

10/20/19

What Is Your Response To God's Work
Ezra 3:1-13

The decree of Cyrus has gone out to every Jew that wanted to return to Jerusalem and repatriate the nation and the Jews.

* A small contingency of 50,000 answered the invitation!

The majority of Jews that remained in Babylon contributed an abundance of the necessary materials for the building of the temple, including Cyrus who returned the articles of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem at his taking of the city.

We want to look at the arrival of the Jews to Jerusalem to build the Temple that is laid out in three movements. Ezra 3:1-13

- I. The restoration of the worship in Jerusalem. vs. 1-6
 - II. The preparations for the building the temple in Jerusalem. vs. 7-9
 - III. The celebration over the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem. vs. 10-13
- I. **The restoration of the worship in Jerusalem.**
vs. 1-6

- A. The united worship of the people at the altar. vs. 1-3
- 1. The people of God were back in the land. vs. 1
 - a. The date is stated, "And when the seventh month had come." vs. 1a
 - 1) The seventh month in the Jewish religious calendar is the month of Tishri, Sept.-Oct. of 536 B.C.
 - 2) The month is considered the holiest month because of the three feast, The feast of Trumpets of New moons, Yon Kippur and Tabernacles.
 - b. The place of their residence is also stated, "and the children of Israel were in the cities." vs. 1b
 - 1) The people that returned to the land, did so to their place of origin according to their tribes.
 - 2) The people knew their genealogies that were taken to Babylon, as the first nine chapters of First Chronicles reveals from Adam to their captivity.
 - c. The unity of the people is indicated, "the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem." vs. 1c
 - 1) The people were back in the land.
 - 2) But not all the people were back with the Lord.
 - 3) The prophet Haggai and Zechariah had to rebuke the people for

- neglecting the building of the temple,
not long from this time.
2. The priest of God were eager to officiate their office. vs. 2
 - a. The name of these priests are listed, “Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren.” vs. 2a-b
 - 1) Jeshua “Yeshuwa”, he is saved.
 - 2) Brethren the priests.
 - 3) Zerubbabel was a priest, but function as governor.
 - 4) His brethren.
 - b. The priority of the priests was the altar, “arose and built the altar of the God of Israel.” vs. 2c
 - 1) The altar was the place of judgment for sin.
 - 2) The altar was made of brass, representing judgment.
 - 3) Possibly on the some of the old foundational stones of the Temple of Solomon.
 - c. The priest needed to consecrate themselves to God, “to offer burnt offerings on it.” vs. 2d
 - 1) The burnt offering was for dedication and consecration to God.
 - 2) It would be completely consumed on the altar.

- d. The as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.”
 - 1) These priest had never officiated any of their priestly duties in captivity, this was the first time.
 - 2) The reason is there was no temple.
3. The priests and people were fearful due to the surrounding enemies, “Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries.” vs. 3a
 - a. The word fear “eymah”, means to be in terror or dread.
 - b. They relized how vulnerable they were to their enemies.
4. The priests and people responded properly to their fearfulness, they turned to the God of heaven, “they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening burnt offerings.” vs. 3b-c
 - a. They stepped out in faith having returned looking to and trusting God for His faithfulness.
 - b. Now their faith was being challenge by the danger of the circumstance that could only be resolved by turning to God.
 - c. Living by faith does not mean things won’t be difficult or dangerous, but faith in the midst of fear makes us corrageous in Christ.

- B.** The united observance of the Feasts. observed with preparations to build the house of worship. vs. 4-6
1. The priests and people celebrated the feast of ingathering, “They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written.” vs. 4a
 - a. The Feast of Tabernacle was celebrated Oct. 15-22.
 - 1) The actual date will fluctuate based on the Jewish religious calendar based on the moon, 360-day year.
 - 2) Not the Gregorian calendar of the sun, 365 days per year.
 - b. The people would build booths in the open air and live in them for seven days .
 - 1) They remember the faithfulness of God to bring them into the promise land. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:34-36
 - 2) And for the harvest.
 2. The priests sacrificed unto God, “and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day.” vs. 4b
 - a. The burnt offering represented total dedication and consecration.
 - b. They would be offered every day. Lev. 23:36
 3. The priests and people celebrated the holy month of the seventh month. vs. 5
 - a. It began with October 1st of the Feast of Trumpets of new moon, “Afterwards

