

EZRA CHAPTERS 5 & 6 – Restoration of Temple Resumed; The Decree of Darius; The Temple Completed and Dedicated; The Passover Celebrated

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

EZRA – Chapters 5 & 6

I. Returning to the Land (1-2) -- A. The proclamation (Ezr_1:1-4) - B. The precious things (Dan_1:5-11) - C. The people (Ezr_2:1-70)
 II. Rebuilding the Temple (Ezr_3:1-13) -- A. Establishing the altar (Ezr_3:1-6) - B. Laying the foundation (Ezr_3:7-13) III. Resisting the Enemy (Ezr_4:1-24) - A. Compromise (Ezr_4:1-3) - B. Interference (Ezr_4:4-5)

IV. Resuming the Work (Ezr_5:1-17)

Fifteen years go by between Ezr_4:1-24 and Ezr_5:1-17. It is not until the Word of God is proclaimed by the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah that the work of the temple begins again. The Word of God had begun the work (Ezr_1:1), and now the Word of God would encourage the workers and ultimately finish the work (Ezr_6:14). From 520-515 the people labored and finished the temple. The preaching of God’s Word by His servants is the secret of victory in any work of God. God’s Word encouraged Joshua and Zerubbabel, and God’s eye was upon them (Ezr_5:5).

You will note in **Haggai four different messages**:

- (1) **Rebuke of the people for building their own houses and neglecting God’s house, Hag_1:1-15;**
- (2) **Encouragement of Zerubbabel that God is with him, Hag_2:1-9;**
- (3) **Conviction to the priests for refusing to cleanse themselves of defilement, Hag_2:10-19; and**
- (4) **Promise to Zerubbabel that the Messiah would one day rule in glory, Hag_2:20-23.** Haggai even dated each of these messages.

The Book of Zechariah is more complicated, but it too deals with the same period of time. **In Zec_1:1-6, the prophet called the nation to repent**; this was in November. Later, in February, he gave several visions of encouragement to the people (1:7-6:15). In the last half of his book (chaps. 9-14), Zechariah pictured Christ in His rejection, second coming in glory, and future kingdom. **All of these messages, of course, were meant to encourage the people to get to work and finish the temple.**

Tattenai the governor was within his rights asking about the building program, since the materials were being supplied partly by the royal treasury. We have his letter to the new ruler, Darius (521-486 BC), and in Ezr_6:1-22, the reply of the king. Ezr_6:8 indicates that the ministry of the two prophets had stirred up the people, for the work was progressing rapidly. “Sheshbazzar” in Ezr_6:16 is Zerubbabel. The Jews knew that they were in the right and suggested that the governor investigate the records to find the decree of the king. **It is not wrong for God’s people to claim their rights as citizens; see Act_16:35-40; 22:25.**

STEPS IN RESTORATION: For a nation or for an individual!

1. **Coming back!** (Letter to the Ephesians)
2. **Rebuilding the altar** – sacrifices, shedding of blood, to the cross of Christ!
3. **Back to the House of God - Commencing worship - the body of Christ – service, testimony!**
4. **Resistance! Enemy offers to join! Compromise; Direct Hindrance; Misrepresentation**
5. **Revival of the Word of God – Push Through Resistance with God’s Help - Reading/mediating, hearing God’s word**
6. **The necessity of bringing God’s work back, to stir up revival and ending lethargy.**



TIME LINE – BOOKS OF EZRA – (“Bible Hub” online)

