

## **The Temple Completed**

Ezra 6:13-22

Ezra 3:11-13

by Don Falkos

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Tattenai, the governor of all the Persian territory west of the Euphrates River, and the officials serving under him, carried out the decree of King Darius with all diligence. They provided funds to cover all the construction needs for the Temple of God in Jerusalem as well as the animals needed by the priests for sacrifice.

Work on the Temple continued uninterrupted according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia. When the Temple was completed, the people of Israel who had returned from exile along with those who had never left the land celebrated the dedication of the house of God under the guidance of the priests and Levites. They sang songs, shouted for joy, and praised the Lord.

Many of the oldest among them, who had seen Solomon's Temple in all its glory, wept aloud when they realized God had not indwelt this new structure. No pillar of cloud came down upon it as had happened with the former Temple. Their wailing was drowned out by the deafening celebration around them.

The dedication of the Temple involved hundreds of sacrifices, including twelve sin offerings, one for each of the tribes of Israel.

About a week later, the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the newly completed Temple. All who had purified themselves ate the Passover lamb, both the returned exiles and those who had renounced the filthy practices of their foreign neighbors in order to seek after the Lord. And for the next seven days they joyfully celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread.