

## Ezra 6 — The House Finished — A Scroll Found in the Archive, a King Who Funds His Enemies' Work, and a Passover of Joy

*Ezra 6: Darius the king orders the royal archives searched and Cyrus's original decree is found at Achmetha (Ecbatana); Darius confirms it, commands Tatnai to fund the work from the king's own tribute and supply the sacrifices, and the elders build and prosper through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah until the house is finished on the third of Adar in Darius's sixth year (c. 515 BC); the temple is dedicated with joy and the returned exiles keep the Passover, having separated themselves to seek the LORD God of Israel.*

Ezra 5 ended on a held breath. The work on the temple had restarted under the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, but Tatnai, the Persian governor "beyond the river," had written to the new king, Darius, essentially asking: who authorized this? The Jews had answered that Cyrus, back in his first year, had issued a decree permitting the house of God to be rebuilt — and then, with remarkable nerve, they had invited the king to go check the royal archives and see for himself (Ezra 5:17). Chapter 6 opens with Darius doing exactly that. It is a chapter that turns on a piece of paper.

### Hebrew Word Studies

**bayit / genaz (H1005, H1596) (בַּיִת / גִּנְזָא)** — **house — and the treasure-house / stored-up treasures v. 1.** The chapter's first move is a pun the English almost hides. Darius orders a search in the *bayit* (H1005), the "house," of the rolls — the same Aramaic word that will name the *house* of God dozens of times before the chapter ends. The building being sought for on paper and the building being built in Jerusalem share one noun; the archive-house holds the warrant for the temple-house. And the rolls are stored where the *ginzayya* (H1596), the royal *treasures*, are laid up — the word for a king's guarded valuables. So the decree that will rebuild the LORD's house was filed among an emperor's treasures, in a treasure-house, and had to be dug out from among the gold to set the true temple rising. The scene quietly asks the reader to reweigh what counts as treasure. Persia hoarded silver; heaven had hidden, in the same vault, a sentence of scripture-shaped mercy waiting eighteen years to be found. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21) — and the Lord's treasure, it turns out, was a promise on a shelf.

**parak / uparku (H6744, related) (פָּרַק / שָׁלַח (root: פָּרַק))** — **to prosper, to be pushed through to success v. 14.** The verb the KJV renders "prospered" in verse 14 (Aramaic *tselach*, tagged H6744) carries the sense of being *pushed through* — driven forward to a successful finish, the way a river is pushed to the sea. It is not a limp "things went well." It is the language of a work that meets resistance and is forced through it to completion. And note precisely what the verse credits with the prospering: not the royal funding, generous as it was, but "the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah." The money from Darius removed the excuse; the word from the prophets removed the paralysis. Haggai's whole burden had been to shame a people who "dwell in your cieled houses" while "this house lie waste" (Hag. 1:4), and the moment they obeyed, the Lord said "I am with you" and "stirred up the spirit" of governor and people alike (Hag. 1:13–14). This is the engine of every finished house of God, ancient or modern: not permission, not budget, but living prophecy that pushes the work through. Wherever the Lord means a house of his to be finished, he sends prophets to prosper it.

**kelal / shetsi (H3635, H3319) (שֶׁטִּי / שָׁלַח (root: שָׁלַח / שָׁלַח))** — **to complete, to finish, to bring to an end vv. 14, 15.** Two Aramaic verbs of completion sit side by side in these verses, and together they close the arc. In verse 14 the elders "finished it" — *kelal* (H3635), a root meaning to complete or perfect, to make whole. In verse 15 the house "was finished" — *shetsi* (H3319), to bring to an end, to accomplish fully. The doubling is not redundancy; it is emphasis, the text pressing the point that what had been broken off is now not merely resumed but *perfected*, brought to a whole and finished state. For a generation that had known only ruin — a temple burned, a city breached, a people carried off — the sheer fact of a finished house was itself the sermon. The Hebrew imagination linked *completion* to *perfection*; the same conceptual family stands behind the vision of a Zion made whole. When the Lord finishes a thing, he does not merely stop working on it; he perfects it. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" (Ps. 138:8) is the personal form of what Adar's third day announced for a nation: the unfinished made complete, at last, on a dated day.

**chanukkah (H2597) (חֲנֻכָּה)** — **dedication, consecration, initiation into use vv. 16, 17.** *Chanukkah* (H2597) means far more than a ribbon-cutting. Its root, *chanak*, is the verb of *initiating* something into its intended use — the same word behind "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6), where a child is *dedicated*, set on his purpose. To dedicate the house is to initiate it into the service for which it exists, to set it running toward its purpose. And the purpose here is worship: the dedication verse is immediately followed by the setting of priests and Levites "in their courses," the house put to work the

moment it is consecrated. This is why the dedication is "with joy" and not merely with relief — a dedicated house is a house that has begun to do what it was made for. The word will echo down the centuries: the Maccabees' rededication of the defiled temple gave the feast of Hanukkah its name, and the Latter-day dedicatory prayer at Kirtland asked the Lord to accept "this house which we have built to thy name" (D&C 109:4). Every dedication in that long line does what Ezra 6 does first among the returned exiles: it initiates a finished house into holy use, and the fitting response is joy.

**sabab / lev / simchah (H5437, H3820, H8057) (ס.ב.ב. / ל.ב. / ש.ח.ה) — to turn / heart / joy, gladness v. 22.** Three Hebrew words carry the chapter's last and largest claim. The LORD *turned* — *sabab* (H5437), to turn around, to swing about, the word for reversing a direction entirely — the *heart* — *lev* (H3820), the seat not merely of feeling but of will and decision, the whole inner governing center of a person — of the king. This is Proverbs 21:1 enacted: "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD... he turneth it whithersoever he will." The verb insists that a king's decision, which looks from the outside like sovereign policy, was in fact *swung around* by a hand the king never saw. And the fruit of that turning is *simchah* (H8057), joy — the deep gladness of a covenant feast, the word for the rejoicing of harvest and festival. Trace the causation the verse spells out: the Lord turned the heart, which strengthened their hands, which finished the house, which was dedicated and fed the Passover, which the Lord *made* into joy. The joy at the end of Ezra 6 is not the people's achievement; it is the last link in a chain whose first link is a hand on a king's heart. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5) — and the morning of the second temple came because the God of heaven turned a heart no army could have moved.

### From the Chapter's Architecture

*There is one deliberate structural seam that a reader should not miss, and it is linguistic. The Aramaic of empire governs verses 1 through 18 — the decrees, the funding, the finishing, even the dedication are told in the administrative tongue of Persia. Then at verse 19 the text turns to Hebrew for the Passover. The change of language is a change of key: the story climbs out of the imperial ledger and into the covenant sanctuary, and the vocabulary marks the ascent. The house was built by Persian permission and Persian money, all rendered in Persian's diplomatic Aramaic; but the house was built for a Hebrew feast, and when the feast arrives, the mother tongue returns. The architecture of the chapter is the architecture of the whole return: the nations' resources conscripted, in their own language, to serve a worship that answers only to Jehovah.*