

# THE TEMPLE REBUILT

CORE PASSAGE: EZRA 6:6-12,16-22

## CONTEXT

After the return to Jerusalem, God's remnant people prepared to rebuild the Lord's temple. The task ahead was daunting with opposition at every turn. On the surface, their work seemed insurmountable. Yet theirs was not a man-made assignment. They were commissioned by the Creator and Sustainer of all—the same God who providentially brought them back to their ancestral home and provided abundant supplies for the temple's reconstruction. This faithful Deliverer would continue to pave the way for them to complete the task, enabling them to proclaim His excellencies along the way.

## KEY CONCEPT

**God will restore worship of Him, resulting in a joyful celebration of His faithfulness.**

As you examine Ezra 6:6-12,16-22:

- Reflect on the reality that though enemies of God tried to stop the rebuilding of the temple, God had a plan in place.
- Recognize that joy comes with worship as we remember God's faithfulness in the past, present, and into the future.



## TIMELINE

King Cyrus of Persia Issues  
Decree Allowing the Jews to  
Return to Judah (Ezra 1)

The Jews Face Opposition  
and Pause Rebuilding the  
Temple (Ezra 4)

**SESSION STUDY:**  
The Temple Is Completed  
and Dedicated (Ezra 6)

The First Group of Jews Returns,  
Builds the Altar, and Lays the  
Foundation for the Temple (Ezra 1-3)

Haggai and Zechariah  
Encourage the Building  
to Resume (Ezra 5)

Ezra the Priest Returns to  
Judah and Instructs the People  
in the Law (Ezra 7-10)

## Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Ezra 4:1-5

☐ **Day 4:** Ezra 6:1-15

☐ **Day 2:** Ezra 4:24-5:2

☐ **Day 5:** Ezra 6:16-22

☐ **Day 3:** Ezra 5:3-17

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 20



Scan this QR code  
to access this session's  
Scripture passages.

## GOD IS ABLE TO USE ANY MEANS TO RESTORE WORSHIP OF HIM.

*Circle the phrases in which King Darius references God as part of His decree.*

**6** Therefore, you must stay away from that place, Tattenai governor of the region west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues, the officials in the region. **7** Leave the construction of the house of God alone. Let the governor and elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its original site. **8** I hereby issue a decree concerning what you are to do, so that the elders of the Jews can rebuild the house of God: The cost is to be paid in full to these men out of the royal revenues from the taxes of the region west of the Euphrates River, so that the work will not stop. **9** Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of the heavens, or wheat, salt, wine, and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem—let it be given to them every day without fail, **10** so that they can offer sacrifices of pleasing aroma to the God of the heavens and pray for the life of the king and his sons. **11** I also issue a decree concerning any man who interferes with this directive: Let a beam be torn from his house and raised up; he will be impaled on it, and his house will be made into a garbage dump because of this offense. **12** May the God who caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who dares to harm or interfere with this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued the decree. Let it be carried out diligently.

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Soon after the temple's foundation was set and dedicated, opposition to the work emerged. Enemies sought to sabotage the efforts of God's people: first by attempting to infiltrate their work and then by making them afraid to build; they also bribed officials to frustrate the work (4:1-5). Unfortunately, the enemies' crusade to crush the construction efforts succeeded.

The work on the house of God stopped "until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia" (4:24). For over a decade, the job site sat in silence. Day after day, year after year, God's people passed by the unfulfilled slab of rock dedicated for the structure central to their life and worship. Perhaps the people felt defeated, at first, but then that seemed to give way to disinterest as they turned their focus to their own houses (Haggai 1:2-4).

**When has opposition discouraged you from obeying the Lord?**

In His perfect timing, God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to re-declare God's plan and stir up God's people to restart the rebuilding efforts. But this also rekindled the difficulties—a letter from the regional governor was sent to the king of Persia asking if this rebuild was allowed (Ezra 5:1-17).

The faithful God of Israel led King Darius of Persia to respond to the letter with a clear decree in the Jews' favor. First, Cyrus's original decree was found (6:1-5). Then in keeping with Medo-Persian law, in which a decree of the king is irrevocable (Daniel 6:8), and in deference to "the God of the heavens," Darius supported, protected, and provided for the construction of God's house (Ezra 6:6-12). The Lord used both Cyrus and Darius to accomplish His will.

