

THE LORD'S HOUSE

"Faithful to Fulfill: A Study of God as Revealed in Post-Exilic Scripture"
Ezra 3:8-13 / Part 4 / Pastor Matthew Jones

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Witness (Ezra 3:8a)

[cf. 2 Sam. 7; 1 Kngs 8:10-11; cf. 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-2; Ezek. 43:5; 44:4]

Work (Ezra 3:8b-9)

Worship (Ezra 3:10-11)

Weeping (Ezra 3:12)

Weightiness (Ezra 3:13)

Washing (John 2:13-25)

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

Reflective Questions for You and Your Small Group

1. This week our study of Ezra 3 included a look into the theological significance of the Temple in the history of Israel and in the Bible. Discuss together what was taught concerning the Temple and its theological symbology. How do the rich images of the Temple and its history inform our lives today? Discuss personal application one might make in response.
2. Along with the Temple, we reflected on the priesthood and their vital work among the people according to Ezra. Discuss the grueling work of the priests and the significance of their role in salvation history. How does all of this set the stage for Jesus, who becomes the high priest of the church? Turn to the book of Hebrews and discuss what it says about Jesus as our high priest in this age (see Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:14-15, 5:6, 6:20, 7:11-27, 9:12-14, 10:12).
3. The priesthood and the Temple were ordained by God to call the people to worship and witness to the surrounding nations. That said, in this age God has ordained for the church to be a priesthood who likewise call the world to come in repentance and faith to their creator. Please read what 1 Peter 2:9-10 says about this ministry we have been given and discuss what this looks like practically in your life. Who are you reaching out to and how are you being a witness to them with the life-transforming good news of Jesus Christ?
4. In Ezra 3 we read about the different reactions of the young and old to the new post-exilic Temple in Jerusalem. Generationally, discuss the importance of having young and old in one's community to give perspective to life. How have you learned from older saints at church? How have you benefitted from younger saints in the congregation? Discuss the benefits of intergenerational community for life and witness together.
5. In Ezra 3 the older generation wept at the sight of the post-exilic Temple. The text is not entirely clear, so while those could be tears of joy, it seems that they rather were very likely tears of disappointment that the new Temple was less impressive than the older one the people lost at the hands of the Assyrian army. This seems to be the prophet Haggai's point to the people (see Haggai 2:3,9), in which case, let's try to personally challenge ourselves with this scene. How are you personally prone to maybe idolize things in the past in such a way that it robs you from having joy in the moment? When things are not the way they 'used to be' or the way 'they're supposed to be' in your opinion, how does that impact you? Share and think ways to grow in grace and joy.
6. Thinking about joy in the last question, what robs you of your joy in the Lord? Added, how do you practically fill your cup with godly joy?