

Wednesday, Aug 7

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Ezra 4:24 - 6:22

4 24 So the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem had stopped, and it remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

5 1 At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They prophesied in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. **2** Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak responded by starting again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them. **3** But Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues soon arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?" **4** They also asked for the names of all the men working on the Temple. **5** But because their God was watching over them, the leaders of the Jews were not prevented from building until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision. **6** This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the province west of the Euphrates River sent to King Darius: **7** "To King Darius. Greetings. **8**"The king should know that we went to the construction site of the Temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success. **9** "We asked the leaders, 'Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?' **10** And we demanded their names so that we could tell you who the leaders were. **11** "This was their answer: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel. **12** But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he abandoned them to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed this Temple and exiled the people to Babylonia. **13** However, King Cyrus of Babylon, during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the Temple of God should be rebuilt. **14** King Cyrus returned the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon. These cups were taken from that temple and presented to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah. **15** The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. **16** So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been

working on it ever since, though it is not yet completed.' **17** "Therefore, if it pleases the king, we request that a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to discover whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. And then let the king send us his decision in this matter."

6 **1** So King Darius issued orders that a search be made in the Babylonian archives, which were stored in the treasury. **2** But it was at the fortress at Ecbatana in the province of Media that a scroll was found. This is what it said: "Memorandum: **3** "In the first year of King Cyrus's reign, a decree was sent out concerning the Temple of God at Jerusalem. "Let the Temple be rebuilt on the site where Jews used to offer their sacrifices, using the original foundations. Its height will be ninety feet, and its width will be ninety feet. **4** Every three layers of specially prepared stones will be topped by a layer of timber. All expenses will be paid by the royal treasury. **5** Furthermore, the gold and silver cups, which were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, must be returned to Jerusalem and put back where they belong. Let them be taken back to the Temple of God." **6** So King Darius sent this message: "Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues and other officials west of the Euphrates River—stay away from there! **7** Do not disturb the construction of the Temple of God. Let it be rebuilt on its original site, and do not hinder the governor of Judah and the elders of the Jews in their work. **8** "Moreover, I hereby decree that you are to help these elders of the Jews as they rebuild this Temple of God. You must pay the full construction costs, without delay, from my taxes collected in the province west of the Euphrates River so that the work will not be interrupted. **9** "Give the priests in Jerusalem whatever is needed in the way of young bulls, rams, and male lambs for the burnt offerings presented to the God of heaven. And without fail, provide them with as much wheat, salt, wine, and olive oil as they need each day. **10** Then they will be able to offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the welfare of the king and his sons. **11** "Those who violate this decree in any way will have a beam pulled from their house. Then they will be lifted up and impaled on it, and their house will be reduced to a pile of rubble. **12** May the God who has chosen the city of Jerusalem as the place to honor his name destroy any king or nation that violates this command and destroys this Temple. "I, Darius, have issued this decree. Let it be obeyed with all diligence." **13** Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues complied at once with the command of King Darius. **14** So the Jewish elders continued their work, and they were greatly encouraged by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. The Temple was finally finished, as had been commanded by the God of Israel and decreed by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia. **15** The Temple was completed on March 12, during

the sixth year of King Darius's reign. **16** The Temple of God was then dedicated with great joy by the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the people who had returned from exile. **17** During the dedication ceremony for the Temple of God, 100 young bulls, 200 rams, and 400 male lambs were sacrificed. And 12 male goats were presented as a sin offering for the twelve tribes of Israel. **18** Then the priests and Levites were divided into their various divisions to serve at the Temple of God in Jerusalem, as prescribed in the Book of Moses. **19** On April 21 the returned exiles celebrated Passover. **20** The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were ceremonially clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. **21** The Passover meal was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and by the others in the land who had turned from their immoral customs to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. **22** Then they celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There was great joy throughout the land because the LORD had caused the king of Assyria to be favorable to them, so that he helped them to rebuild the Temple of God, the God of Israel.

1 Corinthians 3:5 - 23

3 5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. **6** I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. **7** It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. **9** For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building. **10** Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. **11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. **12** Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. **13** But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. **14** If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. **15** But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. **16** Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? **17** God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. **18** Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. **19** For the wisdom of this world is

foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, “He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness.” **20** And again, “The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless.” **21** So don’t boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you— **22** whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, **23** and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Psalm 29:1 - 11

29 1 Honor the LORD, you heavenly beings ; honor the LORD for his glory and strength. **2** Honor the LORD for the glory of his name. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. **3** The voice of the LORD echoes above the sea. The God of glory thunders. The LORD thunders over the mighty sea. **4** The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. **5** The voice of the LORD splits the mighty cedars; the LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon. **6** He makes Lebanon’s mountains skip like a calf; he makes Mount Hermon leap like a young wild ox. **7** The voice of the LORD strikes with bolts of lightning. **8** The voice of the LORD makes the barren wilderness quake; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. **9** The voice of the LORD twists mighty oaks and strips the forests bare. In his Temple everyone shouts, “Glory!” **10** The LORD rules over the floodwaters. The LORD reigns as king forever. **11** The LORD gives his people strength. The LORD blesses them with peace.

Proverbs 20:26 - 27

20 26 A wise king scatters the wicked like wheat, then runs his threshing wheel over them. **27** The LORD ’s light penetrates the human spirit, exposing every hidden motive.