



**WELCOME  
TO  
BIBLE HOUSE  
OF  
GRACE**

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

## **Ezra 6**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Ezra 6

---

### Topics.

- Darius orders a search be made in Babylon and Ecbatana.
- Cyrus the king issues a decree, let the House be rebuilt.
- Let the cost be paid from the royal treasury.
- Darius commands Tattenai to let work continue on the temple.
- Tattenai, recites Darius decree for rebuilding the temple.
- The house of whoever alters the edict, will be made a dunghill.
- Tattenai, shethar-bozenai, and associates did all Darius ordered.
- Through Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews completed the temple.
- The returned exiles celebrate the completion of the temple.
- As written in the book of Moses, they set the priests and Levites.
- They kept the Feast of Unleavened bread with joy for seven days.

---

### INTRODUCTION

---

The book of Ezra begins where 2 Chronicles ended as prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 44:28) the Persian King Cyrus had sent exiles led by Zerubbabel back to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. (Persia had defeated Babylon in 539 B.C.). Despite opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea, and after encouragement by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the temple was rebuilt (515 B.C.). Then in 458 B.C., Ezra led the second of three waves of returning exiles. By the time Ezra arrived, the people had again fallen into sin, Ezra preached God's word and the people repented (10:9-17). Ezra succeeded because God's hand was upon him (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28) (Ezra 8:18, 22, 31). This book (probably written by Ezra), shows that God uses pagan kings to accomplish His purposes and His faithfulness to His promises and His people.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

---

**The previous chapter:** speaks of Haggai and Zechariah encouraging the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem to build the Temple. Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai ask Zerubbabel, "Who gave them permission to finish the temple," they tell him, and he sends a letter to Darius suggesting the king makes a search to see if a decree was Issued by Cyrus to rebuild the Temple.

---

### EZRA 6:1-5

---

#### Darius Orders a Search be Made in Babylon and Ecbatana.

- **Ezra 6:1-2:** <sup>1</sup> Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in Babylonia, in the house of the archives where the documents were stored. <sup>2</sup> And in Ecbatana (Achmetha in KJV), in the palace the citadel that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found on which this was written: "A record.

The Darius in focus here is Darius Hystaspes, he no doubt appointed all his officials in Babylon to firstly search the archives there, but not finding the edict there, his officials in Ecbatana (also called Achmetha) searched the royal city of the Medes and Persians and found the scroll containing Cyrus degree that gave the Jews permission to rebuild the House of God. One of the likely reasons Darius determined to confirm the decree which Cyrus had granted to the Jews and do everything he could to honour him may have been because he had married two of his daughters.

**In the house of the archives where the documents were stored:** (v1) historians say that during these ancient times, registers, legal documents and public records of the greatest importance to the history of the ancient world especially writings relating to the monarchy, and the dominions belonging to them were stored in chambers in the royal palace. They would be carefully placed on shelves of varying sizes for scrolls and documents of different sizes. The first shelf was about a foot above the floor with the rest going to the ceiling and entirely covering every wall. These chambers were referred to as, "the house of the rolls," or "the house of books."

**A scroll was found on which this was written, a record:** (v2), these words show that from here on Darius is reciting the words written on the scroll of Cyrus. This is also confirmed, by the following words of verse twelve, "I Darius make a decree; let it be done with all diligence." (v12) meaning let all that Cyrus decreed be done. From here on Darius begins to recite Cyrus's scroll.

---

## DARIUS BEGINS TO RECITE CYRUS'S SCROLL

---

### EZRA 6:3

---

#### **Cyrus the King issued a Decree, Let the House be Rebuilt.**

2

---

- **Ezra 6:3:** In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices were offered, and let its foundations be retained (strongly laid in KJV). Its height shall be sixty cubits and its breadth sixty cubits.

The book of Ezra begins with this proclamation of Cyrus:

- In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing. (Ezra 1:1).

The house was to be built, the exact places where sacrifices were offered, meaning it was to be built in the exact same place as it was in the past when Solomon built it and its foundations were to be extremely strong so that they would easily support the building erected on them.

---

**Its height shall be sixty cubits and its breadth sixty cubits:** (v3) these measurements differ from those of Solomon's temple as the following shows:

#### **The new Temple was:**

- Sixty cubits high.
- Sixty cubits wide.

#### **Solomon's temple was:**

- Sixty cubits long.

