

The Prophets Stir the People to Action (vv. 1–2)

“Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah... prophesied to the Jews... So Zerubbabel... and Jeshua... rose up and began to build the house of God... and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.” (Ezra 5:1–2 NKJV)

After years of delay and discouragement, **God sent prophets—not soldiers—to reignite the work.** Through the bold preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the people were challenged to stop living for themselves and return to building God’s house. Their words were not just correction—they were **hope, direction, and empowerment.**

Haggai rebuked the people for putting their own comfort above God’s priorities (Haggai 1:4–9), while Zechariah gave visions of encouragement, assuring them that the Lord was with them and would complete the work through His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6–10). Revival broke out—not through political reform, but through **faithful preaching.**

Resistance Reappears, But God’s Eye Was Watching (vv. 3–5)

As soon as the work resumed, **opposition returned.** Tatnai, a regional Persian governor, showed up with his officials and questioned the Jews:

“Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?” (v. 3)

These officials acted like ancient building inspectors—intimidating, suspicious, and bureaucratic. They demanded names. They threatened to report the project. But verse 5 is a powerful reassurance:

“But the eye of their God was upon the elders... so that they could not make them cease...” (v. 5)

Even under investigation and pressure, the work continued because **God was watching over His people.** That phrase—***“the eye of their God was upon them”***—reminds us that when we obey God, we are never out of His sight or care.

A Letter to the King (vv. 6–17)

Tatnai and his officials didn’t stop the work immediately. Instead, they wrote a **formal letter to King Darius**, reporting what they saw and requesting clarification. Their tone is surprisingly fair—they didn’t demand an end to the work but simply asked the king to investigate the Jews’ claims.

The Jews’ response to the inquiry was bold and humble:

“We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth...” (v. 11)

“King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God.” (v. 13)

They explained that their exile was due to their ancestors’ sin and rebellion, but now they were obeying **a divine mandate confirmed by royal decree.** They referenced **Sheshbazzar** (another name for Zerubbabel or possibly an earlier leader), who was appointed by Cyrus and sent with the temple vessels.

This was not a defiant response—it was a declaration of identity and purpose. They **didn't appeal to national pride**, but to the sovereignty of **God and the integrity of Cyrus's decree**. And now, they asked Darius to check the royal archives and confirm the truth.

Personal Application: God Is Watching Over the Work

Ezra 5 teaches us how to keep building when opposition resurfaces:

1. **God sends encouragement when we stall.** The Word of God through Haggai and Zechariah reignited the people's purpose. Sometimes, a fresh word from God is all we need to restart what fear or fatigue once silenced.
2. **Faithfulness doesn't mean absence of conflict.** As soon as the work resumed, resistance came—but this time, the people didn't back down. Why? Because **they were anchored by God's Word** and stirred by His Spirit.
3. **God's eye is upon you.** When you're doing His will, you may be outnumbered—but you are never overlooked. His protective gaze remains fixed on those who honor Him.
4. **Be ready to give an answer.** When challenged, the elders knew who they were ("servants of the God of heaven and earth"), what they were doing, and why it mattered. Can you clearly articulate your faith and calling when questioned?

Key Reflections

- What prophetic word has stirred your heart recently? Are you acting on it?
- Have you faced fresh opposition after restarting something for God? How did you respond?
- Do you trust that God's "eye" is on your situation even when others are trying to shut it down?
- How can you better prepare to give an answer for your faith when challenged?