



Getting Ready for Christmas—Part 2  
The Venue and Decorations  
From Sermon 11.13.22

Read *Daniel 9:2*

Overview from Sunday's sermon: When we last left our history drama, Israel had been conquered by Babylon, under God's design, as judgment. Christmas was in jeopardy. But, as prophesied, the Persians conquer Babylon, and after the designated time, release the Jews to return to Israel. Christmas is back on track. However, once back in the land, only more issues arise—mostly due to disobedience and lack of faith among God's people. Two empires have come. The next is on the way.

1. In our key passage, when God gave the captivity specifics (70 years), was He just speaking symbolically/metaphorically? Or does God mean what He says? It was exactly as planned and foretold. God means what He says. Yet, for the most part, today, most take the book of Revelation (1000 years) and sections like Jesus' Olivet discourse as symbolic and the numbers only mere representatives.

2. Even though the Jews are back in the land under the Persians, what repeated pattern did they fall back into? Ignoring the holy. Disregard for the details, the Word, and commandments of God. Colluding with the culture and compromising the faith. Their religious life was a burden. See also *Malachi 1:6-8*

3. In the God-ordained, amazing world history: What empire and leader conquered the Persians? The Greeks led by Alexander the Great.

4. What was their section of the Daniel statue and symbolic material and, also, their representative animal? Statue: The belly and thighs of bronze. Animal: A leopard with 4 wings.

5. What in the world is "Hellenization" and why does it matter to history, the church, and our study? The installation/adoption of Greek culture, language, and identity by foreign lands conquered by Alexander. See also *John 19:19-20, Acts 6:1 & Acts 9:29*. Importance: As English is the international language of today (i.e., banking & flight control), the Greeks made Greek the common language of the known ancient world. Although cultures could keep their native languages, Greek was to be used for commerce, government, and academia. This is no small thing and it's yet another amazing way God was working. Because of Hellenization, the entire New Testament was written in Greek—rather than the spoken Aramaic of Jesus & Judea, which no one spoke outside of Israel. This meant the Scriptures could be instantly disseminated and understood by the entire Mediterranean world. The dispersed Jews had also translated the Old Testament into Greek (Septuagint). [now, if we just had some decent highways and roads to transport it]

6. What significant events happen after the early death of Alexander the Great? The Greek empire was divided into 4 sections, each with its own new ruler...one of Alexander's Generals. This was clearly prophesied in Daniel. These new rulers were not as tolerant of foreign customs and religion as Alexander and the Persians would have been. Result: "Abomination of desolation". Commandeer the Temple. Revolt under the Maccabees. These preview end times.