

# The New Temple

Ezra 3-6

Key Verse: 3:11

Theme: Seeking God in adversity

The man that Cyrus put in charge of Judah, or Judea as it would now be called, was named Zerubbabel. Together with the priest Jeshua, the two men worked to rebuild the temple. When the first stone was laid, many cried tears of joy. Others who remembered the old temple and those who had died cried tears of sadness.

But soon the builders ran into trouble. Do you remember the Samaritans? These people worshiped God but they also worshiped idols. Some of the Samaritans were Jews from the old ten tribes. Others were Assyrians who had been brought in long ago to settle in the country. When they heard the temple was being rebuilt, they wanted to help.

Zerubbabel and Jeshua did not want the help of people who worshiped idols and told them to go away. Cyrus had died, and the king who was now ruling the Persia Empire was not a friend of the Jews. The Samaritans wrote to him and

warned him not to let the people rebuild the temple. If they did, the Samaritans advised, the Jews would rebel against his rule.

This king believed the Samaritans and ordered that the building stop. After a while two prophets began speaking God's Word to the people. One was named Haggai and the other was Zechariah.

The prophets said it was God's will that the temple be finished. Zerubbabel and Jeshua went back to work.

Soon a new king took over the Persian Empire. He was a wise man named Darius, and he wanted the temple to be built. He told the Samaritans to leave the Jewish people alone. Twenty-one years after the work started, the temple was done. The

new temple was larger than Solomon's temple, but not as beautiful or as richly decorated. Further, there was no Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies because the golden chest had been lost forever. But at least the people had a temple again where they could serve God.

## CHARACTERS

JESHUA: PRIEST OF GOD

ZERUBBABEL: THE APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF JUDEA  
KING CYRUS, XERXES & DARIUS: KINGS OF PERSIA





## THINK ABOUT IT

1. We must cast out all other things that become God in our heart to serve God
2. We must give first importance to seek God first
3. We must overcome obstacles to worship God by faith
4. When we decide to seek God first, God makes a way for us to come to him

## TALK ABOUT IT

- What work did the Israelites decide to begin?
- What was the importance of the temple?
- What did the rebuilding of the temple symbolize for them?
- Who came to help?
- Who were the Samaritans?
- Why didn't they want their help?
- Why must we first purify ourselves before we can serve God?
- What trouble did the Samaritans start?
- What was Xerxes's command?
- Who rose up to teach the people at this time?
- What was the message of Haggai and Zechariah?
- How did God make a way for them to begin building again?
- What can happen when we decide to seek God first?
- What was missing in the temple?
- How does this represent the broken relationship they had with God because of their sin?
- What can we learn about overcoming obstacles to seek God?

