

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

EZRA 5

Ezra 5

Ezra five introduces to us the two exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The opposition had risen against the people of God in building the second temple. The work had been stopped after just one year. Now the days of the great King Cyrus had come and gone. He reigned from 550-530 B.C. and after him his oldest son had only reigned a short time and now Darius I or Darius the great had come to power in 522 B.C. This was the right time for God to raise up His men to encourage His people to get back to the task for which they had returned to their homeland, namely, to rebuild the great central worship center for the nation. The message of the prophets was clear. You have started and you were sidetracked, now it is time to get back to work.

Ezra notes that when the leaders saw the need and started leading again, the people gladly followed. Verse two says, that Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest ***"rose up and began to build the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them."*** Opposition was swift, but this time the prophets of God were there to encourage the people and they continued to work. As the opposition intensified, the leadership, when

threatened, told the opposition to do what they must, they were going to continue working. Letters were written to King Darius, who made search of the archives in the palace where the words of King Cyrus were kept. The opposition made a grave error and cited by what authority the Jews were working and even gave the year of the decree. This was all that it took for Darius to send his researchers looking for the documents that validated the decree in 538 B.C.

Chapter six records that when the search was indeed made, the decree was found, just as the Jews had said. This was the beginning of the end of opposition for several decades until the time of Ezra some fifty years later. Darius was in power much of that time period, so this brought stability to the people who had come back into the land from Babylonian exile. However, there was a problem. The temple was built, but the people needed spiritual renewal.

Prayer and Action Steps

Lord, please send us men of God, who will teach us to be faithful to your calling and stand strong in the face of opposition. Amen

Date _____ Scripture _____

- *Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.*
- *Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.*
- *Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.*

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act? _____

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions? _____

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible? _____

