

- Recap of last week: Daniel interprets another disturbing dream for Nebuchadnezzar who is deposed from the throne, goes crazy, and lives in the field acting like a wild animal until he comes to his senses and acknowledges God. (Daniel 4). Nebuchadnezzar is tricked into throwing Daniel into a den of lions, but God protects him. (Daniel 6) Daniel has a disturbing dream with four beasts being destroyed by God. He keeps the dream to himself. (Daniel 7) Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar is throwing a feast when everyone sees a hand writing on the wall. Daniel translates the writing as saying the kingdom is over and it happens that very night when the Medo-Persian empire becomes the new power in the world. (Daniel 5)
- God predicted through the prophet Isaiah that he would use a King named Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and release Jewish captives. (Isaiah 45:1-13)
- It happens. In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, God tells Him directly to rebuild Jerusalem and let people go from exile and he provides great riches to this endeavor. (Ezra 1)
- There is a detailed record of all the names of families who were exiled. This done all the way down to families with a few dozen people. (Ezra 2:1-62)
- There is a pretty exact number of people who came out of exile: 42,320. They had 7,337 maid and servants, there was also a chorus of 200 men and women, 736 horses, 245 mules, 445 camels, 6,720 donkeys. (Ezra 2:63-70).
- Remember that the prophet Jeremiah had written a letter to the Israelites in exile in Babylon urging them to prosper there. (Jeremiah 29:4-7)
- Those who returned from exile began to sacrifice to God and then started rebuilding the temple. They sang, some shouted, and some wept. There we so many people making so much noise that you could not tell who was making what noise. (Ezra 3)
- Other nations than Israel opposed the building of the temple without them because they say they want to worship God too. They succeeded in creating a delay in construction and that worked all the way through the reign of King Darius. (Ezra 4:1-4)
- When Darius dies, Artaxerxes takes his place. The nations write a letter to Artaxerxes and tell him that if Jerusalem is rebuilt they will rebel and not pay taxes. This works. Artaxerxes decrees an end to the work. (Ezra 4:7-24)
- The prophets Haggai and Zechariah and the political leaders Zerubbabel and Jeshua start rebuilding again. A man named Tattenai who was the governor of the province (put in place by the Persians) wrote a letter back to King Darius (who was the successor to Artaxerxes) explaining that he has asked them why they were rebuilding and they told him the whole history and how they had to rebuild because God told them to and asked for the King's permission. (Ezra 5).

- Darius does some research, learns that Cyrus had authorized all this work, and not only order the work to continue but also tells his people to help with resources as needed. (Ezra 6:1-12)
- In the sixth year of the King Darius, the temple is completed and consecrated. (Ezra 6:13-17)
- The feast of the Passover is celebrated. (Ezra 6:19-22)

Questions:

1. What prophet does God use to predict the name of the King who will eventually rescue the children of Israel from exile in Babylon?
2. Who was the world power who defeated the Babylonians?
3. What two things does Cyrus do?
4. Does Cyrus invest in this endeavor?
5. How detailed is the record of all the people who went into exile?
6. How many people and animals came out of exile?
7. What prophet had urged the Israelites to prosper in exile?
8. What three types of noise are the Israelites heard to have made while they started rebuilding the temple?
9. Why did nations other than Israel oppose the temple being rebuilt without them? Did it work?
10. Why did other nations tell Israel they want to also work on construction of the temple?
11. What did the nations other than Jerusalem say in their letter to Artaxerxes?
12. How did Artaxerxes react to the letter he received?
13. What two prophets and two political leaders are key to restarting the work on Jerusalem after work had stopped?
14. Who wrote the letter to Darius explaining why the work had restarted?
15. How does Darius react to the news that the work is restarting?
16. When is the temple rebuilding completed?
17. What feast is the first one celebrated when the temple is consecrated?