

Ezra 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

Analysis

The phrase 'then rose up' (wayyaqum) indicates decisive response to prophetic word. Zerubbabel and Jeshua didn't hesitate or deliberate but acted immediately upon receiving divine direction through the prophets. This demonstrates proper relationship between prophecy and leadership—spiritual authority speaks God's word; civil and religious leaders implement it.

The clause 'and with them were the prophets of God helping them' shows ongoing prophetic support beyond initial encouragement. The Hebrew mesayin lehon means assisting or supporting, indicating Haggai and Zechariah didn't merely deliver messages then depart but remained involved, providing continued encouragement and guidance. This models integrated ministry where prophetic voices and practical leaders work collaboratively.

Beginning 'to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem' marks transition from inaction to obedience. Despite no change in external circumstances—opposition remained, economic challenges persisted, Persian authorization was uncertain—they obeyed prophetic direction. This demonstrates that faith acts on God's word before seeing circumstances resolve, trusting divine provision will follow obedience rather than waiting for favorable conditions before obeying.

Historical Context

Zerubbabel, as Davidic descendant and Persian-appointed governor, provided civil authority for the project. Jeshua, as high priest, ensured religious legitimacy. Their partnership prevented separation of sacred and secular, maintaining integration of faith and public life characteristic of biblical covenant community.

Beginning construction without explicit Persian permission represented significant risk. Darius was consolidating power and might view unsanctioned building as rebellion. Yet the prophets' word provided confidence that God would vindicate obedience. This faith was confirmed when Darius not only approved but funded the project (Ezra 6:6-12).

Archaeological evidence from this period shows Jerusalem remained small and poor. The rebuilt temple, while significant religiously, was modest architecturally compared to Solomon's original or later Herodian expansion. Yet God's presence and blessing didn't depend on magnificence but on obedient response to His word through the prophets.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the immediate response of Zerubbabel and Jeshua to prophetic word model proper relationship between spiritual direction and practical leadership?
2. What does the prophets' ongoing support ('helping them') teach about sustained engagement versus one-time encouragement?
3. How does acting in faith before circumstances improve demonstrate trust in God's sovereignty and provision?

Interlinear Text

בר וַיֹּשֶׁב וְשַׁאֲלֹתִיאֵל
the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son
בְּרֵרֶן זְרֻבָּבֶל לְבָנָם בְּאֵד יְהוָה
Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel
H116 H6966 H2217 H1247 H7598 H3443 H1247

וְיַצֵּד לְמִבֵּן אֶלְעָד יְהוָה
to build the house of God
of Jozadak and began to build the house of God
H3136 H8271 H1124 H1005 H426 H1768

אֶלְעָד יְהוָה בְּרֵשֶׁת מִבְּרָא
the house of God was built at the beginning of
which is at Jerusalem and with them were the prophets
H3390 H5974 H5029 H1768 H426

מְפַעֵּד יְהוָה
helping H0
H5583

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 3:2 (References God): Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

Ezra 6:14 (Prophecy): And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.