- they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons .” vs. 5a-b
- b. It next celebrated Yon Kipor, the Day of Atonement for the sins of the nation, “and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated.” vs. 5b
 - 1) The sins of the nation would be offered, two goats would be chosen, one would be offered to the LORD and the other was the scapegoat.
 - 2) The scapegoat would be released in the wilderness and men would be placed at different intervals.
 - 3) When the last man could no longer see the goat the announcement of joy would be rallied back till it reached the camp declaring the sins of the nation were atone for. Lev. 16
 - c. It included also every person by their offering, “and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD.” vs. 5c
 - 1) The key is a heart of true repentance.
 - 2) The offering being of one’s own free-will, not religious duty or ritual.
 4. The summary statement regarding the Holy month. vs. 6
 - a. The starting day, “From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD.” vs. 6a

- b. The commentary about the temple, “although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.” vs. 6b

Illustration

Jesus told the woman of Samaria that our worship to be acceptable to God must be “in Spirit and truth”, according to His word. Jn. 4

Application

1. We gather together as on man, united because we are Christians, every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday as a church.
 - a. We no longer go to an altar to offer animal sacrifices like the Jews did because they were all prophetic and types of the Messiah to come, the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world by His death and resurrection. Jn. 1:29
 - b. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and not ours alone, but for the whole world. 1Jn. 2:2
 - c. The Law could not make a person perfect or meritorious before God, it accused man of his guilt, the Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal. 3:24
 - d. Jesus did not do away with the Law, but He fulfilled the Law. Matt. 5:17
2. Some Christians get caught up in all the feasts, rituals and ordinance of the Law of Messianic Jews and mistakenly think they need to and try to convince other Christians to focus on these things.

- a. We study all the Feast and rituals of the Law, but as Christians we do not need to practice them or celebrate them, all of them were shadows and types of Christ to come.
- b. A born-again Jew is a Christian and should join himself to a church, that is what Paul did, he did not establish Messianic churches.
- c. Now if a Messianic Jew wants to still celebrate the feasts that is up to them, but it is not necessary and it does not make them more spiritual or superior to other Christians.
 - 1) “For the law, having a **shadow** of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.” Heb. 10:1
 - 2) “which are a **shadow** of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” Col. 2:17
 - 3) The book of Hebrews is adamant as some Jews were going back to animal sacrifices for their sin, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the **veil**, that is, His **flesh**, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Heb. 10:19-22

The restoration of the worship in Jerusalem was a holy dedication!

II. The preparations for the building the Temple in Jerusalem. vs. 7-9

- A. The priests began by contracting the necessary individuals for the constructing of the temple. vs. 7
1. The people hire men to work on the temple, “also gave money to the masons and the carpenters.” vs. 7a
 - a. The men were paid their prize for hire.
 - 1) One can only imagine the destroyed condition and ruins of the city and Temple sight, still after 70 years.
 - 2) The work would not be easy or quick.
 - b. The masons “chatsab”, means to dig, cleave, divide or hew.
 - 1) These men would clear the ground and prepare the ground site.
 - 2) These men would cut stone and timber.
 - b. The carpenters “charash”, refer to the skilled artisans, engravers and craftsmen.
 - 1) These men were of quality refined abilities.
 - 2) These men were finishing carpenters and those having detailed artistic abilities.
 2. The priests bartered for the lumber. vs. 7b-c

- a. The Jews paid in comodeties, “and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre .” vs. 7b-d
 - 1) The people of Sidon and Tyre were the Phoenicians and were mariners.
 - 2) The location of Sidon is 28 miles south of Beirut, modern-day Lebanon.
- b. The Jews stipulated the location for the delivery of the trees, “to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa.” vs. 7d-e
 - 1) The cedars of Lebanon were huge, 120 feet high with a girth of 30-40 feet.
 - 2) The cedar wood was impermeable to rot and insects, very durable.
 - 3) Joppa was the very port Solomon had Hiram float the cedars down the Mediterranean for the temple and where Peter had his vision to go to the house of Cornelius. 1Kings 5:7-12; Acts 10
3. The entire plan to build the temple was by authority of the king of Persian, “according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.” vs. 7f
 - a. Cyrus made the decree in 536 B.C.
 - b. Cyrus reigned from 536- 530 B.C.
 - c. The Persian empire was from 536-330 B.C.

