

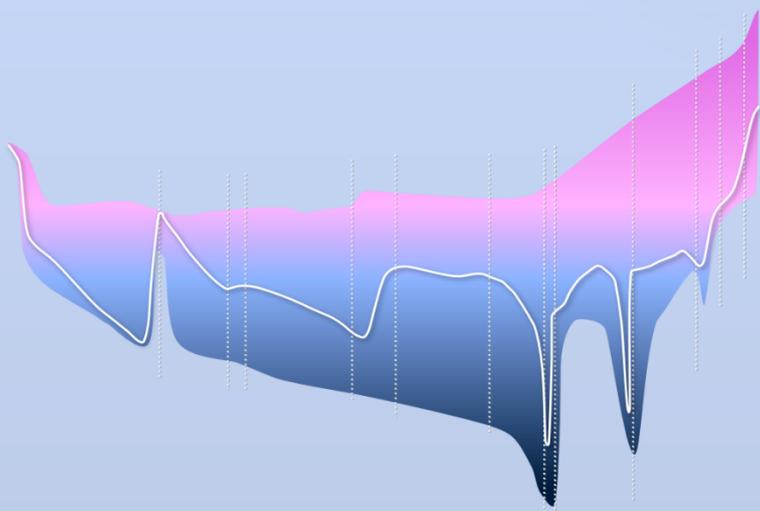
The Holy Scriptures

Old Testament
Exile and Return
(2nd Chron) Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

The Living Voice Bible

This text uses colour and indentation to indicate who is speaking with whom, leaving the surrounding text to act as a narrator. Turn to any page and the dialogues leap forward, helping us to recall the context and the events.

In the resurrection, we will meet some of the great servants of the Almighty - the Daniels, the Deborahs and others - and might even work along side them. This text helps us to familiarise ourselves with our future friends, so that when we meet we will be satisfying a genuine longing to see them.



The

Holy Scriptures

EXILE AND RETURN
(2nd Chronicles), Daniel,
Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Dedication

To Our Heavenly Father

יהוה

and in deference to His son

Jesus Christ

who leads all fine hearts
safely to God's kingdom

The prospect of reading the Bible can be daunting. When presented as flat monotone text, its dialogues can seem unclear, and this – combined with it being an historical text – make it difficult to read an arbitrary book or chapter in its true context. However once the dialogues are clearly marked, it becomes easy to open the scriptures at any page and appreciate who is speaking to whom.

This text has been designed to give the reader a good feeling for the understanding of the God's Word by making it easy to know who is speaking. On turning to any page, the reader will immediately see named characters in action. The historical context leaps to mind, and the remaining flat text becomes that of a background narrator.

In this edition, speech is prefaced with an identification:

- *Prime speaker* — *audience, or secondary speaker*

together with similarly coloured text for the conversation; for example:

- *King Mel-chiz'e-dek of Sa'lem (later "Jerusalayim")* — *A'bram*

◀ *Blessed be A'bram of the Most High God, Maker of heaven and earth*

The icon marks the text as an announcement (◀ or ▶), initial statement (⇒ or ⇐), reply (⇨ or ⇩), or speaking to oneself (⤿) – with its orientation showing the direction of speech from the prime- or from the secondary speaker. Where a conversation quotes others, the text is indented and changes colour to reflect who is being quoted – (see for example Isaiah 36:4-11 where Rab'sha-keh taunts the envoys of Hez-e-ki'ah). This helps the user to see – at any time – who is speaking, who is their audience, and the complexity of quotations within the speech.

When a sacred text is overtly quoted, it appears with its reference – an example being Joshua 8:30-32:

Then Joshua proceeded to build an altar to Jehovah the God of Israel, in Mount E'bal – just as Jehovah's servant Moses had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses:

...An altar of whole stones, upon which no iron tool has been wielded...'



Exodus 20:25

Moses (words of **Almighty God**) — sons of Israel

and presented burnt offerings upon it to Jehovah and offered communion sacrifices.

and where a sacred text is *less* overtly quoted, it may not include the grey box around the text.

This text maintains the standard verse numbering, even where it is shown to have been unwise. However in some places where the text customarily treats separate verses as separate entities (for example Ecclesiastes 7:1-4) rather than a continuation to earlier verses, this text continues the flow to ensure the reader sees them as related, while maintaining the traditional verse divisions.

As a further aid, some supplementary words are included *[in brackets]* – these are words which do not explicitly appear in the manuscripts, but are there to aid the flow and will often be trivial conjunctions (*and, but, whereby, therefore*) or concise amplifications of the true meaning of the underlying Hebrew and Greek – and as such do not compromise a verbal reading of the text. Others *[in raised brackets]* are explanations which are too small for a footnote – such as the meaning of a Hebrew name – but useful enough to include in the immediate flow of the text. All Hebrew names have their meanings explained by this device at their first instance.

As is standard in other Bibles, plurals are in CAPITALS. Where the speech identification clearly denotes a

plural and the text does not include a mixture of singular and plural associations, the plurals are reduced to standard lower-case form and are treated as implicit plurals.

We have included “leitmotif” markers to indicate a point which is repeated in a book – these are especially useful in letters, where the author would, in later verses, build upon themes which he had established earlier. The initial point is marked in grey [^] and all references to it in red ^{A-23-11} where the numeral indicates the chapter number and verse. A grey leitmotif marker declares that this verse holds a notion which will be repeated elsewhere in that particular book of the scriptures. Examples would be Sol’o-mon’s repeated use of the phrase “...a vanity, and a striving after the wind”.

Some expressions appear in the appendix and are marked^[r7] to avoid repeating the meaning in footnotes – an example is the letter chi ^z to denote a verse which is prophetic of the Mes-si’ah. Footnotes are marked in the customary¹ way.

The Divine Name יהוה has been rendered as Jehovah – the standard English representation of the Name Yahweh.

Any translation of the Holy Scriptures will fail to portray the true meaning of the Word, so much subtlety in the original languages cannot be smoothly translated. God’s Word deserves that we – the readers – translate ourselves into reading the original languages, rather than cause all of that beauty to bend to our own. However since this is too difficult for most lovers of God, we have translations. It is hoped that you will find this version easy to read, and will forgive the inevitable flaws which remain in it. As for any benefits, all credit is due to our Heavenly Father, the Almighty – praised be His Name – Who kindly provided Holy Spirit through His Son to support this endeavour.

The Living Voice Bible

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¹ footnote

Old Testament – Hebrew Scriptures

Histories

Ca'naan: *2nd of Chronicles*

Prophets: Daniel

Exile: Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Supplements: Glossary

The testament of the

Hebrew Covenants

to set apart a people called to be Holy to Almighty God

in anticipation of the seed of Promise, the Messiah the son of David.

THE 2ND OF Chronicles

36

Je-ho'a-haz (2nd in line) crowned King of Judah by the people

¹ Then the people¹ of the land took Je-ho'a-haz the son of Jo-si'ah and made him king in the place of his father in Jerusalem. ² Je-ho'a-haz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months.

Je-hoi'a-kim (E-li'a-kim) crowned King of Judah by Phar'aoh

³ However, the king of Egypt removed him in Jerusalem and fined the land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ⁴ Furthermore, the king of Egypt made E-li'a-kim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed his name to Je-hoi'a-kim;² but Ne'cho took his brother Je-ho'a-haz and brought him to Egypt.

⁵ Je-hoi'a-kim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years – but he did what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah his God. ⁶ Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with two fetters of copper to carry him off to Babylon.³ ⁷ Neb-u-chad-rez'zar also brought some of the utensils of the house of Jehovah to Babylon and then put them in his temple⁴ in Babylon.

⁸ ...as for the rest of the affairs of Je-hoi'a-kim and his detestable acts – and the ones which were [later] discovered about him – there they are written in the scroll of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

And Je-hoi'a-chin his son began to reign in place of him.

Je-hoi'a-chin inherits crown from E-li'a-kim (Je-hoi'a-kim) – King of Judah

⁹ Je-hoi'a-chin was eighteen⁵ sa years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for [a mere] three months and ten days; and he continued to do what was bad in Jehovah's eyes.

Zed-e-ki'ah, King of Judah

¹⁰ And at the return of the year King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar sent and had him brought to Babylon along with desirable articles of the house of Jehovah; and he made Zed-e-ki'ah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ Zed-e-ki'ah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years. ¹² And he did what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah his God. He did not humble himself on account of Jeremiah the prophet⁶ at the order of Jehovah. ¹³ And he even rebelled against [his sponsor] King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – who had made him swear by God – and he kept stiffening his neck and hardening his heart so as not to return to Jehovah the God of Israel. ¹⁴ Moreover, all the chiefs of the priests and the people committed more unfaithfulness – such as all the detestable things of the nations – so that they defiled the house of Jehovah which He had sanctified in Jerusalem...

¹⁵ – and Jehovah the God of their forefathers kept sending against them by means of His messengers, sending again and again, because He felt compassion for His people and for His dwelling place – ¹⁶ but they would deride the messengers of the [true] God and despised His words and abused His prophets... until Jehovah's rage-beyond-healing⁷ came up against His people.

¹ Je-ho'a-haz was not the 1st in line – his brother E-li'a-kim was 2 years' older than him 2nd Chronicles 36:5 – but the people installed him, a wrongdoing to the status of the line of David which was to cost him dearly Jeremiah 22:13-16

² From "God raises up" to "Jehovah raises up" – Phar'aoh Ne'cho perhaps trying to impress upon Jerusalem that God's will has been done, a difficult thing for them to accept since the great revivalist and lover of God Jo-si'ah had been killed fighting him

³ Reprisal over Judah's affiliation with Phar'aoh, who had battled at Car'che-mish on at the Eu-phra'tes

⁴ Not his personal house, but his temple to his god Ezra 1:7

⁵ Hebrew reads 8, but he was of an age to be independent and perform badness 2nd Kings 24:9 – corrected to 18 from 2nd Kings 24:8

⁶ A sign that Chronicles was the product of writings by the prophets – the scrolls of Kings does not mention this disrespect to Jeremiah.

⁷ 2nd Kings 2:17; 2nd Chronicles 34:25

¹⁷ ...So He brought up against them the king of the Chal-de'ans,⁸ who killed their young men with the sword inside the house of their sanctuary – He [God] did not have compassion for young man or virgin, old or decrepit, but He gave everything into his [Neb-u-chad-rez'zar's] hand. ¹⁸ And he brought all the utensils, great and small, of the house of the [true] God and the treasures of the house of Jehovah and the treasures of the king – and of his princes, everything! – to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then he burned the house of the [true] God and pulled down the walls of Jerusalayim; they burned all of its dwelling towers in the fire⁹ together with all of its desirable articles, so as to cause ruin. ²⁰ Furthermore, he carried off as captive to Babylon those who had escaped the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the royalty of Persia [^{pure} or ^{splendid}] began to reign [over Babylon] – ²¹ to fulfil Jehovah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah

'...until the land paid off¹⁷ its Sabbaths'



Leviticus 26:34

All the days of lying desolated it kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.¹⁰

²² Then... in the first year of Cyrus [^{you possess the furnace}] the king of Persia – [in order] that Jehovah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished – Jehovah roused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia, so that he caused a proclamation to pass through all his kingdom – which [he also recorded] in writing¹¹ – saying:

- message of King Cyrus of Persia — all in his kingdom

⇒ ²³ This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said:

- King Cyrus of Persia —

⇒ 'Jehovah the God of the heavens has given all the kingdoms of the earth to me, and He Himself has commissioned me to build Him a house in Jerusalayim, which is in Judah.

Whoever there is among YOU of all His people, may Jehovah his God be with him. So let him go up.'

⁸ Prophesied by Ba'laam Numbers 24:22 . Likely to have been King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar (see v 20 and Ezra 5:12) – although as king of kings, there may have been a subordinate king who performed the actual slaughter

⁹ A means of desecration: all of the palaces were knocked down and burned on the site of the Temple! (see 2nd Kings 23:19)

¹⁰ Jeremiah 25:11-12; Contrary to some views that the 70 years referred to 607-537, verses 20 and 21 show that the 70 years were the entire 70 years of the Babylonian era which came to an end when Persia defeated Babylon in 539

¹¹ Ezra 6:1-5

Daniel

Daniel was written partly in Ar-a-ma'ic, a form used in Palestine rather than in Babylon. This would date some parts of it to around 200 BCE – even though the events they describe are contemporaneous with the whole.

Parts of the book were not penned by Daniel at-all – see the phrasing at Daniel 7:28 as an example of the 3rd person.

This is not to describe the Book of Daniel as spurious or a forgery, but that the portions which came down to us are copied down at that later date.. A lack of authority has been imputed to the book of Daniel as it was not included in the main prophetic writings of the Jews, however whereas the three post-exilic books – Esther, Ez'ra and Ne-he-mi'ah – were included, they detailed short portions or reconstruction, whereas Daniel details a history of life inside Babylon. This – and its delay – is more likely to account for the omission. It is however referred to in the Christian gospels.

1

[606 BCE] Daniel selected – along with Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah – nurtured for royal service in Babylon. Their adherence to God's standards on food – even on the pain of death – brought them these privileges of becoming close servants to the King's office.

¹ In the third year of the kingship of Je-hoi'a-kim the king of Judah, Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king of Babylon came to Jerusalayim and began to lay siege to it. ² In time Jehovah gave king Je-hoi'a-kim of Judah into his hand together with a portion of the utensils of the house of the *[true]* God. So he brought them to the land of Shi'nar to the house of his god, and he brought those utensils to the treasure-house of his god.

³ Then the king told Ash'pe-naz *["I will make the anointed prominent"]* his chief court official to bring some of the *[citizen]* sons of Israel and some of the royal offspring and of the nobles – ⁴ children without blemish but pleasing in appearance and having insight into all wisdom¹ *[ability to reason]* and adept at learning *[acquainted with knowledge]*, and understanding science, who also had deportment so as to stand in the palace of the king – to teach them the writing and the tongue of the Chal-de'ans. ⁵ Furthermore, the king appointed to them a daily allowance from the king's own delicacies and from his drinking wine to nourish them for three years,² so that at the end of these *[years]* they might stand before the king.

⁶ Now from among the sons of Judah were:

Daniel *["God is my judge"]*, Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah.

⁷ and the principal court official assigned names to them. So he assigned to Daniel *[the name of]* Bel-te-Shaz'zar *["lord of the impoverished one's treasure"]*, and to Han-a-ni'ah: Sha'drach *["royal" or "the great scribe"]*, and to Mish'a-el: Me'shach *["guest of a king"]*, and to Az-a-ri'ah: A-bed'Ne-go *["servant of Nego"...of Jupiter or Venus]*.

⁸ ...however Daniel determined in his heart that he would not pollute himself with the king's delicacies and drinking wine, but he kept seeking the principal court official's favour so that he might not defile himself. ⁹ Accordingly the *[true]* God gave Daniel over to loving-kindness and mercy before the principal court official, ¹⁰ ...however the principal court official said to Daniel:

● Daniel (Bel-te-Shaz'zar) — guardian over the young Jews (message from Ash'pe-naz, chief court official)

⇐ *I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed YOUR food and YOUR drinks. Why then, should he see YOUR faces looking dejected in comparison with similar-aged children, and *[why]* should YOU have to make my head liable before the king?*

¹¹ So Daniel said to the steward whom the principal court official had appointed over Daniel, Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah:

↪ ¹² *Please, test your servants for ten days – let them give us some vegetables to eat and water to drink – ¹³ and then let our countenances and the countenance of the children who are eating the delicacies*

¹ In Ezekiel 28:3 the king of Tyre esteems himself as wiser than Daniel – thus Daniel was already reputed to be wise

of the king appear before you, [then] do with your servants according to what you see.

¹⁴ So he consented to them over this matter and put them to the test for ten days... ¹⁵ and at the end of ten days their countenances appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the children who were eating the delicacies of the king, ¹⁶ and so the steward would take away their delicacies and drinking wine, and would give them vegetables. ¹⁷ ...and as for these four children, the [true] God gave them knowledge and insight in all writing and wisdom – and Daniel understood all sorts of visions and dreams.

¹⁸ And at the end of the days [three years] ¹⁻¹⁻⁵ – beyond which the king had set to bring them in [the four and all the rest of the children] – the principal court official brought them in before Neb-u-chad-rez'zar. ¹⁹ And the king began to speak with them, but none among them was found to be like Daniel, Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah – so they remained before the king; ²⁰ in every matter of wisdom [and] understanding of which the king inquired from them, he found them to be ten times better than all the divining priests [and] the necromancers that were in all his royal realm!

²¹ (...and Daniel remained [in such service] until the first year of Cyrus the king.)

2

[584 BCE] (ARAMAIC) Neb-u-chad-rez'zar both dreams and forgets a vision of the night – and threatens his wise men over their inability to tell the dream. By God's hand, Daniel tells the king his forgotten dream and its interpretation, and the king prostrates himself to his captured servant Daniel and elevates him – and Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go – to the highest offices in the land

The Dream of the Statue of World Powers

¹ And in the second year of the kingship² of Neb-u-chad-rez'zar [over Jerusalem?], Neb-u-chad-rez'zar dreamed dreams – and his spirit became troubled, and his sleep [continually] abandoned him. ² So the king called for the divining priests and the necromancers and the sorcerers and the Chal-de'ans so that they might expound the king his dreams, so they came in and stood before the king. ³ Then the king said to them:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— divining priests, necromancers, sorcerers, Chal-de'an diviners of dreams

⇒ I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is itching to understand the dream.

⁴ At that the Chal-de'ans spoke to the king in Ar-a-ma'ic:

↔ O king, may you live on for times indefinite. Tell the dream to your servants, and we shall show the interpretation.

⁵ [...but] the king answered the Chal-de'ans saying:

↔ The dream has fled from me!

If YOU men do not tell me the dream – with its interpretation – YOU will be dismembered and YOUR houses will be turned into into dunghills! ⁶ But if YOU do reveal the dream and its interpretation, YOU will receive gifts and fame and high esteem from me.

Therefore show me the dream – and its interpretation.

⁷ They answered a second time saying:

↔ Let the king tell his servants what the dream is, and we shall show its interpretation.

⁸ The king answered replied:

↔ I know for a fact that YOU men are trying to gain time, because YOU know that my the dream has fled from me, ⁹ therefore if YOU do not reveal the dream to me, this one and only sentence is upon YOU. All of YOU have conspired to lie and mislead me until the time goes by.³ Therefore tell me the dream, and then I shall know that YOU can [also] show its interpretation.

² The dates seem spurious – possibly 603 BCE (the 2nd year of his reign) but this would cross with Daniel 1:5, 18 which states that Daniel and his colleagues had a three-year period before reaching their stated positions – which they clearly had, because Daniel 2:13 shows that Daniel was to be killed also as one of the wise men. Therefore this “2nd year” either means his 2nd year in reign over Jerusalem – (584 BCE) the Jewish perspective – or much less likely the 2nd year of the king's reign while Daniel was in his service

³ “until the time when Neb-u-chad-rez'zar will not recognise the dream even if it is told to him”

¹⁰ The Chal-de'ans answered the king, saying:

↩ *There is not a man on earth who is able to interpret the matter of the king, which is why no grand king or governor has asked such a thing as this of any divining priest or necromancer or Chal-de'an.* ¹¹ *What the king is asking is extraordinary, and there is nobody who can show it before the king – except the gods, whose own dwelling is not with flesh at all.*⁴

¹² Because of this the king became very angry and grew furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be killed, ¹³ and the order was issued for the wise men to be killed; so they looked for Daniel and his companions for them to be killed [also].

¹⁴ So Daniel responded with prudence and tact to Ar'i-och [^{lion-like}] the chief of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to kill the wise men of Babylon, ¹⁵ [and] he responded to Ar'i-och the officer of the king:

● Daniel — Ar'i-och, chief of the king's bodyguard

↩ *Why is there such an urgent edict on the part of the king?*

– so Ar'i-och made the matter known to Daniel. ¹⁶ So Daniel went in and petitioned the king that he should give him time – he [Daniel] specifically – to disclose the interpretation to the king.

¹⁷ After that Daniel went to his own house, and he made known the matter to his companions – Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah – ¹⁸ [that they might] ask for mercies on the part of the God of heaven concerning this mystery, in order that Daniel and his companions might not perish along with the remainder⁵ of the wise men of Babylon...

¹⁹ ...Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Consequently Daniel blessed the God of Heaven, ²⁰ Daniel answering and saying:

● — Daniel

↻ *Let the Name of God be blessed from time indefinite to time indefinite, for wisdom and mightiness² belong to Him.* ²¹ *He changes times and seasons, he removes kings and sets up kings, granting wisdom to the wise ones and knowledge to those knowing how to discern.* ²² *He reveals the deep things and the concealed things, knowing what is in the darkness – for the light dwells with Him.*

● Almighty God — Daniel

↩ ²³ *To You, O God of my forefathers, I give praise and adulation! because You have given wisdom and mightiness²⁻¹⁹ to me. For now You have made known to me what we sought of You, for You have made known to us the very matter of the king!*⁶

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went in to Ar'i-och – whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He departed [for there], and this is what he said to him:

● Daniel — Ar'i-och, chief of the king's bodyguard

⇒ *You should not destroy any wise men of Babylon. Thrust me in⁷ before the king, and I shall disclose the interpretation to the king.*

²⁵ Then Ar'i-och took Daniel before the king in haste, and this is what he said to him:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon — Ar'i-och, chief of the king's bodyguard

➤ *I have found a certain man of the sons of the captivity of Judah who will make known the interpretation to the king!*

²⁶ In answering, the king said to Daniel, whose name was Bel-te-Shaz'zar:

⁴ Dangerous to tell the king that no other king has asked it because it is unreasonable! Also, they reveal that they are mere men and not in touch with the Divine at-all

⁵ ...some of the wise men having already been killed

⁶ Daniel felt privileged!! He would be well aware that King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar had been God's instrument – "servant" – in the destruction of Jerusalem, yet here God had given Daniel insight and knowledge of the king's own dreams, which the king himself had already forgotten!

⁷ "bring me in" – this is not a request for an appointment... Daniel is asking the guard to hurriedly thrust Daniel before the king, as a matter of urgency

↳ Are you⁸ actually able to reveal to me the dream that I beheld, and its interpretation?

²⁷ Daniel answered before⁹ the king, saying:

↳ The wise men, the necromancers, the divining priests [and] the astrologers are unable to disclose to the king the mystery which the king demands, ²⁸ however, there is a God in the heavens Who is a Revealer of secrets – and He has made known to King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar what is to occur in the final part of the [future] days.¹⁰

⇐ This is [the account of] your dream and the visions of your head [as you lay] upon your bed:

²⁹ As for you, O king, thoughts arose [as you lay] on your bed concerning what might happen in the future, and the One revealing secrets caused you to know what will occur. ³⁰ As for me, it is not through any wisdom in me over any others alive that this mystery is revealed to me... except to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king himself and that you might understand the thoughts of your heart.

³¹ “You O king, were dreaming and look! there was an immense image. That image – large and extraordinarily bright – stood before you, and its form was fear-inspiring: ³² the head of the image was of good gold, its chest and its arms were of silver, its belly and its thighs were of copper, ³³ its legs were of iron and their feet were partly of iron and partly of clay.

³⁴ You watched until a stone¹¹ ²⁻²⁻⁴⁵ was cut out [from a mountain] – not by hands – and it struck the image on its feet made of iron and of moulded clay and crushed them. ³⁵ At that time the iron, the moulded clay, the copper, the silver and the gold – all together – were pulverised and became like the chaff from the summer threshing floors, and the wind lifted them as no place was found for them.¹² And as for the stone that struck the image, it became a large mountain and filled the whole earth.”

³⁶ This is the dream, and we¹³ shall declare its interpretation before the king:

³⁷ “You O king – the king of kings – you to whom the God of the Heavens has given the kingdom, the might, and the strength and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand He has given the beasts of the field and the winged creatures of the heavens – wherever the sons of mankind are dwelling – and whom He has made ruler over all of them – you are the head of gold.¹⁴

³⁹ And after you will rise another kingdom inferior to you [Me'do-Persia]; and another kingdom, a third one [Greece] of copper, that will rule over the whole earth.

⁴⁰ And as for the fourth kingdom [Rome], it will prove to be strong like iron, just as iron crushes and grinds everything else; in the way that iron shatters all of these [gold, silver, copper], it will crush and pulverize.

⁴¹ ...but whereas you beheld the feet and the toes to be partly of clay of a potter and partly of iron, the [fourth] kingdom will become divided, but some of the hardness of iron will be in all [the divisions], because you beheld the iron mixed with moist clay.¹⁵ ⁴² And the toes of the feet – being partly of iron and partly of clay – the kingdom will be partly strong and will partly fragile. ⁴³ Whereas you beheld iron mixed with moist clay, they [the toes, divisions of power] will come to be mixed

⁸ Note that the mathematics and science and skills of the Babylonians were far in advance of those of Egypt – whose own were far more advanced than those of Israel – and that Daniel was a mere captive youth whose first language was not even Chal-de'an

⁹ Daniel is clearly not speaking to the king directly here, because he repeats himself in the next verse. Clearly, the king – mindful of the other wise men who had used deceit on him to gain time – had no confidence in nor wished to address personally someone he was about to slaughter. Thus the king's statement – though to Daniel – was really transmitted through Ar'i-och, and Daniel's answer was to him first of all – then Ar'i-och would motion to the king that Daniel was indeed confident of doing so

¹⁰ The revelation to King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar that God has spoken to him in his dream would impress and convince him to listen

¹¹ Jeremiah 10:10; See Daniel 2:45 for explanation

¹² No government thereafter would be of that king

¹³ Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go were also there

¹⁴ This marks the fall of Jerusalem as a pivotal event. See also Song of Songs 5:10-11 – speaking of the image of David – as identifying the Christ as king of kings, the head of gold

¹⁵ Roman force as strong, but Roman politics is malleable – and a weakness which can be exploited to various ends to wrestle the right to command the iron strength of the kingship

with¹⁶ the offspring of mankind; but they will not stick together one to the other, just as iron does not mix with moulded clay.

⁴⁴In the days of those kings the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin, and that kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms,¹⁷ and it itself will stand to times indefinite ⁴⁵because – as you beheld – the stone¹⁸ was cut out of the mountain ² without hands, and [that] it crushed the iron, the copper, the moulded clay, the silver and the gold.

The Great God Himself has made known to the king what is to occur in the future [the final part of the days]. And the dream is reliable, and its interpretation is trustworthy.

⁴⁶At that time King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar himself fell down upon his face, and he prostrated himself to Daniel!¹⁹ and he said to present a grain offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷The king answered Daniel saying:

↳ Truly, YOUR God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a Revealer of secrets, because you were able to reveal this secret.

⁴⁸Consequently the king made Daniel great, and he gave to him many immense gifts, and he made him the ruler over all the jurisdictional district of Babylon and the chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹And Daniel petitioned the king, and he appointed Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go over the administration of the jurisdictional district of Babylon – but Daniel was in the court of the king.

3

(ARAMAIC) King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar makes a huge square image of gold and orders everyone to worship it, but because a report was made by envious Chal-de'ans that Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go would not worship it, they are thrown alive into the fiery furnace. God's angel protects them, so Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – deeply impressed – declares their God to be beyond reproof or criticism and he promotes the three men.

Neb-u-chad-rez'zar Makes the Gold Head of the Statue

¹Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king made an image of gold²⁰ – sixty cubits tall [and] the sixty cubits wide – [and] erected it in the plain of Du'ra²¹ ["dwelling"] in the jurisdictional district of Babylon. ²And Neb-u-chad-rez'zar called to assembly the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the police magistrates and all the administrators of the jurisdictional districts – to come to the inauguration of the image that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king had erected.

³So the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the police magistrates and all the administrators of the jurisdictional districts were assembling themselves for the inauguration of the image that King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar had set up, and they stood in front of the image that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar had erected. ⁴And the herald loudly proclaimed:

● herald — all the administrators of the jurisdictional districts

↳ YOU are commanded, O peoples, communities and language groups:

⁵'When YOU hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, the harp, the lyre, the stringed instrument, the bagpipe and a concert of music, YOU will fall down and worship the image of gold that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king has set up.'

⁶and whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into the burning fiery furnace in that very hour.

⁷Because of this, as soon as the peoples heard the sound of the horn, the pipe, the harp, the lyre, the

¹⁶ Rather than a disturbing nature, this seems to imply a world power weakened by democracy – where power is subject to the whims of citizens. See the grandiose manner of the small horn in *Daniel* 7:8

¹⁷ Time of and after God's Divine Rescue. However, *Matthew* 21:44 and *Isaiah* 28:16 indicate that an early fulfilment of this would be with the house of Israel – at Ma-sa'da

¹⁸ *Jeremiah* 10:10

¹⁹ An incredible turn-around – this brutal king of kings bows down before one of his captured servants!

²⁰ This may have been his representation from the dream – to depict physically what God had shown him. The square dimensions would indicate that it would not be an elongated figure, but could – conceivably – be a head about 100' high. Perhaps also the fact that the small stone would strike the toes of a kingdom much much later had given him confidence that he himself would not be struck down for doing this

²¹ Genesis tells us that the tower of Ba'bel was built in the plain from baked bricks – there being no stone for the construction. This may have been Neb-u-chad-rez'zar's equivalent for prominence, like a latter-day Nim'rod

stringed instrument and a concert of music, all the peoples, communities and language groups fell down [and] worshipped the image of gold that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king had set up.

⁸ ...At that same time certain Chal-de'ans approached and accused the [three prominent] Jews. ⁹ They responded to Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king [regarding his command], saying:

- King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— malicious Chal-de'ans, staunchly obedient to the herald's pronouncement

↩ O king, may you live on for times indefinite.

¹⁰ You yourself, O king, set forth the decree that every man that hears the sound of the horn, the pipe, the harp, the lyre, the stringed instrument, and the bagpipe and a concert of music, should fall down and worship the image of gold, ¹¹ and that whoever would not fall down and worship should be thrown into the burning fiery furnace...

¹² There are certain Jews whom you appointed over the administration of the jurisdictional district of Babylon – Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go. These men have paid no regard to you, O king – they are not serving your gods, and they are not worshipping the image of gold that you have set up.

¹³ Then Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – in a violent wrath and fury²² – said to bring in Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go... and consequently these men were brought in before the king. ¹⁴ Neb-u-chad-rez'zar questioned²³ them saying:

- King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go (Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah)

⇒ Is it really so, O Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go, that YOU are not serving my gods, and YOU are not worshipping the image of gold that I have set up?

¹⁵ Now if YOU are prepared at the time YOU hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, the harp, the lyre, the stringed instrument, and the bagpipe and concert of music, that YOU will fall down and worship the image that I have made, [all right], but if YOU do not worship then YOU will be thrown into the burning fiery furnace in that hour. And who is the god that can rescue YOU out of my hands?²⁴

¹⁶ Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go answered the king, saying:

↩ O Neb-u-chad-rez'zar, there is no need for us to say back a word to you in this regard.²⁵ ¹⁷ If it is to be, our God – Whom we serve – is able to rescue us out of the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, and we will not worship the image of gold that you have set up.

Three Martyrs Thrown into the Fiery Furnace

¹⁹ So Neb-u-chad-rez'zar became filled with fury, and the expression of his face changed [no longer reasoning] toward Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go. So he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times greater than it was customary to heat it up. ²⁰ And he told the most prominent strong men from his army to bind Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go in order to throw [them] into the burning fiery furnace.

²¹ So these able-bodied men were bound in their mantles, their garments and their caps and their other clothing and were thrown into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²² [However], because the king's word was urgent and the furnace was heated to excess, those warriors who escorted Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go were the ones that the fiery flame killed, ²³ but these three [other] men – Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go – fell down bound in the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ ...then Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king became alarmed and he rose up in haste and inquired of his high royal officials:

- King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— high royal officials

⇒ Was it not three men that we threw bound into the midst of the fire?

– and they were answering and saying to the king:

²² Recall that he saw the image of gold as Divinely authorising him as the brightest, the greatest king of all who were to come after him – and was piqued at the “lack of respect” and lack of appreciation to him by his own rewarded servants

²³ Not showing fury, but reasoning

²⁴ See *Ecclesiastes 7:13* for the reprise of this!

²⁵ In other words, the king already knows Who that God is

↔ Yes, O king.

²⁵ – but he was replying and saying:

↔ Look! I see four able-bodied men – walking about freely in the midst of the fire – and there is no hurt to them, and the form of the fourth one is like a son of the gods!

²⁶ Then Neb-u-chad-rez'zar himself approached the door of the burning fiery furnace, and spoke, saying:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go (Han-a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el and Az-a-ri'ah)

↳ Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go, YOU servants of the Most High God: step out and come here!

– then Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go stepped out from the midst of the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects and the governors and the high officials of the king that were assembled saw these men – that the fire had had no power over their bodies, and not a hair of their head had been singed, and even their mantles had not been affected and not even the smell of fire had come onto them. ²⁸ Neb-u-chad-rez'zar said in response:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ———

↳ Blessed be the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go, Who sent His angel and rescued His servants that trusted in Him and influenced the very word of the king! and delivered their bodies so that they shall neither serve nor worship any god at all except their own God.

²⁹ Therefore I am exacting an order:

any people, community or language group that says anything wrong against the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go should be dismembered, and their house should be turned into a dung-heap;

...because there does not exist another god that is able to deliver like this One.

³⁰ At that time the king himself promoted Sha'drach, Me'shach and A-bed'Ne-go in the jurisdictional district of Babylon.

4

(ARAMAIC) A final letter from Neb-u-chad-rez'zar for the instruction of his people. This proud and brutal man was given a vision by God of a tree, which became chopped down but its roots left bound, ready for regrowth. Daniel interprets the dream for him... and Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – in a proud moment – is himself “chopped down”, fed with straw like a bull for seven years in a field until he realises that God is the Most High, not him. Finally, he is returned to royal position – and ends his days praising the True God!

Last Words of King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – a Letter

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon ——— to all nations

⇒ ¹ Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king, to all the peoples, communities and language groups that are dwelling in all the earth:

May YOUR peace be multiplied!

⇒ ² It has seemed good to me to disclose the signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed with me; ³ [about] how grand are His portents, and how mighty are His miracles! His kingdom is a kingdom to time indefinite, and His rulership is for generation after generation. ²⁶ ²⁷

Neb-u-chad-rez'zar Dreams of His Empire – His Fall and Rising

⁴ I, Neb-u-chad-rez'zar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace... ⁵ Then I beheld a dream, and it terrified me – and the portents upon my bed and the [lingering] visions in my head made me tremble. ²⁷ ⁶ And I issued a decree to bring in before me all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the dream's interpretation.

²⁶ Mindful of his age – perhaps this is an end-of-life letter – that no king survives his generation, but God does

²⁷ This is two-fold: he sees an external vision over his bed while lying down, and the memory of those visions linger in his head

⁷ Then the divining priests, the necromancers, the Chal-de'ans and the astrologers entered, and I related the dream to them, but they did not tell me its interpretation. ⁸ Then finally, Daniel – whose name is Bel-te-Shaz'zar according to the name of my god – came in before me, he in whom there is the spirit of the Holy gods; and I told the dream to him:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon — Daniel (Bel-te-Shaz'zar)

⇒ ⁹ 'O Bel-te-Shaz'zar, chief of the divining priests, because I myself well know that the spirit of the Holy gods is in you and that no mystery at all is beyond you, tell [me] the visions of my dream that I had and its interpretation...

¹⁰ 'I saw the vision [while] upon my bed, and look! a tree in the midst of the earth,²⁸ whose height was immense. ¹¹ The tree grew taller and became strong, and its height reached to the heavens! and it was visible to the extremity of the whole earth. ¹² Its foliage glistened and its fruit was abundant, and there was food on it for all! The beasts of the field sought shade under it, and the birds of the heavens dwelt in its boughs, and all flesh ate from it.

