King of Kings (Ezra 5:1-6:12)

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[0:00] Remember how your mum's are listening tonight? But yes, let's open up our Bible. Today is Israel chapter 5, sorry, verse 1, chapter 6, verse 12.

So it's going to be quite long, so please, please, please bear with me and follow along. Yeah, and I guess just keep in mind that the God that we're talking about in here is the exact same God that we believe in.
So with that in mind, let's read. What happened that day? Now, Hergai, the prophet, and Zechariah, the prophet, a descendant of Idos, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of God of Israel, who was over them.
Then, the rubber-down, son of Sheol's Jew, and Joshua, son of Jehoiath, did to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, according to them.
At that time, Petanai, governor of Chan-Syphrates, and Shista Bozanae, and their associates, went to them and asked, Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?
[1:08] They also asked, What are the names of those who are constructing this building? But the eyes 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.

This is a copy of the letter that Petanai, governor of Chan-Syphrates, and Shista Bozanae, and their associates, the officials of Chan-Syphrates, sent to King Darius.
The report they sent him read a follow-up. To King Darius, poor deal of greeting. The kings should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great gods.
The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with villages and is making rapid progress under their direction. We questioned the elders and asked them, Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?
We also asked them their names, so that we could write down the names of their leaders for your information. 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 in Sinai.
[2:21] But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean king of Babylon, who destroyed the temple and deported the people to Babylon.

However, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God. He then 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 Shebuchadnezzar, whom he had appointed governor. He then told him, Take these articles and go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem and rebuild the house of God in its sight.
So this, Shebuchadnezzar, 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.
Now that pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus should in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then let the king stand up to his decision in this matter.
[3:32] King Darius then issued an order and they searched in the archives stored in the treasury at Babylon. A scroll was found in the citadel of Asbantana in the province of Medea.

And this was written on it. Memorandum. In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of Balda-Nazia in Jerusalem. Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to be

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sacrificed to, and let its foundations be laid.
It is to be 60 cubits high and 60 cubits wide, with three forces of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury.
Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which never can be put from the temple in Jerusalem and forth to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem. They are to be deposited in the house of God.
Now then, Cessnai, governor of Trans-Aphrates and Cessna Boisenae, and you other officials of that province, stay away from them.
[4:37] Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its side. Moreover, I hereby decree that you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God.

Their expenses are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the rhythmies of Trans-Aphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed, young bulls of rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine, and olive oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem, must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices, pleasing to the God of heaven, and pray for the well-being of the kings and his sons.
Furthermore, I decree that if anyone defies this, a beam is to be pulled from their house, and they are to be impelled from it. And for this crime, their house is to be made a pile of rubble.
May God, who has caused his name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lift a hand to change this decree, or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have decreed this.
Let it be carried out with villages. Okay, thank you. Thank you. Well, a book that says in Jerusalem is kind of a document.
[6:04] A graduate of Global Studies. Thank you, Frank. Yeah. Although names and cities, we don't even know how to pronounce. All right.

All right. It's me again, from last week. Okay. So last week we talked about the rebuilding project kind of halted because of threats of the enemies.
So see what happens to this week. Okay. Before that, I'd like to introduce some stories, history. Okay. Now this is actually a restaurant.
Not a restaurant, but it sells like some Chinese sausages. And, you know, it's named, if you could read those characters in Chinese, it's called Wong, all right.
What's that? That is king above king. It's actually just the name of the place. Okay. Okay. And, and, and that, that, that is the one, that this place was in, in Guangzhou, in China.
[7:03] But this, this is, goes back to about 40 years. This is about the early 70s in Hong Kong. Um, actually it's the same name, but they, they sold different things.

Could you read the characters? What, what, what, what they were selling? Ice cream. For same company. All right. Wong, shang, wang. King above king.
All right. And the story was, um, there was two brothers. One, is called Park. Okay. You name him Park. Okay. Park. And, and the younger brother is called Cheung, like windows.
But it's not that windows. Not that term. Okay. But anyway, the, the bigger brother Park, he, he actually started this business selling Chinese sausages. And, and, and stuff like that.
A lot of char siu actually, um, roast pork. And it was doing well. And, uh, his brother, his younger brother, Cheung, actually thought, Oh, I could do something like that as well.
[8:02] So he started another, another business selling similar stuff. But he made, the, the, the, the older brother's name, the, the place called, Tai Zeng Wong.

