

Read the Bible in A Year: Chronological

Readings for September 6-14, 2020

From: Ezekiel 29-30, 47-49; 2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 52; Daniel 5-12; 2 Chronicles 36; 1 Chronicles 3; Ezra 1-6; Haggai 1-2; and Zechariah 1-14

We continue the events in Israel and Judah during this time in their history. If you recall, the people of Israel had been exiled to Assyria (see the purple lines on the map below), and the King of Assyria had repopulated the cities of Israel (Samaria) with gentiles from other lands (see red line below). Judah has faced years of struggle with Babylon, having two kings and two waves of captives already sent into exile in Babylon. Now Judah continues to face threats from Egypt and Assyria, and the Babylonian forces have laid siege to Jerusalem and carried captives to exile in Babylon. The prophets continue to speak words of judgement and hope to the people in captivity and under siege.



Our Readings this week continue with the prophet, Ezekiel, as he continues to tell of the vision he was given...

The River Flowing from the Temple

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and water was flowing out from under the threshold of the temple eastward, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing down from under from the right side of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces east; and the water was coming out on the south side.

When the man who had the line in his hand went eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water; the water reached the ankles. Again he measured a thousand and brought

me through the water. The water reached the knees. Again he measured a thousand and brought me through *the water*. The water *reached* the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand. And it was a river that I could not pass over, for the water had risen, *enough* water to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Then he brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. When I had returned I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. Every living creature that swarms, wherever the rivers go, will live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come there and the others become fresh. Thus everything shall live wherever the river comes. It shall come to pass that the fishermen shall stand upon it. From En Gedi even to En Eglaim there shall be a place to spread out nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the *Mediterranean* Sea, exceedingly many. But its miry places and its marshes shall not be healed. They shall be given to salt. By the river upon its bank, on this side and on that side, shall grow all *kinds of* trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade nor shall its fruit fail. They shall bring forth fruit according to their months, because their water issues out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food and their leaves for medicine.”

The Borders of the Land

Thus says the Lord GOD: This shall be the border by which you shall divide the land for an inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph *shall have two* portions. You shall divide it for an inheritance, one as equally as another. For I lifted up My hand to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you for inheritance. This shall be the border of the land on the north: from the *Mediterranean* Sea by the way of Hethlon as men go to Zedad, Hamath, Berothah, Sibram (which lies between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hattikon, which is on the border of Hauran. The border from the sea shall be Hazar Enan at the border of Damascus, and on the north northward is the border of Hamath. And this is the north side. The east side, from Hauran and from Damascus and from Gilead and the land of Israel, shall be the Jordan. You shall measure from the northern border to the eastern sea. And this is the east side. The south side, toward the Negev, shall run from Tamar even to the waters of Meribah Kadesh, from there along the brook *of Egypt* to the *Mediterranean* Sea. This shall be the south side, toward the Negev. The west side also shall be the *Mediterranean* Sea from the *southern* border to a point opposite Lebo Hamath. This is the west side. So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. It shall come to pass that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who sojourn among you, who shall bear sons among you. And they shall be to you as born in the country among the sons of Israel. They shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. It shall come to pass that in whatever tribe the alien sojourns, there you shall give him his inheritance, says the Lord GOD.

The Division of the Land

Now these are the names of the tribes: From the north end beside the way of Hethlon as one goes to Lebo Hamath, *as far as* Hazar Enan at the border of Damascus northward beside Hamath going from east to west, Dan, one portion; by the border of Dan from the east side to the west side, a portion for Asher; by the border of Asher from the east side even to the west side, a portion for Naphtali; by the border of Naphtali from the east side to the west side, a portion for Manasseh; by the border of Manasseh from the east side to the west side, a portion for Ephraim; by the border of Ephraim from the east side even to the west side, a portion for Reuben; by the border of Reuben from the east side to the west side, a portion for Judah; by the border of Judah from the east side to the west side shall be the allotment which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand cubits in width and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side to the west side. And the sanctuary shall be in the middle of it.

The allotment that you shall set apart to the LORD shall be twenty-five thousand cubits in length, and ten thousand in width. For them, even for the priests, shall be this holy allotment, toward the north twenty-five thousand cubits in length and toward the west ten thousand in width and toward the east ten thousand in width and toward the south twenty-five thousand cubits in length. And the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in its midst. It shall be for the priests who are sanctified of the sons of Zadok, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the sons of Israel went astray as the Levites went astray. It shall be an allotment to them, a thing most holy, the allotment of the land by the border of the Levites.

Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites shall have twenty-five thousand cubits in length and ten thousand in width. All the length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits, and the width ten thousand. They shall not sell of it or exchange or alienate this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to the LORD.

The five thousand cubits in width that remain and the twenty-five thousand in length shall be for common use for the city, for dwellings and for suburbs. And the city shall be in the midst. These shall be its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits; and the south side four thousand five hundred cubits; and on the east side four thousand five hundred cubits; and the west side four thousand five hundred cubits. The suburbs of the city shall be: to the north, two hundred and fifty cubits; to the south, two hundred and fifty cubits; to the east, two hundred and fifty cubits; and to the west, two hundred and fifty cubits. The rest in length alongside the holy portion shall be ten thousand cubits eastward and ten thousand westward. And it shall be alongside the holy portion. And its increase shall be for food to those who serve the city. Those who serve the city, out of all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. All the allotment shall be twenty-five thousand by twenty-five thousand cubits. You shall set apart the holy allotment foursquare, with the property of the city.

The rest shall belong to the prince, on both sides of the holy allotment and the city property, next to the twenty-five thousand cubits of the allotment toward the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand toward the western border, next to the portions for the prince. And the holy allotment and the sanctuary of the temple shall be in its midst. Moreover excluding the property of the Levites and the property of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, everything between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall be for the prince. As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west side, Benjamin *shall have* one portion. By the border of Benjamin from the east side to the west side, Simeon *shall have* one portion. By the border of Simeon from the east side to the west side, Issachar *shall have* one portion. By the border of Issachar from the east side to the west side, Zebulun *shall have* one portion. By the border of Zebulun from the east side to the west side, Gad *shall have* one portion. By the border of Gad at the south side southward the border shall be even from Tamar to the waters of Meribah Kadesh and to the brook of *Egypt* toward the *Mediterranean* Sea. This is the land which you shall divide by lot to the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, says the Lord GOD.

