

Ezra, Book Study

Chapters 5 & 6

Chapters 5 & 6 with Notes: NKJV

5 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who *were* in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over them.

- These two prophets are the same prophets who wrote books in the Old Testament: the book of Haggai and the book of Zechariah. Zechariah also communicated the spiritual struggles of the Jews as they faced spiritual resistance to the rebuilding of the temple. – Perry Stone *Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 704*
- Haggai 1:1- 6
- Zechariah 1:1-6

2 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; and the prophets of God *were* with them, helping them.

3 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: “Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?” **4** Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. **5** But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this *matter*. **6** This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent:

The governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who *were in the region* beyond the River, to Darius the king.

- At this time certain leaders in Samaria tried the ultimate intimidation: getting the names of the men rebuilding the temple and reporting them in a letter to the king in Babylon. To disobey the king's orders meant arrest or death. These leaders reasoned that, if they could threaten the Jews through fear of personal reprisal from the king, then the rebuilders would lay down their tools, leaving Jerusalem in ruins and Samaria at the top of the economic chain. This intimidation did not work, as the "eye of their God" was upon the elders of the Jews (v. 5). The psalmist wrote, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. 34:15). – Perry Stone *Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 704*

7 (They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus.)

To Darius the king:

All peace.

⁸ Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

⁹ Then we asked those elders, *and* spoke thus to them: “Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?” ¹⁰ We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who *were* chief among them.

¹¹ And thus they returned us an answer, saying: “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. ¹² But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, *who* destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. ¹³ However, in the first year of Cyrus **king of Babylon**, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. ¹⁴ 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—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. ¹⁵ And he said to him, ‘Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple *site* that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.’ ¹⁶ Then the same Sheshbazzar came *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished.”

¹⁷ Now therefore, if *it seems* good to the king, 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, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this *matter*.

6 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. ² And at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record *was* written thus:

³ In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem: “Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they

offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits *and* its width sixty cubits, ⁴ *with* three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. ⁵ Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which *is* in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which *is* in Jerusalem, *each* to its place; and deposit *them* in the house of God"—

⁶ Now *therefore*, Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who *are* beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. ⁷ Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.

- Imagine the expression on the faces of the Samaritan leaders when they received this response from Darius the Mede, the king ruling in Babylon. He not only reinforced the Jews' legal permission to rebuild, but also demanded that whatever they needed to assist them would come from the king's tax revenue (see v. 8). – *Perry Stone Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible*, p. 705

⁸ Moreover I issue a decree *as to* what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes *on the region* beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. ⁹ And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who *are* in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, ¹⁰ that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, **and pray for the life of the king and his sons.**

¹¹ Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. ¹² And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

The Temple Completed and Dedicated

¹³ Then Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. ¹⁴ So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes **king of Persia.**

- Haggai and Zechariah gave instructions to the Jews and the elders during the six years it took to build the house of the Lord. As these anointed men prophesied, the people prospered during the entire rebuilding process. Zechariah told the people that their work was "not by might, nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts," and he confessed God's ability by shouting "grace" to the mountain of opposition (Zech. 4:6-7). These words inspired the people to complete their assignment as they saw God confirm His word given by His faithful prophets. – *Perry Stone Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 706*

15 Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

- The temple was probably completed in 515 BC. This is the temple that Christ and His disciples would visit and the same temple He prophesied would be destroyed (see Matt. 24:1-3). Christ's words came to pass in AD 70 when the Roman Tenth Legion reduced it to rubble. – *Perry Stone Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 706*

16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. **17** And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. **18** They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover Celebrated – *Hebrew language resumes*

19 And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

- The leaders restored the worship and singing David had established (see Ezra 3:10-11) and restored the sacrifices Moses had required. Passover was the first feast to be observed after the completion of the temple. – *Perry Stone Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 706*

20 For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them *were ritually* clean. And they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. **21** Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the *filth of the nations of the land* in order to seek the LORD God of Israel.

- Certain purification rituals were required for priests and Levites before they could minister at the temple. Zechariah indicated that Satan had attempted to resist Joshua the high priest because he was clothed in unclean garments and had not been sanctified for temple service (see Zech. 3:1-5). Satan can accuse people before God for their sins and charge them with their iniquities if they are not forgiven and cleansed by Christ's blood (see Rev. 12:10-11).

Satan had been resisting the work of God, but the priests and Levites purified themselves and stopped Satan's accusations. – *Perry Stone Prophetic Hebraic Study Bible, p. 706*

22 And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the **king of Assyria** toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Titles given to the Emperors of Persia in Ezra Chapters 5 & 6:

Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes – King of Persia (v.6:13) current empire of book of Ezra

Cyrus – King of Babylon (v. 5:13) – Empire who took southern Kingdom of Judah in exile

Darius I – King of Assyria (v. 6:22) – Empire who took northern Kingdom of Israel into exile.