

## Lesson 10 Restoration of the Temple Resumes

### Key Themes in the Book of Ezra

- Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness and man's covenantal unfaithfulness
- Yahweh sovereignly and providentially works out his redemptive purpose in history despite human evil.
- Yahweh's intention for Israel for purity in worship and obedience to the law
- Yahweh's grace and mercy exceed his anger
- Sinful man's need for a changed heart

### Background:

**Haggai and Zechariah** prophesied to the people over a 4 year period while the rebuilding of the temple was underway.

**Tattenai** was a regional governor. He governed the area of the Persian Empire west of the Euphrates River of which Judah was a part. There were only 20 regional governors in the Persian Empire so it can be assumed he was a very powerful official. The position of Shethar-Bozenai is not stated but he was probably an aide or secretary to Tattenai.

**King Darius** ruled Persia from 521-486 BC

**Sheshbazzar** : Many scholars believe that this was Zerubbabel. Sheshbazzar would have been his Persian name.

### Key Words and phrases:

**report: Strong's H6600 "pithgam"** a written word, an answer, a letter or decree. It was used in Ezra to describe the written communication that was used between the kings, the Israelites and their adversaries. In Ezra 5:7 it is translated as "report" and in Ezra 5:11 it is translated as "answer".

**servants Strong's H5649 "abad"** slave or servant. It is used for servants of God or of human beings.

### Time line for the Rebuilding of God's Temple

**536 BC** .....Temple Begun

**534 BC**.....Work on Temple stopped

**520 BC**.....Work on Temple resumed

**515 BC**.....Temple completed

### Read Ezra 5:1-17

For 18 years work on the temple in Jerusalem had been neglected while the people built their own houses. God raised up 2 prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to speak His word to the people. The people were told in Haggai 1:5 to "consider their ways" which which literally means "set your course or way of life". In other words they needed to change their priorities and put God's work before their own. The people repented and work resumed on the temple under the godly leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest.

1. The Jews were off to a fresh start. They were now obeying the word of the Lord that had been spoken to them through the two prophets. And they had started to put God first. According to verses 1-2, as they stepped out in obedience, who was "over them"? Who "supported" them as they moved forward in God? What kind of support do you think was given to them? According to Ezra 5:11 how did the leaders see themselves? Why didn't the leaders mention Solomon by name?

**Application:** What can you learn from Ezra 5:1-2;11 regarding the best way to begin a new ministry that God has called you to? What role should God and His word play in that ministry? What kind of support can you expect from the Lord as you move forward in obedience to Him? What does it mean to be a "servant of God" ?

2. According to Ezra 5:3-5 shortly after the Jews resumed building, the work was again opposed.. This time the opposition was led by the Persian governor of the province and his assistant who came and demanded to know who had issued them a decree to rebuild the temple and finish the structure. Why didn't the governor shut down the construction immediately? What do you think it means in practical terms to have the "eye of your God" on you as you seek to obey and serve Him? See 2 Chronicles 16:9: Psalm 33:18-22.

3. Looking back on Ezra 5:1-17, what can you learn about the character of the Jewish leaders? What explanation did they give for the destruction of Solomon's Temple and their deportation to Babylon? What was their attitude towards the Persian officials? Can you see God working through Tattenai's letter to King Darius? If so, how? Was the sending of this letter actually a blessing from God? Why?

**Application:** What does the Apostle Peter instruct Christians to do in 1 Peter 2:13-17? What does Peter tell us to do when we encounter various trials and opposition because of the Lord? See 1 Peter 4:12-19

**Application:** As we seek to live for the Lord in a fallen, broken secular world, we will often encounter people who have a very different world view than we do. When that occurs what does Peter tell us we should be ready to do? See 1 Peter 3:13-18. Are you prepared and ready to make a thorough but gentle defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you?

