

---

EZRA 5: 1 Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem; in the name of the God of Israel they prophesied to them.

---

Haggai and Zechariah the prophets encourage Zerubbabel and Jeshua to proceed with the building of the temple, Ezr 5:1, Ezr 5:2. Tatnai, the governor of the provinces on this side the Euphrates, and his companions, inquire by what authority they do this, Ezr 5:3-5. They write to Darius; a copy of the letter, Ezr 5:6-16. They request to know how they are to proceed, Ezr 5:17.

Verse 1

Haggai - and Zechariah - These are the same whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets.

The son of Iddo - That is, the grandson of Iddo; for Zechariah was the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo. See his prophecy, Zac 1:1 (note).

---

EZRA 5: 2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build God's house which is at Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

---

Verse 2

Then rose up Zerubbabel - Here we find three classes of men joining in the sacred work: Zerubbabel the civil governor; Jeshua the high priest or ecclesiastical governor; and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets. How glorious it is when we see the civil government joining with the sacerdotal and prophetic for the establishment and extension of true religion!

---

EZRA 5: 3 At the same time came to them Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shetharbozenai, and their companions, and said thus to them, "Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this wall?"

---

Verse 3

Tatnai, governor - He was governor of the provinces which belonged to the Persian empire on their side of the Euphrates, comprehending Syria, Arabia Deserta, Phoenicia, and Samaria. He seems to have been a mild and judicious man; and to have acted with great prudence and caution, and without any kind of prejudice. The manner in which he represented this to the king is a full proof of this disposition.

---

EZRA 5: 4 Then we told them in this way, what the names of the men were who were making this building.

---

Verse 4

What are the names - It is most evident that this is the answer of the Jews to the inquiry of Tatnai, Ezr 5:3, and the verse should be read thus: Then said we unto them after this manner: These are the names of the men who make this building.

---

EZRA 5: 5 But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not make them cease, until the matter should come to Darius, and then answer should be returned by letter concerning it.

---

Verse 5

The eye of their God was upon the elders - The watchful care of God was upon the elders. They were assured of his favor; and they found his especial providence working in their behalf.

---

EZRA 5: 6 The copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shetharbozenai, and his companions the Apharsachites, who were beyond the River, sent to Darius the king;

EZRA 5: 7 they sent a letter to him, in which was written thus: To Darius the king, all peace.

EZRA 5: 8 Be it known to the king, that we went into the province of Judah, to the house of the great God, which is built with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls; and this work goes on with diligence and prospers in their hands.

---

Verse 8

With great stones - They are making a very strong and a very costly building.

---

EZRA 5: 9 Then we asked those elders, and said to them thus, "Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this wall?"

EZRA 5: 10 We asked them their names also, to inform you that we might write the names of the men who were at their head.

EZRA 5: 11 Thus they returned us answer, saying, "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and are building the house that was built these many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished.

---

Verse 11

We are the servants of the God of heaven - How simple, plain, and ingenuous is this confession! They were the servants of the God of heaven. How came they then into bondage! Why, they provoked the God of heaven - repeatedly sinned against him, and then he gave them into the hands of their enemies.

---

EZRA 5: 12 But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

EZRA 5: 13 But in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree to build this house of God.

EZRA 5: 14 The gold and silver vessels also of God's house, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought into the temple of Babylon, those Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

EZRA 5: 15 and he said to him, 'Take these vessels, go, put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let God's house be built in its place.'

EZRA 5: 16 Then the same Sheshbazzar came, and laid the foundations of God's house which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now has it been in building, and yet it is not completed.

---

Verse 16

Sheshbazzar - Probably the military officer that conducted the people from Babylon, and had the oversight of the work; but some think that Ezra is meant.

---

EZRA 5: 17 Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem; and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter."

---

Verse 17

The - treasure house - גִּנְזָיָה ginzaiya. This is a Persian word, gunji, a treasury.

There is a great deal of good sense and candour in this letter. Nothing of passion or prejudice appears in it. They laid before the king a fair statement without any attempt to prejudice his mind, and gave him those directions which were most likely to lead him to the truth, and to form a correct judgment on a business which, however it issued, must be of considerable importance to the state. God was in all this business; he was now giving an additional proof of his continued regard for a disobedient people, whom, though he had punished in his justice, he had spared in his mercy.