- Twenty cubits wide.
- Thirty cubits high. (1 Kings 6:2), while the porch was one hundred and twenty cubits high.
- **2 Chronicles 3:4:** The vestibule (porch in KJV) in front of the nave (the house in KJV) of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house, and its height was 120 cubits. He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold.
- Here we are told that the porch in front of the Temple was 20 cubits long and 20 cubits in width (i.e., 20 cubits square) and 120 cubits high overlaid on the inside with pure gold.

It is difficult to reconcile the dimensions here with the two temples various commentators have suggested:

- Solomon's cubits were sacred cubits, which were larger than common cubits which may be used here.
- The sixty cubits of height only refer to the porch, so that it would not be of greater magnificence than Persian temples.
- The word rendered breadth, should be rendered the length, because its improbable that the king would give orders about the breadth and not the length, and it cannot be reasonably thought that the breadth would be equal to the height, nor so disproportionate to Solomon's temple, should this be the case the length would be the same as the length of Solomon's temple.

In Ezra chapter twelve we read that the younger generation who had never seen the grandeur of the first temple and therefore could not compare the two, rejoiced at the completion of the foundation and shouted aloud for joy upon seeing the beginning of the new temple rise from its ruins. But many seventy years of age and over who that had seen the first temple built by Solomon, could contrast the two and wept with a loud voice (Ezra 3:12), because they saw that the foundation was not nearly as glorious.

They may also have wept because it was being built during a time of unrest in contrast to the time of Solomon's temple being built in a time of peace and the fact they would have been aware that the Ark of the Covenant, the shekinah glory and the Urim and Thummim, would be missing when the temple was completed. This is an error on their part since they should have been looking forward and not backward and greatly rejoicing in the fact that they were free from Babylon's dominion and after seventy years of being without the temple, the generation that had come out were tremendously excited to offer their time, labour and money to rebuild the temple and establish the Jewish faith and the worship of the Lord their God throughout the nation.

---

## DARIUS RECITES CYRUS'S SCROLL CONTINUED

---

### EZRA 6:4-5

---

#### **Let the Cost be Paid from the Royal Treasury.**

- **Ezra 6:4-5:** with three layers of great stones and one layer of timber. Let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. <sup>5</sup> And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple that is in Jerusalem, each to its place. You shall put them in the house of God."

The decree Cyrus issued commended that the three layers of foundation stones, which were so great that they could not be carried, but had to be rolled were to be paid for by the Persian royal treasury. This portion of

the decree was probably not observed during the later years especially during the reign of Cambyses, which meant that the financial burthen fell upon the Jews themselves.

- Some of the heads of families, when they came to the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God, to erect it on its site.  
<sup>69</sup> According to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priests' garments. (Ezra 2:68-69).

**The gold and silver vessels of the House of God:** Ezra chapter one tells us that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods the following items:

- 30 basins of gold and 1,000 basins of silver.
- 29 censers and 30 bowls of gold.
- 410 bowls of silver and 1,000 other vessels.

The total of all the vessels of gold and silver was 5,400.

All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:7-11). The items listed only add up to 2499 which means that many items are not mentioned in the above list, probably the smaller items and less important ones. Cyrus gave orders for all of these to be returned to Sheshbazzar who he had made governor of Judah. We, should like Zechariah, set our eyes beyond the things of this world to the much higher spiritual global building that God is building at this present moment in the Lord Jesus Christ, laying one stone upon another. Though difficulties, sorrows and troubles may delay the progress of this sacred building edifice, we should never let such things discourage us, for in due season it will be completed to His abundant praise. God, at his appointed time will bring forth the head-stone of this magnificent eternal building with loud praises rising up from hearts filled with gratitude fully aware that it is only by grace that each living stone had been set in its place.

---

## DARIUS CONFIRMS CYRUS'S SCROLL

---

### EZRA 6:6-7

---

#### Darius Commands Tattenai to Let Work Continue on the Temple.

- **Ezra 6:6-7:** "Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and your associates the governors who are in the province Beyond the River, keep away. <sup>7</sup> Let the work on this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site.

**Tattenai the governor of the province and Shethar-boznai:** (v3) Tattenai was probably a new governor whom Darius had appointed and sent for it was usual with new kings to change the governors of provinces, while Shethar-boznai was perhaps his prefect or secretary. The previous governors Rehum and Shimshai etc., may have been removed upon this new king coming to the throne or perhaps dead. Tattenai and Shethar-boznai had authority over the entire province of Syria and Phœnicia, and therefore had jurisdiction over Judaea and over Zerubbabel.

