

Relaying the Foundations

5 May 2024 PM – Text: Ezra 3:1-13 – Topic: Revival

Introduction: It is sad when a house burns down. The work involved in rebuilding is great. The rubble must be removed. The ground must be cleared. Plans must be drawn up. New materials must be purchased. Workers must be hired. Then a lot of work must be put into it.

The temple in Jerusalem had been demolished about 50 years earlier. Jeshua and Zerubbabel were leading those who returned to Jerusalem to help rebuild the temple. The work was great.

Transition: Ezra 3 describes for us five components of the relaying of the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem from which we can see a parallel to spiritual revival in our hearts and in our church.

1. The Components of Rebuilding

a. Passion (v.1)

- 1) They recognised the great need to rebuild the temple, thus, they gathered themselves together as one man, v.1. They were unified around the need.
- 2) They had a great desire to see the rebuilding take place. They left their adopted homeland of Babylon. They took the four-month dangerous and tiring trip. Many had sacrificed their possessions.

b. Prayer (v.2-6)

- 1) They sought the Lord. They followed what Moses had written in the law and built the altar of God (v.2).
- 2) The altar was an essential part of their prayer and worship of God. As part of their worship, **Noah** (Gen 8:20), **Abram** (Gen 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9), **Isaac** (Ge 26:25), **Jacob** (Gen 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7) and **Moses** each built altars.
- 3) They also celebrated the feast of tabernacles (v.4). Verses 5-6 seem to indicate that they kept all the feasts and offerings that God had prescribed right up until the foundations of the temple had been completed.
- 4) The people knew that if they were going to relay the foundations and rebuild the temple, they were going to need God's help.

honestly do this until we pray for personal revival.

c. Preparation

- 1) The Jews gathered needed materials for the temple.
- 2) We need improved personal Bible study. As you read the Bible, read for **application**, not just for information. Seek to find nuggets that will feed your soul. Begin removing the rubble in your life that is blocking revival (e.g., TV, video, Internet, phone, selfishness, friends, music, books, etc.).
- 3) Approach the Bible as Solomon urged his son to do in Proverbs 2:1-6.

d. Participation

- 1) The Jews all got involved in the renovation work.
- 2) When you read a scripture that you know you are not fully obeying, ask God to help you change (Col 3:16). Those who make excuses for their failures are not working toward revival.
- 3) We ought to be expert at confessing our sins, forsaking sin, forgiving sins of others, and obeying God (Jas 5:16).
- 4) Change is often difficult, but with God's help, you can make any change that God prescribes.

e. Praise

- 1) As God begins to revive your soul, praise Him.
- 2) Sing praises to Him while you go about your day.
- 3) Actively look for opportunities to speak to others about Christ. This gives God active praise as it blesses your own heart.

Conclusion: Just as these five components were part of the Jews relaying the foundations of the temple, they are also a part of personal and church revival.

Would God say that you are a man or woman after his own heart? Are you seeking daily to apply and flesh out the commands you read in the Bible? If not, you need revival. Instead of blaming others and making excuses for your failures, agree with God and begin praying earnestly for revival in your heart.

Song: Chorus, "You can have revival" (take chorus books)

c. Preparation (v.7)

- 1) They hired workers to do what they could not do.
- 2) They got involved by transporting the timber from Joppa to Jerusalem. Though not mentioned, there was likely a lot of rubble that had to be removed in Jerusalem.
- 3) It appears that this preparation work took at least six months as they gathered together in the seventh month (v.1) and they began reconstruction in the second year and second month (v.8).

d. Participation (v.8-10)

- 1) The workers gathered to participate in the work (v.8).
- 2) Note that the Levites were to “**set forward**” the work. This means that they were the supervisors.
- 3) Truly, the work of relaying the foundation of the temple was no small task. Every stone had to be cut from a quarry, transported to the temple mount, cut to the exact size if this was not already done, and then set in its precise location.
- 4) Moving and setting the massive foundation stones was no small task. Remember, Jerusalem is not located on a low flat plane. It is on the top of a mountain. No one knows for sure how the ancients accomplished these difficult tasks.
- 5) According to one article, *“To this day, on the western wall of the temple mount, one huge foundation stone perhaps bares testimony to the original. The stone is estimated to weigh about 500 tons, with no piece of machinery on earth today capable of moving it.”* <https://www.bibleistrue.com/gna/pgna41.htm>

e. Praising (v.10-13)

- 1) As the stones were being set in place, the priests blew their trumpets and the Levites played cymbals to praise the Lord. The word for cymbal means to tinkle. Some think it was an instrument that rattled, while others assume it was similar to modern cymbals.
- 2) As the instruments were playing, the Levites were singing by course (i.e., one group answering another group) in praising and giving thanks to the LORD.

- 3) During this music, as the workers set the great stones in place, the people shouted with a great shout and praised the Lord.
- 4) Many of the ancient men, who had seen Solomon’s temple, wept, perhaps in part because this temple was not as grand as the former. Others of them shouted aloud for joy (v.12). Their noise was heard afar off (Hag 2:1-9).

2. The Comparison to Revival

It is common for our hearts and our church to become complacent or even broken down spiritually. When this happens, we need to relay the spiritual foundation for revival. The same components needed to relay the temple foundation are needed to relay our spiritual foundation for revival.

a. Passion

- 1) Just as the Jewish people saw the great need to rebuild the temple, we will never experience personal or church revival until we see the great need.
- 2) We must compare our spiritual condition to God’s expectation in the Bible rather than comparing it to others we know. For example, consider Romans 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:22; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:32; Ephesians 5:22; Ephesians 5:25; Ephesians 6:1-2; and scores of others.
- 3) If you have a lot of work to do, you need revival. Ask God to give you a passion to seek true revival in your life.

b. Prayer

- 1) Just as the Jews saw their need for God’s help and turned to the Lord in prayer and worship, so we must do the same.
- 2) From what I have read, prayer was the spark that ignited nearly every great revival in history.
- 3) If the Holy Spirit reveals that your heart needs a revival, begin to pray to that end. Ask God to open your eyes to hidden sins. Ask Him to reveal things that you need to forsake. Pray that God will use His word and the Holy Spirit to revive your cold heart.
- 4) We ought to pray for revival in our church, but we cannot