

# Ezra 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

## Analysis

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The prophets Haggai and Zechariah emerged during a critical period when temple reconstruction had ceased for approximately 16 years (536-520 BC). The Hebrew phrase 'prophesied unto the Jews' (hitnabbeu al-yehudaya) indicates they spoke authoritatively in God's name, not merely offering human encouragement. The specification 'in the name of the God of Israel' (beshem elohe Yisrael) emphasizes prophetic authority derived from divine commission, not personal opinion.

Haggai's ministry began in the second year of Darius (520 BC, Haggai 1:1), confronting the people's priority of building personal houses while God's house lay in ruins. Zechariah, son of Iddo, began his ministry two months later (Zechariah 1:1), providing complementary apocalyptic visions of future glory motivating present obedience. Their combined ministry demonstrates how God raises up prophetic voices at crucial moments to redirect His people.

Theologically, this verse illustrates that God's work requires both human effort and divine enablement. The people had legitimate reasons for discouragement—opposition, economic hardship, governmental prohibition. Yet God didn't accept these excuses but sent prophets to reignite vision and courage. This teaches that divine calling transcends circumstances, and God provides resources (prophetic encouragement) for challenges He ordains.

## Historical Context

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The 16-year gap between foundation-laying (536 BC) and resumed construction (520 BC) resulted from multiple factors: opposition from neighbors (Ezra 4), economic difficulties as people struggled to establish agriculture, and perhaps loss of initial enthusiasm. Haggai 1:4-11 reveals the people prioritized personal prosperity over God's house, experiencing crop failures and economic frustration as divine discipline.

Darius I (Darius the Great, 522-486 BC) consolidated power after defeating rivals following Cambyses II's death. His reign brought stability enabling renewed temple work. Archaeological evidence, including the Behistun Inscription, documents Darius's consolidation of power and administrative reforms. His favorable disposition toward the Jerusalem temple contrasted with earlier Persian reluctance.

Haggai and Zechariah represent different prophetic styles: Haggai delivered straightforward calls to action (five messages in four months), while Zechariah received elaborate apocalyptic visions spanning years. Together they provided immediate motivation and long-term hope, demonstrating how God uses diverse gifts to accomplish His purposes.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. What does God's provision of prophetic encouragement at this crisis point teach about His commitment to complete what He begins?

2. How do Haggai's practical exhortations and Zechariah's apocalyptic visions complement each other in motivating faithful action?
3. What principles emerge about persevering in God's work when facing prolonged discouragement or opposition?

## Interlinear Text

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עֲדֹא	בֶר	וְזַכְרְיָה	נְבִיאֵי א	חַגַּי	וְהִתְנַבֵּי
of Iddo	the son	and Zechariah	Then the prophets	Haggai	prophesied
H5714	H1247	H2148	H5029	H2292	H5013
וּבִירוּשָׁלַם	בֵּיהּ וּד	דִּי יְהוּדָיִ א	עַל־יְהוֹנָן:	נְבִיאֵי א	
and Jerusalem	that were in Judah	the Jews	even unto	Then the prophets	
H3390	H3061	H3062	H5922	H5029	
עַל־יְהוֹנָן:	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֱלֹהֵי	בְּשֵׁם		
even unto	of Israel	of the God	in the name		
H5922	H3479	H426	H8036		

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