

## Join Ventures, The Second Temple, 3.28.10

### Introduction:

1. History Lesson
2. The Key Players :
  - a. Jewish – Zerubbabel & Jeshua/Joshua; Haggai & Zechariah
  - b. Persian Emperors – Cyrus & Darius
3. Timeline & Important Events
  - a. 1000 BC – The First Temple was completed in Jerusalem, the capitol of Israel.. It was funded by David and built by his son, Solomon.
  - b. 586 BC – Judah goes into Babylonian Captivity due to sinful ways; The Temple is destroyed.
  - c. 539 BC – Babylon falls to the Persians
  - d. 538 BC – The Persian Emperor Cyrus issues a decree to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem at the expense of the Persian Empire, (Ez.1.2–4; 6.3–5). Approximately, 50,000 Jews return. They laid the foundation, rebuilt the altar and started the burnt offerings (Ezra 3).
  - e. 537 BC – After a good start, the pressure mounted from w/o to stop the construction of the Second Temple and they did (Ezra 4.1–5, 24)
  - f. 520 BC – The prophets Haggai & Zechariah challenge the people to begin rebuilding (Ez.5.1f.; Haggai 1) & immediately opposition restarts (Ez.5.3–5). They continue their work though a report is sent to Darius, the new Emperor of the Persian Empire. He hears the complaint and investigates it. He discovers Cyrus’ decree and makes his own, Ez.6.6–12. He demands the work be completed and that those resisting the work be a part of finishing it!
  - g. 515 BC – The Second Temple or Zerubbabel’s Temple is completed. This Temple stood until Herod remodeled it beginning 20 BC.
  - h. 458 BC – Ezra arrives & deals with spiritual issues and reestablishes the purity of the priesthood.

- i. 445 BC – Nehemiah arrives and leads the reconstruction of the walls around Jerusalem.
- j. 20 BC – mid 60's AD – Herod's Temple
- k. 70 AD – Jerusalem destroyed, Temple pulled to the ground and Jews deported.

4. ss

#### You Can't Rest In The Nest

- A. The Cross Over campaign & every area of life. God is always issuing new challenges and giving new opportunities. Our tendency is to rest. There is a time to rest both weekly & eternally, but most of our time must be spent following the Lord. Following requires the willingness to adapt and change to the new realities, b/c Jesus isn't walking in circles.
- B. The historical context of Ezra 1 – 4.
  - a. The work stoppage – 537
  - b. The work restarts – 17 years later
  - c. Why the lag & how to move forward. The reasons we get stuck & how to move ahead.

#### It's Hard To Move Forward When:

- a. You live in the past (3.12). They were remembering the glory days of Israel and they were comparing the present Temple foundation with the past one. Their memories whether correct or incorrect were getting in the way of God's present work. There was a whole group of people who weren't too excited about God's current activity.
  - i. Sometimes our past experiences whether good or bad can get in the way of where God is currently taking us – past regrets, hurts, problems. Just because something looks similar to where we've been doesn't mean we know where it's going.
  - ii. Let the past be a helpful guide and not a dictating tyrant.

- iii. Acts 5.33–39: Gamaliel’s advice. He didn’t actively resist the current move of God. He recalled the past, but was open to the future.
  - iv. Appl – If you’re living in the past, you’ll have a suspicious or negative view of any new challenges, “I remember when” will be a part of vocabulary, you will selectively remember only the bad things and you either will seldom acknowledge or be aware of anything good happening with the new direction.
    - 1. Eccl.7.10 – Don’t long for the “good old days.” This is not wise.
  - v. Illust – staying at a cabin with my boys over Spring Break. I honestly thought it would be a difficult challenge based upon my last experience at that cabin. It’s the E–Orr mentality. We project failure based on the past.
- d. You have opposition – (Ezra 4.1–5, 24)
- i. These verses encompass 17 years. They didn’t want them to build. Nehemiah had the same type of opposition, but he didn’t listen to them.
  - ii. The negative opinions of others over time can easily stifle the still small voice of God. You can walk out in confidence knowing that you’re following the leadership of the HS and then a strategic critical comment or two can knock you off track.
  - iii. Recount the historical events that led them here – the decree, the move, the money, the victories, the “good old” days crowd, and now this opposition.
  - iv. Illust of cowdog, Put, wearing down English Bulldog, M&M.
- e. It’s been years since you were in the right place with God, (Hag.1.1–10).
- i. 17 years has elapsed and they built their homes and got settled. They were okay with how things were.

