

Ezra 5:1-2,Haggai 1,Zechariah 1:1-6

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[0:00] So, Ezra chapter 5, verses 1 and 2 will be our primary focus. So, we will not lose sight of Ezra, but I believe I mentioned this a couple weeks ago to really understand what is going on.

You have to read this. These are one of the books. There are a number of them that it's beneficial to read the coinciding books of prophecy that go with them.

So, but Ezra is one that really, especially by the time you get to this chapter, you really need to read the minor prophets that are prophesying at that time. Zechariah is a little bit longer. Haggai is just two chapters.

But we won't look at them in their entirety, but it is really beneficial so that we can fully understand what is going on. And really, in particular, the set of verses that we have tonight.

So, we'll do that. Again, I know I made mention this morning of kind of the early days of my preaching. Those of you that knew me when I preached, it used to be like 10 different passages. You'd have to mark all kinds of portions of Scripture.

[1:07] And so, that's changed a lot dramatically over the years. But, you know, let's go ahead and go to the Lord in prayer. And then we'll get right into the Word of God together. Again, remember in prayer those, you know, we have a lot going on in our midst.

There's a lot around us. I know we can share that on Sunday nights. We shared a little bit on Wednesday nights. But I know that Miss Peggy and the Payne family continue to be in prayer for them. Kimberly, her dad passed away this past week, Wednesday.

And so, we'll continue to be in prayer for her. And we can also, Dan Williams goes Tuesday to the heart doctor so they can schedule.

They're looking at when they're going to have to do the bypass surgery. So, be in prayer for that. Miss Nancy Crowell goes Thursday to finally get the battery replaced. And her pacemaker, she's just been so low of energy.

She, I mean, it's, there really are needs all around us. There are others that they're dealing with sickness with their parents. And just, there's a lot around us.

[2:14] So, it is a joy to have a church family to carry burdens with you. But it's also, it doesn't always make it easy. So, continue to, just continue to encourage those around us.

And we continue to be with them, be present. And I thank you. And I've heard such a testimony over and over again, just how much the church continues to pour into individuals.

So, thank you for that. But I just want to encourage you to continue to do so. So, let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for the day. We thank you for just the benefit of gathering together. We thank you for the privilege of being able to read the word with one another.

We pray that you help us to understand it. We pray that you give us discernment and wisdom as we look at it. We do continue to pray for those around us. We know that there are those who are walking through the loss of loved ones.

We pray you just give them comfort and peace. We pray for those who have doctor visits this week. Those who are undergoing procedures. We pray that you just lead and guide there as well. And just for the day-to-day events, I know there are people, lives are busy and it's a hectic season.

[3:16] So, I pray that you just continue to lead and guide. Give us wisdom. Father, give us discernment in the things before us and help us as a church to continue to walk alongside brothers and sisters in Christ.

We thank you for the church. We thank you for the body of believers. We thank you for the encouragement that it is to us. We thank you that we can walk alongside others and pray that you continue. Lord, as you are the head of the church, you are the one who leads and guides.

We pray that as we follow your example that we would serve those around us with joy and sincerity. Lord, lead tonight and just be glorified through our study and we ask it on Christ's name.

Amen. Ezra chapter 5 verses 1 and 2. We will not turn to the minor prophets quite yet, but we will very quickly.

Well, actually, let's read it all together at one time. Okay, so let's read Ezra 5 verses 1 and 2 and then we'll go right over to the book of Haggai, read the first chapter there, and then we'll go into Zechariah and read there.

[4 : 22] So, listen. The Word of God says, Turn with me over to the book of Haggai.

The first chapter there says, In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai, to Zerubbabel, the son of Shilti, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak.

That's the same guy, by the way. The high priest saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, this people says, The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.

Then the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet saying, Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?

Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. You have sown much, but harvest little. You eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied.

[5 : 39] You drink, but there is not enough to become drunk. You put on clothing, but no one is warm enough. He who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

Go up to the mountains, bring wood, and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified, says the Lord. You look for much, but behold, it comes to little.

When you bring it home, I blow it away. Why, declares the Lord of hosts, because of my house, which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore, because of you, the sky has withheld its due, and the earth has withheld its produce.

