EZRA: RETURN TO THE WORD
REBUILDING SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS



Memory Verse: "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." Ezra 7:10

- 586 BC: Babylon destroys Jerusalem and Solomon's temple, carrying many Judeans into exile
- 539–538 BC: Persia conquers Babylon, and Cyrus permits the Jewish exiles to return and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1)
- A person may maintain a respectable appearance while neglecting prayer, Scripture, obedience, and fellowship. A church may have a beautiful building, organized programs, and a busy calendar ***while losing its spiritual vitality***.
- **Activity is not the same as spiritual health, and visible success is not the same as faithfulness in spirit and truth**

Sacrifice: The Altar must be the center of our Worship (1-6), Ezra 3:1-2
- They rebuilt according to the Word of God, not personal preference or popular opinion
- We must put our compromises on the altar and pick up consecration: His Way, Ezra 3:3,5
- The altar was not just a symbol but a steady place of obedience to God
- We don't wait until life gets easier to be faithful to honor God at the altar with our lives, Ezra 3:4
- The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) reminded them of God's faithfulness in the wilderness so their faith could be strong in this journey of difficulty, 1 Peter 2:5

Service: Worship must produce a willingness to Serve (7-9)
- Ezra 3:7
- The surrender of finances is often the hardest to do; service should cost us something, Ezra 3:8-9
- The greatest service is a personal sacrifice of being involved, not just standing on the sidelines, Nehemiah 4:6
- The value of service is not measured by visibility, but viability

Singing: Worship + Work= Weeping of Joy (10-13), Ezra 3:10-11
- Our singing should be an outward,physical expression of the spiritual working of God in our soul
- Notice: **all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD**; your praise cannot rest in the voices of others, Ezra 3:12

- The praise often consists of different reasons and perspectives, but it all goes to only one: GOD! Ezra 3:13
- Their praise invaded the ears of those not present: do not let the absence of others limit your praise, Ephesians 2:19-22

Questions:

1. Read Ezra 3:1-2; Deuteronomy 12:5–7; Psalm 119:9–11, 105; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; James 1:22–25. What does it mean to rebuild our lives according to God's Word? The returning exiles rebuilt the altar "as it is written in the law of Moses." Why was obedience to God's revealed instructions essential to their restoration? How can a Christian distinguish between a genuinely biblical conviction and a personal preference that has been treated as a biblical command? What happens when churches prioritize popularity, tradition, or numerical growth over Scripture? Personal application: Identify one area where your habits, decisions, or attitudes do not align with God's Word. What specific change can you make this week? What Scripture will guide that change?
2. Read Ezra 3:10-11; Exodus 34:6–7; Psalm 136:1; Lamentations 3:22–24; Philippians 1:3–6; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18. How does remembering God's steadfast love change the way we face unfinished work? The people praised God for His goodness and enduring love before the temple was completed. What is the difference between biblical gratitude and pretending that problems do not exist? How can a church celebrate God's faithfulness while honestly evaluating its weaknesses? How does confidence in God's character help us persevere without assuming He will fulfill every personal ambition? Personal application: Write down three ways God has demonstrated His faithfulness in your life. Is there an unfinished situation in which you need to trust His character while continuing to obey Him? What would gratitude look like in that situation this week?
3. Read Ezra 3:12-13; Isaiah 43:18–19; Haggai 2:3–9; Ecclesiastes 3:1–4; Philippians 3:13–14; Revelation 21:1–5. How should Christians respond when restoration brings both joy and grief? Why might some people celebrate a new beginning while others grieve what has been lost? How can older and younger generations learn from each other without idolizing the past or embracing every new idea? How should a church evaluate change in light of Scripture rather than nostalgia, personal preference, or cultural pressure? How does the promise of God's ultimate restoration shape Christian hope? Personal application: Is regret, comparison, or resistance to change preventing you from taking a faithful next step? What can you learn from the past without remaining trapped in it? Identify one action that would help you move forward in obedience to Christ.