537 BC	The Proclamation of Cyrus	Ezra 1
537 BC	The Exiles Return	Ezra 2
535 BC	Temple Work Begins (70 yrs. from 605BC)	Ezra 3
534 BC	Adversaries Hinder Temple Work	Ezra 4
534 BC	Artaxerxes Orders Work Stopped	Ezra 4:17
520 BC	Tattenai's Letter to Darius	Ezra 5
520 BC	Temple Work Resumed by Darius' Decree	Ezra 6
(Books of Haggai & Zechariah occur here)		
515 BC	Completion and Dedication of the Temple	Ezra 6:16
(Book of Esther occurs here)		
458 BC	Ezra Journeys to Jerusalem	Ezra 7
458 BC	Ezra Commissioned by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:11
457 BC	Families Return to Jerusalem with Ezra	Ezra 8
457 BC	Ezra's reforms	Ezra 9
456 BC	Ezra's Prayer About Intermarriage	Ezra 10

BOOK OF ESTHER (about 60 yrs. from 1st return)

483 BC	Queen Vashti Deposed	Esther 1
478 BC	Esther Becomes Queen	Esther 2
478 BC	Mordecai Thwarts a Conspiracy	Esther 2:21
474 BC	Haman Seeks Revenge on the Jews	Esther 3
473 BC	Mordecai Informs Esther of Haman's Plot	Esther 4
473 BC	Esther Prepares a Banquet	Esther 5
473 BC	The King Honors Mordecai	Esther 6
473 BC	Haman Is Hanged	Esther 7
473 BC	Xerxes' Edict on Behalf of Esther and Jews	Esther 8
472 BC	Purim Instituted	Esther 9
472 BC	Xerxes' Tribute to Mordecai	Esther 10

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH (about 100 years from 1st return)

445 BC	Nehemiah's Prayer for the Exiles	Nehemiah 1
444 BC	Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Nehemiah 2
444 BC	Builders of the Walls Named	Nehemiah 3
444 BC	Builders Overcome Ridicule	Nehemiah 4
444 BC	Nehemiah Abolishes Debt and Bondage	Nehemiah 5
444 BC	Sanballat's Plot	Nehemiah 6
444 BC	Completion of the Wall	Nehemiah 6:15
444 BC	Census of Returned Exiles	Nehemiah 7
444 BC	Ezra Reads the Law	Nehemiah 8
444 BC	Israelites Fast and Repent	Nehemiah 9
444 BC	Israelites Seal the Covenant	Nehemiah 10
444 BC	People Settle in Jerusalem	Nehemiah 11, 12
443 BC	Nehemiah Restores Laws	Nehemiah 13

Kings of Persia in Ezra-Nehemiah:

Cyrus(539-530); Darius I(522-486); Xerxes(Ahasueres – 485-464); Artaxerxes I (464-423)

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

EZRA CHAPTERS 5 & 6 – Restoration of Temple Resumed;

Ezr 5:1 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah (The Lord remembers) the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.

Ezr 5:2 So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

Ezr 5:3 At the same time Tattenai the (Persian)governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: "Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?"

Ezr 5:4 Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building.

Ezr 5:5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.

Tattenai's Letter to King Darius

Ezr 5:6 This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent: The governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who were in the region beyond the River, to Darius the king.

Ezr 5:7 (They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus) To Darius the king: All peace.

Ezr 5:8 Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

v. 1 God helps by sending prophets (as an alarm clock!) to move the work again. The words of the *Prophet Haggai* to the returnees are found in OT book, bearing name. The heart of his prophecy is Hag 1:2-10. *Zechariah's* prophecy is found in the Book of Zechariah. Cf. Zech 3:1-5; 4:1-10. Haggai's prophecy was a more direct encouragement **to get busy on the work of building the temple**; Zechariah's prophecy was **more directed to the spiritual condition of the returned exiles.**

v. 2 ...*prophets of God*.. The work of these prophets was effective, and helped the people properly re-order their priorities and to resume the building work on the temple (*rose up and began to build the house of God*). This verse also indicates that their work went beyond the directly prophetic as they helped with the practical work of building.

v. 3 God helps by protecting the work and allowing it to continue. *Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River*.; appointed by the King of Persia to govern the province that included Judea. He and his *companions* wanted to know why the work of building both the *temple* and the *wall* had resumed.