¹³ I saw the vision upon my bed, and look! a Holy angel coming down from the heavens. ¹⁴ He called out loudly, and this is what he said:

● Holy watcher (angel of Almighty God) — army of other (angels? men?) to act

↳ 'CHOP down the tree²⁹, and SEVER its boughs. SHAKE off its foliage, and SCATTER its fruitage. Let the beasts flee from under it, and the birds from its boughs.

¹⁵ ...however, LEAVE its rootstock in the earth with a banding of iron and of copper, surrounded by the grass of the field and streaked with the dew of the heavens, and let its station be [not high in the heavens, but] with the beast among the vegetation of the earth. ¹⁶ Let its heart be changed from that of mankind, and let the heart of a beast be given to it, and let seven times [years? seasons?] pass over it.

¹⁷ – this is the decree [delivered] by angels, and the instruction is [at] the word of Holy ones, to the intent that those living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of mankind and that He gives it to the one whom He wants to, and He sets up over it the lowest of mankind.³⁰

¹⁸ This was the dream that I myself – King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – beheld. Now you, O Bel-te-Shaz'zar, declare the interpretation, because all the [other] wise men of my kingdom are unable to make the interpretation known to me, whereas you are competent, because the spirit of Holy Gods is in you.'

¹⁹ At that time Daniel – whose name is Bel-te-Shaz'zar – was astonished for a moment, and his thoughts began to frighten him.

The king said in response:

● King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar of Babylon — Daniel (Bel-te-Shaz'zar)

↪ 'Bel-te-Shaz'zar, do not let the dream and the interpretation frighten you.³¹

Bel-te-Shaz'zar replied, saying:

↪ 'O my lord, may the dream [apply] to those hating you, and its interpretation to your adversaries:

²⁸ See Ezekiel 31 for comparison

²⁹ Compare with Jeremiah 50:23 on the fall of Babylon itself. See prophetic statement at Ezekiel 17:24

³⁰ Possibly "...He gives it to the one whom He wants to, but He sets up over it the basest of mankind." Those placed in power by God have included Neb-u-chad-rez'zar and Saul – but ruinous and mad. It was only David – from lowly mankind – pursued, hated, despised, greatly abused amongst friends and family – who acted as a good chosen replacement, just as Jesus Christ is chosen as a replacement for the bad kings of the earth. It seems to allude to the point that God's people discarded Him – the very best – as their King, so God chose a poor standard as replacement and would do so for all human governments which were not part of God's arrangement

³¹ The king was intolerant – he had previously ordered the slaughter of his entire retinue of advisors concerning an earlier dream... yet here, he shows concern for Daniel, because his dream is terrifying enough to him, and he does not want to be alone with it

²⁰ The tree that you beheld, that grew taller and became strong – whose height reached to the heavens and which was visible to all the earth, ²¹ whose foliage glistened and whose fruit was abundant, and on which there was food for all, and under which the beasts of the field would dwell, and in whose boughs the birds of the heavens would roost – ²² it is you, O king, because you have grown taller and become strong, and your grandeur has increased and extended to the heavens, and your rulership [extended] to the extremity of the earth.

²³ And because the king beheld a Holy angel come down from the heavens, who was also saying:

‘CHOP down the tree, and RUIN it... however, LEAVE its rootstock in the earth among the grass of the field, but with a banding of iron and of copper, and let it become streaked with the dew of the heavens, and let its station be with the beasts of the field until seven times pass over it’

²⁴ then this is the interpretation, O king, and the decree of the Most High which must certainly befall my lord the king:

²⁵ they ^{λ-4-14} are driving you away from mankind, and you will dwell with the beasts of the field, and they will feed you with vegetation just like the bulls, and you will become streaked with the dew of the heavens... and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and that He gives it to the one whom He wants to.

²⁶ ...but because they said to leave the rootstock of the tree, your kingdom will be preserved for you – after you learn that the heavens rule!

²⁷ Therefore, O king, may my counsel seem good to you, and desist of your sins by employing righteousness, and of your perversities by showing mercy to the poor ones. Perhaps there will be a lengthening of your tranquillity...’

²⁸ ...[but] all this did befall Neb-u-chad-rez’zar the king...

²⁹ Twelve lunar months later, he was walking upon the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king was responding [to what he was looking at] and saying:

- — King Neb-u-chad-rez’zar of Babylon
↳ “Is not this Babylon the Great, that I myself built for the royal house with the power of my strength and for the honour of my majesty?”

³¹ ...While the word was yet in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from the heavens:

- voice from heaven — King Neb-u-chad-rez’zar of Babylon
↳ “It is declared to you, O Neb-u-chad-rez’zar the king:
- voice from heaven (decree of **Almighty God**) — King Neb-u-chad-rez’zar of Babylon
↳ “The kingdom will pass away from you, ³² and they ^{λ-4-14} will drive you away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. They will feed you vegetation just like bulls, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of mankind, and that He gives it to the one whom He wants to.”

³³ At that [very] moment the word was fulfilled upon Neb-u-chad-rez’zar, and he was driven away from mankind, and he began to eat vegetation just like bulls, and his body became wet with the dew of the heavens, until his hair had grown like eagles’ [feathers] and his nails like birds’ [claws].

³⁴ ...And at the end of the days [the seven times] I – Neb-u-chad-rez’zar³² – lifted up my eyes to the heavens, and my power of reason began to return to me; and I knelt before the Most High and I praised and magnified the One living to time indefinite, because... [to quote myself]

³² Notice the humility – he does not say “King”

“His rulership is a rulership to time indefinite and His kingdom is for generation after generation.”²⁻⁴⁻³



Daniel 4:3 (self-quote)

³⁵ and all the inhabitants of the earth are reckoned as nothing, but He is doing according to His will among the army of the heavens and [among] the inhabitants of the earth. And there is no-one that can check His hand³³ or that can say to Him,

‘What have You been doing?’³⁴

³⁶ At the same time that my power of reason began to return upon me, the dignity of my kingdom – my royal bearing and brightness – began to return to me! Even my high royal officers and my grandees petitioned me [for my return to power] and I was re-established upon my own kingdom, and extraordinary greatness was added to me!

³⁷ Now I, Neb-u-chad-rez’zar, do praise and exalt and glorify the King of the Heavens, because all His works are truth and His ways are justice, and because He is able to abase those who walk proudly.”

Bel-Shaz’zar’s Feast – the Last Day of Babylonian Rule

5³⁵

(ARAMAIC) Bel-Shaz’zar – the co-ruler of Babylon in place of his permanently-absent archaeologist father Naboni’das – holds a feast. Taking the Temple utensils, he raises a toast to his pagan gods, and the True God writes a message on the wall. Daniel interprets this as the ultimate disaster for the city... and that night Da-ri’us the Me’dé overthrows Babylon and brings to an end the Babylonian era

¹ Bel-Shaz’zar [*“O Bel, protect the king”*] the king³⁶ made a great feast for a thousand of his grandees, and he was drinking wine in front of the thousand. ² While drinking the wine, Bel-Shaz’zar commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver be brought in which Neb-u-chad-rez’zar his [fore]father³⁷ had taken away from the temple that was in Jerusalem [¹⁹], so that the king and his grandees, his concubines and his secondary wives might drink from them.³⁸ ³ So they brought the golden vessels that they had taken from the [Holy] temple of the house of God that was in Jerusalem [¹⁹]... and the king and his grandees, his concubines and his secondary wives drank from them. ⁴ They drank strong wine, and they praised the gods of gold and of silver, copper, iron, wood and stone.

⁵ ...In that same hour the fingers³⁹ of a man’s hand came forth and were writing upon the plaster of the wall of the palace of the king – in front of the lamp-stand – and the king was watching the back of the hand that was writing... ⁶ so the king’s complexion changed, his thoughts began to frighten him, and his hip joints loosened and his knees began knocking together.⁴⁰

⁷ The king called out loudly to bring in the necromancers, the Chal-de’ans and the astrologers.⁴¹ The king said to the wise men of Babylon:

● *King Bel-Shaz’zar of Babylon ——— wise men of Babylon*

⇒ *Any man that will read this writing⁴² and show me its interpretation will be clothed with purple, a necklace of gold [placed] about his neck,⁴³ and he will rule as the third one⁴⁴ in the kingdom.*

³³ See end of *Daniel 3:15* where Neb-u-chad-rez’zar felt *he himself* had that power!

³⁴ Compare with *Job Job 1:7; Job 2:2* ;– perhaps he had learned of this through speaking with Daniel when his senses returned

³⁵ Chronologically, this chapter belongs after chapter 8

³⁶ This is several generations later and Daniel is about 80 years old. Bel-Shaz’zar is son to Naboni’das – grandson to Neb-u-chad-rez’zar – and co-reigns, since his father is preoccupied with researching the old gods

³⁷ See *Genesis 9:24*; also *Jeremiah 27:5-7* and *Jeremiah 52:31* where E’vil-Mer’o-dach becomes king prior to him

³⁸ Something even his forefather had not done

³⁹ Compare Jesus’ condemnation of those who maligned him *Luke 11:20*

⁴⁰ He was standing at the time he noticed this. “his hip joints loosened” might be a euphemism for incontinence

⁴¹ The Hebrew for “loudly” means “an army” – his call broke whatever other sound or conversation was in the room. Calling for the necromancers might mean he wanted to get advice from his deceased grandfather Neb-u-chad-rez’zar who had initially stolen these items

⁴² This is a reprise of the vision which his forefather – King Neb-u-chad-rez’zar – experienced in *Daniel 2*, which only the king experienced and which fled from his mind quickly. The writing was not visible to anyone else, otherwise any ordinary Chal-de’an could have read the writing. But the fact that the wise men were “perplexed” shows that the writing was not there to read!

⁴³ Denoting almost godly status – as was the case with Joseph in Egypt

⁴⁴ ...because Bel-Shaz’zar himself was second to his absentee archaeologist father King Naboni’das

⁸ Then all the wise men of the king came in, but they were unable to read the writing or to make known its interpretation to the king. ⁹ Consequently King Bel-Shaz'zar became very frightened and his complexion changed within him – but his grandees were [merely] perplexed.⁴⁵

¹⁰ Because of the words of the king and his grandees, the queen entered right into the banqueting hall, and the queen responded and said:

● *King Bel-Shaz'zar of Babylon ——— queen of Babylon (queen mother)*

↩ *O king, keep living to times indefinite. Do not let your thoughts frighten you, nor let your complexion be changed.*

¹¹ *There is a capable man in your kingdom in whom there is the spirit of Holy gods, and in the days of your father⁴⁶ illumination and insight and wisdom – the [very] wisdom of the gods – were found in him. Moreover King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar your [fore]father himself set him up as chief⁴⁷ of the divining priests, necromancers, Chal-de'ans [and] astrologers – your [fore]father! O king – ¹² because an extraordinary spirit and knowledge and insight to interpret dreams and to explain riddles and the untying of knots had been found in Daniel, whom the king named 'Bel-te-Shaz'zar'.*

Now... let Daniel be called, that he may show the interpretation.

¹³ – so Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke to Daniel saying:

● *King Bel-Shaz'zar of Babylon ——— Daniel (Bel-te-Shaz'zar)*

⇒ *Are you the Daniel⁴⁸ of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom my [fore]father the king brought out of Judah? ¹⁴ I also have heard about you – that the spirit of gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you.*

¹⁵ *Now the wise men [and] the necromancers were brought in before me to read this writing and to make its interpretation known to me, but they are not able to disclose its interpretation. ¹⁶ But I have heard about you, that you are able to furnish interpretations and to untie knots [solve riddles].*

Now, if you are able to read the writing and to disclose its interpretation to me, you will be clothed with purple with a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will rule as the third one in the kingdom.

¹⁷ Then Daniel replied and said before the king:

↩ *Your gifts shall remain yours – give your reward to others.⁴⁹ However, I shall read the writing to the king, and I shall disclose the interpretation to him.*

¹⁸ *O king, the Most High God gave the kingdom and the greatness and the dignity and the majesty to Neb-u-chad-rez'zar your [fore]father, ¹⁹ and because of that greatness which He gave him, all races, communities and language groups trembled and were fearful before him. He killed whomsoever he wanted to, and he struck whom he happened to want to; and he exalted whomsoever he wanted to, and he humiliated whomsoever he wanted to!*

²⁰ *But when his heart became haughty and his spirit became obstinate so as to act presumptuously, he was brought down from the throne of his kingdom, and his dignity was taken away from him. ²¹ He was driven away⁵⁰ from the sons of mankind, and his heart was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling place was with the wild asses! They would give him vegetation to eat just like bulls, and his body grew wet with the dew of the heavens, until he understood that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of mankind, and that He sets up over it whomsoever He wants to..*

²² *But as for you – his son Bel-Shaz'zar – you have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, ²³ but you exalted yourself against the Lord of the Heavens. And they even brought the*

⁴⁵ The grandees are functional... Bel-Shaz'zar clearly feels the weight of history and the hand of the Divine One – of whom he would have read through his grandfather's writings

⁴⁶ Evidently, Daniel had also advised and been appreciated by E'vil-Mer'o-dach – King after and son of Neb-u-chad-rez'zar – who himself released King Je-hoi'a-kim from prison – see *Jeremiah 52:31*

⁴⁷ Clearly Daniel had “been retired” or lost favour, since he would have been summoned at the same time as the others had been summoned

⁴⁸ By this time, Daniel would have been in his 80s

⁴⁹ This attitude perhaps because Daniel would have known about - and would see - the Holy utensils brought there for the king to drink from

⁵⁰ Daniel quotes the last testament of his forefather, King Neb-u-chad-rez'zar, which was a matter of public record in the entire kingdom – and a mark of the king's eventual understanding, humility and gratitude to God

vessels of His house before you, and you – and your grandees, your concubines and your secondary wives – have been drinking strong wine from them, and you have praised ^[raised a toast to] gods of silver and of gold, copper, iron, wood and stone, that see nothing and hear nothing and know nothing;⁵¹ but you have not glorified the ^[True] God in Whose hand your breath rests and to Whom all your ways belong. ²⁴ Consequently the back of a hand was sent from before Him ^[God], and this writing was inscribed; ²⁵ and this is the writing that was inscribed:

“ME’NE ^[mina, ma’neh], ME’NE, TE’KEL ^[shekel] and PAR’SIN ^[half-shekels]”

²⁶ This is the interpretation⁵² of the word:

ME’NE – God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has finished it ^[the counting].

²⁷ TE’KEL – you have been weighed in the balances and have been found deficient.

²⁸ PE’RES ^[half-shekel] – your kingdom is being divided and given to the Me’des and the Persians.⁵³

²⁹ ...Then Bel-Shaz’zar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple with a necklace of gold about his neck... and they proclaimed him to be the third ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ In that very night Bel-Shaz’zar the Chal-de’an king was killed ³¹ and Da-ri’us the Me’de received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

6

[c 535 BCE] (ARAMAIC) Daniel is highly favoured by the new king of Babylon – Da-ri’us the Me’de – which angers his jealous colleagues. They conspire to find Daniel guilty of a crime – but in the process insult and humiliate the king. Daniel is cast into the lions’ pit, but God closes their mouths and he survives into the morning. Seeing this, Da-ri’us pulls Daniel to safety, but throws his accusers and their children and wives into the pit, where they die.

Finally, Da-ri’us issues a decree that the God of Daniel must be revered throughout the kingdom.

¹ It seemed good to Da-ri’us to set up one hundred and twenty satraps over the kingdom, who were to be over the whole kingdom; ² and three emirs ^[high officials] over them – of whom Daniel was one – in order that these satraps might continually report to them, and the king himself might not suffer loss of authority. ³ And this Daniel was steadily distinguishing himself over the ^[other] high officials and the satraps, because an extraordinary spirit was in him... and the king intended to elevate him over all the kingdom...

Jealous Satraps Fabricate a Law to Trap Daniel

⁴ ...So the high officials and the satraps were constantly seeking some pretext against Daniel respecting the kingdom; but they could find neither pretext nor fault at all, because he was trustworthy and neither negligence nor corruption at all was found in him. ⁵ Consequently these men would say:

● ——— high officials and satraps

↻ We shall find no pretext at all in this Daniel, unless we have to find it against him in the law of his God.

⁶ Accordingly these high officials and satraps assembled together to enter before the king, and they said to him:

● “King” Da-ri’us the Me’de ——— high officials and satraps

⇐ O Da-ri’us the king, may you live on for times indefinite.

⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high royal officers and the governors, have taken counsel together to establish a royal decree and to enforce a vow of abstinence:

⁵¹ They epitomise Bel-Shaz’zar

⁵² An interpretation was needed because vowels were not used in writing, and many words had several meanings depending on the vowel sounds spoken. Each of the words had at least two meanings as follows: “Me’ne” – a minah, or numbered, “Tekel” – shekels, or weighed, “Par’sin” – half shekels, or divisions. A shorthand of the denunciation might read: “Thoroughly numberd, weighed and divided”

⁵³ All of this was said before the assembled grandees – they also heard that his kingdom was to end that very night

[that] whoever makes a petition to any god or man for thirty days – except to you, O king – should be thrown to the lions' pit.

⁸ Now, O king, may you⁵⁴ establish the decree and sign the writing, in order for *[it]* not to be changed, according to the law of the Me'des and the Persians which is not annulled.

⁹ – in accord with this, King Da-ri'us signed the writing and the decree.

¹⁰ ...But as soon as he learned that the writing had been signed, Daniel entered into his house, and as the windows in his roof chamber were open for him toward Jerusalem ^[19], he would recline on his knees – praying and offering praise before his God three times in a day, as he had been regularly doing prior to this. ¹¹ At that time these men assembled together and found Daniel petitioning and imploring favour before his God.

¹² Then they approached and spoke before the king concerning the king's decree:

● *King Da-ri'us the Me'de — high officials and satraps*

← *Have you not signed a decree that:*

“any man that asks a petition from any god or man for thirty days...

except from you, O king,

... should be thrown to the lions' pit?”

The king replied saying:

↪ *The matter is well established according to the law of the Me'des and the Persians, which is not annulled.*

¹³ Immediately they answered, and said before the king:

↪ *Daniel – of the sons of the captivity of Judah – has paid no regard to you, O king, nor to the decree that you signed, but he makes his petition three times in a day [to One other than you].*

¹⁴ Consequently as soon as the king heard the word, he was very displeased with himself ^[that he had enacted a law against his trusted servant!] and so he set ^[his] heart upon Daniel in order to rescue him, and he laboured till the setting of the sun ^[to find a way] in order to deliver him. ⁵⁵ ¹⁵ Finally these men entered as a throng before the king, and they said to the king:

● *King Da-ri'us the Me'de — high officials and satraps*

↪ *Take note⁵⁶, O king, that the law – belonging [“not to you, but...”] to the Me'des and the Persians – is that any decree or statute that the king himself establishes is not to be changed.*

Daniel Thrown into the Lion's Den

¹⁶ Accordingly the king commanded, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' pit. The king said to Daniel:

● *King Da-ri'us the Me'de — Daniel*

↪ *Your God Whom you are serving with constancy, He will rescue you.*

¹⁷ and a stone was brought and placed on the mouth of the pit, and the king sealed it with his signet ring and with the signet ring of his grandees, in order that nothing should be changed in the case of Daniel.

¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no diversions ^[music or entertainment or conversation] were brought in before him, and he was unable to sleep. ¹⁹ Finally, the king rose in the ^[early]

⁵⁴ “By the law of the Me'des and the Persians” makes it sound like they are loyal to him and his nation... a cruel enticement. This does sound – on first hearing – like they are imposing control on the population for its new ruler... however the satraps and high officials deceived the king with what seemed like respect, but was really a goad: “Would the king decline and tacitly allow others than himself to be consulted?” – of course not, for fear of insurrection. So their advice placed the onus for its execution – upon Daniel and his brothers – upon the king himself. See Ha'man's action for comparison (*Esther 3:7-12*)

⁵⁵ The king could not simply remove the lions temporarily from the pit before throwing Daniel in – this would be seen as contrived and disingenuous, a dangerous thing at any time, but especially over a new kingdom

⁵⁶ Reminding the king that the law belonged to more than just he himself! Hearing this imperative tone, the king would know that he had been manipulated into destroying those whom the satraps and high officials did not like, and that to rescind it would be to humiliate his reign and race and encourage rebellion amongst the Chal-de'ans

light of day and went in haste to the lions' pit, ²⁰ and as he got near to the pit he cried out with a sad voice to Daniel. The king shouted to Daniel:

● *King Da-ri'us the Me'de — Daniel*

⇒ *O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God Whom you serve constantly been able to rescue you from the lions?*

²¹ ...immediately Daniel spoke! to the king:

↔ *O king, may you live on to times indefinite. ²² My God sent His angel and closed the mouth of the lions, and they have not hurt me, because innocence was found in me before Him. Also, I have done no hurtful act before you, O king.*

²³ Then the king rejoiced greatly! and he commanded that Daniel be lifted up out of the pit. So Daniel was lifted up out of the pit, and there was not any harm at all found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ Then the king commanded, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they threw them into the lions' pit – [they and] their sons and their wives – and they had not reached the ground part of the pit before the lions had got the mastery over them... and they crushed all their bones.⁵⁷

²⁵ Then it was that king Da-ri'us himself wrote to all the peoples, the communities and languages groups that are dwelling in all the earth:

● *King Da-ri'us the Me'de — people of all nations*

⇒ *May YOUR peace be multiplied.*

²⁶ *I have enacted a decree: that in every dominion of my kingdom, people should tremble before and respectfully fear [slink, crawl before] the God of Daniel, for He is the living God and One enduring to times indefinite, and His kingdom is one that will not be brought to ruin, and His dominion lasts forever. ²⁷ He rescues and delivers and performs signs and miracles in the heavens and on the earth – for He has rescued Daniel from the paw of the lions!⁵⁸*

²⁸ And this Daniel prospered in the kingdom of Da-ri'us and in the kingdom of Cyrus the Persian.

7

(ARAMAIC) A significant prophecy. Daniel sees the world powers leading up to Rome and its off-shots. Then – masquerading as an off-shoot of Rome – comes the adversary to foment war against the Christ and the Holy ones, and to disrupt prophecy in order for God's foresight to be shown to be faulty – but he fails.

¹ In the first year of Bel-Shaz'zar⁵⁹ the king of Babylon, Daniel himself beheld a dream while sleeping upon his bed. So he wrote down the dream, and told the complete account of the matters. ² Daniel declared:

Daniel's Dream of World Powers

● *Daniel —*

⇒ *I was observing my visions during the night, and behold! the four winds⁶⁰ of the heavens were stirring up the vast sea, ³ and four huge beasts were coming up out of the sea, each one different from the others:*

⁴ The first one was like a lion [Babylonia], and it had the wings of an eagle. I kept watching it until its wings were plucked out, and it was lifted up from the earth and was made to stand up on two feet just like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it.

⁵⁷ The king executes his revenge upon those who manipulated him, and upon their families

⁵⁸ The effect on his subjects would be considerable. Here, the king – echoing the action of Neb-u-chad-rez'zar, whose letter he would undoubtedly be familiar with – cites himself as witness that the God of the Hebrews is the TRUE God and has already done acts such as these

⁵⁹ This is clearly a few years earlier than the previous 2 chapters

⁶⁰ Perhaps the turbulence in nations which gives rise to empires in action over them. Compare *Ezekiel 37:9* and *Zechariah 6:3-5*

5....and, see there! another beast, a second one, like a bear [Me'do-Persia]. And it was raised up on one side,⁶¹ and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth and they⁶² said to it,

● three ribs in mouth of beast like a bear — bear

↳ 'Get up, eat much flesh.'

6....after this I kept watching, and see there! another [third beast], one like a leopard [Greece]⁶³ but it had four wings of a flying creature on its back. And the beast had four heads, and active rulership was given to it.

7....after this I kept watching in the visions of the night, and, see! a fourth beast [Rome], crawling along and mighty and unusually strong. It had huge iron teeth [for] devouring and crushing, and it trod down what was left with its feet.

And it was different ^λ from all the [other] beasts that were prior to it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and look! another horn – a small one – arose in among them, and three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots from before it. And look! there were eyes like the eyes of a man in this horn, and a mouth speaking grandiose things.⁶⁴

⁹ I kept on beholding until there were thrones placed [for the Judge and His advocate] and the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was white just like snow, and the hair of His head was like clean wool. His throne was flames of fire and its wheels⁶⁵ were a burning fire. ¹⁰ A fiery stream issued out from before Him.⁶⁶ A thousand thousands were ministering to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand were standing right before Him. The Court rose, and books were opened...

¹¹ ...I kept watching at that time because of the sound of the grandiose words that the horn was speaking; I watched until the beast [remaining fourth beast] was killed and its body was destroyed and it was given to the burning fire. ¹² But as for the rest of the beasts, their empires were [just] taken away, but their life was extended until a [specific] time and season.⁶⁷

¹³ I kept on watching in the visions of the night, and, behold! someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of the Heavens⁶⁸ and he gained access to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him up close before that One.⁶⁹ ¹⁴ And [the essence of] rulership and dignity and kingdom were given to him, that the peoples, communities and language groups should [eventually] all serve him...

...his rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin.^{70 λ-4-3}



Daniel 4:3
Neb-u-chad-rez'zar —

¹⁵ As for me Daniel, my spirit was grieved within me [on account of what I had seen], and the visions of my head began to frighten me. ¹⁶ I drew near to one of those who were standing [of the 100 million angels] and I asked him the meaning of all this; so he told me and explained the interpretation of the matters:

● angel of Almighty God, one standing in the heavenly court — Daniel

⇒ ¹⁷ These four immense beasts are four kings that will rise up from the earth. ¹⁸ But the Holy ones of the Supreme One will receive the kingdom, and they will take possession of the kingdom for

⁶¹ Me'do-Persia expanded westward only. The later empire of Greece would expand both east and west of Babylonia

⁶² The three ribs are giving that advice to the thing that will eat them! They are the remains of allies which have been sacrificed – likely by the bear. Possibly alluding to the eventual fall of the bear – see *Jeremiah 7:21-26*

⁶³ Greece – in the form of Alexander and his four generals

⁶⁴ Small horn like a phantom tooth which displaces three regular teeth. There is nothing to say that this little horn is rooted in the beast – but has appeared within it. This represents the spirit of the adversary – loosed on the earth *Revelation 12:3-4* – and the 1/3 of the stars of heaven show the demonic backing for oppressive earthly kingdoms

⁶⁵ Compare with God's celestial chariot *Ezekiel 1-2*

⁶⁶ Come in condemnation. Compare with the healing waters issuing from the sanctuary which provide life *Ezekiel 47:1-12*

⁶⁷ This seems to prefigure the events of Revelation, where the assembly of kings attacks Christ and are destroyed – but the adversary alone is cast into the abyss to be resurrected after the 1,000 year reign. However there is to be a resurrection of the rest of the dead after this reign, and the historic people behind those beasts will also be resurrected at that time

⁶⁸ Prophetic of the realisation that Jesus was indeed the Christ *Matthew 24:30* as judgement is brought upon the intransigent traditionalists. (see *Mark 14:63; Revelation 14:14;*)

⁶⁹ Mes-si'ah approaches God *Revelation 5:1-10*

⁷⁰ The same statement made by Neb-u-chad-rez'zar

time indefinite, even for time indefinite upon times indefinite.⁷¹

¹⁹ Then I wanted to make certain concerning the fourth beast – the one which was different ^{λ-7-7} from all the others [being] exceedingly fearsome, whose teeth were of iron and whose claws were of copper, which was devouring [and] crushing, and treading down the remains with its feet – ²⁰ and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other [little horn] that rose up and before which three fell – the horn that had eyes and a mouth speaking grandiose things and whose appearance was more prominent than that of its associates...

²¹ ...I kept watching as that very horn⁷² made war upon the Holy ones, and it was prevailing against them
²² until the Ancient of Days came and gave judgement in favour of the Holy ones of the Supreme One [supreme oneS??], and the due time arrived that the Holy ones would take possession of the kingdom.

²³ This is what he said:

● angel of **Almighty God**, one standing in the heavenly court — Daniel

⇒ The fourth beast will become a fourth kingdom in the earth, which will be different from all the [other] kingdoms; and it will devour all the earth and will trample it down and crush it. ²⁴ And as for the ten horns, there are ten kings that will rise up out of that kingdom... but still another one [small horn speaking grandiose things] will rise up after them, and he himself will be different from the first ones and will humiliate three kings. ²⁵ And he will speak even against the Most High, and he will continually harass even the Holy ones of the Supreme One. And he will intend to change times and [Divine] decree, and they will be given into his hand for a time, and times and half a time.⁷³

²⁶ But the Court must certainly sit, and they must take away his rulership, in order to annihilate [him] and to destroy [him] totally.

²⁷ And the kingdom and the rulership and the grandeur of the kingdoms under all the heavens were given to the people who are the Holy ones of the Supreme One. His kingdom is an indefinitely lasting kingdom, and all the rulerships will serve and obey Him.

²⁸ Up to this point is the end of the matter [prophetic message]. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts kept frightening me a great deal, so that my countenance changed, though I kept the matter in my own heart.

8

2 years' after the earlier vision, Daniel receives another.

This vision begins with an explanation of Me'do-Persia being defeated by Greece. Then it quickly speaks of the fall of Jerusalem by its final king, powered by an evil Divine force to break Abraham's prophecy of the Mes-si'ah several centuries before his birth – but although the temple is destroyed again, the attack against prophecy fails

¹ In the third year of the kingship of Bel-Shaz'zar the king, a vision appeared to me – Daniel – a continuation of the one which appeared to me at the start.

² I began to watch the vision – it happened that I was in Shu'shan⁷⁴ the castle, which is in the jurisdictional district of E'lam, while I was seeing it. And as I was looking at the vision, I came to be by the stream of U'lai [⁷⁵my leaders (mighties)']. ³ And I raised my eyes, I was looking and there! a ram was standing before [the west bank of] the stream, and it had two-horns. And the two horns were elevated, but the one was higher than the other, and the higher one rose up last.⁷⁶ ⁴ I saw the ram butting toward the west and to the north and to the south, so that no wild beasts could stand before it, nor did anyone deliver [its victims] from out of its hand;^α it acted according to its will, and it put on great airs ^β [put on a display of strength].

⁷¹ To the end of our era of independence, and until the end of the next era!

⁷² "making war on the Holy ones" – during Christ's reign *Revelation 12:17*

⁷³ An outright attempt to prevent prophecy, thereby portray God as fallible. 1st fulfilment: the adversary given license to oppose Christ and his followers for the 3½ years of ministry. 2nd fulfilment: In the new era, the power behind the antichrist – priest-like, preaching for the same time as Christ, bearing diadems like the Christ, but completely opposite! This is the adversary – incorporating the first three beasts into the character of the fourth. See *Daniel 12:7b* and *Revelation 12:3 & Revelation 13:1-6* – who is intent on changing the timing of God's prophecies in order to make them fail

⁷⁴ Capital of Persia. "Shu'shan the castle" may indicate that it is a large fortified city. Compare with *Esther*

⁷⁵ This river is in E'lam, and Daniel is transported away there in the vision, but it seems to portray the Jordan as an assault is made upon Jeru salem. The man standing in the middle of the river who commands Ga'bri-el would appear to be a representation of the human form of the Mes-si'ah

⁷⁶ Da-ri'us, then Cyrus and his successors – See explanation in *Daniel 11*

⁵ And as I was pondering... look! there was a male goat coming from the west over the entire surface of the earth without touching the earth [because it moved too speedily] and the he-goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.⁷⁷ ⁶ He kept coming all the way to the ram which sported the two horns, which I had seen standing before the stream, and it came running toward it in his powerful rage.

⁷ And I saw him striking the side of the ram, and he acted bitterly toward it – striking down the ram and breaking its two horns – and the ram was powerless to stand before him.^{λ-8-4α} So he [the he-goat] threw it to the earth and trampled it down, and there was no-one to deliver the ram out of his hand.

⁸ Now... the he-goat put on great airs ^{λ-8-4β} – to an extreme! – but as soon as it became mighty, the great horn was broken, and four [smaller horns]⁷⁸ arose conspicuously instead of it, [moving] toward the four winds of the heavens.

⁹ And out of one of them [Ptolemy] there came forth another horn – a small one⁷⁹ – and it kept growing greatly toward the south and toward the sunrising and toward the [land of] splendour.⁸⁰ ¹⁰ And it kept growing more mighty – all the way to the army of the heavens – so that it caused some of the army and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it went trampling them down.⁸¹ ¹¹ And it put on great airs all the way to the Prince of the army,⁸² and the constant⁸³ [feature] was taken away from it [the land of splendour, Israel], and the established place of its sanctuary [Jerusalayim] was thrown down. ¹² And an army was used against the constant [feature] because of transgression. and it kept throwing truth down to the earth – it acted, and it had success.

¹³ And I got to hear a certain Holy one speaking, and another Holy one said to the particular one who was speaking:

- a Holy one (Ga'bri-el) — another Holy one

⇐ For how long will the vision of the constant [feature] and of the transgression causing desolation last, so that [the] Holy place and [the] army [of Jerusalayim] are trampled upon?

¹⁴ so he said to me [Daniel in the vision];

- a Holy one (Ga'bri-el) — Daniel (man in the vision)

↪ For two thousand three hundred evenings [and] mornings; then [the] Holy place will certainly be brought into its right condition.¹⁵ And it came about that, while I myself – Daniel – was watching the vision and was seeking understanding, that behold! there was someone [Ga'bri-el] standing in front of me [the living, not visioned, Daniel] who looked like a valiant man. ¹⁶ And I began to hear the voice of an earthing man in the midst of the [river] U'lai, and he called out and said:

- angel Ga'bri-el of Almighty God — earthing man in the midst of the river U'lai, human form of the Mes-si'ah

⇐ Ga'bri-el ["warrior of God" or "man of God"], make that one there understand the thing seen.

¹⁷ so he came beside where I was standing, but when he came I was afraid and I fell upon my face – but he said to me:

- angel Ga'bri-el of Almighty God — Daniel

⇒ Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of [the] end [of the traditionalist era]. [r39]

¹⁸ And while he was speaking with me, I was stunned with my face toward the earth. So he touched me and made me stand upright ¹⁹ and he went on to say:

Here I am making you understand what will occur in the final part of the fury,⁸⁴ because it is for the appointed time of the end [of the traditionalist era]:

⇒ ²⁰ The two-horned ram that you saw [stands for] the kings of Me'de-a and Persia. ²¹ The hairy he-goat

⁷⁷ Greece – in the form of Alexander the Great. The Greeks used to be known as Aegeadoc – goat people – from which the term Aegean arises

⁷⁸ Lysimachus (N), Se-leu'cus (E), Ptolemy (S) and Cassander (W) were his four generals, amongst whom the kingdom was divided. Ptolemy was to produce the "small horn" toward the south, which was to become the Roman Empire

⁷⁹ From Ptolemy, or possibly Antioch Epiphanes (see John 10:22) – a hater of God. See Daniel 11:21

⁸⁰ Land of Israel

⁸¹ The "trampling" is not aggressive, but subjecting them to his will – as willing minions.

⁸² The head one of Judah? The Lord – David's Lord – who is still concerned over Israel Matthew 4:3-11

⁸³ "constant feature" – the altar for constant sacrifices to God

⁸⁴ Bear in mind that Israel and Judah had already been sacked by Babylon – but the vision showed that more denunciation was set to come

[stands for] the king of Greece; and the great horn that was between its eyes [stands for] its first king.
22 Once that one has been broken, four will finally stand up instead of it – four kingdoms will arise from [his] nation – but not with its [the original horn's] power.

