



Rice Memorial MBC

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Celebrating with Joy

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **July 14, 2013**

Worship with us at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

Ezra 6:13-22

Introduction: How solemnly the foundation of the temple was laid we read in Ezra 3:1-13 How slowly the building went on, and with how much difficulty, we found in Ezra 4:1-5:17 But how gloriously the **topstone** was at length brought forth with shoutings we find in this chapter; and even we, at this distance of time, when we read of it, may cry, "Grace, grace to it." As for God, his work is perfect; it may be slow work, but it will be sure work. We have here, I. A recital of the decree of **Cyrus** for the building of the temple, Ezra 6:1-5. II. The enforcing of that decree by a new order from **Darius** for the perfecting of that work, Ezra 6:6-12. III. The finishing of it thereupon, Ezra 6:13-15. IV. The solemn **dedication** of it when it was built (Ezra 6:16-18), and the handselling of it (as I may say) with the celebration of the passover, Ezra 6:19-22. And now we may say that in Judah and Jerusalem things went well, very well. The Favourable Decree of Darius B. C. 519
(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible* classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

Ezra 6:1-7, Then Darius the king made a **decree**, and **search** was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the **house** of God at Jerusalem, Let the **house** be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the **foundations** thereof be strongly **laid**; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: And also let the golden and silver vessels of the **house** of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the **house** of God.
Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 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 in his place.

NOTE: Darius the king--This was Darius Hystaspes. Great and interesting light has been thrown on the history of this monarch and the transaction of his reign, by the decipherment of the cuneatic inscriptions on the rocks at Behistun.

in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon--An idea of the form of this Babylonian register house, as well as the manner of preserving public records within its repositories, can be obtained from the discoveries at Nineveh. Two small

chambers were discovered in the palace of Koyunjik, which, from the fragments found in them, MR. LAYARD considers "as a house of the rolls." After reminding his readers that the historical records and public documents of the Assyrians were kept on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, many specimens of which have been found, he goes on to say, "The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor they were entirely filled with them; some entire, but the greater part broken into many fragments, probably by the falling in of the upper part of the building. They were of different sizes; the **largest tablets** were **flat**, and measured about nine inches by six and a half inches; the smaller were slightly convex, and some were not more than an inch long, with but one or two lines of writing. (Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/jfb)

Ezra 6:8-12, Moreover I make a **decree** what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this **house** of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be **not hindered**. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall **alter this word**, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to **alter** and to **destroy** this **house** of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

NOTE: The decree granted them the privilege of drawing from his **provincial treasury** of Syria, to the amount of whatever they required for the furthering of the work and providing sacrifice for the service of the temple, that the priests might daily pray for the health of the king and the prosperity of the empire.

11, 12. whosoever shall alter this word--The **warning** was specially directed against the turbulent and fanatical Samaritans. The extremely favorable purport of this edict was no doubt owing in some measure to the influence of Cyrus, of whom Darius entertained a high admiration, and whose two daughters he had married. But it proceeded still more from the deep impressions made even on the idolatrous people of that country and that age, as to the being and **providence** (timely care) of the God of Israel. (Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/jfb)

NOTE: Let him be hanged thereon.. This, of course, was **crucifixion**, a punishment widely used by the Persians. Keil cites a word from Herodotus as saying that Darius impaled **3,000** Babylonians when he took their city. Therefore, this was no idle threat. Cook added that, Crucifixion was the most common form of punishment among the Persians. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Ezra 6:13-15, Then **Tatnai**, governor on this side the river, **Shetharboznai**, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of **Cyrus**, and **Darius**, and **Artaxerxes** king of Persia. And this house was **finished** on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

NOTE: A concurrence of favorable events is mentioned as accelerating the restoration of the temple and infusing a new spirit and energy into the workmen, who now labored with unabating (unshrinking) assiduity (diligence, attention) till it was brought to a completion.

Its foundation was laid in April, **536 B.C.** (Ezr 3:8-10), and it was completed on February 21, **515 B.C.**, being twenty-one years AFTER it was begun [Lightfoot].
(Source: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/jfb)

NOTE: *And Artaxerxes king of Persia* (Ezra 6:14). There was a lapse of 82 years between the end of Darius' reign (486 B.C.) and the beginning of that of Artaxerxes (404 B.C.) (See p. 25, above); and some have wondered just why his name should have been mentioned along with that of Cyrus and Darius. He was probably included here because he, at a later date, contributed to the beautifying of the temple (Ezra 7:21-28).

The third day of the month Adar This was March 12, 515 B.C., **four and one half years** after work had begun in earnest. It will be remembered that it required over seven years in the building of Solomon's temple. (Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 1. As you can see, there isn't complete agreement on the finishing month and day, but there is agreement in regard to the year it was finished. It must be noted also that hindrances from their enemies held them up for about 15 years. This caused the total completion time to be 21 years.

Ezra 4:1-7, 11-13, 23-24, Now when the **adversaries** of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king **Cyrus** the king of Persia hath **commanded us**. Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and HIRED counsellors against them, to frustrate their **purpose**, all the days of **Cyrus** king of Persia, even until the reign of **Darius** king of Persia. And in the reign of **Ahasuerus**, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an **accusation** against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

...This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the **rebellious** and the **bad city**, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt **endamage** the **revenue** (profits) of the kings.