I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and all the labor of your hands. Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shiltiel, and Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God hath sent him.

And the people showed reverence for the Lord. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people, saying, I am with you, declares the Lord. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shiltiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

[6 : 56] And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the 24th day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. Now turn with me, if you will, just over to the book of Zechariah, the first six verses there.

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying, The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return to me, declares the Lord of hosts, that I may return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return now for your evil ways from your evil deeds.

But they did not listen to give, or give heed to me, declares the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants, the prophets, overtake your fathers?

Then they repented and said, As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so he has dealt with us. If we were to continue reading the book of Zechariah, it has a great amount of imagery and a great amount of really foreshadowing of the events that will come on.

[8 : 12] It is there in which the Lord of hosts declares to Zerubbabel, Not by might nor by strength, but by my word you will rebuild the house. There are promises contained in the second chapter of Haggai, because there are like three prophetic utterances of Haggai there in that short book and in that second chapter.

There are promises for the Lord's filling of that temple, his blessings of Zerubbabel and his descendants. Those promises continue as we make our way through the book of Zechariah. It is there that we find the branch from the root of David.

It is there that we see the triumphal entry of the king as he comes in and they all cry out, Hosanna, blesses he who comes in the name of the Lord. Great works of prophecy that are given.

But if you were to go back to the book of Ezra in the fifth chapter and the first two verses, I want you to see this evening awakened by the word. The last time we were together, we looked at the first five verses of the fourth chapter and then the final verse of the fourth chapter, and we saw how they were discouraged by the enemy.

That portion in between them, that is from verse six down to verse 23, is a parenthetical insertation into that portion of scripture that shows us that the enemy continues to do the same thing over and over.

[9 : 28] That is when it sees someone laying their hand or setting their hand to the work, comes beside them and discourages them. It says that they discourage them by writing letters and hiring counselors against them and that we are told there in the very last verse of the fourth chapter, so the work on the house of the Lord stopped.

They rebuilt the altar. They started the sacrificial system. They laid the foundation stones. Some rejoiced with celebration. Some mourned with weeping and crying. And the sound of that occurrence was heard by all those around.

And the enemy showed up and the work stopped. Just so that we can understand in context, between the issuing of the decree of King Cyrus and the restart to the rebuilding of the temple in the second year they came back, from the decree of King Cyrus until the prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah, 16 years passed.

There are 16 years. So at minimum, we can say that they have been idle for 12 years, 12 to 14 years.

We have to give them some time to get back to rebuild the altar. They wait until the second year. They gather enough supplies. They lay the foundation stones.

[10 : 46] The enemies begin to come against them and to hinder them, and they stop for at least 12 years. They are idle. They are idle long enough to rebuild their own houses and to decorate them, for that's what it says in Haggai, to live in paneled houses.

This means they did not just have structures. They had ornate homes. They were really nice. They had lived in the land long enough to plant and to sow and to see the harvest come back very sparse.

They had lived in the land long enough to understand that they were bringing in money and putting it in purses that had holes in it. Some of us know what that feeling is like, right? They would bring it in, but it would not stay.

They had lived long enough for the testimony to resound among them. But after a certain amount of time, they are reawakened, and it almost seems like it's in an instance, and we've looked at that reality that they are awakened to begin to work.

The enemy's tactic hasn't changed. If we were to read down to verse 3, we would meet Tetani again, and we would see that they begin the same thing. They would begin the same attacks. They would begin the same verbal accusations.

[11 : 50] They would begin the same letter-writing campaigns. They would start doing the same thing. We'll see that. But the difference is, is now they don't stop. So what happened in these two verses in the fifth chapter between the enemy running their mouth, and they give up, until, well, the enemy's going to talk, let them talk, and let's keep working.

Something really significant happened in verses 1 and 2 of the fifth chapter. Something amazing happening in that 16th year. And we've seen a small portion of it, but I want you to see how they were awakened by the word.

They were not awakened by the need, for the need was ever-present with them. The entire time they were there, the temple was still in shambles. The foundation stones were testifying to the reality that you have begun this work, but you haven't completed it.

