

## KNIGHT OF THE EAST (15°)

### THE INFLUENCE OF ZERUBBABEL AND HIS TEMPLE-BUILDING WORK ON SCOTTISH RITE FREEMASONRY

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

Zerubbabel, the man most commonly associated with building the Second Temple, is one of the most popular figures in all Biblical literature.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite being a famous man on a famous mission, he is also a man of mystery. It is relatively easy to learn what he is credited with accomplishing, but it is more difficult to get his measure, to fully appreciate what made him tick. We have made him into a caricature of what we want him to be, without really caring to know who he really was. Therein lies a character flaw that we should consider rectifying in ourselves for our own good.

Little is known historically about this man who is associated with the construction of the replacement for Solomon's Temple, a Second Temple which stood for 500 years following the destruction of the original Temple. Zerubbabel appeared seemingly out of nowhere, at the direction of the great Persian King Cyrus, to rebuild the Temple as the Babylonian Captivity finally drew to a close. He disappeared abruptly once his task was completed, never to reappear again. Some scholars suggest that perhaps he never really existed, but was merely a fiction that was invented by pious believers to illustrate how Deity interacts with the Covenant People.

Zerubbabel's story raises many questions and few answers. The Bible suggests that he was a royal prince of Judah, but he made no attempt to assume the throne even though he had no competitors. Some postexilic Jews considered him a messianic figure, but that may have been wishful thinking. Whether he left Jerusalem voluntarily after the Temple was completed, or was killed because of political intrigue, or simply disappeared because he was no longer important to the story, is unknown. He remains forever a man of mystery, while linked forever with his mission of building the Second Temple.

But there is no dispute that Zerubbabel is safely enshrined in the pantheon of Masonic heroes. Illustrious Albert Pike put into Persian King Cyrus's mouth (albeit anachronistically) the statement that Zerubbabel was famous as a wise and accomplished Freemason.<sup>2</sup> Modernly, he is referred to as a Perfect Élu.<sup>3</sup> As such, he has been elevated

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<sup>1</sup> Israel P. Loken, *Ezra* (xulonpress.com, 2007), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Pike, *Magnum Opus or the Great Work of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing Co., 2004), p. XV ... 7.; see also J.W.S. Mitchell, *The History of Freemasonry and Masonic Digest*, Vol. I (Marrieta, Ga.: n.p., 2nd ed. 1859), p. 104 and

to a post of pristine honor within the Masonic Fraternity and made worthy of our emulation.

But why do we emulate someone whom we really do not know? One suggestion is that Royal Arch Masonry, which offers at the culmination of the Lodge of Perfection an alternative version of the Hiram legend, continues its relationship with Scottish Rite Freemasonry by introducing the Zerubbabel legend into the Chapter Rose Croix. Royal Arch Masonry's arcane lessons about the Ineffable Word, long associated with Solomon's Temple, were not necessarily lost when that Temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans. The lessons survived, and arguably provided Royal Arch Masonry with reasons to survive, when the Temple was rebuilt under Zerubbabel's supervision. It is the marriage between Royal Arch Masonry and Scottish Rite Masonry that gives Zerubbabel his special status within the Fraternity.<sup>4</sup> Zerubbabel is the officiant at their allegorical wedding.<sup>5</sup>

In writing the life of Zerubbabel from a Masonic point of view, it is incumbent that reference should be made to the legends as well as to the more strictly historical details of his eventful career. With the traditions of the Royal Arch, and some other of the high degrees, Zerubbabel is no less intimately connected than is Solomon with those of Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry. To understand those traditions properly, they must be placed in their appropriate place in the life of him who plays so important a part in them. Some of these legends have the concurrent support of Scripture, some are related by Josephus, and some appear to have no historical foundation. Without, therefore, vouching for their authenticity, they must be recounted, to make the Masonic life of the builder of the second Temple complete.<sup>6</sup>

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Elder David Bernard, *Light on Masonry: A Collection of All the Most Important Documents on the Subject of Speculative Free Masonry* (Utica, N.Y.: William Williams, 1829), p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> Rex R. Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light* (The Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, 1995), p. 118. "To the Mason, Zerubbabel is the type of leader who perseveres, encourages the disinherited, cheers the timid, incites the indolent, forces the apathetic and reluctant and has incorruptible fidelity to honor and duty." *Ibid.*, p. 122. Brother Anderson went further and referred to Zerubbabel as the "General Master Mason of the Jews." James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons; Containing the History, Charges and Regulations of That Most Ancient and Right Wonderful Fraternity, for the Use of the Lodges* (New York: Robt. Macoy, 1859), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Everett R. Turnball and Ray V. Denslow, *A History of Royal Arch Masonry, Part One* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 523.

<sup>5</sup> The "Office of Zerubbabel" within Royal Arch Masonry is upheld as an example of moral and religious rectitude for all Freemasons. Herbert F. Inman, *Royal Arch Working Explained* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), p. 235.

<sup>6</sup> E.R. Johnston, *Masonry Defined, Part 2* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2002), pp. 674-75.

Thus, one way to plumb ever deeper into the mysteries of Royal Arch Masonry<sup>7</sup> requires us to explore Zerubbabel's allegorical role in the Chapter Rose Croix of Scottish Rite Freemasonry.<sup>8</sup> For that to occur, we must understand the significance of the Zerubbabel legend, which we learn from a mixture of Biblical stories, secular sources like the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, and Masonic hagiography.

## II. ZERUBBABEL, MAN OF MYSTERY

### A. A Tale of Two Temples

The Biblical and historical significance of who Zerubbabel was and what he accomplished is best understood against the backdrop of his times and circumstances. The story can have many different beginnings, but a good choice is the destruction of Solomon's Temple in the Sixth Century BCE, for Zerubbabel would not have needed to rebuild the Temple had it never been destroyed. Solomon's Temple was the first one in Jerusalem but not the first temple in Judaism. It replaced the Temple of Shiloh,<sup>9</sup> which had housed the Ark of the Covenant, thereby constituting a legacy of Jewish temple building that continued for a thousand years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Royal Arch Masonry holds Zerubbabel in such high regard that it dates its origins from his commencement of construction on the Second Temple. George H. Thummel, et al., *Monitor and Ceremonies, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Nebraska* (Omaha, Neb.: Omaha Printing Company, 19190), p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> Brother Pike reminds us that the entire Fifteenth Degree is allegorical; none of it should be taken literally. Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Charleston, S.C.: Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, 1871), p. 237.

<sup>9</sup> Little is known about the temple at Shiloh, even its precise location, only that it predated the Davidic dynasty, was the place where the prophet Samuel first heard Deity's voice, and was as important to the pre-monarchy as Solomon's Temple was during the monarchy. *The Hebrew Monarchy: A Commentary with a Harmony of the Parallel Texts and Extracts from the Prophetic Books*, ed. Andrew Wood (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1896), p. 554. Shiloh may have physically been a tent or a shrine (as the replacement of Moses' traveling sanctuary tent), but it is commonly considered a temple because it housed the Ark of the Covenant and therefore represented Deity's dwelling place on earth. Tomoo Ishisa, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel* (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1977), p. 96. Apparently it was destroyed by Deity's wrath because of the people's impiety, and the great preexilic prophet Jeremiah warned the people that their comfortable surroundings and even Solomon's Temple could be destroyed as easily as had Shiloh. *The Holy Bible* (KJV 1989), Jeremiah 26:1-6.

<sup>10</sup> We do not know when the Temple at Shiloh was built, but it was destroyed ca. 1050 BCE. Harold W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship* (Hague, The Netherlands: Moulton Publishers, 1979), p. 48. King Herod did not build a new, Third Temple, but remodeled Zerubbabel's Temple extensively. Ostensibly, he did so because the building's masonry was crumbling when he became king. J. King, *Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill at Jerusalem* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1884). But Herod's underlying motivation was less altruistic; he wanted to elevate his status by comparing himself to Solomon as a mighty temple-builder and created a structure magnificent enough that was intended to attract Jews from all over the Roman Empire. Samuel Rocca, *Herod's Judaea* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p. 121. Construction of the Herodian Temple commenced ca. 19 BCE, the new structure was dedicated 10 years later, and detail work continued until ca. 70 CE, when the Romans leveled it during the Jewish Civil War. Tony Garland, *A*

There were many cultural, linguistic and theological connections between Solomon's Temple and Zerubbabel's Temple, even though the cultures they represent were also very different.<sup>11</sup> Solomon's Temple represented the purity of Jewish life before the Captivity and was designed directly by Deity, while Zerubbabel's Temple represented the awkward human efforts that existed in the postexilic period because of the disruption of Judaism's preexilic relationship with Deity. Zerubbabel needed to rebuild the Temple, therefore, as a symbol of humanity's zealous search to regain what had been lost, both spiritually and temporally.<sup>12</sup>

## **B. The Crises of Preexilic Judaism**

The zenith of Jewish preexilic power and prestige was centered in the monarchy of King David's son, Solomon, in the Tenth Century BCE.<sup>13</sup> Solomon was revered for his wisdom, wealth, and the Temple which history names after him. The era was described as a time of peace, wisdom, happiness, justice, and the absence of sin.<sup>14</sup> Scholars and rulers came from afar to pay their respects to Solomon, including the fabled Queen of Sheba.<sup>15</sup>

Tragically, "Solomon's kingdom barely outlived him."<sup>16</sup> Following his death circa 931 BCE, his successors and generals squabbled among themselves over the rights

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*Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Camano Island, Wash.: SpiritandTruth, 2004), p. 368.

<sup>11</sup> Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 20-21.

<sup>12</sup> Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 150-51. The prophet Ezekiel described the ideal temple where Deity might indwell in Ezekiel 40:5-43:2. Some have tried to analyze Ezekiel's design literally, especially its details of radically high walls, but, in so doing, they miss the mark. Ezekiel was describing the temple as the source of a radically high standard of religious devotion and worship. Iain Dugoid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999), p. 481.

<sup>13</sup> Admirers of the Davidic dynasty say that Solomon sat on Deity's throne, but they acknowledge that successive kings were unable to maintain the same levels of national power and prestige. *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into Its History and Interaction*, ed. Albert Gerhards and Clements Leonhard (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007), p. 268.

<sup>14</sup> This description comes from the pseudepigraphical Jewish text of 2 Baruch, likely written in the early Second Century CE. 2 Baruch 61:2, reprinted in *The Apocalypse of Baruch Translated from the Syriac*, ed. R.H. Charles (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896).

