

Ezra 3:10–13

<sup>10</sup> When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.

<sup>11</sup> And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel.” Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

<sup>12</sup> But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy,

<sup>13</sup> so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

### *Building Begins Ezra 3:1-13*

INTRO:

**Ezra 2** is one of those chapters that makes Ezra hard to preach. It is a long chapter of genealogy. We will not dwell upon it, but we must recognize we know the line of the Christ because the Jewish people were so meticulous about their genealogy.

**Ezra 3** begins after the Israelites are back in the land. We do not know how long they have been there. Now the seventh month of the Jewish year has come and all are now gathered to Jerusalem and they start the process of building the altar and then the Temple.

- I. Spiritual Restoration (v. 1-7)*
- II. The House of the LORD begins (v. 8-13)*

#### *I. Spiritual Restoration (v. 1-7)*

**Ezra 3:1-7** *“And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.*

***Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening burnt offerings. They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.”***

A. The first thing they did after arriving in the land is to come together in Jerusalem and rebuild the Altar of the LORD so they could celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This was one of the pilgrim feasts. Three times a year the males in Israel were commanded to present themselves at the temple. The three feasts were the feasts of Passover, the feast of Weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles. The Jews came together at the beginning of the month to construct the Altar so they could obey God in celebrating this feast and so they could again offer the sacrifices the LORD demanded of them.

B. They built the Altar carefully. They built the Altar precisely as Moses had described and offered sacrifices that Moses commanded. This was not a one-time event. It was a return to wholesale obedience to God. Our worship is not attached to a place but it still has to be careful in that we worship God ***“in spirit and truth.”*** Remember the question the woman at the well asked Jesus?

**John 4:20** ***“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”***

Jesus answered her.

**John 4:23–24** ***“The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”***

C. They built the Altar because of their fear of their enemies. Their only hope was in the person of the LORD who brought them to the land. They sought His blessing by being faithful to His commands.

## ***II. The House of the LORD begins (v. 8-13)***

**Ezra 3:8–13** ***“Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of***

***the house of the LORD. Then Jeshua with his sons and brothers, Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah, arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren the Levites. When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: ‘For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’” Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.”***

A. The foundation of the Temple was finished through the combined efforts of all who returned to the land. The process was not a quick, nor an effortless one. In **verse 7**, they ordered the needed material and provided for workers to help in the project. We are not directly told how long this first step took.

B. However, when the foundation was finished they took time to stop and recognize how God worked through them to build.

**vs.10-11** ***“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: ‘For He is good, for His [steadfast love] endures forever toward Israel.’”***

The idea was to make everyone stop and recognize the miracle God had done. God had brought them out of captivity and back to the land. He protected them from all their enemies. The LORD also provided all that they needed to actually build their Temple and reestablish the worship of the living God in Jerusalem. God had done it all. To remind them of this fact, they sang a part of Psalm 136.

C. Yet, there was a problem.

**vs.11-13** ***“Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off”***

Many praised and a good number wailed in sorrow. This was so serious an issue that ten years later when Haggai the prophet commanded and encouraged the people to return to the task of building the temple, he revisited this event. Haggai wrote;

**Haggai 2:3-4** *“Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the LORD; ‘and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,’ says the LORD, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ says the LORD of hosts.”*

Haggai answered these naysayers with God’s promise that He would shake the nations to supply what was needed for the Temple and that the glory of the latter would exceed the glory of the former. God Himself would come to this Temple in the flesh. Jesus came in the flesh to be dedicated. He would return at age twelve to teach the priests. Later He cleansed the temple of the merchants twice. He often taught in its porticos.

This is important for us here. Many of us remember the days when the missionary budget was bigger. The church was full of people, and we had more money than we could shake a stick at. So, now we demand that God make this all return right now. The result of those who mourned is they drowned out those who rejoiced and God was not glorified.

**vs.11-13** *“Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.”*

We must be careful we do not steal from God the glory He is due for the work that He is doing.

Do we try to make sure our accounts are clear when we come to serve our Lord?

Are we obedient?

Are we jealous for our Lord’s glory?

Are we giving Him glory for all He is doing?

**Hymn #409** *I Know Whom I Have Believeth*