**How does God's sovereignty relate to His faithfulness, as seen in this passage?**

#### THEOLOGY CONNECTION

**GOD IS FAITHFUL:** God's faithfulness means He keeps His word and always fulfills His promises (1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:13; 1 Peter 4:19). God's faithfulness is demonstrated in His fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostle Paul linked the attribute of "faithful" to God's coming through on His word in 1 Thessalonians 5:24. We reflect God by keeping the promises we make to Him and to others.

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

EZRA 6:16-22

### WHEN WE CELEBRATE GOD'S PAST FAITHFULNESS, JOYFUL WORSHIP ENSUES.

*Underline the ways the Israelites celebrated the dedication of the temple “with joy.”*

**16** Then the Israelites, including the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles, celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. **17** For the dedication of God's house they offered one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, and four hundred lambs, as well as twelve male goats as a sin offering for all Israel—one for each Israelite tribe. **18** They also appointed the priests by their divisions and the Levites by their groups to the service of God in Jerusalem, according to what is written in the book of Moses. **19** The exiles observed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. **20** All of the priests and Levites were ceremonially clean, because they had purified themselves. They killed the Passover lamb for themselves, their priestly brothers, and all the exiles. **21** The Israelites who had returned from exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the Gentiles of the land in order to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. **22** They observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days with joy, because the LORD had made them joyful, having changed the Assyrian king's attitude toward them, so that he supported them in the work on the house of the God of Israel.

## CHURCH CONNECTION

God made the rebuilding of the temple possible so the people could see His faithfulness to them, resulting in joy and celebration. God's faithfulness is revealed ultimately in His provision of His Son, Jesus Christ, which results in ultimate joy and celebration for believers today.

**Key Concept:** God will restore worship of Him, resulting in a joyful celebration of His faithfulness.

The people celebrated, offered, appointed, observed, and more “in order to worship the LORD” (Ezra 6:21). And all of this unfolded in the context of community and “with joy, because the LORD had made them joyful” (v. 22). Worship activates action, fosters fellowship, and rouses rejoicing. The context of the majority of God’s commands surrounding worship is corporate, expecting a body of believers with a common goal of God’s glory.

Though we no longer slay lambs and build temples, we can worship with the same fervor and joy, together as the church. Worship isn’t passive or solitary. While lyrics and mountaintops may stir our souls, the call to worship leads God’s people to active, corporate rejoicing in who God is and all He has done.

**What obstacles in your life might you need to address to worship God actively, corporately, and joyfully?**

Within a month of the temple’s completion and dedication, the time arrived for Passover—a long-standing celebration of God’s deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt—and then the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Both were instituted by the Lord at the beginning of the exodus “because on this very day I brought your military divisions out of the land of Egypt. You must observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent statute” (Exodus 12:17).

Recalling God’s faithfulness is vital to our faith and worship. Day by day, year by year, generation after generation, we are called to remember who God is and all He has done. He is good. He does good. He is worthy of our praise. Though the remnant Jews in Jerusalem faced an uncertain future under Persian rule, they chose to worship God for His past deeds and what He was presently doing. When the future seems cloudy, we can look to our past and present to see how God has unfailingly provided all we needed, precisely when we needed it.

**How can remembering God’s past and present faithfulness help you worship God more deeply today?**



## GOD'S CONTINUING FAITHFULNESS

*Read the following Scriptures and write down how God displayed His faithfulness.  
Then record how God has shown you His faithfulness.*

EXODUS 14:13-31	DANIEL 2:1-23
ACTS 2:36-47	ACTS 5:25-42
EZRA 6:6-12,16-22	
TODAY	

What part do we play in the restoration of God's worship in the world today?

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## HEAD

What are some ways you can regularly remind yourself that you exist for God's glory?

### PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 20. Call for the Lord's help in your "day of trouble" (v. 1) and express your faith in His deliverance and victory, however He chooses to bring that about. Praise Him for His faithfulness to His people who call on His name.



## HEART

Who or what has been the true object of your worship lately? Why?

### PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



## HANDS

How can you better enjoy and employ God's Word, God's Spirit, and God's people this week?