<sup>15</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 1 Kings 10:1-13; Sir James George Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend and Law*, Vol. II (London: Macmillan & Co., 1918), pp. 564-560.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Thomas Frank, *Discovering the Biblical World* (New York: Hammond, 1974), p. 99.

of succession<sup>17</sup> and the brutal civil war that ensued left the nation divided and weakened. The larger and more powerful Northern Kingdom of Israel lay adjacent to the weaker but still significant Southern Kingdom of Judah (whose capital remained in Jerusalem).<sup>18</sup> Despite their common heritage, each kingdom seldom came to the other's rescue when invading armies swept in. Both kingdoms eventually were conquered and lost their sovereignty.<sup>19</sup>

The Northern Kingdom, comprising ten of the 12 Jewish tribes,<sup>20</sup> was the first to fall. It was captured by Sargon II, king of neighboring Assyria, in 721 BCE.<sup>21</sup> Assyria

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<sup>17</sup> Solomon's son, Rehoboam, traveled to Shechem to be anointed king and to be acclaimed by the nation, as had Kings Saul, David and Solomon before him. The 10 northern tribes chose collectively to reject him and instead acclaimed Jeroboam, who had fled to Egypt to escape Solomon's wrath. Rehoboam was both the last king of the united Jewish kingdom and the first king of the new Southern Kingdom of Judah (consisting of only two tribes) as a result of the civil war between them. The war weakened both sides and left them vulnerable to outside invasion. *The Holy Bible*, 1 Kings 12-16; *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, Vol. 4 (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Co., 1915), p. 2551.

<sup>18</sup> Menahem Mansoor, *Jewish Thought and History: An Introduction* (Jersey City, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1991), p. 9; Victor Harold Matthews, *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 53-55. While this was a formal political division, there was a long-term tension between the northern and southern tribes historically dating back before King David's time. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Minn.: William R. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), p. 357.

<sup>19</sup> Occasionally they formed uneasy alliances to defend themselves from a common aggressor. *Outlines of Old Testament History*, ed. Erastus Blakeslee, et al. (Boston, Mass.: The Bible Study Publishing Company, 1894), p. 154. At other times, they recruited neighboring armies as allies and mercenaries in their ongoing conflicts with each other. Norman Gelb, *Kings of the Jews: The Origins of the Jewish Nation* (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Jewish Publication Society, 2008), p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> W.C. Taylor, *A Manual of Ancient History: Containing the Political History, Geographical Position, and Social State of the Principal Nations of Antiquity* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 5th ed. rev. 1852), p. 47. For all its power, the Northern Kingdom lacked prestige because its rulers were not descended from the Davidic dynasty. Robert Ullian, *Frommer's Israel* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2011), p. 101. It was led by 20 kings over its 250-year existence, with capitals in Shechem, Tirzah and Samaria. Because it was cut off from worshipping in Solomon's Temple, it turned to its own rituals and eventually resorted to Baal worship. *Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia*, ed. Charles Kendall Adams, Vol. IV (New York: A.J. Johnson Company, 1895), p. 787.

<sup>21</sup> The prophet Isaiah had warned the people that if they did not repent, Deity would use Assyria "as the rod of mine anger." *The Holy Bible*, Isaiah 10:5. Assyria arranged for mass deportation of conquered peoples throughout its empire. Only a few of the poorest Israelites remained behind when the Northern Kingdom was conquered. Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), p. 36. Since this was the frontier between the Assyrian territory to the north and Egypt to the south, the Assyrians garrisoned troops in the former Northern Kingdom, and they gradually intermarried with the remaining local inhabitants. The result was a mixed race that came to be known as Samaritans, and the worship of Jehovah became mixed with non-Jewish beliefs and practices. As typified by the ancient Jewish historian Josephus and his ethnocentric prejudices, the Southern Kingdom disregarded Samaritans as non-Jews and pagans. Louis H. Feldman, "A Selective Critical Biography of Josephus," in *Josephus, The Bible, and History*, ed. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Tokyo: Yamamoto Shoten Publishing House, 1988), p. 420; Charles H. Cosgrove, "Toward a Postmodern *Hermeneutica Sacra*: Guiding Considerations in Choosing Between Competing Plausible Interpretations of Scripture" in *The Meanings We Choose*:

was the greatest known empire of its day until Nebuchadnezzar II, who has the king of neighboring Chaldea, invaded Assyria and destroyed its capital city of Ninevah in 612 BCE.<sup>22</sup> Nebuchadnezzar conquered many small neighboring states and incorporated them into an empire which extended from the Nile to the Tigris and Euphrates, including portions of modern-day Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Iran.<sup>23</sup>

The loss of the Northern Kingdom left the Southern Kingdom even weaker and more isolated than before (it consisted only of two tribes, plus the Levites who ministered in the Temple).<sup>24</sup> Shortly after Jehoahaz became king of Judah at age 23, the Southern Kingdom was conquered by the King of Egypt, who removed Jehoahaz from the throne and appointed Jehoahaz's older brother Eliakim as king in his place.<sup>25</sup> The new king reigned for 11 years and was seen as unrighteous by pious Jews.<sup>26</sup> The Hebrew Bible records that Deity punished Eliakim for his unrighteousness by permitting Nebuchadnezzar to invade Judah, take Eliakim back to Babylon as a hostage, and pillage the Temple.<sup>27</sup> Subsequent kings of Judah were likewise unrighteous under Jewish law.

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*Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy and The Conflict of Interpretation*, ed. Charles H. Cosgrove (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 1 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), p. 270; Rainier Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century BCE* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics and Society*, ed. Marvin Perry, et al. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 9th ed. 2009), p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> The Southern Kingdom bought time after the Northern Kingdom's fall by paying tribute to Assyria for a century as the Assyrian Empire's influence gradually weakened. The Southern Kingdom encircled Jerusalem and made the Temple the center of its own waning influence. William J. Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel, *World History*, Vol. I (Boston, Mass.: Wadsworth, 6th ed. 2010), p. 27. Postexilic Jews referred to themselves spiritually as Israel, even though they technically were remnants only of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 357.

<sup>25</sup> Judah lost the ability to control its Philistine subjects, which rendered the region more attractive to Egyptian takeover. John Drane, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 124. Judah unwittingly played into Nebuchadnezzar's hands by allying itself with Egypt, who was then at war with Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar ordered an invasion of Judah as part of its overall strategy against Egypt. Israel Smith Clare, *The Centennial Universal History: A Clear and Concise History of All Nations, with a Full History of the United States to the Close of the First 100 Years of Our National Independence* (Philadelphia, Penn.: J.C. McCurdy & Co., 1876), p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36:1-5. The prophet Jeremiah chastised Eliakim for living in decadent luxury while ignoring the needs of his people. Jeremiah 22:15. David Mandel, *The Ultimate Who's Who of the Bible* (Alachua, Fla.: Bridge-Logos, 2007), pp. 154-55.

<sup>27</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36:6-7. Sir Isaac Newton, *Newton's Revised History of Ancient Kingdoms: A Complete Chronology*, ed. Larry and Marion Pierce (Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books, 2009), p. 104. Judah had overestimated Egypt's ability to withstand Nebuchadnezzar's reach and therefore stopped paying tribute to Babylon. This provoked Nebuchadnezzar into retaliating against Judah, and he directed some of his vassal states to begin attacking Jerusalem as a prelude to his personal invasion. Warren G. Weirsbe, *The Weirsbe Bible Commentary: The Complete Old Testament* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C. Cook, 2007), p. 729.

To worsen matters, the people ignored Deity's prophetic messengers and defiled the Temple.<sup>28</sup> Devout Jews believed that this impiety kindled Deity's wrath and Deity thereupon caused Nebuchadnezzar to invade Jerusalem again.<sup>29</sup> This time the result was horrific: men, women and children were slaughtered indiscriminately, the Temple and the city walls were leveled, and many of the survivors were taken back to Babylon as slaves.<sup>30</sup> Pious Jews viewed all this as stemming from the people's unrighteousness.<sup>31</sup>

But the Chaldeans did not remain in power for very long. Their might declined rapidly with the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BCE.<sup>32</sup> In 539 BCE, in an act that pious Jews attribute to Deity's punishment of Nebuchadnezzar for his many sins, Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians under the leadership of Cyrus the Great.<sup>33</sup> Unlike

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<sup>28</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36: 8-16. The preexilic Jerusalem community was less syncretistic and less monotheistic than postexilic Judaism; temple worship was viewed as more institutional in the First Temple period and more personal in the Second Temple period. Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London: T&T Clark International 2006), p. 92. Some in postexilic Judaism decided that preexilic disregard for the Temple had triggered Deity's displeasure, which led to divine punishment in the form of the Babylonian Conquest. Gerard von Groningen, *First Century Gnosticism: Its Origins and Motifs* (Leiden: The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1967), p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> Other Babylonian and Persian leaders were involved in the series of raids against Jerusalem, but Biblical authors and scholars deliberately identified Nebuchadnezzar as the specific threat because of his historical links to the Babylonian Captivity. Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 2nd rev. ed. 2004), p. 122.

<sup>30</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36: 17-20; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston (Lynn, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1982), Book X, Chapter VIII, Paragraphs 1-5. The intensity of violence and destruction intensified with each successive raid. The first of the three raids took the leading Jewish citizens back to Babylon. *The Holy Bible*, 2 Kings 24:1. The second raid resulted in taking 10,000 captives back to Babylon; the final raid destroyed the city and the Temple, and took all remaining inhabitants back to Babylon except for all but the poorest inhabitants. *The Holy Bible*, 2 Kings 25:1-21. E. Michael and Sharon Rusten, *The Complete Book of When and Where in the Bible and Throughout History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2005), p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36:21. The prophet Jeremiah anguished over the complete destruction of Jerusalem which he witnessed, knowing that it could have been averted had the people remained faithful to Deity. H.N. Bialik and Y.H. Rawnitzky, *Sefer Ha-aggadah: The Book of Jewish Folklore and Legends* (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing House, 1988), p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> Nebuchadnezzar II was the last great Chaldean ruler. He was followed by ineffective successors, beginning with Amil-Marduk (called Evil-Merodach in *The Holy Bible*, 2 Kings 25:27), who ruled for less than two years. Neriglissar, who was a brother-in-law of Amil-Marduk, then ruled for four years. His son, Labashi-Nurduk, was deposed after nine months. Nabonidus, a leader of the priestly party, ruled for 16 years, from 555 BCE to 539 BCE. Bill T. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> This transition marked not just the replacement of one dynasty with another. It marked the entrance of an entirely new world order. "The fall of Babylon marked the end of Semitic world power. With the triumph of Cyrus, a new race, the Indo-European, came into world dominion and the political destiny of the world was henceforth in the hands of that race. This, therefore, marks a new and very important watershed in Biblical history." Elmer W.K. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History* (New York: Ronald Press, 1951), pp. 348-49.

