

10/27/19

Ezra 5-6

The people were back in the land on the seventh month of the Jews, Sept.-Oct. of 536 B.C. , they celebrated the major feast of the holy month, the Feast of Trumpets (New moons) Yon Kippur or the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, the Levites were appointed to start as well as to oversee the work of the temple on May 535 B.C. and they laid the foundation of the temple.. Ezra 3:1, 4-6, 8, 10

There were adversaries in the start of the reign of Ahasuerus, who is Cambyses, 530-522 B.C. , and they wrote accusations against the Jews. Ezra 4:6, 21

1. The letters of accusations lasted till the days Artaxerxes king of Persia known as Guamata (pseudo-Smerdis) in 522 B.C. reigning 9-10 months. Ezra 4:7
2. The temple work has ceased for 15-16 years!

5:1-17      The building restoration of the temple resumed.

5:1-2      The command to return to the building of the temple came through the prophets of God.

- 1) The two prophets are named, “Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem.” vs. 1a-b
  - a) The temple construction has ceased for 15-16 years, till the second year of the

reign of Darius I (Hystaspis), 522-486 B.C. Ezra 4:24; 5:6; 6:1, 3; Hag. 1:1

- b) This same Darius king of Persian, in the second year of his reign, 520 B.C. gave the decree to continue the construction of the temple after cease and desist order. 15-16 years. Ezra 5:6, 6:1, 3; Hag. 1:1
- c) The prophesy of Haggai contains four messages delivered within four months, Sept.-Dec. 520 B. C. , in the second year of Darius. Hag. 1:1; 2:1, 10, 20
  - \* Haggai “Chaggay”, means festive of Festival probably born on a feast day.
    - 1) September 1. ag. 1
    - 2) October 21. Hag. 2:1-9
    - 3) December 24. Hag. 2:10-19
    - 4) December 24 of the same month, December. Hag. 2:20-23
- d) The prophecies of Zechariah are dated different, before the building of the temple, they are vision prophecies and all three are dated. Zech. 1-8, 1:1; 7, 7:1
  - \* Zechariah “Z@karyah”, means Yahweh remembers.
    - 1)) Nov. 520 B. C., two months after the first prophesy of Haggai and one month after his second prophecy. Hag. 1:1; 2:1
    - 2)) Next several vision on Feb. 24, 520 B. C., three months after the first prophecy. Zech. 1:7, 1:1

- 3)) Then in Nov.-Dec. of 518 B. C. 23 months after the previous visions. Zech. 7:1; 1:7
- e) The prophecies after or completion of the temple are undated. Zech. 9-14
- 1)) Some center on the Messiah's First Coming and rejection with inferences to His Second Coming. Zach. 9-11
- 2)) Others center on the Messiah's Second Coming and enthronement with inferences to His First Coming. Zach. 12-14
- f) Haggai's first prophecy, "In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.'" Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" Hag. 1:1-4
- a) The second year of Darius, 520 B.C. this is Darius Hystaspes 522-486 B.C. , not the Darius of the days of Daniel.

- 1)) The dating at this point is no longer by Jewish kings, but the "Time of the Gentiles" had begun with Babylon. Dan. 2; Lk. 21:24
- 2)) But the months are based on the Jewish religious calendar, April being the first month.
- b) The sixth month is September and the first day are of the Jewish religious calendar, September 1, while the years are of Darius, the Gentile king.  
\* This is true in Haggai and Zechariah.
- 2) The two prophets were sent by God, "in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them." vs. 1c-d
- a) The two prophets spoke in the covenant name of God is Yahweh.
- b) The authority over the lives of the Jews that had returned to rebuild was God.
- c) "Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the

LORD. “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. “For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.” Hag. 1:5-11

- 3) The response of two men was to be revived to the rebuilding of the temple, “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.” vs. 2a
- a) The leaders were revived, Zerubbabel, Joshua with all the remnant of the people, obey the words of Haggai fearing the presenee of the LORD. Hag 1:12
- b) The encouragement by God, “I am with you, says the LORD.” Hag 1:13
- c) The LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the spirit of Joshua, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, Sept.-

Oct. 24, 520 B.C., in the second year of King Darius.” Hag 1:14-15

- 4) The partnership of the prophets revived the rebuilding of the temple, “and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.” vs. 2b
- a) Haggai and Zechariah worked with their own hands to rebuild the temple, as examples of servants of God!
- c) Zechariah prophesied 7 months after Haggai calling the people to repent, November of 520 B.C. to repent and God would return to them, the were not to be like their fathers who rejected the former prophets telling them to turn from their evil deeds, but did not listen. Zech. 1:1-4
- \* When Ezra returned in 457 B.C. 63 years after the two prophets, the people and leaders had married pagan women and had children, both had to be put away. Ezra 9-10

5:3-5 The attempt to stop the building of the temple was the second time.