The Gates of the New City

These are the exits of the city on the north side, four thousand five hundred cubits by measurement. The gates of the city shall be named after the tribes of Israel, three gates northward: one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi. At the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits, shall be three gates: one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan. At the south side, four thousand five hundred cubits by measurement, shall be three gates: one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun. At the west side, four thousand five hundred cubits, shall be three gates: one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali. The circumference *shall be* eighteen thousand cubits.

And the name of the city from that day *shall be*, The LORD Is There.

Babylonia to Plunder Egypt

In the twenty-seventh year, in the first *month*, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying: Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled. Yet he and his army had no wages from Tyre for the labor that he had done against it. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And he shall carry off her wealth and take her spoil and take her prey. And it shall be wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor with which he labored against it, because they acted for Me, says the Lord GOD. On that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will open your mouth in their midst. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

A Lament for Egypt

The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Howl, “Woe to the day!” For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day, it shall be the time of *doom* for the nations. The sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain fall in Egypt, they take away her wealth, and her foundations are broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, all Arabia, Kub, and the men of the land that is in league shall fall with them by the sword.

Thus says the LORD: Indeed, those who uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down. From Migdol to Syene they shall fall in her by the sword, says the Lord GOD. They shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted. They shall know that I am the LORD when I have set a fire in Egypt and when all her helpers are destroyed.

In that day messengers shall go forth from Me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them as in the day of Egypt. For it is coming! Thus says the Lord GOD: I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste and all that is in it, by the hand of strangers. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Thus, says the Lord GOD: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease from Memphis; and no more shall there be a prince of the land of Egypt. And I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in Thebes. I will pour out My fury upon Pelusium, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of Thebes. I will set fire in Egypt; Pelusium shall have great pain, and Thebes shall be rent asunder, and Memphis *shall have* distresses daily. The young men of Heliopolis and of Bubastis shall fall by the sword, and the women shall go into captivity. In Tahpanhes also the day shall be darkened, when I break there the yokes of Egypt. And the pomp of her strength shall cease in her; as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. Thus I will execute judgments in Egypt, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Both 2 Kings and Jeremiah record the release of King Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon. Though he remained in exile, he was given a position of privilege in Babylon...

Jehoiachin Released from Prison

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Awel-Marduk king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him in Babylon. He changed his prison garments, and he ate food continually before him all the days of his life. His allowance was a regular allowance given him by the king every day, all the days of his life. (2 Kings)

In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Awel-Marduk, king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison, and spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings who were with him in Babylon. Therefore, Jehoiachin changed his prison garments and continually ate meals before him all the days of his life. For his allowance, there was a continual allowance given him by the king of Babylon, every day a portion all the days of his life until the day of his death. (Jeremiah)

It was in this same year that the prophet, Daniel, had the following vision...

Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his mind *while* on his bed. Then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spoke and said: I saw in my vision by night the four winds of the heaven striving upon the *Mediterranean Sea*. Four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I watched until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. Another beast appeared, a second, like a bear, and it raised itself up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said to it, "Arise, devour much flesh." After this I looked and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a fowl. The beast also had four heads. And dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the visions at night a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong. And it had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet. And it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, when there came up among them another little horn before whom three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

The Ancient of Days Reigns

I watched until the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of Days was seated, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and its wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came out from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. Then I watched because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking. I watched even until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and there was one like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. There was given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The Interpretation of the Dream

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I approached one of those who were standing by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Then I desired to know the truth of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron and its nails of bronze, and which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet; and of the ten horns that were in its head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastful words, whose look was more stout than its fellows. I beheld, and the same horn was warring with the saints and prevailing against them until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be different from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be different from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and plan to change times and law. And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. But the court shall sit for judgment, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the

Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” At this point the matter ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts troubled me much, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat

In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, even to me Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first. I saw in the vision, and while I was looking, I was at Susa in the palace which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision that I was by the canal of Ulai. Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high. But one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward and northward and southward, so that no animal might stand before him; nor was there any that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. As I was considering this, suddenly a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth and did not touch the ground. And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. He came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran to him in the fury of his power. I saw him come close to the ram, and he was moved with rage against him, and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and stamped on him. And there was none who could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the male goat grew very great. And when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and four conspicuous *horns* came up in its place toward the four winds of heaven.

The Little Horn

Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Pleasant *Land*. It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them. Indeed, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and from Him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of rebellion, an army was given *to the horn* to oppose the daily sacrifice; and it cast truth to the ground. It practiced this and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said to that certain saint which spoke, “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be cleansed properly.”

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought for the meaning. Then there before me stood one who had the appearance of a man. I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was afraid and fell upon my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision deals with the time of the end." Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face toward the ground. But he touched me and set me upright. He said, "Listen, I will make you know what shall be in the final period of the indignation, for the end shall be at the appointed time. The ram which you saw having two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. The rough goat is the king of Greece, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now the broken horn and the four horns that stood up in its place are four kingdoms that shall stand up out of his nation, but not with his power. In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king will arise, having a fierce countenance, skilled in intrigue. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. And he shall destroy wonderfully and shall prosper and practice his will and shall destroy the mighty men and the holy people. By his cunning, he shall cause deceit to succeed under his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in a time of peace. He shall also rise up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken, not by human hands. And the vision of the evenings and the mornings, which was told, is true. Therefore shut up the vision, for it deals with many days *in the future*." Then I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for some days. Afterward I rose up again and did the king's business. So I was astonished at the vision, but there was none to explain it.

Daniel and the Lions' Den

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty officials, so that they would be over the whole kingdom, and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, so that the officials might give accounts to them and the king not suffer loss. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and officials because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and officials sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no occasion or fault because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Then these presidents and officials assembled together to the king, and said to him: "King Darius, live forever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the officials, the counselors, and the captains have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and

sign the writing, that it not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be altered.” Therefore King Darius signed the writing, even the decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house. And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled on his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near and spoke before the king concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree, that every man who asks a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?”