...Now when the copy of king **Artaxerxes'** letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. Then **ceased** the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem.

So it **ceased** unto the **second year** of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

NOTE: After a **15-year delay**, work on the temple resumed; the governor reports to Darius I; the historical situation - Under the urgent admonitions of Haggai, both Zerubbabel and Jeshua rose up and vigorously began work on the temple. The **foundation** had been laid much **earlier**, but that foundation was probably little more than a ground-breaking that projected the size of the structure but did little else. (This is in Ezra 3)

Also a **new governor**, operating from his headquarters in Damascus, under the

authority of the Persian ruler who, at this time was Darius Hystaspes, was in charge of the satrapy that included Palestine. The governor was **Tattenai**, a far more **noble person** than the evil Rehum, a governor who came much later, and whose sympathies were totally in favor of the Samaritans and who was bitterly opposed to Israel.

We may be sure that when work was resumed on the temple that the Samaritans went immediately to Damascus to enlist the aid of the new governor in stopping it. Tattenai, however, **refused** to take any action against the temple work until he had **consulted** his overlord Darius I. (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Ezra 5:1-6, 17, Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, **prophesied** unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them. At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building? But the **eye** of their **God** was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter. The copy of the **letter** that **Tatnai**, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king...

...if it seem good to the king, let there be **search** made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a **decree** was made of **Cyrus** the king to build this **house** of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

NOTE: This was the key request of Darius by Tattenai. If indeed it was true that Cyrus had made such a decree, then according to the **Medo-Persian** tradition it was impossible to change it. Daniel twice referred to the Law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not (Daniel 6:8,12). Daniel commented that, It is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed (Daniel 6:15). If the projected search proposed by Tatrenal revealed that Cyrus indeed had made such a decree as the Jews claimed, then it was settled; **the law could not be changed**. (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 2. Tatnai, the new governor, was a man who had a good understanding of what God required of leaders. Therefore, he used God's WISDOM to be sure of the situation before doing anything. He wanted to be right in God's eyesight as he governed the area over which he had responsibility. So, because of that desire, he was ruling in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

2 Samuel 23:3, The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men **MUST** be **JUST**, ruling in the **fear** of God.

Just defined 6662, just [1. In a moral sense, upright, honest; 2. FAIR, impartial].

Ezra 6:16-18, And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the **dedication** of this **house** of God with joy, And offered at the dedication of this **house** of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes

of Israel. And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; **as it is written** in the book of Moses.

NOTE: Critical scholars are very sensitive about any mention of the book of Moses, and their usual knee-jerk reaction is to challenge the passage as being from a different editor or some later hand. However, there is no reason whatever to believe such challenges. They are not scientific, they are founded upon scholarly imagination, and not upon any fact. The silly reason for such a challenge, according to Hamrick, was that the word **Jews** was the author's usual term for Israel; but here he referred to them as the children of Israel. What a foolish assumption it must be that Ezra was not familiar with both expressions and that he would never have used both. At this glorious moment when God's people had been returned from captivity and their temple restored, the more **formal term** children of Israel, was not only appropriate, it was required.

As Hamrick noted, "This story indicates that there was a conscious attempt to imitate the ceremony associated with the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8, and 2 Chr. 5--7). However, the relative poverty of the people made it impossible to duplicate it. "Solomon offered over two hundred times as many oxen and sheep at the dedication of his temple as were offered on this occasion (1 Kings 8:63)." (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

1 Kings 8:63, And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, **two** and **twenty thousand** oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

Ezra 6:19-22, And the children of the captivity kept the **passover** upon the fourteenth day of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and **killed the passover** for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the **filthiness** of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with **JOY:** for the LORD had made them **joyful**, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the **house (temple)** of God, the God of Israel.

NOTE: With Ezra 6:19, the writer resumes the Hebrew language, which he had discarded for the Chaldee, beginning at Ezra 4:8. With the exception of the letter of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12-26), the remainder of the book is in Hebrew." **All of them were pure** (Ezra 6:20). It is not exactly clear, as the translation reads, but Cook assures us that a contrast is drawn between the universal purity of the Levites and the more general purity of the priests. This made it fitting that the Levites should slaughter all the consume.

And all such as had separated themselves from the filthiness of the nations of the land (Ezra 6:21). Here, these are contrasted with the returnees from captivity. These were those who were left in Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar and had become **mixed with** the **heathen** population. **Jehovah. turned the heart of the king of Assyria** (Ezra 6:22). This is a reference, of course, to Darius I the king of Persia. However it is definitely not a scribal error as charged by Cundall. Darius was king of Persia and also king of Babylon, but as the ruler of the former Assyrian Empire, he was also King of Assur, as Keil stated it. (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Thought 1. Last of all, the people kept the dedication in TRUE (*unsolicited by a cheerleader*) joy. Even the feasts of the Lord where they ate unleavened bread, etc., was a joy to them.

Proverbs 13:12, Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the **desire cometh**, it is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:9, The **desire accomplished** is **sweet** to the soul...