23 And in the final part of their kingdom, as the [Jewish] transgressors come to their end, there will stand up a fierce-faced king⁸⁵ skilled in trickery and deception. 24 His influence will bind [restrict Jerusalem], but not by his own [military] power, but he will cause ruin in an awesome way and will certainly prove both successful and effective. And he will ruin both the mighty and also people from [the] Holy ones: 25 by his insight he will make deception prosper in his hand, and he will put on great airs⁸⁻⁸⁻⁴ in his heart. He will bring many to ruin during a care-free period and he will stand up against the [very] Prince of princes [Jesus Christ], but be curtailed without [a human] hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning [period] which was told [to you] is true. You, for your part – keep the vision secret, because it is yet for many days [ahead].

27 And I, Daniel, became sick [despondent] for [some] days. Then I got up and performed the king's duties; but I remained stunned because of the vision, and nobody could understand [why I was ill].

9

[c 538 BCE] Daniel perceives the end of the 70 years of Sabbath for the land, and prays to God for His Name to shine again.

Daniel receives detailed foresight of the advent of the Mes-si'ah – a clarity to the promise given to Abraham.

Ga'bri-el is sent to explain to Daniel that the 70 years is a pattern – that there will be 70 weeks of years beginning from the call to rebuild Jerusalem [c 454 BCE] and lasting until the fall of the Mes-si'ah: seven weeks to rebuild Jerusalem [c 405 BCE], sixty two weeks until the advent of the Mes-si'ah in Jerusalem [c 29 CE], Mes-si'ah preach for a half week [c 33 CE], and Jerusalem is stable for the next half week [c 36-7 CE] – after which – to Daniels horror! – there will be even worse carnage on Jerusalem

Daniel Discerns the 70 years' for Israel's Denunciation

1 In the first year of Da-ri'us the son of A-has-u-e'rus⁸⁶ of the seed of the Me'des, who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chal-de'ans – 2 in the first year of his reigning – I Daniel, discerned by the scrolls [which showed regnal years] the number of the years concerning which the word of Jehovah had occurred to Jeremiah⁸⁷ the prophet, for fulfilling the [current] desolations of Jerusalem, [namely]: seventy years. 3 So I set my face to Jehovah the [true] God, to seek [Him] with prayer and with entreaties, with fasting and sack-cloth and ashes. 4 And I began to pray to Jehovah my God and to make confession and to say:

● **Almighty God** — Daniel

⇐ Ah Jehovah the [true] God, the great One and the fear-inspiring One, keeping the covenant and the loving-kindness to those loving Him and to those keeping His commandments:

5 we sinned⁸⁸ and were crooked and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from Your commandments and from Your judicial rulings. 6 And we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your Name to our kings and our princes and our forefathers – and to all the people of the land.

7 Righteousness belongs to You, O Jehovah, but shame of face to us as at this day – to the men of Judah and to the [very] inhabitants of Jerusalem and to all those of Israel, those near and those far away in all the lands to which You dispersed them because of their treachery with which they offended You – 8 O Jehovah, the shame of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our princes and to our forefathers, because we have sinned against You...

⁸⁵ Secularly, this was believed to be Antioch Epiphanes (see John 10:22), channelling the character of the adversary – the little horn – as if in rehearsal for Christ's actual reign. This is borne out by the fact that he is curtailed in his plan – that of proving prophecy to be flawed. The parallel with the adversary as portrayed in Revelation is very close (he and his actions may be a prophetic pattern)

⁸⁶ Compare with A-has-u-e'rus – Xerxes 1st – in Esther

⁸⁷ Jeremiah 25:11-12; Jeremiah 29:10 Clearly Jeremiah was so respected and given such credence that his words were written down, and a copy of them lay in the hands of Daniel in Babylon

⁸⁸ 1st Kings 8:47

● — Daniel

9. To Jehovah our God belong the mercies – and the acts of forgiveness, even though we have rebelled against Him 10. and have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God so as to walk in His laws that He set before us by the hand of His servants the prophets.

11. ...yes, all Israel have overstepped Your law and departed by not obeying Your voice

– that is why the curse⁸⁹ has been poured out upon us – the sworn oath that was written in the law of Moses the servant of the [true] God – for we have sinned against him. 12. And He proceeded to carry out His words that He had spoken against [both] us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us great evil – such as has never occurred under the whole heavens as has been done in Jerusalem.

13. Just as it is written in the law of Moses – all this calamity – it has come upon us, and we have not softened the face of Jehovah our God so as to turn back from our error and to understand Your truth.⁹⁰

14. Therefore Jehovah kept alert to the calamity... and finally brought it upon us, for Jehovah our God is righteous⁹¹ in all His works that He has done... only we have not obeyed His voice.

15. And now, O Jehovah our God, You Who brought Your people out from the land of Egypt by a strong hand so as to make a Name for Yourself as at this day:

We have sinned, we have acted wickedly.

16. O Jehovah, according to all Your acts of righteousness, please let Your anger and Your rage be turned away from Your city Jerusalem – Your Holy mountain – for by our sins and the perversities of our forefathers, [both] Jerusalem and Your people are an object of reproach to all those round about us.

17. And now listen, O our God, to the prayer of Your servant [Moses] and to his entreaties⁹², and for the sake of Jehovah cause Your face to shine upon Your desolated Sanctuary. 18. Incline Your ear, O my God, and hear; open Your eyes and see our devastation and the city that has been called by Your Name – for we are not pleading before You according to our [reformed] righteous acts, but according to Your many mercies!

19. O Jehovah, do discern; O Jehovah, do forgive; O Jehovah, do pay attention and act. Do not delay,⁹³ for Your Own sake, O my God, for Your Own Name has been called upon Your city and upon Your people.

70 years a pattern for 70 weeks' of years to span the time of the Mes-si'ah

20. While I was yet speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and casting my request for favour before Jehovah my God concerning the Holy mountain of my God – 21. yes [while] I was yet speaking in the prayer, the man Ga' bri-el – whom I had seen in the vision at the start, having been made weary with tiredness – arrived by my side at the time of the evening gift offering. 22. And he lifted me out from my fervent anxiety and spoke with me saying:

● angel Ga' bri-el of Almighty God — Daniel

⇒ O Daniel, now I have come forth to give you insight with understanding.

23. At the start of your entreaties a command went forth, so I myself have come to announce, because you are greatly loved. So now consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24. Seventy [further] weeks⁹⁴ had been determined upon your people and upon your Holy city, in order to restrain the transgression [from doing further damage], and to finish off sin and to make

⁸⁹ See Leviticus 26:3 – blessing and curse

⁹⁰ John 8:31-32

⁹¹ God had to keep his oath concerning the consequences to His people; to have foregone the prescribed curse would be to break His word

⁹² The humility of Daniel, who despite being a significant prophet links himself in the wrongdoing and asking for God to hear again the loyal servant Moses

⁹³ Daniel has shown contrition in behalf of God's nations, and not demanded an end to their suffering because of the end of the 70 years. Only at this point in the prayer does he ask God – humbly – not to delay the easing of the tribulation... and God answers immediately

⁹⁴ (See Daniel 7:25 – the attempt to disrupt prophecy) The 70 years for the cleansing of the land were prophetic of the 70 weeks of years for cleaning God's loyal people. (This is based on the prophetic flood of Noah's day (Genesis 7:4), where there were 7 days (corresponding to Christ's 3½ days' ministry and 3½ days' hiatus after his death) before the 40 days' flood (the start of 40 years of unstoppable angst with the Romans) The 70 weeks of years begins at the call to restore Jerusalem, and ends with the death of the Mes-si'ah

atonement for perversity – and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite, to imprint a seal upon vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.⁹⁵

²⁵ And you must know and have insight [that] from the going forth of [the] word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem⁹⁶ until Mes-si'ah [the] Leader, there will be seven weeks [for the restoration] also sixty-two weeks⁹⁷ [until the advent of the Mes-si'ah]. She [Jerusalem] will return and be rebuilt with a public square and wall... but for troublesome times.

²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks Mes-si'ah will be made distinct,⁹⁸ but not for [his own glory] (and the people of a [nother] leader will come and will bring the city and the sanctuary to their ruin, and its end will be by an [all-encompassing] flood.⁹⁹ ✕ And desolations have been determined until [the] end of the war)

²⁷ ...but he [Mes-si'ah] must keep [the] covenant in force for the many for one week; and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease.¹⁰⁰

And [after the remaining ½ week] the one causing desolation will come upon the wing of idolatries [Rome], and what has been decided [as an action] will be poured upon the one being desolated [Jerusalem and its way] until [there has been] an extermination.

10

Daniel is tired through mourning and fasting. In a vision he sees an angelic messenger by the river Hid'de-kelel (Tigris) – signifying authority at that confining boundary – who explains the absolute beauty of the identity of the Mes-si'ah – he is the archangel Mi'cha-el, and such a one was needed, because the messenger angel reveals that evil spirits are attempting to hinder God's flow of prophecy – the very thing which is essential, since Daniel has been given a time-table for the Mes-si'ah.

In revealing this, the messenger reveals that Heaven is ridden with rebelliousness.

Daniel's Prayers Rewarded – the Mes-si'ah is Identified

¹ In the third year of [the reign over Babylonia by] Cyrus the king of Persia, a matter was revealed to Daniel – whose name was called Bel-te-Shaz'zar – and the matter was trustworthy and greatly significant.¹⁰¹ And he understood the matter, and the understanding came to him in a vision:

● Daniel —

< ² In those days I – Daniel – happened to be mourning for three full weeks.¹⁰² ³ I did not eat dainty bread, and no flesh or wine entered my mouth, and I didn't grease myself until the completing of the three full weeks.

⁴ Then on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I happened to be on the bank of the great river Hid'de-kelel [Tigris], ⁵ I raised my eyes and saw [something]:

...here was a certain man clothed in linen, with his hips girded with golden ore of U'phaz. ⁶ And his body was [also golden] like Tar'shish [yellow jasper, crysolite], and his face appeared brilliant like lightning, and his eyes were like fiery torches, and his arms and feet looked like burnished copper, and the sound of his voice was like the sound of a crowd.

⁹⁵ "atonement for perversity" – here it is marked that the Christ will be a sacrifice for the sins of the entire Jewish nation. "to seal up vision and prophet" – to bring an end to the events of the vision and prophetic word on the Mes-si'ah (See *Matthew 27:51* for fulfilment) This sounds all-encompassing, yet it covers many traumatic events, all aggravated by typical human rebellion

⁹⁶ *Ezra 7:9*

⁹⁷ Seven weeks to rebuild Jerusalem, 62 weeks after that the Mes-si'ah is made manifest, 3½ days later he is killed, 3½ days after that begins the Jewish angst which brings the one causing desolation

⁹⁸ Some translations say "cut off" – implying death – which does not come until the end of the ½ week. This sentence refers to his being made distinct, evident in the land – but not for glory for himself

⁹⁹ The Roman destruction of the Temple. See Jesus' words against God's nations in *Matthew 24:37*

¹⁰⁰ Sacrifices end at Christ's death – at the end of the ½ week – as a new covenant is now in force. (See *Mark 11:15-16*) "covenant in force for the many" – 3½ years ministry specifically to convince Jews in Jerusalem, since it was their region which was to be destroyed by Rome, rather than the synagogues situated abroad.

¹⁰¹ Not easy to translate – it seems to imply that the matter which was revealed to Daniel was detailed, greatly eventful, and spanned a generous expanse of time and of application

¹⁰² Possibly for a person, or possibly waiting for an answer to a prayer having heard that building work on the Temple had been opposed *Ezra 4* since it was Daniel who had perceived the end of the 70 weeks for the land. See also *Daniel 10:13* fn

⁷ And only I – Daniel – saw the sight, for the men that were with me did not see the sight, but a great anxiety fell upon them, so they ran away to hide themselves.

⁸ So I was left by myself, and I saw this great sight but there was no power left in me; my complexion turned sour and I had no strength,¹⁰³ ⁹ Yet I began hearing the sound of his words; and while I listened to the sound of his words I became stunned and [fell with my] my face [turned] toward the earth.

¹⁰ ...but look! a hand touched me, and it stirred me up on to my knees and the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said to me:

● high ranking angel of **Almighty God** (possibly Ga'bri-el) — Daniel

↪ O Daniel, you highly valued man, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have been sent to you.

and when he spoke this word with me, I did stand up, though trembling. ¹² And he went on to say to me:

Do not be afraid, O Daniel, for your words have been heard from the first day¹⁰⁴ that you gave your heart to understanding and humbling yourself before your God, your words have been heard and I come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the royal realm of Persia was standing in opposition to me for twenty-one days,¹⁰⁵ but look! Mi'cha-el – one of the foremost princes – came to help me; after which I remained there [unhindered] beside the [fleshly] kings [Da-ri'us and Cyrus] of Persia.

¹⁴ [So finally] I have come to explain to you what will befall your people in the final part of the days [of the Jewish era], because it is a vision for future days.

¹⁵ Now when he spoke these words with me, I set my face to the earth and become speechless. ¹⁶ And look! someone who looked like one of the sons of mankind touched my lips,¹⁰⁶ and I began to open my mouth and speak and say to the one who was standing in front of me:

↪ O my lord, my body collapsed at the sight, and I did not retain any strength. ¹⁷ So how could the servant of my lord speak with my lord? And up to now there has been no power in me nor breath remaining in me.

¹⁸ And the one who looked like an earthling man touched me again and it strengthened me, ¹⁹ and he said:

↪ Do not be afraid, you highly valued man.¹⁰⁷ May you have peace. Be strong, yes, be strong. – and as soon as he spoke with me I exerted my strength and said:

↪ Let my lord speak, because you have strengthened me [Daniel felt able to listen now].

²⁰ So he went on to say:

↪ Do you understand why I have come to you?

Now I shall go back to fight with the prince [rebellious angelic overlord] of Persia. When I go forth, look! the prince of Greece will come.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Possibly only Daniel had spent three weeks' mourning without food, and so his strength and complexion had suffered

¹⁰⁴ Possibly referring to his searching for the truth of Jeremiah's 70 years' prophecy *Daniel 9:2*

¹⁰⁵ No coincidence – Daniel's was weak with mourning (*Daniel 10:3*) and an evil spirit would want to hinder contact with Daniel, as it pertained both to the prophecies of the Mes-si'ah and the flow between God and His established prophet. This evil spirit's aim was that Daniel die – he being the one who had learned of the 70 weeks' prophecy – and the prophecy be split and seen as less conclusive – so the stakes were high. (Compare importance of knowledge being hidden for God's purpose at *Matthew 24:43*) That this angel remained by the kings of Persia – Cyrus and Da-ri'us, both of whom were instrumental in God's purpose – showed he was there to protect them in this. This shows that answers to our prayers can be hindered by the devil's allies, if the issue pertains to God's prophecy

¹⁰⁶ This "like a son of man" would appear to be Mi'cha-el – the pre-human Jesus, the single one who helped the high-ranking angel who may himself be Ga'bri-el, since Ga'bri-el appears to have continued as a messenger angel in the New Testament

¹⁰⁷ Compare Ga'bri-el's words to Mary *Luke 1:26-28*

¹⁰⁸ The angel declares that these world powers of the earlier visions *Daniel 8:1-8* are powered by evil angels. The Prince of Persia opposed God's prophetic purpose and tried to hinder its announcement to Daniel, and in the future the Prince of Greece will do what it can to hinder God's purpose. Until the Mes-si'ah, there will be a long-lasting war with spirit creatures fighting – not for earthly kingdoms such as Greece of Persia, but to break the flow of God's prophecy!!!! The messenger reveals that the heavens are ridden with chaotic rebellion, so that only he and Mi'cha-el are standing for God's purpose – this angel may therefore be Ga'bri-el

21. However, I shall tell you the things noted down in the writing of truth [Law and the Prophets], and no one is fortifying me in these [things] except for Mi'cha-el, the prince of YOU people.¹⁰⁹

11

Daniel learns of the fate of the last two beasts. Greece will arise and be split into four, with the resulting north and the south kingdoms the most prominent. These will engage in fierce spasmodic struggle with each other until the prominent and despicable king of the north is squashed by a fledgling Roman empire. This new empire has no regard for God, declaring its god to be a god of war and fortresses. It eventually overflows both Syria and Egypt, but also falls itself in later years between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea.

The text is overly intricate in places, as if amplified by a later hand.

This convoluted historical chapter – not written by Daniel himself – serves to undermine the integrity and purpose of Jerusalem and true worship – the true aim of the adversary.

- high ranking angel of **Almighty God** (Gabriel?) — Daniel

↪ ¹And as for me, in the first year of Da-ri'us the Me'de I stood to uphold and strengthen him.¹¹⁰ ²And now I shall tell to you what is truth:

Look! There will yet be three¹¹¹ [more] kings standing up for Persia, but the fourth one will amass greater riches than all [others].¹¹² But as soon as he has become strong through his riches, he will bare everything¹¹³ against the kingdom of Greece.

³And a mighty king [Alexander the Great] will arise and he will rule with [even more] extensive dominion and act according to his¹¹⁴ [own] will [unhindered]. ⁴And when he has stood up [been seen as mighty after his successful conquests] then his kingdom will be broken and be divided toward the four winds of the heavens [N-E-S-W split] – but not with his posterity and not with his dominion with which he had ruled, because his kingdom will be uprooted¹¹⁵ for others than these [four]:

Kings of North and South in the Prophecy

⁵The king of the south [Egypt] will become strong, and [one] of his princes will prevail against him and rule with extensive dominion [greater than] that one's ruling power.

⁶And at the end of [some] years they [the two kings] will ally themselves with each other – the daughter of the king of the south will come to the king of the north [Syria] in order to make an equitable arrangement.¹¹⁶ ⁷But she will not retain the power of her arm, nor will he [her father the king] stand nor will his [own] arm prevail; and she [the princess herself] will be given up – together with those bringing her in, and he who caused her birth, and the one making her strong in [those] times. ⁸One from the sprout of her roots [her brother] will stand up in his [father's] place, and he will come with the military force and enter the fortress of the king of the north and will act against them – and prevail! ⁹– and he will carry their [Syria's] gods into captivity to Egypt: their molten images, their desirable

¹⁰⁹ The Mes-si'ah is identified!! Ezekiel 44:2-3. the archangel Mi'cha-el (Jude 9). is "the Prince of YOU people" – this angelic son of God is to be the Mes-si'ah Daniel 12:1-3 (see also Isaiah 63:4-5 where only God's Arm – the Mes-si'ah – comes to assist God in His purpose of disciplining delinquent Jerusalem) Daniel has been given a truly sacred secret!!! and in saying this revealed that only two high-ranking angels were loyal to God – revealing a startling scale of rebellion (although a large number of other angels Luke 2:13) However see the extension of this prophecy in Zechariah 2:11

¹¹⁰ First and smaller of the two horns – see Daniel 8:3

¹¹¹ There would be more than three actual kings, but only three concerned with maintaining Persia as the dominant world power

¹¹² (prophetic of the Ma'gi?? Matthew 2:1-2; and Jesus' temptation? John 12:20-27) This is the greater of the two-horns of the ram which arises after the first. This scripture has been likened to the three horns which fell before the little horn speaking grandiose things Daniel 7:8 – however that is part of the 4th beast, which is Rome and comes later

¹¹³ Babylonia had been very strong and had taken over Israel and Egypt; Persia seeks further influence – this time beyond Tyre (who hid their treasures on islands off the coast, which Babylon could not access) by sea-warfare against Greece. But this ambitious 4th horn – greater than the first three – was overcome by his own ambition

¹¹⁴ Babylon fell by an alliance of E'lam-ites, Me'des and Persians – Greece will act alone, and by the hand of a single man

¹¹⁵ The territories of Lysimachus (N) and of Ptolemy (S) changed – Egypt became prominent, and Syria responded. Their mutual angst disrupted the vast Alexandrian empire, leaving the eastern and western regions isolated to wither, while the war between the houses of the two stronger generals only served to make their regions strong – not them – and so Egypt and Syria became independent powers again

¹¹⁶ Reminiscent of King Je-ho'ram of Judah intermarrying with an unnamed daughter of King A'hab of Israel – something Jehovah said should not happen between Israel and Judah (see 2nd Chronicles 21:6)

articles of silver and of gold. He will continue for more years than the king of the north. ⁹ Thus the king of the south will surely come into his [Syria's] kingdom and then return [safely] to his own [native] soil.

¹⁰...but his [King of Syria's] sons will fume and assemble a large crowd of military forces which will come and flood over and pass through [against the king of the south]. Then he will go back, and he will fume all the way [back] to his fortress.

¹¹ So the king of the south will grow bitter and he will certainly go forth and fight with the king of the north; he will recruit a large crowd – but the crowd will actually be given into that one's [King of Syria's] hand. ¹² The crowd will certainly be carried away; his heart will become confident and he will cast down ^λ tens of thousands [of the Egyptian forces] but he will not make use of his strong position [will not exploit by advantageously expanding his territory].

¹³ However the king of the north will surely return and amass a larger crowd than the first; and at the end of [some] years he will come again with a great military force and with a great deal of supplies. ¹⁴ In those times, many will stand up against the king of the south.

...And the sons of the tyrants among your people¹¹⁷ will be carried along to try to fulfil a vision¹¹⁸ – but they will have to fail.

¹⁵ So the king of the north will come and erect a siege rampart and capture the most fortified city. The armed forces of the south will not stand, neither the elite [troops] and there will be no power to keep standing: ¹⁶ the one coming against him [against Egypt] will do whatever he wants, and no one will stand before him: he [Antiochus the Great of Syria] will stand in the land of the splendour [Ca'naan], with the power to destroy it in his hand. ¹⁷ He will be determined to come with the full force of his entire kingdom, and he will bring equitable [terms] with him and will act effectively,^{119 λ-11-6} and he will give the daughter of womankind so as to corrupt through her, but she will not stand [by him] nor continue to be his.

¹⁸ After this he will turn attention back to the coastlands [Palestine, western empire] and will capture many, but an army commander will make his reproachfulness cease; unable to continue reproaching others, he will turn back homeward. ¹⁹ Then he will turn his face back toward the fortresses of his [own] land [Syria] but will stumble and fall, and will not be found. ²⁰...and one will stand up in his authority¹²⁰ who sends men to extract tribute in honour of the kingdom, but in a few days he will be broken without anger or warfare.

²¹ A despised one¹²¹ will stand up in his place and they will certainly not set the dignity of [the] kingdom upon him; he will come during a peaceful period and take hold of [the] kingdom by means of cunning flattery. ²² The existing established armies will be swept away from before him and they will be broken, as will the leader of [the] covenant [of peace with him].¹²² ²³ After allying themselves to him, he will act deceitfully, and [in this way] he will rise up and become mighty by means of a little nation.¹²³ ²⁴ He will enter peacefully even into the richest of the jurisdictional districts and actually do what his fathers and his fathers' fathers have not done: he will distribute plunder and spoil and goods among them... only to devise his schemes against their fortified places, but only until a time.¹²⁴

²⁵ Then he will arouse his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great military force – but the king of the south will incite himself for the war with an exceedingly great and mighty military force; but he [king of the north, Syria] will not stand,

¹¹⁷ The meaning is unclear – it could mean 2nd generation dispersed ones, or dyed-in-the-wool robbers – and be those from among God's people or those who inflicted themselves against God's people

¹¹⁸ Knowing Daniel's prophecy, they will try to become the final great power *Daniel 7:7*

¹¹⁹ Just as Egypt did toward Syria, so Syria will do

¹²⁰ Se-leu'cus Philopater – eldest son of the king of Syria

¹²¹ Antiochus Epiphanes (see *Daniel 8:9* – the small horn growing grand) (also *John 10:22*)

¹²² Possibly betraying Onias, the high priest at that time in Jerusalem. The new man betrays those with whom he has an agreement. Compare with King Zed-e-ki'ah 2nd *Kings 24:20*

¹²³ “a little nation” – but the deceit makes him seem harmless... and the deceit is the cancer which overthrows those he approaches

¹²⁴ Because of the “appointed time” – see v27

because they ^[his own force] will practice schemes against him; ²⁶ the very ones eating his delicacies¹²⁵ will bring his downfall.¹²⁶ His military force will be swept away, and many will fall down slain.¹⁻¹¹⁻¹²

²⁷ – for the heart of both of these kings will be inclined to doing wickedness – each continually speaking a lie at a meal ^[despicable and devious betrayal amongst allies] – but nothing will succeed, because ^{[the] end is yet for the appointed time} ^[for the dawn of Rome]...

²⁸ And he ^[king of the north] will return to his land with a great quantity of riches, but his heart will be against the Holy covenant; he will act effectively and then go back to his land. ²⁹ At the appointed time he will return and he will come against the south, but the latter will not be as successful as at the former: ³⁰ the ships of Kit'tim ^[Cyprus] ^[under the power of Rome] will come up against him and he will become dejected. So he¹²⁷ will return and hurl his denunciations against the Holy covenant; he will do so, then return and show consideration for those who forsake the Holy covenant. ³¹ Armed forces will proceed from him and will stand up and actually profane the sanctuary, the fortress, and remove the constant ^[feature] ^[altar for daily sacrifices]. And they will erect in its place the disgusting thing ^[altar to a pagan god] that causes desolation.¹²⁸

³² And he will lead those who transgress against ^{[the] covenant} into outright apostasy¹²⁹ through his smooth words – but the people who know their God will be steadfast and prevail.

³³ Those who have insight among the people will explain to the many what is happening, yet they will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by plundering, for ^{[some] days}. ³⁴ And when they are made to stumble they will be helped with a little help... but many will infiltrate themselves among them by means of deceitful flatteries. ³⁵ Some of those having insight will be made to stumble because of them – as part of a refining work and to cleanse and whiten,¹³⁰ until the time of ^{[the] end}, because it is yet for the ^[future] appointed time.

³⁶ The king¹³¹ will act according to his own will, and he will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god; he will speak astonishing things against the God of gods – and he will prove successful until ^{[the] indignation} comes to a finish, because the thing decided upon must be done. ³⁷ He will neither have regard for the God of his fathers, nor will he desire women nor give regard to any other god – because he will magnify himself over everyone. ³⁸ He – in his station – will give glory to the god of fortresses; he will glorify a god that his fathers did not know – with gold and silver and precious stone and desirable things – ³⁹ he will act with a foreign god against the most fortified of strongholds; whoever recognises him ^[the god of fortresses] he will make abound with glory, and he will certainly make them rule over many, and he will apportion out ^{[the] ground} for a price.¹³²

⁴⁰ And in the time of ^{[the] end} the king of the south will engage with him ^[Rome] in a pushing, and the king of the north will storm against him with chariots and horsemen and with many ships; and he ^[Rome] will enter into the lands and flood over and pass through.¹³³ ⁴¹ He will also actually enter into the land of the splendour, and many ^[lands] will be made to stumble; but these ones will escape out of his hand: E'dom, Mo'ab and the main part of the sons of Am'mon.¹³⁴

⁴² And he ^[Rome] will keep stretching forth his hand against the lands, and the land of Egypt ^[king of the south] will not escape; ⁴³ he ^[Rome] will rule over the hidden reserves of gold and of

¹²⁵ Downfall through revolt and treason

¹²⁶ See antithesis of this at *Luke 13:24-26* where Jesus will not be fooled by those who are not sincere. Also *John 13:21-27* for Judas, who receives the food from Jesus in fulfilment of *Psalms 41:9*

¹²⁷ In frustration and pique at being hindered by Rome

¹²⁸ *Mark 13:14; Matthew 24:15;*

¹²⁹ Not merely pagan sacrifice, but active opposition to God's way

¹³⁰ The difference between having insight and having insight with the heart behind it

¹³¹ Rome?? "Divine" Emperors? Herod *Acts 12:20-24?*

¹³² Vassal tenants of cities conquered by Rome?

¹³³ Rome occupied Palestine, but Egypt and Dam-a-scus remained out of their control until about 32 CE

¹³⁴ East of the Jordan, bordering the desert, not strategically important – Rome let the locals bear the burden of defence

silver and over all the desirable things of Egypt... and the Lib'y-ans and the E-thi-o'pi-ans will be within range of him.

⁴⁴...but there will be reports out of the sun-rising and out of the north that will disturb him, and he must go forth in a great rage in order to annihilate and to devote many to destruction. ⁴⁵And he will plant his palatial tents between [the] grand sea ^[Mediterranean] and the Holy mountain of splendour ^[Jerusalayim]; and he will come to his end¹³⁵ with no helper for him.

12

Daniel is told of 1st century events: the Mes-si'ah will stand, then the tribulation – the fall of Jerusalayim again... and its form of worship! but those loyal to God will move forward with the Mes-si'ah, and to the resurrection of the dead.

He now sees two messengers by the river Hid'de-kel (Tigris), one on each side – signifying that there are further events beyond the Abrahamic covenant – an expansion of God's dominion, as fundamentally significant as was the crossing into Canaan over the Jordan.

The scroll is sealed until the time of the end – including Daniel's question as to what will happen next.

The End Revealed to Daniel – Then Sealed for the Appointed Time

- high ranking angel of **Almighty God** — Daniel

⇒ ¹And during that time Mi'cha-el will stand up! – the great prince who is standing in behalf of the sons of your people. Then will occur a time of distress¹³⁶ such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time.

During that time your people will escape – [that is] each one who is written down in the book [of life].¹³⁷ ²And many of those asleep in the dust of the ground will be woken – some to indefinitely lasting life and others to shame [and] to indefinitely lasting abhorrence.

³ – but the ones having insight will shine like the brightness of the expanse, and those who are bringing the many to righteousness like the stars to time indefinite, even forever.

⇒ ⁴And as for you, O Daniel, make the words secret ² and seal up the scroll, until the time of [the] end. Many will rove about, and the [true] knowledge will become abundant.

⁵Then I – Daniel – looked, and behold! there were two others standing – one on this bank of the river [Hid'de-kel – aka Tigris] and the other on that bank of the river. ⁶Then one said to the [divine] man clothed with the linen,¹³⁸ who was up above the waters of the stream:

- High ranking angel of **Almighty God** — an angel of **Almighty God** standing on the bank of the river Hid'de-kel

⇐ How long will it be to the end of the astonishing things?

⁷And I heard the man clothed with the linen who was upon the waters of the river, as he raised his right [hand] and his left [hand] to the heavens¹³⁹ to swear by the One Who is alive for time indefinite:

⇒ It will be for an appointed time, and times and a half [^{3½} times, 1260 days]. As soon as the dashing of the power of the Holy people to pieces¹⁴⁰ has come to a finish, all these things will come to their finish.

⁸Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand; so that I said:

- High ranking angel of **Almighty God** — Daniel

⇐ O my lord, what will be the [final] outcome of [future following] these things?¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Herod at his post-Christian end?

¹³⁶ “Great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20-22) Revelation 7:1-14

¹³⁷ Reference to following the Christ – later to be revealed as “the Word” John 1:1

¹³⁸ See Daniel 10:5

¹³⁹ Compare angel of 7 thunders Revelation 10:5-7

¹⁴⁰ End of Jewish era – see Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 9:27 (the half week – 1260 days) for prophecy

¹⁴¹ Daniel has been shows details of great upheaval – so what will be the result for God's people?

⁹ And he said:

↪ Go, Daniel, because the words have been made secret ^{λ-12-4} and sealed up until the time of [the] end.¹⁴² ¹⁰ Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined – and the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly – but no wicked ones at all will understand, whereas the ones having insight will understand.

¹¹ From the time that the constant [feature] [daily sacrifice for sin] has been removed and the disgusting thing that is causing desolation has been erected in its place, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days¹⁴³ [3 years and 7 months] – ¹² happy is the one who is keeping in expectation and who arrives [alive]¹⁴⁴ at the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days [3 years and 8½ months]

¹³ And as for you [Daniel], go toward [your own] end and rest, and you¹⁴⁵ will stand up [again] for your destiny at the end of the days.

¹⁴² Scroll with seven seals about to be opened *Revelation 5:1*

¹⁴³ Two scenarios 1) Period of fight with Rome against Jerusalem (see Exodus to start of Sol'o-mon's temple, plus the 120 years' wait between God's declaration and the flood to make the additional 600 years) or 2) time of Jesus' ministry

¹⁴⁴ Same two scenarios 1) 45 days (years) of tribulation, at the end of which many will have been killed – but after that, they will not be persecuted, or 2) days between Jesus' ascension and the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of Holy Spirit

¹⁴⁵ Effectively, "your words written down of this prophecy" will help those who are righteous like Daniel in the end of the days

Ezra

Chronologically this book straddles the book of Ne-he-mi'ah. Chapters 1 through 6 detail the call to rebuild the temple at the order of Da-ri'us – then the events of Ne-he-mi'ah under Ar-ta-xerx'es 1st take place, at which Ez'ra was himself present as a younger man.

Then the remaining chapters 7 through 10 detail the expedition of Ez'ra, which is the re-population of Jerusalayim with people and Le'vites from Babylon, and the cleansing of the people of foreign wives and their children

1

These first 6 chapters take place during the reign of Da-ri'us, some 120 years before Ez'ra's return to Jerusalayim in chapter 7 and even before his birth. These 6 chapters are an historical account penned by Ez'ra the copyist, but to which he was neither witness nor contemporary.

Cyrus orders a Rebuilding of the Temple

¹ In the first year of Cyrus the king of Persia – [in order] that Jehovah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished – Jehovah roused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia, so that he caused a proclamation to pass through all his kingdom – which [he also recorded] in writing – saying:

- message of King Cyrus of Persia — all in his kingdom

⇒ ² This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said:

- King Cyrus of Persia —

⇒ Jehovah the God of the Heavens has given all the kingdoms of the earth to me, and He Himself has commissioned me to build Him a house in Jerusalayim, which is in Judah.

³ Whoever there is among YOU of all His people, may His God prove to be with him. So let him go up to Jerusalayim, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel – He being the true God – which was in Jerusalayim. ⁴ As for anyone that is left from all the places where he is residing as an alien, let the men of his place [his neighbours] assist him with silver and with gold² and with goods and with domestic animals – in addition to the voluntary offering for the house of the true God which used to be in Jerusalayim.

⁵ Then the heads of the fathers of Judah and of Benjamin and the priests and the Le'vites rose up³ – everyone whose spirit the [true] God had roused – to go up and rebuild the house of Jehovah, which was in Jerusalayim. ⁶ And all those round about them [their neighbours] strengthened their hands [at the request of Cyrus] with articles of silver, with gold, with goods and with domestic animals and with precious things, in addition to all that which was voluntarily offered.⁴

Cyrus Returns Articles Stolen by Neb-u-chad-rez'zar

⁷ Also, King Cyrus brought forth the utensils of the house of Jehovah, which Neb-u-chad-rez'zar had brought out from Jerusalayim and had put in the house of his god.⁵ ⁸ And Cyrus the king of Persia brought them forth by the hand of Mith're-dath [given by Mith're] the treasurer and numbered them out to Shesh-baz'zar [fire worshipper] [aka Ze-rub'ba-bel] the chieftain of Judah.

¹ The first few verses of Ez'ra read as the last few verses of 2nd of Chronicles. Whilst this is a distraction, it should be remembered that Jewish versions of the Hebrew scriptures place Chronicles at the end of the texts, and not in the position it occupies in a complete Christian Bible

² Similar to what happened at the exodus from Egypt *Exodus 12:35*

³ These tribes named were local to Babylon in their exile. The other tribes of Israel are not mentioned, because they had been exiled 130 years earlier than Judah – some 200 years ago at that time – and were widely dispersed around the world

⁴ Prophetic of God's purpose. The Jews – God's people – contributed willingly to the construction of Sol'o-mon's Temple, but the Gentiles contributed willingly to the replacement

⁵ 2nd Chronicles 36:7

⁹ Now these are their quantities:

thirty basket-shaped vessels of gold,
a thousand basket-shaped vessels of silver,
twenty-nine replacement vessels,
¹⁰ thirty small bowls of gold,
four hundred and ten small secondary bowls of silver,
a thousand other utensils.