The king answered and said, “The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be altered.” Then they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is of the sons of the captivity of Judah, does not regard you, O king, or the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” Then the king, when he heard these words, was sorely displeased with himself and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he labored until sunset to deliver him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.” Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”

Daniel Saved from the Lions

A stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting, and no instruments of music were brought before him. And his sleep fled from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. When he came to the den, he cried with a voice full of sorrow to Daniel. And the king spoke and said to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you serve continually been able to deliver you from the lions?” Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God has sent His angel and has shut the lions’ mouths so that they have not hurt me, because innocence was found in me before Him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” Then the king was exceeding glad for him and commanded that they take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of harm was found on him, because he believed in his God. Then the king commanded, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces before they came to the bottom of the den. Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

“Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, enduring forever; His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and His dominion shall be forever. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The Prayer of Daniel

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which *were specified by* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the accomplishment of the desolations of Jerusalem, that is, seventy years. I set my face toward the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said:

“Alas, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping His covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commandments. We have sinned and have committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments. We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our officials, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day, to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to all Israel, who are near and who are far off, through all the countries wherever You have driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against You. O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, to our officials, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Your law, even by departing that they might not obey Your voice. Therefore the curse has been poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him. He has confirmed His words, which He had spoken against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing on us great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done such as has been done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, great calamity has come on us. Yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God so that we might turn from our iniquities and give attention to Your truth. Therefore, the LORD has kept the disaster in store and brought it upon us. For the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which He does, but we have not obeyed His voice. Now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a

name, even to this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I beseech You, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain, because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all who are around us. Now therefore, O God, hear the prayer of Your servant and his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and look at our desolations and the city which is called by Your name, for we do not present our supplications before You for our righteousness, but for Your great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not defer, for Your own sake, O my God. For Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

The Seventy Weeks

While I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, indeed, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. He informed me and talked with me, and said, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision: Seventy weeks have been determined for your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until the Prince Messiah shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks. It shall be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of trouble. After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the troops of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall come with a flood. And until the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed destruction is poured out on the desolator.”

And finally, the time came when Cyrus, King of Persia, under whose control the exiles now lived, began to allow some of the exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple there...

The Proclamation of Cyrus

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also declared in a written edict: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has commanded me to build for Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up."

The Proclamation of Cyrus (as recorded by the Prophet, Ezra)

Now 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 issued a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him, and may he go to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem. Whoever remains in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver, gold, goods, and animals, along with voluntary gifts for the house of God in Jerusalem."

Then the heads of the households of Judah and Benjamin, and the Levitical priests, with all those whose spirits God had stirred, rose up to go up to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. So everyone all around them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, gold, goods, animals, and precious things, besides all that was given voluntarily. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods. Cyrus king of Persia even brought forth more for them, by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer and had them numbered for Sheshbazzar, who was the prince of Judah. This is the number of them: thirty containers of gold, one thousand containers of silver, and twenty-nine knives. There were also thirty smaller bowls of gold, four hundred and ten smaller bowls of silver (of lesser value), and one thousand other various containers.

All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Post-Exilic Royal Line

The sons of Jeconiah were Assir, Shealtiel his son, Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei, and the sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; and Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-Hesed, five. The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons of Shekaniah. The sons of Shekaniah were Shemaiah and the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six in all. The sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam, three in all. The sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pedaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani, seven in all.

So, the first wave of exiles returned to Jerusalem to begin the rebuilding of the temple (as recorded by the Prophet, Ezra)

Now these are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive to Babylon (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to their own town, in company with Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah):

The list of the men of the people of Israel: the descendants of Parosh (2,172), of Shephatiah (372), of Arah (775), of Pahath-Moab through the line of Jeshua and Joab (2,812), of Elam (1,254), of Zattu (945), of Zakkai (760), of Bani (642), of Bebai (623), of Azgad (1,222), of Adonikam (666), of Bigvai (2,056), of Adin (454), of Ater through Hezekiah (98), of Bezai (323), of Jorah (112), of Hashum (223), of Gibbar (95).

The men of Bethlehem (123), of Netophah (56), of Anathoth (128), of Azmaveth (42), of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah and Beeroth (743), of Ramah and Geba (621), of Bethel and Ai (223), of Nebo (52), of Magbish (156), of the other Elam (1,254), of Harim (320), of Lod, Hadid and Ono (725), of Jericho (345), of Senaah (3,630). The

The priests: the descendants of Jeahiah through the family of Jeshua (973), of Immer (1,052), of Pahshur (1,247), of Harim (1,017). The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel of the line of Hodaviah (74). The musicians: the descendants of Asaph (128). The gatekeepers of the temple, the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai (139).

The temple servants: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, Keros, Siaha, Padon, Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub, Hagab, Shalmi, Hanan, Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah, Besai, Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim, Bakkub, Hakupha, Harhur, Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha, Barkos, Sisera, Temah, Neziah, and Hatipha.

The descendants of the servants of Solomon: the descendants of Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda, Jaala, Darkon, Giddel, Shephathiah, Hattil, Pokereth-Hazzebaim, and Ami.

The temple servants and the descendants of the servants of Solomon totaled 392.

The following came up from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer, but they could not show that their families were descended from Israel: The descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda (652) and from among the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai (a man who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by that name). These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. The governor ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there was a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.

The whole company numbered 42,360, besides their 7,337 male and female slaves; and they also had 200 male and female singers. They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

When they arrived at the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings toward the rebuilding of the house of God on its site. According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver and 100 priestly garments. The priests, the Levites, the musicians, the gatekeepers and the temple servants settled in their own towns, along with some of the other people, and the rest of the Israelites settled in their towns.

Rebuilding the Altar

When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled together as one in Jerusalem. Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. Then in accordance with what is written, they

celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD. On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

Rebuilding the Temple

Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by Cyrus king of Persia.

In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the LORD. Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers—all Levites—joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.

When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever."

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

Opposition to the Rebuilding

When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." But Zerubbabel, Joshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us." Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

It was at this time that the prophet Daniel, who remained in captivity in Babylon, was given a terrifying vision...

Daniel's Vision of a Man

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar, and the message was true and one of great conflict. And he understood the message and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no tasty food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all until three whole weeks were fulfilled. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river which is Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked and saw a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, and his face had the appearance of lightning, and his eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet were like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, and my countenance grew deathly pale, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words, then I was in a deep sleep on my face with my face toward the ground.