- B.** The priests appointed oversees for the work of the temple. vs. 8-9
1. The second date is stated, “Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem,.” vs. 8a
 - a. The second month of the second year from a specific event, their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem is May of 535 B.C., the same month Solomon started the temple. 1Kings 6:1
* Some will say 536 B.C. because they place the decree of Cyrus at 538 B.C.
 - b. This indicates they had been at Jerusalem for one year and five month according to the first date of the 7th month, Sept.-Oct. , of the first year. Ezra 3:1
 2. The specific individuals are listed for us. vs. 8b
 - a. The governor, “Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel.” vs. 8b
 - b. The high priest, “Jeshua the son of Jozadak.” vs. 8c
 - c. The other priests, “and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites.” vs. 8d
 - d. The Jew that returned, “and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem,.” vs. 8e
 3. The purpose to indicate the commencement of the work by assigning overseers for the

- work, “began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD.” vs. 8f
- a. The Levites in the days of Moses began their apprenticeship at 25, then entered their ministry at 30 and retired at 50. Num. 4:1-3; 8:24-25
 - b. The age after the Babylonian captivity was lowered to 20 years. 1Chron. 23:24
2. The particular Levites to oversee the work of the temple, vs. 9
 - a. The word “then” indicates there was no procrastination or delay.
 - b. The High Priest is listed first, “Then Jeshua with his sons and brothers.” vs. 9a
 - c. The next group, “Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah, arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God:.” vs. 9b
 - d. The last group, “the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren the Levites.” vs. 9c

Illustration

Anyone who has ever worked on a project with others be it around the house or a big project at work knows that for the effectiveness of the goal there must be delegation, a coordinated plan and oversight, but the most important thing is a “oneness of heart in the work”.

* We have seen this throughout the years from all of you who get involved in the medical outreaches, the Christmas boxes and other things.

Application

1. In the church is no different when it come to the work of ministry.

- a. God raises up evangelist, pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till believer come to the state of a mature believer in knowledge and wisdom. Eph. 4:11-13
- b. The reason is that they no longer be children, tossed to and fro carried about eith every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cumming craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head---Christ. Eph. 4:14-15
- c. To work as a well oiled machine, “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4:16

2. The entire effort is not to have people have their eyes on us or glory in us, but rather that people come to be saved and worship Jesus.

- a. As God assigns people according their calling to serve in the body.

- b. As God equips each person with the necessary spiritual gifts. Rom. 12; 1Cor 12, 14
- c. Motivated by the love of God. 1Cor. 14

The preparations for the building the temple in Jerusalem was a joint participation!

III. The celebration over the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem. vs. 10-13

- A. The joyous worship at the temple sight. vs. 10-11
 - 1. The occasion was their first goal, “When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD.” vs. 10a
 - a. They had made that long journey of four months, travelling 900 miles.
 - b. Now they were witnessing the first tangible evidence of the temple.
 - 2. The ones that initiated the worship were the priests, “the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets.” vs. 10b
 - a. The priest sounded the trumpets as a call to joyous celebration.
 - b. They stood in reverence and honor to God.
 - 3. The second group followed, “And the Levites the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD.” vs. 10c-e
 - a. The Levites singers of the sons of Asaph accompanied the priests with cymbals.