It is certain they had been incited by the complaints and turbulent outrages of the Samaritans against the Jews, but rather than rely on what they said, he suspended his judgment, so that he along with Shethar-boznai could ascertain the real state of matters by personal inspection and enquiry. Darius commands Tattenai, and the governors of the province to let the work on the House of God continue. When this news reached the Jews, it infused into the workmen a new spirit and passion of vitality to labour with unabating energy until the House of God was brought to a completion. It is said by some scholars that after its foundation was laid twenty-one years passed before it was completed.

**Beyond the River:** (v6) refers to the Persian empire west of the Euphrates which at this time included Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Phœnicia, and other, provinces subject to Darius. The empire was divided into twenty provinces, called satrapies. Syria formed one satrapy, encompassing Palestine, Phœnicia, and Cyprus. The Persian king never interfered with the Jews internal government except when there was a threatened disturbance of order and tranquility.

---

## DARIUS CONFIRMS CYRUS'S SCROLL

---

### EZRA 6:8-10

---

#### **Tattenai, Recites Darius Decree for Rebuilding the Temple.**

- **Ezra 6:8-10:** Moreover, I (Darius) make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God. The cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province from Beyond the River. <sup>9</sup> And whatever is needed—bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests at Jerusalem require—let that be given to them day by day without fail, <sup>10</sup> that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

Darius (reciting the words of Cyrus degree) not only commands Tattenai, and the governors of the province to let the work on the House of God continue, but also commands that the cost for the rebuilding of the house of God was to be paid in full from the royal revenue, as recorded in Cyrus scroll, so that the work would not be stopped for lack of money. Added to this, he ordered that they were to be supplied with every animal and all the wheat, salt, wine and oil that they needed for their sacrifices when the temple was completed. These were all to be collected out of the dominions of Darius on that side the river Euphrates, toward the land of Israel. Observant commentators note that Darius here was the first of the kings of Persia that exacted tribute from his dominions to pay to the Jews under Cyrus and that Cambyses though he offered presents imposed a tribute on the Jews, and for this reason even though he was addressed as Lord he was called a huckster, while Cyrus had the name of father.

**Pray for the life of the king and his sons:** (v10) Darius was clearly persuaded that the God Israel worshipped, heard and answered the prayers of His people, and naturally desired that they would pray for him and his family, and was therefore kind to them. For though it would be extremely offensive before God for the Jews to desire the heathen to pray to their gods for them, it was right and proper for them to pray for the heathens when they honestly desired them to, especially when it was the king desiring their prayers. Likewise, it is right and proper for Christians to pray for others besides themselves, especially when asked to and particularly for kings and civil magistrates. The LORD through Jeremiah said to all the people, who Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

- Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup> Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jer. 29:5-7).

Many of the Heathens had a high opinion of the God of the Jews, and believed Him to be the best and most powerful of all gods and therefore welcomed their prayers to Him for them and their kingdoms.

---

## CYRUS DECREE TO REBUILD THE HOUSE OF GOD --- CONTINUED

---

### EZRA 6:11-12

---

## **The House of whoever Alters the Edict, will be Made a Dunghill.**

- **Ezra 6:11-12:** Also I make a decree that if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled on it (let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon in KJV), and his house shall be made a dunghill. <sup>12</sup> May the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who shall put out a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God that is in Jerusalem. I Darius make a decree; let it be done with all diligence.”

Darius not only commands Tattenai, and the governors of the province to let the work on the House of God continue, and that the cost for the rebuilding of the house of God was to be paid in full from the royal revenue, but also commands that should anyone hinder the building of the Temple they are to be put to death and their household utterly destroyed.

**Whosoever shall alter this word:** (v11) though this warning included everyone who does not obey or acts contrary to Darius’ command, the warning would have been especially directed against the fanatical Samaritans who desired that all work on the Temple would be stopped.

Following are two possible reasons for this extremely favorable decree:

1. It was in some measure due to the influence of Cyrus, of who Darius held a high admiration, and whose two daughters he had married.
2. The Jews strong faith had made a deep impression upon the idolatrous people of that country as to being the most powerful God above all the gods the surrounding nations believed in.

**A beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled on it:** (v11) (let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon in KJV), means that timber was to be pulled down from his house, and set up outside for him to be hanged or crucified on.

**Let his house be made a dunghill:** (v11) a dunghill is something no one wants to go near for its smell is most repugnant, which means that the expression, “Let his house be made a dunghill” means that his house was to be made rubble and brought to utter ruin and that his family would be considered most abhorrent. loathsome and the foulest of all people.

---

## **EZRA 6:13**

---

### **Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and Associates did all Darius Ordered.**

- **Ezra 6:13:** Then, according to the word sent by Darius the king, Tattenai, the governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates did with all diligence (speedily in KJV) what Darius the king had ordered.