v. 4 ...*told them the names of the men*: This was recorded by Ezra, demonstrating there was no hint of rebellion among the returned Jews. In no way were they trying to rebel against the authority of the Persian King.

v. 5 ... *eye of their God was upon the elders*... God's blessing was upon them. The work, resumed under a response to the prophets of God, did not have to stop immediately. The work continued, confirming God's hand on His prophets. ***Till a report could go to Darius***: For two reasons: The bureaucracy and slow postal system meant that the work could continue. Second, they could pray and trust that God would guide King Darius to a favorable decision.

v. 6 Being a good administrator, *Tattenai* not only sent a letter to Darius, he also preserved *a copy* that made its way into Ezra's record.

vs. 7-8 *Let it be known to the king*: In this letter, Tattenai seems to fairly recount the situation from his perspective. Without prejudice or malice he explains the matter to King Darius. **t8b. Which is being built with heavy stones**: The **heavy stones** may have aroused suspicion in Tattenai, thinking perhaps wondering if the Jews were building a temple or a fortress.

v. 1 From Haggai, we might conclude that all God was interested in was the temple. Zechariah tells us how God is interested in lives, in people, not only in buildings. Haggai covers the period of August-December, 520 BC. Zechariah begins two months later than Haggai began and covers about two years. **Notice the self centeredness and lethargy of the people. God's work will never proper unless it is God's work happening under God's word! Do we ever fall asleep-just going through the motions-in our Christian walk? Especially when resistance comes!**

v. 2 Note the effectiveness of Haggai's (A very clear and very direct message) and Zechariah prophesying and joining in this call to action! The building of the temple was stopped about fifteen years. Then two good ministers, who urged them to go on with the work. It is a **sign that God has mercy in store** for a people, when He raises up prophets to be helpers in the work of God, as guides, overseers, and rulers. In Haggai, **we see what great things God does by His word**, which He magnifies above all His name, **and by His Spirit working with it. Ezr 6:14. Even Zerubbabel and Jeshua had fallen asleep, but they quickly rose up and began the work – Amen to the message!**

vs. 3-4 Coincidentally, as God's prophets are encouraging the work to continue, the government shows up to see **who gave them authority** to build the temple and what were **the names of the men** doing the construction. **Note the honesty in their answers, which, under God's hand, will be used to give approval for the work to continue.**

v. 5 God's favor is on them to complete the work – it will continue until a decree is received to stop! *Zec 2:8 For thus says the LORD of hosts: for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. Aren't we thankful that this promise also applies to all His children?*

vs. 6-8 Tattenai the governor was within his rights, making inquiry, since the materials were being supplied partly by the royal treasury. His letter is to the new ruler, Darius (521-486, indicating the ministry of the two prophets had stirred up the people, for the work was progressing rapidly. **The Jews knew that they were in the right** and suggested that the governor investigate the records to find the decree of the king. **It is not wrong for God's people to claim their rights as citizens**; see Acts 16:35-40, Paul-Philippi; 22:25, Paul-Jerusalem, scourging.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Rebuilding Begins Anew

Ezr 5:9 Then we asked those elders, and spoke thus to them: "Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?"

Ezr 5:10 We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who were chief among them.

Ezr 5:11 And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel (Solomon) built and completed.

Ezr 5:12 But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon.

Ezr 5:13 However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God.

Ezr 5:14 Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that was in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor.

Ezr 5:15 And he said to him, 'Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.'

Ezr 5:16 Then the same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished."

