

Restoration of Exiles: A Study of Ezra Chapter 3

Review: After Cyrus conquered Babylon (539 BC), he issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple to the Lord (Ezra 1). A large group of Jews made the long journey back (Ezra 2) and the people settled in their towns.

1. What do you think "assembled together as one" means (v. 1)? How would you apply that phrase to NorthWest?
2. After the people arrived back in Judah and got settled in their towns, what did they do (3:2)?
For what purpose (3:2)?
According to what document (3:2)?
3. How did they feel while they were doing this? (3:3) Why do you think they continued in spite of these feelings?
4. What Festival did they celebrate next? What was the purpose of this festival? (see Leviticus 23:33-44)
5. According to v. 5, they had regular burnt offerings, New Moon sacrifices and sacrifices for all the appointed festivals but also one other kind of offering? What was this other kind? This kind of offering is just what it sounds like it is (cf. Exodus 35:29; 36:3). So their worship included sacrifices and offerings prescribed by the law as well as offering they gave spontaneously. How would you apply that to us today?
6. Verse 6 indicates the next thing to be rebuild. What was it?
7. What two leaders are mentioned in v. 8? Do you remember what role these were had last week (see Haggai 1:1)? In addition to these two leaders, "the rest of the _____" begin to work. As we have already seen, to get God's work done, leaders are needed but so are the _____.

8. Verses 10-11 When the foundation was laid, more worship takes place as prescribed by who? What does this have in common with 3:2?

9. Their worship included singing to the Lord with praise and thanksgiving (v. 11). What examples can you think of from your own life give that illustrate the truth of the words to the song they sang? (v. 11)

10. What do you think would be a good word or phrase to shout in celebration of good things God enables to happen (v. 11).

11. Why do you think some of the older folks who had seen the first temple wept? (vv. 12-13)

12. What good thing was taking place now, after Ezra 3, that was not taking place before it? (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11). Why is this good thing that was now taking place so important?

13. Can you find the phrase "to the Lord" 5 times in this chapter? (in NIV). What is the subject each time it is used? What does that tell us?

14. If we were going to apply this chapter directly to our situation, what would you conclude to be the purpose for which God will release us from our "captivity" (quarantine) to this virus? Do you think that is a legitimate application of Scripture?