When they received and read the above letter from the king, a new spirit and energy was infused into the workmen, who now being greatly encouraged and furnished with everything they needed, labored with all diligence (speedily in KJV), meaning the people gathered themselves together as quickly as they could to assist the work, until it was brought to completion. From the time the foundation was laid the temple took around twenty-one years to complete. Like the temple of old, the present spiritual temple God is building in Christ is long, but it will be finished at the appointed time.

Every believer is a living temple, building themselves up through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as they journey through this world facing opposition, sorrows and hardships, can rest in the confidence, that he who began a good work will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6), until then let us be like these Jews of old, set our minds to remain faithful and zealous to see the Kingdom of God prosper and increase.

**Through Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews Completed the Temple.**

- **Ezra 6:14:** And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia;

After Darius had given the order to let the governor and elders of the Jews rebuild the House of God: (v7), they continued and prospered through the prophesying and encouraging of Haggai and Zechariah and succeeded in their work, as the prophets foretold and promised that they would.

**Zechariah the son of Iddo:** the book of Zechariah introduces him as the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo (Zechariah 1:1), while the book of Ezra names Zechariah as the son of Iddo (Ezra 5:1) (Ezra 6:14), it is more likely that Berechiah was Zechariah's father, and Iddo was his grandfather.

**Artaxerxes:** who Artaxerxes is and his commandment, is not easy to say; he cannot be the Artaxerxes between Cyrus and Darius, because he hindered the work of the building.

- **Ezra 4:21-23:** Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. <sup>22</sup> And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?" <sup>23</sup> 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.

So, it must have been one of the following two that followed after Darius, which means it could have been either:

1. **Xerxes, Darius's son and successor:** who was also called Artaxerxes, and Ahasuerus, who at this time may have been working with his father Darius, as his viceroy, and acting as co-emperor with his father during his lifetime, which was not unusual. As Darius's son it is most likely he favored the Jews, and promoted their cause and saw that his father's decree was carried out.
2. **Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son of Xerxes and grandson of Darius:** which is more likely. In chapter seven he is seen as the king of Persia who was best known by the name of Artaxerxes. Though the following verse shows that the building work of the temple was fully completed during the reign of Darius:

- **Ezra 6:15:** and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

It was afterwards more fully completed and adorned by Artaxerxes, who made a decree that the people of Israel may go to Jerusalem with all the silver and gold that they find in the whole province of Babylonia; whatever else is required for the house of God that they lack the king will provide out of his treasury; whatever Ezra required was to be done and it would be unlawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on any of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants and any other servants of the House of God. (Ezra 7:11-26).

- And I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence. (Ezra 7:21).
- Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king (Artaxerxes), to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:27).

The king goes on to say:

- Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:27).

A common belief amongst the Persians (and the Romans) was that amongst the many gods they believed in, there was a God that stood above all other gods and that if they did not appease the Most High God it would bring His wrath upon their kingdom as the following verse shows.

- Whatever is decreed by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven, lest his wrath be against the realm of the king and his sons. (Ezra 7:23).

The fact these kings believed that Israel's God was the Most High God, may be another reason these kings showed such great favour to the Jews. The king's stringent orders silenced all opposition allowing the work of the House of God to continue quickly.

---

## EZRA 6:15-17

---

### The Returned Exiles Celebrate the Completion of the Temple.

- **Ezra 6:15-17:** and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. <sup>16</sup> And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. <sup>17</sup> They offered at the dedication of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

**The month Adar:** was the twelfth month, the last month of the Jewish year, and contains part of February and part of March. Haggai gives the exact date of the re-commencement (Haggai 1:13-15) of the temple, which means the time for its completion was around four years, but dating from the first foundation (Ezra 3:10) around twenty years had elapsed after their return from captivity; and five hundred and fifteen before the coming of the Messiah.

**The dedication of the Temple** how long the dedication of the House of God was after its completion is not specified, but it is most likely that it followed immediately after the completion of the building. Many of the aged who had wept when they saw the completion of the foundation probably did not survive to see the completion of the Temple. The sacrifices offered at the completion of this temple were poor in comparison to the sacrifices offered at the completion of Solomon's Temple.

