

BACK TO WORK

(Ezra 5:1-17)

- I. Resuming the Temple's RECONSTRUCTION (Ezra 5:1-2)
 - A. Haggai and Zechariah "prophesied...in the name of the God of Israel, who was OVER THEM" (5:1)
 - B. Zerubbabel and Jeshua OBEYED and RESUMED construction (5:2)
 - 1. Included the INVOLVEMENT of ALL the Jews
 - 2. Accompanied by the ongoing SUPPORT of the prophets

- II. Provoking an Official INVESTIGATION (Ezra 5:3-17)
 - A. Persian officials CHALLENGED Zerubbabel's AUTHORIZATION (5:3-4)
 - 1. Demanded to know WHO had issued the DECREE
 - 2. They wanted the names of the men doing the BUILDING
 - B. By God's PROVIDENCE, Tattenai did not STOP the work (5:5)
 - C. Ezra recorded Tattenai's LETTER to King Darius (5:6-17)
 - 1. Indicates this needs the king's ATTENTION but is not necessarily a PROBLEM (5:7)
 - 2. Says they are in JUDAH watching construction of a TEMPLE (5:8)

3. States he requested their AUTHORIZATION and their NAMES (5:9-10)
4. Quotes their answer with NO NAMES (5:11-16)
 - a. Identified themselves as servants of the God of HEAVEN and EARTH
 - b. Indicated they were doing RESTORATION, not NEW construction
 - c. Explained that GOD had destroyed it because of their fathers' SINS, using Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as His TOOL
 - d. Defended their work on the basis of a DECREE from CYRUS
 - e. Admitted the construction was not yet COMPLETE
5. Requests an archival search for a COPY of the DECREE

III. Lessons

- A. God SUPERVISES His people and DIRECTS events
- B. FAITH and OBEDIENCE are the proper response to God's WORD
- C. Our CONFIDENCE in future glory comes from understanding THEOLOGY and HISTORY