

5³ At that time Tattenai, the governor of province beyond the Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and spoke to them as follows: “Who issued you a decree to rebuild this temple and to finish this structure?”⁴ Then we told them accordingly what the names of the men were who were reconstructing this building.

⁵But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until the report could reach Darius, and then the decree concerning it could be sent back.

⁶This is the copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor of the province of Euphrates River, and Shethar-bozenai and his colleagues the officials, who were beyond the River, sent to Darius the king.

⁷They sent the report to him in which it was written as follows: “To Darius the king, all peace. ⁸May it be known to the king that we have gone to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God which is being built with large stones, and beams are being laid in the walls; and this work is being performed with great care and is succeeding in their hands.

⁹Then we asked those elders and said to them as follows: ‘Who issued you a decree to rebuild this temple and to finish this structure? ¹⁰We also asked them their names so as to inform you, in order that we might write down the names of the men who were in charge.

***11 So they answered us as follows, saying,
‘We are the servants of the God of heaven
and earth, and are rebuilding the temple that
was built many years ago, which a great
king of Israel built and finished. 12 But
because our fathers provoked the God of
heaven to wrath, He handed them over to
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the
Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and
deported the people to Babylon.***

¹³However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God. ¹⁴Also the gold and silver utensils of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought them to the temple of Babylon, King Cyrus took them from the temple of Babylon and they were given to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor.

15 And he said to him, "Take these utensils, go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem, and have the house of God rebuilt in its place." 16 Then that Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem; and from then until now it has been under construction and it is not yet completed.'

17 And now, if it pleases the king, let a search be conducted in the king's treasure house, which is there in Babylon, as to whether a decree was issued by King Cyrus to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem; and let the king send to us his decision concerning this matter."

6 ¹Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was conducted in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. ²And in Ecbatana, in the fortress which is in the province of Media, a scroll was found; and the following was written in it: “Memorandum-

³In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: ‘Concerning the house of God in Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt, and let its foundations be repaired, its height being sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, ⁴with three layers of large stones and one layer of timber. And the cost is to be paid from the royal treasury.

⁵Also the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put them in the house of God.'

***⁶“Now as for you, Tattenai, governor of the province beyond the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues, the officials of the provinces beyond the River, stay away from there. ⁷Leave that work on the house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild that house of God on its site.*”**

⁸Furthermore, I issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of Judah in the rebuilding of that house of God: the full cost is to be paid to those people from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces beyond the Euphrates River, and that without interruption.

⁹And whatever is needed, bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem order, it is to be given to them daily without fail, ¹⁰so that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the lives of the king and his sons.

11 And I issued a decree that any person who violates this decree, a timber shall be pulled out of his house and he shall be impaled on it; and his house shall be turned into a refuse heap on account of this.

¹²May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who attempts to change it, so as to destroy that house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued this decree; it is to be carried out with all diligence!”

