

Ezra Inductive Bible Studies for Youth

Ezra 3:1-7

3:1

- In what month of the Jewish calendar did the people gather?
- Where were the children of Israel?
- Where did the people gather as one man?

3:2

- Who all was involved in building the altar of God?
- For what purpose did they build the altar?
- Who had told them to offer these sacrifices?

3:3

- When they set the altar on its base, they did so in spite of what?
- In spite of their fear, what else did they do?
- Have you ever been fearful in doing the work of God?
- Have you ever stopped the work of God out of fear? Have you ever kept on doing it in the face of great fear? Share your experience with the group.

3:4

- What feast did the people keep after the altar was built?
- When did they offer sacrifices every day?
- What do you think was the significance of a morning sacrifice and also an evening one? (Perhaps they sinned during the day; perhaps they sinned during the night, if even in the desires of their dreams.)
- What festival did the people keep?

- Festivals in the Old Testament were celebrations of God's people, looking forward to Christ. These festivals were not involved with idol worship but with remembering, honoring & celebrating the One, True & Living God. In our culture, how have we changed the intent of festivals?
- What festivals are held in your area? Do they honor idols, or do they honor God?
- What was the purpose for which God gave the children of Israel the Feast of Tabernacles? (See Leviticus 23:43, Nehemiah 8:9-18.)
- The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated immediately after the harvest. Why do you think it was especially meaningful to those who were returning to their homeland after captivity, rebuilding the city and the temple?

3:5

- What other offerings & sacrifices were given?
- Read Hebrews 7:26-27. How is the offering of Christ different from the offerings of the priests of the Old Testament? How is the Hebrews passage even more meaningful in light of the number & frequency of Old Testament offerings?
- What is a freewill offering?
- Have you ever offered a freewill offering to God?

3:6

- The altar would eventually stand in the Temple of the Lord. Why do you think the people began to offer sacrifices even before the Temple was rebuilt?

3:7

- How did they pay for the work of rebuilding the Temple?
- Who participated, and what did each do?
- All this rebuilding they did according to the permission they had from whom?

- Have you ever been away from God in your spirit, and then repented and returned? How did you return? How did you feel?

Ezra 3:8-13

- After they returned to their land, how long was it before they began work on rebuilding the temple?
- Think back. What had they been doing the first year?
- Who were the two leaders in this work?
- Did they work alone, or who helped them?
- What part of the temple did they lay first?
- How did they celebrate the completion of this part of the temple? See if you can name four parts or details of the celebration.
- Why did they sing to the Lord? What was the theme of their song?
- Pretend you are an observer to the celebration. How would you describe it?
- Who cried and mourned at the celebration?
- Why did they cry?
- How do you explain the difference in attitude between the younger people and the older ones?
- Have you ever heard the sounds of joy and sorrow all at the same time? On what occasion? What was it like? If you have never heard this, try to imagine and describe what it must have been like.
- Other people were living in the land at the time, people who moved there during the captivity of the children of Israel, people who did not know God. How do you think those people felt when they heard and saw the completion of the foundation of the temple and the celebration that accompanied it?
- We might compare this event with celebrations today when the cornerstone of a big building is laid or with turning the first shovel of dirt where an important new building is to be located. Have you ever attended one of these events? Tell the class about it.
- Why was this event so significant to the children of Israel?
- This event moved them one step closer to the full restoration of worship together as a people. Think about your own attitude toward meeting with others for worship. Is your own attitude as enthusiastic as theirs? If not,

why not? What can you do to bring your attitude more into line with what God wants?

Ezra 6:13-22

6:13

- Who did Darius the king send to ensure that the work of rebuilding was completed speedily?

6:14

- What two prophets also helped them to prosper in their task?
- Do you think the word “prospered” is used here in the sense of amassing great wealth, or in the sense of successfully completing the task before them? Why?
- Which three heathen kings had participated in the command to rebuild?
- Behind all of them, whose command was it ultimately to rebuild?

6:15

- What phrases tell us that they did actually finish the job? (vs. 14 & 15)

6:16

- What did they do when the house was completed?
- Who all participated in the celebration?
- What emotion was predominant during the celebration?

6:17

- What kinds of animals were offered as sacrifices & how many of each?
- Why so many?
- Whose sin was included in the offerings?
- These offerings looked forward to the perfect offering of the perfect sacrifice, our Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:27 says “he was once offered to bear the sins of many”. How is the sacrifice of Christ like the animal sacrifices & how is it different?

6:18

- What two groups led the worship?
- Who ordained these to groups to this task?
- Who were they serving?
- What are you doing to serve God?

6:19

- What feast did the people keep?
- What do you remember about the meaning of this feast?

- Why were these important things to remember?
- Jesus is called our Passover (I Corinthians 5:7) Why?

6:20

- What does it mean that the priests were purified for Passover (see Numbers 8:6-7)?
- For what three groups did they kill the Passover?
- Why did they have to kill it & offer it for themselves, since they were priests of God?
- In that regard, what was different about the offering of Jesus Christ? Did He have to pay for His own sin as well as ours? Why not? (See 2 Corinthians 5:21).

6:21

- Who amongst the children of Israel ate the Passover?
- How is the religion of the people of the land described?
- What was their goal in separating themselves from the heathen customs of the land?

6:22

- What is another name given for the Passover feast? Why is it called that?
- How long did the feast last?
- Why were they joyful?
- The heart of any heathen king would not naturally be toward them, much less the heart of their captor. What amazing thing did God do for them?
- What did the king of Assyria do?
- What “God things” have you seen or experienced in your life?
- Why was this particular Passover celebration especially exciting to them?

Ezra 8:21-23

8:21

- What did Ezra proclaim?
- What request were they making of God?
- By what methods did they seek God’s help?

8:22

- They had a choice between seeking God’s help and seeking the help of whom?
- Why did they not want to seek the king’s help?

- Was this request self-centered, or was their concern for God's glory?
- Think about your most common requests from God. How many of them are self-centered, and how many are for God's glory?

8:23

- When they sought God with fasting, what was the result?

Ezra 8:31-32

8:31

- From what place did these people of God depart on their journey?
- What was their intended destination?
- What were the dangers they faced along the way?
- How and why did they arrive safely?

8:32

- Where did they finish their journey?
- How long did they rest after completing their journey?
- Note that this was a different group than the children of Israel who returned earlier. What is the explanation of this? (One group made the first journey and were later joined by others.) Have you heard of a similar pattern of migration in African history? (This is a very common pattern of migration. A small group goes ahead and sends word back after they have begun to establish themselves in a good place. Then other groups of the same people follow them.)