

## **EZRA 3-4**

### **Ezra 3 – Restoring Worship and Laying the Temple Foundation**

- A) *People gather together in Jerusalem in the seventh month [536 BC] (vv. 1-5)*
- 1) Joshua and Zerubbabel lead rebuilding of the altar to offer burnt offerings
  - 2) Fear had come upon Jews because of the people in the countries around them
  - 3) Burnt offerings offered to God; kept feast of Tabernacles
- B) *Foundation of temple not yet laid (vv. 6-7)*
- 1) Money given to masons, carpenters, and people of Tyre and Sidon (for cedars of Lebanon) to prepare to build the temple
- C) *Work begins on temple in second month of second year (vv. 8-13; cf. 1 Kgs. 6:1)*
- 1) Levites twenty years old and above appointed to oversee the work
  - 2) The foundation of the temple is laid
    - a) Levites and priests praise the Lord as David had ordained (cf. 1 Chron. 6:31; 16:4; 25:1)
    - b) All the people shout and praise the Lord
  - 3) Many of the elderly Jews who had seen the first temple wept with a loud voice (cf. Hag. 2:3; Zech. 4:10 “not like the first temple”)
    - a) The noise of shouting (weeping and joy) was heard afar off

### **Ezra 4 – Outside Resistance**

- A) *Adversaries of Jews offer to help build the temple (vv. 1-5)*
- 1) Joshua and Zerubbabel refuse their offer (for background of adversaries – 2 Kg. 17:24-34)
  - 2) Adversaries try to discourage and trouble Jews; hired counselors to frustrate them all the days of Cyrus until the second year of the reign of Darius (v. 24)
- B) *Historical account interrupted to give examples of later opposition (vv. 6-23)*
- 1) Inserted here to illustrate how the problem of opposition continued into the future
  - 2) First example – accusation against Jews written to King Ahasuerus (v. 6)
  - 3) Second example – Letter from Rehum, Shimshai, and others to King Artaxerxes against Jerusalem (sometime after 464 BC, possibly 446-445 BC)  
(*Note: 4:8–6:18 was originally written in the Aramaic language*)
    - a) Accusation that Jews are building the “rebellious and evil city” and finishing its walls and repairing the foundations
    - b) Assertion that if city is completed, the Jews will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and that the king will lose his dominion in that region; warning that history showed that the city is a harmful and has incited sedition
    - c) King Artaxerxes responds by decreeing that the work on the city be stopped, and the command was carried out by force of arms (cause of distress in Nehemiah 1:3?)
- C) *Work is stopped on the temple for a period of sixteen years (v. 24; 536-520 BC)*

### **Questions**

- 1) Why was it important to rebuild the altar of God?

- 2) Why would fear of the surrounding peoples become a hindrance to the Jews?
- 3) Why did some weep while others rejoiced when the foundation of the temple was laid?
- 4) Why was it proper for Joshua and Zerubbabel to refuse the offer of outsiders to help?
- 5) Was it right to delay the building of the temple for several years due to the opposition of enemies? Why or why not?

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<b><i><u>Jewish Calendar</u></i></b> (religious year)	<b><i><u>Corresponding Month</u></i></b> (roughly equivalent)
Nisan	April
Iyar	May
Sivan	June
Tammuz	July
Ab	August
Elul	September
Tishri (beginning of civil year)	October
Marchesvan	November
Kislev	December
Tebeth	January
Shebet	February
Adar	March