

.....  
<sup>13</sup>Then Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. <sup>14</sup>So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the  $\infty$ command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. <sup>15</sup>Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. <sup>16</sup>Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this  $\infty$ house of God with joy. <sup>17</sup>And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. <sup>18</sup>They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.  
.....

1. Final completion

- a. 20 years after Cyrus issued his decree for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, it is finished
- b. Much opposition & apathy hindered the work
- c. After Haggai's speech in 520 BC the work restarted
- d. King Darius added his support to the work
  - a1. Gov. Tattenai carried out the king's orders
  - a2. After 4 ½ years the temple was finally complete
- e. A great celebration ensued with great joy
- f. The new temple was different than Solomon's temple
  - a1. Its dimensions were smaller
  - a2. It was completed 70 years after the destruction of Sol.'s temple (586 BC)
  - a3. Finished in the Babylonian month of Adar (Mar.)
  - a4. There was no Ark of the Covenant (taken)
  - a5. Instead of over 130,000 animals sacrificed (1 Kn. 8) only a few hundred were sacrificed
  - a6. Less furnishings were in the new temple
  - a7. The new temple would last 500 years
- g. The new temple was dedicated in joy (Neh. 8:6)
  - a1. *Dedication* = the Hebrew word *Hanukkah*
  - a2. Hanukkah became a celebration after the rededication of the temple in 165 BC by the Maccabees after defeating Antiochus Epiphanies, after he desecrated the temple

- h. Notice that even after 70 years, the new generation still knew how the temple order & worship was to be done
- i. Hebrew now begins & Aramaic is finished until Artaxerxes's letter in chapter 7
- j. The mention of King Artaxerxes is out of place
  - a1. Artaxerxes was ruler during the time of Nehemiah some 70 years after the temple was dedicated
  - a2. The scribe seems to have wanted to include the blessings of the completion of the wall as a praise to the blessings of God during Persian rule

2. Worship begins anew

.....  
<sup>19</sup>And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. <sup>20</sup>For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them *were ritually* clean. And they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. <sup>21</sup>Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel. <sup>22</sup>And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.  
.....

- a. A new Passover celebration commences a few weeks after the dedication
  - a1. The Lord fills the people with joy & zeal
  - a2. They recognized how God moved in the hearts of these kings to bless Israel
- b. The mention of the King of Assyria is odd
  - a1. The Assyrian king had taken away Israel & had promoted idol worship in the land
  - a2. The Persian king also carried the title of being king of the lands he conquered (Babylon, Syria, Assyria...), so the scribe may have used the closest territory to Israel as his reference

3. A separate people

- a. The Jews separated themselves from the *filth* or *uncleanness* of the land (idol worshippers)
- b. The problem is that to begin separated does not guarantee one will stay separated (1 Kn. 8 dedication)
- c. Ch. 7 God puts a plumb line on Israel
- d. A commit to dedicate oneself is not actual dedication