

The Foundation of the Second Temple is Laid (May 536 BC)

Ezra 3:8–13

8 In the second year after they had come to the temple of God in Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak initiated the work, along with the rest of their associates, the priests and the Levites, and all those who were coming to Jerusalem from the exile. They appointed the Levites who were at least twenty years old to take charge of the work on the LORD's temple.

9 So Jeshua appointed both his sons and his relatives, Kadmiel and his sons (the sons of Yehudah), to take charge of the workers in the temple of God, along with the sons of Henadad, their sons, and their relatives the Levites.

10 When the builders established the LORD's temple, the priests, ceremonially attired and with their clarions, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with their cymbals, stood to praise the LORD according to the instructions left by King David of Israel.

11 With antiphonal response they sang, praising and glorifying the LORD:

“For he is good;
his loyal love toward Israel is forever.”

All the people gave a loud shout as they praised the LORD when the temple of the LORD was established.

12 Many of the priests, the Levites, and the leaders—older people who had seen with their own eyes the former temple while it was still established—were weeping loudly, and many others raised their voice in a joyous shout.

13 People were unable to tell the difference between the sound of joyous shouting and the sound of the people's weeping, for the people were shouting so loudly that the sound was heard a long way off.

Restore Us, O Lord (c. May 536 BC)

Psalms 126

A song of ascents.

- 1 When the LORD restored the well-being of Zion,
we thought we were dreaming.
- 2 At that time we laughed loudly and shouted for joy.
At that time the nations said,
“The LORD has accomplished great things for these people.”
- 3 The LORD did indeed accomplish great things for us.
We were happy.
- 4 O LORD, restore our well-being,
just as the streams in the arid south are replenished.
- 5 Those who shed tears as they plant
will shout for joy when they reap the harvest.
- 6 The one who weeps as he walks along, carrying his bag of seed,
will certainly come in with a shout of joy, carrying his sheaves of grain.

Temple Construction Halted by Local Enemies (536–520 BC)

Ezra 4:1–5, 24

1 When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin learned that the former exiles were building a temple for the LORD God of Israel,
2 they came to Zerubbabel and the leaders and said to them, “Let us help you build, for like you we seek your God and we have been sacrificing to him from the time of King Esarhaddon of Assyria, who brought us here.”

3 But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the leaders of Israel said to them, “You have no right to help us build the temple of our God. We will build it by ourselves for the LORD God of Israel, just as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.”

4 Then the local people began to discourage the people of Judah and to dishearten them from building.

5 They were hiring advisers to oppose them, so as to frustrate their plans, throughout the time of King Cyrus of Persia until the reign of King Darius of Persia.

24 So the work on the temple of God in Jerusalem came to a halt. It remained halted until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Temple Construction Restarted Through Preaching of Haggai and Zechariah (520 BC)

Ezra 5:1

1 Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied concerning the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

Haggai's Prophecy to the Remnant—Living Large While God's House Lies in Ruins (August 29, 520 BC)

Haggai 1:1–13

1 On the first day of the sixth month of King Darius' second year, the LORD spoke this message through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak:

2 The LORD who rules over all says this: "These people have said, 'The time for rebuilding the LORD's temple has not yet come.'"

3 So the LORD spoke through the prophet Haggai as follows:

4 "Is it right for you to live in richly paneled houses while my temple is in ruins?

5 Here then is what the LORD who rules over all says: 'Think carefully about what you are doing.

6 You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but are never filled. You drink, but are still thirsty. You put on clothes, but are not warm. Those who earn wages end up with holes in their money bags.'"

7 "Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says: 'Pay close attention to these things also.

8 Go up to the hill country and bring back timber to build the temple. Then I will be pleased and honored,' says the LORD.

9 'You expected a large harvest, but instead there was little, and when you brought it home it disappeared right away. Why?' asks the LORD who rules over all. 'Because my temple remains in ruins, thanks to each of you favoring his own house!

10 This is why the sky has held back its dew and the earth its produce.

11 Moreover, I have called for a drought that will affect the fields, the hill country, the grain, new wine, fresh olive oil, and everything that grows from the ground; it also will harm people, animals, and everything they produce.'"

