

# The House of the Lord Dedicated

**Key Verse:** *“The children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.”*  
—Ezra 6:16

**Selected Scripture:**  
Ezra 6:16-22

**IT HAD BEEN NEARLY** twenty years since Cyrus, King of Persia, issued the proclamation that the Jews return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple which had been destroyed by the Babylonian army. The rebuilding work was now done, and the Temple was finished. If not for God’s help in providing the leadership of Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the head of the tribe of

Judah, as well as the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the work most likely would not have been completed.—Ezra 6:14

Similarly, in any service that we may engage in for the Lord, we are not sufficient of ourselves to complete the task. We, as Israel did, must look to our spiritual leaders, Jesus and his apostles, for encouragement and strength to accomplish the work the Heavenly Father would have us do. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.”—II Cor. 3:5

Likewise, in our day-to-day experiences in life, we must rely on God’s help through prayer and supplication to

him. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16) Paul realized this in his own life. When speaking of the weakness of his eyesight, he was reminded by the Lord, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”—II Cor. 12:7-9

Our Key Verse indicates that all the Jews who had returned from the captivity joined in the dedication of the rebuilt Temple. The event was one of great joy, thanksgiving and reflection upon what they had been able to accomplish with the Lord’s help. As divine providence would have it, the completion and dedication of the Temple coincided with the first month of the Jews’ religious year. Thus it is stated, “The children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. ... And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria [Persia] unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God.”—Ezra 6:19,22

The children of Israel dedicated the Temple with joy. As part of the ceremony, they offered “for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel,” indicating that all twelve tribes were represented among the returned captives.—vss. 16,17

God’s people of today, the followers of Christ, are also to rejoice in dedicating their lives to the Heavenly Father. The church is spoken of as God’s dwelling place, his temple. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?” (I Cor. 3:16) Being in this symbolic “temple” condition, we should continually feast upon the Lord, partaking of his truth, his example, his words and his character. Israel kept a seven-day feast—seven signifying completeness or perfection. Our feasting upon the Lord is every day, with our entire life represented as being the complete seven-day feast upon the “unleavened” bread of Truth.—I Cor. 5:8 ■