Nebuchadnezzar, who treated his subjects with cruelty that was exceptional even by contemporary standards,<sup>34</sup> Cyrus was considered a benevolent ruler of the peoples whom he conquered. He won the loyalty of his subjects by treating them with kindness and respect, thereby avoiding many uprisings and dissent.<sup>35</sup>

### C. Zerubbabel's Mysterious Entrance

The Babylonian Captivity was a major, seminal event in the history of the Jewish people. Various Semitic peoples had spent centuries working together to build a nation following Moses' tortuous travels toward Palestine from Egypt. Then it was all gone, with the Northern Kingdom gone forever and a handful of survivors from the Southern Kingdom stranded in distant Babylon. This was a watershed moment, as the exiles searched for a way to return home and rebuild what was lost in a strange, new postexilic shadow of Judah's former greatness.

The stage is thus set for Zerubbabel's entrance. The place and date of his birth are unknown, but it appears that he was a Jew who was born in Babylon circa 558 BCE.<sup>36</sup> The linguistic root of his name *zēr bābīlī*, which means "Root of Babylon" or "Born in Babylon," suggests that he was born outside Judah.<sup>37</sup> Apart from Biblical references which formed the basis for Josephus's historical commentary,<sup>38</sup> we cannot prove from

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<sup>34</sup> Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 1, pp. 271, 275-76. Jewish historians did not exaggerate his legendary cruelty. He once tore and ate the flesh of a rabbit while the animal was still alive. Matthias Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins & Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1999), p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*, p. 349; *Ancient Egypt and the Near East: An Illustrated History*, ed. Brian Kinsey (Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2011), p. 128. He endeared himself particularly to the Jewish exiles by allowing them to return to Palestine. Amanda Rorabaum, *Iran in a Nutshell* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Emsen Publishing, 2006), p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> It is unlikely that Zerubbabel was born after 558 BCE, because that date would have made him only 22 years old when he reportedly returned to Jerusalem in 536 BCE. Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, The Text Carefully Printed From the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorized Version Including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts With a Commentary and Critical Notes Designed as a Help to a Better Understanding of the Sacred Writings*, Vol. I (New York: N. Bangs & J. Emory, 1825), p. 364.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Allen Hahlen and Clay Alan Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, Vol. 2 (Joplin, Mo: College Press Publishing Co., 2006), p. 253; Festschrift E. Volterra, "Civil Authority in Ezra" in *Medicine in the Biblical Background and Other Essays on the Origins of Hebrew*, ed. Robert North (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000), p. 122, fn 23; Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, *Judea From Cyrus to Titus: 537 B.C. – 70 A.D.* (Chicago, Ill.: A.C. McClurg & Company, 1899), p. 25. His name root should not be confused with *zerûb ba-'ebel*, which is defined as "Oppressed in Grief," which distinguished him from the prophet Nehemiah, whom "God has consoled." Volterra, "Civil Authority in Ezra," p. 122, fn. 23.

<sup>38</sup> Josephus acknowledged the prophets Ezra and Esdras as primary sources for his account of Zerubbabel. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter IV, Paragraph 9, footnote.



secular sources that Zerubbabel was actually a real person.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, the absence of confirming details should not disturb us. They may be interesting to know, but they are not essential to an understanding of why the Bible discusses Zerubbabel; Biblical authors generally were not interested in providing a full biographical sketch of an important person. Rather, they were interested in telling us enough to illustrate someone's role in Deity's involvement with human history, as in this case the Covenant People returning to Jerusalem so they could rebuild the Temple.<sup>40</sup>

Much has been said about Zerubbabel's ties to the Davidic dynasty.<sup>41</sup> The Bible refers to him in several verses as the son of Shealtiel, who was the son of Jehiakim, the last hereditary king of Judah before the Captivity:

Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel *the son of Shealtiel*, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that had come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the Lord.<sup>42</sup>

This genealogy would make Zerubbabel the grandson of King Jehoiakim and a descendant of King David. Some postexilic Jews in Jerusalem may have welcomed such news, if they wanted to associate Zerubbabel with a return to the happier times that they have enjoyed as a monarchy before the Exile.<sup>43</sup> The way that Ezra emphasized Zerubbabel's greatness may have persuaded Josephus to praise Zerubbabel as the great hope underpinning the postexilic restoration, elevating him even above the prophets Ezra

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<sup>39</sup> Bob Becking, "Zerubbabel, Zechariah 3-4, and Post-Exilic History," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History of Honor of John H. Hayes*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, et al. (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), p. 279.

<sup>40</sup> *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 220. Because the version of the Bible that exists today is the result of much editing since ancient times, loose ends have been allowed to linger. John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2007), p. 213.

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., Annie Barksdale, *Zerubbabel: The Call of a Prophet* (Fairfax, Va.: Xulon Press, 2002), pp. 9-10; Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> The Holy Bible, Ezra 3:8, *emphasis added*. See also 1 Chronicles 3:19, Ezra 5:2 and Haggai 1:12-14.

<sup>43</sup> Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: The Text Carefully Printed From the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorised Translation, Including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts, with a Commentary and Critical Notes; Designed as a Help to a Better Understanding of the Sacred Writings*, Vol. 2 (London: William Tegg & Co., 1854), p. 364; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster Press Knox Press, 1986), p. 456. The postexilic prophets refer to some unnamed contemporary Judean leader as a precursor to the Messiah, and some commentators believe these references were to Zerubbabel. If so, Zechariah 12:10 hints that the pro-Davidic faction was split over whether to endorse him. *Ibid.*, p. 460.

and Nehemiah as the leaders of the Jewish community.<sup>44</sup> Such accolades were heightened by the prophet Haggai's reference to Zerubbabel as Deity's signet ring, viz., his co-regent on earth:

In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealthiel, saith the Lord, *and will make thee as a signet*: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.<sup>45</sup>

The analogy of a signet ring is very compelling. Issuance of a signet ring (*hôtām* in Hebrew) was as legally binding on its owner in the ancient Mideast as the issuance of a power of attorney is on its conveyor in today's business world. The bearer of a royal signet ring was the literal personification of royalty and was accorded all the prerogatives that belonged uniquely to the monarch.<sup>46</sup> But Zerubbabel did not wear Deity's signet ring – in the “Zerubbabel Oracle” quoted above, he *was* Deity's signet ring. He was therefore a living embodiment of Deity and carried divine approval for all his actions. Some devout Jews thought this meant that Zerubbabel was foreordained by Deity to oversee the physical restoration of the Temple. Some went further and attached Messianic aspirations to him: Zerubbabel became a popular messianic-type figure for those who yearned for the restoration of religious and political rights in postexilic Judah.<sup>47</sup>

The Bible supports this inference in other verses, but they do not always identify Zerubbabel by name. For example, the Psalmist is thought to have referred to Zerubbabel when writing about the messianic heir of King David in Psalms 110, 132 and 138.<sup>48</sup> This

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<sup>44</sup> Sara Japhat, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), p. 89. Some hagiographers claim that Zerubbabel was identical to the prophet Nehemiah, but they do not explain why. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews: Bible Times and Characters from Joshua to Esther*, vol. IV (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913), p. 352.

<sup>45</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Haggai 2:23, emphasis added. Readers should be cautious about reading Haggai too closely because it is not a contemporaneous account of the postexilic restoration but a subsequent compilation of the prophet Haggai's words by a later editor. Lewis B. Paton, “Jehoiachin's Descendants” in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Apr. 1903): 189.

<sup>46</sup> Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, p. 234; Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 554. The Babylonian captors delegated power over the Jews by ensuring who would possess the royal signet ring. *The Holy Bible*, Esther 3:10, 8:2. One commentator suggests that this verse means Deity took significant steps to protect Zerubbabel, just as an earthly monarch would protect his physical signet ring. This interpretation indicates how highly Deity favored Zerubbabel, as another sign of his importance in the postexilic restoration. Pieter A. Verhoef, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p. 147.

<sup>47</sup> Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, p. 22; Abba Hillel Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1927), p. 49.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Haupt, “Zerubbabel and Melchizedek” in *Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*, ed. Samuel A.B. Mercer, Vol. II (Chicago, Ill.: The Society of Oriental Research, Oct. 1918), p. 76; Heinrich

silence about the Messiah's identity lends credence to the supposition that Zerubbabel was not an actual person, but merely a literary figure which was created to personify Judah's deepest longings. The prophet Zechariah wrote, for example, in connection with the restoration of the Temple, that crowns of silver and gold would be placed on the heads of the new chief priest and an (unnamed) royal prince.<sup>49</sup> The prince is not identified expressly as Zerubbabel, but the inference is apparent because no one else, other than the chief priest Jeshua, is identified so closely with rebuilding the Temple.

There are others who contend that Zerubbabel, if he existed, was neither royal nor messianic. For one thing, there is no secular record confirming that the royal couple who were led off into the Captivity ever had children who survived the Captivity.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the Bible refers to Zerubbabel elsewhere not as the son of Shealtieh but as the son of Pedaiah, who was the brother of Shealtieh.<sup>51</sup> Being Shealtieh's nephew instead of his son could have impaired Zerubbabel's claim to the throne even under the malleable Jewish law of primogeniture.<sup>52</sup> But if Pedaiah died and Shealtiel had married his widowed

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Ewald, *The History of Israel*, Vol. V, trans. J. Estlin Carpenter (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), p. 125. Traditional Biblical devotion ascribes all the psalms to King David, whether written as a young shepherd or later as king, but modern Biblical scholars contend that many of the psalms were written during the postexilic era, even during the Macedonian period. This would certainly be true if they described a postexilic Judaism that did not exist until 500 years after King David's death. *Chambers' Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*, Vol. VIII (Philadelphia, Penn.: J.B. Lippincott Company, new ed. 1891), p. 469.