That's father of the king. All right. Now, in Chinese traditions, even though you're a king, something as a, as a son, you still need to submit to your father.
So that, you know, that means, um, the father of the king was, even, has greater authority than the king. But his younger brother, he thought, he thought, Tai Zeng Wong, father of the king is not good enough.
I want to name it Wong Zeng Wong, you know, king above king. So, when they, uh, when this, they extended the branch in, in Hong Kong, that, they added a few more things over there selling.
Ice cream, they had restaurants, and, and, it's for kind of rich people, for middle class. And me, as urban Asian poor, we live in, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, in the, we couldn't even afford, really see, oh, I would love to, that would be my dream, to go there one day.

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[9:11] But I never, because it kind of, closed up in 1978. And, when, they actually, um, branch out to Hong Kong, if you could see the English, they, now, they did never have it, an English name.

I, I kind of translated for this, right? But they actually, had the English name, when they, started out in Hong Kong. What was that? King of Kings. I'm, I'm sure there'll be some, some, employers, they were Christians, and they, they thought about, Wong, Zhe, Wong, and, ah, this would be appropriate.
So they call them, call the place for, King of Kings. Huh. Now, who is the King of Kings, we know? Of course, Jesus, alright?
But, just, just, just, think of, the, the two brothers, you know? Kai Zhe, Wong, not good enough. King of Kings, Wong, Zhe, Wong, you know, that, that, always, men want to be, greater, better, higher, to be on top of everything.
And, interestingly, in the, in the Bible, that the King, the Persian King, that we have kind of read, the last few chapters, the, the, the Raios, Xerxes, right?
[10:26] They called themselves, King of Kings. And in chapter 7, Xerxes' son, Arthur, Arthur Xerxes, he also called himself, the King of Kings. Actually, in this letter, he addressed, to his officials, this, King of Kings, Arthur Xerxes.

King of Kings, this, so and so and so. But we know, the author, really wants to tell us, tell the people at the time, who actually, were, the King of Kings.
These, powerful kings, the little that they knew, they were actually, serving, the purpose, of the greatest king, the King of Kings, Yahu, Arthur, and Jesus, is the King of Kings.
So, let's go into this, 5, 1, 2, 6, 12. You have read that, I mean, you have listened to it. It's quite interesting, how the, the change is kind of happened, okay?
In this, in this, many verses, were told that the Persian officials, came, to inquire of this, rebuilding project. They started, the rebuilding, after many years, after about 15 years, 17 years, of, of the project, they started.
[11:54] And, these, officials, they came, and said, why are you building? And, and they weren't sure, what, what, were they doing it, legitimately.

So, they once, they sent letters, to the Persian king, for his decision. And, the reply, was quite surprising. It was very positive, and came, even, with royal, provision.
That's something, you could, well, you could never imagine, right? And, for us today, this, this passage, I think, we all can reflect.
we can trust God, in his things, in his sovereignty, and power, anything that happens, to our past, anything happening now, or anything that, will be happening, all, will work, according to his plan, and we can have that, assurance, full, assurance, in him.
Maybe things, that we're, we're, we're, encountering now, maybe we find a very, part, maybe we don't even, understand. Maybe, it comes, come to us, and, I don't know how to, handle, but if we, we know, we believe, he, is the king of things.
[13:20] That'll make a difference. Alright? So, let's, let's, have a look at it. Firstly, um, I mean, often, we, we often, being sidetracked, or we, we are impacted, by the things, by the chaos, by the challenges, by the circumstances, that's happening around us.