¹¹ – *all* the utensils of gold and of silver were five thousand four hundred, which was everything that Shesh-baz'zar brought up along with the exiled people from out of Babylon to Jerusalayim.

2

People Return to Their Own Cities in Judah and Jerusalayim

¹ And these were the sons of the jurisdictional district that went up out of the captivity of the exiled people whom Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king of Babylon had taken into exile at Babylon and who later returned to Jerusalayim and Judah, each one to his own city; ² those who came with Ze-rub'ba-bel [aka Shesh-baz'zar]; ⁶

Jesh'u-a, Ne-he-mi'ah [*"Jehovah comforts"*], Se-rai'ah [aka Az-a-ri'ah], Re-el-ai'ah [*"bearer of Jehovah"*] [aka Ra-a-mi'ah], Mor'de-cai [*"little man"*], Bil'shan [*"in slander"*], Mis'par [*"number"*] [aka Mis'pe-reth], Big'vai [*"in my bodies"*], Re'hum [*"compassion"*] [aka Ne'hum], Ba'a-nah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel:

- ³ The sons of Pa'rosh [*"flea"*] – two thousand one hundred and seventy-two
⁴ the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah – three hundred and seventy-two
⁵ the sons of A'rah – seven hundred and seventy-five [652 – Ne-he-mi'ah]
⁶ the sons of Pa'hath-Mo'ab [*"pit of Mo'ab"*] (of the sons of Jesh'u-a [and] Jo'ab) – two thousand eight hundred and twelve [2818 Ne-he-mi'ah]
⁷ the sons of E'lam – one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
⁸ the sons of Zat'tu [*"brightness of him"*] – nine hundred and forty-five; [845 Ne-he-mi'ah]
⁹ the sons of Zac'cai [*"pure"*] – seven hundred and sixty;
¹⁰ the sons of Ba'nee [aka Bin'nu-i] – six hundred and forty-two; [648 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹¹ the sons of Be'bai [*"my cavities"???*] – six hundred and twenty-three; [628 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹² the sons of Az'gad [*"Gad is mighty"*] – one thousand two hundred and twenty-two [2322 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹³ the sons of Ad-o-ni'kam [*"my lord arose"*] – six hundred and sixty-six [667 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹⁴ the sons of Big'vai – two thousand and fifty-six; [2067 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹⁵ the sons of A'din [*"dainty" or "delicate"*] – four hundred and fifty-four; [655 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹⁶ the sons of A'ter, of Hez-e-ki'ah – ninety-eight;
¹⁷ the sons of Be'zai [*"conqueror"*] – three hundred and twenty-three; [324 Ne-he-mi'ah]
¹⁸ the sons of Jo'rah [*"he instructs"*] – one hundred and twelve;
¹⁹ the sons of Ha'shum [*"rich"*] – two hundred and twenty-three; [328 Ne-he-mi'ah]
²⁰ the sons of Gib'bar [*"the valiant"*] [aka Gib'e-on] – ninety-five;
²¹ the sons of Beth'le-hem – one hundred and twenty-three;

⁶ (10 men – compare with *Nehemiah* 7:7 which includes Na-ham'a-ni to make a total of 11) Ze-rub'ba-bel is the grandson of 3-month king Jec-o-ni'ah – the grandson of good king Jo-si'ah. It was the kindness of the later king of Babylon - E'vil-Mer'o-dach, who released king Jec-o-ni'ah after 37 years in the prison house *2nd Kings* 25:27-30 – that he was to have children and grand-children who would be so prominent in rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple.

- 22 the men of Ne-to'phah – fifty-six; [total 188 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 23 the men of An'a-thoth – one hundred and twenty-eight;
- 24 the sons of Az'ma-veth⁷ – forty-two;
- 25 the sons of Kir'i-ath-Je'a-rim, Che-phi'rah and Be-er'oth – seven hundred and forty-three;
- 26 the sons of Ra'mah [Benjamin] and Ge'ba – six hundred and twenty-one;
- 27 the men of Mich'mas [*"hidden"*] [aka Mich'mash] – one hundred and twenty-two;
- 28 the men of Beth'el and A'i – two hundred and twenty-three; [123 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 29 the sons of Ne'bo – fifty-two;
- 30 the sons of Mag'bish [*"congregating"*] – one hundred and fifty-six;
- 31 the sons of the other E'lam – one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
- 32 the sons of Ha'rim – three hundred and twenty;
- 33 the sons of Lod, Ha'did [*"sharp"*] and O'no – seven hundred and twenty-five; [721 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 34 the sons of Jer'i-cho – three hundred and forty-five;
- 35 the sons of Se-na'ah [*"thorny"*] – three thousand six hundred and thirty. [3930 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 36 The priests:
The sons of Je-dai'ah [aka Je-da'iah] of the house of Jesh'u-a – nine hundred and seventy-three;
- 37 the sons of Im'mer – one thousand and fifty-two;
- 38 the sons of Pash'hur – one thousand two hundred and forty-seven;
- 39 the sons of Ha'rim – one thousand and seventeen.
- 40 The Le'vites:
The sons of Jesh'u-a and Kad'mi-el [*"God is the ancient one"*] of the sons of Hod-a-vi'ah – seventy-four
- 41 The singers: the sons of A'saph – one hundred and twenty-eight [148 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 42 The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shal'lum, the sons of A'ter, the sons of Tal'mon, the sons of Ak'kub, the sons of Ha-ti'ta [*"exploring"*], the sons of Sho'bai [*"glorious"*] – all together [*being*] one hundred and thirty-nine. [138 Ne-he-mi'ah]
- 43 The Neth'i-nim:
The sons of Zi'ha [*"parched"*], the sons of Ha-su'pha [*"stripped"*], the sons of Tab-ba'oth [*"rings"*],⁴⁴ the sons of Ke'ros [*"ankle"*], the sons of Si'a-ha [*"departing"*] [aka Si'a], the sons of Pa'don [*"ransom"*],⁴⁵ the sons of Le-ba'nah [*"moon-white"*], the sons of Hag'a-bah [*"locust"*], the sons of Ak'kub,⁴⁶ the sons of Ha'gab [*"locust"*], the sons of Sal'mai [*"my garments"*], the sons of Ha'nán,⁴⁷ the sons of Gid'del [*"very great"*, poss. *"very large"*], the sons of Ga'har [*"hiding place"*], the sons of Re-a'iah,⁴⁸ the sons of Re'zin, the sons of Ne-ko'da [*"distinguished"*], the sons of Gaz'zam [*"devouring"*],⁴⁹ the sons of Uz'za, the sons of Pa-se'ah, the sons of Be'sai [*"my treading"*],⁵⁰ the sons of As'nah [*"I shall be hated: she has stored up"*], the sons of Me-u'nim [*"habitations"*] [poss. *"inhabitant of Ma'on"*], the sons of Ne-phu'sim [*"scattered spices"*] [aka Ne-phush'e-sim],⁵¹ the sons of Bak'buk [*"bottle"*], the sons of Ha-ku'pha [*"bent"*], the sons of Har'hur [*"inflammation"*],⁵² the sons of Baz'luth [*"asking"*, *"peeling"*] [aka Baz'lith], the sons of Me-hi'da [*"famous" or "noble"*], the sons of Har'sha [*"mute"*],⁵³ the sons of Bar'kos [*"the son cut off"*], the sons of Sis'e-ra, the sons of Te'mah,⁵⁴ the sons of Ne-zi'ah [*"pre-eminent"*], the sons of Ha-ti'pha [*"seized"*].
- 55 and the sons of the servants of Sol'o-mon:
The sons of So'tai [*"changeful"*], the sons of So-phe'reth [*"writing"*], the sons of Pe-ru'da [*"grain" or "kernel"*] [aka Pe-ri'da],⁵⁶ the sons of Ja'a-lah [*"ascending"*] [aka Ja'a-la], the sons of Dar'kon [*"scatterer"*], the sons of Gid'del,⁵⁷ the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah, the sons of Hat'til [*"doubtful"*], the sons of Po'che-reth-ha-Ze-ba'im [*"trap of gazelles"*, (*"here the cutting off"*)] [aka 'Po'che-reth of Ze-ba'im], the sons of A'mi [*"bond-*

⁷ While Ne-he-mi'ah records the "men" of the city, Ez'ra records the "sons" of the man after whom the city is named

⁵⁸ – all the Neth’i-nim and the sons of the servants of Sol’o-mon were three hundred and ninety-two.

⁵⁹ And these were the ones going up from Tel-Me’lah [^{“mound of salt”}], Tel-Har’sha [^{“mound of the deaf mute”}], Che’rub [^{“blessing”}], Ad’dan [^{“strong, firm”}] [aka Ad’don] [and] Im’mer, and they proved unable to discern the house of their fathers and their posterity, whether they were of Israel:

⁶⁰ the sons of De-la’iah, the sons of To-bi’ah [^{“Jehovah is good”}], the sons of Ne-ko’da – six hundred and fifty-two [^{642 Ne-he-mi’ah}]

⁶¹ And of the sons of the priests: the sons of Ha-bai’ah [^{“Jehovah has hidden”}], the sons of Hak’koz, the sons of Bar-zil’lai – [an un-named man] who took a wife from the daughters of Bar-zil’lai the Gil’e-ad-ite and came to be called by their name.

⁶² – these were the ones that looked for their registration among those whose genealogy was established, but they were not to be found, so that they were disqualified as polluted from the priesthood.⁶³ Consequently the Tir-sha’tha⁹ [^{Persian deputy}] told them that they could not eat from the Most Holy things until a priest stood up with U’rim and Thum’mim.

⁶⁴ The entire congregation as one group was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, ⁶⁵ apart from their men slaves and their slave girls – these being seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred male singers [^{245 Ne-he-mi’ah}] and female singers. ⁶⁶ Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, ⁶⁷ their camels four hundred and thirty-five, [their] asses six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

⁶⁸ And certain ones of the heads of the paternal houses, on coming to the house of Jehovah which was in Jerusalem, made voluntary offerings to the house of the [true] God so as to cause it to stand on its own site.¹⁰ ⁶⁹ According to their power they gave gold for the working supplies – sixty-one thousand drachmas, and silver – five thousand mi’nas, and a hundred robes of the priests.

⁷⁰ ...And the priests and the Le’vites and some of the people, and the singers and the gatekeepers and the Neth’i-nim took up dwelling in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

3

People Re-Establish Sacrifices Before Everything Else

¹ By the time the seventh month had arrived the sons of Israel were [lodged] in [their] cities, and the people gathered themselves as one man to Jerusalem. ² And Jesh’u-a the son of Joz’a-dak [^{“Jehovah is righteous”}] [aka Je-hoz’a-dak] and his brothers the priests and Ze-rub’ba-bel the son of She-al’ti-el and his brothers¹¹ proceeded to rise up and build the altar¹² of the God of Israel, to offer up burnt sacrifices upon it, according to what is written in the law of Moses the man of the [true] God.

³ So they set the altar firmly upon its own site – for fright [came] upon them because of the peoples of the lands

– and they began offering upon it burnt sacrifices to Jehovah: the burnt sacrifices of the morning and of the evening. ⁴ Then they held the festival of booths¹³ according to what is written, with the burnt sacrifices day by day in number according to the rule of what was due each day. ⁵ And afterward there was the regular burnt offering for the new moons and for all the sanctified festival seasons of Jehovah – and for everyone that willingly offered a voluntary offering to Jehovah.

⁶ – from the first day of the seventh month on they started to offer up burnt sacrifices to Jehovah – [even] when the foundation of Jehovah’s temple itself had not yet been laid!

⁷ And they proceeded to give money to the masons and to the craftsmen – also food and drink and oil to

⁸ Ne-he-mi’ah registers the sons of A’mon *Nehemiah* 7:57-59, while Ez’ra registers the sons of his son A’mi

⁹ Likely this was Ne-he-mi’ah himself *Nehemiah* 10:1

¹⁰ ...to enable the site to function with priests, utensils and other items which needed to be purchased

¹¹ The genealogy is confused. Pe-dai’ah – brother of She-al’ti-el - is marked as father of Ze-rub’ba-bel. His father being less significant, he is marked as “the son of She-al’ti-el-and-his-brothers” (!) The genealogy in Luke records She-al’ti-el as (immediate line of ancestry) to Ze-rub’ba-bel, but disgraced king Jec-o-ni’ah is not mentioned. Unless there were coincidentally two prominent pairings of these father/son names at the same time, we must presume that there is only the one and that Jec-o-ni’ah was direct ancestor She-al’ti-el, who was paternal guardian to Ze-rub’ba-bel

¹² First act – to build the altar to Jehovah and to offer thanks upon it

¹³ *Leviticus* 23:34-44

the Si-do'ni-ans and the Tyr'i-ans to bring cedar timbers from Leb'a-non to the sea at Jop'pa, according to the permission granted to them by Cyrus the king of Persia.

⁸ In the second year of their coming to the house of the [true] God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak and the rest of their brothers – the priests and the Le'vites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem – began installing the Le'vites from twenty years of age upward to act as supervisors over the work of the house of Jehovah. ⁹ Accordingly [the Le'vites] Jesh'u-a, his sons and his brothers [and] Kad'mi-el and his sons – the sons of Judah – stood up as one group to act as supervisors over the workmen in the house of the [true] God, [as did] the sons of Hen'a-dad [¹⁴“favour of Ha'dad”], their sons and their brothers, the Le'vites.

¹⁰ ...And when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, then the priests took their stand in official clothing with the trumpets, and the Le'vites – the sons of A'saph – with the cymbals, stood up to praise Jehovah according to the direction of King David of Israel. ¹¹ And they responded by praising and giving thanks to Jehovah,

for He is good! for His loving-kindness is toward Israel is to time indefinite!



Psalm 136:1

and all the people shouted loudly in praising of Jehovah over the laying of the foundation of the house of Jehovah. ¹² However many of the priests and the Le'vites and the heads of the paternal houses – the old men that had seen the former house – were weeping with a loud voice at the laying of the foundation of this house before their eyes, while many others were raising the voice in shouting for joy. ¹³ Hence the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of rejoicing from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people were shouting with a loud shout, and the sound was heard a long way away.

4

Troublemakers oppose work, Ar-ta-xerxes Orders a Halt

¹ When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the exile were building a temple to Jehovah the God of Israel, ² they immediately approached Ze-rub'ba-bel and the heads of the paternal houses and said to them:

- *Ze-rub'ba-bel, son of She-al'ti-el ——— adversaries of Judah and Benjamin*

↩ *Let us build along with YOU; for just like YOU, we search for YOUR God and we [have been] sacrificing to Him since the days of E'sar-had'don the king of As-syr'i-a, who brought us [replacement citizens from As-syr'i-a] up here.*

³ however Ze-rub'ba-bel and Jesh'u-a and the rest of the heads of the paternal houses of Israel said to them:

- *Ze-rub'ba-bel, Jesh'u-a, all other heads of the paternal houses of Israel ——— adversaries of Judah and Benjamin*

↪ *YOU have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God, for we – and only we – shall build to Jehovah the God of Israel, just as King Cyrus of Persia has commanded us.*

⁴ At that the people of the land continually weakened the hands of the people of Judah and disheartened them from building, ⁵ and they hired advisers against them to frustrate their counsel all the days of Cyrus the king of Persia down till the reign of Da-ri'us [^{2nd}] the king of Persia.

⁶ Then in the reign of A-has-u-e'rus [¹⁴“I will be silent and poor”] – at the [very] start of his reign – they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. ¹⁵ ⁷ Also in the days of Ar-ta-xerxes [¹⁵“I will make the spoil be roasted: I will stir myself (in) winter”], Bish'lam [¹⁶“in peace”], Mith're-dath, Tab'e-el [¹⁶“God is good”] and the rest of his colleagues¹⁶ wrote to Ar-ta-xerxes the king of Persia, and the text of the letter was written in Ar-a-ma'ic characters and in the Ar-a-ma'ic language; ⁸ Re'hum the chief government official and Shim'shai [¹⁶“sunny”] the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem [¹⁹] to Ar-ta-xerxes the king (as follows):

¹⁴ Esther 1:1

¹⁵ Compare with Ha'man's action in Esther 3:5-9

¹⁶ The ones who spoke to Ze-rub'ba-bel were exiled citizens, but these ones are opposers with authority

⁹ Thus [writes] Re'hum the chief government official and Shim'shai the scribe and the rest of their colleagues – the Din-a'ites ["judgement"] and the A-phar'sach-ites ["I will divide the deceivers (?)"] [lesser governors] the Tar-pel-ites ["they of the fallen (or wondrous) mountain"], the A-pha-res-ites ["causers of division (?)"] [secretaries], the Ar-chev'ites ["lengthy"] [people of E'rech], the Babylonians, Shu'shan-ites ["lily"] [inhabitants of Su'sa or Shu'shan] – that is to say the E'lam-ites – ¹⁰ and the rest of the nations whom the great and honourable As'e-nap-par ["horned bull: thorn abolished"] took into exile and settled in the cities of Sa-mar'i-a, and the others over the River [eastward];

– as follows:¹⁷

¹¹ (so^{voc} this is a copy of the letter that they sent concerning it)

● King Ar-ta-xerx'es of Persia — Re'hum, chief government official and Shim'shai the scribe

↩ To Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, [from] your servants, the men beyond the River:

– as follows:

¹² let it become known to the king that the Jews who came up here from you to us have come to Jerusalem. [^{r19}] They are building the rebellious and wicked city, and have built the walls and are completing the foundations.

¹³ Now let it become known to the king that, if this city should be rebuilt and its walls be finished, they will give neither tax nor toll nor tribute, and it will cause loss to the treasuries of the kings.

¹⁴ Now inasmuch as we eat the salt of the palace [receive maintenance], and it is not proper for us to see the denuding of the king, on this account we have sent and made [it] known to the king, ¹⁵ so that he might investigate the book of records of your ancestors. Then you will find in the book of records and learn that that city is rebellious, causing loss to kings and jurisdictional districts, and breeding insurrectionists from the days of old – for which reason that city has been laid waste. ¹⁶

We are making known to the king that, if that city should be rebuilt and its walls be finished, you also will have no share beyond the River. ¹⁸

¹⁷ The king sent word [in reply] to Re'hum the chief government official and Shim'shai the scribe and the rest of their colleagues who were dwelling in Sa-mar'i-a and the rest beyond the River:

● King Ar-ta-xerx'es of Persia — Re'hum, chief government official and Shim'shai the scribe and their colleagues

↪ Greetings!

– as follows:

¹⁸ the official document that YOU have sent us has been distinctly read before me.

¹⁹ So I gave orders and investigations were made, and they found that that city has – from the days of old – raised itself up in rebellion against kings, and is one forming sedition. ²⁰ There were strong kings over Jerusalem [^{r19}] which ruled over all [those] beyond the River, and toll, tax and tribute were being given to them [instead of to me].

²¹ Now PUT an order through to stop these men, that that city may not be rebuilt until the order is put through by me.

²² BE careful not to be negligent about acting in this regard; why should harm increase to the injury of kings?

²³ Now after the copy of king Ar-ta-xerx'es' official document had been read before Re'hum and Shim'shai the scribe and their colleagues, they went in haste to the Jews in Jerusalem [^{r19}] and they stopped them by force of arms. ²⁴ Thus the work on the house of God, which was in Jerusalem [^{r19}] was halted; and it remained halted [for forty years!] until the second year of the reign of Da-ri'us the king of Persia.

¹⁷ This "as follows" appears to be a separation of the text, to mark the start of a new portion of a document

¹⁸ This attitude prevailed as the background to the book of Esther

5

Work Restarts on Advice from Prophets; Appeal made to New King Da-ri'us to Halt it

¹ And Hag'gai [^{festive}] the prophet and Zech-a-ri'ah the grandson of Id'do the prophet prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and in Jerusalem [^{r19}], in the Name of the God of Israel [*Who was*] over them...¹⁹ ² It was then that Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak started to rebuild the house of God, which was in Jerusalem [^{r19}]; and the prophets of God were there supporting them. ³ At that time Tat'te-nai [^{gift}] the governor beyond the River [*westward*] and She'thar-Boz'e-nai [*star of splendour*] and their colleagues came to them, and this is what they were saying to them:

- Ze-rub'ba-bel and Jesh'u-a ——— Tat'te-nai the governor beyond the River, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues

⇐ Who put an order through to YOU to build this house and to finish its [*beam*] structure?

⁴ and then they said this [*implied threat*] to them:

⇐ What are the names of the men who are erecting this building?

⁵ – but the eye of their [Ze-rub'ba-bel and Jesh'u-a's] God proved to be upon the older men of the Jews, and they [Tat'te-nai, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues] did not stop them until the report could go to Da-ri'us and then an official document concerning this could be sent back.

⁶ [*Here*] is a copy of the letter that Tat'te-nai the governor beyond the River and She'thar-Boz'e-nai and his colleagues – the A-phar'sach-ites [*lesser governors*] that were beyond the River – sent to Da-ri'us the king; ⁷ they sent a letter to him, and this is what was written in it:

- King Da-ri'us of Persia ——— Tat'te-nai, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues

⇐ To Da-ri'us the king:

All peace!

⁸ Let it become known to the king that we went to the jurisdictional district of Judah to the house of the great God, and it is being built with stones rolled [*into place*], and timbers are being laid in the walls; and that work is being done eagerly and is progressing in their hands. ⁹ Then we questioned these older men, and we asked them:

- Ze-rub'ba-bel and Jesh'u-a ——— Tat'te-nai the governor beyond the River, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues

⇐ 'Who put an order through to YOU to build this house and to finish its structure?'

¹⁰ – we also asked them their names, so as to let you know, that we might write the names of the chiefs of the men – ¹¹ and they returned a reply to us saying:

↪ 'We are the servants of the God of the Heavens and the earth, and we are rebuilding the house that had been built many years before this, which a great king of Israel built and finished.

¹² However, because our fathers irritated the God of the Heavens, He gave them into the hand of Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king of Babylon, the Chal-de'an, and he demolished this house and took the people into exile to Babylon.

¹³ Nevertheless, in the first year of Cyrus the king of that self-same Babylon, Cyrus the king put an order through to rebuild this house of God. ¹⁴ Also the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar had taken out of the temple which had been in Jerusalem [^{r19}] and had transported to the temple of Babylon – these Cyrus the king [*also*] took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were given to Shesh-baz'zar [*aka Ze-rub'ba-bel*] (the name of the one whom he made governor). ¹⁵ And he said to him:

- King Cyrus of Persia ——— governor Shesh-baz'zar

⇒ "Take these vessels. Go, place them in the temple that is in Jerusalem [^{r19}], and let the house of God be rebuilt upon its [*rightful*] place."

¹⁹ See the result Ezra 6:14

¹⁶ When that Shesh-baz'zar came and he laid the foundations of the house of God, which is in Jerusalem ^[r19]; and from then until now it is being rebuilt but it has not been completed.'

¹⁷ And now if it seems good to the king, let there be an investigation in the king's house of treasures that are there in Babylon, whether it is so that King Cyrus promulgated a decree to rebuild that house of God in Jerusalem ^[r19]; and let him send to us the king's decision concerning this.

6

¹ It was then that Da-ri'us the king gave an order, and they searched in the house of the records of the treasures deposited there in Babylon. ² And at Ec-bat'a-na ^[Capital of Med'ea], in the fortified place in the jurisdictional district of Me'de-a ^["middle land"], a scroll was found, and the memorandum to this effect was written in it:

³ In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king promulgated a decree concerning the house of God in Jerusalem ^[r19]:

"Let the house be rebuilt as the place where they are to offer sacrifices, and its foundations are to be laid, its height to be sixty cubits, its width sixty cubits, ⁴ with three layers of stones rolled ^[into place] and one layer of timbers – and the expense will be given from the king's house.

⁵ Also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Neb-u-chad-rez'zar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem ^[r19] and brought to Babylon be returned, that they may go to the temple that is in Jerusalem ^[r19] at its place and be deposited in the house of God."



scroll of command of King Cyrus

King Da-ri'us of Persia (written command) — governor Tat'te-nai, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and the lesser governors west of the Eu-phra'tes

→ ⁶ Now ^[I say to YOU] Tat'te-nai the governor beyond the River, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues, the A-phar'sach-ites ^[lesser governors] that are beyond the River:

Keep YOUR distance from there. ⁷ Let the work on that house of God alone. The governor of the Jews and the older men of the Jews will rebuild that house of God upon its place.

⁸ Moreover an order has been promulgated by me as to what YOU will do with these older men of the Jews, for the rebuilding of that house of God; the expense will be given to these men forthwith from the royal treasury – even of the tribute from beyond the River²⁰ – so they are not hindered. ⁹ And whatever is needed – young bulls as well as rams and lambs for the burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine and oil... whatever the priests that are in Jerusalem ^[r19] say – let ^[them] be given them continually day by day without fail; ¹⁰ that they may continually be presenting soothing offerings to the God of the heavens and praying for the life of the king and his sons.

¹¹ Also I have made a decree that whoever violates this text will have a timber pulled out of his ^[own] house and he will be impaled upon it, and his house will be turned into a public privy on this account.

¹² And may the God Who has caused His Name to reside there overthrow any king and people that thrusts his hand out to commit a violation and destroy that house of God, which is in Jerusalem ^[r19].²¹

I, Da-ri'us, promulgate this decree. Let it be done promptly.'

¹³ Then Tat'te-nai the governor beyond the River, She'thar-Boz'e-nai and their colleagues, acted promptly just as Da-ri'us the king had sent ^[word].

¹⁴ And the older men of the Jews were building and making progress under the prophesying²² of Hag'gai the prophet and Zech-a-ri'ah the grandson of Id'do, and they built and finished ^[it] due to the order of the God of Israel and due to the order of Cyrus and Da-ri'us and Ar-ta-xerx'es the king of Persia. ¹⁵ And they completed this house by the third day of the lunar month A'dar ^["glorious"] ^[12th month, march/April] – that is, in the sixth year of the reign of Da-ri'us the king.

¹⁶ And the sons of Israel – the priests and the Le'vites and the rest of the former exiles – held the

²⁰ A great blow to the opposers – funds are even to be given direct from the tribute which the opposers amass to send to Babylon!

²¹ A threat to those who would hinder the rebuilding work – an appeal to God from the King!

²² Ezra 5:1

inauguration of this house of God with great joy! ¹⁷ And they presented for the inauguration of this house of God:

a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs,

and as a sin offering for all Israel:

twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁸ And they appointed the priests in their divisions and the Le'vites in their apportioned groups, for the service of God which is in Jerusalem ^[r19], according to what is written in the scroll of Moses.

¹⁹ And the former exiles held the Passover on the fourteenth [*day*] of the first month, ²⁰ for the priests and the Le'vites had cleansed themselves as one group – they were all of them clean – and so they slaughtered the Passover victim for all the former exiles and for their brothers the priests and for themselves. ²¹ Then the sons of Israel that had returned from the exile ate – together with everyone that had separated himself to them from the uncleanness of the nations of the land, to search for Jehovah the God of Israel. ²² And they went on to hold the festival of unfermented cakes for seven days with rejoicing – for Jehovah caused them to rejoice, and He had turned the heart of the king of As-syr'i-a around toward them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of the ^[true] God, the God of Israel.

--- end of the rebuilding of the Temple

*** it would be appropriate to now read the scroll by Ne-he-mi'ah before continuing to the next chapter ***

--- the events of the scroll of Ne-he-mi'ah during the time of Ar-ta-xerx'es 1st take place before the next chapter 7

7

Ez'ra Returns to Jerusalayim with Letter of Authority from the King

¹ After these things, in the reign of King Ar-ta-xerx'es ^[2nd]²³ of Persia, Ez'ra ^["help"]²⁴ – the son of Se-rai'ah²⁴ the son of Az-a-ri'ah the son of Hil-ki'ah ² the son of Shal'lum the son of Za'dok the son of A-hi'tub ³ the son of Am-a-ri'ah the son of Az-a-ri'ah the son of Me-ra'ioth ⁴ the son of Zer-a-hi'ah the son of Uz'zi the son of Buk'ki ⁵ the son of Ab-i-shu'a the son of Phin'e-has the son of El-e-a'zar the son of Aaron the chief priest – ⁶ the said Ez'ra himself went up from Babylon ^[to Jerusalayim]; and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses which Jehovah the God of Israel had given. So the king granted him his every request, according to the hand of Jehovah his God upon him. ⁷ Consequently, some ^[also] of the sons of Israel and of the priests and the Le'vites and the singers and the gatekeepers and the Neth'i-nim went up to Jerusalayim in the seventh year of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king.

⁸ ...At length he came²⁵ to Jerusalayim in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king, ⁹ for on the first [*day*] of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first [*day*] of the fifth month he arrived at Jerusalayim, according to the good hand of his God upon him – ¹⁰ for Ez'ra had prepared his heart to frequent the law of Jehovah and to do ^[it] and to teach regulation and justice in Israel.

¹¹ Now this is a transcript of the letter that King Ar-ta-xerx'es gave Ez'ra the priest, the copyist – a copyist of the words of the commandments of Jehovah²⁶ and of His regulations toward Israel:

¹² 'Ar-ta-xerx'es, the king of kings, to Ez'ra the priest, the copyist of the law of the God of the heavens:

^[Peace] be perfected.

– as follows:

²³ By this time, Da-ri'us has died, the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt under *Nehemiah*, and Ar-ta-xerx'es the 2nd reigns over Persia – a contemporary of Ez'ra

²⁴ (See *1st Chronicles 6:14*) This long introduction is clearly to re-establish Ez'ra and his ancestry – a strange device in a document, and only here because of the many years separating the first 6 chapters from the later ones. These remaining chapters were, therefore, clearly written long after the first 6

²⁵ The events mentioned in the following chapters occurred before Ez'ra returned to Jerusalem – he did not return alone, but with the huge entourage of Jews and Le'vites to facilitate the work of reconstructing Jerusalem

²⁶ Only for the most diligent, the most observant and precise, the best hearted ones could be copyists.

¹³ I have promulgated a decree: that everyone in my realm of the people of Israel and their priests and Le´vites that is willing to go to Jerusalem ^[r19] with you should go. ¹⁴ Inasmuch as [you are being] sent from before the king and his seven counsellors²⁷ to evaluate Judah and Jerusalem ^[r19] according to the law of your God that is in your hand, ¹⁵ and to carry the silver and the gold that the king and his counsellors have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, Whose residence is in Jerusalem ^[r19], ¹⁶ together with all the silver and the gold that you find in all the jurisdictional district of Babylon – the voluntary gift of the people and the priests who are giving to the house of their God, which is in Jerusalem ^[r19] – ¹⁷ that you will promptly buy with this silver the bulls, rams, lambs and their grain offerings and their drink offerings and will present them upon the altar of the house of YOUR God, which is in Jerusalem ^[r19].

¹⁸ And whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the residue of the silver and gold, YOU men may do according to the will of YOUR God. ¹⁹ As for the vessels that are being given to you for the service of the house of your God, you should deliver them in full before God at Jerusalem ^[r19]. ²⁰ And whatever other necessities there may be for the house of your God that it devolves upon you to give, you will give from out of the king’s house of treasures.

²¹ And I – Ar-ta-xerx´es the king – make a decree to all the treasurers that are beyond the River: that whatever Ez´ra the priest, the copyist of the law of the God of the heavens, requests of YOU men to be done promptly, ²² even to a hundred talents of silver and a hundred cor measures of wheat and a hundred bath measures of wine and a hundred bath measures of oil, and salt without limit. ²³ Let all that is decreed by the God of the heavens be done diligently for the house of the God of the heavens, that there may occur no wrath against the king’s realm and his sons. ²⁴ And it is being made known to YOU men that – as respects any of the priests and the Le´vites, the musicians, the gatekeepers, the Neth´i-nim, and the workers of this house of God – you have no authority to impose tax, tribute or toll upon them.

²⁵ And you Ez´ra – according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand – appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people that are beyond the River who know the laws of your God – and YOU men will instruct anyone that does not know [them].

²⁶ And as for everyone that does not become a doer of the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be promptly executed upon him – whether for death or for banishment, or for a fine or for imprisonment.’



Letter
King Ar-ta-xerx´es of Persia ——— Ez´ra the priest

Whereas the former 26 verses were narration, from here onwards Ez´ra himself speaks in the text in the 1st person

● ——— Ez´ra (personal praise) *sotvoc*

➤ ²⁷ Blessed be Jehovah the God of our forefathers, Who has put such a thing into the heart of the king!²⁸ to beautify the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalayim! ²⁸ And He has extended loving-kindness toward me before the king and his counsellors and before all of the king’s mighty princes.

So I strengthened myself by to the hand of Jehovah my God upon me, and I assembled the head ones of Israel to go up with me!

8

¹ Now these were the heads of their paternal houses and the genealogical enrolment of those going up with me out of Babylon during the reign of Ar-ta-xerx´es the king:

² of the sons of Phin´e-has: Ger´shom;

of the sons of lth´a-mar: Daniel;

of the sons of David: Hat´tush;

³ of the sons of Shec-a-ni´ah of the sons of Pa´rosh: Zech-a-ri´ah, and with him there two hundred

²⁷ Confirmed by the retinue of A-has-u-e´rus *Esther 1:10-14*

²⁸ This is not a Jewish king, but one enacting laws for the protection and re-establishment of God’s people!

men;

⁴ of the sons of Pa'hath-Mo'ab: El'ie-ho-e'nai [*"my eyes are toward Jehovah"*] the son of Zer-a-hi'ah, and with him two hundred males;

⁵ of the sons [*of Zat'tu*]: Shec-a-ni'ah the son of Ja-ha-zi'el, and with him three hundred males;

⁶ and of the sons of A'din: E'bed the son of Jon'a-than, and with him fifty males;

⁷ and of the sons of E'lam: Je-sha'iah the son of Ath-a-li'ah, and with him seventy males;

⁸ and of the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah: Zeb-a-di'ah the son of Mi'cha-el, and with him eighty males;

⁹ of the sons of Jo'ab: O-ba-di'ah the son of Je-hi'el, and with him two hundred and eighteen males;

¹⁰ and of the sons of [*Ba'nee*]: She-lo'mith the son of Jo-si-phi'ah [*"Jehovah adds"*], and with him a hundred and sixty males;

¹¹ and of the sons of Be'bai: Zech-a-ri'ah the son of [*another man named*] Be'bai, and with him twenty-eight males;

¹² and of the sons of Az'gad: Jo-ha'nan the son of Hak'ka-tan [*"the small"*], and with him a hundred and ten males;

¹³ and of the last sons of Ad-o-ni'kam, these were their names: E-liph'e-let, Je-i'el and She-mai'ah, and with them sixty males;

¹⁴ and of the sons of Big'vai: U'thai and Zab'bud [*"given"*], and with them seventy males.

People Assemble... but there are no Le'vites Among Them

¹⁵ And I assembled them at the stream that comes to A-ha'va [*"I shall subsist"*] [a town near Babylon] and we encamped there three days, that I might scrutinise the people and the priests... but I found none of the sons of Le'vi there.

¹⁶ Accordingly I sent for E-li-e'zer, Ar'i-el, She-mai'ah and El-na'than and Ja'rib and El-na'than and Nathan and Zech-a-ri'ah and Me-shul'lam – head ones – and for Joi'a-rib [*"Jehovah contends"*] and El-na'than – discerning men. ¹⁷ Then I sent them to Id'do – the head one in [*the city of*] Ca-si-phi'a [*"silvery"*] – and I put words in their mouth to speak to Id'do [*and*] his brothers the Neth'i-nim in Ca-si-phi'a: that they should bring ministers to us for the house of our God. ¹⁸ So they brought to us, according to the good hand of our God upon us, a man of wisdom from the sons of Mah'li, the grandson of Le'vi the son of Israel, namely:

She-re-bi'ah [*"Jehovah has scorched"*] and his sons and his brothers – eighteen;

¹⁹ and Hash-a-bi'ah and with him Je-sha'iah from the sons of Me-rar'i, his brothers, and their sons – twenty.

