

The Jews Return

CHARACTERS: Zerubbable, Ezra. All

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Ezra 3

FK reading level: 5.2

Sacrifice Restored

ZERUBBABLE: By the seventh month, the Israelites had settled in their towns

ALL: and the people gathered together in Jerusalem.

EZRA: The priests along with Zerubbabel began to build the altar of Israel's God

ALL: as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God.

EZRA: On the first day of the seventh month we began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord

ALL: even though the foundation of the Lord's temple had not yet been laid.

ZERUBBABLE: We gave money to the stonecutters and artisans

ALL: and gave food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre

EZRA: so they could bring cedar wood from Lebanon

ALL: according to the authorization given them by King Cyrus of Persia.

Rebuilding the Temple

ZERUBBABLE: In the second month of the second year after we arrived

EZRA: Zerubbabel, the priests, the Levites, and all who had returned to Jerusalem from the captivity

ALL: began working on the house of God.

ZERUBBABLE: When the builders had laid the foundation of the Lord's temple

EZRA: the priests and the Levites took their positions to praise the Lord

ZERUBBABLE: They sang with praise and thanksgiving to the Lord

ALL: For He is good; His faithful love to Israel endures forever.

EZRA: But many of the older priests, Levites, and family leaders, who had seen the first temple

ALL: wept loudly when they saw the foundation of this house

ZERUBBABLE: but many others shouted joyfully.

ALL: And the sound was heard far away.

Opposition to Rebuilding the Temple

CHARACTERS: Zerubbable, Mithredath, Rehum, Zerubbable, Ezra, All

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Ezra 4

FK reading level: 6.2

REHUM: The returned exiles are building a temple for Yahweh, the God of Israel

MITHREDATH: Let's pay a visit to Zerubbabel and the leaders of the families

REHUM: Our enemies

MITHREDATH: Let us build with you, for we also worship your God and have been sacrificing to Him

REHUM: Ever since the time King Esar-haddon of Assyria brought us here.

ZERUBBABLEZ: You may have no part with us in building a house for our God

ALL: since we alone must build it for Yahweh, the God of Israel

REHUM: *(aside to MITHREDATH)* Let us discouraged the people of Judah

MITHREDATH: Good idea. We will make them afraid to build.

REHUM: We can bribe officials to act against them to frustrate their plans

MITHREDATH: Take down this letter King Artaxerxes. *(REHUM and MITHREDATH pantomime writing, editing a letter as they ponder, hands on chins, considering the wording, pointing to the letter)*

REHUM: Let it be known that the Jews are rebuilding that rebellious and evil city

MITHREDATH: finishing its walls, and repairing its foundations.

REHUM: If that city is rebuilt and its walls are finished

MITHREDATH: they will not pay tribute, duty, or land tax, and the royal revenue will suffer.

REHUM: Since we have taken an oath of loyalty to the king

MITHREDATH: and it is not right for us to witness his dishonor, we suggest that a search should be made

REHUM: in your fathers' record books

MITHREDATH: There you will discover and verify that the city is a rebellious city

REHUM: harmful to kings and provinces.

MITHREDATH: There have been revolts in it since ancient times.

REHUM: That is why this city was destroyed.

MITHREDATH: We advise the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are finished

REHUM: you will not have any possession west of the Euphrates.

The reply

CHARACTERS: Zerubbable, Mithredath, Rehum, Zerubabble, Ezra All

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Ezra 4

FK reading level: 7.9

REHUM: *(waving a letter)* King Artaxerxes has sent this reply. *(MITHREDATH and REHUM appear to be reading together, at times pointing to phrases)*

MITHREDATH: *(appearing to be reading)* As you suggested, a search was conducted.

REHUM: It was discovered that this city has had uprisings against kings since ancient times

MITHREDATH: and there have been rebellions and revolts in it.

REHUM: Powerful kings have also ruled over Jerusalem

MITHREDATH: and exercised authority over the whole region

REHUM: and tribute, duty, and land tax were paid to them.

MITHREDATH: Therefore, issue an order for these men to stop

REHUM: so that this city will not be rebuilt until a further decree has been pronounced by me.

(MITHREDATH and REHUM stop and high five each other, smiling broadly)

MITHREDATH: See that you not neglect this matter.

REHUM: Otherwise, the damage will increase and the royal interests will suffer. *(stop reading and look at each other)*

MITHREDATH: Issue an order and forcibly stopped the Jews in Jerusalem from building.

EZRA: The construction of God's house in Jerusalem stopped

ZERUBBABLEZ: and remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Online review game

Ezra Battleship <http://www.quia.com/ba/534664.html>