The altar was still visibly present because there were no walls surrounding it, so they did not become awakened because there was a need. They knew the need. They responded to the need when Cyrus issued the decree.

They were not awakened because they had the resources. We know that they gathered the resources, and everything was there, and everything was present, yet they just let it stay there. They didn't do anything with it.

[13:03] But it was the word of God through the prophets that awakened them to do the work, and we have to ask ourselves why. So how are they awakened, and how are we awakened by the word?

The first thing that we notice here is that this is a centralized message. That is, it is to a specific people in a specific place at a specific time. It is a centralized message.

This is very unique in the Old Testament as it concerns a prophetic word, especially when it is being declared to the people of the Lord because we usually see the prophets showing up and declaring to all of the house of Israel or all of the Jewish people, but look at what it says.

When the prophets Haggai and the prophets Zechariah, we'll get to those in just a moment, the son of Israel prophesied, here it is, here's the centralization of it, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem.

It is a very small minority of the people. If you remember, it's 42,000 and some change of people and you say, well, pastor, you keep saying that. I understand because the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people remained in the region of Babylon in the Persian Empire.

[14:11] We like to think that when Cyrus issued the decree, everybody went back. The reality is that when the decree was issued, only a small minority of the people went back because most people were at home where they were at and they were comfortable and they were not slaves the way we think of slaves.

They had been transplants. They had been taken out of this land, moved to this land. It was a land that Jeremiah told them to pray for. It was a land that Ezekiel said that they should pray the Lord's blessing would rest upon and the Lord had shown favor and blessed them.

They built houses. They planted gardens. They had rivers running through that land. It was a fruitful land and they were very much at home at that land. And so the majority, overwhelming majority of them did not go back, but the small remnant did.

But what we see here is this word of the Lord is not directed to those who stayed behind. It is directed to those who were in Jerusalem and Judah.

It was a message that was centralized in this. Those whose heart were stirred to do the work that God was calling them to do. It's a better way of saying those who were entrusted much, were expected to do much.

[15:28] Notice that God does not decry the reality that the people still living in the eastern portion of the Persian Empire, that is around the region of Babylon, many people there, I'm sure, lived in paneled houses.

Many people there had nice gardens. Many people there were probably bringing in the harvest. There's no prophetic word decrying the reality they're living in paneled houses while the temple is in ruins.

Ezra is not being chastised because he is in the higher upper ranking official, even in the religious world of it over in Persia. Nehemiah is not being rebuked because he's the king's cupbearer and therefore is probably living a pretty wealthy lifestyle.

We know that because when Nehemiah comes, he tells us what the people at his table eat. And Nehemiah says that he furnishes it from his own pocket, right? He doesn't take the governor's allowance. And he feeds a multitude of people around his table when we see in the book of Nehemiah.

So Nehemiah was a man of sustenance. He had a little bit of wealth about him. God's not rebuking him because he lives in the king's palace, but the rebuke is given to those who were moved to rebuild.

[16:34] It is a message directed to those who stopped doing what God had called them to do. It's a very focused message because God had a word for them.

And he had a word for those Jews there. It was not, again, a message that was just scattered to all the Jewish people everywhere, but rather it tells us it was to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem.

You know, when God calls us to do a matter, then quite often the message that he sends us is unique and it is specific to who we are as a church and as individuals.

And it is easy to say, well, that's a message that they need to hear when the reality is that's a message we need to hear. And we see this centralized message, one that is directed of the Lord because he speaks to their hearts.

They had been moved. They had been led. They had been called. And yet they had stopped doing what God had commissioned them to do. Notice, secondly, that not only is it a centralized message, it is a consistent message.

[17:40] And I love this reality because it tells us when the prophets Hecariah, the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo. So we are introduced to two prophets immediately.

It is a consistent message. What does the word of God tell us? By the mouths of two witnesses, a matter shall be settled. And when God had a message to those people who had stopped doing the work, he did not just send one prophet, but he sent two.

And he sent two prophets, if you were to go read both of their works, that were very consistent in their message. But these could not be two differing prophets, by the way.

Many people, and I believe that I agree with them here, many Bible scholars believe Haggai would have been one of those prophets who had seen the old temple. He was probably an older gentleman, so at that time, I mean, we're 70 years since Nebuchadnezzar has first come and besieged Jerusalem.

