and again throughout the Old Testament.

What I see:

You are working so hard to make everything happen, the church, the new building, financing, planning, living in all the details. Many of the prophets of old had an assistant who tended to the details. The man of God was to hear from the Lord, receive reports and direct the actions to be taken.

There is more than imagined in the chest. Do not be swayed by what you can see. It's difficult to stir what is in the pan, but worth the effort to get to what is waiting.

Maybe someone else should be doing the stirring while you tend to the staff and insure that in every aspect of their life and communication they show how much they love and care for people.

I have other things on my mind, but that is just me. It is my hope and prayer that the Lord comfort, care for, and direct you and your family through the Transition the Mesa Church is undergoing. Be strong and courageous, but tempered by the leading of the Lord.

With love and prayers, ELDER

ELDER: Adversity seems to be a theme for well over a year now. The message, stay strong, move forward and be obedient. Jordan you are obedient and the Mesa family will continue to move forward!!!

ELDER: Jordan I'm so thankful for you. I know your heart and love for God's people. Thank you for all you do. I don't say thank you enough. It's been a week....12 hour days, etc. the enemy is out for my firm right now, but we won't be moved or fooled.

Here's my thoughts for our church. Focus on His word. How do we prepare for the season ahead? Will you stand up for Jesus or fall for the enemy? I believe persecution is coming...many are not ready.

What does the Bible say about these hot topics in the world? How do we become more loving as a Church? Love the person, not the sin. How do we really live this way as Christ followers. Do we care for people's eternity?

In light of God's eternity does this really matter? Wake up church! You've been too comfortable for way too long.

ELDER: I firmly believe that you have been called to Mesa Church for this season. As challenging and difficult as it has been, God placed you here for such a time as this and He has given you the ability to lead us. He is doing a new thing at Mesa. I know you carry a huge burden for our church. But, God is faithful and his promises are true.

BE ENCOURAGED!

The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. – Zephaniah 3:17

“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” – Isaiah 55:11

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” – 2 Corinthians 12:9

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” – Psalm 32:8

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” – Romans 8:31

“Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” – Romans 5:3-5

We are standing with you, Jordan!

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

Ezra 5:1-17

5 At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They prophesied in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. 2 Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak responded by starting again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them.

3 But Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues soon arrived in Jerusalem and asked, “Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?” 4 They also asked for the names of all the men working on the Temple. 5 But because their God was watching over them, the leaders of the Jews were not prevented from building until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision.

Tattenai's Letter to King Darius

6 This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the province west of the Euphrates River sent to King Darius:

7 “To King Darius. Greetings.

8 “The king should know that we went to the construction site of the Temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success.

9 “We asked the leaders, ‘Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?’ 10 And we demanded their names so that we could tell you who the leaders were.

11 “This was their answer: ‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel. 12 But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he abandoned them to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed this Temple and exiled the people to Babylonia. 13 However, King Cyrus of Babylon, during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the Temple of God should be rebuilt. 14 King Cyrus returned the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon. These cups were taken from that temple and presented to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah. 15 The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. 16 So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been working on it ever since, though it is not yet completed.’

17 "Therefore, if it pleases the king, we request that a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to discover whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. And then let the king send us his decision in this matter."

Haggai 1:2-10

2 "This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: The people are saying, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.'"

3 Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? 5 This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Look at what's happening to you! 6 You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

7 "This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Look at what's happening to you! 8 Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the Lord. 9 You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine houses. 10 It's because of you that the heavens withhold the dew and the earth produces no crops.

Zechariah:

1:1-3 Therefore, say to the people, 'This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.'

1:13 And the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. 14 Then the angel said to me, "Shout this message for all to hear: 'This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: My love for Jerusalem and Mount Zion is passionate and strong.

1:17 The towns of Israel will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem as his own.'

2:10 The Lord says, "Shout and rejoice, O beautiful Jerusalem,[d] for I am coming to live among you. 11 Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they, too, will be my people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies sent me to you. 12 The land of Judah will be the Lord's special possession in the holy land, and he will once again choose Jerusalem to be his own city.

3:3 Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. 4 So the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy clothes." And turning to Jeshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes."

4:6-10 Then he said to me, "This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. 7 Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him! And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'" 8 Then another message came to me from the Lord: 9 "Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies has sent me. 10 Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand."

1 Corinthians 14:3-4

3 But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.