

BIBLICAL

A verse-by-verse
series through the
book of Ezra

BUILDING

WEEK 8:

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Written by Rev. R. Brady Henderson
For the First Baptist Church of Gaston



MONDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2025

‘FRUSTRATED OR FAITHFUL?’

It has been quite a while since I last wrote devotionals for our ‘Biblical Building’ series. I was out a week at the convention, then I preached an evangelistic sermon on John 3:16-17. last week, I wasn’t able to get it done. But hopefully, starting this week, I’ll be back on track in getting you these weekly devotionals regarding our series in Ezra.

The part of yesterday’s sermon was the preparation. Even amidst the craziness of VBS last week (by the way, VBS was awesome), I was able to have some amazing talks with our Lord and deep studies with the many tools God has given me to exegete Ezra 4:17-24. I hit the ground running a week from today and was able to run all week in my studies. Only having 1 sermon to preach and prepare last week made a difference. Let me share with you a quick devotional thought before you enter into your dedicated prayer time with the prayer points I’ve provided.

In my introduction of yesterday’s sermon, I alluded to the fact that sometimes, when God allows a halt, it is frustrating. I mentioned traffic is frustrating, and here in the Midlands, it certainly is. I mentioned how I was frustrated when God put a HALT to my plans to attend seminary and Pastor in Texas. But, may we not get so frustrated that we choose to no longer be faithful. The Israelites got frustrated, and as Haggai’s account points out, they got frustrated to where they quit trying to do what was necessary to rebuild God’s temple, they instead built their paneled homes. Don’t stay frustrated, stay faithful to God!



Application for Today: Frustrations are inevitable, and they happen to us all. But don't live in your frustrations. Let your frustrations be a catalyst to your faithfulness to God.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God if there are any current frustrations in your heart. Frustrations you have with Him, your family or friends. Let's get them out today so we can begin healing towards dedicated faithfulness.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying for white lines that will be painted onto the pavement as parking spots.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



TUESDAY, JULY 1ST, 2025

‘EXXAGGERATIONS END RELATIONSHIPS’

Once upon a time, many years ago, there was a Pastor who served in the deep South in a large, leading Baptist Church among the SBC. He was originally not from the Deep South and quickly learned that southern ways and etiquette were not suggestions but rules. What he also learned was how word travels fast. Whether it's true or not, many do not care. The Southern tongue in Baptist Churches is a force to be reckoned with. This middle-aged, prominent Preacher went to eat lunch at a local fast-food restaurant with a member of his staff. He had eaten lunch and walked out with the large cup he had purchased with his meal. Once he got into his truck, he realized he had walked out without a refill, so he went back in and asked the cashier if it was feasible for him to refill his cup with Coca-Cola. She said, 'Of Course!'. While walking out, a Church member who was disgruntled with him over Sunday's Sermon happened to be riding by. This Church member couldn't wait to get home and get on the landline phone. The Church member called 40+ Church members within 2 hours and said, 'The Pastor got out of his truck and got a refill without paying or eating at the restaurant, he just keeps using the cup, he's stealing!'. Within 4 weeks, during a business meeting with nearly 800 people present Pastor was fired. And it got ugly, ungodly, in seconds. All based on this one rumor. Due to the hurt and the lies, this Pastor never to Pastored again. What a great man of God, ruined by a person's exaggerations. Sadly, this is indeed a true story.

It was an exaggeration. But make no mistake, you cannot separate exaggerations from lies. They are one in the same. Just as Rehum convinced Artaxerxes to believe his exaggerations that the Israelites were once so powerful that they crossed the Euphrates, destroying the spirit of the Israelites in rebuilding the temple, so can your lies today ruin lives. Watch your tongue.

BIBLICAL

BUILDING



Application for Today: Like Rehum and this one disgruntled Church member from our true story this morning, have you ever exaggerated something that ended up hurting someone or a group of people? If so, reconcile. Make things right. Today.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking the Lord to guide and protect your tongue. Ask God to make you dedicated to taking every thought and word captive before it leaves the tongue.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today for the chairs in classroom #9 and for the people who will sit in them.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying about what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 2ND, 2025

‘IS GOD REALLY LORD OF YOUR LIFE?’

We will not be meeting tonight for our regular Midweek Worship and activities. I will miss seeing you all tonight but hope you'll take this time to enjoy time with your families and to celebrate our nation and how good God has been to us.