Prophecies of Persia and Greece

But then a hand touched me, which set me on my knees and on the palms of my hands. He said to me, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have been sent to you now." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. For from the first day that you set your heart to understand this and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days. So Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what shall befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is yet for many days."

When he had spoken such words to me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became mute. Then one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, because of the vision, sorrows have come upon me, and I have retained no strength. How can the servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? And as for me, there remains no strength in me now, nor is there any breath left in me."

Then again, the one having the appearance of a man came and touched me, and he strengthened me. He said, "O man, greatly beloved, do not fear. Peace be unto you. Be strong and courageous!"

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

Then he said, "Do you understand why I have come to you? But now I shall return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I have gone forth, then truly the prince of Greece will come. But I will show you what is inscribed in the Scripture of Truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces, except Michael your prince.

The Kings of the South and the North

“Also, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now I will tell you the truth. Truly, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than all of them; and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. A mighty king shall stand up who shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will. When he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled. For his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides them. The king of the South shall be strong, as well as one of his officials who shall be strong above him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion. In the end of some years they shall join themselves together. For the king's daughter of the South shall come to the king of the North to make an agreement. But she shall not retain her position of power, and neither he nor his power shall stand. But she shall be given up with those who brought her and with him who fathered her and with him who strengthened her in those times. But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his place, who shall come with an army and shall enter the fortress of the king of the North and shall deal against them and shall prevail. And he shall also carry captive into Egypt their gods, with their officials, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold. And he shall continue more years than the king of the North, who will enter the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of armed forces. One shall advance like a flood and pass through, and again shall wage the war as far as his fortress. The king of the South shall be moved with rage, and shall go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall raise a great multitude; but that multitude shall be given into his *enemy's* hand. When he has taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands, but he shall not be strengthened by it. For the king of the North shall return and shall raise a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much equipment. In those times many shall stand up against the king of the South. Also the robbers of your people shall exalt themselves to fulfill the vision, but they shall fall. Then the king of the North shall come and set up a siege mound and capture a fortified city. And the forces of the South shall not withstand him; neither shall his chosen best troops have strength to resist. But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the Pleasant Land, which shall be consumed by his hand. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he shall put into effect. And he shall give him the daughter of women to corrupt it. But she shall not stand on his side or be for him. After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many. But a commander shall put a stop to his reproach against him, and he shall repay him for his reproach. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but shall stumble and fall and not be found any more. Then one shall stand up in his place who shall send an oppressor in the

glory of his kingdom. But within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. In his place a vile person shall stand up, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom. But he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. A flood of armies shall be swept away before him and be broken, and the prince of the covenant as well. After the league *is* made with him, he shall work deceitfully, and he shall come up and shall become strong with a small force of people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the richest places of the realm. And he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers. He shall distribute among them the plunder and spoil and riches. And he shall plan his devices against the strongholds, but only for a time. He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army. But he shall not stand, for schemes shall be devised against him. Indeed, those who eat his choice food shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow, and many shall fall down slain. As for both of these kings, their hearts shall plan on mischief, and they shall speak lies to one another at one table. But it shall not prosper, for the end shall yet be at the appointed time. While turning back to his land with great wealth, his heart shall be against the holy covenant. He shall *wage war* and turn back to his own land.

Blasphemies of the Northern King

“At the appointed time he shall return and come into the south, but this latter time shall not be as the former. For the ships of Kittim shall come against him. Therefore he shall be grieved and return and have indignation against the holy covenant and take action. He shall even return and show regard to those who forsake the holy covenant. His armies shall rise up and desecrate the sanctuary fortress. They shall abolish the daily sacrifice and set up the abomination that makes desolate. By flatteries he will corrupt those who act wickedly toward the covenant. But the people who know their God will be strong and take action. The wise among the people shall instruct many. Yet for many days they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by destruction. Now when they fall, they shall be given a little help. But many shall cleave to them with flatteries. Some of the wise will fall, so that they may be purged, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it is still for the appointed time. The king shall do according to his will. And he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak blasphemous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation is accomplished. For that which is determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above them all. But instead he shall honor the god of forces, a god whom his fathers did not know. He shall honor him with gold and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus he shall do in the strongest of fortresses with a foreign god. He shall give great honor to those who acknowledge him, and shall cause them to rule over the many and shall divide the land for gain.

Conquests of the Northern King

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall push at him. But the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen and with many ships. And he shall enter the countries and shall overflow them and pass over. He shall enter also the Pleasant Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown. But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the sons of Ammon. Then he shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the hidden treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt. And the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But reports from the east and from the north shall trouble him. Therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. He shall pitch the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, and no one shall help him.

The Prophecy of the End Times

“And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who shall be found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, but others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who turn the many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. One said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the water of the river, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was over the water of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time. And when they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. As for me, I heard, but I could not understand.

So I said, “My lord, what shall be the result of these things?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel. For these words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰Many shall be purified and made white and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he

who waits and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But as for you, go your way until the end. Then you shall rest and rise *again* for your lot at the end of the age.”

Then the work of the house of God in Jerusalem ceased. So it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. (Ezra 4:24-5:1)

Due to the opposition to the rebuilding of the temple, the work had ceased. But at that time, the prophet, Haggai, came to Jerusalem and encouraged the people to continue the work on the temple...

Haggai's Message

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, Thus says the LORD of Hosts: These people say, The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD. Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: Is it time for you yourselves to live in paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of Hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood and rebuild the house, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the LORD. You looked for much, and it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of Hosts. Because of My house that lies in ruins while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its crops. I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on men, on livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.

The People Obey God's Command

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke the message of the LORD to the people, saying: I am with you, says the LORD. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of Hosts their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

The Future Glory of the Temple

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, saying: Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not, in your eyes, as nothing in comparison? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong all you people of the land, says the LORD. Work, for I am with you, says the LORD of Hosts. According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear. For thus says the LORD of Hosts: Once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and earth, the sea and dry land. And I will shake all the nations, and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is Mine, says the LORD of Hosts. The glory of this latter house will be greater than the former, says the LORD of Hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the LORD of Hosts.