But, I think, if we, kind of, um, it kind of, shifts our purpose, uh, shifts our focus, and then we'll, we'll see, changes.
Firstly, it changes, it changes in me firstly, instead of things that are around. So, firstly, look, these people, um, they, I mean, they, they, they, they stopped, the rebuilding, of the temple, for many years, 16 years.
Why? All of a sudden, they started rebuilding, because, it was, the words of God, being prophesied. If we hear, God's words, in our lives, if we pay attention, if we are, receptive, to God's words, they'll make a lot of, difference, in our lives.
I don't know, what impacts us, what, what, um, cause us, to, to react, what, how do we react to things?
[14:51] Do we have the will of God in us, so direct, my path, and, and, and impact my decisions? Do we, what, actually, you have in us?

So here, in verse one, Haggai, the prophet, and Zechariah, Zechariah, there were two prophets, all right, prophesied, to the Jews, in Judah, and Jerusalem, in the name, of God, of Israel, who worked, over them.

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That's been, 16 years, they just, left aside, the foundation, of the, the temple, and all, can you imagine, they just go in, work, go to, plow the land, or do, do, what other things, but you know, they just go past, this, this rubble, and this foundation, of the temple, every day, and they go back, home, and they just, and for, 10 years, 17 years, never, they put any thoughts to it.
They were busy, okay, they were doing this, earning money, that now, the prophets of God, prophesied to them.
Now, this word, prophesied, is actually, what, it really meant, um, seeking on these paths, alright, to speak on these paths.
[16:13] So, the prophets, of Yahweh, as you, here, that's why, always, the prophets of God, in the, in the Old Testament, they say, thus says the Lord.

It's not, thus says, Haggai, thus says, Zechariah, no, thus says, the Lord, because, all the, all the, words, came, from the Lord, and, he directed, directed them, to speak, to the people, of God.
And, this is what they said. Alright, a long passage, but, but, basically, the prophets, challenged them, from, from the words, of Yahweh, God, challenged them, look, all these times, you just, just, just, ignored, the building, of the temple.
But, is it time, in verse 4, is it a time, for you, yourself, to be living, in Taino Tauti, while, this house, of mine, remains, ruined?
Is it time, is it, is it, right? You're busy, doing, building your home, but my home, my house, being ruined.
[17:31] And, further, in verse 5, verse 6, give careful thoughts, to your ways, look, you have planted much, but you harvested, little, right?

You eat, but you never, have enough. You drink, but you never, have your fill. You put on clothes, you're not warm. You earn wages, only put them, in a first, with whole dinner.
The outcomes, do not, equate, the efforts, that you give, you're given. You know? There's, there's things, you know, we try to, to work hard, two jobs, three jobs, you know, we think we've got extra income, but, just to come and wait, oh look, how come, how come I see doctors more, in these, these, these, these, serves of time?
And, you know, the car breaks down more often. do I actually fear for myself rather than the kingdom of God and sometimes it helps us for us to reflect it's not that we don't work hard but when we come to God and God says to us where do I put my focus there's nothing wrong with working hard right we need to work and we need to do our best right but if we ignore the health of that then somehow maybe we could end up like these people but when the word of God came through the prophets that came happened and we see the people that reacted they were receptive to the word of God in verse 12 the people obeyed the voice of the Lord of God and they fear the Lord that's that's a very encouraging result when the prophets of God preaching the law of the Lord and the people obeyed and they fear the Lord and it's not just not just that in verse 14 the Lord stirred up the spirit of the probable son of the yes governor of Judah and the spirit of Joshua son of the justedak and the and the whole remnant of the people and the result was they came and began to work on the house of the Lord
Almighty of God now very interesting in chapter 4 they stopped the work of the Lord alright it's just the king even did not even issue a bank but they were just fearing the people were harassing them hassling them and they just stopped right but now they did not even receive the ethic from the king to go ahead to decide the building so they they actually was obeying the order of the king of kings and not the prison king I'm not saying that we should break any law right but do we have do we have the command and the order of the of the Lord in my heart that gives me the priority of my life and if there any any government orders or laws that go against the will of God right how will I respond this is this this is how the people at a time respond to to the to the to the will of God and the start of building and I believe that as people of God as Christians we do need the will of God in our lives otherwise
[22:12] I mean we you know we're built we're built our lives anyway but if we're built not on the will of God not on the solid rock everything will turn out we'll just go yeah we'll just break down Jesus said that right if you hear my words and obey not just hearing but observing and obeying and you'll be your life will be built on the solid rock but all the time if we just build our lives on certain other secondary values even whether we're Chinese or we're Asians we're built on our Asian valleys better than the Western valleys they will crumble but we're built on the will of them and we'll stand solid this is this is what we want to encourage us all to respond

