

FINDING JOY IN RESTORATION Sunday, July 7, 2013

Unifying Topic: **TEMPLE RESTORED**

Lesson Text

I. Building The Foundation (Ezra 3:8-9)

II. Rejoicing And Weeping (Ezra 3:10-13)

The Main Thought: And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because [he is] good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And 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, KJV).

Unifying Principle: When people are separated from something they hold dear, restoration is usually a general anticipated goal. How do people respond to an accomplished goal when the returned Israelite exiles laid the foundation stone to restore the temple? They rejoiced and gave thanks to God with weeping, shouting, and playing of trumpet and cymbals.

Lesson Aim: To acquaint students with the returning exile practice of worship, particularly as it relates to the completion of the foundation of a new temple.

Life Aim: To show students worship is the lens that shapes our view of life. All actions must flow out of the practice of worship.

3:8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

3:9 Then stood Jeshua [with] his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

3:10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

3:11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because [he is] good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

3:13 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 noise was heard afar off.

HISTORY:

Ezra 3:1-7 After the Israelites are coming back to Jerusalem the priests rebuild the altar to offer burnt offerings; they celebrate all the feasts, and they make preparations to gather supplies for the rebuilding of the Temple.

¹They built the altar even before they started rebuilding the temple. Why? Because worship must always come first. Out of the rubble of their past disobedience, they first made sure they were right with God. In a sense, by making sacrifices first, they were saying, *"Lord, we want to get right with you."* The altar was the link between God and man. During all the years in Babylon, the people had no altar and thus no clear access to God and no assurance of forgiveness. Their disobedience had taken the altar away and broken fellowship with God.

Money to the masons and carpenters was given. Food, drink, and oil were given to the people of Zidon and Tyre to bring cedar trees from Lebanon by sea of Joppa authorized by king Cyrus of Persia.

LESSON:

Ezra 3:8-9 Building The Foundation

3:8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. This is the second year of the Israelite's return to

¹ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2002-11-10-Overcoming-Disappointment/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

the house of God at Jerusalem. The first year was in the seventh month to rebuild the altar, which is mentioned in Ezra 3:1, but at that time the Temple was not rebuilt. It was called the House of God even though it lay in ruin because it symbolized the consecration for worship. It took from September to June just for the preparation to rebuild the Temple. It took time just to bring forth the materials ordered. And the workers were hired from those who had returned under the direction of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, the remnant priests, and Levites. It took time to make the plans because this project was important to them. The Law of Moses commanded that the Levites begin their serving at thirty years of age. However, David changed the starting age for Levitical service to twenty years of age (1 Chronicles 23:24). Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, they adopted David's revised practice. Therefore, the Levites at the age of 20yrs were appointed to supervise the workmen.

3:9 Then stood Jeshua [with] his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. The Levites were given the responsibility to oversee the rebuilding of the Temple. Three classes of Levites are mentioned: Jeshua and his family, Kadmiel and his family, and Henadad and his family. In this rebuilding we can conclude that this task was accomplished in an orderly fashion.

Ezra 3:10-13 Rejoicing And Weeping

3:10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. The laying of the foundation was accompanied by festivity and singing. The priests were dressed in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites with cymbals to praise the Lord prescribed by king David of Israel. This was a time of celebration and they did it up with flair according to the ordinance of David.

3:11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because [he is] good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. Celebration always calls for singing. As they sang together, they gave thanks unto the Lord. ²This is united, public praise. It is intense, emotional and God-centered. When they sang, they declared, "He is good," not "We are good." When we have been humbled by God, our praise will be sweeter because it will not be mixed with sinful pride. The Jews could never say, "Look at us, we did it, we brought ourselves back from Babylon." No way. God humbled them, He punished them, and when the time came, He brought them home again. Human pride had been crushed years earlier. Now God alone would get the glory. They openly gave God all the credit. Shouting with a great shout once the foundation was laid, they kept going on that *"His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel."* They did not wait until the building was done to praise the Lord. Even though laying the foundation was significant, there was a mountain of work left to do. Great things start small and deserve praise and thanks unto a loving God!

3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:— Some of the older people (many priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers) remembered and had seen the first house of God (Solomon's Temple) and were filled with emotion. They began to weep loudly because for one reason, they were alive to see the new Temple being rebuilt to honor God; second they were back in their own land to worship God. Even though it could not be compared to the first house, it was being rebuilt for the purpose of getting back on track to honor God. What an awesome sight, one group was weeping loudly and the other group was shouting loudly with joy just feels me emotionally. When one remembers how unworthy one is, and at the same time remembers how awesome God is will cause great emotion. If you had lost your home and then see it rebuilt, and get a chance to enter in again, it will cause tears of sadness because of some things that were lost that you couldn't replace, yet tears of joy for the chance to settle into its newness with a fresh start at the same location.

² <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2002-11-10-Overcoming-Disappointment/>
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There were young and old there. The young might have been the ones shouting for joy loudly and the older ones were the ones weeping loudly. The young ³had never seen Solomon's temple, didn't remember its glory, and hadn't witnessed its destruction. All they knew about was what they had heard from the older generation (parents and their parents' friends). So when they saw the temple foundation relaid, to them it was an amazing sight and answer to prayer. This was a time to celebrate the goodness of the Lord. However, the older generation remembered how good things had been, and they recalled what had been lost through disobedience and they wept. In conclusion the young need the old to remind them of the past and the old need the young to encourage them about the future.

3:13 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 noise was heard afar off. ⁴This had to be a spectacular sound with the cymbals clanging, the trumpets blowing, the weeping loudly, and the shouts of praise. Everyone had to know what was happening by the loud sounds. Wouldn't it be interesting to see a church in our day rejoicing so loudly that it would stir up the entire neighborhood? People far away could hear the noise but nobody could tell if they were laughing or crying.

SUMMARY:

In the second year after the Jews returned to Jerusalem, they began rebuilding the Temple with the Levites in charge. When the Temple's foundation was complete, there was a great celebration. The priests and Levites blew trumpets, clash cymbals, and sang praises to the Lord, *'He is good, and His love, mercy toward Israel will last forever.'* There was such loud shouting going on because the foundation of the Temple had been laid that some of the older ones were weeping among those that were shouting loudly with joy and the people far off couldn't distinguish the difference.

APPLICATION:

After being humbled we find restoration. This brings a joyous outburst when we remember what God has done in our lives. We get back to what we are supposed to do, that is, praise Him, who makes all things possible! Through the Joy of praise unto Him, He restores us! Ask God to restore you, so you can get back to the practice of worshipping Him!

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2002-11-10-Overcoming-Disappointment/>

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ezra/03.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>