Also, at this time, the prophet, Zechariah came to Judah and prophesied among the returned exiles...

A Call to Repentance

In the eighth month, during the second year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berekiah, son of Iddo, saying: The LORD was very angry with your fathers, so you will say to them, Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Hosts. Do not be like your fathers to whom the former prophets cried, "Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Turn away from your evil ways and deeds!" But they did not listen or pay attention to Me, says the LORD. So where are your fathers, and do the prophets live forever? Surely My words and statutes that I commanded to My servants, the prophets, did they not persuade your fathers? They turned back and said, "Whatever the LORD of Hosts planned to do to us according to our ways and deeds, so He has done to us."

Haggai continued to prophesy to the people in Jerusalem, especially to the governor, Zerubbabel.

Blessings on a Defiled People

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Now ask the priests concerning the law, saying, If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches with his fold bread or stew, or wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy? The priests answered, "No." Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, will it become unclean?" The priests answered, "It will become unclean." Then Haggai said, So it is with this people, and so it is with this nation before Me, says the LORD, and so with every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. Now consider from this day onward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD, from those days when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I struck you

and all the labor of your hands with blight and mildew and hail; yet you did not turn to Me. Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day when the foundation of the temple of the LORD was laid, consider: Is the seed yet in the barn? As of yet, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you.

The Promise of God to Zerubbabel

The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month: Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow the throne of the kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. I will overthrow the chariots and their riders. The horses and their riders will come down, every one by the sword of his brother. On that day, says the LORD of Hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and I will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of Hosts.

The governor heard the words of Zechariah and Haggai and decided to restart the rebuilding project of the temple...

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Joshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, helping them. (Ezra 5:2)

And as the work continued on the temple rebuild, Zechariah was given a vision...

Vision of the Horsemen

On the twenty-fourth day, in the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, during the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berekiah, son of Iddo:

I saw during the night a man riding on a red horse. But he was standing among the myrtle trees that were in the ravine, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. And I said, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who was speaking with me said, "I will show you what these are." Then the man who was standing among the myrtle trees responded and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent out to walk to and fro on the earth."

They answered and said to the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone to and fro on the earth, and all the earth is resting and peaceful."

Then the angel of the LORD said, "How much longer, O LORD of Hosts, will You withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah with which You have been angry these seventy years?" And the LORD answered the angel speaking to me with good and comforting words. So the angel who spoke with me said, Cry out, saying: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: I have a great jealousy for Jerusalem and Zion. And I have a great anger for those nations who are at ease, for while I was angry but a little, they helped to increase evil.

Therefore thus says the LORD: I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy, and My house will be built in it, says the LORD of Hosts, and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem. Cry out again, saying, Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Yet again My cities will overflow with goodness, and again the LORD will comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.

The Vision of the Horns and Craftsmen

And I then lifted up my eyes, and I saw four horns. And I said to the angel speaking to me, “What are these?” And he answered, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. And I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah after which no one could raise his head; and these four craftsmen have come to terrify and throw down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

The Vision of the Man With the Measuring Line

And I lifted up my eyes, and I saw a man with a measuring cord in his hand. And I said, “Where are you going?” And he responded, “To measure Jerusalem and to note what is its width and length.” Then the angel who was speaking with me went out, and then another angel came out to meet him, and said to him, “Run, say to this young man: Jerusalem will be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of men and animals in her. And I will be like a wall of fire all around her, says the LORD, and I will be as glory in her midst.”

Interlude: An Appeal to the Exiles

Up, up, flee from the northern land, says the LORD, for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the LORD. Deliver yourself, O Zion, you who live with the daughter of Babylon. For thus says the LORD of Hosts: He has sent Me after glory to the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. For I will swing My hand against them, and they will become plunder for their servants. Then you will know well that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for I am coming and will dwell in your midst, says the LORD. And many nations will join themselves with the LORD in that day, and they will be My people. And I will reside in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and He will again choose Jerusalem. Be still, all flesh before the LORD, for He is stirred from His holy habitation.

The Vision of Joshua the High Priest

Then he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you! Is this not a burning brand taken out of the fire?” Now Joshua had on filthy garments and was standing before the angel. And he said to those standing before him, “Take off his filthy garments.” Then he said, “See that I have removed from you your iniquity, and I will clothe you with rich robes.” And I said, “Let them place a pure turban on his head.” So they put a pure turban on his head and garments on him. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.

And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, “Thus says the LORD of Hosts: If you walk in My ways and keep My charge, then you will judge My house and guard My courts, and I will give to you access to these who are standing here. Hear this, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends sitting before you, for these men are a sign. I am bringing My servant, the Branch. The stone that I have set before Joshua, on that single stone is seven eyes. And I will engrave an inscription, says the LORD of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day. On that day, says the LORD of Hosts, each of you will invite your companion to come and sit under the vine and under the fig tree.”

The Vision of the Gold Lampstand

And the angel who was speaking with me returned and woke me up like a man who is roused from his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?” And I responded, “I see a completely gold lampstand and a bowl at its top, with seven lights on it, and seven pipes on it for each lamp in order to light them. ³And there are two olive trees next to it, one on the right of the bowl and one on the left.” So I answered and I asked the angel speaking with me, “What are these, my lord?” Then the angel speaking with me responded, “Do you really not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” And he said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts. “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will be made level ground, and he will bring out the top stone amidst shouting of ‘Grace! Grace to the stone!’”

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: “The hands of Zerubbabel have established the foundation of this house, and they will even complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me to all of you. For who has despised the day of small things? These seven will rejoice and see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. These are the eyes of the LORD, which survey to and fro throughout the earth.”

Then I answered and I asked, “What are these two olives trees on the right and left of the lampstand?” And I asked a second time, “What are these two branches of the olive trees that are next to the two golden pipes from which they pour out the gold oil?” And he asked me, “Do you not know what these are?” I responded, “No, my lord.” He answered, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of all the earth.”

The Vision of the Flying Scroll

Then I turned and lifted up my eyes and saw a flying scroll. He asked me, “What do you see?” And I responded, “I see a flying scroll with its length as twenty cubits and its width as ten cubits.” He said to me, “This is the curse going out over the surface of all the land. Everyone who steals will be purged according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears falsely will be purged according to the writing on the other side. I will send it out, says the LORD of Hosts, and it will enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by My name. It will remain in his house and consume it, with its timber and stones.”

