

We will now begin the third lecture on the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah. /Today we will begin with Ezra chapter 5. /In verse 1-2, /the people began rebuilding the temple. /The construction of the temple was halted for fourteen years.

/During that time, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah rebuked and encouraged the people of Judah. /Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the high priest rose up at this time. /All the people rose up and began to build the temple.

/In the past, the work of the construction of the temple was halted because of the interruption of the order of King Artaxerxes and the enemies. /Now, the people began construction again through the encouragement of the prophets and God's command.

/Now, the people of Judah relied only on God and began to rebuild the temple. /The prophets prophesied during this time. /God was with the people and they began to rebuild the temple.

/In verses 3-5, /other governors interrupted the people, and there was also help from the Lord. /When the people began rebuilding the temple, /Tattenai and Shethar-Bozenai of Trans-Euphrates /and their associates began to interrupt the building of the temple.

/However, these enemies were different people from chapter 4. /They were different powers. /This was because fourteen years had passed since the foundation of the temple was laid and the building of the temple was put to a stop. /Therefore, the governor of Trans-Euphrates was now someone else.

/They were governors that the king of Persia appointed. /They had great power. /However, God helped the elders of Judah. /Therefore, the governors were not able to interrupt the work of the construction of the temple.

/They reported everything to King Darius. /Then they waited for the king's written reply. /However, they were not a huge interruption. /This was because the people of Judah built the temple with faith.

/This was proof that God was with them. /In the past, the people of Judah relied on the king of Persia. /Hence, the work of the building of the temple was put to a stop. /Now, the people of Judah relied only on God and God's word.

/Because the people of Judah went forward in faith, the enemies were not able to interrupt them. /Verse 4 says, "What are the names of the men constructing this building?" /The people of Judah answered, "We are rebuilding the temple because God told us to" (verse 11).

/In verses 6-17, /the governor of Trans-Euphrates accuses the people, and it tells of the faith of the builders. /In verses 6-17, the governor of Trans-Euphrates and the Apharsachites sent a report to King Darius. /The contents of the report are the contents of today's passages.

/Verse 8 says, “The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great God. /The enemies asked the elders of Judah what they were building. /The elders of Judah replied, “We are building the temple of the great God.”

/The enemies then reported this to the king. /This was proof that the people of Judah were building the temple with faith in the power of the great God. /At this time, the people of Judah built the temple with large stones. /They placed timbers in the walls.

/The people of Judah worked with diligence. /Then the governors of Trans-Euphrates asked by what authority were they building the temple. /The governors of Trans-Euphrates asked what the names of the men constructing the building were.

/In verse 11, the people of Judah gave their reply. /They said that they were servants of the God of heaven and earth. /The people of Judah replied that the master and head of them was God. /The elders of Judah replied that they were reconstructing the old temple.

/The people of Judah knew and believed that God was the God of heaven and earth. /The people believed that God allowed them to be taken captive. /They also believed that God allowed them to return from captivity.

/The people of Judah believed that God allowed kings and enemies to be obstinate. /The people of Judah believed that God controlled the hearts of their enemies. /Then the people of Judah believed that God would allow them to build the temple well.

/God is in control of all things. /The people obeyed as servants of God. /If the people of Judah had this faith in the past, the construction of the temple would not have been put to a stop.

/Now, they stood upright in proper faith. /Verse 11 says, “We are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago.” /They referred to the temple that King Solomon built in the past.

/However, because of the sins of the people of Judah, God allowed them to be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. /Then the temple was burned down. /Now, the people of Judah had faith in God’s sovereignty.

/When the people of Judah repented in Babylon and cried out to God, /God moved the heart of King Cyrus and allowed them to return to the land of Judah. /In verse 14, King Cyrus returned the articles of the temple that were taken and kept in the temple of Babylon.

/Now, the temple was to be rebuilt. /The elders of Judah replied that they were building the temple by God’s command. /However, verse 13 records, “In the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon.”

/King Cyrus was king of Persia, but here it says, “king of Babylon.” /This was because King Cyrus conquered Babylon when the people of Judah were captives in Babylon. /Governor Sheshbazzar in verse 14 refers to Zerubbabel.