It's not been quite 70 years since the temple has been destroyed, but he had possibly laid eyes upon the first temple because he references it in one of his prophetic utterances. And it tells us that when he came, look, it is marked for us, not every one of them are marked, but it says, in the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, God sends this old prophet to these people who have stopped.

[19:04] In contrast of the old prophet, we have Zechariah, which many people believe is a very young prophet. He is one that would have never seen the temple, but notice when he comes, it tells us, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, so two months later.

In just a short window, God sends two individuals with a consistent message to awaken his people. If the first prophet showed up and began to declare what the word of the Lord was and they said, well, now that's challenging and maybe we need to begin this work because it tells us there in the second verse what the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

Zechariah has a longer prophetic ministry and he continues with them for some time. Haggai speaks for just a little while, but what we see is this consistent message of not just beginning the work, but bringing it to its completion and even then beyond that.

God sends two individuals. It's encouraging because when God has something to say to his people and to awaken his people, very, very seldom does God just say it in one way.

Henry Blackaby used to say, if you want to know and understand the will of God then you listen to a multitude of ways that what God is saying, right? That God is consistent in what he says. If you've ever been through the study experiencing God, the old one that he put together and then they revitalized it later with his son Richard Blackaby and then, but Henry Blackaby is knowing and doing the will of God.

[20:32] He said, you listen to the word of God. God speaks to us through his word, through his people and through various means and various ways. I've had people tell me before, say, well, you know, that message was something I heard earlier in the week or that message was something that someone had just brought up to me or that was, and we don't ever say, well, that's coincidental.

No, then we pay attention because God is saying something in a consistent manner through a multitude of ways, so now we, as his people, need to say, oh, what's the will of God in this then? Because when God begins to declare something to you, you begin to understand it when each time he's moved in my life personally, it has not just been one voice that has declared it, it has been, oh, I read this and then I hear this and next thing I know someone is saying this to me and it seems to come out of nowhere but God continues to reinforce the same message because he wants to awaken his people to his word and he does it with a consistent voice, he does not just speak, he is true to his word, he does not just speak in one word of testimony, even Jesus says that the testimony is you have the word of the Lord, you have the presence of the Lord and you have the word of Moses, right, and you have the testimony of scripture and the testimony of his deeds and the testimony of his word, God speaks in a consistent manner, here we see that he sends two prophets with a consistent message to awaken his people to do what he's called them to do, third,

and it's a thing we don't like very well, to be honest, it is a confrontational message, it says, when the prophets

Haggai, the prophet Zechariah, the son of Idul, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, look at this, in the name of the Lord God of Israel who was over them, that's a confrontational message, who was over them, the first reality that is confronted is the loyalty that the people owe, because the prophets come prophesying in the name of the Lord God of Israel who was over them, now in context, let's put it together, they may have thought that they were in the land because Cyrus issued a decree which they responded to and therefore when the subjects of Cyrus that surrounded them, the peoples of the lands that they were afraid of, began to write letters back to Cyrus and then later to Darius and to all the other kings and began to hire counselors and to frustrate their plans and to hinder them, they would have thought, well, we are subjects to the Persian Empire, to the kings of Persia.

By this time, Cyrus has already left the throne and is an unnamed king of Persia that reigns for about two years and now Darius is on the throne and we're in the second year of Darius' reign and they think, well, we're under those kings because they are not a free people, they don't have a king of their own, they have governors and leaders and they're people of the province, they're people of that region of the Persian Empire but they're not an independent people.

[23 : 46] That comes in Intertestament times later on. We see that reality and they're kind of in between all these empires that we see being laid out for us in the book of Daniel and you remember, you see the image with Nebuchadnezzar being the golden one and then all the silver and then the bronze and then the iron and the clay and all these things, these different empires that are divided and the people of Israel are passed back and forth between all that because they're just people of the province.

But the first thing that's confronted is that they are not under the king, they're under the Lord God. It is the God who is over them.

So the first thing they're confronted on is the loyalty they possess. And with all due respect, I'm sure they were still paying their taxes to the Persian Empire but they were not rebuilding the temple.