Ezr 5:17 Now therefore, if it seems good to the king, let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which is there in Babylon, whether it is so that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter. .

vs. 9-10 Darius came to the throne in a time of conflict and struggle. Therefore the Jews in Jerusalem started their work “without receiving any permission from him, and they did this when he was far too busy fighting for his throne to attend to the troubles of a small, distant city.” To see first hand what was going on, Tattenai the governor of that region and companions came to them and spoke thus to them: *“Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish these walls.... the names of the men who were chief?”*

vs. 11-12 Notice is answering the critical questions, from the standpoint of continuing the temple rebuilding, were totally accurate and honest.

vs. 13-15 Zerubbabel answers, "By the authority of a decree of Cyrus, issued in the year that he became king of Babylon" (*Ezr_5:13*). Then, a second question was asked, "What are the names of the men responsible for carrying on the work?" Zerubbabel answered that he was alone responsible, giving his name as Sheshbazzar, and declaring himself to be acting under a commission received from Cyrus (*Ezr_5:15*)

v. 16 Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation: This leads us to believe that Sheshbazzar (likely Babylonian) is actually another name for Zerubbabel, and that Tattenai (likely Persian) used this name because it would be more likely to appear in the records that were to be searched.

v. 17 Let a search be made (find out whether these things are true) . . . whether it is so that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem: Respectfully, Tattenai asked King Darius to research the matter, to determine if the rebuilding of temple and Jerusalem was royally sanctioned.

vs. 9-10 Tattenai, knowing that the king’s treasury was supplying part of the funding, came to see what is going on, asking two questions. Who gave you the authority and what are the names who were chief among them. Note the accuracy of the response. **How accurate, how truthful are we in responding to questions of those in authority?**

vs. 11-15 They don’t hide the truth, they didn’t make excuses, for Israel’s going into the Babylonian exile. Zerubbabel’s answer was accurate and truthful. God will use these truthful answers to provide a records search, which will verify the answers. As His children, **we must be careful to answer any questions totally accurately and honestly** as those who built, did here. They **took responsibility for Israel’s immorality and idolatry**, which resulted in their Babylonian activity! **What a sign of spiritual maturity here-no blame shifting! How often do we “blame-shift”?**

v. 16 Open and honestly, Zerubbabel says, I came and laid the foundation. The work was started but *it is not finished!* **Is it customary for us to finish the work the Lord gives us to do?**

v. 17 Notice how the truthful answer, enables the request to be made that a search of the king’s records be made to verify that King Cyrus had indeed issued a decree to build this house of God in Jerusalem. Also giving confidence to the next statement, *let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter. . .* Notice also Tattenai’s fairness and diligence! **May we always remember to be accurate and honest in our answers!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The Decree of Darius;

Ezr 6:1 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon.

Ezr 6:2 And at Achmetha (capital of the Medes, 300 miles northeast of Babylon-also known as Ecbantana, Hamedam - Esther, Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite). in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus:

Ezr 6:3 In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits.

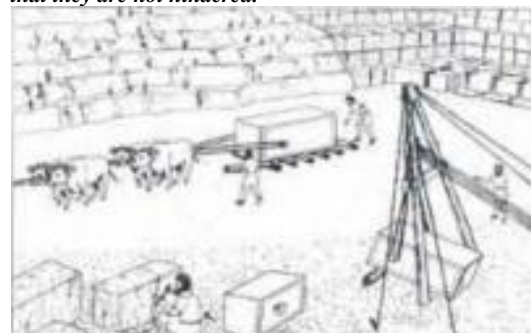
Ezr 6:4 with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury.

Ezr 6:5 Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God"— (for the first time we find out these interesting facts, from the records at Achmetha, capital of the Medes)

Ezr 6:6 Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who are beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there.

Ezr 6:7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.

Ezr 6:8 Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered.



v. 1 *Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made:* This was the response to the respectful request made by Tattenai described in the last part of Ezra 5.

v. 2 *At Achmetha . . . a scroll was found:* This indicates that there must have been some diligence required in the search. This in itself was an evidence of God's hand in the matter; otherwise, they might have easily given up the search.