- 1) The confrontation to enquire about the present construction on the temple. vs. 3
- a) The authorities of the region hearing of the resumed construction went to Jerusalem, “At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their

companions came to them and spoke thus to them.’ vs. 3a

- b) The question was by what name had they resumed the construction of the temple. “Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?” vs. 3b
  - 1)) The person that gave the permission to continue the construction.
  - 2)) The wall is of the temple not the city.
- 2) The Jews gave the names of those working on the temple, “Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building.” vs. 4
  - a) The list in chapter two contains all who returned.
  - b) The list is not given or stipuated.
- 3) The commentary of God protection is stated. vs. 5
  - a) The Jews were under Divine oversight, “But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews.” vs. 5a
    - 1)) The phrase “the kings eye” was known and used of these governors and inspectors for the king.
    - 2)) The eye of God in Scriptures refers to watchful care of God for His people. Ps. 33:18; 34:16; Job 36:7
    - 3)) The hand of God or LORD. Ezra 7:6, 9; 7:28; 8:18; 22, 31
  - b) The authorities were unable to stop the rebuilding of the temple, “so that they

could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius.” vs. 5b

- 1)) God was dealing with His people’s complacency and self-absorption, rather than building the temple.
- 2)) God was going to direct Darius or He knew Darius would search the record?
- c) The matter needed to be reported to Darius, “Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.” vs. 5c
  - 1)) The governor and inspectors sole motive is to stop the construction.
  - 2)) They were looking to be rewarded in some way by their loyalty to king.

**5:6-17** The accusation against the Jews to Darius for starting to build the temple again.

**5:6-10** The confrontation and allegations in the letter.

- 1) The letter and representatives of the accusations. vs. 6
  - a) The identification of the letter sent by the governor, “This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent: The governor of the region beyond the River.” vs. 6a-b
  - 1)) The Elamite text from Persepolis discovered in 1933-34 verify that such inquiries as this one were sent directly to the king.

- 2)) Two-thousand fortification tablets were published in 1960's by Harnoc, dating from the 13th to the 28th years of Darius, 509-494 B.C.
- b) The other men standing behind the governor, "and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who were in the region beyond the River, to Darius the king." vs. 6c-f
- 2) The greeting of the letter, "They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus-- To Darius the king: All peace." vs. 7
- a) The phrase "written thus" is a technical term in Aramaic used in legal documents.
- b) The greeting, "All peace" is a typical of that day.
- 3) The report of their objection to the resumed the building of the temple. vs. 8
- a) The personal inquiry about the construction, "Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea." vs. 8a
- b) The identification of the God of the temple, "to the temple of the great God." vs. 8b
- c) The description of the sturdy structure, "which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls." vs. 8c
- \* The phrase heavy stones "g@lal", means rolling and possibly indicates

- how these large stones were moved, on rollers.
- d) The declaration of the progress, "and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands." vs. 8d-e
- 4) The direct conversation with the leaders, "Then we asked those elders, and spoke thus to them: "Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?" vs. 9
- a) The elders would be the leading men.
- b) The question to them was to find out the name of the person that authorized the work on the walls of the temple.
- 5) The request for the name of the men responsible for the resumed construction, "We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who were chief among them." vs. 10
- a) The second question was for the names of those in authority, the leaders.
- b) The phrase chief "re'sh", refers to them.
- 5:11-17** The confession of their sin against God and commission by the decree of King Cyrus.
- 1) The Jews gave their identity, "And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth." vs. 11a-b
- a) The fact that they said they were, "the servants of the God of heaven and earth", meant God created and order in both