And their loyalty to the king of Persia probably still remained the same but their loyalty to the God whom they were under was waning. It really was non-existent.

And then when we get to that first chapter of Haggai we see these confrontations and this repeated refrain that Haggai gives. He says, consider your ways over and over again.

[25 : 10] Consider your ways. Not only are they confronted with the loyalty to who they are under, they are also confronted with the reality of how they are living. Consider your ways.

It is not time to rebuild the temple of the Lord, you say, but it is time to live in your paneled houses. Consider your ways. Who is of greatest importance?

By the way, side note, just complete side note, not really a complete side note, it's a side note of application from the passage from my personal life. This is why I believe that it is of utmost importance to take care of the house of the Lord, the building that we have the opportunity to worship in even if it means we don't maintain our own homes as well.

That is just a personal conviction. This is where I get this. I consider my ways. It's not that I don't want to maintain my own home. It's not that I don't want to have a nice home.

It's not that I don't want those things. It's just that if I'm going to worship somewhere and it is in a run down condition compared to where I'm living then I need to consider my ways.

[26 : 20] That's just my personal takeaway from this. You take it as you see fit. But that is the first thing that Haggai tells them to do.

Consider your ways. You say that my house can be in disrepair but you would never dare have your house. Malachi does the same thing. Malachi says consider your ways. You bring the lame and the blind to me but you would never give it to your governor.

Right? You're offering me junk but you are offering him the best. By the way Haggai is the first prophetic voice of the post exile time.

You need to know that. He's the first prophet to speak after Babylonian exile. And he confronts the people with this consideration not only the considering of how well they're living but how little they're thinking of the Lord but also this consideration of how's that working out for you.

Right? You plant much but you harvest little. You eat but you're never full. You don't even have enough wine to get drunk on. By the way that's not endorsing debauchery.

[27 : 34] That's just a statement. You put on clothing but you're still cold. You take on money but it flies away. How's that working out for you?

And so what God is doing is he's confronting them with the reality that possibly these things are happening because you're neglecting me. Possibly there's a connection here and he let them go in that manner for 12 years.

So he gave them a lot of background to consider. He confronted them with this reality. Right? It's not like at first he said ah and he said well it's just we're just having a bad year.

The Lord's like well you know for a number of years it's been a bad year. I've shut the heavens. I've cursed men. I've cursed the animals. And then he rises the prophet up to confront them with the reality.

Zechariah confronts them in the first chapter of the first six verses and he confronts them with this thought. What about your father? Did not the Lord send prophets to your fathers?

[28 : 38] Did they repent and listen? Because by the way he comes two months after Haggai tells them to consider their ways right? And so now they're like well we're considering our ways but do we really need to listen to him? And now Zechariah shows up and says did your fathers listen?

And they'd have to say no. They said where are they at? Well they're not here. Did the word of the prophets come true? Well yes it did. So you see this confrontation.

The first confrontation is who are you loyal to? How's that working out for you when you are disloyal to him? And what do past events tell us?

It's a confrontational message. When God speaks to our hearts at times he confronts us with what we perceive to be realities right? We think it tells us in the word of God that man plans his way but the Lord ordains his step and sometimes that ordaining comes with the confrontation with the Lord says I'm going to let you go that way.

How's that working? How is it between you and I? Do you see my blessings in my favor rest upon that or do you see from past events that maybe you need to put me first?

[29 : 54] Christ. This is not an Old Testament truth reality. This is a New Testament as well because Jesus declares to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

We do that through considering our ways. Fourth and finally and we I could not honestly wait to get to this one. The whole reason I think we preach this message is to get to this one.

We see it's a centralized message. It's a consistent message. It's a confrontational message. God always seems to end on a high note. It's a comforting message. What does the word of God tell us there in the fifth chapter?

There's a word there that we need to pay attention to. That when the prophets came to them they prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem.

Look at what this says. In the name of the God of Israel. In the name of the God of Israel.

[31 : 01] Now let's put ourselves in context. They stopped the work. They were excited about the work. They were rejoicing in the beginning of the work.

They could not wait to restart the sacrificial system prior to laying the foundation stones. The fear of the people led them to worship. We see that in Ezra chapter 3.

