

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why did the people gather together to worship?
2. In what different ways did the people express their joy and thankfulness to God?
3. How has God intervened in your life during the times that it seemed that His requests were impossible to fulfill?
4. What can we learn from their cooperation to rebuild the temple?
5. How critical is the construction of a sound, spiritual foundation?

SUMMARY:

God's faithfulness in keeping His word is demonstrated in His dealing with the Jews in this period in history. His preparation of Cyrus, king of Persia, and the Jews living in bondage, for their return and rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem at this time, is a direct fulfillment of His previous promise.

All the people that returned were volunteers who desired of their own free will to go back to their homeland. Those that remained were encouraged to give free will offerings toward the rebuilding of the temple. When the Jews got back to their land, they all gathered together to restore worship according as God had originally commanded them to do. They built an altar and offered burnt offerings in repentance for their past sins and continued the daily burnt offerings as were required. Then they organized for the building of the temple. When the foundation was laid they praised God with music, song and shouting. But some old men who had seen the first temple wept.

NOTES:

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bible Lesson #2

July 9, 2006

Third Quarter

RETURN AND REVIVAL

LESSON TEXT: *Ezra 1:1-11; 3:1-13*

LESSON SETTING: Returning from Persia to Jerusalem.

TIME: Approximately 536 B.C.

I. RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY *Ezra 1:1-11*

- A. God's Word Sure (vs. 1) Ezekiel 12:15; Matthew 5:18
- B. Prophecy Fulfilled. Jeremiah 29:10-14

II. RESTORATION OF WORSHIP *Ezra 3:1-9*

- A. Gathered Together (vs. 1) Leviticus 23:2-4; Acts 2:1
- B. Burnt Offerings (vs. 4-5) Exodus 29:38-39; Leviticus 1:4; 6:9-13
- C. Free Will Offerings (vs. 5) Deuteronomy 16:10; 23:23

III. REJOICING OF THE PEOPLE *Ezra 3:10-13*

- A. Praised God with Music and Song (vs. 10-11) Exodus 15:1; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Psalm 33:1-3; Ephesians 5:19
- B. Rejoicing Commanded. Deuteronomy 12:7; Psalm 5:11-12; Philippians 4:4

GOLDEN TEXT: *EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE, THEY LABOUR IN VAIN THAT BUILD IT.*
Psalm 127:1

NEXT SUNDAY'S LESSON: Ezra 4:1-24; 5:1-5

SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES: Zechariah 1:1-21;
Acts 5:12-42; 14:1-20

QUARTERLY THEME: God's People in Captivity

TOPIC: GOD'S WORK OPPOSED

INTRODUCTION:

Whenever God's people wish to carry out His commandments, the devil steps in and makes it difficult for them to carry on the work. He cannot tolerate people working for the Lord and he does all in his power to hinder it. This is a sure evidence that when we do God's will, we are tempted by the devil. Our missionaries can testify to this truth and, we ourselves know when we witness to a soul how hard the devil tries to keep his hold upon that soul.

So it was when the Jews went back to Jerusalem to begin the rebuilding of the temple, the surrounding nations did all they could to hinder the work. How discouraging it must have been for the people, but God came to their rescue, as He always does when we trust Him, and King Darius gave them permission to go on.

We must put forth all effort to do God's will. In spite of the many handicaps and hindrances the devil places in our pathway, God is faithful and will help us to prosper.

CENTRAL TRUTH: We should continue to serve God in spite of opposition, for God's work done in God's way cannot fail.

GOLDEN TEXT: *IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?*
Romans 8:31

The children of Benjamin and Judah who were trying to rebuild the house of God and the wall about the city, were not allowed to work unhindered. When they refused to permit the uncircumcised inhabitants of the land to take part in restoring the temple, the people caused the Persian king to decree that the work must cease. No doubt it seemed that every man's hand was against them. But God prepared the heart of another king to allow them to proceed with His work.

God also has a purpose for our lives, which is primarily that we be a part of His church, redeemed by Christ out of the world. The aim and purpose of Satan is to put obstacles and hindrances in our path as we labor on "God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:9)

In times of prosperity Satan tempts us with pride and selfish desires, while in times of persecution he might use evil men to attempt to stop our spiritual growth. How comforting is our Golden Text: "*If God be for us who can be against us?*" John also encourages God's children, "*because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" (1 John 4:4)

Thus in all distresses
When by fear I'm tried,
Hope my heart possesses;
God is at my side!

Z.H. 148:3b

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF July 10 - 16

M. *Adversaries Plot Against Reconstruction. Ezra 4:1-6

T. *Letter of Accusation. Ezra 4:11-16

W. *The Work Suspended. Ezra 4:17-24

T. *Prophets Encourage a New Beginning. Ezra 5:1-6

F. Opposition Revived. Ezra 5:7-17

S. God's Presence Amid Persecution. Psalm 102:12-22

S. Path to Ultimate Triumph. Romans 8:33-39