<sup>49</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Zechariah 6:9-15. Jewish commentators say that the precious metals used to fashion these crowns came from Babylon, i.e., an allusion that the seat of earthly royal power was a source of the materials used to validate Zerubbabel's and Jeshua's divine authority. Frank Knight Sanders and Charles Foster Kent, *The Messages of the Bible: The Messages of the Later Prophets, Arranged in the Order of Time, Analyzed, and Freely Rendered in Paraphrase* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 226. Jeshua's diadem was stored in the Second Temple; the historical record does not list a second diadem. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, et al., Vol. III (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), p. 279.

<sup>50</sup> Clarke, *The New Testament*, p. 364; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book X, Chapter VIII, Paragraph 4. Preexilic Judean writings, including family histories and portions of the Bible, likely were preserved by the royal family in Babylon and returned to Jerusalem by government functionaries who continued to maintain the records in the postexilic period. William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 164. Some Biblical and historical scholars contend that the Davidic monarchy ended unofficially during the Captivity and did so conclusively during a postexilic civil war in Jerusalem ca. 520-515 BCE that ended with only the priests left in charge. Herbert Niehr, "Religio-Historical Aspects of the Early 'Post-Exilic' Period," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Traditions in Exilic and Post Exilic Times*, ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel (Lieden, The Netherlands: Bren, 1999), pp. 230-31.

<sup>51</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 1 Chronicles 3:19.

<sup>52</sup> "Ought the Law of Primogeniture To Be Repealed?" in *The British Controversialist, and Impartial Inquirer*, Vol. IV (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1853), p. 460; B.H. Carroll, *The Hebrew Monarchy* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916), p. 263.

sister-in-law as required under Jewish law,<sup>53</sup> his adoption of Pedaiah's son would have bolstered Zerubbabel's standing as a potential royal heir.<sup>54</sup>

Another challenge to Zerubbabel's royal status is linguistic: Ezra referred to Zerubbabel as a prince but the prophet Haggai specifically called him a governor.<sup>55</sup> Being called a "governor" is not a dispositive indication of whether he was, or was not, of royal blood because the distinctions between the Hebrew definitions of "prince" (*nāsī*) and "governor" (*pehāh*) are fluid. A "prince" (*nāsī*) is not necessarily royal because the title could mean someone who was elected or selected for a specific purpose, e.g., a tribal leader or military captain. On the other hand, a "governor" (*pehāh*) could be local representative of a foreign ruler with some level of official authority.<sup>56</sup>

Zerubbabel may have come from humble beginnings. There is an apocryphal story in the non-canonical 1 Esdras 3 that claims Zerubbabel was one of King's Cyrus's bodyguards, and that he caught the royal attention by answering some tricky questions to the king's satisfaction.<sup>57</sup> This story makes no mention of Zerubbabel being of royal blood. This dialogue – which is famous among Freemasons<sup>58</sup> – was not a philosophical

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<sup>53</sup> Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 187; Israel I. Mattuck, "The Levirate Marriage in Jewish Law" in *Jewish Law Studies Issued in Honor of Professor Kaufman Kohler* (Berlin, Germany: G. Heimer, 1913), pp. 210-21.

<sup>54</sup> *An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers by Various Writers*, ed. Charles John Elicott, Vol. III (London: Cassell & Company, Ltd., 1883), p. 229. A formal adoption would have been necessary to make the royal connection, because only the first-born son was allowed to succeed to his father's greatness. Clarke, *The New Testament*, p. 364.

<sup>55</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 1:1, 14 and 2:2, 21. Josephus referred to Zerubbabel as "Zorobabel" and identified him as the governor. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter I, Paragraph 3. This title may have caused confusion, in part, as to whether Zerubbabel was the same person as Sheshbazzar, the first Persian governor of the fledgling Jerusalem colony. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. IV (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), p. 475; Loken, *Ezra*, p. 70. Some Jewish commentators discount the possible connection, suggesting that "Sheshbezzar" was merely a Chaldean name for the prophet Daniel. William Smith, *A Concise Dictionary of the Bible* (London: John Murray, 1865), p. 1032; Walter W. Crump, "The Building of the Second Temple" in *The Expository Times*, ed. James Hastings, Vol. VI (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1985), p. 522. The mystery lingers because Sheshbezzar disappeared once Zerubbabel arrived in Jerusalem. 1 Esdras 6:18.

<sup>56</sup> Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 254.

<sup>57</sup> Esdras is part of the Apocrypha and therefore is not included in the Authorized Version. E.J. Phipps, *A Catechism of the Old and New Testaments, for the Use of the Church Schools* (London: Joseph Masters, 1850), p. 55. It was found originally in the Septuagint, but was condemned by Jerome and now is accepted canonically only by Eastern Orthodox Christians. Western Christians do not accept its authenticity. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), p. 423. The same story is recorded in Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraphs 2-8.

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., S. Brent Morris, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), p. 100.

debate, but an exegesis on the importance of subordinating earthly rules to Deity's eternal plan.<sup>59</sup> It can also be viewed as an example of an Oriental literary genre that exaggerated a famous person's importance, not necessarily Jewish in origin but a story that Jewish audiences may have found amusing.<sup>60</sup> All the many discrepancies illustrate that the Bible was intended to be a moral lesson and not a strict historical record.<sup>61</sup>

Curiously, if Zerubbabel was royal, there is no record that he ever attempted to seize the Judean throne, especially at a time when he had no apparent rivals.<sup>62</sup> According to the prophet Ezra, this may have not been necessary for his importance lay primarily in his personal prestige, not in his title or official position.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps it was because of his integrity, and not his bloodline, that Judah pinned its expectations of a royal succession so heavily on Zerubbabel.<sup>64</sup> Those expectations ended with his disappearance, which suggests that he may have been a real person after all; Judah surrendered any ideas of restoring the monarchy once Zerubbabel was no longer available, hardly a likelihood if he was simply a fictional character.<sup>65</sup>

#### **D. Zerubbabel's Mysterious Departure**

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<sup>59</sup> *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*, ed. Randall Curren (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> "Orientalisms of the Lesson" in *The Sunday School Journal for Teachers*, ed. J.L. Hurlbut, Vol. XXXI, no. 9 (Sept. 1899): 551. Eileen M. Schuller, "1 Esdras" in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), p. 265; Erich Gruen, "Persia Through the Jewish Looking Glass" in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, ed. Tessa Rajah, et al. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2007), p. 64.

<sup>61</sup> Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 213. Biblical historians and theologians disagree over whether Zerubbabel was a vassal governor who was positioned between all-powerful King Cyrus and his ambitious son Cambyses, or if he was a patriot who bided his time before he could trigger an uprising against the Persians. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, pp. 16-19. There is no indication that he sought personal profit or honor, but his example offered hope for those who struggled to restore their broken homeland. Samuel Sharpe, *The History of the Hebrew Nation and Its Literature; With an Appendix on the Hebrew Chronology* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 5th ed. 1890), p. 303.

<sup>62</sup> Paul L. Reddit, *Introduction to the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), p. 331.

<sup>63</sup> Volterra, "Civil Authority in Ezra," p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> Prophetic expectations of an idealized new David or Solomon coalesced in Zerubbabel, who was a political leader and not a priest, because he was so instrumental in rebuilding the Temple. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 213; Richard A. Landes, *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 434. The "Zerubbabel Oracle" in Haggai 2:23 (see footnote 42 *supra* and accompanying text) further solidified the expectation that Zerubbabel was the Promised One. Walter Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period" in *Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*, ed. Rainier Albertz and Bob Becking (Papers read at the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies, Utrecht, Aug. 6-9, 2000): 169.

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Peabryhn Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church From Her Captivity to the Christian Era* (London: John Murray, 1876), p. 104.

No one knows what ever happened to Zerubbabel – was he killed in some uprising, did he retire and return to Babylon, or did the Biblical authors simply lose interest in him once the Temple was built?<sup>66</sup> Psalm 89:39-52 refers to some unnamed messianic ruler who was struck down in battle and his kingdom brought to an end. It does not name Zerubbabel explicitly, but the tantalizing questions posed by Psalm 89 have caused some to speculate that Zerubbabel was killed after he claimed the Judean throne and turned against his Persian masters.<sup>67</sup> This scenario is historically possible, since Judah has been granted a degree of local autonomy so that it could serve as a buffer against Persia’s great enemy, Egypt. However, revolts erupted around the Persian Empire throughout King Darius’ reign<sup>68</sup> and the Persians may have imprisoned or killed Zerubbabel if they perceived him as doing anything perceived as a threat to the empire.<sup>69</sup>

A Jewish tradition from the Sixth Century CE states instead that that he simply returned to his governmental position in Babylon once his work was completed in Jerusalem and that he died a peaceful death in Babylon.<sup>70</sup> Recent scholarship has turned away from the rebellion theory, supposing that Zerubbabel died in Jerusalem, either due to natural causes circa 516 BCE or because of an internal Judean power struggle.<sup>71</sup> Yet others say that he was succeeded peacefully by his son-in-law Elnathan.<sup>72</sup> Everyone agrees that we simply do not know what happened to him.

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<sup>66</sup> Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, p. 34.

<sup>67</sup> M.A. Dandamaev, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*, trans. W.J. Vogelsang (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1989), p. 127; *The Encyclopedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, vol. XV (New York: The Encyclopedia Britannica Company, 11th ed. 1919), p. 388.

<sup>68</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica: A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political and Religious History, the Archaeology, Geography and Natural History of the Bible*, ed. T.K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, Vol. II (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1901), p. 1789

<sup>69</sup> Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, p. 163; Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, vol.2, p. 257. This is a viable theory: the rising tide of nationalism in postexilic Judah may have caused Zerubbabel to be recognized as an emerging leader against Persia. Theodore J. Lewis, “The Mysterious Disappearance of Zerubbabel” in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Ronald L. Troxel, et al. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), p. 307.

<sup>70</sup> Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, p. 163.

<sup>71</sup> *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 295.

<sup>72</sup> H.G.M. Williamson, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), p. 16. 1 Chronicles 3:19 identify Zerrubabel as having two sons (Meshbullam and Hananiah) and one daughter (Shelmonith). Contemporary records seem to indicate that Shelmonith was married to Elnathan, who became the Persian governor of Judah ca. 500 BCE., but it is unclear whether he became governor on his own merits or through some form of nepotism. James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests After the Exile* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), p. 103.

