

Ezra – Chapter Three

“The Supreme Spiritual Priority”

Review

Chapter 1 – Decree of Cyrus in 538
Chapter 2 – The registry of the 42,360 returnees
Ezra wrote this about 90 years later after the events of this first return
He wrote this about 8 to 10 years after the events of the second return in 458.

Introduction

It was 950 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem (Mobile to Chicago)
It was a very difficult journey that would have taken about 4 months (7:9)
There is no record of the events of the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem

Their Primary Priority: The Spiritual Foundation 1-6

1

This would have been September/October 537

There were 3 feasts/events in 7th month: Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles (Lev 23 & Num 29)

2

Godly leaders: Jeshua, the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor (Haggai and Zechariah)

Notice the great unity!

3-6

Those who inhabited the land during the 70 years saw themselves as the deed holders and the Jews as a threat.

The foundation of the altar was still in place.

They kept the feasts and burnt offerings as written, consecrated, and appointed in the Word of God

They gave freewill offerings themselves.

They were obedient in looking toward the rebuilding of the Temple.

Their Secondary Priority: The Temple Foundation 7-9

7

Similar to what Solomon did in 1 Kings 5-6

They did not seek money or gifts in kind or free work from foreigners.

8-9

This would have been April/May 536

The Priority of Praise 10-13

10

1 Chronicles 6:31

11

Psalm 136:1

12

Psalm 126, one of the Psalms of Ascents, was written especially about this occasion.
Zechariah 4:6 – “... ‘not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

13

The praise of God’s people is a great testimony to the world!

Doctrinal Conclusions

1. When God does a work in the hearts of His people, that work will be marked by unity. 1, 8, 9, 13

Psalms 133:1 A Song of Ascents. Of David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!

Ephesians 4:1-6 & Philippians 2:1-4

2. God works through Godly leaders to lead His people. 2

Numbers 27:16-17 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, (17) who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

3. Giving reveals the heart. 5

2 Corinthians 8:5 [the churches of Macedonia] ...

"first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God."

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

4. All work done in the will of the Lord for the Lord is spiritual work. 9-11

Exodus 35:30-35

Colossians 3:23-24 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, (24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

5. The spiritual foundation of obeying God by worshipping and praising Him as He has prescribed in His Word is the supremely important priority. 2, 3, 6

Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.