12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, along with the whole remnant of the people, obeyed the LORD their God. They responded favorably to the message of the prophet Haggai, who spoke just as the LORD their God had instructed him, and the people began to respect the LORD.

13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's word to the people: "I am with you!" says the LORD.

Work Begins Again on the Temple (September 21, 520 BC)

Haggai 1:14–15

Ezra 5:2

14 So the LORD energized and encouraged Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the whole remnant of the people. They came and worked on the temple of their God, the LORD who rules over all.

15 This took place on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of King Darius' second year.

2 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak began to rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem. The prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

Tattenai Questions the Remnant's Authority to Rebuild the Temple (c. October 520 BC)

Ezra 5:3–17

3 At that time Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates, Shethar-Bozenai, and their colleagues came to them and asked, "Who gave you authority to rebuild this temple and to complete this structure?"

4 They also asked them, "What are the names of the men who are building this edifice?"

5 But God was watching over the elders of Judah, and they were not stopped until a report could be dispatched to Darius and a letter could be sent back concerning this.

6 This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates, Shethar-Bozenai, and his colleagues who were the officials of Trans-Euphrates sent to King Darius.

7 The report they sent to him was written as follows: "To King Darius: All greetings!

8 Let it be known to the king that we have gone to the province of Judah, to the temple of the great God. It is being built with large stones, and timbers are being placed in the walls. This work is being done with all diligence and is prospering in their hands.

9 We inquired of those elders, asking them, 'Who gave you the authority to rebuild this temple and to complete this structure?'

10 We also inquired of their names in order to inform you, so that we might write the names of the men who were their leaders.

11 They responded to us in the following way: 'We are servants of the God of heaven and earth. We are rebuilding the temple which

was previously built many years ago. A great king of Israel built it and completed it.

12 But after our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he delivered them into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and exiled the people to Babylon.

13 But in the first year of King Cyrus of Babylon, King Cyrus enacted a decree to rebuild this temple of God.

14 Even the gold and silver vessels of the temple of God that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and had brought to the palace of Babylon—even those things King Cyrus brought from the palace of Babylon and presented to a man by the name of Sheshbazzar whom he had appointed as governor.

15 He said to him, “Take these vessels and go deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt in its proper location.”

16 Then this Sheshbazzar went and laid the foundations of the temple of God in Jerusalem. From that time to the present moment it has been in the process of being rebuilt, although it is not yet finished.’

17 “Now if the king is so inclined, let a search be conducted in the royal archives there in Babylon in order to determine whether King Cyrus did in fact issue orders for this temple of God to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us a decision concerning this matter.”

Haggai’s Prophecy to the Remnant—Don’t Be Discouraged (October 17, 520 BC)

Haggai 2:1–9

1 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the LORD spoke again through the prophet Haggai:

2 “Ask the following questions to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the remnant of the people:

3 ‘Who among you survivors saw the former splendor of this temple? How does it look to you now? Isn’t it nothing by comparison?’

4 Even so, take heart, Zerubbabel,’ says the LORD. ‘Take heart, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you citizens of the land,’ says the LORD, ‘and begin to work. For I am with you,’ says the LORD who rules over all.

5 ‘Do not fear, because I made a promise to your ancestors when they left Egypt, and my spirit even now testifies to you.’

6 Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says: ‘In just a little while I will once again shake the sky and the earth, the sea and the dry ground. [[Heb 12:26](#)]

7 I will also shake up all the nations, and they will offer their treasures; then I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD who rules over all.

8 ‘The silver and gold will be mine,’ says the LORD who rules over all.

9 ‘The future splendor of this temple will be greater than that of former times,’ the LORD who rules over all declares, ‘and in this place I will give peace.’”

Zechariah’s Prophecy to the Remnant—Don’t Be Like Your Ancestors (c. October 27, 520 BC)

Zechariah 1:1–6

1 In the eighth month of Darius’ second year, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah son of Iddo, as follows:

2 The LORD was very angry with your ancestors.

3 Therefore say to the people: The LORD who rules over all says, “Turn to me,” says the LORD who rules over all, “and I will turn to you,” says the LORD who rules over all.

4 “Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the former prophets called out, saying, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “Turn now from your evil wickedness,”’ but they would by no means obey me,” says the LORD.

