

EZRA – NEHEMIAH: LESSON TWO

- I. OVERCOMING OPPOSITION IN BUILDING THE TEMPLE (EZRA 4-6)**
- A. Rejected Samaritans trouble and weaken the Jews in building the temple, beginning in the days of Cyrus (4:1-6)**
1. Zerubbabel and Jeshua would not let Samaritans have part in building the temple – *“Ye have nothing to do with us”* (v. 1-4).
 2. Counsellors hired to frustrate building project with accusatory letter in the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus (Cambyses) (529 B.C.) (v. 5-6).
- B. Letter sent to Artaxerxes (Smerdis) (522 B.C.) that causes the building of the temple to stop completely (4:7-24).**
1. Counselors write letter that is translated into Syrian language by governor (Rehum) and his secretary (Shimshai) warning of Jerusalem’s rebellious past and probable loss of revenue for King if temple is rebuilt (v. 7-16).
 2. Artaxerxes (Smerdis) decrees that work must stop – *“Why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings”* (v. 17-22).
 3. With copy of King’s letter, Rehum and Shimshai make the building work cease by force and power until the second year of King Darius (v. 23-24).
- C. Building resumes and temple is completed during the reign of King Darius (520-516 B.C.) (5:1-6:15).**
1. Prophetic work of Haggai and Zechariah encourages work to resume (5:1-2).
 2. Interested governor (Tattenai) writes on behalf of Jewish leaders for Darius to search for record of Cyrus’ decree to build temple (5:3-17).
 3. King Darius decrees for search and the record is found in Achmetha (Ecbatana – ancient palace of Medes) (6:1-5).
 4. King Darius commands governor not to hinder the work of building the temple and provide provisions for sacrifice with punishment of crucifixion if orders are not heeded (6:6-12).
 5. Governor (Tattenai) carries out decree and temple is finished on the third day of the month Adar in the sixth year of the reign of Darius (516 B.C.) (6:13-15).
- D. Dedication of the completed temple (6:16-18)**
- E. Passover kept on the fourteenth day of the first month with joy (6:19-22)**

QUESTIONS:

IDENTIFY THE KINGS BY GIVING NAME OF KINGDOM AND DATE OF RULE

- A. Esarhaddon (4:2) -

 - B. Ahasuerus (4:6) -

 - C. Osnappar (Ashurbanipal) (4:10)-

 - D. Artaxerxes (4:7)-

 - E. Artaxerxes (6:14)-

 - F. Darius (6:15)-
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1. Why did the Jewish leaders not allow the willing Samaritans to help them rebuild the temple?

 2. Describe the persistent effort of the people of the land to frustrate the rebuilding project:

 3. Whose letter was translated in the Syrian tongue before being sent to the Persian King, Artaxerxes?

 4. The letter to Artaxerxes accused the Jews “building the _____ and the _____ city, and have set up the _____, and joined the _____.”

Was this true?

 5. What did the letter predict for the Persian Kings if the building of temple continues?

6. What year did the work of the house of God cease?
7. Give one specific example of how Haggai and Zechariah helped in causing the building of the temple to resume?
8. How did the letter written by the governor Tattenai differ from the letter written by the previous governor Rehum?
9. What was “on the elders of the Jews” that did not allow the work to cease while waiting for Darius’ answer to the letter?
10. The roll of Cyrus’ decree was found in Babylon. (T) (F)
11. Out of what money source were the builders of the temple to be paid according to Darius’ decree?
12. What was the punishment for altering Darius’ decree of rebuilding the temple?
13. In what year was the house of God’ finished?
14. What specific things occurred during the dedication of the house of God?
15. What characteristic of joy occurred in keeping the Passover after completing the temple?