v. 3 *King Cyrus issued a decree:* This is the decree originally recorded in Ezra 1, giving the Jewish people who wanted to return to Jerusalem and Judea the right to return and to repopulate Judea and to rebuild Jerusalem. *Let the house be rebuilt . . . Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury:* Not only did Cyrus give permission for the temple to be rebuilt, he commanded the funding of the work from the royal treasury

v. 4 *Heavy stones:* “The great stones which had excited suspicion were now found to be expressly authorized - for the term is the same as for the ‘huge stones’ of [Ezr 5:8](#) - literally, stones for rolling, too massive to be transported by other means.”

v. 5 *Let the gold and silver articles of the house of God . . . be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem:* Furthermore, Cyrus ordered that the spoils taken from the temple some two generations before be returned to the Jerusalem temple. It was a remarkable example of God's providence that so many of these gold and silver articles of the house of God still existed intact and that King Cyrus commanded them to be returned.

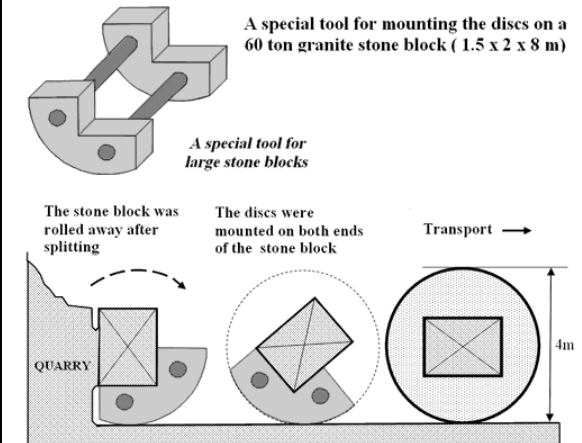
v. 6 *keep yourselves far from there.* A legal term, which means, “keep away from them and keep your hand off them!”

v. 7 *Let the work of this house of God alone:* Based on the search and recovery of the relevant document from King Cyrus, Darius made the appropriate command to *Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River.* Darius commanded him to allow the work on the temple and the city of Jerusalem to continue without interruption. *Build the house of God on its site:* Darius recognized what the elders of the Jews recognized, that it was essential to build the temple upon its old foundations.

v. 8 *Let the cost be paid at the king's expense:* Based on the prior decree from Cyrus, King Darius did more than allow the work to continue. He commanded that it be funded by local taxes on the region beyond the River. Darius did what is common for politicians to do; he put the burden for funding this work on the province itself, not from his own treasury.

v. 1 *Now King Darius issued his decree to make a search!* Do you believe that God can still work sovereignly through political leaders? He certainly can, as He did here!

v. 2 How wonderful it is to see the archaeologist's spade confirm the Scriptures. Such evidence of God's hand! How sure are we that God's word is completely true, even when there is no historical evidence that has t been found by man? **vs. 3-5** Darius became ruler in 522 B.C., establishing the great empire of the Persians by defeating Babylon. (not Darius the Mede mentioned in [Dan 5:1-31](#); [6:1-28](#); [9:1-27](#).) More kindly disposed toward the Jews. We have in [Ezr 6:3-5](#) a detailed record of the original decree of Cyrus, mentioned in [Ezr 1:1](#).



vs. 6-7 *..Tattenai...and your companions...keep yourselves far from there.* Equivalent to a legal Persian term, “Leave them alone”! Let the work of rebuilding be continued”! “Do not interfere!” Notice how thoroughly the Lord enables His command for the Jews to rebuild the temple, to be completed. **v. 8** To Cyrus' original decree, **Darius seems to have added his own decree** ([Ezr 6:8-12](#)): the governor **must assist the Jews** in their work and **see that there is no opposition**, and the **supplies are to be provided** out of the king's treasury. **this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. Not only could Tattenai not stop reconstruction of the temple, he also had to fund its completion! What a miracle of Darius' cooperation, that he issues his own decree – not only not to stop the work, but for it to continue and that it be funded by the kings treasury!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Ezr 6:9 And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail,
Ezr 6:10 that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons.*

Ezr 6:11 Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this.

Ezr 6:12 And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

The Temple Completed and Dedicated:

Ezr 6:13 Then Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent.