- places had commanded them to build the temple.
- b) They had obeyed God through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.
  - c) The phrase “God of heaven” remember is a key phrase also. Ezra 1:2; 5:11, 12; 6:9, 10; 7:12, 21, 23 (2x’s)
- 2) The Jews gave their goal of the construction, “and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed.” vs. 11c-d
- a) They were building the second temple to replace the first that was destroyed.
  - b) The great king that built the first temple was King Solomon, the son of David. 1Kings 7:13-45
- 3) The Jews gave the reason God had punished them. vs. 12
- a) They sinned against their God, “But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath.” vs. 12a
  - b) They were allowed to be conquered, “He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean.” vs. 12b-c
  - c) They witnessed their temple leveled and then carried off for 70 years of captivity, “name who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon.” vs. 12d

- 4) The Jews declared the end of their 70 year captivity. vs. 13
- a) The date and name of the Persian king, “However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon.” vs. 13a-b
    - 1)) Cyrus calls himself the “king of Babylon” in the Cyrus Cylinders discovered.
    - 2)) Cyrus is called also the king of Persia eight times. Ezra 1:1, 2. 8; 3:7; 4:3, 5; 6:14
  - b) The proclamation of the Persian king was the authority behind the present construction, “King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God.” vs. 13  
\* The parallel passages. 2Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4
- 5) The Jews reported the benevolent help of Cyrus for the temple. vs. 14
- a) The spoils of the temple taken by Nebuchadnezzar were in the possession of Cyrus, “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.” vs. 14a
  - b) The spoils were returned to Zerubbabel, “those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor.” vs. 14b-d

- \* The total was 5,400 articles of silver and gold. Ezra 2:11
- 6) The Jews reported the orders Cyrus gave to Zerubbabel. vs. 15
- a) The first order was to return them to their proper place of origin, “And he said to him, ‘Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem.’” vs. 15a-d
- b) The second order was to construct the temple again to house the vessels, “and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.” vs. 15e
- 7) The Jews reported the obedience of Zerubbabel to the decree of Cyrus. vs. 16
- a) The foundational slab was laid for the second temple, “Then the same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem.” vs. 16a
- \* The parallel passage. Ezra 1:7-11
- b) The project to the present is not completed, “but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished.” vs. 16b-c
- 8) The governor Tattenai requested that Darius search the archives for the decree of Cyrus.” vs. 17
- a) The request was presented respectfully, “Now therefore, if it seems good to the king.” vs. 17a-b

- b) The request was to examine the archives of Babylon to verify the decree of Cyrus, “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.” vs. 17c-d
- c) The request was that Darius might inform him his answer after his search of the archives, “and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter.” vs. 17e
- \* The law of the Medes and Persians could not be altered, Tattenai did not believe such a decree had been declared by Cyrus! Dan. 6:9, 12, 15

**6:1-22      The decree of Darius to continue the rebuild the temple, the dedication and the Feast of Passover.**

- 6:1-12**    The decree of Darius confirmed the original decree of Cyrus.
- 6:1-5**      The search of the records for a decree from Cyrus to rebuild the temple.
- 1) The order was given by Darius, “Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon.” vs. 1
- \* Archives is literally “house of books”.

- 2) The location of the decree of Cyrus. vs. 2
  - a) The city, “And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media,” vs. 2a
    - 1)) Achmetha “Ecabatana” was the capital of Media and summer residence of Persian kings.
    - 2)) The palace “biyra”, is citadel or fortress.
  - b) The particular inscription, “a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus.” vs. 2b
    - \* The particular scroll was found the original decree of Cyrus.
- 3) The decree read with undeniable clarity. vs. 3a-c
  - a) The date and object of concern, “In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem.” vs. 3a-b
    - \* The parallel passages. 2Chron. 35:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4
  - b) The command, “Let the house be rebuilt.” vs. 3c
- 4) The concession for religious worship was unmistakable, “the place where they offered sacrifices.” vs. 3d
  - \* This was the temple sight on Mount Moriah.
- 5) The particular details about the construction expense were included in the decree. vs. 3c-4

- a) The size, “and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits.” vs. 3c-d
    - \* A cubit was 18 inches, so 90 feet high and wide.
  - b) The structural design, “with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber.” vs. 4a
  - c) The expense was to be paid by Cyrus, “Let the expenses be paid from the king’s treasury.” vs. 4b
  - 6) The decree for the articles of the temple of Solomon to be returned were stipulated. vs. 5
    - a) The gathering of precious metal articles, “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.” vs. 5a-b
      - \* 50,400 of silver and gold. Ezra 1:11
    - b) The returning of them to the rebuilt temple, “be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God” vs. 5c-e
- 6:7-12** The renewed decree of Darius to continue rebuilding the temple.
- 1) The accusers were to not go near the building sight, “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.” vs. 6