²⁰ and from the Neth'i-nim, whom David and the princes gave to the service of the Le'vites: two hundred and twenty Neth'i-nim, all of whom had been designated by [*their*] names.

²¹ Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river at A-ha'va, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek the right way from Him for us and for our little ones and for all our goods – ²² for I felt ashamed to ask for a military force and horsemen from the king to protect us against an enemy in the way, because we had said to the king:

● *King Ar-ta-xerxes of Persia ——— Ez'ra the priest*

← *'The hand of our God is over all those seeking Him for good, but His strength and His anger are against all those leaving Him.'*

²³ – so we fasted and made request of our God concerning this... and He let Himself be entreated by us.

Twelve Entrusted with bearing the Silver and Gold to Jerusalem

²⁴ I now separated from the chiefs of the priests twelve, namely:

She-re-bi'ah, Hash-a-bi'ah, and ten of their brothers with them

²⁵ and I proceeded to weigh out to them the silver and the gold and the utensils, the contribution to the house of our God that the king and his counsellors and his princes and all the Israelites who could be found had contributed. ²⁶ Thus I weighed out into their hand six hundred and fifty talents [*45 lbs per talent*] of silver and a hundred silver utensils [*weighing*] a hundred talents, [*and*] gold – a hundred talents, ²⁷ and twenty

covered gold bowls weighing a thousand darics [250 talents] and two utensils of good copper – gleaming red, as desirable as gold.

²⁸ Then I said to them:

- *Ez'ra the priest* — 12 chiefs of the priests: *She-re-bi'ah, Hash-a-bi'ah, and ten of their brothers*

⇒ YOU are Holy to Jehovah, and the utensils are Holy, and the silver and the gold are a voluntary offering to Jehovah the God of YOUR forefathers.

²⁹ Keep alert and be on guard until YOU weigh [them] out before the chief priests and the Le'vites and the princes of the fathers of Israel in Jerusalem, in the halls of the house of Jehovah.

³⁰ And the priests and the Le'vites undertook the weight of the silver and the gold and the utensils, to bring [them] to Jerusalem to the house of our God. ³¹ Finally we pulled away from the river at A-ha'va on the twelfth [day] of the first month to go to Jerusalem, and the hand of our God proved to be over us, so that He delivered us out of the palm of the enemy and the ambusher on the way...

³² So we came to Jerusalem and dwelt there three days [to recover]...

³³ on the fourth day we weighed out the silver and the gold and the utensils in the house of our God into the hand of Mer'e-moth ["elevations"] the son of U-ri'jah the priest and with him El-e-a'zar the son of Phin'e-has²⁹ and with them [two] Le'vites: Jo'za-bad the son of Jesh'u-a and No-a-di'ah ["meeting with Jehovah"] the son of Bin'nu-i ["built up"] — ³⁴ by number [and] by weight for everything, after which all the weight was written down at that time.

³⁵ ...and those coming out of the captivity – the former exiles – presented burnt sacrifices to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs, twelve he-goats as a sin offering, everything as a burnt offering to Jehovah.

³⁶ ...then we gave the king's edicts to the king's satraps and governors beyond the River, and they assisted the people and the house of the [true] God!

9

- *Ez'ra is Distraught on Hearing of Inter-Marriages*

¹ And as soon as these things were finished, the princes approached me, saying:

- *Ez'ra the priest* — *princes of Israel*

⇐ The people of Israel... and the priests and the Le'vites... have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands as regards their detestable things of the Ca'naan-ites, the Hit'tites, the Per'iz-zites, the Jeb'u-sites, the Am'mon-ites, the Mo'ab-ites, the Egyptians and the Am'or-ites. ² For they have taken some of their daughters for themselves – and for their sons; and they have mixed the Holy seed with the peoples of the lands... and the hand of the princes and the deputy rulers has been foremost in this unfaithfulness!

³ Now as soon as I heard of this thing I ripped apart my garment and my sleeveless coat, and I began to pull out some of the hair of my head and of my beard, and I kept sitting stunned. ⁴ Then they gathered themselves to me, everyone trembling because of the words of the God of Israel against [this] treachery of the exiled people, while I was sitting stunned until the grain offering of the evening.

⁵ And at the grain offering of the evening I stood up from my self-affliction, with my garment and my sleeveless coat torn apart, and I proceeded to bow upon my knees and spread out my palms to Jehovah my God. ⁶ And I went on to say:

- *Almighty God* — *Ez'ra the priest*

⇐ O my God, I do feel ashamed and embarrassed to raise my face to You, O my God, for our errors have multiplied³⁰ over our head and our guiltiness has grown great even to the heavens.

²⁹ Numbers 25:6-14

³⁰ Going to rebuild the Temple should have been a cause of cleansing, of freedom of pursuing God again... but instead has been exploited as a license to loose living

⁷ From the days of our forefathers we have been in great guiltiness until this day; and because of our errors we have been given – our kings, our priests – into the hand of the kings of the lands, and thence to the sword, to captivity and to be plundered and shame-faced, just as at this day...

● Ez'ra the priest ——— people nearby

⇒ ⁸ At this time, for a brief moment, favour has come to us from Jehovah our God, by leaving over for us those who escape and by giving us a peg [back] in His Holy place – for our God to make our eyes shine and to grant us a little reviving in our servitude. ⁹ For we are slaves, but our God has not forsaken us in our servitude, but He extends loving-kindness toward us before the face of the kings of Persia, to revive us so as to raise up the house of our God and to restore its desolated places and to give us a [protective] wall in Judah and in Jerusalem....

⇐ ¹⁰ But now what shall we say, O our God, after this? For we! [the returnees] have forsaken Your commandments, ¹¹ which You commanded by means of Your servants the prophets, saying:

'The land that YOU people are going in to take possession of is an impure land – because of the impurity of the peoples of the lands, because of their disgusting things with which they have filled it from end to end by their uncleanness.

¹² And now: do not YOU people give YOUR daughters to their sons, neither accept their daughters for YOUR sons; and to time indefinite YOU must not work for their peace and their prosperity, in order that YOU may grow strong and certainly eat the good of the land and indeed take possession for YOUR sons to time indefinite.'



Exodus 34:11-15 (paraphrased)
Almighty God through Moses ——— all Israel

⇐ ¹³ Yet after all that has come upon us for our bad deeds and our great guiltiness – for You Yourself, O our God, have held back [Your punishment] to less than our error, and You have given us this escape – ¹⁴ shall we return to breaking Your commandments and forming marriage alliances with the peoples which are behind these “disgusting things”? Will You not get incensed at us to the limit so that there will be none remaining and none escaping?

¹⁵ O Jehovah the God of Israel, You are righteous, because we have been left over as a delivered people [from what would be just punishment] ...as at this day. See! we are before You in our guiltiness, for it is impossible to stand before You on account of this...

10

¹ Now as soon as Ez'ra had prayed and he had made confession while weeping and lying prostrate before the house of the [true] God, those of Israel collected themselves together to him, a very large assembly – men and women and children – for the people had wept profusely. ² Then Shec-a-ni'ah the son of Je-hi'el of the sons of E'lam answered and said to Ez'ra:

● Ez'ra the priest ——— Shec-a-ni'ah, son of Je-hi'el

↔ We³¹ – we have acted treacherously against our God by marrying foreign wives from the peoples of the land. Yet now there exists a hope for Israel concerning this:

³ let us conclude a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and those born from them according to the counsel of my lord [Ez'ra] and of those³² who tremble at the commandment of our God, that it may be done according to the Law.

⇐ ⁴ Get up, for the matter devolves upon you, and we are with you. Be strong and act.

⁵ At that Ez'ra rose and had the chiefs of the priests, the Le'vites and all Israel take an oath to do according to this word.. and they took the oath.

⁶ Ez'ra now rose from before the house of the [true] God and went to the chamber of [the high priest] Je-ho-ha'nan the son of E-li'a-shib [a former high priest] – but although he went there, he ate no bread and drank no

³¹ Although some of his cousins – the sons of E'lam – had taken foreign wives, Shec-a-ni'ah himself had not. He is standing as a spokesman, to saw what the guilty are too ashamed to say, and counting himself as guilty in not having done enough to prevent it

³² There were those – of all ranks – who did not like the foreign marriages, but their voices did not prevent it. Shec-a-ni'ah is speaking for those there who really want God's way to thrive again

water, for he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiled people. ⁷ Then [together] they caused a call to pass throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the former exiles:

...to collect themselves together at Jerusalem, ⁸ and anyone that did not come in three days' time according to the counsel of the princes and the older men – all his goods would be put under a ban and he himself be separated from the congregation of the exiled people.³³

⁹ So all the men of Judah and Benjamin collected themselves together at Jerusalem within three days on the twentieth [day] of the ninth month, and all the people kept sitting in the open place of the house of the [true] God, shivering because of the matter and on account of the showers of rain.

¹⁰ At length Ez'ra the priest rose and said to them:

● Ez'ra the priest — all former exiles, Judah and Benjamin

⇒ YOU have acted treacherously – YOU have married foreign wives so as to add to the guiltiness of Israel.

¹¹ And now make confession to Jehovah the God of YOUR forefathers and do His pleasure:

separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.

¹² To this all the congregation responded, and said with a loud voice:

↔ As you have said, so shall we do.

¹³ However, the people are many and it is the season of downpours, and we cannot stand outside – and this matter will not take one day or two, because many of us have rebelled in this matter.

¹⁴ So please, let our princes act representatively for all the congregation; and let all those in their cities who have taken foreign wives come at the times appointed – together with the older men of each individual city and its judges – until we have turned back the burning anger of our God from us, on account of this matter.

¹⁵ – and Jon'a-than the son of As'a-hel and Jah-zei'ah [¹⁶“Jehovah will see”] the son of Tik'vah themselves were employed over this, and the Le'vites Me-shul'am³⁴ and Shab'be-thai [¹⁷“sabbatical”] helped them.

¹⁶ So the sons of the exiles did that: Ez'ra the priest [and] the men that were the heads of the fathers for their paternal house – all of them by [their] names – now separated themselves and began sitting on the first day of the tenth month to inquire into the matter; ¹⁷ and gradually they finished with all the men that had married foreign wives by the first day of the first month [of the new year].

¹⁸ And some of the sons of the priests came to be found that had given a dwelling to foreign wives:

of the sons of Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak and his brothers: Ma-a-sei'ah and E-li-e'zer and Ja'rib and Ged-a-li'ah. ¹⁹ But they promised to put their wives away, and that – they being guilty – a ram of the flock should be given for their guiltiness.

²⁰ And of the sons of Im'mer there were: Ha-na'ni and Zeb-a-di'ah;

²¹ and of the sons of Ha'rim: Ma-a-sei'ah and E-li'jah and She-mai'ah and Je-hi'el and Uz-zi'ah;

²² and of the sons of Pash'hur: E'li-o-e'nai, Ma-a-sei'ah, Ish'ma-el, Ne-than'el, Jo'za-bad and E-e-a'sah.

²³ And of the Le'vites:

Jo'za-bad and Shim'e-i and Ke-lai'ah [²⁴“Jehovah has dishonoured”] [aka Ke-li'ta] (that is, Ke-li'ta [²⁵“crippled”] [aka Ke-lai'ah]), Peth-a-hi'ah, Judah and E-li-e'zer;

²⁴ and of the singers: E-li'a-shib;

and of the gatekeepers: Shal'lum and Te'lem and U'ri.

²⁵ And of Israel:

of the sons of Pa'rosh there were: Ra-mi'ah [²⁶“Jehovah has loosened”] and Iz-zi'ah [²⁷“Jehovah sprinkles”] and

³³ “all his goods placed under a ban” – he would not be allowed to trade with the Hebrews. He would be cast to the nations

³⁴ Perhaps the son of Ze-rub'ba-bel, or the Me-shul'am who travelled with Ez'ra to Jerusalem – or perhaps they are one and the same

Mal-chi'jah and Mij'a-min and El-e-a'zar and *[another]* Mal-chi'jah and Be-nai'ah;

²⁶ and of the sons of E'lam: Mat-ta-ni'ah, Zech-a-ri'ah and Je-hi'el and Ab'di and Jer'e-moth and E-li'jah;

²⁷ and of the sons of Zat'tu: E'li-o-e'nai, E-li'a-shib, Mat-ta-ni'ah and Jer'e-moth and Za'bad and A-zi'za *["strong"]*;

²⁸ and of the sons of Be'bai: Je-ho-ha'nan, Han-a-ni'ah, Zab'bai *["pure"]*, Ath'lai *["whom Jehovah afflicts"]*;

²⁹ and of the sons of Ba'nee: Me-shul'lam, Mal'luch and A-dai'ah, Ja'shub and She'al *["asking"]* *[and]* Jer'e-moth;

³⁰ and of the sons of Pa'hath-Mo'ab: Ad'na *["rest" or "pleasure"]* and Che'lal *["completed"]*, Be-nai'ah, Ma-a-sei'ah, Mat-ta-ni'ah, Bez'al-el and Bin'nu-i and Ma-nas'seh;

³¹ and *[of]* the sons of Ha'rim: E-li-e'zer, Is-shi'jah *["Jehovah will lend"]*, Mal-chi'jah, She-mai'ah, Shim'e-on *["heard"]*, ³² Benjamin, Mal'luch *[and]* Shem-a-ri'ah;

³³ of the sons of Ha'shum: Mat-te'nai *["gift of Jehovah"]*, Mat'tat-tah *["gift of Jehovah"]*, Za'bad, E-liph'e-let, Jer'e-mai *["my exaltations"]*, Ma-nas'seh *[and]* Shim'e-i;

³⁴ of the sons of *[a second]* Ba'nee: Ma-a-da'i *["ornament of Jehovah"]*, Am'ram and U'el *["wish or will of God"]*, ³⁵ Be-nai'ah, Be-dei'ah *["servant of Jehovah"]*, Chel'u-hi *["my accomplishment"]*, ³⁶ Va-ni'ah *["Jehovah is praise"]*, Mer'e-moth, E-li'a-shib, ³⁷ Mat-ta-ni'ah, Mat-te'nai and Ja'a-su *["they will do"]*;

³⁸ and of the sons of Bin'nu-i: Shim'e-i ³⁹ and Shel-e-mi'ah and Nathan and A-dai'ah, ⁴⁰ Mach-nad'e-bai *["he brought low my willing ones"]*, Sha'shai *["noble"]*, Sha'rai *["releaser"]*, ⁴¹ Az'ar-el and Shel-e-mi'ah, Shem-a-ri'ah, ⁴² Shal'lum, Am-a-ri'ah, Joseph;

⁴³ of the sons of Ne'bo: Je-i'el, Mat-ti-thi'ah, Za'bad, Ze-bi'na *["bought"]*, Jad'dai *["timely" or "lovely"]* and Joel *[and]* Be-nai'ah.

⁴⁴ — all these had taken foreign wives, and among those wives some *[had to]* place their sons.

Nehemiah

The Scroll of Ne-he-mi'ah details events between the end of chapter 6 – when the Temple work (though not the city work) was rekindled to completion – and the beginning of chapter 7 of the scroll of Ez'ra.

It lies during the reign of Ar-ta-xerx'es 1st and concerns the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalayim – under much turmoil and threat of disruption from locals.

The text is interrupted with verbatim prayers from Ne-he-mi'ah at times of great stress.

1

¹ The words of Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Hac-a-li'ah [^{“whom Jehovah enlightens”}];

Now it came about in the month Chis'lev [^{9th month – “his confidence”}], in the twentieth [^{regnal}] year¹ [^{of King Ar-ta-xerx'es}], that I myself happened to be in the palace at Shu'shan [^{“tily”}]. ² Then Ha-na'ni, one of my brothers, came in – he and other men [^{who were come}] from Judah. So I asked them about the Jews – those who had escaped, who had been left [^{allowed to remain in the Promised Land}] of the captivity, and also about Jerusalayim. ³ And they said to me:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Hac-a-li'ah — Ha-na'ni his brother & other men of Judah*

⇐ *Those left of those [families] which remained [at the time of] the captivity [140 years ago] in the jurisdictional district, are in a very bad plight and in reproach; and the wall of Jerusalayim is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.²*

⁴ And as soon as I heard these words, I sat down and began to weep and mourn for days, and I was continually fasting and praying before the God of the heavens. ⁵ And I went on to say:

- *Almighty God — Ne-he-mi'ah*

⇐ *Ah, Jehovah the God of the heavens, the great and fear-inspiring God, keeping the covenant and loving-kindness toward those who love Him and keep His commandments:*

⁶ *Let Your ear become attentive now and Your eyes opened to listen to the prayer of Your servant, which I am praying before You today – day and night – concerning the sons of Israel Your servants, all the while making confession concerning the sins of the sons of Israel with which we have sinned against You.*

We have sinned, both I and the house of my father. ⁷ We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments and the laws and the judicial rulings that You gave in command to Moses Your servant.

⁸ *Remember, please, the word that You commanded Moses Your servant, saying:*

*‘If YOU people act unfaithfully, I shall scatter YOU among the peoples...’
⁹ ‘...When YOU have returned to Me and kept My commandments and done them, then even though YOUR dispersed people should be at the end of the skies³ I shall collect them from there and bring them to the place that I chose to have My Name reside there.’*



*Leviticus 26:33 ; Deuteronomy 30:1-5 (paraphrased)
Almighty God — Moses*

¹ This takes place in the 9th month, and his prayer is answered with access to the king in the 1st month – of the same year *Nehemiah 2:1-2*. Clearly, this is a regnal year of the king, which did not begin with the 1st month of the Jewish year, therefore Chislev preceded Ni'san in that king's 20th year

² Some 60 years earlier, the Temple had been rebuilt – on a larger scale – and the walls and gates re-established to some minor extent, beginning with the first returnees at the behest of Cyrus, and then completed after the decree of Da-ri'us. However during the later 60 years, these had been attacked by locals, and – lacking an army or king of their own – the city and the people suffered. Judah was still a province of Persia, and whereas God's protection was marvellous in the days of the Promised Land, it did not extend to supporting another nation which had ownership of His people. Israel needed to be free again

³ This means far beyond the horizon as seen from the Promised Land

¹⁰ and they are Your servants and Your people, whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your Strong Hand. ¹¹ Ah, Jehovah, please, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants who take delight in fearing Your Name; and please: grant success to Your servant today and make him an object of pity before this man.

...now I happened to be cup-bearer to the king!

2

¹ And it came about in the month Ni'san [*1st month: "their flight"*] in the twentieth year of King Ar-ta-xerx'es [^{1st}] that wine was before him, and I as usual took up the wine and gave it to the king... but never before had I been gloomy before him. ² So the king said to me:

● *King Ar-ta-xerx'es of Babylon — Ne-he-mi'ah*

⇒ *Why is your face gloomy when you are not sick in yourself? This is nothing but a gloominess of heart!*

At this I became very much afraid, ³ so I said to the king:

↔ *Let the king live to time indefinite! Why should my face not become gloomy when the city – the house of the burial places of my forefathers – is devastated, and its gates have been eaten up with fire?*

⁴ In turn the king said to me:

↔ *What are you asking for?*

– at once I prayed to the God of the heavens... ⁵ and I replied to the king:

↔ *If it seems good to the king, and if your servant seems good before you, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of the burial places of my forefathers, so that I may rebuild it.*

⁶ At this the king said to me, as his queenly consort⁴ was sitting beside him:

↔ *How long will your journey be? when will you return?*

...so it was good before the king to send me, and I gave him the appointed time. ⁷ And I went on to say to the king:

↔ *If it seems good to the king, let letters be given me for the governors beyond the River, so that they may let me pass until I come to Judah; ⁸ also a letter to A'saph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me trees to make timbers for the gates of the palace [*enclosure, courtyard*] that belongs to the house [*of Jehovah*], and for the wall of the city, and for the house which I will enter.*

So the king gave [*them*] to me, according to the good hand of my God upon me...

⁹ Eventually I came to the governors beyond the River and gave the king's letters to them; moreover, the king had sent chiefs of the military force and horsemen with me.

¹⁰ ...but when San-bal'lat [*"strength"*] the Hor'o-nite [*Mo'ab-ite*] and the servant To-bi'ah the Am'mon-ite, got to hear [*of it*], then it seemed very bad to them that a man had come to procure something good for the sons of Israel.

¹¹ – at length I came to Jerusalem, and I remained there for three days.

¹² Then I rose up by night – I and a few men with me – and I did not tell anyone what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem, and there was no beast with me except the animal on which I was riding⁵.

¹³ At night I went out by the Valley Gate before the Snake Well and to the Gate of the Ash-heaps, and I examined the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, and its gates had been eaten up by fire. ¹⁴

And I went passing along to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, and there was no place for the

⁴ Clearly this queen consort is significant concerning the Jews, otherwise Ne-he-mi'ah would not have referred to her. However this is not Esther *Ezra 4:6-7* – but may be another Jewish queen consort. Since Esther was pleasing to A-has-u-e-rus and prevented great strife throughout the entire kingdom, some of her children would likely have remained close to the royal household, and one of the girls been taken by the new king as a consort

⁵ The "chiefs of the military force and horsemen" were an escort for kingly business – that is, for the letters to reach the governors – and not an escort to Jerusalem

domestic animal under me to pass along. ¹⁵ So I ascended in the torrent valley [of Kid'ron] by night,⁶ and I kept on examining the wall; after which I came back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so got back [inside Jerusalem].

¹⁶ The deputy rulers did not know where I had gone and what I had done, nor had I yet told anything to the Jews and the priests and the nobles and the deputy rulers nor to anyone responsible for the work. ¹⁷ Finally I said to them:⁷

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — Jews, priests, nobles, deputy rulers and the rest of the doers of the work

⇒ YOU see the plight we are in, how Jerusalem is devastated and its gates have been burned with fire. Come and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be ashamed.

¹⁸ — and I told them of the hand of my God — how it had been good upon me — and also of words which the king had said to me. At this they said:

↩ Let us get up, and we will build!

— so they strengthened their hands for the good work.

¹⁹ Now when San-bal'lat the Hor'o-nite and the servant To-bi'ah⁸ the Am'mon-ite and Ge'shem the Arabian heard of it, they began to deride us and looked down on us and say:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah and those working on the reconstruction* — San-bal'lat the Hor'o-nite, To-bi'ah the servant, the Am'mon-ite, and Ge'shem the Arabian

⇐ What are YOU doing? Are YOU are rebelling against the king?

²⁰ but I answered their contention and said to them:

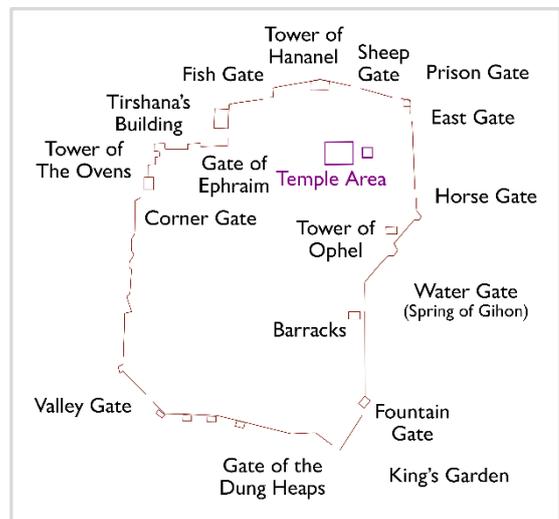
- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — San-bal'lat the Hor'o-nite, To-bi'ah the servant, the Am'mon-ite, and Ge'shem the Arabian

↪ The God of the Heavens is the One that will grant us success, and we His servants shall get up, and build — but YOU have no share, nor just claim, nor memorial in Jerusalem.⁹

3

¹ And E-li'a-shib the high priest and his brothers the priests proceeded to get up and build the Sheep Gate. They sanctified it and set up its doors; and they sanctified it as far as the Tower of Me'ah ["hundred"], as far as the Tower of Hanan'el ["God has favoured"], ² And the men of Jer'i-cho did building at his side, and Zac'cur the son of Im'ri did building at his side.

³ And the sons of Has-se-na'ah ["thorny"] built the Fish Gate; they erected its frame and then set up its doors, its bolts and its bars. ⁴ And at their side Mer'e-moth the son of U-ri'jah the son of Hak'koz did repair work, and at their side Meshul'lam the son of Ber-e-chi'ah the son of Mesh-ez'a-bel ["God delivers"] did repair work; and at their side Za'dok the son of Ba'a-na did repair work. ⁵ And at their side the Te-ko'ites did repair work; but their "majestic ones"¹⁰ did not bring the back of their neck into the service of their masters.



Possible wall layout for Jerusalem during the rebuilding by Nehemiah and Zerubbabel

⁶ Situated on the eastern slope of Jerusalem, it would have been illuminated by the light of the moon toward the south east

⁷ Ne-he-mi'ah acted in secret at night, to avoid opposition and avoid inciting depressed inactivity in the Jews — but presented them with his record of his inspection as an incentive, to show that the work — though great — was not boundless

⁸ Nehemiah 13:4

⁹ Ne-he-mi'ah's rebuke indicates how down-trodden the Jews had been by the opposers surrounding them

¹⁰ They saw manual labour as beneath them, perhaps excusing themselves on the grounds of vulnerability, being from a city some 8 miles away from Jerusalem and open to assault from local adversaries. Compare the action of princes in verses 14-19

6 ...but Joi'a-da [^{"Jehovah knows"}] the son of Pa-se'ah and Me-shul'lam the son of Bes-o-dei'ah [^{"with the counsel of Jehovah" or "in the secret of the Lord"}] repaired the Gate of the Old [City]; they erected its frame and set up its doors and its bolts and its bars. 7. And at their side Mel-a-ti'ah [^{"Jehovah delivered"}] the Gib'e-on-ite and Ja'don [^{"thankful"}] the Me-ron'o-thite, did repair work – men of Gib'e-on and Miz'pah [^{who}] belonged to the throne of the viceroy beyond the River¹¹. 8. At his side: Uz'zi-el the son of Har-hai'ah [^{"fear of Jehovah"}] – goldsmiths – did repair work; and at his side Han-a-ni'ah – a member of the ointment mixers – did repair work; and they proceeded to restore [^{both hills of}] Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.¹² 9. And at their side Re-pha'iah the son of Hur – a prince of half the district of Jerusalem – did repair work.¹³

10. And at their side Je-da'iah the son of Ha-ru'maph [^{"split nose"}] did repair work in front of his own house; and at his side Hat'tush the son of Hash-ab-nei'ah [^{"whom Jehovah regards"}] did repair work.

11. Another measured section was repaired by Mal-chi'jah the son of Ha'rim and Has'shub the son of Pa'hath-Mo'ab, and also the Tower of the Bake Ovens. 12. And at his side Shal'lum the son of Hal-lo'hesh [^{"whisperer"}] – a prince of half the district of Jerusalem – did repair work, he and his daughters.

13. The Valley Gate was repaired by Ha'nun and the inhabitants of Za-no'ah; they built it and then set up its doors, its bolts and its bars, also a thousand cubits in the wall as far as the Gate of the Ash-heaps, 14. but the Gate of the Ash-heaps [^{itself}] was repaired by Mal-chi'jah the son of Re'chab – a prince of the district of Beth-hac-Che'rem [^{"house of the vineyard"}]; he himself built it and setting up its doors, its bolts and its bars.

15. The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shal'lun [^{"retribution"}] the son of Col-ho'zeh [^{"all-seeing"}], a prince of the district of Miz'pah; he built it and placed a roof over it and set up its doors, its bolts and its bars, and also the wall of the Pool of the Shi-lo'ah [^{"sent"}] [Pool of the Canal] to the King's Garden and as far as the Stairway that goes down from the City of David.

16. After him Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Az'buk [^{"strong devastation"}] – a prince of half the district of Beth-zur – did repair work as far as in front of the Burial Places of David and as far as the pool that had been made and as far as the House of the Mighty Ones.

17. After him the Le'vites did repair work: Re'hum the son of Ba'nee; at his side Hash-a-bi'ah – a prince of half the district of Kei'lah – did repair work for his district. 18. After him their brothers did repair work: Bav'vai [^{"my goings"}] the son of Hen'a-dad, a prince of half the district of Kei'lah.

19. And next to him E'zer the son of Jesh'u-a, chief of Miz'pah, repaired another measured section in front of the ascent to the Armoury at the corner [SW corner, the buttresses].

20. After him Bar'uch [^{"blessed"}] the son of Zab'bai worked with fervour [and] repaired another measured section, from the corner as far as the entrance of the house of E-li'a-shib the high priest.

21. After him Mer'e-moth the son of U-ri'jah the son of Hak'koz repaired another measured section, from the entrance of the house of E-li'a-shib as far as the end of E-li'a-shib's house.

22. And after him the priests – men of the [Jordan] District – did repair work. 23. After them Benjamin and Has'shub did repair work in front of their own house. After them Az-a-ri'ah the son of Ma-a-sei'ah the son of A-na-ni'ah [^{"Jehovah clouds"}] did repair work close by his own house. 24. After him Bin'nu-i the son of Hen'a-dad repaired another measured section, from the house of Az-a-ri'ah as far as the angle and as far as the corner.

25. [After him] Pa'lal [^{"judge"}] the son of U'zai [^{"I shall have my sprinklings"}] [did repair work] in front of the angle and the tower that protrudes from the King's House, the upper one that belongs to the Courtyard of the Guard. After him there was Pe-dai'ah the son of Pa'rosh.

26. Now the Neth'i-nim were dwelling in O'phel; [they did repair work] as far as in front of the Water Gate on the east and the protruding tower.

27. After them the Te-ko'ites repaired another measured section, from in front of the great protruding tower as far as the wall of O'phel.

¹¹ A pointed reference – these were much more majestic in status than the aloof "majestic ones" of Te-koa

¹² Since the fill-in mound of O'phel had been constructed linking Mt. Mo-ri'ah solidly with Mt. Zion, this formed Jerusalem – wider Jerusalem – so this wall would go around both mountains

¹³ In comparison to the "majestic ones" who found labour too far beneath them, there are some of the Neth'i-nim *Nehemiah 7:46-51* and princes and fine-handed artisans – who need mild hands for their work – labouring profusely for the city

²⁸ The priests did repair work above the Horse Gate, each one in front of his own house.

²⁹ After them Za'dok the son of Im'mer did repair work in front of his own house.

And after him She-mai'ah the son of Shec-a-ni'ah – the keeper of the East Gate – did repair work.

³⁰ After him Han-a-ni'ah the son of Shel-e-mi'ah and Ha'nun the sixth son of Za'laph [^{“wound”}] repaired another measured section.

After him Me-shul'lam the son of Ber-e-chi'ah did repair work in front of his own hall.

³¹ After him Mal-chi'jah – a member of the goldsmith guild¹⁴ – did repair work as far as the house of the Neth'i-nim and the traders, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the roof chamber [^{or stairway}] of the corner.

³² And between the roof chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the traders did repair work.

4

¹ Now it came about that, as soon as San-bal'lat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and highly offended, and he kept deriding the Jews. ² And he would speak to his brothers and the military force of Sa-mar'i-a, saying:

- *San-bal'lat* — brothers and the military force

⇒ *What are the feeble Jews doing? Will they depend upon themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish [be worn out] in a day?¹⁵ Will they revive stones out of piles of soil and burned remnants? [“from where will they get their building stones?!”]*

³ Now To-bi'ah the Am'mon-ite was alongside him, and he went on to say:

- *San-bal'lat* — *To-bi'ah the Am'mon-ite*

↔ *Even what they are building, if a fox went up [against it] he would break down their wall of stones.*

Ne-he-mi'ah prays for help

- *Almighty God* — *Ne-he-mi'ah* ^{sotvoc}

↔ ⁴ *Hear, O our God, for we have become an object of contempt. Turn back their reproach upon their own head, and give them to be plundered in the land of captivity.* ⁵ *And do not cover over their perversity and their sin from before You, do not wipe it out, for they have committed offence against the builders.*

⁶ So we continued building the wall, and the entire wall came to be joined together clear to half its [^{height}], for the people had the heart for working.

⁷ But when San-bal'lat and To-bi'ah and the Arabians and the Am'mon-ites and the Ash'dod-ites heard that the walls of Jerusalem had been joined [^{together}] (for the gaps had started to be stopped up) they became very angry. ⁸ And all of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and cause it harm. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and kept a guard posted against them day and night on account of them.

¹⁰ ...Then [^{men of}] Judah began to say:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah and those working on the reconstruction* — *men of Judah*

↔ *The power of the burden bearer has faltered, and there is a great deal of rubbish; and we ourselves are not able to build on the wall.*

¹¹ — moreover our adversaries kept saying:

¹⁴ Literally “son of the goldsmith”. However, just as the “sons of the prophets” was a guild of devout people during the time of Israel's spiritual neglect, this can also refer to a guild rather than a paternal relationship

¹⁵ Otherwise be vulnerable when night falls

- *adversaries (San-bal'lat, To-bi'ah, Ge'shem ?)* —

↻ **They will neither know nor see until we are right in among them... and we shall kill them! and put a stop to the work.**

¹² And it came about that whenever the Jews dwelling close by them came in, they said to us ten times:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah and those working on the reconstruction* — *Jews dwelling near the adversaries*

↵ **[They will come up] from all the places to which YOU people are returning us.**¹⁶

The situation is dangerous: the burden-bearers have become tired out, the towns and settlements from which many of the workers have come are now targets for the adversaries in order to form bases there – both to attack Jerusalem and to disrupt (even take away) the lives of the workers, and the wall – although completed – is symbolic, lacking any real strength. There is the need to reinforce the wall, but also to defend against the threat of murderous attack, yet the men are tired, losing their own homes in the towns of Judah, and short of materials.

¹³ So I kept [*men*] posted at the lowest parts of the place behind the wall at the open places, and I kept the people posted by families with their swords, their lances and their bows. ¹⁴ I looked and rose up and said to the nobles and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *nobles, deputy rulers, the rest of the people*

⇒ **Do not be afraid because of them. Keep in YOUR mind Jehovah – the great and the fear-inspiring One – and fight for YOUR brothers, YOUR sons and YOUR daughters, YOUR wives and YOUR homes.**

¹⁵ Now it came about after our enemies heard that it had become known to us – that is, that the [*true*] God had frustrated their counsel – we all returned to the wall, each one to his work. ¹⁶ From that day forward half of my young men were active in the work and half of them were on alert with shields and bows and coats of mail and with the princes behind the whole house of Judah. ¹⁷ The one building on the wall and those who were carrying the burdens were laden so that one hand did the work while the other [*hand*] was holding a javelin. ¹⁸ And the builders were girded, each one with his sword upon his hip while building; and the trumpet man [*for calling the alarm*] was alongside me – ¹⁹ and I said to the nobles and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *nobles, deputy rulers, the rest of the people*

⇒ **The work is vast and widespread, and we are separated far apart from one another upon the wall. ²⁰ Wherever YOU hear the sound of the horn, collect yourselves together to us there, and our God Himself will fight for us.**

²¹ so we laboured in the work while the other half of them were holding the lances from the ascending of the dawn until the stars came out. ²² Besides, at that time I said to the people:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *the people*

⇒ **Let the men spend the night with his attendant in the midst of Jerusalem,¹⁷ and they must become a guard for us by night and workers by day.**

²³ – so neither I nor my brothers nor my attendants nor the men of the guard who were behind me removed our garments,¹⁸ each one [*having*] his javelin even when he went for water.

