

He permitted them to go ahead and finish it; there is a definite decree, but I don't know of anybody who says that's the command to rebuild and --- who says that's the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem. Certainly the important one was given by Cyrus.

Now a period of about 60 yrs. later Artaxerxes in 458 B.C. gave Ezra permission to go back to Jerusalem and take a new group of people with him. It is told about in Ezra 7:12-26 and he directed that sacrifices be made and the God of heaven prayed to that He will bless king Artaxerxes. One evangelical (recent) scholar says that this is the point at which the decree goes out for the building of Jerusalem because he figured that if you can take 69 weeks and go from 458 B.C. you can get some where near the time of Christ. But I don't think you can say it is such a decree. Very few take that as a starting point.

Now in his 20th year Artaxerxes performed an action which a larger number of people say is the starting point of this. They say the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is Artaxerxes' action in 445 B.C. This action is described in Neh. 2:5-8. We find there Artaxerxes took no action on his own part; gave no decree. There is no such statement made. We find that a man whom he greatly liked came in to serve him wine and was very sad. Artaxerxes said Why are you so sad? Nehemiah said the sepulchre of my ancestors is fallen into disrepair and the walls of ~~the~~ my city are fallen into disrepair, the city from which my ancestors came. The king said: What you like to do? Nehemiah said, I would appreciate it if you would send me back to Jerusalem and let me fix things up a bit. The king said, How long will you be gone, and Nehemiah told him a ~~year~~ ~~cert~~ certain length of time which is no stated, and Nehemiah proceeded to say he would like to have letters to people there to give him assistance in this project, give him materials. And the king said, God.

Now I don't think that === I don't see how you can consider that a decree. "The going forth of a commandment to rebuild Jerusalem" particularly when we have the action by Cyrus nearly a century earlier. Well, someone may suggest well yes Cyrus gave such a statement but it wasn't done. The word of === the word that went forth that caused Jerusalem to be built was when Artaxerxes permitted Nehemiah to go. A big jump logically. But actually it certainly is not true because Hag. 1:4 in 520 B.C. rebukes the people for not completing building the temple and says (v.4), "Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste." Surely there is the implication there very clearly that the city of Jerusalem stands, that the city has been built even though it does not have strong walls about it, and that the city has been built even if it is not the great capital it once was there is a city in which the people are living in comparative luxury while they are neglecting the temple of the Lord.

If that is not sufficient evidence to convince that the phrase "the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" should refer to Cyrus' action, let's look at Is. 44:28, Where we find God has given ~~xxx~~ through Isaiah a long poem praising the great