

Lesson 6 The Foundation of the Temple is Laid

Key Themes in the Book of Ezra

- Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness and man's covenantal unfaithfulness
- Yahweh sovereignly and providentially works out his redemptive purpose in history despite human evil.
- Yahweh's intention for Israel for purity in worship and obedience to the law
- Yahweh's grace and mercy exceed his anger
- Sinful man's need for a changed heart

Background

Temple : the temple in Jerusalem was the place where Yahweh dwelled and the place He chose to meet with His people. His people went there for forgiveness of their sins and to express their thankfulness for His goodness to them. It was also a place of corporate celebration where all Israel gathered three times a years for the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

temple foundation: the exiles laid the foundation of the temple on the exact spot where the previous temple foundation had been laid. The spot was considered sacred because God had dwelt with His people there.

trumpets and cymbals: musical instruments such as trumpets, cymbals, lyres and harps were often used to accompany religious rituals in bible times. Music in many different forms was part of Hebrew worship of Yahweh.

Key Words and phrases:

house : Strong's H1004 "bayith": a house or temple in the OT. **Key Phrase "the house of the Lord"** which in Hebrew is "beth Yahweh " and means the house of Yahweh or the house where Yahweh dwells.

laid the foundation: Strong's H3245 "yasad" to establish, firmly place, to lay a foundation

Read Ezra 3:6-13

The exiles had built and established the altar on the site of the previous altar. Now that the altar was in place, they began preparation for the building of the temple.

1. According to Ezra 3:7 how did the exiles begin their preparation for the rebuilding of the temple? How did the use of cedar wood from Lebanon (Tyre and Sidon) contribute to the continuity of the new temple with the one that had been destroyed? See 2 Chronicles 2:1-16.

2. Who came together in verse 8 to begin work on the temple? Who was appointed to oversee the work according to verses 8 and 9? What was the significance of assigning members of this tribe to oversee the work? See Numbers 3:1-9.

3. Describe the worshipful response of both the priests and the people in 3:10-11 when the foundation of the new temple was laid? What was the dominant characteristic of their worship? Besides the laying of the Temple foundation, what are some of the other things they should have been thankful to God for?

4. Not all of the worshipers responded with praise . What did some of the older men and priests do according to 3:12-13? While the younger generation rejoiced in what had been accomplished, those of the older generation wept. Why do you think they wept?

Application: In comparison to the temple built by Solomon, the restoration temple seemed like nothing (Hagai2:3). What are some of the dangers of comparing the past with the present? The world is a place of constant change. Things will never be as they were in the past. According to the apostle Paul in Philippians 3:7-12 what is the best policy for us to follow as we live out our lives?

Application: Zerubbabel waited until the second year before doing what he wanted i.e. rebuild the temple. How patient are you (with self, with God or other people) when waiting for a new beginning or opportunity?