The Vision of the Woman in the Basket

Then the angel who was speaking with me came out, saying, “Now lift up your eyes and see what this is that is going forth.” And I asked, “What is it?” He said, “This is the ephah basket going forth. This represents their iniquity throughout all the land.” The lead cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the ephah basket. And he said, “This is wickedness.” And he threw her back into the basket and then thrust back the lead stone over its opening. Then I lifted my eyes and saw

coming forward two women. There was wind in their wings, and the wings were like those of a stork, and they lifted up and carried the ephah basket between heaven and earth. Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “Where are they carrying the basket?” He responded, “To build a house for it in the land of Shinar. And when the house is established, the basket will be set there on a pedestal.”

The Vision of the Four Chariots

And I turned around and lifted my eyes, and I saw four chariots coming out from between two mountains, which were bronze mountains. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered the angel speaking with me, “What are these, my lord?” The angel responded, “These are the four winds of heaven going out after standing before the Lord of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the white ones are going after them, while the dappled ones are going toward the south country.”

When the strong horses went out, they were seeking to go to and fro throughout the earth. And he said, “Go out to and fro throughout the earth.” And they went out to walk to and fro throughout the earth. Then he cried out to me, “Look, the ones going out to the northern land have given rest to my Spirit in the north.”

The Coronation of Joshua

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah who have come from Babylon, and go on that day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. And say to him: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Here is a man whose name is Branch; for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD; he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne. He shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And the crown shall be for a memorial to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah, in the temple of the LORD. And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD; and you all shall know that the LORD of Hosts has sent me to you. This shall happen if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

The process of rebuilding the temple had begun again under the direction of the governor, Zerubbabel. But new opposition was on its way, as the prophet Ezra recorded in his history...

At the same time Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, and Shethar-Bozenai and their companions came to them and said to them, “Who issued a command for you to build this house and complete this structure?” They also asked them, “What are the names of the men building this building?” But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, so that they could not cause them to cease building until a command came from Darius. Consequently, they sent a letter concerning this matter.

This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, and Shethar-Bozenai and his colleagues, the officials who were in the province Beyond the River, sent to Darius the king. This is the document that they sent to him, containing accordingly what follows:

“To Darius the king: All peace. May it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judah, to the temple of the great God, which is built with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goes diligently, and prospers in their hands. Then we questioned those elders and said to them, ‘Who issued a command for you to build this house and complete this structure?’ Also, we asked for their names in order to notify you and to document the names of the men that were their leaders. Thus they returned us an answer, saying, ‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth and are rebuilding the temple that was built these many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. Afterwards, our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, so He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and carried the people away into Babylon. However, in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, King Cyrus made a decree to rebuild this house of God. The vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and placed them into the temple of Babylon, those Cyrus the king withdrew from the temple of Babylon and had them delivered to the one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. King Cyrus said to him, ‘Take these vessels, go, carry them to the temple in Jerusalem and let the house of God be built its site.’ So that same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God in Jerusalem. Since that time even until now it has been under construction, yet it is not finished.’ Now therefore, if it seems good to the king, let there be search made in the king’s treasure house there in Babylon to ascertain if it is so that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem. May the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.”

The Decree of Darius

Then Darius the king issued a decree and a search was made in the house of records, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. At Ecbatana, in the provincial palace of the Medes, a scroll was found, and in it the following record was written:

“In the first year of Cyrus the king, the same Cyrus the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God at Jerusalem: ‘Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations of it be strongly laid, to a height of sixty cubits, and a width of sixty cubits. *Let it consist of three rows of great stones and a row of new timber, and let the expenses be paid from the king’s treasury.* Also, let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought back to their places in the temple in Jerusalem. Put them in the house of God.’ Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, and Shethar-Bozenai, along with your colleagues, the officials who are in the province Beyond the River, stay far away from there. 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 its place. Moreover, I issue a decree concerning what you shall do for the elders of these 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 Beyond the River. Whatever they need—whether young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings to the God of heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests in Jerusalem—let it be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven, as well as pray for the life of the king and of his

sons. Also, I have issued a decree that whoever shall violate this word, the timber will be pulled down from his house and arranged so that he may be hanged on it. Thus shall his house be made a dunghill for this. May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow all kings and people who stretch forth their hand to violate or destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued the decree; so let it be done diligently.”

Completion and Dedication of the Temple

In compliance, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-Bozenai, and their companions speedily accomplished what Darius the king had decreed. The rebuilding by the elders of the Jews prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built, and finished it, according to the decree of the God of Israel and according to the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

As the people who had returned from exile completed the task of rebuilding the temple and resettling the land, the prophet Zechariah received word from the Lord to instruct them for faithful service...

A Call for Justice and Mercy

And in the fourth year of King Darius, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Kislev, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah. Those in Bethel sent Sharezer and Regem-Melek and their men to entreat the graces of the LORD, saying to the priests and prophets of the house of the LORD of Hosts, “Should I weep and dedicate myself during the fifth month as I have done in these many years?” Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: Say to all the people in the land and to the priests: When you fasted and lamented during the fifth and seventh months for these seventy years, did you really fast for Me? And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves? Were these not the very words that the former prophets proclaimed when Jerusalem dwelled with ease along with her surrounding cities, and when the Negev and the Lowland were inhabited?

Punishment for Rejecting God’s Demands

And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother. Do not oppress the widow, orphan, sojourner, or poor. And let none of you contemplate evil deeds in your hearts against his brother.

But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears so that they should not hear. They made their hearts hard like a diamond so as not to hear the instruction and words that the LORD of Hosts sent by His Spirit through the former prophets, and there was great anger from the LORD of Hosts.

Therefore it happened that as I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear, says the LORD of Hosts. So I scattered them about among all the nations whom they did not know, so

the land was left desolate behind them with no one coming or going. And they made a desirable land desolate.