/Sheshbazzar returned to Jerusalem and heaped build the temple. /In verse 16, it is certain that the foundation of the temple was laid by Sheshbazzar. /The enemies reported everything to King Darius what the people of Judah said.

/They asked that the king search and find out if the king of Persia commanded the people to return to Jerusalem and build the temple. /They wanted to find out if this was true, and ask the king what his decision was regarding the construction of the temple.

/In 6:1-5, /King Darius discovers the decree made by King Cyrus. /King Darius did research after receiving the report from the governors of Trans-Euphrates. /King Darius ordered that the issued decree of King Cyrus be found in the treasury at Babylon.

/Yet, they did not find King Cyrus’ decree in Babylon. /However, they found a scroll in the citadel of Ecbatana in the province of Media. /The citadel of Ecbatana was King Cyrus’ summer house. /This was God’s special revelation.

/They found a scroll saying that King Cyrus had issued a decree concerning the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. /When King Artaxerxes looked for this in the past, he was not able to find it. /There were only disadvantageous records of Jerusalem at the time.

/Hence, construction of the temple was put to a stop. /This was because the people of Judah relied more on King Cyrus than they did on God. /This was all God’s work.

/Yet now, the people of Judah relied solely on God. /The people of Judah obeyed God’s command and built the temple. /This time, God allowed the people to discover the decree that was issued by King Cyrus.

/When believers do not rely on God and do not have faith, /God allows believers to only discover disadvantageous things. /However, when believers rely only on God and obey God’s commands to build the temple, /God allows them to discover /good and advantageous things.

/As you all know, the same thing happened in the case of Rehoboam son of King Solomon. /Rehoboam did not listen to the older men who counseled him. /Rehoboam listened to wrong advice from young men he grew up with.

/Rehoboam listened to the words of the young men. /Thus, Rehoboam’s kingdom was split into two. /Verse 3 gives a detailed and specific record of the decree issued by King Cyrus about the construction of the temple in Jerusalem.

/It said to let the people who were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar return. /Send back

the articles of the temple. /Build the temple at Jerusalem. /Lay a firm and strong foundation of the temple. /Let it be ninety feet (or sixty cubits) high and ninety feet wide. /Verse 4 says that the King of Persia would pay for the expenses.

/Here it says to make the foundations sixty cubits in height and width. /It is normal for the length of a building to be longer than the width. /Therefore, the length of the temple is estimated to have been approximately 120 cubits. /This was a bigger standard than Solomon's temple.

/Solomon's temple was twenty cubits in width. /Zerubbabel's temple was sixty cubits in width. /King Cyrus issued a decree that a bigger temple be built. /The royal treasury would also pay for all the expenses.

/However, when Zerubbabel and the people of Judah laid the foundations, they made it smaller than Solomon's temple. /Why did they make the temple smaller? /It was because they did not build the temple with the expenses that the royal treasury of Persia gave them.

/This was because they wanted to build the temple with the materials that they gave God and with their own strength.

/In verses 6-13, /King Darius issued a decree to help with the construction of the temple. /King Darius decided to carry out what King Cyrus decreed. /Thus, King Darius issued a decree to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and the Apharsachites.

/In verse 7, Darius ordered that the governors of Trans-Euphrates do not interfere with the construction, but help them. /He ordered that the expenses of the construction be paid for from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates.

/The temple was to be built with the revenues from Trans-Euphrates. /God moved Darius' heart.

/From verse 9, King Darius ordered that young bulls and other offerings for sacrifice were to be given as requested by the priests. /King Darius commanded that they offer sacrifices to God. /Then he told them to pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

/King Darius believed that he would receive blessings if the priests prayed for him and his sons. /King Darius was a foreign king, but he knew God and served God. /King Darius might have known about God through the late king.

/Darius also might have known about God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. /However, King Darius here is a different king from King Darius in Daniel's time. /When Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, the king then was King Darius the Mede.

/King Darius the Mede in Daniel's time was the father-in-law of King Darius of Persia. /King Darius here in the Book of Ezra is Darius king of Persia. /In verse 11, this King

Darius issued a decree. /It was about punishment for anyone who changed this edict.

