

An aerial view of Prague, Czech Republic, at sunset. The Vltava River flows through the city, with the Charles Bridge in the foreground. The city is filled with historic buildings, including a prominent church with a green dome. The sky is filled with soft, golden light from the setting sun.

WELCOME
to the
International Baptist Church
of Prague

SUNDAY 16 MAY 2021

PRAYER



Psalm 18. For the director of music.

Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

¹ I love you, LORD, my strength.

² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.

Psalm 18

⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears...

²⁰ The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.

²¹ For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I am not guilty of turning from my God.

²² All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.

²³ I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.

²⁴ The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

Psalm 18

²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,

²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.

²⁷ You save the humble
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

²⁸ You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;
my God turns my darkness into light.

²⁹ With your help I can advance against a troop;
with my God I can scale a wall.

³⁰ As for God, his way is perfect: the LORD's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.

³¹ For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?...

Psalm 18

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Saviour!

⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,

⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies.

You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.

⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.

⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing love to his anointed,
to David and to his descendants for ever.



SERMON

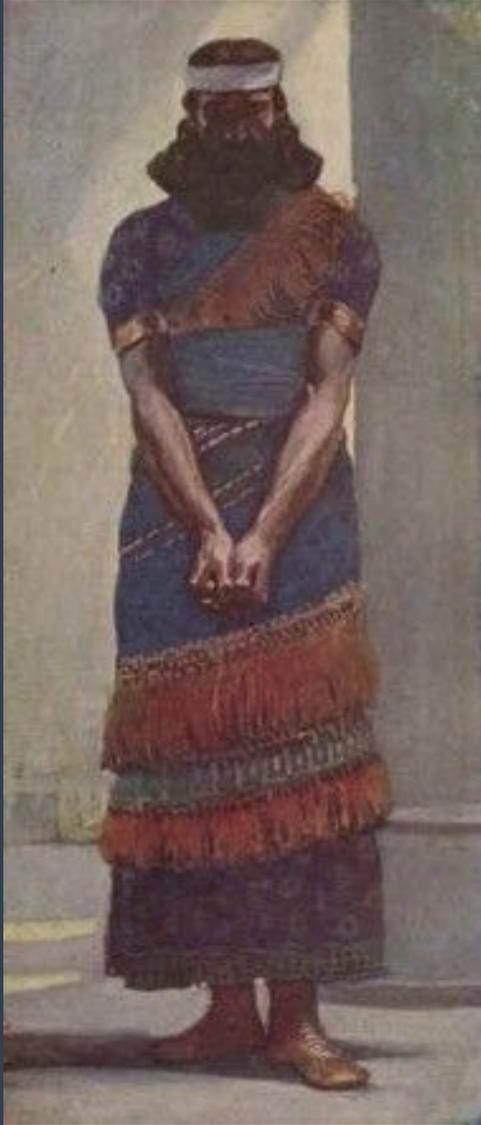


**EZRA/
NEHEMIAH**

EZRA 6

“Completing the Temple”

The Lord's Proclamation



HAGGAI 1:1-4

In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest:

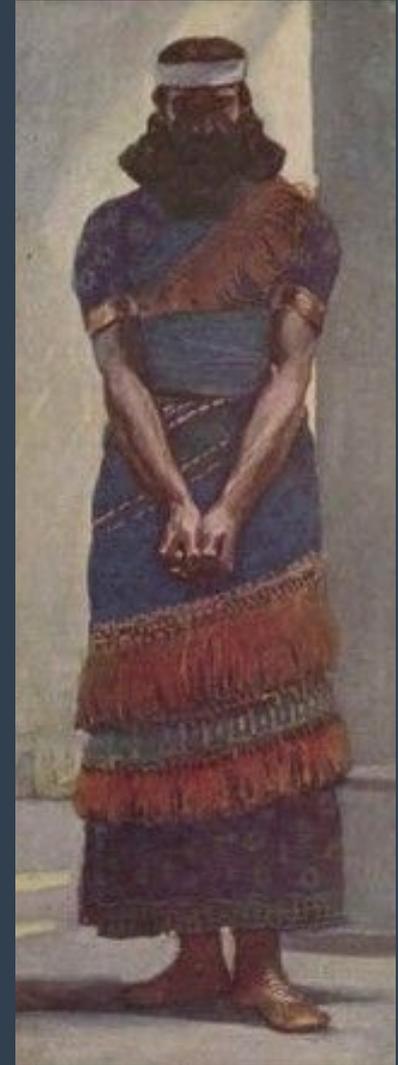
This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘These people say, “The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD’s house.”’

Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?’

The Lord's Proclamation

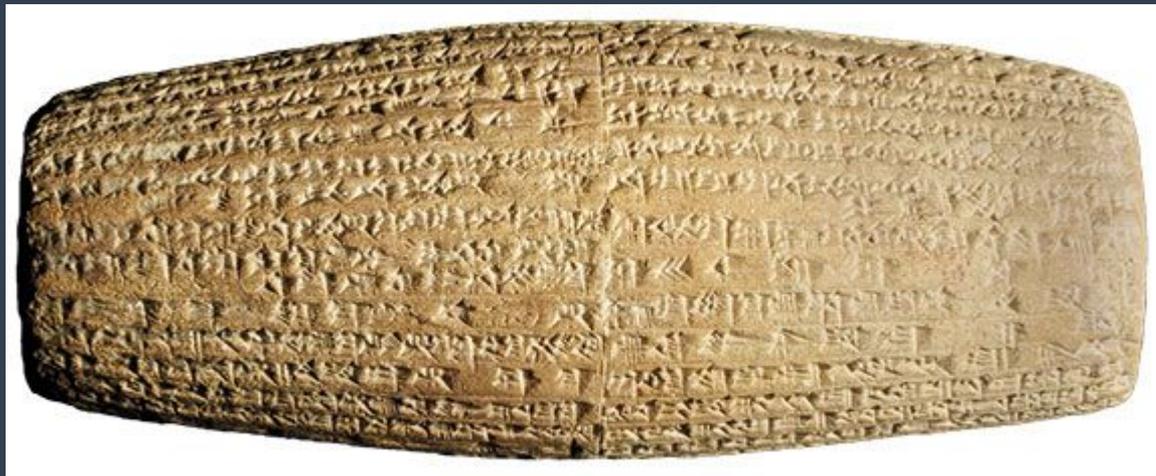
EZRA 5:1-3: Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. ² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, supporting them. At that time Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates went to them and asked, 'Who authorised you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?'

EZRA 5:17: Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter.



Ezra 6:1-5: The Lord's Purpose

¹ King Darius then issued an order, and they searched in the archives stored in the treasury at Babylon. ² A scroll was found in the citadel of Ecbatana in the province of Media, and this was written on it: Memorandum: ³ In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be sixty cubits high and sixty cubits wide, ⁴ with three courses of large stones and one of timber. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. ⁵ Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God.



Ezra 6:1-5: The Lord's Purpose



1 Timothy 2:1-4

¹ I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Ezra 6:6-17: The Lord's Provision

They were given the freedom to work 6:6-7

Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you other officials of that province, stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site.

They were given the means to work 6:8-10

Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: Their expenses are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed – young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and olive oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem – must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

THE CYRUS CYLINDER



In 1879 “Cyrus Cylinder” was discovered in ruins of Babylon in Iraq. The clay cylinder gives Babylonian account of conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BC. It also records his restoring of statues etc to various temples which had been removed by previous king of Babylon, and also of his own work at Babylon.

Cylinder shows Cyrus’ strategy for gaining the loyalty of conquered regions: funding reconstruction, returning temple properties, repatriating displaced people.

Ezra 6:6-17: The Lord's Provision

They were given the King's blessing 6:11-12

¹¹ Furthermore, I decree that if anyone defies this edict, a beam is to be pulled from their house and they are to be impaled on it. And for this crime their house is to be made a pile of rubble. ¹² May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.

¹³ Then, because of the decree King Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates carried it out with diligence. ¹⁴ So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia.

