

## 4. They were Unified in Praise (v.10-13)

### a. They used instrumental music to praise the Lord

- 1) The priests blew trumpets (v.10). These trumpets may have been of silver or brass and varied in kind and size.
- 2) The Levites played cymbals (v.10).
  - a) From the artifacts that have been excavated in the Palestine area, we are told that there are two basic types of bronze cymbals that ranged in size from approximately 3-6 cm for the smaller cymbal to 8-12 cm for the larger variety. The smaller variety produces a high-pitched tinkle. The larger variety produces a clear, ringing, defined tone, and pitch.  
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  - b) They were patterned after David's musical groups, "after the ordinance of David". They may have even played songs composed by David.
  - c) This music was designed to praise the Lord not the flesh. In our hearts, we pretty much know which music praises the Lord, and which praises the flesh.
- 3) The singers sang songs to praise the Lord (v.11)
  - a) They were organized – by course – unified, not chaos.
  - b) The lyrics were God-lifting and God-thanking (v.11)
  - c) The people shouted their affirmation to the praise.
    - (1) Possibly "Amen!"
    - (2) Some shouted for joy while others wept.
- 4) The old men cried and shouted for joy (v.12-13). They sang and praised God from the heart. When we sing we must do the same. That takes concentration.

**Conclusion:** From this chapter, we have learned how we can build unity in our church. Gathering regularly builds unity. Worshipping together to fear and honour God builds unity. Working together to serve the Lord builds unity. Singing and praising the Lord together builds unity.

Do your attendance, worship, service, and singing truly focus attention on God and give Him honour? Let's ask the Lord tonight to help us unify in these areas that we might better glorify him.

**Song:** Praise Him! Praise Him! **442**

# Congregational Unity

10 September 2017 PM – Ezra 3 – EzNe17 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** Solomon said, (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, 12) "*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. [10] For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. [12] And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*" The benefits of unity are demonstrated in my car tow rope. It contains hundreds of threads woven tightly together. Individually they have very little strength, but together they form a powerful rope. (Take tow rope)

**Transition:** In Ezra 3 we find that unity brought many benefits for the rebuilding nation. I find at least four ways in which they were unified. If we will apply these four ways to our lives, they will benefit our congregation as well.

## 1. They were Unified in Body (v.1)

### a. The people gathered together (v.1).

- 1) They left their separate places.
- 2) They congregated in one place.
  - a) Gathering together involves personal sacrifice.
    - (1) Sacrifice of plans
    - (2) Sacrifice of work
    - (3) Sacrifice of time
  - b) When we gather together for church these same sacrifices are true. Yet God encourages us to make those sacrifices for our spiritual benefit. (Hebrews 10:25) "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*"

### b. The people unified as one man (v.1).

- 1) They were one in location.
- 2) They were one in desire and goal.
  - a) Sometimes we may gather in one location but not be unified in desire and goal.
  - b) Unity in desire and goal is essential for the Lord's work. (Amos 3:3) "*Can two walk together, except they*

*be agreed?"* Let's ask God to give us a unified heart for His work as a church.

## 2. They were Unified in Worship (v.2-6)

### a. The people worshipped God through sacrifices

- 1) They built an altar to offer burnt offerings (v.2). They set it on its bases (perhaps on the old foundation or in the old location) (v.3).
- 2) They offered burnt offerings (v.3). They did this both to worship the Lord and to secure His blessing because they feared the enemy peoples around them.
- 3) They also offered free-will offerings (v.5).
  - a) These were voluntary personal sacrifices offered from the heart to worship God.
  - b) We don't need to offer burnt offerings to worship God because Christ offered himself to God on our behalf. Now we worship God in three basic ways:
    - (1) By confessing our sin and receiving his forgiveness – these show fear and dependence.
    - (2) By prayer, Bible reading, song, and church attendance – these show our obedience and submission.
    - (3) By giving ourselves and our financial offerings – these show our love for God. (Romans 12:1) "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

### b. The people worshipped through feasts

- 1) Feast of Tabernacles is here mentioned
  - a) It was 8 days long, the first and last day were Sabbaths (no work). (Leviticus 23:35-36) "*On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. [36] Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.*" This was the last feast of the year, in October.

- b) They were to live in booths (branch huts) during the feast "*to remind them that God delivered them out of the "land of Egypt" and to look forward to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would deliver His people from the bondage of sin.*" gotquestions.org  
(Leviticus 23:42) "*Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths.*"
  - c) It was a time of sacrifice, offering, and rejoicing.
- 2) God is worshipped when we give Him honour and when we sacrifice to put Him first.
- a) Worship begins with a proper fear of God. (Ps 5:7) "*But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*"
  - b) We worship by bowing and obeying (Ps 95:6) "*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.*"

## 3. They were Unified in Work (v.7-10)

### a. They worked together preparing to build the temple.

- 1) Materials were ordered and craftsmen were hired (v.7).
- 2) They carried materials to the work site.
  - a) This is not mentioned in the Bible, but they carried the timber over land from Joppa over 55 km from Jerusalem ([see map](#)).
  - b) Stones and other materials had to be cut, carried and prepared.

### b. They worked together to build the temple

- 1) About seven months later (April/May) the people again gathered at Jerusalem (v.8). Supervisors were appointed.
- 2) Everyone helped in the work (v.8-9).
  - a) Every hand is valuable – carry materials, prepare food, deliver water, prepare mortar, hold tools, pull ropes, etc.
  - b) Never feel insignificant in God's work. *Every string in a rope is important when united with the whole.*