Ezr 6:14 So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

Ezr 6:15 Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

*Ezr 6:16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.
Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.*

v. 9 And it was funded in an impressive manner: *whatever they need and let it be given to them day by day without fail* mean that this was a substantial grant

v. 10 *And pray for the life of the king and his sons*: This explains part of the motivation of King Darius. Not only was his decision on the precedent of King Cyrus, but he also wanted the prayers of the Jewish people for himself and his sons.

v. 11 *Let him be hanged on it . . . let his house be made a refuse heap . . . destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it*: Finally, Darius was careful to make the decree *strong*, with severe punishments against those who violated both the letter and the spirit of the decree.

v. 12 *Let it be done diligently*: At the end of it all, the king of the mightiest empire on the earth commanded that the temple be finished by the returned exiles and funded by the empire.

v. 13 *Diligently did according to what King Darius had sent*: They were diligent in supporting and funding the work of rebuilding the temple, and were diligent in punishing anyone who opposed it.

v. 14 *They prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the Prophet and Zechariah*: The words and personal ministry of these post-exilic prophets was an important component in the success of the work. The work and the workers were genuinely strengthened by the word of God through these prophets.

v. 15 *The temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year*: This means that it took four years from the resumption of construction. It was such a big job that even with all doing the work **diligently** it was not quickly completed.

v. 16 *Celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy*: There was a previous celebration, many years before at the founding of this second temple (Ezra 3). This was the celebration for the finishing of a functioning temple.

v. 9 These were the chief sacrificial animals of the Jews—a lamb being required every morning and evening, two more on the sabbath, seven at each of the great feasts and at the beginning of each month, and fourteen on every day during the feast of tabernacles, altogether more than a thousand in the course of the year; and rams and bullocks being joined with the lambs on the more solemn occasions. The only other ordinary sacrificial animal was "a kid of the goats." Wheat, salt, wine, and oil were needed for the "meat offerings" by which every burnt offering was accompanied. *Let it be given them day by day*. Since sacrifice was offered every day. **What awesome provision!**

v. 10 Darius had another motive for his kindness. He wanted the Jews to pray for his health and for the welfare of his family.

v. 11 Darius, with total authority **gives a very strong command, punishable by death with one's house being destroyed and made a junk heap. What a penalty for disobedience!**

v. 12 Darius also couples a request for the Lord to *destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem! ..Let it be done diligently. Do you think that if the people had pushed through instead of stopping that that would have moved? When God calls us to do something. It's not to just try until resistance comes and then quit. But to push forward with full commitment to completion! Which do we usually do? God wanted a temple built!!*

vs. 13-14 Tattenai moved quickly to obey the decree. Haggai and Zechariah provided the spiritual encouragement; the governor supplied the material needs; and thus the work was completed. Notice the elders helped: *they built and finished it. In our ministries do we help or just give orders?*

v. 15 **God is so faithful in keeping His promises.** It appears the completion date in 516-515 BC is exactly 70 years from the date of the destruction of the former temple in 586 BC.

vs. 16-18 So, we see the situation ... *Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.* The Jews joyfully dedicated the house of the Lord, even though the building was not as grand and glorious as Solomon's temple had been. God moved the hearts of three very +powerful pagan kings in the world (Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes) to accomplish His purpose!!! **We need to look higher than to things of the world! We need to step out in Scriptural faith, confident that God will do what is needed to accomplish His objectives! Faith to know what God has called me to do, that it's going to be done!**

EZRA CHAPTERS 5 & 6 – Restoration of Temple Resumed; The Decree of Darius; The Temple Completed and Dedicated; The Passover Celebrated