The Bible notes several notable virtues which can be attributed to Zerubbabel. Jewish commentators say that Deity gave him knowledge of the future, including when the Messiah would appear (there is that Messianic connection again).<sup>73</sup> The Talmud says that he was visited by angelic messengers.<sup>74</sup> He did not do anything for personal self-aggrandizement; everything was directed to restore hope to a people broken by war, exile and general destitution.<sup>75</sup> As such, Zerubbabel may symbolize for us someone who is divinely inspired to rescue us from spiritual captivity when we need help and cannot rescue ourselves.<sup>76</sup>

### III. ZERUBBABEL, MAN ON A MISSION

#### A. The Restoration Begins

In order to understand Zerubbabel's mission of restoring the Temple, we must return to King Cyrus at the point when he conquered Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Cyrus was apparently a religious man, sensitive to divine promptings, and as time passed, Deity stirred up his spirit to write:

All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.<sup>77</sup>

Cyrus needed to select a leader for the expedition. Neither the Bible nor secular history reveal why Zerubbabel was chosen. We find the curious Apocryphal story in 1 Esdras and Josephus wherein Zerubbabel answered correctly a cunning three-part test

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<sup>73</sup> Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, p. 352. A Seventh Century CE Byzantine Jew wrote the *Sefer Zerubbabel*, in which Zerubbabel was not considered a messiah but nonetheless a great apocalyptic visionary. Pieter W. Van Der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), P. 226.

<sup>74</sup> Martha Himmelfarb, "The Mother of the Messiah in the Talmud Yerushalmi and Sefer Zerubbabel," *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Vol. 3 (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr, 2002), p. 383.

<sup>75</sup> Samuel Sharpe, *The History of the Hebrew Nation and Its Literature; With An Appendix on the Hebrew Chronology* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Williams and Norgate, 5th ed. 1890), p. 303.

<sup>76</sup> Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* (London: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 79.

<sup>77</sup> *The Holy Bible*, 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; compare Ezra 1:1-3. The words of Cyrus recorded in Ezra 1:2 refer to a prophecy in Isaiah 44:28 that mentioned Cyrus by name 150 years earlier. One Biblical historian suggests that Cyrus met the prophet Daniel when he took Babylon, and that Daniel in his capacity as a wise government minister pointed out Isaiah's prophecy to him. Clarke, *The Holy Bible*, p. 730. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus reported that Cyrus read his name in Isaiah's prophecies, was touched by Deity, and desired to fulfill what had been written. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter I, Paragraphs 1-2.

posed by King Cyrus.<sup>78</sup> The story relates that Zerubbabel requested nothing for himself, only permission from Cyrus to return to Jerusalem and restore the Temple.<sup>79</sup>

Archaeological evidence shows that Judah evolved into an independent, self-sustaining province of the Persian Empire during the postexilic period, with a local governor appointed by Babylon.<sup>80</sup> When Cyrus agreed to send Zerubbabel there, he likely saw no threat posed to the Empire. Judah was still a small, non-descript hinterland, without power or prestige, and its population probably numbered less than 20,000 inhabitants.<sup>81</sup> Judah hardly represented any threat to Persia: the Judeans who had been left behind during the Captivity were so preoccupied with eking out a subsistence existence that they had taken little interest in rebuilding anything,<sup>82</sup> and visited the remains of Solomon's Temple only as a form of devotional pilgrimage.<sup>83</sup>

There is no record of how much of Judah was re-colonized at first.<sup>84</sup> The first group who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon was led by priests who carried with them precious metals with which to decorate the new temple.<sup>85</sup> Cyrus restored to them the items which Nebuchadnezzar had plundered from Solomon's temple, thus ensuring some continuity in the new temple from the original temple worship.<sup>86</sup> It is unlikely that

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<sup>78</sup> 1 Esdras 3:1-5:6. Curiously, most of Esdras has parallel texts in other canonical books, mostly 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, but this passage is not found and is not replicated in any canonical book. It stands alone and is truly unique among the ancient texts mentioning Zerubbabel. Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), p. 234.

<sup>79</sup> Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, p. 352; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraph 8

<sup>80</sup> William Sanford Lasor, et al., *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Forms and Backgrounds of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2nd ed. 1996), p. 560.

<sup>81</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of the Second Temple and Rabbinical Judaism* (Jersey City, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House Ltd., 1991), 36.

<sup>82</sup> Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, p. 36.

<sup>83</sup> Tim Dowley and Peter Pohle, *The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Solomon's Temple Model* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 2003), p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> C.G. Montefiore, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892), p. 290.

<sup>85</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 1:5-6. Not many Jewish exiles were eager to return to Jerusalem at first, having established themselves in Babylon during their decades-long forced residence there. Lady Magnus, *Outlines of Jewish History: From B.C. 586 to C.E. 1885: With Three Maps*, revised by Michael Friedländer (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 2nd ed. 1888), p. 3. The first group was more like a religious crusade and, even though Jews returned to Jerusalem in varying groups over the next century, more Jews continued to live in Babylon than in Jerusalem for many generations. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*, p. 350.

<sup>86</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 1:7-11. Many of the contents of Solomon's temple were restored to beautify Zerubbabel's temple, and helped to ensure that Deity would withhold wrath against the Babylonian authorities. *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 7:12-28. Despite the impressive list of items that were



Zerubbabel was in the first group of returning exiles; he probably led a subsequent group circa 538-522 BCE.<sup>87</sup>

King Cyrus died circa 530 BCE and his son, Cambyses, consolidated his holdings by assassinating his brother, Bardiya. The highlight of his turbulent eight-year reign was the conquest of Persia's old nemesis, Egypt, which occasioned a march through Judah. As with many military campaigns which live off the land, this war may have contributed significantly to the economic poverty that greeted the exiles' return from Babylon.<sup>88</sup> Cambyses died suddenly upon his return home from Egypt circa 522 BCE. One of his generals, Darius, moved quickly to consolidate power under himself circa 520 BCE and resumed the benevolent policies enjoyed previously during King Cyrus' reign.<sup>89</sup>

## B. Construction of the Second Temple

Some of the returning exiles initially were indifferent to rebuilding the Temple because they were more secular-minded than the priests and wanted to resume their livelihoods in their ancestral homeland.<sup>90</sup> Coinciding with Darius's rise to power, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began to stir up enthusiasm among the Judeans to rebuild the Temple. The return to a more stable political climate generated widespread messianic expectations and the prophets encouraged them to see the Temple as a necessary preparation for the Messiah's return.<sup>91</sup> Haggai thought the Temple's restoration would

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returned, notably missing were the Ark of the Covenant, the Urim and Thummim, and the cherubim over the judgment seat. Dowley and Pohle, *The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Solomon's Temple Model*, p. 16. The new Temple featured only one candlestick and one golden table. Thomas C. Upham, *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology* (Andover, Mass.: Flag & Gould, 1823), p. 431. The Holy of Holies was remarkably empty in comparison to Solomon's Temple. Latimer, *Judea From Cyrus to Titus*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>87</sup> Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, p. 36. Josephus records that the first group was led by the rulers of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, plus Levites and priests, without any mention of Zerubbabel. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter I, Paragraph 2. The Persian Empire appointed an independent bureaucrat from Babylon as the local governor, possibly Sheshbazzar (not Zerubbabel). Montefiore, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 289.

<sup>88</sup> Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 255.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256. Cyrus's benevolence posed pragmatic benefits to himself: he thought he could buy allegiance throughout the far-flung distances of the empire by restoring local religious cultic practices. Karen H. Jobes, *The NIV Application Commentary: Esther* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999), p. 25.

<sup>90</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica*, p. 1789. It goes without saying that national morale had been devastated with the destruction of Jerusalem; the returning exiles were still the vassals of a distant warlord. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, pp. 14-15. The three pillars of preexilic Judaism – King, Temple and Country – were all gone on account of the people's sinfulness. *Ibid.*, p. 16. They could relate easily to "[t]he crown has fallen from our head; woe to us, for we have sinner." *The Holy Bible*, Lamentations 5:16.

<sup>91</sup> Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, p. 36; Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 257.

not only usher in a new era of blessings, but also instigate a shake-up of the surrounding nations.<sup>92</sup>

There was a council of 12 Judean elders who oversaw both the temple project and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and Zerubbabel was considered its most important member.<sup>93</sup> He is credited with laying the foundation stone and building the Temple generally,<sup>94</sup> but his exact duties are unclear.<sup>95</sup> The third and fourth chapters of Ezra describe the initial phase of construction. The people gathered together under the leadership of Jeshua (the chief priest) and Zerubbabel first to build an altar and offer burnt sacrifices in accordance with the Mosaic law before construction began on the rest of the temple.<sup>96</sup> They donated money and provisions to the masons and carpenters, and after preparations were made, the temple foundations were laid.<sup>97</sup> Bystanders who remembered Solomon's temple wept at the sight of the new temple, and there were general shouts of joy.<sup>98</sup>

But construction was not smooth. The Temple was built over a 20-year period, with a 15-year respite shortly after construction began.<sup>99</sup> Neighboring Samaritans promptly came forward to offer their assistance to Zerubbabel, but their offer was declined because he felt that Cyrus' instruction had been limited only to him and the

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<sup>92</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Haggai 1:2-11, 2:6-9 and 15-19; see also Zechariah 1:8-15 and 6:1-8. The influence of Haggai and Zechariah was incalculable in mobilizing workers to commence the construction project. Rainier Albertz, "Religion in Israel During and After the Exile" in *The Biblical World*, ed. John Barton, Vol. II (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 109.

<sup>93</sup> Montefiore, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 290.

<sup>94</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 3:2, 5:2; Haggai 2:4 and Zechariah 4:9; Loken, *Ezra*, p. 70; Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, p. 104. But even this is disputed, for Ezra 5:14-16 attributes the temple building to Sheshbezzar, who then was governor. This interchange of names may have led inadvertently to the confusion of Zerubbabel with Sheshbezzar.

<sup>95</sup> Henry Deane, *Daniel: His Life and His Times* (New York: Fleming H. Rivell Co., 1888), p. 164. Hagiographers state merely that Zerubbabel performed traditional royal functions in rebuilding the temple, without providing any details. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 213.