The Holy City of Peace and Prosperity

And the word of the LORD came, saying: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, and with great wrath I am jealous for her. Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem will be called a city of faithfulness and the mountain of the LORD of Hosts, the holy mountain.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Older men and women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each having a staff in his hand because of advanced age. And the plazas of the city will be filled with young boys and girls playing in her open places.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes? says the LORD of Hosts.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: I will deliver My people from the eastern lands and from the western lands. And I will bring them, and they will reside in Jerusalem, and they will be for Me as a people, and I will be for them as God, with faithfulness and righteousness.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Let your hands be strengthened, whoever is hearing these words in these days, from the mouth of the prophets who were there in the day that the house of the LORD of Hosts was founded, that the temple might be built. For before those days there were no wages for a man nor any hire for an animal; and there was no peace from an enemy for him who went out or came in; for I set every man against his neighbor. But now I will not be as in the former days against this remnant people, says the LORD of Hosts. For sowing will be done in peace, and the vine will produce its fruit, and the ground will provide its produce, and the heavens will give their rain. And I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all of these benefits. And as you have been like a curse among the nations, O house of Israel and house of Judah, I will deliver you, and you will be a blessing. Fear not, and strengthen your hands!

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Just as I had determined to punish you when your fathers incited Me to wrath, says the LORD of Hosts, I did not relent. So again have I purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear! These are the things you will do: Speak truth each to his neighbor, and make judgments in your gates that are for truth, and justice, and peace. Let none of you consider evil plans in your heart against your neighbor, and do not love false oaths, for I hate all these things, says the LORD.

And the word of the LORD of Hosts came to me, saying: Thus says the LORD of Hosts: The fast during the fourth and fifth months, and the fasts during the seventh and tenth months, will become rejoicing and joy and pleasant feasts for the house of Judah. So love what brings truth and peace.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: Peoples will still come, even those who live in many cities. Those who live in one city will journey to another, saying, "Let us surely go to seek the LORD of Hosts. I myself am going." Many peoples and strong nations will seek out the LORD of Hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.

Thus says the LORD of Hosts: In those days ten men from every language of the nations will take hold of the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

An oracle of the word of the LORD that is against the land of Hadrak, and Damascus is the place where it will rest. For the eyes of men and the tribes of Israel are on the LORD. Also Hamath borders it, even Tyre and Sidon, cities that are very wise. Tyre has built a rampart for herself and stored up silver like it were dust, and even gold like it were mud in the streets. The Lord will dispossess her of her possessions and strike down her power in the sea, and she will be devoured with fire. Ashkelon will observe this and fear; Gaza as well and will writhe in anguish; even Ekron, her hope will be confounded. The king of Gaza will perish, and no one will inhabit Ashkelon. A mongrel people will dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut down the pride of Philistia. I will take away the bloodshed from its mouth, and the abominations from between its teeth. Even it will be a remnant for our God. It will be like a tribe of a clan in Judah, and Ekron like the Jebusites. Then I will make camp at My house with a garrison, so that no one can pass back and forth. And no oppressor will pass through them, for now I see with My eyes.

The Coming King of Zion

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! And cry aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your king is coming to you; he is righteous and able to deliver,
he is humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the offspring of a donkey.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem;
and the bow for battle will be cut off.
He will speak peace to the nations; and his dominion will be from one sea to another,
and from the Great River to the ends of the earth.

And as for you, because of the blood of your covenant,
I will send your prisoners from the empty, waterless pits.

Return to your stronghold, prisoners who now have hope.
Today I declare that I will return to you a double portion.
Because I have bent Judah as My bow and fitted the bow with Ephraim.
I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece,
and will set you like the sword of a warrior.

Then the LORD will appear over them, and His arrow will go out like lightning.
The Lord GOD will sound His trumpet, and will march forth like storm winds of southern Teman.

The LORD of Hosts will protect them.
They will devour up and subdue them with stone slingers.
And they will drink and make noise as with wine;
they will be filled with *blood* as a bowl, saturated like the corners of the altar.
The LORD their God will deliver them that day like the flock of His people.
For like jewels embedded in a crown, they will shine in His land.
For how great is His goodness, and how great His beauty!
There will be grain for the young men and new wine to prosper the young women.

The Restoration of Judah and Israel

Ask for rain from the LORD during the season of the latter spring rains.
And the LORD will make the storm winds; and He will give them showers of rain;
all will have vegetation in the field.
For the household Teraphim idols speak wickedness, and the diviners envision lies.
They utter false dreams, and provide comfort that does not last.
So the people wander about like sheep; they are afflicted because there is no shepherd.

My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will visit judgment on the male goats.
For the LORD of Hosts will visit His flock, the house of Judah,
and will make them like His majestic horse in battle.
From him comes the cornerstone, and from him the tent peg.
From him comes the bow for battle, and from him every ruler goes out, all these together.
And they will be as mighty men, who trample down in the muddy streets in battle.
They will fight because the LORD is with them, and He will put to shame those riding on horses.
I will make strong the house of Judah, and will deliver the house of Joseph.
I will restore them because I have compassion on them.
They will be like I had never rejected them;
for I am the LORD their God, and I will respond to them.

Then Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their hearts shall rejoice as with wine.
Their children shall see this and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in the LORD.
I will whistle to them and gather them in, for I have ransomed them;
they will be numerous as they were numerous before.
When I scatter them among the nations, they will remember Me in the distant lands;
they will live with their children and then return.
I will bring them home from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, until there is no room for them.

He will pass through the sea of distress, and will put down the waves in the sea:
All the depths of the Nile will be dried up; and the arrogance of Assyria will be brought down,
and the scepter of Egypt will turn away.
I will make them strong in the LORD, and they will go to and fro in His name, says the LORD.

Open your doors, O Lebanon, so the fire can consume your cedar.
Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen; the majestic trees are destroyed.
Wail, O oaks of Bashan, because the unassailable forest has been brought down.
There is the sound of wailing shepherds, because their glory is ruined.
There is the sound of roaring lions, because the pride of Jordan is ruined.

Two Kinds of Shepherds

Thus says the LORD my God: Shepherd the flock of slaughter. The ones who buy them then slaughter them and have no guilt, and those who sell them say, "Blessed is the LORD because I am rich." Their own shepherds do not take pity on them. For I will no longer have pity on those who dwell in the land, says the LORD. But I will cause each of them to fall into the hands of his neighbor, even into the hands of his king. They will crush the land, and I will not deliver any from their hands.

