

LONG STORY SHORT

The Return

Ezra 1-6

The **Plan**

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, **the LORD fulfilled the prophecy** he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

(2 Chronicles 36:22, Ezra 1:1, NLT)

“This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. **Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you!**’” (Ezra 1:2–3, NLT)

God always makes a way!

**Even when it feels like your life is falling apart,
God is still working his plan and his plan is still working!**

The **Change**

Even though the people were afraid of the local residents, **they rebuilt the altar** at its old site. Then they began to sacrifice burnt offerings on the altar to the LORD each morning and evening. (Ezra 3:3, NLT)

Things need to be different.

**The key to a comeback is to
rebuild the altar of the Lord
and put yourself on it.**

The **Opposition**

The **enemies** of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were rebuilding a Temple to the LORD, the God of Israel. (Ezra 4:1, NLT)

Stay alert to the enemy’s schemes.

So the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem had **stopped**, and it remained at a **standstill** until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia. (Ezra 4:24, NLT)

**When you have a setback,
do not step back,
because God has already
prepared your comeback.**

The **Discipline**

At that time the **prophets** Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They **prophesied in the name of the God** of Israel who was over them. (Ezra 5:1, NLT)

“Why are you living in luxurious houses while **my house lies in ruins**? This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: **Look at what’s happening to you!** You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!” “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: **Look at what’s happening to you!** Now go up into the hills, bring down timber, and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD. You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because **my house lies in ruins**, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine houses. It’s because of you that the heavens withhold the dew and the earth produces no crops. **I have called for a drought** on your fields and hills—a drought to wither the grain and grapes and olive trees and all your other crops, a drought to starve you and your livestock and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get.” (Haggai 1:4–11, NLT)

Stay open to correction.

So the Jewish elders **resumed their work**, and they were greatly encouraged by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. The Temple was finally **finished**... (Ezra 6:14, NLT)

**When you stay on track,
God makes your comeback
into an impact!**