

A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18

The Book of

EZRA

Restoring The Heart of The Nation



Establishing the Foundation

Ezra 3

Lesson 2

Background Information

There is a time gap to be understood between chapter 2 and 3, though we don't know how long. Doubtless there were weeks, or possibly months of earnest labor, in which the returned remnant built homes for themselves. They also made preparations for the rebuilding of the desolated temple by clearing away the rubbish and debris that stood in the way of their building project. Once the building began, the people gathered together "as one man" with the common desire to worship the Lord. Restoration of any kind begins with a solid foundation. It was essential that the altar be constructed upon the foundation of the old one in order to revive the sacrificial rituals of their worship of Yahweh. They laid the foundation for their spiritual worship in the altar, providing for the daily sacrifices to be observed. They then turned their labor toward their physical worship in rebuilding the temple providing for their service to the Lord. Once again they kept the Feast of Tabernacles honoring God's commandment which commemorated God's provision for the earlier generation's wanderings in the wilderness.

It is interesting to note that the construction of Solomon's temple began in the second month, likewise the construction of the second temple began in the second month. The Levites twenty-years old and above were called into service. The law stated that the Levites were to be thirty-years old before they were called to serve, but the lower number was necessary because of the small number of Levites that made their way back to Jerusalem. Those who returned celebrated the completion of laying the temple's foundation in almost the same way that the previous generation had celebrated the first temple.

Treasures of the Heart

*... 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.*

Ezra 3:11

What does it say?

The first step is getting the lay of the land. Carefully observe the text looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Mark your text looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. **Does a key verse stand out in each section?** Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Ezra 3:1-7

1 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. 2 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. 3 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. 4 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. 5 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. 6 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. 7 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.

What does it mean?

What lesson can I draw from my observations? Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else.

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 3:1-7 _____

Ezra 3:8-13 _____

How can I apply it?

Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?" How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions?

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 3:1-7 _____

Ezra 3:8-13 _____

What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Ezra 3:1-7 _____

Ezra 3:8-13 _____

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

Time to build

Take note of how each challenge is met. Ask yourself: How was it responded to? How did it affect those who interacted? What building materials were used? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.)
What did you learn that can help you next time you meet a similar challenge?

Radiating His Truth

Restoration of many kinds begins with laying a solid foundation, for only upon a secure base may one build a secure structure. .

Mark Roberts