So I shepherded the flock that was for slaughter, even the afflicted of the flock. And I took for myself two staffs. One I called Favor and the other I gave the name Union. So I pastured the flock. I destroyed the three shepherds in the span of one month. For my soul was impatient with them, and their souls detested me. Then I said, "I will not shepherd you. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. Let those who are left devour each other's flesh."

I took the staff named Favor and cut it into pieces, to break the covenant that I made with all the peoples. So it was broken that day, and the afflicted of the flock were watching me and knew that this was the word of the LORD. Then I said to them, "If this is good in your eyes, then give my wages to me, but if not, then keep it." They weighed my wages at thirty pieces of silver.

Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, the splendid price by which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty silver pieces and threw them to the house of the LORD to the potter. Then I cut up the second staff, Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

Then the LORD said to me: Take for yourself again the vessels carried by a foolish shepherd. I am raising up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are perishing, nor seek the young, nor heal the broken, nor feed those who are standing still. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hoofs in pieces. Woe to this worthless shepherd who abandons his flock. May the sword take his arm and right eye; may his arm surely wither up, and his right eye become blind.

The Deliverance of Judah

The oracle of the word of the LORD against Israel.

Thus says the LORD, the One who stretches out the heavens and establishes the earth and forms the spirit of man within him: I am going to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling before all the surrounding nations. And when there is a siege against Judah, it is also against Jerusalem. And it will be on that day that I will set Jerusalem as a weighty stone to all the peoples. All who carry it will surely gash themselves, and all the nations of the land will be gathered against it. On that day I will strike every horse with confusion and its rider with madness, but for the house of Judah I will keep My eyes open although I will strike with blindness every horse of the peoples. Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, "There is strength for us with those residing in Jerusalem by the LORD of Hosts, their God."

On that day I will set Judah like a fiery pot among wood and as a flaming torch among cut grain. And they will devour to the right and left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem will still reside in her place, the place of Jerusalem.

The LORD will deliver the tents of Judah as before, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of those dwelling in Jerusalem will not eclipse Judah. On that day the LORD will defend those residing in Jerusalem; and even the one who stumbles among them will be as David on that day. And the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going out before them. On that day I will seek to destroy all the nations who come out against Jerusalem.

Mourning for Him Whom They Have Pierced

And I will pour out on the house of David and over those dwelling in Jerusalem a spirit of favor and supplication so that they look to Me, whom they have pierced through. And they will mourn over him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as that of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn

with each family by itself: the family of the house of David by themselves, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by themselves, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by themselves, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by themselves, and their wives also by themselves; and all the families that remain, each by itself and their wives by themselves.

The Cleansing of God's People

On that day there will be a spring opened up for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and impurity. And on that day, says the LORD of Hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will not be remembered any more. And I will also remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit. And it will be if a man again prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say, "You will not live because you speak deception in the name of the LORD." Then when he prophesies, his father and mother will pierce him through.

On that day each prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a robe of coarse hair in order to deceive. But he will say, "I am not a prophet. I am a man who works the ground, for a man purchased me when I was young." If someone asks, "What are these wounds on your arms?" he will say, "I was struck in the house of my close friends."

Striking the Shepherd, Scattering the Sheep

"Awake, O sword, against My shepherd and the man of My association,"
says the LORD of Hosts.

Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter.

I will turn My hand against the small ones.

And it will happen in all the land, says the LORD,
that two-thirds will be cut off and die, and one-third will be left in the land.

And I will bring this one-third left into the fire,
and will refine them as the refinement of silver, and will test them as the testing of gold.

They will call on My name, and I will answer them.

I will say, "They are My people"; and they will say, "The LORD is my God."

The Day of the LORD

A day of the LORD is coming when your spoil will be divided in your midst.

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle. The city will be captured and the houses plundered and the women ravished. Half of the city will go to exile, but the remainder of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight those nations as He fights in the day of war. On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is to the east of Jerusalem. And from east to west the Mount of Olives will be split in two halves by a very great valley so that one half moves to the north and the other to the south. And you will flee to my mountain valley, for the mountain valley will reach to Azal. You will flee just like you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come and all His holy ones with you.

And on that day there will be no light. The lights will diminish. And there will be one day known to the LORD, neither during the day nor the night, but at the evening time there will be light. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the Dead Sea and the other half to the Mediterranean Sea. This will happen for the summer as well as the winter.

And the LORD will be king over all the earth. In that day it will be—“The LORD is one,” and His name is one.

All the land will be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon to the south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem will rise and dwell in her place from the Benjamin Gate to the place of the Old Gate, to the Corner Gate, and then from the Tower of Hananel to the winepress of the king. And people will live there, and she will never again be devoted for destruction. Jerusalem will reside in security. And this will be the pestilence with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who go to battle against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot as they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. Then on that day a great tumult from the LORD will come on them as each person will seize the hand of his neighbor, and the hand of one will be raised against the hand of another. And even Judah will fight with Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, a great abundance of gold, silver, and garments. So this plague will come to horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and any other animals that are in the camp. So will this plague be.

Then it will be that all the nations who have come against Jerusalem and survived will go up each year to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. And it will happen that if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts, then there will not be rain for them. If the family of Egypt does not go up and enter in, they shall have no rain. This will be the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

On that day “HOLY TO THE LORD” will be engraved on the bells of the horses. And the pots in the house of the LORD will be as the basins before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD of Hosts so that all who come to sacrifice will take from those pots and boil the meat in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of Hosts.

Ezra records the celebration at the conclusion of the completion of the rebuilding of the temple...

The rebuilding by the elders of the Jews prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built, and finished it, according to the decree of the God of Israel and according to the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. This temple was finished on the third day of the month Adar during the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. The children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the descendants of the captivity kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. At the dedication of this house of God, they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and as a sin offering for all Israel, they offered twelve goats (according to the number of the tribes of Israel). They appointed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their orders for the service of God in Jerusalem, as it had been written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover

The children of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. Because the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together, all of them were pure. So, they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, both for their brothers the priests and for themselves. Then they ate together, both the children of Israel who had come out of captivity and all those who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the nations of the land, in order to seek the LORD God of

Israel. With joy they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days because the LORD had made them joyful. He had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them and strengthened their hands in the work on the house of God, who is the God of Israel.