One thing that we didn't touch on as heavily as I would've liked to on Sunday for time's sake was the last phrase in Ezra 4:22. Let's look at that verse again, paying special attention to the last phrase: **‘And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?’**

King Artaxerxes is worried about himself based on the letter built upon exaggerations (half-truths) by Rehum. Artaxerxes is concerned that if he were to allow the Jews to continue ‘business as usual,’ it would create more damage and problems for him. And as he said, why should anything bad/challenging approach the King?

While none of us are Kings of Persia, isn't this how we sometimes act as Christians? Like whether it's our current building initiative, or the splitting of our SS class for space, or the moving of rooms for space, changing of curriculum, or a host of things, we're okay with change in the Church and in our lives, as long as it doesn't affect us. Or as Artaxerxes said, ‘damage’. But once the ‘damage’ hits our lives, then we have a problem. May we not be so selfish as to live this way and then simultaneously claim Christ as Lord? If He's Lord, then you'll let Him prune these behaviors right out of you!

BIBLICAL

BUILDING



Application for Today: We often talk a big game until we are asked to do something for Christ and His Kingdom that we don't want to do. What can we apply? If He's Lord, we'll act like it.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today earnestly asking the Lord if there's any area in your life where God is not Lord. Are there any blind spots you have that He wants to expose this morning?

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying screws and hinges that will be on the door of classroom #9. That God will bless each person who opens that door into the room.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying about what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



THURSDAY, JULY 3RD, 2025

‘FROM VERBAL TO PHYSICAL!’

Have you ever heard the phrase, maybe you’ve even said it before, ‘It’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt?’. This is so true. As we discussed on Sunday in Ezra 4:17-22, we find words that were uttered by Artaxerxes based on what Rehum had sent in a previous letter. These words were obviously verbal and communicated in the form of a letter. What happens in verse 23 is that Rehum is given the permission to ruin the work that the Israelites had already done on the temple. Let’s take a look at Ezra 4:23, “Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease.’

On Sunday, I pointed out that Rehum was a military commander (see verse 17). Due to his military connections as a Samaritan commander, he was probably escorted down to Jerusalem with a platoon of soldiers. Which is why verse 23 is clear to say ‘by force’. This wasn’t a nice, calm, and level-headed, ‘y’all get out of here’. There was force involved that may have gotten physical. We don’t know for sure, as the text does not indicate that. But historically, anytime Samaritans and Jews were in the same vicinity, it was probably going to get physical at some point.

The point of today’s devotion, your tongue, though verbal, can cause a lot of physical damage. Some seen and some unseen. Before you enter into the prayer points, open up James 3:1-12. I think that will serve as a good reinforcement of this morning’s devotional.

BIBLICAL

BUILDING



Application for Today: What you say today may not (and I hope not) lead to a physical altercation. But, it could cause pain to someone's well-being for years. Let's be careful.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today carefully praying over every word in James 3:1-12, and ask God to convict you of anything that needs changing in your life regarding your tongue.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying for the nets of the basketball goals that will be in our multi-purpose facility.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying about what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



FRIDAY, JULY 4TH, 2025

‘YOU AREN’T FREE TO BE LAZY!’

Happy Fourth of July! I hope and pray you have a great and safe holiday as we celebrate our nation’s birth. At the time you’re reading this devotion, Hannah and I will either be on our way or already in Atlanta. We decided to take a day trip to see our Atlanta Braves play Baseball. Go Braves! This coming Sunday, during our time of worship, we will recognize our nation and our freedoms. But make no mistake, we will worship King Jesus!

I know this past Sunday seems like it was a long time ago, but do you remember the last verse we looked at in our passage on Sunday? It’s the last verse in Ezra chapter 4. Let me remind you of it, ‘Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.’ For approximately 15 years, the work of the Lord on the temple in Jerusalem stopped. Of course, the opposition of the Samaritans had something to do with this. But as we closed our sermon on Sunday by looking at Haggai’s account, specifically Haggai 1:3-6, we know that their own laziness prohibited them from trying any further to get the house of the Lord built.

There are no records of any appeals made to Artaxerxes I (when legally appeals would have been allowed). Plus, Artaxerxes made a point in verse 21 that he could change his mind and recant the decree, if he wanted to. So why did the Israelites not push it when they could have? Comfort. The paneled homes that came from money that was given for the temple were much nicer to them, than having the temple built.

BIBLICAL

BUILDING



Application for Today: The freedom that we have in this country is unique and incredible. But we aren't free so we can be lazy. Let's not get comfortable in serving the Lord?

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today praying and asking the Lord to examine your heart and life to see if there's any avenue in which you might be lazy.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying for the cups that will be used in the new kitchen. Pray for the lips that will sip from these cups that they may spread the Gospel all across the world.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying about what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.