- b.** In order to sing to Yahweh praises.
- 4.** The manner is stated, “according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.” vs. 10f
 - a.** According to their order and arrangements.
 - b.** As list in Chronicles. 2Chron. 8
- 5.** The description of their worship is state, “And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD.” vs. 11a-b
 - a.** The word respectfully “anah” meaning in course, which is described next.
 - b.** Praising, giving the credit and glory to God with gratitude for His faithfulness and enabling.
- 6.** The words are recorded, “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel.” vs. 11c-d
 - a.** The song is antiphonal.
 - b.** One group sang the words, “For He is good” and the next group would respond, “For His mercy endures forever towards Israel.”
- 7.** The joining in of all the people followed, “Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD.” vs. 11e-f
 - a.** The number was “all”, not some.
 - b.** Their praises were sung in a loud shouted to be heard by all.

- 8.** The reason for the praise and thanksgiving is stated, “because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.” vs. 12g
 - a.** It is a repetition of verse 10a.
 - b.** This was both the occasion and reason for the praise and thanksgiving to God!
- B.** The mixed response at the temple sight. vs. 12-13
 - 1.** There were those that wept at the sight of the laid foundation, “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.” vs. 12a
 - a.** The word “but” marks the great contrast,
 - 1)** The “many” were the old men of the priests, Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses.
 - 2)** These are the ones who wept.
 - b.** The reason they wept was that they had seen the temple of Solomon prior to being taken captive to Babylon.
 - 1)** They remembered the magnificence of the beauty and splendor of the building and the Shekinah glory.
 - 2)** They wept over the unattractive and simple foundation laid for the temple.
 - 2.** There were those that were joyous, “Yet many shouted aloud for joy.” vs. 12b

- a. These individuals “many” were thrilled with joy shouting over the accomplishment, as the start of the temple.
 - 1) They were looking forwards to what God would do.
 - 2) They considered it a privilege.
 - 3) The old men were a discouragement to the younger ones.
- b. The younger men had nothing to compare, but rejoiced in the faithful new work of the temple God had called them to be part of.
 - 1) This was all they knew.
 - 2) They were content and excited about what God was going to do.
- 3. The mixture of two opposite emotions were blended as one. vs. 13
 - a. The difference was hard to distinguish, “so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.” vs. 13a
 - 1) The word discern “nakar” means they could not recognize the weeping as a disappointment.
 - 2) The crying and shouting were both thought to be for joy.
 - b. The two groups were filled with high emotions that affected them deeply, “for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.” vs. 13

- 1) They sense of having accomplished the will of God was satisfying..
- 2) The understanding that they had been used by God to participate in the construction of the second temple was a joyous excitement.

Illustration

When teens in high school got your first car in the 60’s it was an old car with some dents, the paint was fades and possibly with primer spots, The interior might have some tears, older guys in their mid 20’s were not impressed with it when they saw it, but it was yours and you washed and waxed it and you were excited!

Application

1. Do you look back on your life and celebrate with joy praising and thanking God for what He has done in for you, as He laid that new foundation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ for your life?
 - a. Having forgiven you for all your sins. Jn. 3:16
 - b. Having made you a child of God. Gal. 4:6
 - c. Having made you a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:17
 - d. Having given you a new divine nature to life the life of Christ. 2Pet. 1:3-4
 - e. Having given us His word that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for

every good work.” 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Pet. 1:19-21

2. Are you as a Christian always looking back to the good old days and despising the present days of God’s work?

- a. Be it in the present work that God is doing that by all evidence may seem to be not as exciting or significant as in the past in your life.
- b. Or maybe it is the work in the church that you believe is not what it used to be?
- c. Are you an encouragement to others in what God is doing or do you steal their thunder, like the old men at the temple sight?
- d. Each of us can fall into this trap, as we trust in our flesh and Satan to discourage us, we are not to give place to the devil or to have a foothold. Eph. 4:27
- e. Always remember that as Christians we do not live in the past, “today is the best day of my life because it is the next day of my life in Christ”.
Xavier
* Zechariah says, “For who has despised the day of **small things?**” Zech. 4:10a

The celebration over the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem was a divided reaction!

Conclusion

The arrival of the Jews to Jerusalem to build the Temple has been laid out in three movements.

- I. The restoration of the worship in Jerusalem was a holy dedication!

- II. The preparations for the building the temple in Jerusalem was a joint participation!
- III. The celebration over the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem was a divided reaction!