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Ezra he has he has his mandate to devote himself to the study and observing of the law of the Lord and he was teaching his retreat and Lord in Ezra Pastor William did that in probably time he spoke that in last week I mean yes Saturday and I mean it's not just for Ezra it's for the whole community of us people and even to us today we have the word of God in us and we receptive to the word of God if we are not we could never experience the sovereignty of God never they couldn't see anything down the road if they were just kept doing their own thing they heard the prophet but they did not respond they couldn't experience the greatness of God full stop but they were receptive they acted and they distorting happening so when they were building these people came they and and they were they were the governor of
France and maybe the secretary or whatever other officials they came they inquired what were you doing in the area that we governed because legitimately they need to inquire because these guys were building such a big project they could be anything valious you know so they need to as officials they need to find out and then they sent a letter to the king now this trans-Uphrates what's trans-Uphrates now this is the Uphrates river okay in original language it really says something like on the west side of the Uphrates so what's on the west side of the Uphrates it'll be around here now this is the whole of
Persian empire but on the west side of the Uphrates this is what this he was actually governing so anything happen here he needs to know if these guys rebel and started something he'll be answerable to the king so that it's very legitimate for him to find out hey what are you guys doing but compared to the enemies mentioned in chapter 4 he was kind of neutral and he did not stop them just inquired and then he sent a letter to the king to find out what going on so in the letter to the king it was interesting that he included the reply the conversation of the Jews and he recorded what they said in the letter to the
Persian now see see what the Jews actually said the governor asked them why are you building this and they actually this is what the Jews replied that we are the servants of the God of heaven and earth now because our ancestors angers him so he gave us into the hands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon but however in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon oh he issued a decree for us to rebuild now they were telling the past history they were recognizing God's seed in the past now even in this reply we could see the Jews had some sort of understanding they were saying they were mentioning
[27:50] God was God of heaven and earth right everything was under his control he was Yahweh was sovereign overall even though you guys these kings call them king of kings but our God is greater now imagine it's pretty courageous you know you're writing something to the guy who called himself king of kings so you say I'll see greater than you because they're going to have some sort of courage in all these people and then in verse 12 he said our God is God of righteousness I mean even we are as his people we sin he wouldn't let us go unpunished right he was not a God that you could actually bribe you know he's just given more sacrifice he's spurned more offerings and he'll acquit you no no no

God is the God of heaven and earth and God is God of righteousness he would not let us even his people go unpunished if we sin and certainly God is God of merciful kindness is faithful to his covenantal life and that's why in in in in in in in time he brought us back through the person who someone who didn't even understand knowing our God but he was sovereign overall so these people these Jews returned Jews they had this kind of reflection over in the past history and over God in dealing with their history they realized that wow
God was indeed sovereign and good and right but they had the assurance to rebuild the temple and they they they would be very very much um comforted to know God is merciful kindness God is merciful to them and being kind to them allow them to come back to the dead so do we realize that these attributes of God in our life now this I mean our God is so different compared to other religions other religions always that one but not the other what we have all these attributes of God and if beyond beyond our head how can a God who's totally righteous and also loving kindness and loving kindness how can we balance it we can't but God has what we can and we can we can lay fully assured he has the power to change our circumstances and we need to be careful we don't because oh God who loves me still he died he did die on the cross for me and we just maybe
I'll do whatever I want we can't so just help us to reflect God's way God's action God's deed in my life and and just help me how to respond to him and certainly to recognize God's sovereignty in chapter 6 verses 1-12 this that's the reply to reaction of this Persian king why would what was

