### Ezra

## Chapter 6

1Well, after examining the library at the treasury in Babylon, King Darius thereafter issued a decree. 2For in the city of AchMetha, in the palace of the Medes, he found a scroll with a record that was written in the 1st year of King Cyrus, where he rendered a decree concerning the Temple of God in JeruSalem.  
  
3It said:  
  
 ‘Allow a Temple to be built where they’ll offer sacrifices!  
  
 ‘Let them set in place the foundations.  
  
 ‘[The building] must be 100 feet (30.5m) high and 100 feet (30.5) wide.  
  
 4‘It should be made with three layers of durable stones and a layer of durable timbers.  
  
 ‘It’s decreed that the expense [of this construction] will be paid for by the palace of the king. Also, the items of gold and silver that were confiscated from the Temple of God by NebuChadNezzar should be removed from his temple and returned to the one in JeruSalem… It should be taken from Babylon and transported to the Holy Place in JeruSalem, the Temple of God.’  
  
  
6So [the king] told King TatNai, ShetharBozNai, and his fellow servants (the ApharSachites from the other side of the river) to leave that place and to allow the work on the Temple of God [to be completed]… 7[not to bother] the elders and those who were directing the work of the Judeans, so they could rebuild [the Temple] where it once was.  
  
8[He said]:  
  
 ‘My decree through the elders of those Judeans is for them to build the Temple of God using tax money from the [vassal] kings on the other side of the river. The expenses must be carefully calculated and then paid to those men, so the work doesn’t stop.  
  
 9‘Also, where they’re lacking enough male calves, rams, and lambs for their whole burnt offerings to the God of heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, or olive oil… Whatever the Priests in JeruSalem need, must be given to them each day.  
  
 ‘There must be no arguing... Whatever they ask for 10should be provided, so a pleasant aroma may be offered to the God of heaven, and so that prayers may be offered on behalf of the king and his sons.  
  
 11‘This decree has come from me, and any man who challenges what I’ve said will have his house demolished and its boards placed upright! Thereafter, he will be impaled on top of them, and everything in his house will be looted.  
  
 12‘May the God who camps and puts His Name there wipe out any people and their kings who raise a hand against, or change, or hide the Temple of God in JeruSalem.  
  
 ‘For I, Darius, have rendered this decree after thoughtful consideration…  
  
 ‘May it be so!’  
  
  
13Then TatNai (the vassal king) from the other side of the river (as well as ShetharBozNai and his fellow servants) did exactly as they were told, because of what King Darius had decreed.  
  
14So, the Judean elders kept on building… And they were blest, just as the Prophets HagGai and ZechariAh (son of IdDo) foretold. They got everything ready and did the rebuilding, following the instructions of the God of IsraEl by the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and ArthaSastha, the kings of the Persians.  
  
  
15Well, the Temple was completed by the 3rd day of the month of Adar in the 6th year of the reign of King Darius.  
  
16So, the sons of IsraEl, the Priests, the Levites, and all the rest that had returned in the resettlement joyfully declared a holiday of rededication of the Temple of God.  
  
17And this is what they offered for the rededication:  
  
 • 100 calves,  
 • 100 rams,  
 • 200 lambs, and   
 • 400 winter-yearling goats as sin offerings for all IsraEl.  
  
And they repeated this 12 times (for the number of the tribes of IsraEl).  
  
18They also reestablished the divisions of the Priests and they distributed the duties at the Temple of God in JeruSalem among the Levites, just as it was written in the book of Moses.  
  
19Thereafter, those who had returned went on to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the 1st month. 20For by then, all the Priests had been purified and all the Levites were clean.  
  
So they slaughtered the Passover for those who had returned and for their brothers the Priests. 21Then, all the sons of IsraEl (those who had returned and separated themselves from the uncleanness of the gentiles so they could ask for things from Jehovah the God of IsraEl) ate the Passover, 22and they joyfully observed the holiday of Fermentation-free Bread for seven days, because Jehovah had filled them with joy.  
  
Thereafter, even the king of Assyria assisted them by providing [workers] for the Temple of the God of IsraEl.