They were justifying their existence by saying, “Now isn’t the time...”

- ii. It’s hard to change the direction of our life when we’ve been walking for a year or more in the wrong direction. It may not be gross sin, but simple decisions that then make it more challenging to make the right decision.
  - iii. Illust – Paul Keith Davis comments in March Newsletter.
  - iv. Illust of my life in Christ as a dot inside a circle; my life outside of Christ as a person covered with one box and another. Our wrong decisions become self imposed barriers to completely following God’s will. When we finally decide to completely follow God’s will, then there is a major reckoning...something changes significantly.
    - 1. Like a alcoholic coming to terms with his life – how he relates to people, his friends, his money, etc. It all has to change.
    - 2. Like tithing, learn it now children & young people!
    - 3. C/O application: you want to give, but b/c of some decisions, some bad & others b/c of life, you’re limited.
- f. All we see are limitations, Hag.2.6–9.
- i. I believe the people were afraid to do anything because of the strength of the opposition, the lack of finances and their perception of the work. God makes it clear that he will remove those things as barriers.
    - 1. God would shake their antagonist, so that they would have to support their work;
    - 2. Emperor Darius would open up the treasuries of Persia to pay for the work;
    - 3. Jesus, himself, would walk into this temple! He has much greater glory than Solomon!!
  - ii. I know I’m living in unbelief about God’s will for my life, when I’m more convictional about the reasons for

defeat than I am for the reasons for success. I may say all the right things about success, but I really believe defeat will happen instead.

- iii. Appl – All you see with your finances are impossibilities
- g. We forget our testimony
  - i. Ezra 1 and the decree of Cyrus.
  - ii. Why didn't they bring out this document? Why didn't they push back against the resistance? Why didn't they send an inquiry to Cyrus, in order to shut the mouths of their antagonist? The same reasons we don't – we grow petrified of the roar of the enemy and we don't think our testimony has any real power. It's the testimony that liberates, gives us hope and breaks the power of the enemy. . We are so scared that we can't move.
  - iii. We either forget or downplay the provision of God from the past season. The word of God for me, "When will stop questioning whether or not I will take care of your needs? Your testimony has been that I have never failed you, so trust me for it!"
  - iv. C/O Appl –
- h. Conclusion: If you rest in the nest, you are assured one or more of these things will stop the spiritual movement

What Motivates Us To Move Forward (What gets you out of the nest):

- a. Remembering the Original Call
  - a. Ez.1 – Cyrus giving the order
  - b. Go back to what God told you; the time when there was so much excitement & it was fresh. It's not necessarily to some location or activity, but to what was God doing that made it so significant.
  - c. God reminding Abraham over & again; Jesus telling the Ephesians to return to their first love.
- b. The Fresh Voice of God

- a. Ez.5 – God speaking through the prophets.
- b. What is God saying to you today...being challenged by God. You sense the convicting word of God. Every where you go you see it.
- c. Clear Signs of His Activity (Confirmations)
  - a. Ez.6 – Darius reissuing the decree; telling the objectors to stop disturbing them; demanding they assist (the Haman effect); and releasing the money.
  - b. Similar to Conocco Phillips paying for the construction of Faith BC in Sweeny.
- d. Our Testimony – how God has spoken & helped in the past.
  - a. The testimony of Israel through the ages. God always kept his word. They were back in the land after captivity, b/c God kept his word.
  - b. The prophetic words about Cyrus – Is.44.28–45.7.