5

Ne-he-mi'ah Bans Jews from Practicing Usury

¹ However there came to be a great outcry of the people and their wives against their [*wealthier*] Jewish brothers, ² for there were those who were saying:

- *the people and their wives, reluctant workers and givers* —

↵ **We are giving our sons and our daughters as security so that we may get grain and eat and stay**

¹⁶ Places below Jerusalem were acting as settlements, and those places were becoming nervous that San-bal'lat would wreck their homes while they were in Jerusalem working on the wall. So Ne-he-mi'ah set up armed men ready, should any show themselves

¹⁷ The workers would no longer go to their homes outside of the city, but would sleep within the walls. To the opposers watching from outside Jerusalem, who would see nobody leave at the end of the day, Jerusalem would seem much more formidable

¹⁸ They never relaxed

alive.¹⁹

³ – others were saying:

↳ We are giving our fields and our vineyards and our houses as security that we may get grain during the food shortage.

⁴ – and still others were saying:

↳ We have borrowed silver for the king's tribute on our fields and our vineyards, ⁵ yet our flesh is the same as the flesh of our brothers, our sons are the same as their sons, but look! we are reducing our sons and our daughters to servitude²⁰ – and some of our daughters are already reduced [to servitude, slavery] and there is no power in our hands while our fields and our vineyards belong to others!

⁶ Now I became very angry as soon as I heard their outcry and the explanation. ⁷ So my heart took the ascendancy, and I contended with the nobles and the deputy rulers, and said to them:

● *Ne-he-mi'ah* — nobles and deputy rulers

⇒ YOU are lending on interest! each one from his own brother!

Further, I arranged a great assembly against them ⁸ and I said to them:

● *Ne-he-mi'ah* — assembly of the people

⇒ We ourselves have bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations, as far as it was in our power; yet at the same time will YOU sell YOUR own brothers? and must they be sold to us [working on rebuilding Jerusalem]?

at this they became speechless, and had no answer. ⁹ So I went on to say:

What YOU are doing is not good. Should YOU not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? ¹⁰ I and my brothers and my attendants are giving silver and grain on loan to them. Now let us abandon this lending on interest.²¹ ¹¹ Now restore to them – today! – their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses, and the hundredth of the silver and the grain, the new wine and the oil that YOU are exacting as interest from them.

¹² to which they said:

↳ We shall restore and shall ask nothing back from them. We shall do precisely what you say.

So I called the priests and made them swear to do according to this word. ¹³ Also, I shook out my bosom and said:

● *Ne-he-mi'ah* — priests and the assembly of people

⇒ In this manner may the [true] God shake out from his [own] house and his home²² every man that does not carry out this word; may he become dishevelled and worthless in this manner.

to this all the congregation said:

↳ 'Amen!'

and they began to praise Jehovah. And the people did according to this word.

¹⁴ Another thing: *sotvoc*

from the day that he commissioned me to become their viceroy in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerxes the king – twelve years – I myself and my brothers did not eat the bread due the viceroy. ¹⁵ As for the former governors that were prior to

¹⁹ The indignation – the outcry compared to the idle who had wealth and food. The underlying Hebrew reads: “Our sons and our daughters are many, and we take up grain to eat and live” – which implies picking up scattered bits of grain to eat. However the context of these verses is one of outcry of some Jews against other Jews. If the word for many – **רַבִּימָה** – had become that by omitting a preceding Ayin – **אֵי רַבִּימָה** – the sentence would speak of “giving a security”, rather than “many” children. This seems to fit the context of the section better, although the literal translation is included in this footnote

²⁰ Complaining of having to sell their families as slaves to the “superior ones”

²¹ *Exodus 22:25*

²² “house and home” – property and family

me, they had made it a burden upon the people – taking their bread and wine, as well as forty silver shekels. Moreover their attendants domineered over the people. But as for me, I did not do that way on account of the fear of God.

¹⁶ And what is more, I took a hand in the work of this wall, and we did not acquire a field ^[for himself]²³ and all my attendants ^[in his role as viceroy] gathered together there for the ^[building] work. ¹⁷ And the Jews and the deputy rulers – a hundred and fifty men – and those coming in to us from the nations that were around us were at my table; ¹⁸ as for that which happened to be allocated to me daily: one bull, six select sheep and birds which were allocated for me, also once every ten days every sort of wine in abundance – I did not demand this “bread due the viceroy” because the service upon this people was heavy.

- *Almighty God* — *Ne-he-mi'ah* *sotvoc*

⇐ ¹⁹ *Do remember me, O my God, for good, all that I have done in behalf of this people.*

6

¹ Now as soon as it was told to San-bal'lat and To-bi'ah and to Ge'shem the Arabian and to the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and there had not been left a gap in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates) ² then San-bal'lat and Ge'shem sent to me to ask:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *messenger (words of San-bal'lat and Ge'shem the Arabian)*

⇐ *Come, and let us fix a time to meet together in the villages of the valley plain of O'no*²⁴.

– but they were scheming to do me harm. ³ So I sent messengers to them, saying:

- *messenger (words of Ne-he-mi'ah)* — *San-bal'lat and Ge'shem the Arabian*

↪ *I am doing a great work, and I am not able to go down. Why should the work cease by my neglecting it and go down to YOU?*

⁴ ...Yet they sent me the same message four times, and I replied to them with this same answer.

⁵ Finally San-bal'lat sent his attendant to me with the same word a fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. ⁶ There was written in it:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah (and anyone who read the open letter)* — *open letter via attendant (from San-bal'lat)*

⇐ *It is heard among the nations – and Ge'shem is saying [it] – that you and the Jews are scheming to rebel. That is why you are building the wall; and according to these words you are becoming a king to them! ⁷ and that you have even appointed prophets to call out concerning you throughout Jerusalem, saying:*

- *alleged “prophets appointed by Ne-he-mi'ah”* — *people throughout Jerusalem*

↳ *‘There is a king in Judah!’*

– and now things like these will be told to the king ^[over As-syr'i-a]. So now... come, and let us consult together.

⁸ But I sent to him, saying:

- *messenger (words of Ne-he-mi'ah)* — *San-bal'lat*

↪ *Things such as you are saying have not happened, but you are inventing them out of your own heart.*

⁹ – for all of them were trying to make us afraid, saying:

- *San-bal'lat and other adversaries* —

↻ *“Their hands will drop down from the work so that it will not be done.”*

²³ Although this land was to be his home from now on for him and his family, Ne-he-mi'ah did not procure family land, but acted as if he were a visiting workman for the rebuilding of Jerusalem!

²⁴ Some 30-40 miles west of Jerusalem! The implication that a force could conspire there out of sight of Jerusalem, and that it would be advantageous of Ne-he-mi'ah to show a time-consuming interest by visiting

- **Almighty God** — *Ne-he-mi'ah (in prayer)* ^{sotvoc}

⇐ *But now, strengthen my hands.*

¹⁰ Afterward I entered the house of She-mai'ah the son of De-la'iah the son of Me-het'ab-el while he was confined. And he said:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *She-mai'ah, son of De-la'iah*

⇐ *Let us meet by appointment at the house of the [true] God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple; for they are coming in to kill you, they are coming in to kill you in the night.*

¹¹ but I said:

↪ *Should a man like me run away? And who is there like me that could enter into the temple and live? I shall not enter!*

¹² — so I investigated... and here it was not God that had sent him, but he had spoken this prophecy against me because To-bi'ah and San-bal'lat had hired him! ¹³ He had been hired in order that I might be afraid and act that way, and I should sin and they might have something for an evil report in order that they might reproach me.

- **Almighty God** — *Ne-he-mi'ah* ^{sotvoc}

⇐ ¹⁴ *Do remember, O my God, To-bi'ah and San-bal'lat, according to these deeds of [each] one, and also No-a-di'ah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets that were trying to make me afraid.*

¹⁵ At length the wall came to completion on the twenty-fifth [day] of E'lul [^{"nothingness"}], in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And as soon as all our enemies heard [of it] and all the nations that were around us got to see it, they [To-bi'ah and San-bal'lat and corrupt prophets] immediately fell greatly in their eyes, because they realised that it was by our God that this work had been done.

¹⁷ — in those days also the nobles of Judah sent numerous letters to To-bi'ah and those of To-bi'ah came in to them — ¹⁸ for many in Judah were sworn to him, for he was a son-in-law²⁵ to Shec-a-ni'ah the son of A'rah²⁶; and Je-ho-ha'n²⁷ his [To-bi'ah's] son had himself taken the daughter of Me-shul'lam²⁸ the son of Ber-e-chi'ah. ¹⁹ They also continually reported good things about him [To-bi'ah] before me, but reported my own words to him... and To-bi'ah sent letters to make me afraid.

7

Gates Closed Long For Protection

¹ And it came about as soon as the wall had been rebuilt and I had set up the gates and had appointed the gatekeepers and the singers and the Le'vites ² that I put Ha-na'ni my brother in command of Jerusalem²⁹ — with Han-a-ni'ah the prince of the Castle — for he [^{Ha-na'ni}] was such a trustworthy man, fearing the [true] God more than many others. ³ And I said to them:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — *Ha-na'ni his brother (commander of Jerusalem) and Han-a-ni'ah (prince of the Castle)*

⇒ *The gates of Jerusalem should not be opened until the sun gets hot; and while they are standing by they should shut the doors and YOU [Ha-na'ni and Han-a-ni'ah] should bolt [them]. Also, YOU should station some guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each one during his own watch and each one in front of his own house.*

Ne-he-mi'ah finds Ez'ra's Scroll of Enrolment

⁴ Now the city was wide and great, but there were few people inside it, and there were no houses built... ⁵ but my God put [it] into my heart to collect together the nobles and the deputy rulers and the people to get themselves enrolled genealogically. Then I found the scroll of genealogical enrolment of those who

²⁵ Although those Jews who had taken foreign wives would later discard them and their children *Ezra 9 & 10* Ez'ra had no such jurisdiction over daughters who had been taken by foreign husbands. It seems that some Jews were friends of these two women, while others were concerned over them

²⁶ *Ezra 2:1-5*

²⁷ This Je-ho-ha'n²⁷ appears to be the son of To-bi'ah — the oppose to the reconstruction of Jerusalem!

²⁸ *Nehemiah 3:30*

²⁹ A counter to the slander by San-bal'lat *Nehemiah 6:6-7*

came up at the first, and found written in it [as follows]:³⁰

6. “These are the sons of the jurisdictional district who came up out of the captivity of the exiled people whom Neb-u-chad-rez’zar the king of Babylon had taken into exile and who later returned to Jerusalem and to Judah, each to his own city:”

7. (those who came in with Ze-rub’ba-bel)³¹

Jesh’u-a, Ne-he-mi’ah, Az-a-ri’ah [aka Se-rai’ah], Ra-a-mi’ah [“thunder of Jehovah”] [aka Re-el-ai’ah], Na-ham’a-ni [“merciful”], Mor’de-cai, Bil’shan, Mis’pe-reth [“number”] [aka Mis’par], Big’vai, Ne’hum [“comfort”] [aka Re’hum], Ba’a-nah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel:

8. The sons of Pa’rosh – two thousand one hundred and seventy-two;
9. the sons of Sheph-a-ti’ah – three hundred and seventy-two;
10. the sons of A’rah – six hundred and fifty-two [775 – Ez’ra];
11. the sons of Pa’hath-Mo’ab (of the sons of Jesh’u-a and Jo’ab) – two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; [2812 Ez’ra]
12. the sons of E’lam – one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
13. the sons of Zat’tu – eight hundred and forty-five; [945 Ez’ra]
14. the sons of Zac’cai – seven hundred and sixty;
15. the sons of Bin’nu-i [aka Ba’nee] – six hundred and forty-eight; [642 Ez’ra]
16. the sons of Be’bai – six hundred and twenty-eight; [623 Ez’ra]
17. the sons of Az’gad – two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; [1222 Ez’ra]
18. the sons of Ad-o-ni’kam – six hundred and sixty-seven; [666 Ez’ra]
19. the sons of Big’vai – two thousand and sixty-seven; [2056 Ez’ra]
20. the sons of A’din – six hundred and fifty-five; [454 Ez’ra]
21. the sons of A’ter, of Hez-e-ki’ah – ninety-eight;
22. the sons of Ha’shum – three hundred and twenty-eight; [223 Ez’ra]
23. the sons of Be’zai – three hundred and twenty-four; [323 Ez’ra]
24. the sons of Ha’riph [“a plucking off”] – one hundred and twelve;
25. the sons of Gib’e-on [aka Gib’bar] – ninety-five;
26. the men [inhabitants] of Beth’le-hem and Ne-to’phah [“dropping”] – one hundred and eighty-eight; [total 189 Ez’ra]
27. the men of An’a-thoth – one hundred and twenty-eight;
28. the men of Beth-az’ma-veth [“house of the strength of death”]³² – forty-two;
29. the men of Kir’i-ath-Je’a-rim, Che-phi’rah and Be-er’oth – seven hundred and forty-three;
30. the men of Ra’mah [Benjamin] and Ge’ba – six hundred and twenty-one;
31. the men of Mich’mas – one hundred and twenty-two;
32. the men of Beth’el and A’i – one hundred and twenty-three; [223 Ez’ra]
33. the men of the other Ne’bo – fifty-two;
34. the sons of the other E’lam – one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;

³⁰ Although Ez’ra’s was present and a copyist *Nehemiah* 8:1 his numbers vary from those reported by Ne-he-mi’ah

³¹ 11 men. Compare with parallel account at *Ezra* 2:2 which omits Na-ham’a-ni

³² While Ne-he-mi’ah records the “men” of the city, Ez’ra records the “sons” of the man after whom the city is named

35. *the sons of Ha'rim – three hundred and twenty;*
 36. *the sons of Jer'i-cho – three hundred and forty-five;*
 37. *the sons of Lod, Ha'did and O'no – seven hundred and twenty-one; [725 Ez'ra]*
 38. *the sons of Se-na'ah – three thousand nine hundred and thirty. [3630 Ez'ra]*

39. **The priests:**

- The sons of Je-da'iah [aka Je-dai'ah] of the house of Jesh'u-a – nine hundred and seventy-three;*
 40. *the sons of Im'mer – one thousand and fifty-two;*
 41. *the sons of Pash'hur – one thousand two hundred and forty-seven;*
 42. *the sons of Ha'rim – one thousand and seventeen.*

43. **The Le'vites:**

- The sons of Jesh'u-a, of Kad'mi-el, of the sons of Ho'de-vah ["praise of Jehovah"] – seventy-four.*
 44. *The singers, the sons of A'saph – one hundred and forty-eight. [128 Ez'ra]*
 45. *The gatekeepers: the sons of Shal'lum, the sons of A'ter, the sons of Tal'mon, the sons of Ak'kub, the sons of Ha-ti'ta, the sons of Sho'bai – one hundred and thirty-eight. [139 Ez'ra]*

46. **The Neth'i-nim:**

The sons of Zi'ha, the sons of Ha-su'pha, the sons of Tab-ba'oth, 47. the sons of Ke'ros, the sons of Si'a ["departing"] [aka Si'a-ha], the sons of Pa'don, 48. the sons of Le-ba'nah, the sons of Hag'a-bah, the sons of Sal'mai, 49. the sons of Ha'nan, the sons of Gid'del, the sons of Ga'har, 50. the sons of Re-a'iah, the sons of Re'zin, the sons of Ne-ko'da, 51. the sons of Gaz'zam, the sons of Uz'za, the sons of Pa-se'ah, 52. the sons of Be'sai, the sons of Me-u'nim, the sons of Ne-phush'e-sim ["scattered spices"] [aka Ne-phu'sim], 53. the sons of Bak'buk, the sons of Ha-ku'pha, the sons of Har'hur, 54. the sons of Baz'lith ["asking", "peeling"] [aka Baz'luth], the sons of Me-hi'da, the sons of Har'sha, 55. the sons of Bar'kos, the sons of Sis'e-ra, the sons of Te'mah, 56. the sons of Ne-zi'ah, the sons of Ha-ti'pha.

57. **The sons of the servants of Sol'o-mon:**

The sons of So'tai, the sons of So-phe'reth, the sons of Pe-ri'da ["grain" or "kernel"] [aka Pe-ru'da], 58. the sons of Ja'a-la ["ascending"] [aka Ja'a-lah], the sons of Dar'kon, the sons of Gid'del, 59. the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah, the sons of Hat'til, the sons of Po'che-reth-ha-Ze-ba'im, the sons of A'mon. 33

60. *– all the Neth'i-nim and the sons of the servants of Sol'o-mon were three hundred and ninety-two.*

61. *And these were the ones going up from Tel-Me'lah, Tel-Har'sha, Che'rub, Ad'don [aka Ad'dan] and Im'mer, and they were not able to discern the house of their fathers and their posterity, whether they were of Israel:*

62. *the sons of De-la'iah, the sons of To-bi'ah, the sons of Ne-ko'da, six hundred and forty-two [652 Ez'ra].*

63. *And of the priests: the sons of Ha-bai'ah, the sons of Hak'koz, the sons of Bar-zil'lai, who took a wife from the daughters of Bar-zil'lai the Gil'e-ad-ite and came to be called by their name.*

64. *– these were the ones that looked for their registration among those whose genealogy was established, but it was not found, 34 so that they were barred as polluted from the priesthood. 65 Consequently the Tir-sha'tha 35 told them that they should not eat from the Most Holy things until the priest stood up with U'rim and Thum'mim.*

33 Ne-he-mi'ah registers the sons of A'mon, while Ez'ra registers the sons of his son A'mi Ezra 2:55

34 Ezra 2:62

35 At that time of Ez'ra's writing his name is not known, but at the time of this writing is Ne-he-mi'ah himself – see Nehemiah 10:1

⁶⁶ The entire congregation as one group was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, ⁶⁷ apart from their men slaves and their slave girls – these being seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five male [²⁰⁰ Ez'ra] singers and female singers. ⁶⁸ [*Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five.*] ⁶⁹ The camels were four hundred and thirty-five. The asses were six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

⁷⁰ And there was a portion of the heads of the paternal houses that gave to the work. The Tir-sha'tha³⁶ himself gave to the treasure a thousand gold drachmas, fifty bowls, five hundred and thirty priests' robes.

⁷¹ And there were some of the heads of the paternal houses that gave to the treasury for the work – twenty thousand gold drachmas and two thousand two hundred silver mi'nas. ⁷² And what the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas and two thousand silver mi'nas and sixty-seven priests' robes.

⁷³ And the priests and the Le'vites and the gatekeepers and the singers and some of the people and the Neth'i-nim and all Israel took up dwelling in their cities. When the seventh month arrived, then the sons of Israel were in their cities.³⁷

8

¹ Then all the people gathered themselves as one man at the public square that was before the Water Gate, and they asked Ez'ra the copyist to bring the scroll of the Law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded Israel. ² Accordingly Ez'ra the priest brought the Law before the congregation of men as well as women and of all intelligent enough to listen, on the first day of the seventh month.³⁸ ³ And he continued to read aloud from it before the public square that is before the Water Gate from daybreak until midday, in front of the men and the women and the other discerning ones; and the ears of all the people were [*attentive*] to the scroll of the Law:

⁴ And Ez'ra the copyist kept standing upon a wooden podium which they had made for the occasion; standing alongside him were Mat-ti-thi'ah and She'ma and A-nai'ah [*“Jehovah has answered”*] and U-ri'ah and Hil-ki'ah and Ma-a-sei'ah to his right hand, and at his left [*were*] Pe-dai'ah and Mish'a-el and Mal-chi'jah and Ha'shum and Hash-bad'da-nah [*“considerate judge”*], Zech-a-ri'ah [*and*] Me-shul'lam.

⁵ Then Ez'ra opened the scroll before the eyes of all the people – for he was above all the people – and as he opened it... all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ez'ra blessed Jehovah the [*true*] God, the great One, at which all the people answered

● *all the assembled people* —

↳ 'Amen! Amen!'

with uplifted hands. They then bowed their heads and prostrated themselves to Jehovah with [*their*] noses to the earth.

⁷ Then Jesh'u-a and Ba'nee and She-re-bi'ah, Ja'min, Ak'kub, Shab'be-thai, Ho-di'jah [*“my majesty is Jehovah”*], Ma-a-sei'ah, Ke-li'ta, Az-a-ri'ah, Jo'za-bad, Ha'nan, Pe-la'iah – the Le'vites – were explaining the Law to the people, while the people remained in their place. ⁸ And they continued reading aloud from the scroll – declaring from the Law of the [*true*] God – showing the meaning³⁹ and understanding of it before the assembly.

⁹ And Ne-he-mi'ah the Tir-sha'tha, and Ez'ra the priest, the copyist, and the Le'vites who were instructing the people declared to all the people:

● *Ne-he-mi'ah (governor), Ez'ra the priest & copyist, the Le'vites* — *all the assembled people*

↳ *This very day is Holy to Jehovah YOUR God. Do not mourn or weep.*

– for all the people were weeping [*in regret*] as they heard the words of the Law. ¹⁰ And he went on

³⁶ This would appear to be part of the contemporary commentary from the earlier days of Ezra, so the Tir-sha'tha is not Ne-he-mi'ah but the earlier unknown and un-named man

³⁷ San-bal'lat's opposition to the building of the walls of Jerusalem failed miserably: the walls were built, Jerusalem was secure, the priesthood established and attired... and the ordinary workers on the wall came out and inhabited their cities in the wider region where the opposers were. God's people were established and settled, and San-bal'lat and his fellow opposers became the foreigners in the land

³⁸ *Leviticus 23:24*

³⁹ Including the events in history which fulfilled it and brought about its consequences

to say to them:

↳ *GO! Eat the fatty things and drink the sweetest things, and send portions to those for whom nothing has been prepared – for this day is Holy to our Lord, and do not feel hurt, for the joy of Jehovah is YOUR stronghold!*

¹¹ So the Le'vites quietened the people, saying:

● *the Le'vites — all the assembled people*

↳ *HUSH! for this day is Holy. Do not feel upset.*

¹² So all the people went away to eat and drink and to send out portions and to carry on rejoicing greatly, for they had understood the words that had been made known to them.

¹³ On the second day the heads of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Le'vites gathered themselves together to Ez'ra the copyist, to gain insight into the words of the Law. ¹⁴ And they found written in the Law which Jehovah had commanded through Moses, that the sons of Israel should dwell in booths during the festival in the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they should proclaim and cause a call to pass throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying:

● *people of Israel (at command of Almighty God)*

↳ *GO out to the mountainous region and bring in olive leaves and the leaves of oil trees and myrtle leaves and palm leaves and the leaves of branchy trees to make booths, according to what is written.⁴⁰*

¹⁶ So the people proceeded to go forth and bring [them] in and made booths for themselves, each one upon his own roof and in their courtyards and in the courtyards of the house of the [true] God and in the public square of the Water Gate and in the public square of the Gate of E'phra-im. ¹⁷ Thus all the congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and dwelt in the booths – for the sons of Israel had not done that way from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day!⁴¹ – so that there came to be very great rejoicing. ¹⁸ And day by day, from the first day until the last day, there was a reading aloud from the scroll of the law of the [true] God. They held the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly⁴² according to the custom.

9

¹ And on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel gathered themselves together with fasting and with sack-cloth and dirt upon themselves. ² And the seed of Israel proceeded to separate themselves from all the foreigners,⁴³ and they stood and confessed their sins and the errors of their fathers. ³ Then they stood up in their place and they read aloud from the scroll of the law of Jehovah their God for a quarter of the day; and for [a further] quarter they were confessing and prostrating themselves to Jehovah their God.

People all Make Statement to God

⁴ And Jesh'u-a and Ba'nee, Kad'mi-el, Sheb-a-ni'ah, Bun'ni [^{built}], She-re-bi'ah, Ba'nee [and] Che-na'ni [^{my station}] ascended the platform of the Le'vites and cried out with a loud voice to Jehovah their God. ⁵ And the Le'vites – Jesh'u-a and Kad'mi-el, Ba'nee, Hash-ab-nei'ah, She-re-bi'ah, Ho-di'jah, Sheb-a-ni'ah [and] Peth-a-hi'ah went on to say:

● *sons of Israel — Jesh'u-a, Kad'mi-el, Ba'nee, Hash-ab-nei'ah, She-re-bi'ah, Ho-di'jah, Sheb-a-ni'ah and Peth-a-hi'ah*

↳ *RISE up, bless Jehovah – YOUR God from time indefinite to time indefinite:*

● *Almighty God — Jesh'u-a and Peth-a-hi'ah, leading the people in blessing God*

↳ *They bless Your glorious Name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise.⁴⁴*

⁴⁰ Leviticus 23:39-40

⁴¹ A huge omission by their forefathers. It would appear that they used tents

⁴² Leviticus 23:34-36

⁴³ This would seem to be a social separation from foreigners, not a divorcing of foreign wives. This divorcing did not happen until later *Nehemiah* 13:1-3

⁴⁴ There is no praise or blessing sufficient or vast enough for God's Name

⁶ You – alone – are Jehovah,⁴⁵ You Yourself made the heavens – [even] the heaven of the heavens! – and all their army, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that is in them; and You keep all of them alive; and the army of the heavens bow down to You. ⁷ You are Jehovah the [true] God, Who chose A'bram and brought him out of Ur of the Chal-de'ans and constituted his name as Abraham. ⁸ And You found his heart faithful before You and made the covenant with him to set aside the land of the Ca'naan-ites, the Hit'tites, the Am'or-ites and the Per'iz-zites and the Jeb'u-sites and the Gir'ga-shites, to give [it] to his seed – and You carried out Your words, because You are righteous ...

⁹ You saw the affliction of our forefathers in Egypt, and You heard their outcry at the Sea of Reeds.⁴⁶ ¹⁰ So You gave signs and miracles against Phar'aoah and all his servants and upon all the people of his land, for You knew that they acted presumptuously against them [the forefathers] – and You made a Name for Yourself, as at this day.

¹¹ You split the sea before them, so that they crossed over through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and You hurled their pursuers into the depths like a stone in the harsh waters.

¹² You led them by a pillar of cloud by day, and by a pillar of fire by night, to light up for them the way they should go.

¹³ ...and You came down upon Mount Si'nai and spoke with them out of heaven and went on to give them upright judicial rulings and laws of truth, good regulations and commandments.

¹⁴ You revealed Your Holy Sabbath to them – also commandments and regulations – and You commanded them a Law by means of Moses Your servant.

¹⁵ You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and You brought forth waters out of the crag to them for their thirst,⁴⁷ and You went on to tell them to enter and possess the land which You had lifted Your hand [in an oath] to give to them!

¹⁶ ...But they and our fathers were arrogant – they hardened their neck, and they did not listen to Your commandments – ¹⁷ so they refused to listen, and they did not remember Your wonderful acts that You performed with them, but in their rebellion they hardened their neck and appointed a leader in order to return to their servitude [in Egypt]! But You are a God Who forgives:

“gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness”



Exodus 34:6 (paraphrased)

and You did not leave them. ¹⁸ Yes, [even] when they had made for themselves a molten statue of a calf and began to say:

‘This is your god who led you up out of Egypt’,



Exodus 32:4 (paraphrased)

and showed great disrespect, ¹⁹ You – in Your abundant mercy – did not abandon them in the wilderness: the pillar of cloud did not depart from over them by day to lead them in the way, nor the pillar of fire for them by night to light up the way in which they should go. ²⁰ You gave Your good spirit to make them prudent, and You did not withhold Your Manna from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst – ²¹ for forty years You maintained them with food in the wilderness, they lacked nothing: their garments did not wear out, and their feet did not become swollen.

²² Also You proceeded to deliver kingdoms and peoples to them, and to apportion them piece by piece: so that they took possession of the land of Si'hon – even the land of the king of Hesh'bon – and the land of Og the king of Ba'shan.⁴⁸ ²³ And You made their sons

⁴⁵ The Name is more than a name, but an evident demonstration of His power *Exodus 6:2-5* & footnote

⁴⁶ Commonly (erroneously) attributed to the Red Sea – rather, the Nile region. This is speaking of the time when the Hebrews called out for help, and God brought Moses to them miracles and signs were performed (v 10). The splitting of the Red Sea was later (v 11) at their leaving Egypt.

⁴⁷ *Exodus 16:13 ; Numbers 20:8*

⁴⁸ *Numbers 21:21-35*

'...as numerous as the stars of the heavens.'



Genesis 22:17

and You brought them into the land that You had promised to their forefathers so that [they] would enter and take possession. ²⁴ So their sons came in and possessed the land, and You proceeded to subdue the Ca'naan-ites – inhabitants of the land – before them and to give them into their hand: their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them according to their liking. ²⁵ And they seized fortified cities and fertile soil and took possession of houses filled with all good things: hewn cisterns, vineyards and olive groves and trees in abundance for food, and they began to eat and to be satisfied and they grew fat and luxuriated in Your great goodness...

²⁶ ...however they became disobedient and rebelled against You and kept casting Your Law behind their back: they killed Your prophets who bore witness against them [solely] in order to bring them back to You; and they committed many scornful acts. ²⁷ So You gave them into the hand of their adversaries, who caused them distress; but in the time of their distress they would cry out to You, and You Yourself would hear from the very heavens; and in accord with Your abundant mercies You gave them saviours who would free them out of the hand of their adversaries.⁴⁹

²⁸ ...But as soon as they were at rest, they would return to doing bad before You, and You would leave them to the hand of their enemies who would tread them down. Then they would return and call to You for aid, and You Yourself would hear from the heavens and deliver them in accord with Your abundant mercies, time and again. ²⁹ Although You would bear witness against them to bring them back to Your Law, they did not listen to Your commandments but acted presumptuously, and sinned against Your judicial rulings

"..which, if a man will do, he must also live by means of them."



Leviticus 18:5

They kept giving a stubborn shoulder [pushing away, rather than embracing], and they hardened their neck, and they did not listen. ³⁰ You were indulgent with them for many years and kept bearing witness against them by Your spirit in the hand of Your prophets, and they did not give ear. Finally... You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the earth – ³¹ yet in Your abundant mercy You did not exterminate them or leave them, for You are a gracious and merciful God.

← ³² And now, O our God, the God great, mighty and fear-inspiring, the One guarding the covenant and loving-kindness: do not let all the hardship that has come upon us seem little to You – all that distress which sought out our kings, our princes and our priests and our prophets and our forefathers and all Your people, from the days of the kings of As-syr'i-a down to this day. ³³ You are righteous as regards all that has come upon us, for You have acted faithfully, but we have acted wickedly. ³⁴ As for our kings, our princes, our priests and our forefathers, they have not performed Your Law, nor paid attention to Your commandments or to Your testimonies with which You bore witness against them. ³⁵ And they – during their kingdom, and amid Your abundant good things that You gave to them, and in the broad and fat land that You made available for them – they did not serve You and did not turn back from their bad practices.

³⁶ See! today we are slaves! and as for the land that You gave to our forefathers to eat its fruitage and its good things see! we are slaves upon it. ³⁷ It's produce abounds for the kings that You have put over us because of our sins, and they rule over our bodies and over our domestic animals, according to their liking,⁵⁰ and we are in great distress.

³⁸ So in view of all this we contracted a trustworthy arrangement in writing, and attested by the seal of our princes, our Le'vites [and] our priests...

⁴⁹ See the Book of Judges

⁵⁰ Reprisal of oppression of the Ca'naan-ites Nehemiah 10:24

People's Vow Written and Sealed

¹ Now attesting it by seal there were:

Ne-he-mi'ah the Tir-sha'tha, the son of Hac-a-li'ah,

Also

Zed-ki'ah, ² Se-rai'ah, Az-a-ri'ah, Jeremiah, ³ Pash'hur, Am-a-ri'ah, Mal-chi'jah, ⁴ Hat'tush, Sheb-a-ni'ah, Mal'luch, ⁵ Ha'rim, Mer'e-moth, O-ba-di'ah, ⁶ Daniel, Gin'ne-thon [^{gardener}], Bar'uch, ⁷ Me-shul'lam, A-bi'jah, Mij'a-min, ⁸ Ma-a-zi'ah, Bil'gai [^{my cheerfulness}] [and] She-mai'ah

– these being the priests.

⁹ Also the Le'vites:

Jesh'u-a the son of Az-a-ni'ah [^{Jehovah (Yahweh) hears}], Bin'nu-i of the sons of Hen'a-dad, Kad'mi-el ¹⁰ – also their brothers Sheb-a-ni'ah, Ho-di'jah, Ke-li'ta, Pe-la'iah, Ha'nan, ¹¹ Mi'cha, Re'hob, Hash-a-bi'ah, ¹² Zac'cur, She-re-bi'ah, Sheb-a-ni'ah, ¹³ Ho-di'jah, Ba'nee [and] Be-ni'nu [^{our son}].

¹⁴ The heads of the people:

Pa'rosh, Pa'hath-Mo'ab, E'lam, Zat'tu, Ba'nee, ¹⁵ Bun'ni, Az'gad, Be'bai, ¹⁶ Ad-o-ni'jah, Big'vai, A'din, ¹⁷ A'ter of Hez-e-ki'ah⁵¹, Az'zur [^{he that assists}], ¹⁸ Ho-di'jah, Ha'shum, Be'zai, ¹⁹ Ha'riph, An'a-thoth, Ne'bai [^{fruitful}], ²⁰ Mag'pi-ash [^{moth-killer}], Me-shul'lam, He'zir, ²¹ Me-shez'a-bel, Za'dok, Jad'du-a [^{knowing}], ²² Pel-a-ti'ah, Ha'nan, A-nai'ah, ²³ Ho-she'a, Han-a-ni'ah, Has'shub, ²⁴ Hal-lo'hesh, Pil'ha [^{slicing}], Sho'bek [^{is freed}], ²⁵ Re'hum, Ha-shab'nah [^{Jehovah has considered}], Ma-a-sei'ah, ²⁶ and A-hi'jah, Ha'nan, A'nan [^{cloud}], ²⁷ Mal'luch, Ha'rim, Ba'a-nah.

²⁸ As for the rest of the people, priests, Le'vites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Neth'i-nim and everyone separating himself from the peoples of the lands to the law of the [true] God, their wives, their sons and their daughters, everyone having knowledge [and] understanding, ²⁹ they joined with their brothers – their noble ones – and entered into [liability to] a curse and into an oath: to walk in the law of the [true] God, which had been given by the hand of Moses the servant of the [true] God, and to protect and to perform all the commandments of Jehovah our Lord and His judicial rulings and His regulations; ³⁰ and that we should not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, and we should not take their daughters for our sons.⁵²

³¹ As for the peoples of the land who were bringing in wares and every kind of cereal on the Sabbath day to sell, we [agreed that we] should take nothing from them on the Sabbath or on a Holy day, and that we should forego the seventh year⁵³ and the debt of every hand.⁵⁴

Voluntary Extra Rules on the People

³² Also we imposed upon ourselves commandments that each of us would give a third of a shekel yearly for the service of the house of our God ³³ for the layer [show] bread and the constant grain offering and the constant burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the new moons, for the appointed feasts and for the Holy things and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel and [for] all the work of the house of our God.