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

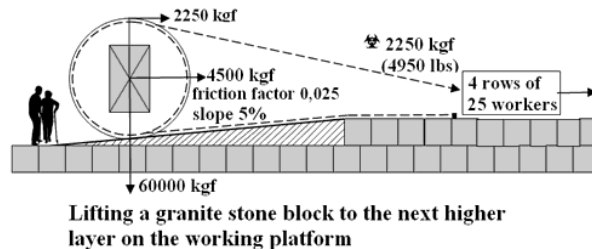
INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Ezr 6:17 *And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.*
Ezr 6:18 *They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.*

The Passover Celebrated

Ezr 6:19 *And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.*
Ezr 6:20 *For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.*
Ezr 6:21 *Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel.*
Ezr 6:22 *And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.*



v. 17 *And they offered sacrifices:* Compared to the dedication of Solomon’s temple (*1Ki 8:62-66*), this was a meager dedication celebration. Solomon sacrificed some 142,000 animals at his dedication of the temple; here at the dedication of the second temple they only sacrificed a total of 712 animals. *As a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats:* “It was a confession of failure but also faith. There was still atonement and still the covenant with the whole people - for this was the implication of the *twelve* sacrifices.”

v.18 *They assigned the priests to their divisions . . . as it is written in the Book of Moses:* They took care to resume the proper priestly service as commanded by the **Book of Moses** and previous pattern of David

v. 19 *The descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month:* This shows that they were careful to keep the Passover according to the command of Moses, on the proper day. In keeping Passover they remembered the central act of redemption of the Old Testament, the deliverance of God’s people from Egypt.

v. 20 *They slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity:* In this, we see that the people themselves did not sacrifice the *Passover lambs*, rather the priests did this for them. It seems that there was no absolute custom for this; sometimes the people sacrificed the Passover lambs under the supervision of the priests and sometimes the priests did it for the people.

v. 21 *With all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land:* Connected with the remembrance of deliverance of Passover was the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, which marked the purity of God’s delivered people. *The children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel:*

v. 22 *The LORD made them joyful:* In the context of obedience and purity, they did not lose their joy. The purity of God’s delivered people was *joyful* in its character (instead of *dour*). It also led them to *strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God.*

v. 17 No “ten lost tribes” here! How wonderful to see the “*sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of tribes of Israel*”! Even though the number of offered animals was so small (712) compared to that of Solomon (142,000), **they offered their best to express their appreciation to the Lord – their very best!** The Lord never measure gift by their amount but by the sacrifice the offering represents! (widow’s mite)

v.18 Notice the care taken to resume the proper priestly service as commanded by the Book of Moses and previous pattern of David. **How important it is for us to be obedient to the Word of God!** We see God’s hand in doing more for them than they expected. It appears if they had pushed on during the 15 year delay, in which they substituted pursuing their own selfish interests, that God would have allowed the work to continue much sooner. What do we do in such circumstances of resistance? **When God tells us to do something, we need to press on until the calling is done!**
vs. 19-22 Just five weeks after the dedication of the temple the Passover was held, which spoke of the death of Christ, our Passover who was offered for us. When they gathered around the Passover, they were gathering around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Word of God. **They kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.** God had answered prayer and kept His promise in returning the people of Israel back from exile in Babylon. God’s grace and God’s favor! God had **turned the king’s heart** (see *Pro_21:1*). The nation had its temple again! **The LORD made them joyful!** He had ‘*turned the heart of the king of Assyria*’ - a title for Darius that speaks for the authenticity of the narrative, for it represents an old form of speech for the ruler of the districts that had once belonged to the king of Assyria. Between chapters 6 and 7 is a period of fifty-eight years. The Book of Esther fits in here. **What unity demonstrated here!** **Unity is always based on holiness, on their obedience! Never based on compromise, lowering the Spiritual standard, which will only attract carnal people. Truly spiritual people will never buy in to that, risking grieving the Holy Spirit! Only Christ provides something greater than those carnal things which produce division!**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS! –Thomas Chisholm – Willaim Runyan – sung by Tom Fettke
Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; as Thou hast been Thou forever will be.
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided; great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth. Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Lord, unto me!