<sup>96</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 3:1-6. They then celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, which had been celebrated following the dedication of Solomon's temple but which had not been observed in Judah for many years. Linda Chaffee Taylor, et al., *Saints and Scoundrels of the Bible: The Good, The Bad and The Downright Dastardly* (New York: Howard Books, 2007), p. 96; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter IV, Paragraph 1.

<sup>97</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 3:7-10.

<sup>98</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 3:11-13. Josephus records that the younger people were content to have a Temple again, whereas the older generation was disappointed that Zerubbabel's Temple was more impoverished than Solomon's Temple, with all the general loss of wealth that connoted. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraph 2.

<sup>99</sup> Mitchell, *The History of Freemasonry*, vol. I (Marrieta, Ga.: n.p., 2nd ed. 1859), p. 104.

Judeans.<sup>100</sup> This response offended the Samaritans. They began to harass the builders and also sent false reports to Babylon through a neighboring governor, Tatlenai, saying that Cyrus had never authorized such a massive construction project and that the Jews actually were building military fortifications as a prelude to rebelling against Babylon.<sup>101</sup> Darius believed the false information and put an immediate halt to the work.<sup>102</sup>

Over time, the prolonged hiatus may have been due more to inflation, drought and crop failures than to official governmental orders.<sup>103</sup> If Zerubbabel faces any criticism, some argue that he did not necessarily have to stop construction altogether, but that he did so to build costly residences in the old city instead. It was only when he felt the spirit of prophecy, as recorded in a vision by the prophet Zechariah, that he roused himself and threw all his strength into renewing the Temple-building project:<sup>104</sup>

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man  
that is awakened out of his sleep,

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<sup>100</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 4:1-3. Samaritans were descendants of Israelites who had not been exiled when the Northern Kingdom was captured and intermarried with Assyrian and Babylonian colonists whom the foreign kings sent to occupy Israel. The Jews refused to let the Samaritans help rebuild the temple because they felt the Samaritans were not true believers. Alan D. Crown, *The Samaritans* (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), pp. 1-6.

<sup>101</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 4:4-16; Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 256. Because the temple mount was located in the northeastern corner of the old city's fortifications, it was easy to misinterpret the temple's rebuilding as an attempt to rebuild the city's defenses. *Ibid.*, p. 255. The Bible refers to Zerubbabel having to climb mountains to build the Temple. That reference might have been rooted historically in the heaps of ruins from Solomon's Temple. Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), p. 248.

<sup>102</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 4:17-24; Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 256. Josephus reported at one point that this decision was made by King Cyrus's son Cambyses not by King Darius. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter II, Paragraphs 1-2. Josephus reported elsewhere both that Darius had made a vow to Deity that, should he become king, he would restore the Temple and that he was friends with Zerubbabel, who became Darius's bodyguard after returning from his stint as governor in Judah. *Ibid.*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraph 1. Masonic tradition informs us that Zerubbabel knew about Darius's vow and traveled to Babylon to see if he could persuade Darius to keep his vow. G. Oliver, *The Historical Landmarks and Other Evidence of Freemasonry, Explained; in a Series of Practical Lectures, with Copious Notes*, Vol. I (New York: Jno. W. Leonard & Co., 1855), p. 315.

<sup>103</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Haggai, 1:6, 9 and 11; Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 255.

<sup>104</sup> Smith, *A Concise Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 1032. Some fault Zerubbabel for being too complacent, which caused him to stagnate spiritually when he should have been anxiously engaged in building the temple. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, p. 352. Some say that Zerubbabel suffered from incompetence and was a desolate and defeated leader during the break in construction, but that he became emboldened again once he resumed the work. David L. Larsen, *Biblical Spirituality: Discovering the Real Connection Between the Bible and Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregge Publications, 2001), p. 150. English Victorians considered him a sort of proto-Fabian, i.e., one who acted boldly rather than waiting passively for results. Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, p. 104; H.J. Laski, "Fabian Socialism" in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: An Historic Revaluation of the Victorian Age*, ed. Noel Annan, et al. (London: Sylvan Press, 1949), p. 78.

And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof;

And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; *his hands shall also finish it*; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.<sup>105</sup>

The image of the two olive trees at the beginning of this vision has been interpreted as referring to Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Just as olive trees were used in ancient Judah to supply oil for the great candlestick for illumination in the Temple, so too Zerubbabel and Jeshua were the two political and priestly authorities who were assigned to work together in building the Temple.<sup>106</sup> Interestingly, whenever their names are listed together, Zerubbabel is almost always mentioned before Jeshua. This hints that Biblical

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<sup>105</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Zechariah 4:1-9, emphasis added.

<sup>106</sup> Edward Robinson, *Calmet's Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (Boston, Mass.: Crocker & Brewster, rev. 1835), p. 941. Just as olive trees were tokens of the rich, good life in the ancient Mideastern world, so Zerubbabel and Jeshua embodied spiritual fertility and blessing for the faithful Judean community. Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in the Biblical Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), p. 124; Carl Friedrich, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Twelve Minor Prophets*, Vol. II, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868), p. 272.

authors may have viewed Zerubbabel as more important than Jeshua.<sup>107</sup> But when Zerubbabel left the scene, this created a political vacuum that caused rabbinical Judaism to be the only surviving form of effective local leadership.<sup>108</sup> Deity's dictates would now come exclusively through the priests, no longer through the prophets; tragically, over time this would create a Judaeo-Christian legacy of Deity being dictatorial rather than inspiring.<sup>109</sup>

With a resurgence in spiritual energy and determination prompted by Zechariah's vision, Zerubbabel and Jeshua resumed construction of the Temple during the second year of the reign of King Darius (circa 520 BCE), under the prophetic inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah.<sup>110</sup> Their efforts provoked the local authorities to question them again, but pious believers felt that Deity would allow the work to continue unabated this time.<sup>111</sup> The authorities did not attempt to stop construction, but reported their findings to king Darius and requested instructions.<sup>112</sup> Darius searched the royal archives and discovered his predecessor Cyrus's decree which had authorized the original construction project.<sup>113</sup> He not only ordered the work to continue expeditiously, but also ordered that anyone who attempted to hinder the work would be executed.<sup>114</sup> The Temple was completed in short order circa 515 BCE.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Loken, *Ezra*, p. 69. Rabbinical Judaism eventually became the norm throughout Judah and the Diaspora, due to the effective use of synagogues as local community centers, schools and places of worship. Judah became its own theocracy within a larger political empire, whether Persian, Greek or Roman. James Stevenson Riggs, *The Jewish People During the Maccabean and Roman Periods (Including New Testament Times)* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 218.

<sup>108</sup> Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel*, p. 460. There is no record that Zerubbabel was ever anointed as governor (something that would have been unlikely unless he was also royalty, because only kings and priests were anointed in ancient Judah). If so, the king and high priest would have been anointed together and thus expected to rule together. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 213.

<sup>109</sup> *An Exposition of the Bible: A Series of Expositions Covering All the Books of the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Marcus Dods, et al., Vol. IV (Hartford, Conn.: S.S. Scranton Co., 1907), p. 632.

<sup>110</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 5:1-2; Larsen, *Biblical Spirituality*, p. 150.

<sup>111</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 5:3-5. The temple became a symbol of Deity's metaphoric presence in postexilic Judah. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics: A Study of the Most Notable Revelations of God and of Christ in the Canonical Scriptures* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1898), p. 148.

<sup>112</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 5:6-17.

<sup>113</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 6:1-5; Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraphs 6-7.

<sup>114</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 6:6-13. Josephus states that Zerubbabel and four companions returned to Babylon to state their case in person before King Darius. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter IV, Paragraph 9.

<sup>115</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 6:14-22. After Zerubbabel, the local leadership in Jerusalem was dominated by the priestly class. This theocracy was permitted by the Persians and later by Alexander the Great too. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter VIII, Paragraphs 4-6.

### C. The Temple Legacy

The Temple's significance cannot be understood in isolation, for it was built as part of a restoration of the Judean Kingdom and it continued to exist until the Roman Empire demolished the remnants of that Kingdom half a millennium later. One can appreciate the Second Temple only as a visible extension of the postexilic Jewish experience. The physical structure of the Temple served no purpose without first understanding the people who built it, maintained it, revered it and worshipped within its walls.

Little is known about the physical characteristics of Zerubbabel's Temple, even though it stood for half a millennium before being enlarged by King Herod in the First Century of the Common Era.<sup>116</sup> Much more is known descriptively about Solomon's Temple in comparison. Zerubbabel's Temple was physically larger than Solomon's Temple but may have seemed smaller because its initial ornamentation was less so than its predecessor.<sup>117</sup> The old men who remembered the grandeur of Solomon's temple thought that the new Temple was inferior in comparison to its predecessor.<sup>118</sup> Not only did it lack the Ark, the sacred fire and the Urim and Thummim from Solomon's Temple, but it also lacked the spirit of prophecy and the *Shekinah* that were never restored.<sup>119</sup> Nonetheless, Zerubbabel's Temple had great spiritual value among postexilic Jews:

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, said the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, said the LORD of hosts.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Dowley and Pohle, *The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Solomon's Temple Model*, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> Cyrus decreed the new temple would be a cube measuring 60 cubits high and 60 cubits high, with three rows of great stones and a row of new timber. *The Holy Bible*, Ezra 6:3-4.

<sup>118</sup> Upham, *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 430-31. The Bible describes Solomon's Temple extensively, with its elaborate dimensions, coverings of precious wood and gold, and intricate decorations and fixtures. *The Holy Bible*, 1 Kings 6:2-36.

<sup>119</sup> A.R. Faussett, *Bible Cyclopaedia Critical and Expository* (Hartford, Conn.: S.S. Scranton Company, 1908).

<sup>120</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Haggai 2:9. With the loss of its national and military status, postexilic Judah turned to the Temple as its predominant focal point of national pride. Hahlen and Ham, *NIV Commentary: Minor Prophets*, p. 258. Moreover, the existence of the Temple was viewed as a divine pledge of a more glorious future. Charles Augustus Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy: The Prediction of the Fulfillment of Redemption Through the Messiah: A Critical Study of the Messianic Passages of the Old Testament in the Order of their Development* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 446.