- **1 Kings 8:63:** Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So, the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

But it must be kept in mind that Solomon was the richest king in all the land and he built the temple in times of great peace and prosperity, whereas the exiles' resources were far less. However, the thankfulness of those that give, is not measured by the number of sacrifice they offer, but by what they are able to offer. The person who is abundantly rich, but says, "God accepts small offerings," and therefore offers a ten-dollar note, might as well keep his money. In contrast to this, a person who is poor, and offers a ten-dollar note is honoured before God. The exiles offered according to their present ability, and it was accepted, for it was made out of a great trial of affliction. The apostle Paul speaks of a similar event in the following verses:

- **2 Corinthians 8:1-24:** We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup> For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup> begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints

To the returned exiles, hundreds were more to them than Solomon's thousands were to him, and they willingly and cheerfully offered them, for there was great joy at seeing the temple completed.

**The people of Israel:** (v16), the Jews are no longer “Judah and Benjamin,” but “all Israel.” On the Day of Atonement, the Day of the new moon, and on all the great feasts the goat was the sin-offering for all the people, it is only here that one is offered for each tribe.

**Twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel:** (v17) one goat for each tribe, to make atonement for their sins. It appears from various passages of Scripture, that though Shalmaneser king of Assyria had carried captive the ten tribes many of them remained in their own country. These were later carried away by Nebuchadnezzar (or at least came under his rule) as was Judah and Benjamin. Others during the seventy-years captivity joined with the two tribes, which means that many from the ten tribes returned out of Babylon with Judah and Benjamin.

---

## **EZRA 6:18-21**

---

### **As Written in the Book of Moses, they Set the Priests and Levites.**

- **Ezra 6:18-21:** And they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their divisions, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses. <sup>19</sup> On the fourteenth day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover. <sup>20</sup> For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. <sup>21</sup> It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by everyone who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.

**As it is written in the Book of Moses:** (v18) the appointment of priests and Levites, according to Moses ordinance and the laws of Leviticus, naturally followed the dedication. Although David arranged the priests and Levites in courses according to their families, it was Moses who assigned to the priests and Levites their rights and privileges, and their stations and various duties. Since the twenty-four courses of priests were not complete nor were the Levites in full force at this time their restoration would have been imperfect, however, they made the book of Moses their rule, and kept the sacrifices and offerings as close as possible to the Levitical laws.

**On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles kept the Passover:** (v19) with great gladness of heart. Following are the three groups of those who ate the Passover:

1. All faithful Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile.
2. All who had joined themselves to the Jews and separated themselves from the idols and gods that the people of the land worshipped and instead subjected themselves to the law of Moses and were circumcised and worshipped the God of Israel, and by doing so were called proselytes of righteousness, for only such could eat of the Passover.
  - **Exodus 12:48-49:** <sup>48</sup> If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. <sup>49</sup> There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

It is very likely that many Gentiles that came out of the dominions of Babylon were influenced by the encouragement that Cyrus and Darius had showed to the Jewish religion and being enlightened into the knowledge and worship of the true God made themselves proselytes.

3. Some say that those who had separated themselves does not refer to Gentile proselytes who had come from heathen lands and turned to the religion of Israel and their God, but to the Jews in the land who had united with foreign populations and taken their women for wives and

worshipped their gods and superstitious vices. However, it is pointless to debate which of these three ate of the Passover since all, whether Jews or Gentile proselytes who had renounced their sinful pasts and walked faithfully before God are accepted before the LORD to eat the Passover lamb.

**The elders prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah:** (v14) this great and unexpected success was not to be ascribed to chance, or to the kindness of Darius, but to God, who, by his prophets, had called and enabled them to continue in the work and used Cyrus, Darius Artaxerxes Longimanus to open the way for the Jews to finish building the Temple and afterward beautify it.

---

## **EZRA 6:22**

---

### **They Kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread with Joy for Seven Days.**

- **Ezra 6:22:** And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

**The feast of unleavened bread:** (00) the week immediately following the Passover feast was, observed as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

- **Exodus 12:18:** In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

**The king of Assyria aided them in the work of the temple:** (v22) the king of Persia is here called the king of Assyria for the following two reasons:

1. He was now reigning over all the kingdoms that were formerly under the power of the famous Assyrian empire, which was first subdued by the king of Babylon.
2. To signify the great power and goodness of God in turning the hearts of great monarchs, whose predecessors had formerly been the chief persecutors and oppressors of the people of God.

**Kept the feast with joy for the LORD:** (v22) one of the special joys of this feast was the knowledge that the LORD had not only turned the heart of the king of the Persian empire, whose predecessors had been persecutors and oppressors of God's people to a favorable temperament towards the Jews and the building of the temple, but had also secured peace and prosperity for them and the privileges of establishing their own religion during the rest of the kings reign.

---

*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

---