

Ezra 5 - The Power of Prophetic Ministry

Remember the thoughts from Ch 4

- Ezra 4:3 We alone will **build** it
- Ezra 4:24 Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem **came to a standstill**

The 16 year standstill due to opposition [discouragement, fear, bad counsel, accusation] then this

Ezr 5:1-17 NIV Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, **prophesied** to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem **in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.** (2) Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jozadak **set to work to rebuild** the house of God in Jerusalem. And **the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.**

What is Prophecy?

It is one means God uses to **communicate His thoughts** to us

- Amo 4:13 NIV He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and **who reveals his thoughts to mankind**, who turns down to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth-- **the LORD God Almighty is his name.**

Why Prophecy Has Such an Impact

These were not human inspired words, or eloquent speeches --- **BUT a word from the LORD ---**

A word for the LORD does something to the spirit of a man

- Rom 10:17 faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word [*rhema*] of God.

A word from the LORD accomplishes HIS purpose

Regardless of the opposition they faced...HE STILL WANTED THE TEMPLE TO BE BUILT

- Isa 55:11 KJV So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: **it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please**, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

A word from the LORD is powerful and creative

- Psa 33:6 & 9 KJV **By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.** 9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.
- Mat 8:8 KJV The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: **but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.**
- Eze 37:3-5 NIV He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know." 4 Then he said to me, "**Prophecy to these bones** and say to them, 'Dry bones, **hear the word of the LORD!**' 5 This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

Example

- 2Ch 20:12-22 ESV [story of Jehoshaphat] O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are **powerless** against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." 13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. 14 **And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel** the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: **Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.** 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you." 18 Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. 19 And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice. 20 And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! **Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.**" 21 And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever." 22 And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

The Structure of this Prophecy

- **God reminded them that HE IS OVER THEM**
- **God reminded them of THEIR CALLING and the work they are called to do**
- **God reminded them the prophets of God were WITH THEM --- to SUPPORT them**
 - A primitive root; to support (mostly figuratively): - comfort, establish, hold up, refresh self, strengthen, be upholden
 - This is much the same as prophecy in the church today - it is for edification, exhortation and comfort

The Prophetic Word Emboldened Them

Ezra 5:3 At that time Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates went to them and asked, "**Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?**" (4) They also asked, "What are the names of those who are constructing this building?" But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received. (5) **But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews,** and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received. (6) This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and

Shethar-Bozenai and their associates, the officials of Trans-Euphrates, sent to King Darius. (7) The report they sent him read as follows: To King Darius: Cordial greetings. (8) The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great God. The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with diligence and is making rapid progress under their direction. (9) We questioned the elders and asked them, "**Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?**" (10) We also asked them their names, so that we could write down the names of their leaders for your information. Ezra 5:11 This is the answer they gave us: "**We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, one that a great king of Israel built and finished.**"

The Prophetic Word made them MORE AWARE of the Lord's Constant Involvement In The Story of their lives... "The LORD Sees"

- (5) **But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews**, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received.

Ezra 5:12 **But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, king of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon.** (13) "However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God. (14) He even removed from the temple of Babylon the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to the temple in Babylon. **Then King Cyrus gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor, (15) and he told him, 'Take these articles and go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem. And rebuild the house of God on its site.'** (16) "So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem. From that day to the present it has been under construction but is not yet finished." (17) Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to **see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem.** Then let the king send us his decision in this matter.

Prophecy Helped them see God was integrated into every part of their lives.

- They acknowledged **their ancestors angered God** - which was the cause of deportation
- They recognized that **God brought Nebuchadnezzar against them**, who destroyed the temple and deported them
- They recognized that **it was God who moved Cyrus to issue a decree to rebuild THIS HOUSE OF GOD** - what he wrote shows GOD's involvement - and they appealed to this
- And now **they are recognizing the hand of the LORD in stirring them back up to build**

HOW IT WORKS

The word of the Lord CAME

Hag 1:1 ESV In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, **the word of the LORD came** by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

The people OBEYED

Hag 1:12 ESV Then **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, and **Joshua** the son of Jehozadak, 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 had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.

The LORD STIRRED HEARTS

Hag 1:14 ESV And **the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and **the spirit of Joshua** the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and **the spirit of all the remnant of the people**. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

- **We want to be stirred BEFORE we obey --- the stirring comes BECAUSE we obey**

We cannot minimize the importance of the prophetic ministry even today

Some have received personal words from the LORD

We fight a good battle

- 1Ti 1:18 NIV Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command **in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well.**

We have the gift of prophecy used in our church

Do Not despise prophecy

- 1Th 5:19-21 ESV Do not quench the Spirit. 20 **Do not despise prophecies,** 21 **but test everything; hold fast what is good.**
 - Despise - to count as nothing

Pursue to be used in the gift of prophecy

- 1Co 14:1-3 ESV Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, **especially that you may prophesy.** 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, **the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.**

- 1 Pet 4:11 If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God

Has the LORD spoken to you? Have you responded? Don't wait for the thrill before you obey.