

EZRA 3: 1 When the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

The altar of burnt-offerings is set up, Ezr 3:1-3. They keep the feast of tabernacles, Ezr 3:4-6. They make provision for rebuilding the temple; and lay its foundation in the second month of the second year, Ezr 3:7, Ezr 3:8. Ceremonies observed in laying the foundation, Ezr 3:9-11. Some weep aloud, and others shout for joy, Ezr 3:12-13.

Verse 1

When the seventh month was come - The month Tisri, which answers to the latter part of our September, and beginning of October. It seems that the Israelites had left Babylon about the spring of the year; that on their arrival at Jerusalem they constructed themselves huts and sheds to lodge in among the ruins, in which they must have spent some months. After this they rebuilt the altar of burnt-offerings, and kept the feast of tabernacles, which happened about this time, and continued to offer sacrifices regularly, as if the temple were standing.

EZRA 3: 2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak stood up with his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers, and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

Verse 2

Jeshua the son of Jozadak - He was grandson of Seraiah the high priest, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar, 2Kgs 25:18, 2Kgs 25:21. This Jeshua or Joshua was the first high priest after the captivity.

EZRA 3: 3 In spite of their fear because of the peoples of the surrounding lands, they set the altar on its base; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening.

Verse 3

They set the altar upon his bases - Rebuilt it on the same spot on which it had formerly stood. As it was necessary to keep up the Divine worship during the time they should be employed in re-edifying the temple, they first reared this altar of burnt-offerings; and all this they did, "though fear was upon them," because of the unfriendly disposition of their surrounding neighbors.

EZRA 3: 4 They kept the feast of tents, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required;

Verse 4

They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written - This began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; but they had begun the regular offerings from the first day of this month, Ezr 3:6. And these were religiously continued all the time they were building the temple.

EZRA 3: 5 and afterward the continual burnt offering, the offerings of the new moons, of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD.

EZRA 3: 6 From the first day of the seventh month, they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD; but the foundation of the LORD's temple was not yet laid.

EZRA 3: 7 They also gave money to the masons, and to the carpenters. They also gave food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus King of Persia.

Verse 7

They gave money also - They copied the conduct of Solomon while he was building his temple; see 1Kgs 5:11. He employed the Tyrians, gave them meat and drink, etc.; and this permission they now had from Cyrus.

EZRA 3: 8 Now in the second year of their coming to God's house at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began the work and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the LORD's house.

Verse 8

In the second year - The previous time had been employed in clearing the ground, felling timber, hewing stones, and transporting them to the place, and making other necessary preparations for the commencement of the building.

EZRA 3: 9 Then Jeshua stood with his sons and his brothers, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in God's house: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brothers the Levites.

EZRA 3: 10 When the builders laid the foundation of the LORD's temple, they set the priests in their clothing with trumpets, with the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel.

Verse 10

After the ordinance of David - With psalms which he composed, acting in the manner which he directed.

EZRA 3: 11 They sang to one another in praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good, for his loving kindness endures forever toward Israel." All the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the LORD's house had been laid.

EZRA 3: 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' households, the old men who had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. Many also shouted aloud for joy,

Verse 12

Wept with a loud voice - They saw that the glory had departed from Israel; in their circumstances it was impossible to build such a house as the first temple was; and had this been even possible, still it would have been greatly inferior, because it wanted the ark of the covenant, the heavenly fire, the mercy-seat, the heavenly manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the Divine shechinah, the spirit of prophecy, and most probably the Urim and Thummim.

Many shouted for joy - Finding they were now restored to their own land, and to the worship of their God in his own peculiar city: these, in general, had not seen the original temple; and therefore could not feel affected in that way which the elderly people did.

The sight must have been very affecting: a whole people, one part crying aloud with sorrow; the other shouting aloud for joy; and on the same occasion too, in which both sides felt an equal interest! The prophet Haggai comforted them on this occasion by assuring them that the glory of this latter house should exceed that of the former, because the Lord (Jesus Christ) was to come to this temple, and fill it with his glory. See Haggai, Hag 2:1-9.

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 far away.