Every Judean adult was taxed annually to maintain the new Temple,<sup>121</sup> and it soon came to rival the beauty of Solomon's Temple in many respects. Macedonian emperor Alexander the Great was impressed by its dignified grandeur and left it alone after offering sacrifice there.<sup>122</sup> Despite a rival Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizem,<sup>123</sup> Zerubbabel's Temple continued to be the center of Judah's national identity and was featured as a centerpiece of the Maccabean revolt.<sup>124</sup> Its last century of existence saw an extensive remodel by King Herod at the beginning of the Common Era.<sup>125</sup> It was destroyed by Roman legionnaires in 70 CE, and remains in ruins to this day.

#### IV. MASONIC APPRECIATION FOR ZERUBBABEL

##### A. Masonic Hagiography of Zerubbabel

Zerubbabel is an interesting character-study for Masonic hagiographers. Despite the somewhat reserved and sometimes confusing accounts of his life and mission as recorded in the Bible and other ancient sources, Freemasonry has created an apotheosis: as the royal representative of Cyrus the Sun King (which is itself a Masonic symbol),

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<sup>121</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Nehemiah 10:32; *People's Dictionary of the Bible Describing Persons, Places, Countries, Customs, Birds, Animals, Trees, Plants, Books, Events and Many Other Things In Holy Scriptures*, ed. Edwin W. Rice (Philadelphia, Penn.: The American Sunday-School Union, 1893), p. 203. The amount varied over time, possibly because different monetary units were used. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, p. 279.

<sup>122</sup> The Jews transferred their political allegiance from the Persians to the Macedonians when Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire in 331 BCE. When Alexander arrived in Jerusalem, the high priest read to him a Biblical prophecy that he interpreted as himself conquering the Persians (*The Holy Bible*, Daniel 7:6, 8:3, 20-22 and 11:3). Alexander was pleased with the thought that the Judean deity supported him and thus left Jerusalem unharmed. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter VIII, Paragraph 5.

<sup>123</sup> Pious Judeans considered the Samaritan temple not only sacrilegious but also a rival to the legitimacy of Zerubbabel's Temple. The Maccabean king, John Hyrcanus, captured and destroyed the Samaritan temple in the late 2nd Century BCE both as a matter of political expediency and religious pride. Donald Harman Akenson, *Surpassing Wonder: The Invention of the Bible and the Talmud* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 150-51.

<sup>124</sup> *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, ed. R.H. Charles, Vol. I (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 183-84. The Greek Seleucid emperor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, desecrated the Second Temple in 168 BCE by erecting an altar to Zeus within its walls. The subsequent cleansing and rededication of the Temple are celebrated even today by the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. *International Dictionary of Historic Places*, ed. Trudy Ring, et al., vol. 4 (Chicago, Ill.: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1996), p. 379.

<sup>125</sup> Herod faced strenuous opposition because the people thought he was replacing the venerable old temple. The public outcry forced him to convert his plans into an ambitious remodel program instead. Aryeh Kasher and Eliezer Witztum, *King Herod: Persecuted Persecutor: A Case Study in Psychohistory and Psychobiography*, trans. Karen Gold (Berlin: Walter deGruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2007), p. 215.

both Zerubbabel and Cyrus are considered proto-Masons.<sup>126</sup> Whether the Fraternity existed in ancient times as we know it since the erection of the First Grand Lodge in 1717, the fact remains that ardent Masonic fans have taken Zerubbabel to themselves and made him a Mason. They have conferred upon him all the virtues that they wish to enjoy themselves, perhaps making him greater than life (if indeed he ever lived at all). This adulation extends primarily from Royal Arch Masons, to a lesser degree from Scottish Rite Masons, and hardly at all from Blue Lodge Masons.

The Zerubbabel legend is found in varying ways in many of the higher Masonic rites, including one which is based not on the construction of the Second Temple but on the desecration of that Temple during the Maccabeus revolt approximately 400 years later.<sup>127</sup> This story illustrates how Masonry has treated Zerubbabel in the higher degrees, often considering him a Grand Master the same way that the original three Grand Masters were connected with Solomon's Temple.<sup>128</sup> Zerubbabel's influence upon the Craft has become so significant over the years that even the story of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, which were supervised by Nehemiah after Zerubbabel was gone, is sometimes described as occurring during "Zerubbabel's time."<sup>129</sup>

Although Scottish Rite Freemasonry takes much inspiration from the writings of Brother Pike, it is curious that he did not pay flowing homage to him. Brother Pike's discussion of the Fifteenth Degree is the shortest of any Degree in his classic text, *Morals and Dogma*, and it does not mention Zerubbabel at all. He gave more attention to Zerubbabel in his reworking of the Fifteenth Degree ritual, but then only as one character within a larger story.<sup>130</sup> Although Zerubbabel is not named in *Morals and Dogma*,

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<sup>126</sup> Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe, *Mysteries and Secrets of the Masons: The Story Behind the Masonic Order* (Tonawanda, N.Y.: Dundurn Press, 2006), pp. 144-46. All the personalities described herein, from Nebuchadnezzar to Darius and Alexander the Great, and from King David to Zerubbabel and Jeshua, were considered Masons and Grand Masters (although Alexander was later expelled from the Order). William L. Stone, *Letters on Masonry and Anti-Masonry Addressed to the Hon. John Quincy Adams* (New York: O. Halstead, 1832), p. 88.

<sup>127</sup> Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Ars Magna Latomorum) and of Cognate Instituted Mysteries: Their Rites, Literature and History*, Volume the First (New York: Weathervane Books, 1970), p. 441. The candidate is described as a wanderer who seeks "the lost treasure of the Holy Place." *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Ars Magna Latomorum) and of Cognate Instituted Mysteries: Their Rites, Literature and History*, Volume the Second (New York: Weathervane Books, 1970), pp. 484-85. Its significance is that the Second Temple allows recovery of Royal Arch Masonic secrets which were lost with the destruction of Solomon's Temple. *Ibid.*, p. 485.

<sup>129</sup> Albert G. Mackey, *An Encyclopædia of Freemasonry: And Its Kindred Sciences Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature As Connected with the Institution*, (Philadelphia, Penn.: Moss & Co., 1879), p. 833. Royal Arch Masons were asked during degree rituals whether they recognized Zerubbabel's signet ring, i.e., his divine authority. Jabez Richardson, *Richardson's Monitor of Freemasonry* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 1999), p. 75.

<sup>130</sup> Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 237-40; Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 1-17.



Brother Pike might have been alluding to the virtue of Zerubbabel's perseverance when he wrote:

It is to single men, and not to the united efforts of many, that all the great works of man, struggling toward perfection, are owing. The enthusiast, who imagines that he can inspire with his own enthusiasm the multitude that eddies around him, or even the few who have associated themselves with him as co-workers, is grievously mistaken; and most often the conviction of his own mistake is followed by discouragement and disgust. To do all, to pay all, and to suffer all, and then, when despite all obstacles and hindrances, success is accomplished, and a great work done, to see those who opposed or looked coldly upon it, claim and reap all the praise and reward, is the common and almost universal lot of the benefactor of his kind.<sup>131</sup>

Biblical and non-Masonic discussions of the Zerubbabel legend tend to fairly two-dimensional and do not give much (if any) indication of what kind of man he was. In contrast, Masonic biographies of Zerubbabel try to portray the man, his thoughts and his feelings so that we can better relate to him as a role model. This information is speculative, of course, since Zerubbabel did not leave a journal or give any interviews that have come down to us.<sup>132</sup> But we can imagine ourselves being in his position and feeling the ranges of poignant emotion that swept through him as he first viewed the ravaged Temple site and soon thereafter restored religious devotions which had been forgotten for centuries. Two Masonic authors have described why they think Zerubbabel was such a central figure at this pivotal point in the postexilic restoration of the Jewish identity:

A man inferior to few of the great characters of Scripture, whether we consider the perilous undertaking to which he devoted himself, the importance in the economy of the divine government of his work, his courageous faith, or the singular distinction of being the object of so many and such remarkable prophetic utterances.<sup>133</sup>

This speculation was not lost on Brother Pike: his lecture on the Fifteenth Degree contains a mixture of Biblical summaries, historical lore, and such suppositions as Zerubbabel once saved Cyrus's life as a youth, all in an effort to show us something more

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<sup>131</sup> Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 238.

<sup>132</sup> Some Freemasons question how closely Zerubbabel aligned himself with the Craft. G. Oliver, *The Discrepancies of Freemasonry Examined During a Week's Gossip with the Late Celebrated Brother Gilkes and Other Eminent Masons, on Sundry Obscure and Difficult Passages in the Ordinary Lodge Lectures, Which, Although Open Questions in Grand Lodge, Constitute a Source of Doubt and Perplexity to the Craft* (London: John Hogg & Co., 1864), p. 260.

<sup>133</sup> John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. 10 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), p. 1089.

of the man behind the legend.<sup>134</sup> Brother Pike echoes here the same virtue of perseverance as hinted at in *Morals and Dogma*.<sup>135</sup> While Brother Pike cited Zerubbabel as an exemplar of perseverance, Brother McClenachan used him as an exemplar of Perfection par excellence:

The purpose of the Degree of Knight of the East or Sword is to animate and encourage the Mason to be active in his duties, by presenting in an effective manner some illustrious examples of Humility, Patience, Truth, Wisdom, Chivalric courage and Devotion, as displayed by our ancient Brethren, and also to preserve the remembrance of the events upon which the grade is founded. In this and the succeeding degree, the initiate appears in a double capacity, as a Craftsman and a Warrior, who must be constantly on the alert, ready either for work or for combat.<sup>136</sup>

Hence, Masonry does not take the Biblical story of Zerubbabel to be literally true, but adopts examples from the Zerubbabel legend to promote the best Masonic virtues for member of the Fraternity in every generation.

## **B. The Link to Royal Arch Masonry**

Zerubbabel's association with Royal Arch Masonry appears in Brother Pike's version of the Fifteenth Degree ritual. In the ritual, Brother Pike selected the candidate to represent Zerubbabel and introduced him as a Perfect Élu of the Fourteenth Degree, therefore one who possesses the Ineffable Word.<sup>137</sup> The candidate qua Zerubbabel has come to Jerusalem to see the ruins of Solomon's Temple and there encounters a group of Judean leaders who have returned from Egypt, who agree to accept his assistance in rebuilding the Temple.<sup>138</sup> Brother Pike's story coincides with Josephus's story in that

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<sup>134</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 12.

<sup>135</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 15. Likewise, he is praised for his "fidelity to his engagements." *Ibid.*, p. XV ... 16.