³⁴ Also, we cast the lots concerning the supply of the wood that the priests, the Le'vites and the people should bring to the house of our God – according to the house of our forefathers, at appointed times, year by year – to burn upon the altar of Jehovah our God, according to what is written in the law; ³⁵ and [for us all] to bring the first ripe fruits of our ground and the first ripe fruits of all the fruitage of every sort of tree, year by year, to the house of Jehovah; ³⁶ and the firstborn of our sons and of our domestic animals – according to what is written in the law⁵⁵ – and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks, to bring [them] to the house of our God to the priests that are ministering in the house of our God. ³⁷ Also, the

⁵¹ The Hebrew reads this as two separate people, however A'ter is only mentioned in two other places – both times as “A'ter of Hez-e-ki'ah”, as if he is a child by a slave, yet owned by Hez-e-ki'ah. This meaning has been preserved here to keep consistency with *Ezra 2:16* and *Nehemiah 7:21*

⁵² This seemingly innocuous practice had nearly brought the downfall of Jerusalem *Nehemiah 6:17-19*. However – now 40 years' later – the land was filled with mixed marriages, and even a polluted priesthood – forcing Ez'ra to take drastic action

⁵³ *Exodus 23:10-11* The fallow state of the land, lack of which was the downfall of the two nations & the reason behind their exile into Babylon

⁵⁴ *Deuteronomy 15:1-3*

⁵⁵ Unclean beasts redeemed with 5 shekels, all others sacrificed on the altar *Numbers 18:15-17; Exodus 13:13*

first-fruits of our coarse meal and our contributions and the fruit of every sort of tree, new wine and oil we should bring to the priests to the dining halls of the house of our God, also the tenth from our soil [crops] to the Le´vites, because the Le´vites are the ones who receive a tenth in all our agricultural cities.

³⁸ ...and the priest, the son of Aaron, must be with the Le´vites when the Le´vites receive a tenth; and the Le´vites should offer up a tenth of the tenth to the house of our God – to the dining halls of the supply house

³⁹ for the sons of Israel and the sons of the Le´vites should bring the contribution of the grain, the new wine and the oil to the dining halls, and there is where the utensils of the sanctuary and the ministering priests, and the gatekeepers and the singers are; and we should not neglect the house of our God.

11

¹ Now the princes of the people dwelt in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring in one out of every ten to dwell in Jerusalem the Holy city, leaving the nine other parts in the other cities. ² Moreover, the people blessed all the men who volunteered to dwell in Jerusalem.⁵⁶

³ And these are the heads of the jurisdictional district who dwelt in Jerusalem; but in the cities of Judah each one dwelt in his own possession in their cities: [that is: the people of] Israel, the priests and the Le´vites, and the Neth´i-nim and the sons of the servants of Sol´o-mon.⁵⁷

⁴ Also in Jerusalem there dwelt some of the sons of Judah and some of the sons of Benjamin.

Of the sons of Judah there were:

A-thai´ah [⁵⁶“Jehovah has helped”] the son of Uz-zi´ah the son of Zech-a-ri´ah the son of Am-a-ri´ah the son of Sheph-a-ti´ah the son of Ma-hal´a-lel of the sons of Pe´rez;

⁵ and Ma-a-sei´ah the son of Bar´uch the son of Col-ho´zeh the son of Ha-zai´ah [⁵⁷“God has seen”] the son of A-dai´ah the son of Joi´a-rib the son of Zech-a-ri´ah the son of the She-la´nite.⁵⁸

⁶ – all the sons of Pe´rez [son of Judah] who were dwelling in Jerusalem amounted to four hundred and sixty-eight capable men.

⁷ And these were the sons of Benjamin:

Sal´lu [or Sa´lu] the son of Me-shul´lam the son of Jo´ed [⁵⁶“Jehovah is witness”] the son of Pe-dai´ah the son of Ko-lai´ah [⁵⁷“voice of Jehovah”] the son of Ma-a-sei´ah the son of Ith´i-el [⁵⁷“God is with me”] the son of Je-sha´iah;

⁸ and after him Gab-ba´i [⁵⁷“my back”] [and] Sal-la´i [or Sa´lu] – nine hundred and twenty-eight;

⁹ and Joel the son of Zich´ri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Se-nu´ah [aka Has-se-nu´ah] was second over the city.

¹⁰ Of the priests:

Je-dai´ah the son of Joi´a-rib, Ja´chin, ¹¹ Se-rai´ah the son of Hil-ki´ah the son of Me-shul´lam the son of Za´dok the son of Me-ra´ioth the son of A-hi´tub – a leader of the house of the [true] God – ¹² and their brothers who did work for the house [of God] – eight hundred and twenty-two;

– and A-dai´ah the son of Je-ro´ham the son of Pel-a-li´ah [⁵⁶“Jehovah has judged”] the son of Am´zi the son of Zech-a-ri´ah the son of Pash´hur the son of Mal-chi´jah, ¹³ and his brothers, heads of paternal houses – two hundred and forty-two,

– and A-mash´sai [⁵⁷“burdensome”] the son of Az´ar-el the son of Ah´zai [⁵⁷“my holder, protector”] the son of Me-shil´le-moth the son of Im´mer, ¹⁴ and their brothers, mighty men of valour – one hundred and twenty-eight

⁵⁶ A great sacrifice – these were leaving behind their hereditary land with its fields for a mere house in Jerusalem, in order to re-populate the Holy city

⁵⁷ The sons of Sol´o-mon’s servants would be legal sons of Sol´o-mon *Exodus 21:2-4*. Keeping them in the cities prevented any pretender heirs to the throne of David from being in Jerusalem

⁵⁸ See *Numbers 26:19* – families of Judah

– and Zab'di-el the son of the great ones⁵⁹ was an overseer over them.

¹⁵ And of the Le'vites:

She-mai'ah the son of Has'shub the son of Az-ri'kam the son of Hash-a-bi'ah the son of Bun'ni,

¹⁶ and Shab'be-thai and Jo'za-bad, of the heads of the Le'vites, over the outside business of the house of the [true] God;

¹⁷ and Mat-ta-ni'ah himself – the son of Mi'cah [aka Mi'cha] the son of Zab'di the son of A'saph – the conductor of the praise [singing], the first at the lauding at prayer, and Bak-bu-ki'ah [wasting / emptying of Jehovah] was second of his brothers, also Ab'da the son of Sham-mu'a the son of Ga'lal the son of Je-du'thun. ¹⁸ All the Le'vites in the Holy city were two hundred and eighty-four.

¹⁹ And the gatekeepers were:

Ak'kub, Tal'mon and their brothers who kept guard in the gates – one hundred and seventy-two.

²⁰ And the rest of Israel, of the priests [and] of the Le'vites, were in all the other cities of Judah – each one in his own hereditary possession. ²¹ And the Neth'i-nim were dwelling in O'phel,⁶⁰ and Zi'ha and Gish'pa [caress] were over the Neth'i-nim.

²² And the overseer of the Le'vites in Jerusalayim was Uz'zi the son of Ba'nee the son of Hash-a-bi'ah the son of Mat-ta-ni'ah the son of Mi'cah [aka Mi'cah] of the sons of A'saph (the singers) concerning the work of the house of the [true] God. ²³ For there was a commandment of the king [Ar-ta-xerxes 1st] in their behalf, that a fixed provision should be for the singers as each day required. ²⁴ And Peth-a-hi'ah the son of Me-shez'a-bel of the sons of Ze'rah the son of Judah was at the side of the king [Ar-ta-xerxes] for every matter of the people.

²⁵ And as regards the settlements in their fields, there were some of the sons of Judah that dwelt in Kir'i-ath-Ar'ba and its dependent towns and in Di'bon and its dependent towns and in Je-kab'ze-el [God gathers] and its settlements, ²⁶ and in Jesh'u-a and in Mo-la'dah and in Beth-pel'et ²⁷ and in Ha'zar-shu'al and in Be'er-she'ba and its dependent towns ²⁸ and in Zik'lag and in Me-co'nah [foundation] and its dependent towns ²⁹ and in En-Rim'mon [fount of the pomegranate] and in Zo'rah and in Jar'muth, ³⁰ Za-no'ah, A-dul'lam and their settlements, La'chish and its fields, A-ze'kah and its dependent towns. And they took up dwelling from Be'er-she'ba clear to the valley of Hin'nom.

³¹ And the sons of Benjamin were from Ge'ba, Mich'mash and A'i [aka Ai'ja] and Beth'el and its dependent towns, ³² An'a-thoth, Nob, A-na-ni'ah, ³³ Ha'zor, Ra'mah, Git'ta-im, ³⁴ Ha'did, Ze-bo'im, Ne-bal'lat [hidden folly], ³⁵ Lod and O'no – the valley of the craftsmen.⁶¹ ³⁶ And some divisions of the Le'vites in Judah settled in Benjamin.⁶²

12

¹ And these were the priests and the Le'vites that had gone up [60 years' earlier] with Ze-rub'ba-bel⁶³ the son of She-al'ti-el and Jesh'u-a:

Se-rai'ah, Jeremiah, Ez'ra.⁶⁴ ² Am-a-ri'ah, Mal'luch, Hat'tush, ³ Shec-a-ni'ah, Re'hum, Mer'e-moth, ⁴ Id'do, Gin'ne-thon, A-bi'jah, ⁵ Mij'a-min, Ma-a-di'ah [adorned of JAH], Bil'gah, ⁶ She-mai'ah, and Joi'a-rib, Je-dai'ah, ⁷ Sal'lu [or Sa'lu], A'mok [to be deep], Hil-ki'ah, Je-dai'ah.

– these were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the days of Jesh'u-a.

⁸ And the Le'vites were:

Jesh'u-a, Bin'nu-i, Kad'mi-el, She-re-bi'ah, Judah, Mat-ta-ni'ah – over the giving of thanks, he and his

⁵⁹ There had been a Zab'di-el who fathered Ja-sho'be-am, the chief of David's guard. This man seems likely to be a descendant if he has this accolade

⁶⁰ Nehemiah 3:26

⁶¹ 1st Chronicles 4:14

⁶² This was the beginning of spreading the Le'vites around the Promised Land. In the days of Joshua, the land was allocated, but in this return from exile they needed to move gradually, and only to lands where they could be sure of the protection of Hebrew brothers

⁶³ Ezra 3:2

⁶⁴ Paternal house, not the scribe and copyist of the same name (Ze-rub'ba-bel was 120 years before Ez'ra's expedition)

brothers, ⁹ and Bak-bu-ki'ah and Un'ni their brothers were in front of them for guard duties. ¹⁰ Jesh'u-a himself became father to Joi'a-kim [*"Jehovah raises up"*], and Joi'a-kim became father to E-li'a-shib, and E-li'a-shib to Joi'a-da. ¹¹ And Joi'a-da became father to Jon'a-than, and Jon'a-than became father to Jad'du-a.

¹² And in the days of Joi'a-kim there were priests, the heads of the paternal houses:

for [paternal house] Se-rai'ah – [priest] Me-rai'ah;

for Jeremiah – Han-a-ni'ah;

¹³ for Ez'ra – Me-shul'lam;

for Am-a-ri'ah – Je-ho-ha'nan;

¹⁴ for Mal'lu-chi [*"counsellor"*] – Jon'a-than;

for Sheb-a-ni'ah – Joseph;

¹⁵ for Ha'rim – Ad'na;

for Me-ra'ioth – Hel'kai [*"my portion is Jehovah"*];

¹⁶ for Id'do – Zech-a-ri'ah;

for Gin'ne-thon, Me-shul'lam;

¹⁷ for A-bi'jah – Zich'ri;

Mi-ni'a-min of Mo-a-di'ah [*"assembly of Jah", or "the set time of JAH"*] – Pil'tai [*"my deliverances"*];⁶⁵ sa

¹⁸ for Bil'gah – Sham-mu'a;

for She-mai'ah – Je-hon'a-than;

¹⁹ and for Joi'a-rib – Mat-te'nai;

for Je-dai'ah – Uz'zi;

²⁰ for Sal-la'i [or Sa'lu] – Kal'lai [*"swift"*];

for A'mok – E'ber;

²¹ for Hil-ki'ah – Hash-a-bi'ah;

for Je-dai'ah – Ne-than'el.

²² As for the Le'vites in the days of E-li'a-shib, Joi'a-da and Jo-ha'nan and Jad'du-a, the heads of paternal houses were recorded as well as the priests⁶⁶ down till the kingship of Da-ri'us [^{2nd}]⁶⁷ the Persian [*"pure" or "splendid"*]. ²³ The sons of Le'vi as heads of the paternal houses were recorded in the scroll of the affairs of the times, even down till the days of Jo-ha'nan – the son⁶⁸ of E-li'a-shib. ²⁴ And the heads of the Le'vites were:

Hash-a-bi'ah, She-re-bi'ah and Jesh'u-a the son of Kad'mi-el and their brothers opposite them to offer praise [and] give thanks according to the commandment of David the man of the [true] God, guard group opposite guard group. ²⁵ Mat-ta-ni'ah and Bak-bu-ki'ah, O-ba-di'ah, Me-shul'lam, Tal'mon, Ak'kub were keeping guard as gatekeepers, a guard group by the stores⁶⁹ [collections] of the gates. ²⁶ These were in the days of Joi'a-kim the son of Jesh'u-a the son of Jo'za-dak [*"Jehovah is righteous"*], and in the days of Ne-he-mi'ah the governor and Ez'ra the priest and copyist.

Procession of Choirs Dedicate the Wall

²⁷ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Le'vites, to bring them out of all their [dwelling] places to Jerusalem to carry out the inauguration and the rejoicing with thanksgivings and with

⁶⁵ This may be "for Mi-ni'a-min of Mo-a-di'ah – Pil'tai", or "for Mi-ni'a-min and for Mo-a-di'ah – Pil'tai" ...or... "for Mi-ni'a-min – Pil'tai of Mo-a-di'ah" – alternately since these pairings match rather closely the list from verses 1-7, there could be a scribal error and a name omission in the Hebrew

⁶⁶ Possibly translated – but *most unlikely* – as "The Le'vites ...were recorded as heads of paternal houses and [as] priests"

⁶⁷ Da-ri'us 2nd – because Ne-he-mi'ah was cup-bearer to Ar-ta-xerx'es in his 12th year – with 29 years of his reign still to go – and was succeeded by King Darian of Persia. Da-ri'us 3rd did not arrive for a further 90 years, long after Ne-he-mi'ah had written this scroll

⁶⁸ This second listing – a follow-on from the listing for E-li'a-shib himself – was to give a "paper trail", a written history to be continued to both show and encourage order for posterity in future generations

⁶⁹ Offerings brought for sacrifice or tribute or annual tithes, or possibly the collection boxes placed at the gates in the time of Jo-si'ah

song, cymbals [and] stringed instruments and with harps. ²⁸ And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both from the District all around Jerusalem and from the settlements of the Ne-toph'a-thites, ⁷⁰ ²⁹ and from Beth-Gil'gal [*"the house of the wheel"*] – and from the fields of Ge'ba and Az'ma-veth (for there were settlements that the singers had built for themselves all around Jerusalem.) ³⁰ And the priests and the Le'vites proceeded to cleanse themselves and cleanse the people, and the gates and the wall.

³¹ Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall. Further, I appointed two large thanksgiving choirs [as processions], [and the one was walking] to the right upon the wall to the Gate of the Ash-heaps [SE corner] – ³² and Ho-shai'ah [*"Jehovah as saved"*] and half of the princes of Judah began to walk behind them, ³³ also Az-a-ri'ah, Ez'ra and Me-shul'lam, ³⁴ Judah and Benjamin and She-mai'ah and Jeremiah; ³⁵ also some of the sons of the priests with the trumpets: Zech-a-ri'ah the son of Jon'a-than the son of She-mai'ah the son of Mat-ta-ni'ah the son of Mi-cai'ah the son of Zac'cur the son of A'saph, ³⁶ and his brothers She-mai'ah and Az'ar-el, Mil'a-lai [*"eloquent"*], Gil'a-lai [*"weighty"*], Ma'ai [*"compassionate"*], Ne-than'el and Judah, Ha-na'ni, with the instruments of song of David the man of the [true] God, – and Ez'ra the copyist before them! ³⁷ And at the Fountain Gate which was straight ahead of them they went up by the steps of the City of David by the rising of the wall above the House of David, and clear to the Water Gate to the east.

³⁸ And the other thanksgiving choir was walking to the left, and I [Ne-he-mi'ah] followed it with half of the people upon the wall up over the Tower of the Bake Ovens [NW corner] and on to the Broad Wall, ³⁹ and up over the Gate of E'phra-im and on to the Gate of the Old [City] and clear to the Fish Gate and the Tower of Ha-nan'el and the Tower of Me'ah and on to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a stand at the Gate of the Guard [NE corner].

The Two Choirs Meet at the East of the Temple

⁴⁰ At length, the two thanksgiving choirs came to a stand at the house of the [true] God, also I and half of the deputy rulers with me, ⁴¹ and the priests E-li'a-kim, Ma-a-sei'ah, Mi-ni'a-min, Mi-cai'ah, E'li-o-e'nai, Zech-a-ri'ah, Han-a-ni'ah [were] with the trumpets, ⁴² and Ma-a-sei'ah and She-mai'ah, and El-e-a'zar and Uz'zi and Je-ho-ha'nan and Mal-chi'jah and E'lam and E'zer and the singers with Iz-ra-hi'ah the overseer kept making themselves heard.

⁴³ And on that day they presented great sacrifices and rejoiced – for the [true] God Himself caused them to rejoice, with great joy. And also the women and the children rejoiced, so that the rejoicing of Jerusalem could be heard far away.

⁴⁴ Further, men were appointed on that day over the halls for the stores – for the contributions, for the first-fruits and for the tenths – to gather into them from out of the fields of the cities [all] the portions [called for by] the law for the priests and the Le'vites; because Judah was rejoicing because of the [newly re-installed] priests and of the Le'vites who were in attendance. ⁴⁵ And they took care of the obligation of their God and the obligation of the purification and of the singers and of the gatekeepers, according to the commandment of David [and] Sol'o-mon his son – ⁴⁶ for in the days of David and A'saph in bygone times there were heads⁷¹ of the singers and the song of praise and thanksgivings to God. ⁴⁷ And all Israel during the days of Ze-rub'ba-bel and during the days of Ne-he-mi'ah gave the portions of the singers⁷² and of the gatekeepers according to the daily need and sanctified [them] to the Le'vites; and the Le'vites sanctified [them] to the sons of Aaron.⁷³

13

¹ On that day the scroll of Moses was read [aloud] in the ears of the people; and there was found written in it that the Am'mon-ite and the Mo'ab-ite [sons of Lot] should not come into the congregation of the [true] God to time indefinite,⁷⁴ ² for they had not greeted the sons of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Ba'laam against them – call down evil upon them – but our God changed the malediction into a benediction. ³ So it came about that as soon as they heard the law, they began to separate all the mixed

⁷⁰ Nehemiah 7:26 (Ezra 2:22)

⁷¹ 1st Chronicles 15:15-24

⁷² Nehemiah 11:23

⁷³ The sanctification and the provision and appreciation and acknowledging of them in status extended from those appointed via Moses – now the praisers and the gatekeepers were valued, as well as the Le'vites

⁷⁴ See the book of Ruth, where a Mo'ab-ite wife is the property of the man who repurchases the field of the deceased husband, and brings blessings – yet the descendant Mes-si'ah, our redeemer and repurchase, is cast out of the community in a strange fulfilment of this law

company from Israel.⁷⁵

Ne-he-mi'ah Goes To Babylon; Returns to Find Jerusalem has Corrupted

⁴ Now before this, E-li'a-shib the priest in charge of a dining hall of the house of our God was a relative of To-bi'ah⁷⁶; ⁵ and he had allocated a large dining hall for him, where previously they would put the grain offering, the frankincense and the utensils and the tenth of the grain, the new wine and the oil, to which the Le'vites – and the singers and the gatekeepers – are entitled, as well as the contribution for the priests.

⁶ During this [time] I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerx'es [^{1st}] the king of Babylon I came to the king. However sometime later I asked leave of absence from the king, ⁷ then I came to Jerusalem and got to see the badness that E-li'a-shib had committed in behalf of To-bi'ah by making a hall for him in the courtyard of the house of the [true] God. ⁸ And it seemed very bad to me... so I threw all of the furniture of To-bi'ah's house outside the dining hall. ⁹ After that I said [the word] and they cleansed the dining halls, then I put back there the utensils of the house of the [true] God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

¹⁰... Then I discovered that the portions for the Le'vites had not been given to [them], so that the Le'vites and the singers doing the work went running off, each one to his own field [to tend crops]. ¹¹ So I contended with the deputy rulers, saying:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — deputy rulers

⇒ *Why has the house of the [true] God been neglected?!*

Consequently I collected them together and stationed them at their standing place. ¹² Then all Judah brought in the tenth of the grain and of the new wine and of the oil to the stores. ¹³ I placed Shel-e-mi'ah the priest and Za'dok the copyist and Pe-dai'ah of the Le'vites in charge of the stores; and under their control there was Ha'nan the son of Zac'cur the son of Mat-ta-ni'ah – for they were considered faithful – and it devolved upon them to distribute to their brothers.

- *Almighty God* — *Ne-he-mi'ah* (plea in prayer) *sovoc*

⇐ ¹⁴ *Do remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my acts of loving-kindness that I have performed for the house of my God and its offices.*

¹⁵ In those days I [also] saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath⁷⁷ and bringing in grain heaps and loading [them] upon asses, and also wine, grapes and figs and every sort of burden, and bringing [them] into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I protested [against them] on the [very] day when they sold their provisions. ¹⁶ Also Tyr'i-ans⁷⁸ [actually] dwelt in [the city], bringing in fish and every sort of merchandise and making sales on the Sabbath to the sons of Judah and in Jerusalem. ¹⁷ So I contended with the nobles of Judah and said to them:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — nobles of Judah

⇒ *What is this bad thing that YOU are doing – profaning the Sabbath day?! ¹⁸ Did not YOUR forefathers do this? so that our God brought all this calamity upon us – and upon this city? Yet YOU are adding to the burning anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath [afresh].*

¹⁹ So... as soon as the gates of Jerusalem had grown shadowy before the Sabbath, I immediately said [the word] and the doors were closed. I said further that they should not open them until after the Sabbath; and I stationed some of my own attendants at the gates⁷⁹ so that no burden might come in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰ Consequently the traders and the sellers of every sort of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem... once... and a second time. ²¹ Then I testified against them, saying to them:

- *Ne-he-mi'ah* — traders spending the night outside the wall and gates on the Sabbath

⇒ *Why are YOU spending the night in front of the wall? If YOU do it again, I shall take action*

⁷⁵ See a long list of culprits Ezra 9 through 10

⁷⁶ To-bi'ah, an associate of San-bal'lat who conspired to ruin the rebuilding of the wall Nehemiah 6:17-19 was also an Am'mon-ite

⁷⁷ Their days in captivity in Babylon had made them lax in practicing His standards

⁷⁸ Tyre was renowned as a trader, with market places in every major city throughout the known world. See Ezekiel 27-29 for an account

⁷⁹ Ne-he-mi'ah had no confidence that they would respect his command or God's law, so he employed his own men to make sure

against YOU.

– and from that time on they did not come on the Sabbath. ²² Then I told the Le´vites that they should purify themselves, and come and keep guard of the gates to sanctify the Sabbath day.

- **Almighty God** — *Ne-he-mi´ah (plea in prayer)* **sotvoc**

⇐ Remember this also to my account, O my God, and spare me according to the abundance of Your loving-kindness.⁸⁰

²³ Also, in those days I saw Jews that had given a dwelling to Ash´dod-ite, Am´mon-ite [and] Mo´ab-ite wives! ²⁴ and as for their sons, half of them were speaking Ash´dod-ite, and none of them knew how to speak Jewish, but [only] in the tongue of the different peoples.⁸¹ ²⁵ And I contended with them and treated them with contempt and struck some of their men and cut off their hair and made them swear by God:

- *Ne-he-mi´ah* — *Jews with Ash´dod-ite, Am´mon-ite [and] Mo´ab-ite wives*

“YOU should not give YOUR daughters to their sons, and YOU should not accept any of their daughters for YOUR sons or yourselves.”



Deuteronomy 7:3

⇒ ²⁶ Was it not because of these that Sol´o-mon the king of Israel sinned? though among the many nations there proved to be no king like him – and he was loved by his God, so that God constituted him king over all Israel. The foreign wives caused even him to sin. ²⁷ Should we copy YOU and commit all this great badness in acting unfaithfully against our God by giving a dwelling to foreign wives?

²⁸ – and one of the sons of Joi´a-da – the son of E-li´a-shib the high priest – was a son-in-law of San-bal´lat the Hor´o-nite... and I chased him away from me.

- **Almighty God** — *Ne-he-mi´ah (plea in prayer)* **sotvoc**

⇐ ²⁹ Do remember them, O my God, for their profaning of the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Le´vites. ³⁰ [that is why] I purified them⁸² from everything foreign, and assigned duties to the priests and to the Le´vites, each one in his own work, ³¹ and the supply of the wood at appointed times and for the first ripe fruits.

Do remember me, O my God, for good.

⁸⁰ The neglect of the Le´vites had made them unclean, however it was not for Ne-he-mi´ah to order the Le´vites – thus he asks for God’s forgiveness. Ne-he-mi´ah’s plea would indicate a personal sin on his part, for which he is asking clemency

⁸¹ A problem in the court of King A-has-u-e´rus – or Xerx´es 1st – with his wife Esther

⁸² Ne-he-mi´ah had ensured they would be provided with provision, so as to prevent them meeting foreigners. Once again Ne-he-mi´ah crosses the boundary of his rights, by chastising the priests and correcting them – because there were none among them to correct themselves – so he must ask God’s forgiveness for his actions, though they were for the purity of God’s people

Esther

The book of Esther is unique in the scriptures in that it is the only book which does not include the Divine Name יהוה in the text – although it does contain four prominent acrostics. It is believed to be the reason why the Book of Esther was the only scroll of the Hebrew-Ar-a-ma'ic scriptures not to be present amongst the Qum'rat Dead-Sea Scrolls.

It is centred at Shu'shan in E'lam, a region east of Babylon and south-east of the lower Tigris.

1

¹ Now it came about in the days of A-has-u-e'rus¹ [Xerx'es 1st] – that is, the A-has-u-e'rus who was ruling from In'di-a [Hindu-stan] to E-thi-o'pi-a [over] one hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts – ² [that] in those days, as King A-has-u-e'rus was sitting upon his royal throne which was in the palace at Shu'shan, ³ in the third year of his reigning, he held a banquet for all his princes and his servants, the military force of Persia and Me'de-a, the grandees and the princes of the jurisdictional districts – right before his presence – ⁴ at which he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour [and] the beauty of his greatness for many days: a hundred and eighty days! ⁵ And when these days had come to the full, the king held a banquet for seven days for all the people that were to be found in the palace at Shu'shan – for the great as well as the small² – in the courtyard of the garden of the king's palace. ⁶ There were linen, fine cotton and violet [drapes] held fast in ropes of fine fabric, and wool dyed reddish purple in silver rings and pillars of marble, couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of porphyry and marble and pearl and black marble.

⁷ Drink was served in gold vessels – and the vessels were different from one another – and royal wine in abundance, fitting to the means of the king. ⁸ Drinking was according to the law that no one was compelled, for that was the way the king had arranged for every great man of his household – each to do according to their own liking.

⁹ ...also Vash'ti ["beautiful"] the queen held a banquet for the women at the royal palace that belonged to King A-has-u-e'rus.

¹⁰ Now on the seventh day, when the king's heart was in a merry mood with wine, he said to Me-hu'man ["faithful"], Biz'tha ["booty"], Har-bo'na ["ass-driver"], Big'tha ["in the wine-press"] and A-bag'tha ["God-given"], Ze'thar ["star"] and Car'kas ["severe"] – the seven court officials who were ministering to the person of King A-has-u-e'rus – ¹¹ to bring Vash'ti the queen in the royal head-dress before the king, to show the peoples and the princes her loveliness; for she was beautiful in appearance... ¹² ...However Queen Vash'ti kept refusing to come at the king's word [conveyed] by means of the court officials. The king grew highly indignant at this, and his rage consumed him.

¹³ And the king questioned the wise men who had knowledge of the times (for such was the king's manner before all those versed in law and legal cases, ¹⁴ and those closest to him were Car-she'na ["illustrious"], She'thar ["a star"], Ad-ma'tha ["a testimony to them"], Tar'shish, Me'res ["lofty"], Mar-se'na ["worthy"], [and] Me-mu'can ["dignified"] – seven princes of Persia and Me'de-a, having access to the king, [and] who were sitting first in the kingdom:

- King A-has-u-e'rus — seven wise princes of Persia and Me'de-a (Car-she'na, She'thar, Ad-ma'tha, Tar'shish, Me'res, Mar-se'na, Me-mu'can)

⇒ ¹⁵ According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vash'ti because she has not obeyed the word of King A-has-u-e'rus by means of the court officials?

¹⁶ To this Me-mu'can said before the king and the princes:

- King A-has-u-e'rus — Me-mu'can

↔ It is not against the king alone that Vash'ti the queen has done wrong, but against all the princes and

¹ Said by some to be Ar-ta-xerx'es 2nd, son of Da-ri'us – but see Ezra 4:6-7 which casts doubt on this

² No women were included – see verse 9

against all the peoples that are in all the jurisdictional districts of King A-has-u-e'rus – ¹⁷ for the matter of the queen will go out to all the wives, so that they will despise their owners in their own eyes by saying to them:

- *all the wives in the kingdom — husbandly owners*

⇒ 'King A-has-u-e'rus himself said to bring in Vash'ti the queen before him, but she did not come in!'

¹⁸ and this day the princesses of Persia and Me'de-a – who witnessed the affair of the queen – will talk to all the princes of the king himself [*his sons*], and there will be plenty of contempt and indignation.

¹⁹ If it seems good to the king, let a royal word go out from his person, and let it be written into the laws of Persia and Me'de-a – which cannot pass away – that Vash'ti cannot come in before King A-has-u-e'rus. Then let the king give her dominion to one of her companions – a woman better than she is – ²⁰ and the decree which the king shall make must be heard in all his realm (for it is vast), then all the wives will give honour to their owners, the great as well as the small.

²¹ And the notion seemed good in the eyes of the king and the princes, so the king proceeded to act according to the advice of Me-mu'can: ²² he sent written documents to all the king's jurisdictional districts – to each jurisdictional district in its own style of writing and to each people in its own tongue – that:

↳ *Every husband should have dominion in his own house*

– and it was proclaimed in the tongue of [*each district's*] own people.

2

¹ After these things, when the rage of King A-has-u-e'rus had subsided, he remembered Vash'ti and what she had done and what had been decided against her. ² Then the young men who ministered to the king said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus — the King's young ministers*

↳ *They should search for beautiful young virgins for the king, ³ and let the king appoint superintendents in all the jurisdictional districts of his realm, and let them collect together all the beautiful young virgins at the palace at Shu'shan, in the house of the women under the charge of Heg'a-i the king's eunuch, the guardian of the women, and let them be given their massages. ⁴ And that young woman who is pleasing in the king's eyes will be queen instead of Vash'ti.*

and the notion was good in the king's eyes, so he proceeded to do so.

⁵ A certain man, a Jew, happened to be in the palace at Shu'shan, and his name was Mor'de-cai the son of Ja'ir the son of Shim'e-i the son of Kish a Ben'ja-min-ite, ⁶ who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the deported people who were taken into exile with Jec-o-ni'ah the king of Judah whom Neb-uchad-rez'zar the king of Babylon took into exile. ⁷ And he became caretaker of Ha-das'sah [*"myrtle"*] – that is, Esther [*"star"*], the daughter of his father's brother – for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was pretty in form and beautiful in appearance, and at the death of her father and her mother Mor'de-cai took her as his daughter. ⁸ And it came about that, when the king's word and his edict were heard, and when many young women were brought together at the palace at Shu'shan under the charge of Heg'a-i, that Esther was [*also*] taken to the king's house under the charge of Heg'a-i the guardian of the women.

⁹ Now the young woman was pleasing to him, so that she received kindness before him and he made haste to give her her massages and her appropriate food, and to give her seven selected young women [*attendants*] from the king's house, and he transferred her and her young women to the best place of the house of the women. ¹⁰ Esther had not revealed about her people or about her relatives, for Mor'de-cai had instructed her not to tell. ¹¹ And day after day Mor'de-cai was walking before the courtyard of the house of the women to know of Esther's welfare and what was being done with her.

¹² Now when the turn of each young woman arrived to go in to King A-has-u-e'rus at the end of the women's regulation for twelve months – for that was the way the days of their massage regime were fulfilled: six months' [*of massages*] with oil of myrrh, then six months' with balsam oil along with the routine massages of the women – ¹³ after this the young woman would come in to the king. Whatever she would ask for would be given her, to come with her from the house of the women to the king's

house...

¹⁴ In the evening she would come in, and in the morning she would return – to go to the second house of the women under the charge of Sha-ash'gaz [*“servant of the beautiful”*] the king's eunuch, the guardian of the concubines. She would not come in to the king again unless the king had taken delight in her and she had been called by name.

¹⁵ Now when the turn of Esther – daughter of Ab'i-ha-il, the uncle of Mor'de-cai, whom he had taken as his daughter – arrived [*for her*] to come in to the king, she did not request anything except what Heg'a-i the king's eunuch, the guardian of the women, would suggest; all the while Esther was continually gaining favour in the eyes of everyone who saw her. ¹⁶ Then Esther was taken to King A-has-u-e'rus at his royal house in the tenth month – that is, the month Te'beth [*“goodness”*], in the seventh year of his reign...

¹⁷ ...And the king came to love Esther more than all the other women, so that she gained more favour and loving-kindness before him than all the other virgins. And he placed the royal head-dress upon her head and crowned her as Queen, in place of Vash'ti. ¹⁸ Then the king held a great banquet for all his princes and his servants – the banquet of Esther! – and he granted a rest day in the jurisdictional districts, and he gave presents befitting the means of the king!

¹⁹ Now when virgins were collected together a second time, Mor'de-cai was sitting in the king's gate. ²⁰ Esther had not revealed about her relatives and her people – just as Mor'de-cai had instructed her – and Esther followed the advice of Mor'de-cai just as when she had been under his care.

²¹ In those days while Mor'de-cai was sitting in the king's gate, Big'than [*“in their wine-press”*] and Te'resh [*“strictness”*] – two court officials ^λ of the king, who guarded the door – became indignant and sought to lay hold on King A-has-u-e'rus... ²² ...but the thing became known to Mor'de-cai, and he told Esther the queen – in turn Esther talked to the king – in Mor'de-cai's name. ²³ So the matter was investigated and it was discovered, and both of them were hanged on a stake... and it was written in the scroll of the affairs of the times,^λ before the eyes of the king.

3

¹ After these things King A-has-u-e'rus magnified Ha'man [*“magnificent”*] the son of Ham-Me-da'tha [*“double” (possibly a twin)*] the Ag'ag-ite [*“I will overtop”*] and promoted him and to put his throne above all the other princes that were with him. ² And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate would bow low and prostrate themselves to Ha'man, for so the king had commanded respecting him... but as for Mor'de-cai, he would neither bow low nor prostrate himself. ³ And the king's servants who were in the king's gate began to say to Mor'de-cai:

- *servants of King A-has-u-e'rus — Mor'de-cai, older cousin and guardian of Esther*

⇒ *Why are you side-stepping the king's commandment?*

⁴ But it came about that as they talked to him – day by day! and he did not listen to them – they told Ha'man in order to see whether they should tolerate Mor'de-cai's stance, for he had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ And when Ha'man himself saw that Mor'de-cai was not bowing low and prostrating himself to him, then Ha'man became filled with rage... ⁶ but in his eyes it was beneath him to lay hand upon Mor'de-cai alone, for they had told him about Mor'de-cai's people – and so Ha'man began seeking to annihilate all the Jews who were in all the realm of A-has-u-e'rus, [*all of*] Mor'de-cai's people...

⁷ In the first month – that is, the month Ni'san – in the twelfth year of King A-has-u-e'rus, someone cast Pur (that is, the lot) ^λ before Ha'man – [*divining*] one day against another day and [*divining*] one month against another month, [*the lot finally falling to*] the twelfth – that is, the month A'dar.

