

“Built for Worship”
Ezra 3:7-13 – Joy and Sadness

Intro: a time to celebrate

Covenant continuity

The first and second temple:

Same building materials, same month of construction, same song sung

The true Temple: “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ They replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.” (John 2:19-21)

Covenant rejoicing

“With praise & thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: ‘He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever.’ And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.” (v.11)

Covenant weeping

“But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid” (v.12)

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple... Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev 21:22,27)

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Questions to think and pray through over the week ahead

What do the features of continuity in the building of the 1st and the 2nd temple, tell us about the continuity in God’s purposes? What does it tell us about God Himself?

What does the symbol of the temple represent? So, why is Jesus an even greater temple than those built in the Old Testament?

Why do you think the Israelites were praising God when only the foundations of the new temple had been laid?

How much do you praise God and celebrate even the small victories and steps forward in life? How might you learn to do that more?

In what way could the new temple not match up to the previous one? What was missing, and why was it so significant as to produce tears?

What sadness do you feel in the Christian life? Why is it important to acknowledge this and not to bury it?

Does your sadness tend to lead towards despair? What steps can you make to limit this from happening?

What are God’s future promises of a temple to come, and how should it fill us with hope?