That worship led to the restart of the reconstruction process and the rejoicing of the laying of the foundation stones. And then the enemy went from being out there to being in here.

And it drew real near. And so they stopped. They got terrified. They were scared. Because when the enemy is out there we can handle them. But when the enemy comes right up close and they're stronger than us and they're more powerful than us and they hire counselors against us and they're attacking us on multiple fronts then we're overwhelmed with the battle being fought and they threw their hands up and said we're done.

It's a spiritual battle. So we don't want to just wag our fingers and say oh that lazy group of people. No they are people probably with a legitimate fear.

[32 : 12] A legitimate fear. They are no longer living in Jewish land. They are living in a land inhabited by a multitude of people that are not Jewish nor loyal to the Lord God Almighty.

So from the human standpoint it's a legitimate fear because these people won't nothing to do with that. But then two prophets arise and they prophesy in the name of the God of Israel.

And I don't know if you caught it or not but they use the specific name of the God of Israel. If you were to go back to Haggai and Zechariah because names of God matter.

How you know him is determined on which names you use of him. We speak of this all the time. When the enemy showed up and said we want to help build the temple they say for we too worship the God of this land and they use the name Elohim.

The generic name of the big God that's in the sky. The creator God. The powerful God. That God. Elohim. It's a wonderful name. It's a name that says in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

[33 : 23] Elohim. He is almighty God creator. But to every other nation around the people of Israel that's a generic name because they too refer to their gods as El.

E-L. El Bethel means the house of God. El is a singular form of the plural Elohim which is a wonderful scriptural kind of insertion of the Trinity at the very beginning of the book of Genesis. In the beginning God. Elohim. Plural form of the word El which is one of the things I kind of geek out on I guess you could say because all of a sudden we're introduced to a plural God who exists in one and our brains begin to smoke.

It is not in the beginning El. E-L created the heavens and the earth. It's in the beginning Elohim. That is the God three in one created the heavens and the earth and like oh wow. That doesn't stand out to us in our English language because we use the same word.

That's why when we read of the God Bel it's G-O-D lowercase G but the God of heaven is capital G-O-D but it is actually different that it is El versus Elohim.

[34 : 25] And so when people around the region of Israel they would refer to him the same way. We can just add this Elohim to our El and we'll be okay. He's the big God. You refer to him in this world.

Some people refer to him that big man in the sky. Oh yeah there's a creator God up there somewhere that there has to be some people because they don't have any other way of explaining things refer to a higher power or there has to be something out there.

But that does not mean they're in a relationship with him right. So then we progress when we get in scripture and we begin to see more and more names of God being introduced to us.

We see themes of that being introduced. We see a lot of things and then all of a sudden we understand that he is Yahweh or Jehovah. He is a covenant God and no longer is he just got even in the book of Genesis we make this transition from Elohim to a personal God.

So we go from Elohim to Adonai. Adonai means he is a personal God. He is a God who draws near and so these names of God matter. And when you prophesy in the name of God and you use a particular name of God you are speaking about an attribute of that God and it declares in Ezra that you are under.

[35 : 45] In the name of the God of Israel that they are under that is over them. And so they are going to use a name of the God that they are under in light of the reality and I hope that you understand this.

In light of the reality that they are afraid of the people of the land. Today we know names matter and titles matter. Because depending upon the name we use for an individual depends on the weight it carries.

In the first chapter of Haggai and in the first chapter of Zechariah the repeated refrain is thus says the Lord of hosts.

We read it and it just seems like it's just the Lord of hosts. But what we need to understand is that phrase the Lord of hosts is actually a name. Some translations have it as the Lord of armies. Its translation is literally Jehovah Saba. Jehovah Saba. And it means this.

[37 : 03] It's a pretty lengthy meaning. Jehovah means the covenant eternal God that is walking in relationship with his people. So that's the Lord part. He is the covenant eternal God everlasting walking in relationship with a particular group of people.

And Saba means the one who is over all the host of heaven and earth. That he is the highest power.

He is the ruling authority. He is the commander of heaven's army. And he's the commander of every army on the earth.

