

Ezra 3:1-13

Ezra 3:1 – **“When the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem.”**

1. Chapter 2 describes the return. Here in chapter 3 the Jews begin worship procedures
2. This is the seventh month of the first year the Jew returned so it is Sept/Oct 537 BC
3. The Jews had already settled in their towns
4. Now they leave those homes to assemble as one unified nations in Jerusalem.

3:2 – **“Then arose Jeshua the son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen, and they 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.**

1. First they build the altar
2. Offer burnt offerings on it according to the Law
3. These priests are following the directions of the Word of God and any information their parents had handed down to them.

3:3 – **“They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening.**

1. Details... “They set the altar IN ITS PLACE!” which was the foundation where the altar of Solomon had stood. They would have needed to destroy and clear away any structures that had been set up in their absence. This would have offended someone in the land. There are two groups in the land now:
 - a. The locals
 - b. The returnees
2. They had faith, but they also needed faith in the Lord because they feared the people of the land. The Jews had just displaced many of the local people because they had orders from Cyrus.
3. Now that they were in the land, they feared the people, but looked to God for help.
4. They began the morning and evening rituals

3:4 – **“And they kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required,**

1. The Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated on the 15th of the 7th month
2. This is Sukkot. It is one of three pilgrimage festivals

3:5 – **“and after that the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the appointed feasts of the LORD, and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill offering to the LORD.**

1. This began the return to the worship cycle

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

1. Altar and rituals, but no Temple

3:7 – **“So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus king of Persia.**

1. They take action to begin the building. First, the foundation:
 - a. Offerings for workers
 - b. Imports from Lebanon (Sidon and Tyre) according to Cyrus' decree

3:8 – “Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the LORD.

1. Second month would be April/May. The first month would have hosted Passover.
2. Solomon started the Temple in the second month
3. This is 7 months after the altar began to be used.

3:9 – “And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers.

3:10 – “And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel.

1. Cymbals provided the percussion or beat.

3:11 – “And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever 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.

3:12 – “But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy,

3:13 – “so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.