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Darius response this Persian king who never knew the God of Israel and why was the author putting that in detail and what was he trying to convey now the reply of the Persian king was basically there was two things one do not interfere with the work of this temple of
God don't even go near in Chinese translations don't even go near them leave them alone but not only that verse 9 you give them whatever you need you give them whatever you need but out of your treasury I wonder if that I thought I never never actually why now I have to give more money I paid more money to these now that was the response of the Persian kids the riot and to make sure these people are not harassed anymore in verse 11 furthermore I decree that if anyone despised this edit a beam to be pulled out from their house and they are to be imperiled on it and for this time their house is to be made of tire and heavy who's going to buy that heavy right just to make sure no one would break this law now this is quite amazing from someone who never knew the god of
[33:39] Israel would give this kind of decree now but this decree in verse 10 was had savage in itself because for the Persian king that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the god of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his son so I should be blessed you know have more friends better than more enemies so for him more gods to bless me instead of there is a god who will curse me alright I'll do that I have ample wealth let me be generous to them so that this god can bless me and they can pray for me and me and my son to be prosperous that was his mentality but God used that it was not the right mentality but God can use that right

God can use anything even what we think enemies in our life people opposing us but God can change these circumstances that's why you can see peace is the peace of peace I don't know what sort of things we go through at the moment things we dread that will happen in my life my relationship I know and our truth and our work my health whatever if we trust that we believe Jesus our God is free of him and we can lay our full trust in him national that we and can cant have have he
God is sovereign over all things, even powerful things. Even things that we think, wow, this is too much for me.
This mountain is too great. This river is too deep. Any half of that is free moving things around.
We all know that without this spirit we can be even excited, right? And we all know that all things work for the good of those 11, right?
[36:26] Who have been called according to everything. How many can we actually, confidently, believe in this spirit? I mean, take some difficult times, you've gone through it, gone through it, and then you know, oh God, truly, absolutely, and we can, these four verses we don't appreciate in this time, in certain times.

Only if you go through difficult times, you go through it, go and pass it, and you look back, yes, I believe it. Now, when Paul said that, he did not say that all things were good, alright?
Don't be mistaken. He did not say all things were good. He said all things were for the good. Okay?
For example, okay, these things. Ladies, what do you feel with them? Alright? You bake something, alright?
Bread, cake. Now, these are all things, but not all things are good for eating. I can't imagine taking a tablespoon of salt and putting it in my mouth.
[37:48] No. Milk, I can sip, alright, and swallow, but not oil, right? But, Paul says, all things work together for the good of those who love God, right?

So, you mix them up in a dough, you know, you put an egg, you put water, you put salt, and you mix them up, and, and, and, just so, so, gluey, so doughy, what do you do with them, you know?
And then, and you have to put them in the oven, for, for, for, for, something to breathe, bake them in the, you know, it's three inch, heat. And then, the outcome was, all things work for those who love cake.
You know what I mean? There are things that we don't like. We, we, we, we ask, God, why would you allow these things happen? And Paul says, yes, of course.
There are things I can understand. He, himself, he prays three times for the thorns he had in him. And, God, please remove that. God never removed it. So, when he said that, he knew all things had a purpose, but God is sovereign, to make all things work together for God, for those who love him.
[39:12] Do you agree? You are? Maybe, he wants the, we, we thank you for something that we're going to, have to pass.

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I don't understand. But he does. and he is sovereign, he's going to use that, to make the best out of me. Will we trust that?
Is he picking up you? so we respect God's word and we reflect God's peace and we recognize God's sovereignty in my life we can confidently say and see and indeed the revelation one day I'll use it to come back and and he is me and Lord of Lord you know we don't even need these of images the pictures to remind us we know in our heart father I just want to thank you that we need to be reminded by your word that you are the king of being and Lord of Lord and indeed you can work through the circumstances and things happening in our life things that we dread things that we don't want that we want to pray against that but Lord you allow this happen in my life you have a purpose help me to believe to hear and to observe your word help me to reflect your your deeds in my life to help me to see things that happening in that that you have your purpose in it in order that Lord I can truly believe and I can sing I can proclaim you are the king of things and Lord of lords in Jesus name I say amen

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