5 “As for your ancestors, where are they? And did the prophets live forever?”

6 But have my words and statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, not outlived your fathers? Then they paid attention and confessed, ‘The LORD who rules over all has indeed done what he said he would do to us, because of our sinful ways.’”

Haggai’s Prophecy to the Remnant—Sin’s Corrupting Influence (December 18, 520 BC)

Haggai 2:10–19

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of Darius’ second year, the LORD spoke again to the prophet Haggai:

11 “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘Ask the priests about the law.

12 If someone carries holy meat in a fold of his garment and that fold touches bread, a boiled dish, wine, olive oil, or any other food, will that item become holy?’” The priests answered, “It will not.”

13 Then Haggai asked, “If a person who is ritually unclean because of touching a dead body comes in contact with one of these items, will it become unclean?” The priests answered, “It will be unclean.”

14 Then Haggai responded, “‘The people of this nation are unclean in my sight,’ says the LORD. ‘And so is all their effort; everything

they offer is also unclean.

15 Now therefore reflect carefully on the recent past, before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple.

16 From that time when one came expecting a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty measures from it, there were only twenty.

17 I struck all the products of your labor with blight, disease, and hail, and yet you brought nothing to me,' says the LORD.

18 'Think carefully about the past: from today, the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, to the day work on the temple of the LORD was resumed, think about it.

19 The seed is still in the storehouse, isn't it? And the vine, fig tree, pomegranate, and olive tree have not produced. Nevertheless, from today on I will bless you.'"

Haggai's Prophecy to Zerubbabel—A Message of Encouragement (December 18, 520 BC)

Haggai 2:20–23

20 Then the LORD spoke again to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month:

21 Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah: 'I am ready to shake the sky and the earth. [[Heb 12:26](#)]

22 I will overthrow royal thrones and shatter the might of earthly kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and those who ride them, and horses and their riders will fall as people kill one another.

23 On that day,' says the LORD who rules over all, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant,' says the LORD, 'and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,' says the LORD who rules over all."

Darius Sends His Approval for the Temple to be Rebuilt (c. January 519 BC)

Ezra 6:1–14a

Discovery of Cyrus' Edict

1 So Darius the king issued orders, and they searched in the archives of the treasury which were deposited there in Babylon.

2 A scroll was found in the citadel of Ecbatana which is in the province of Media, and it was inscribed as follows: "Memorandum:

3 In the first year of his reign, King Cyrus gave orders concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: 'Let the temple be rebuilt as a place where sacrifices are offered. Let its foundations be set in place. Its height is to be ninety feet and its width ninety feet,

4 with three layers of large stones and one layer of timber. The expense is to be subsidized by the royal treasury.

5 Furthermore let the gold and silver vessels of the temple of God, which Nebuchadnezzar brought from the temple in Jerusalem and carried to Babylon, be returned and brought to their proper place in the temple in Jerusalem. Let them be deposited in the temple of God.'

Darius' Order to Tattenai

6 "Now Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates, Shethar Bozenai, and their colleagues, the officials of Trans-Euphrates—all of you stay far away from there!

7 Leave the work on this temple of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this temple of God in its proper place.

8 "I also hereby issue orders as to what you are to do with those elders of the Jews in order to rebuild this temple of God. From the royal treasury, from the taxes of Trans-Euphrates the complete costs are to be given to these men, so that there may be no interruption of the work.

9 Whatever is needed—whether oxen or rams or lambs or burnt offerings for the God of heaven or wheat or salt or wine or oil, as required by the priests who are in Jerusalem—must be given to them daily without any neglect,

10 so that they may be offering incense to the God of heaven and may be praying for the good fortune of the king and his family.

11 "I hereby give orders that if anyone changes this directive a beam is to be pulled out from his house and he is to be raised up and impaled on it, and his house is to be reduced to a rubbish heap for this indiscretion.

12 May God who makes his name to reside there overthrow any king or nation who reaches out to cause such change so as to destroy this temple of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have given orders. Let them be carried out with precision!"

Tattenai Immediately Obey

13 Then Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates, Shethar-Bozenai, and their colleagues acted accordingly—with precision, just as Darius the king had given instructions.

14a The elders of the Jews continued building and prospering, while at the same time Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo continued prophesying.