<sup>136</sup> Charles T. McClenachen, *The Book of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (New York: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., 1914), p. 184. Other Masonic scholars are more reserved, trying to put Zerubbabel into a proper historical perspective and thereby limiting the speculative adulation. George Kenning and A.F.A. Woodford, *Kenning's Masonic Encyclopedia and Handbook of Masonic Archaeology, History and Biography* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), p. 654.

<sup>137</sup> He is introduced to the Masonic counsel as "a Prince of the House of Judah, and one of the Captivity; who cometh from Babylon, from the Court of Cyrus the King, upon a pilgrimage to the ruins of the Temple and the Holy City, bearing with him THE TRUE WORD received from the High Priest at Babylon." Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 4. Later in the ritual he is introduced to King Cyrus as "a Mason, first among his equals, a Prince by birth, a captive and slave by misfortune." *Ibid.*, p. XV ... 7.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XV ... 4. The Masonic council comprising the Fifteenth Degree ritual team represents an often-overlooked Biblical story about Judean leaders who were not taken into captivity but who fled with Johanan, son of Kareah, into Egypt when King Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Jerusalem. They have now returned to Jerusalem as Deity stirs King Cyrus's spirit to send workers to rebuild the Temple. *Ibid.*, p. XV ... 5. The prophet Jeremiah counseled the people against following Johanan into Egypt, and that all

Zerubbabel first came to Jerusalem in a governmental capacity and then returned to Babylon for permission from King Cyrus to build the Temple.<sup>139</sup>

It is during that royal interview that Cyrus relates his dream of a roaring lion, and the prophet Daniel interprets it as a divine instruction that Deity desires to have the Temple rebuilt.<sup>140</sup> Cyrus gives Zerubbabel various financial incentives to reveal his arcane knowledge relating to the Ineffable Word, all of which Zerubbabel declines.<sup>141</sup> Cyrus authorizes Zerubbabel as a man of integrity and fidelity and, to reward him, authorizes him to return to Jerusalem on a mission to raise the Temple.<sup>142</sup> Upon finding his way back to the Jerusalem Council, he is invested as a Knight of the East or of the Sword (referencing a sword given to him by King Cyrus).<sup>143</sup> The ritual closes with Zerubbabel about to lay the foundation of the new Temple.<sup>144</sup>

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but a small remnant would be smitten while in Egypt for their unfaithfulness. *The Holy Bible*, Jeremiah 40:1-44:30. This Masonic council is presumably the remnant that was saved to help restore Judah through rebuilding the Temple.

<sup>139</sup> Compare Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter III, Paragraph 1 and Book XI, Chapter IV, Paragraph 9 with Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 5. Zerubbabel's return to Babylon has been described as a "mystic journey." Philip M. Katz, "Freemasonry Under a Cloak: A Masonic Text of the Old Regime" in *Freemasonry in Context: History, Ritual, Controversy*, ed. Arturo de Hoyos and S. Brent Morris (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 170.

<sup>140</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... p. 8.

<sup>141</sup> See also Henry C. Clausen, *Clausen's Commentaries on Morals and Dogma* (The Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, 1974), pp. 80-82.

<sup>142</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... pp. 8-9. One Masonic hagiographer hypothesizes that Zerubbabel and Darius grew up together in Babylon, with Darius listening to Zerubbabel's sighs over the destruction of Solomon's Temple. W.H. Raper, "Orders of Knighthood," *Masonic Review*, Vol. III, No. 2 (Nov. 1847): 33.

<sup>143</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 9-12. Masonic tradition informs us that King Cyrus invested the same "Knight of the East" Degree upon every Mason who worked to build the Second Temple. Ray V. Denslow, *Masonic Rites and Degrees* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2006), p. 154. Masonic tradition further informs us that the medieval Knights Templar modeled themselves after Zerubbabel's military masons. Arthur Edward Waite, *Secret Tradition in Freemasonry*, Part 1 (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2002), p. 301; Eliphas Lévi, *The History of Magic*, trans. A.E. Waite (Boston, Mass.: Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003), p. 208.

<sup>144</sup> Pike, *Magnum Opus*, p. XV ... 17. This is appropriate because references to the Second Temple perhaps are found in this Degree to remind Freemasons that we continue to be spiritual temple-builders regardless of others' efforts to tear down our work. Jim Tresner, *Vested in Glory* (Washington, D.C.: The Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, 2000), p. 50. Although Biblical and historical records show the Temple was built over a 20-year period, Masonic tradition informs us that it took 46 years. McClenachen, *The Book of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, p. 184. Masonic tradition also informs us that Zerubbabel acted as the Grand Master of Masons in Jerusalem, and was assisted in building the Temple by Jeshua, the Assistant Grand Warden. W.H. Kingsbury, *Epitome of the Writings of the Most Celebrating Historian on the Antiquity of Masonry* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), p. 33.

Overtones of Royal Arch Masonry are found throughout the Chapter Rose Croix, continuing the connections that arose with the concluding Degrees of the Lodge of Perfection. Royal Arch Masonry has been dedicated to Zerubbabel because, but for his building the Second Temple, the Ineffable Word might have been lost again.<sup>145</sup> For example, while excavating the ruins of Solomon's Temple preparatory to building the Second Temple, three young men (Esdras, Zachariah and Nehemiah, or as they were known by their Chaldean names: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), discovered a sacred stone in one of the subterranean vaults. They brought this stone to Zerubbabel and his colleagues Heshua and Haggai, who realized the Masonic value of their discovery.<sup>146</sup> Zerubbabel then used that stone as the corner stone of the Second Temple, even though this was another painful reminder of how the Second Temple paled in comparison to the majestic supremacy of Solomon's temple.<sup>147</sup> The example of Zerubbabel reminds today's Freemasons, whether we belong to Royal Arch Masonry or Scottish Rite Masonry, that we are called upon to work together as a temple-building fraternity, allegorically speaking.<sup>148</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

Ultimately it does not depend for our Masonic purposes whether Zerubbabel actually lived or was a literary fiction. Nor does it really matter whether he was a

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<sup>145</sup> John Fellows, *The Mysteries of Freemasonry; or, An Exposition of the Religious Dogmas and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1860), p. 302. Royal Arch Masons contend, allegorically, that Zerubbabel and the other two Grand Masters built a substitute ark, known as the Ark of Zerubbabel, as a repository for the Sacred Volume of Law within the Second Temple. Turnball and Denslow, *A History of Royal Arch Masonry*, Part Three, p. 1348. Some 19th Century anti-Masonic detractors thought that all of Freemasonry, not just Royal Arch Masonry, was dedicated to Zerubbabel. Charles G. Finnett, "Freemasonry – Its Claims of Great Antiquity False," *The Evangelical Repository & United Presbyterian Review*, ed. Joseph T. Cooper and W.W. Barr, Vol. III, No. 4 (Sept. 1868): 239.

<sup>146</sup> Albert G. Mackey and H.L. Haywood, *Encyclopædia of Freemasonry, Part 2: And Its Kindred Sciences Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature As Connected with the Institution*, (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2003), p. 1137. Zerubbabel, Heshua and Haggai were considered the three new Grand Masters. Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie, *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, Part 2 (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2002), p. 577. This is a time-honored tradition within Royal Arch Masonry; the Three Sojourners are mentioned in the Royal Arch Constitutions of 1778 and 1782. *Proceedings of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the District of Columbia for the Year 1868*, Second Annual Report (Washington City: M'Gill's Witherow, 1868), p. 76.

<sup>147</sup> Notwithstanding these deficiencies, Masonic tradition informs us that Zerubbabel and his two fellow Grand Masters used the sanctuary of the Second Temple as a meeting-place. Robert Macoy and George Oliver, *General History, Cyclopaedia and Dictionary of Freemasonry* (New York: Masonic Publishing and Manufacturing Co., 1868), p. 333.

<sup>148</sup> Gerry L. Prinsen, *Bonseigneur Rituals: A Collection of 18th Century Ecossais Rituals* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 1998), p. 14; Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, p. 150; Friendship Gloucester, "Rebuilding Solomon's Temple," *Trestle Board Magazine*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 9 (March 1920): 19.

Freemason from time immemorial. What is important is whether the lessons we learn from his life and example are correct principles worthy of our practice in daily life.<sup>149</sup>

The introductory Degrees of the Chapter Rose Croix, coupled with Royal Arch Masonry's interest in Zerubbabel, are a study of rich contrasts: To the east lies Babylon, which was the center of the then-greatest empire on earth, led by great warrior kings like Cyrus and Darius. To the west lies Jerusalem, which was (and still is) the center of a great spiritual empire on earth, led by Followers of the Book within Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Babylon's greatness has crumbled into dust; Jerusalem's greatness exists today but the fullness of its greatness still lies ahead, as the Temple promises us of future greatness. Bridging the gap between Babylon's past and Jerusalem's future is a single man: Zerubbabel. He might be someone who actually lived. Or he might be a fictitious representation of each of us as Everyman. Regardless, there lies within Zerubbabel and within us all these same contrasts, the temporary allures of material greatness and the eternal rewards that come with righteous living.

The candidate is made to represent Zerubbabel to teach us that his challenges 2,500 years ago are the same challenges we face today. Zerubbabel was given rare opportunities for fame and fortune, but at the possible price of compromising his integrity. May we choose correctly, as he did. Zerubbabel also faced the difficult challenge of restoring the faith of his countrymen by restoring the Temple. We face similar challenges in preserving our nation's freedom by standing up against injustice. May we do the right thing, as he did.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Morris, "Instruction in Masonry," *The American Freemason; a Monthly Masonic Magazine*, ed. J.F. Brennan, Vol. 6 (1858): 60. This mindset contrasts with the more popular approach typified by Robert Lomas, *Turning the Templar Key: The Secret Legacy of the Knights Templar and the Origins of Freemasonry* (Beverly, Mass.: Fair Winds Press, 2007), p. 21.

<sup>150</sup> "We do not seek sovereign power, nor care to chain unwilling captives to our chariot wheels, Kings and princes we know not, neither do we fear them. To God alone we bend the knee. To us, the great man is one who, with firm faith in God, goes forth to fight the battles of the weak, shield the innocent, and protect the poor. The promotion of the Brotherhood of man is our chief joy and greatest good." Arturo de Hoyos, *The Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide* (Washington, D.C.: The Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, 2008), p. 328.