⁸ Then Ha'man proceeded to say to King A-has-u-e'rus:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus — senior prince Ha'man*

⇐ *There is one certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the jurisdictional districts of your realm; and their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not perform the king's own laws. It is not appropriate for the king to leave them untouched.³*

³ Ha'man abuses his position as senior advisor to subtly make the king think of the law he enacted over Vash'ti

⁹ *If seems good to the king, let there be a writing that they be destroyed. I shall pay ten thousand silver talents⁴ into the hands of those doing the work by bringing [it] into the king's treasury.*

¹⁰ At that the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Ha'man the son of Ham-Me-da'tha the Ag'ag-ite, the adversary of the Jews, ¹¹ and the king said to Ha'man:

↔ *The silver is given to you, also the people [the Jews]. Do with them whatever seems right in your own eyes.*

¹² Then the king's secretaries were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a writing [made] according to all that Ha'man commanded the king's satraps and the governors who were over the different jurisdictional districts, and the princes of the different peoples of each jurisdictional district in its own style of writing, for each people in its own tongue. It was written in the name of King A-has-u-e'rus and it was sealed with the king's signet ring.

¹³ The letters were sent by means of couriers to all the king's jurisdictional districts:

"to desolate, kill and to destroy all the Jews ^{λα} – young man as well as old man, little ones and women – on one day:

on the thirteenth [day] of the twelfth month – the month of A'dar ^{λβ}

and to plunder their spoil."

¹⁴ A copy of the writing – to be given as law in all the different jurisdictional districts – was published to all the peoples, [for them] to become ready for this day.

¹⁵ The couriers went out in haste because of the king's edict, and the law was given in the palace at Shu'shan.

As for the king and Ha'man, they sat down to drink; but as for the city of Shu'shan, it was in confusion⁵...

4

¹ And Mor'de-cai learned of all that had been done, then Mor'de-cai ripped his garments apart. He put on sack-cloth and ashes and went out into the middle of the city and cried out with a loud and bitter outcry.⁶

² Finally he came as far as in front of the king's gate – for no one was to enter into the king's gate clothed in sack-cloth – ³ and in all the different jurisdictional districts, wherever the king's word and his edict reached, there was great mourning among the Jews and fasting and weeping and wailing; sack-cloth and ashes were spread out as a couch for many.

⁴ Then Esther's maids and her eunuchs began to come in and tell her [about Mor'de-cai], and the queen was greatly pained. She sent garments to clothe Mor'de-cai – to remove his sack-cloth off him – but he did not accept [them]. ⁵ At this Esther called Ha'thach [truly] – one of the king's eunuchs, whom he had appointed to attend upon her – and she gave him a command concerning Mor'de-cai, to find out what this meant and what this was all about.

⁶ So Ha'thach went out to Mor'de-cai into the public square of the city that was before the king's gate. ⁷ Then Mor'de-cai told him all that had befallen him, and the amount of silver that Ha'man had promised to pay to the king's treasury against the Jews to destroy them. ⁸ And he gave him a copy of the written edict which had been made in Shu'shan to have them annihilated, to show to Esther and to inform her; also to tell her to go in to the king and implore favour of him and make request directly before him for her own people.

⁹ Ha'thach now came in and told Esther all Mor'de-cai's words. ¹⁰ So Esther again spoke to Ha'thach and instructed him concerning Mor'de-cai:

● Esther — Ha'thach, attendant upon Esther

⇒ ¹¹ *All the king's servants and the people of the king's jurisdictional districts are aware that whichever*

⁴ 10,000 silver talents was a great deal of money – Ha'man was making himself look zealous to enact the king's own law. Really, it was a *devious inducement* upon the king to actually *make* the new law, without which Ha'man could not annihilate the Jews. Rich king A-has-u-e'rus is conned and believes this to be zeal, and rewards the "kindness" of Ha'man by giving the money to *him* – and authority to do what he wishes to the "lawbreaking" Jews

⁵ It seems that the king did not know that the city was perplexed by the new law

⁶ Mor'de-cai realises that his own refusal to bow has brought this decree against all his people

man or woman who comes in to the king at the inner courtyard who has not been called, his one law is to have [him] put to death – except when the king holds out the golden sceptre to him, he may stay alive. As for me, I have not been called to come in to the king now for thirty days.⁷

¹² – so they told Esther's words to Mor'de-cai. ¹³ Then Mor'de-cai told them to reply to Esther:

● *Esther* — message of reply (words of Mor'de-cai)

↩ *Do not imagine within your own soul that the king's household will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place... but as for you and your father's house, YOU people will perish. And who knows whether it is for a time such as this that you attained to royal dignity?⁸*

¹⁵ So Esther told them to reply to Mor'de-cai:

● *message of reply (words of Esther)* — Mor'de-cai

↩ ¹⁶ *Go, gather all the Jews that are to be found in Shu'shan, and practice a fast in my behalf – neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day. I and my maidens shall also fast in the same way, and after that I shall go in to the king – which is not permitted by law – and if I must perish, I will perish.*

¹⁷ At this Mor'de-cai spread the word and did all that Esther had laid in command upon him...

5

¹ Now on the third day, Esther dressed royally and then she went to stand inside the inner courtyard of the king's house opposite the king's house, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal house opposite the entrance of the house. ² And as soon as the king saw Esther the queen standing in the courtyard, she gained favour in his eyes, so that the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Esther now came near and touched the top of the sceptre.

³ Then the king said to her:

● *King A-has-u-e'rus* — Esther the Queen

⇒ *What do you want to do, O Queen Esther, and what is your request? Up to the half of the kingdom will be given to you!*

⁴ In turn Esther said:

↩ *If it pleases the king, let the king come with Ha'man today to the banquet that I have made for him.*

⁵ Accordingly the king said:

● *King A-has-u-e'rus* — attendants

⇒ *YOU men, bring Ha'man quickly on the word of Esther.*

– and the king and Ha'man came to the banquet that Esther had made.

⁶ ...And the king said to Esther during the banquet of wine:

● *King A-has-u-e'rus* — Esther the Queen

⇒ *What are you asking for really? – let it be granted you! What is your request? Up to half of the kingdom, and it will be done!*

⁷ To this Esther answered and said:

↩ *My petition and my request is:*

⁸ *If I have found favour in the king's eyes and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and to act on my request, let the king and Ha'man come to the banquet that I shall hold for them [tomorrow], and tomorrow I shall satisfy the king's request.*

⁹ – consequently Ha'man went out on that day joyful and merry of heart! ...But as soon as Ha'man saw

⁷ The king was prone to self-indulgent mood swings, and the longer Esther remains uncalled the more likely that the king will grow accustomed to living without his wife

⁸ Prophetic of good-hearted world rulers at the time of the Divine Rescue?

Mor'de-cai in the king's gate and saw that he did not rise and did not quake on account of him, Ha'man became filled with rage against Mor'de-cai. ¹⁰ Nevertheless, Ha'man kept control of himself and came into his house, then he sent and had his friends and his wife Ze'resh [^{gold}] brought in, ¹¹ and Ha'man proceeded to declare to them the glory of his riches and the large number of his sons and everything with which the king had magnified him, and how he had exalted him over the king's [^{very}] princes and servants...

¹² ...Then Ha'man went on to say:

- *senior prince Ha'man* ——— *Ze'resh his wife and all his friends*

⇒ *What is more, Queen Esther allowed no-one to come with the king to the banquet that she had made – except me! And what is more, I am invited tomorrow also to her with the king!... ¹³...yet all this does not serve me, as long as I continue to see Mor'de-cai the Jew sitting in the king's gate!*

¹⁴ At that his wife Ze'resh and all his friends said to him:

↔ *Let them make a stake fifty cubits high, and in the morning say to the king that they should hang Mor'de-cai on it. Then go in joyfully with the king to the banquet.*

– so the thing seemed good before Ha'man, and he had the stake erected.

6

¹ During that night the king's sleep eluded him. So he called to have the scroll of the records of the affairs of the times brought forward, and so they were read before the king... ² ...and the account was found written of how Mor'de-cai had reported Big-tha'na [^{Big'than}] and Te'resh – two court officials of the king, guardians of the threshold – who had sought to lay hand on King A-has-u-e'rus. ⁹ ^{λ-2-21} ³ So the king said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *the King's attendants*

⇒ *What honour and great thing has been done to Mor'de-cai for this?*

to which the king's young ministers said:

↔ *Nothing has been done with him.*

⁴ Later the king said:

⇒ *Who is in the courtyard?*

(now Ha'man had come into the outer courtyard of the king's house to ask the king to hang Mor'de-cai on the stake that he had prepared for him)

⁵ – accordingly the king's attendants said to him:

↔ *Behold! [^{by way of announcement}] Ha'man is standing in the courtyard.*

so the king said:

↔ *Let him come in.*

⁶ When Ha'man came in, the king [^{pre-emptively}] said to him:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *senior prince Ha'man*

⇒ *What should be done to the man to whom the king has taken delight to honour?*

at this Ha'man said in his heart:

- *senior prince Ha'man* ———

↻ *To whom would the king take delight in rendering an honour more than me?*

⁷ So Ha'man said to the king:

↔ *For the man to whom the king has taken delight to honour, ⁸ let them bring royal apparel with which the king clothes himself and a horse upon which the king rides and on the head of which the royal*

⁹ Esther 2:21-23

head-dress has been put. ⁹ And let this apparel and the horse be delivered into the charge of one of the king's noble princes, who must clothe the man whom the king has taken delight to honour, and they must make him ride on the horse in the public square of the city, and they must call out before him:

- some of the King's noble princes ——— people in the public square

↳ 'This is how it is done to the man whom the king has taken delight to honour.'

¹⁰ At once the king said to Ha'man:

↳ Quickly! take the apparel and the horse just as you have said, and do that way to Mor'de-cai the Jew who is sitting in the king's gate. Do not let anything go unfulfilled of all that you have spoken.

¹¹ ...So Ha'man took the apparel and the horse and clothed Mor'de-cai and had him ride in the public square of the city and called out before him:

"This is how it is done to the man whom the king has taken delight to honour."

¹² Afterward Mor'de-cai returned to the king's gate ...but Ha'man hurried to his house, lamenting and with his head covered. ¹³ And Ha'man told his wife Ze'resh and all his friends everything that had befallen him. At that his wise men and Ze'resh his wife said to him:

- senior prince Ha'man ——— Ze'resh his wife and his "wise" friends

↳ If Mor'de-cai is from the seed of the Jews – before whom you have begun to fall – you will not prevail against him, but you will undoubtedly fall before him.

¹⁴ – and while they were yet speaking with him, the king's court officials arrived and hastily brought Ha'man to the banquet that Esther had made.

7

Prophetic Pattern for Christ's Execution ¹⁰ ✕

¹ ...So the king and Ha'man came in to banquet with queen Esther. ² The king now said to Esther again on the second day during the banquet of wine:

- King A-has-u-e'rus ——— Esther the Queen

⇒ What is your petition, O Queen Esther? – let it be granted you! What is your request? Up to half of the kingdom, and it will be done!

³ at this Esther the queen answered and said:

↳ If I have found favour in your eyes, O king, and if it seems good to the king, let there be given me my own soul at my petition – and my people, at my [earnest] request. ⁴ For we have been sold – I and my people – to be "desolated, killed and destroyed" ^{λ-3-13α}

Now if we had been sold for mere men slaves and for mere maidservants, I would have kept silent, however no distress is appropriate when it damages the king.¹¹

⁵ King A-has-u-e'rus now replied to Esther the queen:

↳ Who is responsible? and just where is the one who has emboldened himself to do that way?

⁶ then Esther replied:

↳ The man, the adversary and enemy, is this evil Ha'man.

Ha'man became terrified because of the king and the queen, ⁷ and the king rose up in his fury from the banquet of wine [to go] to the garden of the palace. Then Ha'man stood up to make request for his soul from Esther the queen, for he saw that the king had determined evil against him. ⁸ Then the king returned from the palace garden to the house of the wine banquet... and there was Ha'man: fallen upon the couch

¹⁰ Richly prophetic. The guilt of cruel Ha'man – opposing the Jews – imputed to the Christ, and there would follow two Pu'rim *Esther* 9:26 days of freedom from Ha'manic oppression – two days of Sabbath after Christ's execution.

¹¹ Jews' annihilation would harm the king – as his being the unknowing instrument against God's will. God deemed that they should suffer 70 years' exile, and then return – not be destroyed

on which Esther had reclined. So the king said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *senior prince Ha'man*

⇒ *Is the queen to be raped as well? with me in the house?*

– as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Ha'man's face.¹² ⁹ And Har-bo'na, one of the court officials before the king, now said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *Har-bo'na, one of the court officials*

⇐ *Behold! there is the stake that Ha'man prepared for Mor'de-cai – [the Mor'de-cai] who had spoken to the benefit of the king – standing fifty cubits high in Ha'man's house.*

At that the king said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *court officials*

↪ *YOU men, HANG him on it!*

¹⁰ – so they hung Ha'man on the stake that he had prepared for Mor'de-cai... and the king's rage subsided.

8

¹ On that day King A-has-u-e'rus gave the house of Ha'man – the one showing hostility to the Jews – to Esther the queen; and Mor'de-cai came in before the king, because Esther had explained what he was to her. ² Then the king removed his signet ring that he had taken away from Ha'man and gave it to Mor'de-cai; and Esther went on to place Mor'de-cai over the house of Ha'man.

³ Moreover, Esther spoke again before the king and fell down before his feet and wept and implored favour of him – to turn away the badness of Ha'man the Ag'ag-ite and his scheme that he had devised against the Jews. ⁴ Then the king held out the golden sceptre to Esther, at which Esther rose and stood before the king. ⁵ She now said:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *Esther the Queen*

⇐ *If it seems good to the king, and if I have found favour before him and the thing is proper before the king and I am good in his eyes, let it be written to undo the written documents – the scheme of Ha'man the son of Ham-Me-da'tha the Ag'ag-ite, which he wrote in order to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's jurisdictional districts. ⁶ For how would I be able to look upon the calamity that will find my people? how would I be able to bear to look upon the destruction of my relatives?*

⁷ So King A-has-u-e'rus said to Esther the queen and to Mor'de-cai the Jew:

- *King A-has-u-e'rus* ——— *Mor'de-cai, and Esther the Queen*

⇒ *Look! I have given the house of Ha'man to Esther, and they have hanged him on the stake because he thrust out his hand against the Jews. ⁸ So YOU yourselves write in behalf of the Jews according to what is good in YOUR eyes in the king's name and seal [it] with the king's signet ring;¹³ for that which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be reversed.*

⁹ Accordingly the secretaries of the king were called at that time in the third month – that is, the month of Si'van [*“their covering”*] – on the twenty-third [*day*] of it, and it was written according to all that Mor'de-cai commanded: to the Jews, and to the satraps and the governors and the princes of the jurisdictional districts that were from In'di-a to E-thi-o'pi-a – one hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts – [*to*] each jurisdictional district in its own style of writing and [*to*] each people in its own tongue, and to the Jews in their own style of writing and in their own tongue.

¹⁰ He wrote in the name of King A-has-u-e'rus and sealed it with the king's signet ring and sent written documents by the hand of the couriers on horses, riding post horses used in the royal service, sons of speedy mares:

¹¹ *“Hereby the king grants to the Jews that were in all the different cities to congregate themselves and stand up for their souls, to desolate, kill and destroy all the force of the people and*

¹² With a hood, similar to the one used on prisoners as they go to be hanged, to show that they will never see light of day again

¹³ From being about to be hung on a stake and seeing his entire race destroyed, Mor'de-cai has become trusted by the very king. However the king is handing over the responsibility to Mor'de-cai to solve the problem, because the king himself declares that he cannot see how to do it.

jurisdictional district that would besiege them and their little ones and women, and plunder their spoil – ¹² on the one day in all the jurisdictional districts of King A-has-u-e'rus:

on the thirteenth [day] of the twelfth month – the month of A'dar.¹⁴ *A-3-13B*

¹³ A copy of the writing was to given as an edict throughout all the different jurisdictional districts, published to all the peoples, so that the Jews should equip themselves for this day in order to avenge themselves upon their enemies. ¹⁴ So the couriers rode out on post horses, being urged forward in haste by the king's word; and the edict was [also] given out in the palace at Shu'shan.

¹⁵ As for Mor'de-cai, he went forth from before the king in royal apparel of blue and linen, with a great crown of gold, and a fine-fabric dyed purple. And the city of Shu'shan itself cried out shrilly and was joyful – ¹⁶ there was brightness and rejoicing and exultation and esteem for the Jews. ¹⁷ And in all the different jurisdictional districts and in all the different cities wherever the king's word and his edict reached, there were rejoicing and exultation for the Jews, a banquet and a good day – and many of the peoples of the land were [falsely] declaring themselves Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen upon them.

9

¹ So in the twelfth month – the month of A'dar – on the thirteenth day of it when the king's word and edict came due to be performed, on the day for which the enemies of the Jews had looked forward to domineering over them... events were overturned and the Jews domineered over those hating them:

² – the Jews congregated themselves in their cities in all the jurisdictional districts of King A-has-u-e'rus to lay hand on those seeking their injury, and no man stood his ground before them, because dread of them had fallen upon all the peoples.

³ – all the princes of the jurisdictional districts and the satraps and the governors and the doers of the business that belonged to the king were assisting the Jews, for the dread of Mor'de-cai had fallen upon them – ⁴ for Mor'de-cai was [now] great in the king's house and his fame was travelling throughout all the jurisdictional districts, because the man Mor'de-cai was steadily growing greater and greater.

⁵ And the Jews went striking down all their enemies, slaughtering them with the sword – killing and destruction! they did what they wanted to those hating them. ⁶ And in the palace at Shu'shan the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men – ⁷ also they killed Par-shan-da'tha [*"given by prayer"*] and Dal'phon [*"dripping"*] and As-pa'tha [*"the enticed gathered"*] ⁸ and Po-ra'tha [*"fruitfulness" or "frustration"*] and A-da'li-a [*"I shall be drawn up of Jah"*] and A-ri-da'tha [*"the lion of the decree"*] ⁹ and Par-mash'ta [*"superior"*] and Ar'i-sai [*"lion of my banners (?)"*] and Ar'i-dai [*"the lion is enough"*] and Vai-za'tha [*"strong as the wind"*] – ¹⁰ the ten sons of Ha'man the son of Ham-Me-da'tha, the adversary to the Jews, but they did not lay their hand on the plunder.

¹¹ On that day the number of those killed in the palace at Shu'shan was reported to the king. ¹² And the king said to Esther the queen:

● King A-has-u-e'rus — Esther the queen

⇒ The Jews have killed inside the palace at Shu'shan, and five hundred men and the ten sons of Ha'man have been destroyed. What then must they have done in the rest of the jurisdictional districts of the king! What you ask for – let it be given to you! And what is your further request? let it be done.

¹³ Accordingly Esther said:

↔ If it seems good to the king, let the Jews that are in Shu'shan be granted to act tomorrow also according to the law of today; and let the ten sons of Ha'man be hanged upon the stake.

¹⁴ So the king commanded it to be done: an edict was given out in Shu'shan, and the ten sons of Ha'man were hanged, ¹⁵ and the Jews in Shu'shan congregated themselves again on the fourteenth day of the month A'dar, and they got to kill three hundred men in Shu'shan, but they did not lay their hand on the plunder.

¹⁶ As for the rest of the Jews that were in the jurisdictional districts of the king, they [had] congregated themselves and stood up for their souls, and avenged themselves upon their enemies by killing seventy-five

¹⁴ Same day as had been set for the annihilation of the Jews *Esther 3:13*

thousand of those hating them, but they did not lay their hand on the plunder, ¹⁷ on the thirteenth day of the month A'dar... But there was a rest on the fourteenth [day] of it, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.

¹⁸ As for the Jews that were in Shu'shan, they congregated themselves on the thirteenth [day] of it and on the fourteenth [day] of it, and there was a rest on the fifteenth [day] of it, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing. ¹⁹ That is why the country Jews, inhabiting the cities of the outlying districts, were making the fourteenth day of the month A'dar a rejoicing and a banqueting and a good day and a sending of portions to one another. ¹⁵

²⁰ And Mor'de-cai wrote these things down and sent written documents to all the Jews that were in all the jurisdictional districts of King A-has-u-e'rus, [both] the nearby and the distant ones, ²¹ to establish the obligation over them to hold [remember] the fourteenth day of the month A'dar and the fifteenth day of it in each and every year, ²² as the days on which the Jews had rested from their enemies and the month that was changed for them from grief to rejoicing and from mourning to a good day, to hold them as days of feasting and rejoicing and of sending portions to one another and of gifts to the poor people.

²³ And the Jews undertook to do what they had started to do – what Mor'de-cai had written to them. ²⁴ For Ha'man the son of Ham-Me-da'tha, the Ag'ag-ite – the adversary to all the Jews – had schemed against the Jews to destroy them, and he had had Pur – that is, the lot¹⁶ ^{λ-3-7} – cast to disturb them and destroy them. ²⁵ But when Esther came in before the king he commanded with a written document:

- *written document (decree of King A-has-u-e'rus) — Esther the Queen*

↳ *Let his bad scheme that he has schemed against the Jews come back upon his own head*

– and they hanged him and his sons upon the stake. ²⁶ That is why they called these days “Pu'rim” [“lot”], by the name of the Pur.^{λ-3-7} That is why – according to all the words of this letter and what they had seen as to this and what had come upon them – ²⁷ the Jews imposed and accepted upon themselves and upon their offspring and upon all those joining themselves to them, that the obligation should not pass away for them to hold these two days according to what was written concerning them and according to their appointed time, in each and every year. ²⁸ These days were to be remembered and held in each and every generation – each family, each jurisdictional district and each city – and these days of Pu'rim should not pass away from the midst of the Jews and their commemoration should not come to an end among their offspring.

²⁹ And Esther the queen – daughter of Ab'i-ha-il – and Mor'de-cai the Jew, wrote with all forcefulness to confirm this second letter concerning Pu'rim. ³⁰ Then he sent written documents to all the Jews in the one hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts, the realm of A-has-u-e'rus, [in] words of peace and truth, ³¹ to confirm these days of Pu'rim at their appointed times, just as Mor'de-cai the Jew and Esther the queen had imposed upon them, and just as they had imposed upon their own soul and upon their [own] offspring: the matters of the fasts and their cry for aid. ³² And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Pu'rim, and it was written down in a scroll.

10

¹ And King A-has-u-e'rus proceeded to lay a levy upon the land and the isles of the sea.

² As for all his energetic work and his mightiness and the exact statement of Mor'de-cai's greatness with which the king magnified him, are they not written in the scroll of the affairs of the times of the kings of Me'de-a and Persia? ³ For Mor'de-cai the Jew was second to King A-has-u-e'rus and was great among the Jews and approved in the eyes of many of his brothers, working for the good of his people and speaking peace to all their offspring.

¹⁵ Prophetic of the Mes-si'ah. Those in the country – ha'aretz – the gentiles commemorate Ni'san 14th as God's conquering evil, whereas the traditionalists continue with Ni'san 15th

¹⁶ The lot – Pur – cast against the Jews *Esther 3:7*

Glossary of Terms

Markers denoting some feature of the text

- Almighty God – not Jesus – as evidenced by the 12th century Hebrew text of the New Testament
- p proverb or saying
- rhet rhetorical statement
- ⚡ prophetic of the Mes-si'ah
- sa scribal anomaly
- sotvoc Soto voce textural comment or explanation inserted by the writer

Notes on terms and phrases

- r1 “life” in this context means “lives”
the generations of one’s line which follow, beginning with one’s existing family. Its use implies a blessing on future generations – and on the longevity of one’s name – due to good actions in the individual in question
- r2 “bereaved”
often means orphans, but in some cases anyone who is lonely and vulnerable through their loss of family head: a widow, an orphan.
- r3 “kidneys”
a term often used to express the thoughts or mind, inner self.
- r4 “house” – a family line
- r5 “gate”
typically the gate to the town or city, a place where a Le’vite judge would sit to hear cases as they are brought to him. A place where wise people sit – a sign of their esteem in the eyes of the city people – not a place for fools.
- r6 “master” – husband by choice.
This is historically and culturally lost to a great extent, but a “master of evil schemes” is someone who has actually been attracted to and wooed and pursued and married evil schemes, because of his love for them – far worse than a “bad marriage” to an unworthy wife.
- r7 “days like a shadow”
the implication is one of gently fading away at the end of one’s life
- r8 “under the sun”
wearisome life in fruitless toil outside of the garden of Eden.
- r9 “evil net” – for catching fish.
Not a net used in a boat for immediate catches, but one lain out at night which traps the fish.
- r10 “daughters of Jerusalem”
A phrase used by the Shu’lam-mite – taken as a prospective bride for Sol’o-mon – to the other chosen young women. The Shu’lam-mite is dark skinned – possibly Nu’bian, beautiful, a worker in the field and the hot sun – whereas her companions there are more refined, from good houses in the land. They despise her for being black, so in turn she calls “daughters of Jerusalem” – a term of aloofness and isolation, since its inhabitants now had the temple and were land-linked to David’s city on Zion, some of the people had become aloof and snobbish.
- r11 “land flowing with milk and honey”
a term to inspire genuine delight of the promised land
- r12 “pass through the fire”
burning alive (a person) as a sacrifice to a false god. Forbidden in the Law (*Deuteronomy 18:10*) but practiced by A’haz of Judah *2nd Kings 16:3* and others *2nd Kings 17:17* including Ma-nas’sah (*2nd Kings 21:6*; *2nd Chronicles 33:6*) – greatly criticised by Jehovah (*Jeremiah 32:35*; *Ezekiel 20:31*) but thoroughly outlawed by good King Jo-si’ah *2nd Kings 23:10*. It was believed that the screams of a first-born child would be the most pleasing call to awaken the attention and favour of pagan gods.
- r13 “footstool”
Term for the temple, God’s foothold on earth. King David yearned to build a temple for God for His “comfort”, that is, a sign that He was respected *1st Chronicles 28:2*; *Psalms 99:2-5*; *Psalms 132:7* – but after the rebellious nature of His people, that prized temple was shown to have been more respected and treasured in the minds of the people than was God. When the rebuke promised under the Law came, the temple was not spared – proof that a people could not inflict conditions of protection upon God – and God dismissed both the temple and Zion as

being special. Instead, He promised through the prophet Isaiah that the whole earth was His footstool *Isaiah 66:1* and this prophesied the future inclusion of Gentiles into His flock, followed by a New Jerusalem which would fill the earth

- r14 “land of / toward the north” – land of Godlessness.
This represents the region of Ma’gog, a people who are only once mentioned in the Hebrew scriptures, since they have absolutely no interest nor contact with God’s ways. These are to feature as the last ones who resist in the vision of *Revelation 20:7-8*
- r15 “dusky people”
Possibly the Scenite Arabians. Alternatively, the darken skinned – mixed races, possibly covered up with mixed cloth *Leviticus 19:19* – their attire to survive sand and sun in the daytime travel, possibly a reference to their communities which only came alive in the evening when they had completed the day’s travel
- r16 “bending down” or “inclining”
this is when God sees the iniquities of people, yet instead of giving denunciation he stoops through that putrid layer in order to encourage and advise, in the manner of a father intervening with a wayward child.
- r17 “the land must pay off its Sabbaths”
note that the land was effectively a victim of forced labour by the people, so to “pay off” was to literally take an enforced rest for 70 years! Not a burden or onerous payment at-all! Fulfilled at the fall of Jerusalem through Neb-u-chad-rez’zar – see *2nd Chronicles 34:14*; *2nd Chronicles 36:17-21*
- r18 “Jehovah of Armies”
a term used for God when speaking of His strong action, rather than His prophecy, His teaching, or His compassion
- r19 “Jerusalem” the city, rather than “Jerusalayim” – greater Jerusalem
Jerusalayim includes the city of Jerusalem on Mount Mo-ri’ah and the city of David on Mt. Zion. It is a terms for both of these as one – Jerusalem and its Kingly portion – and is used in the Hebrew more often than the term “Jerusalem” which refers only to the city of Jerusalem (this only occurs in the scrolls of Ezra and of Daniel). The Hebrew words are identical, but with different vowel markings – absent in the original scrolls, but inserted appropriately according to Jewish scholars
- r20 “virgin daughter” of a country.
The notion is that the country is stable, has achieved and is wealthy enough to raise a child without being oppressed. The virgin daughter is one who is being groomed, gently raised, acquiring a fine status ready for when she has children herself – perhaps a satellite city or region. The phrase is often used when discussing the fate of such hubris-laden nations – that their cherished virgin daughter will not marry, but be ravished – and her child not a kingdom or alliance, but a fated and illegitimate mongrel.
- r21 occasional underlying text is *plural* – of majesty – but written here as singular for the single object
- r22 “city of refuge”
A place for the accidental manslayer to flee to, a place of safety from an avenging relative. There were 6 proposed cities of refuge: Moses set up the first three Be’zer, Ra’moth in Gil’e-ad and Go’lan in Ba’shan to the East of the Jordan. Afterwards to the West there came Ke’desh-Naph’ta-li (in Gal’i-lee), She’chem, Kir’i-ath-Ar’ba (He’bron) – 6 cities
- r23 “utterance of Jehovah”
God would speak face to face with Moses, and spoke through the priests when Israel’s leaders inquired of Him. However, when the priesthood itself became degenerate, God would give an “utterance” – a whisper through a prophet of through a loyal priest – no longer through the direct route of the priesthood. This would come in a dream or a waking vision, or through a Divine messenger. The priesthood remained in place, but providing guidance came through those (most often non-priests) of good heart who sincerely loved Him and yearned for His way. Wherever the phrase “utterance of Jehovah” appears, it means this guidance as given through a prophet.
- r31 “Days of Noah”
The days of Noah were a time when the world was “filled with violence”, but the world had been so for a long time. Certain of Adam’s line had dubious names which illustrated their lack of love for God, Cain had murdered his brother, and La’mech had declared himself to be ten times worse than Cain.
However the real issue was the Neph’i-lim. Rebellious angels wished to usurp the physical creation project, but did not have the power to create life, so some conspired to come to earth and take over the bodies of some of the men (and possibly women) and manipulated the circumstances of a natural human conception to produce a race of giant bullies to dominate the earth. These Chimerae – or hybrids – were human in form, but their nature corrupted by the

angelic interference – not through possession, but through altering how the conception was allowed to be influenced before birth.

In Jesus' day, he describes the time of the end as just like the days of Noah – this is linked closely with his words to Nic-o-de'mus regarding the copper serpent. Just as rebellious angels came to disturb the earth – akin to the serpents which bit the Hebrews in the wilderness – so the servant of God, the Christ came to heal the disturbance – the copper serpent which brought healing.

r32 “The Good News (Gospel)”
The news that people of all the nations can be declared righteous due to faith (see *Isaiah 61:1-2*). This was declared to Abraham, after he was declared righteous – not by works, but by faith in God. *Galatians 3*. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are each their depictions of this, as exemplified in the life of the Mes-si'ah

r33 Abyss = womb
see Joseph's blessing from Israel *Genesis 49:25*, also *John 3:3* says that traditionalists are in the abyss

r34 e.g. “heaven and earth might pass away”
Often seen as an hyperbolae
The rulers are seen as heaven, and the Jews called the Gentiles “al Ha-aretz” – people of the earth. The Law was fulfilled in the Christ, and in handing the new covenant to his ordinary disciples and opening the way for Gentiles *John 3:16-17* so with those two things “the heavens and the earth” did pass away. This term is sometimes used to refer to the wayward people therein *2nd Peter 3:7* – see God's words of comfort to distraught Jews in *Isaiah 51:6*

r35 “Son of David”
see fn to *Psalms 110* and *1st Kings 5:3*, which identify David in the role of God and Jesus Christ in the role of the Son of David – the temple-builder: Sol'o-mon

r36 Loaves of Presentation
these were twelve loaves of bread placed before Jehovah. They were arranged in two rows of six – the twelve corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. They remained before the sanctuary of Jehovah (Holy of Holies) for seven days, after which they were moved to the temple at large, where only the priests could eat them.

r37 Paralytic
a weakness, usually down one side, probably as a result of a stroke

r38 “wild beast” of Revelation
There are 4 beasts in Revelation:

- 1) the wild beast which ascends from the abyss –
- this is undescribed physically, but is the embodiment of anti-christianity. It is formed by a powerful rebel angels or group of angels, which had acted very badly in the past – thus they were placed in the abyss.
- 2) wild beast from the sea
a human organisation borne of the turbulence of ordinary people (see *Isaiah 57:20* – “the wicked are like the sea that is being tossed, when it cannot calm down, the waters of which keep tossing up mud and mire.”), which is representing the wild beast
- 3) wild beast from the earth
a human organisation for ruling classes, which is representing the wild beast
- a 2 horned wild beast – false prophet – created by rebel angels
(3b) molten image of the (2nd) wild beast.
- 4) scarlet coloured wild beast
a depiction of the character of the wild beast.

These are essentially aspects of the wild beast from the abyss – see how the 5th plague is poured on the throne of the wild beast is poured onto the throne of the adversary. The image of the wild beast is an image of the beast from the sea, which is itself a portrayal of the wild beast of the abyss

r39 Traditionalist, Traditionalist era
the era of Judaism which preceded the Christ, particularly those people steeped in man-made doctrine and tradition, most particularly those intransigent to God's Mes-si'ah

r40 Mik'tam / Al-tas'chith
“an engraving”, “do not destroy”
Mik'tam is attached to certain psalms – often associated with King David fleeing from Saul. David carved messages into the rocks where he was hiding, and Saul's men would read David's plea for conciliation toward God. However Saul had hired “indian trackers” – E'dom-ites – to find David, and evidently ordered them to destroy these Hebrew messages before any of Saul's men could read them...

...so David marked some of them “Al-tas’chith” – an Ar-a-ma’ic word which the non-Hebrew reading E’dom-ites *could* understand – which reads “do not destroy”. The hope was that they would read this as a sign that the message was important, and so there was a chance that Saul or his men would read it.

r41 Lillies / Lily of Reminder
Musical trumpets, rather than those for sounding an alert.

r666 666 – or 660 incised as a brand
There are many suggestions for the meaning of this, including the names of despotic world leaders ranging from the 1st to the 20th centuries.

The number could refer to the 66 sons of Israel – not of Joseph’s line *Revelation 7:8* – who left the Promised Land to travel for Egypt *Genesis 46:26*; *Romans 9:6*. It could refer to the sixth commandment “You must not kill” – implying that the number reflects God’s disapproval.

It could also be a negation of God’s order of things: 7 seals, 7 trumpet blast and 7 thunders.

Alternatively it could refer to the voluntary offering of the people under Ne-he-mi’ah – post-Babylonian release – when the temple was being rebuilt on the threshing floor of Or’nan. The area was purchased for 600 shekels weight of gold *1st Chronicles 21:25*. For support, the people would provide their tithe – or 1/10th – for the priests and 1/10th of a 1/10th *Nehemiah 10:32-39* to supply the house of God with food – symbolically 666 in total. The symbolism would be that the entire extra voluntary offering of God’s people on returning to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem – including its tithes – were to be given to the wild beast, effectively stealing food from the mouth of God.

rP “Phaenomena” by Aratus

This is the poem from which the apostle Paul quoted to the Ep-i-cu-re’an and the Sto’ic philosophers in Acts 17:28

“With Jove we must begin, nor from Him rove;
Him always praise, for all is full of Jove!
He fills all places where mankind resort,
The wide-mouthed sea and every sheltering port.
Jove’s presence fills all space, upholds this ball [the earth]
All need His aid – His power sustains us all.
For we His offspring are, and He in love
Points out to man his labour from above:
Where signs unerring show when best the soil
By well-timed culture shall repay our toil...”