¹⁵ The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

Ezra 6:6-17: The Lord's Provision

PHILIPPIANS 4:12-13

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

AND MY
GOD WILL
MEET ALL
YOUR
NEEDS
ACCORDING
TO HIS
GLORIOUS
RICHES IN
CHRIST
JESUS.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Ezra 6:6-17: The Lord's Provision

**Now to him who is able to
do immeasurably more
than all we ask or
imagine, according to his
power that is at work
within us, to him be glory
in the church and in Christ
Jesus throughout all
generations, for ever and
ever! Amen.**

Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

Ezra 6:16-22: The Lord's Passover

¹⁶ Then the people of Israel – the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles – celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.

¹⁷ For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁸ And they installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God at Jerusalem, **according to what is written in the Book of Moses.**

¹⁹ On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover.



PASSOVER

Ezra 6:16-22: The Lord's Passover

²⁰ The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, for their relatives the priests and for themselves. ²¹ So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbours in order to seek the LORD, the God of Israel. ²² For seven days they celebrated with joy the Festival of Unleavened Bread, **because the LORD had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.**

THE FEAST OF
UNLEAVENED
BREAD

CHAG HAMOTZI



Ezra 6: Completing the Temple

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:23-25

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

ALL

LORD, in your mercy, hear our prayer

PRAYER for the persecuted church – SUDAN #13 on Open Doors World Watch List 2021



There are almost 2 million Christians in Sudan about 4.5% of a population of 43.5 million. Though Sudan has taken significant steps towards religious freedom in the past year, including a commitment to end 30 years of Islamic law, Christians from a Muslim background still face extreme persecution from their families and communities.

PRAYER for the persecuted church – SUDAN

Believers no longer face the death penalty for leaving Islam, but may be attacked, ostracised or otherwise discriminated against if their faith is discovered. Church buildings are often attacked or even demolished.

Many still keep their faith secret, for the safety of them and their family. This includes Christian women and girls being forced to dress like Muslims, to avoid being harassed for 'indecent dressing'. Some converts even choose not to raise their children as Christians, wary of retribution from community leaders. This fear of exposure even means some Christians from a Muslim background have Islamic funerals in Muslim cemeteries.

Since President Omar al-Bashir was ousted in April 2019, there has been uncertainty about the leadership of Sudan and how it would impact Christians. Thankfully, and in an amazing answer to prayer, there do seem to be significant steps towards freedom of religion. Islamic law will end after 30 years, and Christians from a Muslim background no longer face the death penalty.

PRAYER for the persecuted church – SUDAN

Sudan's economy was already unstable before Covid-19 hit. Now, Christians from a Muslim background are particularly vulnerable – most don't have access to essential support from their family and community.

“People are suffering a lot and the economy is down,” says a pastor, who must be kept anonymous for security reasons. “Prices of everything are going up and people are just struggling to survive. I am here on the ground and see how converts are suffering every day and every hour to find food and even a place to stay. Many have been unable to pay rent and are forced to find other accommodation.”

Sudan has made great progress towards religious equality this year, but it will take much longer to change the stigma and opposition faced in everyday life by Christians who have left the faith of their families and ancestors.

PRAYER for the persecuted church – SUDAN



PRAYER: Lord God, thank You so much for answering decades of prayer from Sudanese Christians and those who support them. We pray that the change in the law would make a difference to the lives of our brothers and sisters in Sudan, and that the culture of the country would change with them. Let Sudanese believers live lives openly devoted to you, shining the light of Christ in a country that has spent so many years in darkness. Amen.

PRAYER for the CHURCH and PERSONAL NEEDS

ALL

LORD, in your mercy, hear our prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MAY AT IBCP



TODAY Sunday 16	Ezra 6: 'Completion of the Temple' Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website & 16.00 downstairs at the church
Wednesday 19	19.00 Fellowship Group via ZOOM
Friday 21	19.00 Students' Fellowship via ZOOM
Sunday 23	Pentecost Sunday Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website & 16.00 downstairs at the church
Sunday 30	Ezra 7: "Ezra in Jerusalem" Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website & 16.00 downstairs at the church
Sunday 13 June	CHURCH MEETING after the service



Benediction

The Grace ...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all,
Now and forever more.

Amen





To
God
be the Glory!