/The king ordered that all who changed this edict would be impaled on a beam that would be pulled from his house. /He was to be killed, and his house was to be made a pile of rubble. /This was a very strong order.

/God would judge those who would interfere with the construction of the temple. /Why did King Darius issue such a strong decree? /It was because he knew that there would be woe on him if he did not actively participate in the building of the temple.

/Darius knew that he and his sons would be blessed if he cooperated with the building of the temple. /He knew this and he knew what to do. /This is the same for us today. /Those who cooperate in the building of the spiritual temple will be blessed. /However, those who interfere will receive punishments.

/In verse 12, Darius spoke about what would happen to those who changed this edict in the future. /He said, let God overthrow anyone who changes this decree or destroys this temple.

/King Darius could punish anyone who changed this edict while he was king. /However, he would not be able to punish anyone after he died. /Thus, he said this with faith that God would personally punish anyone who changed the edict.

/Thus, Darius said, “I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.” /We too must be prompt when we do God’s work. /When we build the spiritual temple slowly, the devil will take away time and materials.

/In verses 13-15, /the king and governors of Trans-Euphrates began to help when the people of Judah relied only on God as they built the temple. /The governors of Trans-Euphrates carried it out with diligence according to the decree of King Darius.

/The governors of Trans-Euphrates helped build the temple with their national taxes. /The governors also helped with offerings for God. /In verse 14, when the people obeyed God’s word that the prophets preached, and built the temple, /the king helped them, as well as those who were against them.

/The people of Judah constructed the temple according to God’s command and the order of the kings of Persia. /In verse 15, they completed the temple on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. /The month of Adar is the twelfth month on the Jewish calendar. /They completed the temple on the third day of the month of Adar.

/The reconstruction of the temple began after fourteen years of suspension, and it was completed within four years. /The suspension of the construction of the temple took place when the temple was in ruins. /There was a drought and shortage of produce.

/The people were not satisfied even when they ate. /The people were struggled and were poor. /Yet, when the people began to rebuild the temple, everything became abundant. /This is the same for believers today.

/We must go up to the spiritual holy mountain and we must build the spiritual temple with God's word. /Then we can receive blessings.

/In verses 16-18, /they celebrated the dedication of the temple. /When they returned from captivity in Babylon and built the temple, it was centered on the tribe of Judah. /Other Israelites from other tribes also participated in this. /The people gave sacrifices and offerings to God.

/In verse 18, they installed priests from the Levites according to the Law of Moses, and they gave sacrifices. /These were small sacrifices compared to the ones that were given in Solomon's time. /However, these poor people who returned from exile gave wholeheartedly.

/It is important that we first give our hearts to God. /It is important that we give offerings to God. /It is important that we sacrifice our lives.

/In verses 19-22, /the people celebrated the Passover. /The people of Judah built the temple, and the first thing they did was celebrate the Passover. /The Passover was a time of celebration of the time the Israelites left Egypt.

/As they celebrated, they probably celebrated their liberation from Babylon as well. /The Passover lamb symbolized Jesus Christ. /We believers today must participate in more depth in the redemption of Jesus Christ.

/It teaches that we must be moved by the grace of our Lord. /Verse 20 says, "The priests and the Levites had purified themselves." /The priests and the Levites purified themselves.

/The priests purified themselves, and they slaughtered the Passover lamb. /This means that when we become pure in our hearts, we can participate in the grace of the Lord's redemption in more depth.

/In verse 21, the Israelites who returned from Babylon gave thanks to God.

/In verse 22, the Israelites feasted with joyful hearts. /They celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

/In verse 22, it says, God changed "the attitude of the king of Assyria." /"The king of Assyria" refers to King Darius of Persia. /Why was Darius called the king of Assyria? /It was because King Darius had conquered Assyria at the time.

/God allowed King Darius to reign over many nations. /God also allowed King Darius to

assist with the construction of the temple. /God allowed all this to happen.

/Here we will conclude the third lecture on Ezra and Nehemiah. /Thank you.