

## Devotional and Reading Plan for 2022, Week Thirty-seven

Week 37 September 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>. Ezra 4:6 --8:36; Esther 1:1-10:3; Daniel 10:1-12:13; Haggai 1:1-2:23; Zechariah 1:1-14:21

will read about the courage of people like Esther and Mordecai whose actions saved the Jewish people. We will also examine the courage of the Jews who began to return to Jerusalem after the time of captivity to rebuild the temple of the Lord. *D. Curtis*

September 10<sup>th</sup>  
Daniel 10:1-12:13; Ezra 4:24-5:1; Haggai 1:1-15 Courage to Change

In the past few years I have watched Dr. Phil on a number of occasions. I appreciate his question. Apparently, God used that question as an effective tool to show His people that they were not meeting His standard (Hag. 1:5, 7).

-phil- he asks his guest  
This question is a tool to help someone see the deficiency in their own actions. Once that objective has been accomplished, the real work of change begins. Zerubbabel and the remnant

We all will realize at some point that either our actions, beliefs or thoughts will need to be have the courage to change? To make a change requires admitting mistakes and humbling

May you have the courage to do just that.

September 11<sup>th</sup>  
Ezra 5:2; Haggai 2:1-23; Zechariah 1:1-5:11. Ghosts of the Past

ostalgic. I have observed that better. And as we read in Haggai, this can be a discouragement to us in the present.

As the people began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, they soon realized that it would not be nearly as impressive as the temple Solomon built. Instead of disregarding that fact, the Lord acknowledged it (Hag. 2:2-3) and then encouraged the people to press on in spite of that fact (2:4-5). His message was, that regardless of how less impressive a building it was, the people were to continue on in the building of it.

No matter what task God has given you to do, whether it is business, ministry, family, whatever it is, you are to take courage and do it regardless of how much better or more successful the past may have been.

May you take courage and fulfill your tasks, knowing that God is with you.

September 12<sup>th</sup>  
Ezra 5:3-6:14a; Zechariah 6:1-8:23 Surprising Support

Support and encouragement can come from many different sources and sometimes it can discouragement when the governors of neighboring provinces began to investigate the work they were doing on the temple. There was no guarantee that Darius would honor the edict of the Babylonian King Cyrus, who had gone before him.

However, God saw fit to encourage His people by showing that King Darius fully supported them and included instruction for the governors in the area to support the effort.

It can be very encouraging when our efforts are validated by those who are in authority over us. I am sure that you have experienced this kind of encouragement from parents, teachers or bosses in your life. So, the question is, when was the last time you encouraged someone who has to answer to you?

May you be a surprising source of encouragement for someone today.

September 13<sup>th</sup>

Zechariah 9:1-14:21 Day of the Lord

We are all familiar with the concept of a doomsday prophet, who attempts to strike fear in the hearts of people to bring about repentance today. I remember first seeing them as a child in such movies as Ghostbusters and Superman.

Well, today I want you to consider the possibility that courage is also an appropriate response to the coming events in the Day of the Lord. How is it that a description of those events can be an encouragement to us? It is only because of the victory that we have in Jesus.

Zechariah 14:9 says,  
be one Lord

about. What an encouraging picture. The Lord reigning on earth and He will be the only one encouraging to me than the political corruption and idolatry that I see in the world today.

September 14<sup>th</sup>

Ezra 4:6; 6:14b-22; Esther 1:1-4:17. Courage from Above

*Movement for Democratic*

*Change*, was forced to cancel a prayer meeting because the attendees were in grave danger from riot police. Tsvangirai himself was beaten and jailed later when he attempted to visit the 40-some supporters who were arrested at the prayer gathering. Reflecting on that experience,

For men like Tsvangirai and Mordecai, whom we read about today, the courage to stand  
Rather, it is in God that they find the courage to take a stand when governing authorities are in confli

When you face potential persecution or humiliation for your Christian faith, may you have the courage of Mordecai, who stood up to Haaman, or of Peter and John who stood up to the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:29).

September 15<sup>th</sup>

Esther 5:1-10:3 Independence Day

A few years ago, there was a movie titled *Independence Day*. Having an affection for action-adventure movies, I thoroughly enjoyed the movie. One of my favorite scenes is when the President, played by Bill Pullman, encourages a rag-tag band of fighter pilots who were about to face an invading alien force. Speaking to a group who faced certain death and the potential destruction of the human race, he inspired them to victory.

Facing a similar fate of total destruction and annihila

Mordecai, giving them permission and encouraging them to band together and defend themselves.

Mordecai was an encourager. He encouraged Esther to take full advantage of her station as Queen of Persia to help her people. Then he encouraged his people to defend themselves in the face of certain destruction.

May you, like Mordecai, encourage the people around you.

September 16<sup>th</sup>

Ezra 4:7-23; 7:1-8:36. Adopted by God

Romans 8:31b

was upon Ezra. Also in 7:28, Ezra states that this was a great source of encouragement for him in knowing that the hand of the Lord was on him.

There is a similar source of encouragement for us today as New Testament believers and partakers of a new and better covenant. Paul picks up on this theme in Romans 8:31. As

(Rom. 8:17) for we are co-heirs with Christ.

So, take courage, believer! As one who is now adopted by God, know that there is nothing that can separate you from His love (Rom. 8:35). There is no greater source of joy or encouragement for us than to know that the One who created us has also redeemed us and has secured our salvation.