- 2) The accusers were to not interfere in the rebuilding of the temple, “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.” vs. 7
- 3) The accusers were to administrate the finances for the rebuilding of the temple. vs. 8
  - a) This was a decree of Darius unalterable, “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.” vs. 8a-b
    - \* The law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed. Dan. 6:9, 12, 15
  - b) The revenue would come from taxes, “Let the cost be paid at the king’s expense from taxes on the region beyond the River.” vs. 8c
  - c) The decree went into affect at once, “this is to be given immediately to these men,” vs. 8d
  - d) The purpose was clear, “so that they are not hindered.” vs. 8e
- 4) The accusers were to provided everything needed for the worship of Yahweh, vs. 9-10

- a) Be it animals, “And whatever they need-- young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven.” vs. 8a-d
- b) Be it in commodities, “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.” vs. 9e-j
- c) To be able to approach and please their God, “that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven.” vs. 10 a
- d) To be blessed by the God of the Jews, “and pray for the life of the king and his sons.” vs. 10b
- 5) The decree was accompanied with a second decree, one of judgment. vs. 11
  - a) The warning was to all, “Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict.” vs. 11a
  - b) The consequences, “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.” vs. 11b-d
    - \* Such edicts of judgment are found throughout the Bible.
- 6) The decree of judgment affirmed that God himself would destroy them, vs. 12

- a) The reference is to Yahweh, “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.” vs. 12a
- b) The affirmation of the decree, “I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.” vs. 12b

**6:13-18** The completion and dedication of the temple.

- 1) The decree of Darius was carried out, “Then Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent.” vs. 13
  - a) Without doubt Tattenai and Shethar-Boznai and their companions were shocked at the answer and decree of Darius.
  - b) Without doubt also they complied not wanting the consequences of the judgment to come upon them.
- 2) The summary statement of the renewed building. vs. 14-15
  - a) The building of the temple progressed, “So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.” vs. 14a-b

- b) The temple was accomplished, “And they built and finished it.” vs. 14c
- c) The prophecy was accomplished by God through human agents, “according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” vs. 14d-g
- d) The date when the temple was finished, “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.” vs. 15
  - \* March 3, 516 B.C. in four years from 520 B.C.
- 3) The Jews dedication the rebuild temple. vs. 16-18
  - a) It was a joyous celebration, “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.” vs. 16
    - \* **Like Jehoshaphat, Josiah and Hezekiah. 2Chron.**
  - b) It was extravagant, “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.” vs. 17

- \* The expenses came from the taxes of the region, as all other expenses for the temple. vs. 5, 9-10
- c) It was according to the prescribed order in Scripture, “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.” vs. 18

**6:19-22** The celebration of the Passover at the temple.

- 1) The first Passover was celebrated, “And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.” vs. 19
  - \* Hezekiah and Josiah also did in the revival God sovereign pour out. 2Chron. 30, 35
- 2) The priest sanctified themselves, “For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean.” vs. 20a-b
  - \* In Hezekiah’s time not all the priest had cleansed themselves. 2Chron. 29
- 3) The priest sacrifice the lamb, “And they slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.” vs. 20c-e
  - \* April 14 is the Passover.

- 4) The entire number of Jews that returned communed as one nation, “Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all.” vs. 21a
- 5) The sanctification of all was in order to be one with God and seek Him, “who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel.” vs. 21b
- 6) The celebrated the Feast of Unleaven, “And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy.” vs. 22a
  - \* The Feast followed the day after Passover from the 15-22 of April.
- 7) The reasons is stated, “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.” vs. 22b-c

-Chronologically, Esther fits between chapter 6 and 7 of Ezra.

- Zerubbabel returned in 536 B.C.

-The temple was finished in 516 B.C.

-Esther becomes Queen in 479 B.C.

-The Jews were delivered from Hamen in 473 B.C.

-Ezra returned to Jerusalem in 457 B.C.

-Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem in 444 B.C.

-Written around 450-455 B.C. by someone who had first-hand knowledge and access to the chronicles of Persia.