He's the Lord of hosts. He's Jehovah Saba. So no army of this world is without without his control. And no army in heaven is apart from his control. It tells us that they are afraid of the people of the land and the prophets that show up remind them that the God who is over them is also over those who they are afraid of.

[38 : 15] And not only is he over those who surround them, but he's over all the armies of heaven. He's the Lord of hosts. He's the one who rules on high.

He's the supreme commander of every army. The Persian Empire army may gather together and the forces may march into Jerusalem and try to stop them from reconstructing the temple. But if God has ordained it, God overrules the leaders of the Persian army. He is the one who rules all armies and all authority and all power.

So when they come to them and they prophesy in the name of God and they declare this name in a repeated refrain that the Lord of hosts, thus saith the Lord of hosts, thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways, thus saith the Lord of hosts, not by might nor by strength, but by my word you will rebuild this temple.

It says in Zechariah, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of the temple. Zerubbabel will complete the temple. Thus saith the Lord of hosts all the time, some 50 times, Zechariah, the word is thus saith the Lord of hosts.

[39 : 22] It is this continuous repeating of this name because the people needed to know there is an army that is greater than the army you are afraid of and the one who is over you controls that army.

And you need to be reminded who you serve. You need to be reminded who's called you to rebuild. Who's called you to do the work that you've begun.

And it tells us in the second chapter of Ezra 5. So Zerubbabel and Joshua started rebuilding. They began again, it says. They arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem. Why? Because they were awakened by the word of the reality.

That the enemy around them was present, was real, probably was powerful. But they weren't the final word.

[40 : 31] They had a God that they knew his name was the Lord of hosts. He controlled those who opposed them. He controls those who are with them. He controls all the armies of heaven.

And he controls all the armies of the earth. And when that one has called you to do a work, you don't stop because you're afraid of an army.

When the commander of all armies has commissioned the work, then no army can stop you from hinder you in doing the work. So they said, that's a good word.

And they went back to work. No questions. The army still show up. The enemy is still present. But you know what the difference is now?

Is they know the name of the God of Israel. He's not just Elohim. Oh, he's the Lord of hosts.

Because not only is he the God of all the armies, that word Jehovah there to first, that we render Lord or Yahweh, means we're in a covenant relationship with him.

[41 : 39] He's not just the supreme commander. He's the supreme commander that has called me to himself. And I know him and he knows me. I mean, we're on a first name basis.

I know this name of his. He's called me by name. And he's asked me to do this work. I've got divine authority to do what he's commissioned me to do.

And there's no one in a greater place of authority that can stop it. That's amazing. Because see, our willingness to do the work often rests upon the weight of the person who commissioned us to do it.

If we believe the authority is some man or some individual that's asked us to do it, we say, okay, we'll do it. If it is someone of a little bit higher rank, then we say, okay, we'll do it.

If we have the backing of the law and the legal office, we say, okay, we'll do it. If we have the backing of the highest office of the land, well, then we'll be a little bit more compelled to do it.

Friend, listen to me. We have the highest authority that has ever existed, the Lord of hosts, who commissions us to labor in the field for him.

[43 : 03] And he's called us to be in a covenant relationship with him. And he's called us to walk beside him. He's called us to labor.

I believe it was General Patton who once said, of all of the men he's ever led on the battlefield and of all of the great things that he's ever accomplished in the military, the greatest testimony of influence that he ever thought he could have was the raising of his own sons.

Because of them, he was in a deep relationship and he was raising them to be men when he was just leading others as a general. You know, we have the highest ranking officer that has ever existed, the Lord of hosts, who calls us his children.

And when we know that name, then we're awakened by the word to finish the work. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this day.

Thank you for the reality that we can cry out, Abba, Father, to you. We thank you that you are the Lord of hosts and so much more.

[44 : 26] That the battles we fight and the enemies we fear fall under your jurisdiction and your reign. So, Lord, give us boldness as Zerubbabel and Joshua to return again to the work you've called us to do for the glory of the one that we are under.

Lord, as we leave here tonight, we pray that we would walk in faithful obedience to all your calling and leading and you would be glorified through it. As your commission was, that they would rebuild so that you may be glorified.

May we labor that you may be glorified. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Thank you, guys. Really appreciate your time.