



A DAY WITH THE
KING

#65 Rebuilding Jerusalem - Supplement

4 DECREES TO BUILD JERUSALEM

God made a promise that the Israelites would be released from captivity after seventy years. They were to return to Jerusalem where they were to rebuild the temple and re-establish both religious and civil self-governance. God worked miraculously through three pagan kings, all of whom played a significant part in bringing this promise to fulfillment.

1. King Cyrus - 538 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4)

He made a decree to free all the Israelites so that they could voluntarily return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. He also decreed that everyone left behind was to help with donations to aid those returning.

2. King Darius 1 - 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:1-12)

He confirmed King Cyrus' decree of 538 B.C. Furthermore, he expanded the provisions of King Cyrus's decree to include:

- a. Costs to rebuild the temple were to be paid from the king's treasury. Likewise, provisions such as animals, wheat, salt, wine and oil used for various religious offerings were to be supplied as needed.
- b. Anyone attempting to alter King Cyrus' decree was to be hung from timbers pulled from their own house.

3. King Artaxerxes Longimanus 1 – 457 B.C (Ezra 7:11-24 - religious restoration / Ezra 7:25-26 - civil restoration)

He reaffirmed the religious restoration of the previous decrees. In addition, he expanded the previous decree to include civil restoration. This meant that the Jews could, once again, have their own form of government.

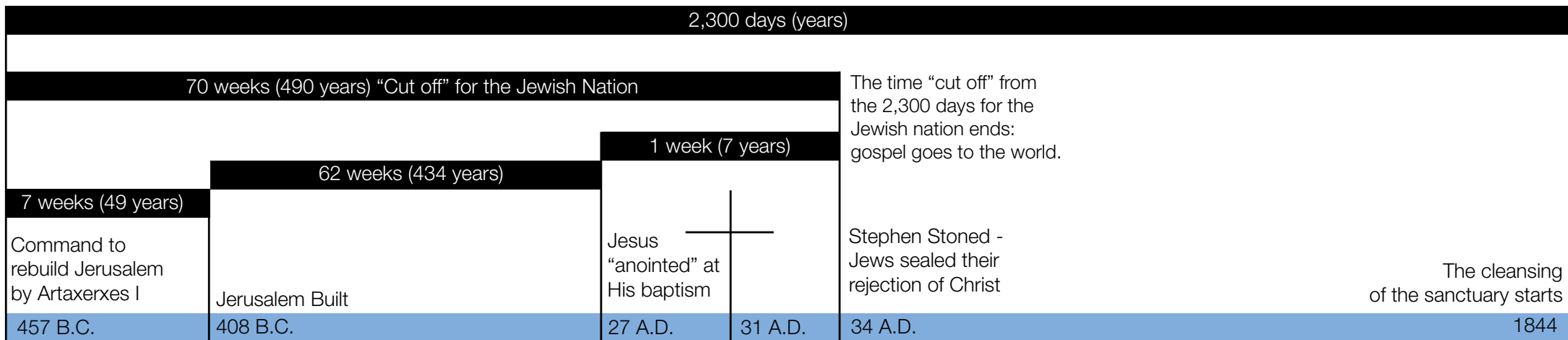
This was the command mentioned in Daniel 9:25 for the beginning of the 70 weeks prophecy which pinpointed the anointing of Jesus. This prophecy also gives us the starting point for the 2,300 day prophecy mentioned in Daniel 8:14, which is the longest time prophecy in the Bible (see timeline on next page).

4. King Artaxerxes Longimanus 1 – approximately 443 B.C (Nehemiah 2:5-10)

Progress on the restoration had slowed down, so he reconfirmed both parts of his earlier decree of 457 B.C. to make sure the temple and city were fully rebuilt.

If God can work through pagan kings, then how much more can He work through you and me who know and love Him?

THE LONGEST TIME PROPHECY - 2,300 YEARS



Jesus is "cut off" in the middle of the week, 31 A.D.

PEOPLE GOD USED

God used honourable men and women such as Zerubbabel, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah to be His shining lights to pagan kings.

- ZERUBBABEL** (decree by King Cyrus - 538 B.C.)
Zerubbabel, a governor and faithful spiritual leader of the Israelites, representing authority of state as the official representative of the Persian king.
 - Summer of 536 B.C., the Israelites return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:1-2), a direct descendant of King David.
 - Spring of 535 B.C., rebuilding of the temple commences with laying of the foundation. (Ezra 3:8-13)
 - Work grinds to a halt after foundation is laid. (Ezra 4:7-24)
 - The temple remains in this unfinished state for approximately sixteen years.
- HAGGAI + ZECHARIAH** (decree by King Darius 1 - 515 B.C.)
Haggai and Zechariah, both prophets and faithful Israelites, provided encouragement and guidance in resuming the work of the temple.
 - Late Summer the first call for resumption. (Haggai 1:1, Ezra 5:1-2)
 - Early Autumn/Fall, three weeks later, work resumed.
 - Early Spring, four and a half years later, the temple is completed, and dedicated. (Ezra 6:14-18)

- ESTHER**
Esther lived as queen in Persia in the time between Zerubbabel and Ezra. Married to King Ahasuerus, God used her in a mighty way to save His people.

- EZRA** (decree by King Artaxerxes 1 – 457 B.C.)
Ezra was a scribe and faithful priest. He was a direct descendant of Aaron, Moses' brother. He was sent back to Jerusalem by King Artaxerxes, to reorganise the nation's administration according to Mosaic law. (Ezra 7:1 to 10:44)
 - Early Spring Ezra departed Babylon traveling to Israel with a second wave of returning Israelites.
 - Mid Summer after a four-month journey, Ezra and the Israelites arrive in Jerusalem.
 - Ezra's commission included:
 - To carrying out an investigation into the religious condition in Judah and Jerusalem – the standard being the law of God. (Ezra 7:14, 25, 26)
 - To carry gifts of silver and gold and free-will offerings. The money was to maintain the Temple sacrifices. (Ezra 7:16-17)
 - To set magistrates and judges in place to rule the people. (Ezra 7:25)
- NEHEMIAH** (decree by King Artaxerxes 1 – approximately 443 B.C.)
Nehemiah, a governor and cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, returns to Jerusalem to offer guidance in rebuilding the walls. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
 - The reconstruction of the wall in fifty-two days. (Nehemiah 1-7)
 - Led in religious revival and restoration of the people. (Nehemiah 8-13)

Is it possible that God has also worked out a specific role for us in His larger plan for the salvation of people? The answer is "yes". He wants us to work for Him like these others did.