

praised God abundantly at the reply of Darius.

b. The Jews celebrated and praised God

- 1) First, they had a **dedication** service (6:16-18). They did this with joy! The task they had returned to do was now complete. The temple was rebuilt. This was a time of worshipping the Lord and praising Him. When God meets our needs or answers prayer for us, we need to be quick to praise Him. (Ps 113:3) "*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised.*"
- 2) Second, they celebrated the **Passover** (6:19-21). At this point, Ezra began again to write in Hebrew. The section that pertained to Persia (Ezra 4:1-6:18) was mostly written in Aramaic.^{Pett}
 - a) This was not the first Passover since their return to the land, but it certainly was a very joyful one.
 - b) They separated from the filth of the land and worshipped the Lord.
- 3) Third, they celebrated the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** (6:22). This was the seven-day feast that always followed the Passover. Darius is here called the king of Assyria because he was king of Assyria as well as Babylon and Persia.

Conclusion: We have noted that God's eye oversaw the inspection, the investigation, the instruction, and the implementation. God's eyes are over us as well. In the introduction we read (Ps 34:15) "*The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*" While the Lord sees all that we do (Pr 15:3), His overseeing eyes are especially upon the righteous. That is a mighty good reason to keep your heart right with the Lord.

If you have not taken time today to praise the Lord for the many blessings He brings your way, do it as we pray in a few moments. He deserves our praise from sunrise till sunset every single day!

Song: Praise the Saviour, 51

God's Overseeing Eye

1 October 2017 PM - Ezra 5-6 - EzNe17 - Scott Childs

Introduction: God used the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah to stir the hearts of His people and put them into action. They began again to rebuild the temple (Ezr 5:1-2).

Once again the devil tried to hinder their work. Officials from Persia came to Jerusalem. This time however, the Jews were determined to obey God and keep building because verse 5 states, "**the eye of their God was upon**" them. Now that they were right with God, God's eye was overseeing them for good. The Psalmist wrote, (Ps 33:18) "*Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;*" (cf., Gen 6:8; Pr 5:21; 15:3).

Nothing happens to God's people that He does not see and allow. He especially oversees those who are living righteously. (Ps 34:15) "*The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*"

Transition: In Ezra 5 and 6 we are going to find four events that God's eyes oversaw which can encourage us in time of trial.

God's eyes oversaw ...

1. The **Inspection** by Persian Officials (5:3-5)

a. Questioning

- 1) Evidently Darius the King of Persia sent officials to Canaan to inspect what the Jews were doing (5:3).
- 2) Remember that for about 14 years the temple work had been neglected. Now that God used Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people, the work was progressing. Perhaps the Samaritans sent word of complaint to Darius, we do not know.
- 3) Tatnai asked the builders two questions. 1) Who commanded you to build? 2) What are the names of the builders?

b. Answers

- 1) God's eye was upon the Jews and God encouraged them. When we are right with God, He will give us courage and boldness to do His work. (Ps 118:6) "*The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*"

- 2) They answered the questions and evidently asked that search be made of Cyrus' command.

God's eyes oversaw ...

2. The **Investigation** of Persian Rolls (5:6-17)

a. A letter was sent to Darius (5:6-16)

- 1) Greetings and introduction (5:6-10)
- 2) The Jews answers are recorded (5:11-16).
 - a) They clearly identified with the God of heaven (5:11).
 - b) They admitted their sin (5:12).
 - c) They claimed that Cyrus had commanded them to rebuild God's house (5:13).
 - d) They mentioned the golden vessels of the temple that Cyrus had returned (5:14-15). This would have been strong evidence that they were telling the truth.
- 3) If we are ever investigated for something, the right thing for us to do is to just tell the truth. Children, if you do wrong and are asked about it, **tell the truth**.

b. The request to investigate (5:17)

- 1) They requested that King Darius investigate these claims.
- 2) They then asked the king to send them his wishes after investigating.
- 3) The next verse (6:1) says that Darius did investigate. You know, I believe God did a work in his pagan heart. Consider the words of Solomon, (Prov 21:1) "*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*" Daniel's description of God also sheds light on this truth. (Dan 4:35) "*And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*"

God's eyes oversaw ...

3. The **Instruction** of King Darius (6:1-12)

a. Evidence was found in Achmetha

- 1) They searched in the house of the rolls where the treasures of the king were kept (6:1). Evidently, the kings

greatly valued their diaries. Whether you keep a diary or journal or not, you ought to at least keep a record of God's blessings and answers to prayer. I have not been very good about this in the past, but I am trying harder now.

- 2) It appears that Achmetha was the place of the summer capital of Persia. ^{Strong's} (6:2)
- 3) Searching all the historical rolls must have been quite a task.
- 4) It is exciting to see how God worked in Cyrus' heart.
- 5) It is wonderful that the king's scribes were so thorough in their recording.

b. Note Darius' exciting reply

- 1) He ordered that they "let the work of the house of God alone" (6:7).
- 2) He then commanded that the Jewish workers be paid from the kings goods (6:8).
- 3) They were also to be supplied with animals for sacrifices (6:9).
- 4) He asked that the Jews pray for him (6:10).
- 5) He ordered that anyone not obeying this word should be punished (6:11).
- 6) He praised the God of the Jews and ordered that this decree be done with speed (6:12).
- 7) Isn't it great that when God worked in Darius' heart, He did not just cause him to leave the Jews alone but caused him to reach out and help them abundantly? Truly God is good! God blesses those who obey Him. (2Chr 16:9) "*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him ...*"

God's eyes oversaw ...

4. The **Implementation** in Jerusalem (6:13-22)

a. The Persian officials acted quickly

- 1) Tatnai and his men speedily obeyed the king (6:13).
- 2) The Jews prospered and completed the work (6:14-15). I would imagine that Haggai and Zechariah rejoiced and