

Ezra 3:1 ¶ And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

On the 7th month the people of Israel gathered together as one in Jerusalem. This is the month in which Rosh Hashanah (the 1st day of the month designating the new year), Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles was observed. It is during our September-October.

Ezra 3:2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God.

Ezra 3:3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening.

Jeshua or Joshua evidently served as high priest. He and his brethren the priests built an altar to God upon which they could offer burnt offerings in accordance with the law of Moses. They put the altar at the exact place upon which the one that had been destroyed had stood, and they offered burnt offerings in the morning and evening as commanded in the law. It is noted that the people were determined to obey the LORD in spite of their fear of the people in the surrounding countries.

I liked Guzik's comment: "They built the altar first because they understood its *spiritual significance*. Fundamentally, the altar was where sin was dealt with and where the common man met with God (the temple was only for the priests to enter). They started with the altar because it was a *wise spiritual priority*, showing they understood their need to have atonement from sin and acts of dedication to God."

Ezra 3:4 They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

Ezra 3:5 And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.

Ezra 3:6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not *yet* laid.

The people kept the feast of tabernacles and then continued to offer burnt offerings as commanded for the new moons, other set feasts, and as the people came to make freewill offerings. This all began on the first day of the 7th month even though the foundation of the temple had not yet been laid.

The writer seems to be emphasizing that the returning remnant were determined to follow the LORD in obedience.

Ezra 3:7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

They gave money to hire masons and carpenters and provided food, drink and olive oil to the men from Zidon and Tyre who brought cedar trees from Lebanon to the port of Joppa as authorized by Cyrus king of Persia. Both Tyre and Zidon were ruled by Cyrus as well.

NIV Commentary: "As with the first temple, the Phoenicians (of Tyre and Sidon) cooperated by sending timbers and workmen (1Ki 5:7-12). The latter were paid in "money" (lit., "silver") that would have been weighed out in shekels (see comment on 2:69). Ancient Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) was renowned for its cedars and other coniferous trees. Both the Mesopotamians and the Egyptians sought to obtain its timbers either by trade or by conquest. Cedars, mentioned seventy-one times in the OT, can grow to a height of 120 feet with a girth of 30 to 40 feet. Their fragrant wood resists rot and insects. The wood was floated on rafts down the coast and unloaded at Joppa."

Ezra 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.

Ezra 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.

In the 2nd month of the 2nd year Zerubbabel and Joshua led the people to begin rebuilding the temple. They appointed Levites that were 20 years and older to supervise the work. Jeshua and Kadmiel and their sons seemed to head up the team of Levites in overseeing the work that was done.

This was a different Jeshua than the high priest.

Ezra 2:40 "The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four."

Ezra 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.

Ezra 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.

Once the foundation of the temple was laid, they gathered together for a time of praise and worship in celebration. They sang in praise of the LORD's goodness and His mercy toward Israel in allowing them to lay the foundation.

Ezra 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:*

Ezra 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.

It is noted that many of the older men, priests and Levites that had seen the first temple wept loudly, probably mourning the lost magnificence of the first temple; while others shouted for joy at the prospect of having a new temple. The noise was so loud that one couldn't distinguish the weeping from the rejoicing and could be heard for quite a distance.

Ironside made an interesting application: "Youth is the period of enthusiasm and exuberance of spirit, while age is the time of sobriety and serious contemplation. Young men are apt to be over-sanguine looking on to the future; aged men, on the other hand, are likely to be reminiscent and unduly occupied with the past. It is often difficult for youth to comprehend the fears of the old and experienced regarding any new work in which they are involved. It is equally hard, frequently, for the elder men to recognize any special work of God entrusted chiefly to the young and in which they cannot share for long. They are too apt to forget their own youth; and as they think of ruined hopes would put the "brake on any who do not now occupy their standpoint. Hence much patience is ever needed in a movement such as we have been tracing. The young need grace, to profit by the godly, sober counsels the fathers, who, in their turn, need grace to rejoice in what God is doing through those as yet immature."