



***Biblical Building***

***Sermon #13***

***'Full of Joy!'***

***Ezra 6:19-22***

Sunday, August 3rd, 2025

***Last Sunday in the Biblical Building Sermon Series:***

- We're over three months, most of them in the summer, of our Biblical Building Sermon Series through the book of Ezra.
  - Last Sunday I preached a sermon entitled ***'The Need for Good People!'*** from ***Ezra 6:13-18***.
  - I asked the question: ***What are the three groups of 'good' people in this text that God chooses to use to rebuild the Temple?***
    - **Truth #1: *The Government Leaders.* (v. 13)**
    - **Truth #2: *God's Leaders.* (vv. 14-15)**
    - **Truth #3: *God's Laymen.* (vv. 16-18)**

- This morning we get to look at the final four verses of Ezra 6, and see how the Jews celebrated the passover.

***'Full of Joy!'***

***Ezra 6:19-22***

**Sermon in a Sentence:**

***As followers of the One true God we can and should be full of joy in all seasons of our walk with Him because of what He's done for us. Especially in times of celebration of His goodness.***

**Intro:**

- ***Joy is such an important part of the life of a Christian.***

- In fact, according to the letter that Paul sent to Galatia, it is one of the fruits of the Spirit.
- All throughout the Bible, we are shown by God Himself that those who know Him, should have joy spewing from their lives.
  - ***From when David expressed immense joy when the ark of the covenant came back to Jerusalem in 2nd Samuel...***
  - ***From the joy of Mary when she was visited by the Angel and realized the magnitude of what God wanted to do through her...***

- *To the joy that Paul clearly expressed in the NT despite his troubles and tribulations...*
  - All are examples of how we can have joy despite our circumstances.
- *One of the first times I ever heard the word 'joy' in correlation with the Christian life, is when I was a child, probably around three years old...*
  - In my Sunday School classes as a small child in small Southern Baptist Churches, I was taught a myriad of Bible songs, but this one in particular sticks with me even to this day...
    - *'I've got the Joy Joy Joy Joy, down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart, I've got the Joy Joy Joy Joy down in my heart, down in my heart to stay'*
  - *Such a fun song for children to sing with deep theological meaning.*
    - Somewhere along the way, through the hustle and bustle of life, I'm afraid that we as adults have lost the Joy that we once had.
  - *Did you know that Jesus wants you to have Joy?*
    - *It wouldn't be one of the fruits of the Spirit if He didn't want you to be a person full of Joy because of what He's done for you!*

- In our Scripture text this morning we are met with a continuation of the joy that began in the verses we looked at last week.
  - *The temple rebuild project had been completed and it was time for the passover.*
    - *Due to being in Babylonian exile and not having a temple, it had been 72 years since they would have been able to celebrate the passover.*
  - *The Joy that these Jews express in this text is contagious, and I pray as a congregation that it would inspire and encourage us to express Joy from the Lord in our lives, for ALL that He has done.*
    - *We have 10,000 reasons plus, to be JOYFUL.*
  - *May we be a people full of Joy rooted in Christ.*

*\*Read Ezra 6:19-22\**

#### **Question to Ask:**

*How does the returning of the Jews and their friends show us great Joy in the first Passover Celebration?*

#### **Truth #1: *A Celebration Sprouted from Obedience. (v. 19)***

- It had been a total of 72 years since the Jews had a functioning temple to be able to celebrate the passover.
  - *Now that they have a temple, they came in and observed the Passover.*

- ‘On the fourteenth day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover.’ Ezra 6:19
- *While verse 19 seems small, the obedience that it took to get to this point is remarkable!*
  - Jewish men were required each year to make 3 trips to Jeruslaem to celebrate the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.
  - *But it had been SO long since this had occurred.*
- I believe there are 1 of 2 possibilities that could have occurred in the situation:
  - *Option #1: It's been 72 years since we have observed these festivals that the Torah states, why would we start now? Let's just keep doing our own thing, and doing living our own lives.*
    - For the Northern Kingdom, this was certainly the case as by this time they had intermarried and were engulfed by what was once Babylonian culture (now Persian).
  - *Option #2: It's been 72 years and I can't wait to worship the Lord once again! My heart has been yearning! Now that the temple has been rebuilt*

*and we've seen God move in foreign kings, let's worship Him!*

- Even in our Churches today these two options are evident within most congregations.
  - Maybe you're on vacation, sick or can't be there.
  - *Option #1 can quickly become attractive if we are not careful...*
- According to verse 19 the fourteenth day of the first month was the day set apart in the pentateuch to celebrate the passover, according to Exodus 12:6.
  - *In the year 515 B.C., this would have been April 21st.*
    - Which means approximately three weeks after the dedication of the temple, the people were able to follow the regulations of the Torah once again.
- *Their ability to celebrate that day was directly rooted to their obedience in the rebuilding efforts!*
  - We must not abandon obeying God!
  - Even though we all fail multiple times on any given week, when we come to

worship we ask the Lord for forgiveness and celebrate of what He's done in and through our obedience and what He's done despite our failures!

- *Here, they celebrated, and they continued in obedience, despite the long time of not being able to worship.*

**Truth #2: *A Caring Spirit for Others (non-Jews).* (vv. 20-21)**

- *An incredible change of heart, which only God can do, has occurred among the people of God in Jerusalem in this situation.*
  - Do you remember all the way back in Ezra 2, that those who could not prove their ancestry were excluded from the community?
    - That was a big deal! As traditions are for many 'Christ' followers today.
  - *Not only did the priests and levites purify themselves and get ready for the passover according to the Torah, the way they would have 72 years ago, they also opened it to non-Jews.*
    - As long as the males were circumcised (according to Exodus 12:43-49), and had separated themselves the paganism of the culture, they were welcome.
  - *Even in the midst of a spiritual celebration, we should have a caring spirit for all of those around us!*

- *It's hard for you and I to understand the true magnitude of these verses, let's look at them closely:*

- 'For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were clean. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. **21** It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.'
- Verse 20 is significant because of the ritual washing with water that had occurred among the priests and levites, according to Exodus 29:4 and Numbers 8:7.
  - *The author of Chronicles even stressed the need for this purification and at Hezekiah's great Passover celebration, it was delayed a month because there were few ceremonially clean priests (2nd Chronicles 30:2-3).*
    - *It is an incredible thing that after 72 years, they still sought to do things the Biblical way, according to the Torah.*
    - Think about how easy it would've been, that many years removed from the last time they

had a temple, to leave out ‘small’ but important details like that!

○ ***Verse 21 is very important for us and for these Jews at this time, contextually:***

- This verse gives us clear indication that there were other Jews living in Judah that may have not returned from exile.
- ***I believe many of these were converts, and not born Jews!***
- By this time there were many people assimilated with the Jews, think about how long the land had been without the Jews living in it, a long time.
- ***What happened here in verse 21 was remarkable:***
  - The leaders invited all the Jews and the Jewish ‘proselyties’ to share in the passover.
  - ***There were inevitably those present who couldn’t prove their lineage. But as long as the males were circumcised (according to Exodus 12:43-49), separated themselves from the pagan culture, they were welcome to participate.***
- A caring spirit for others doesn’t mean you have to go against what the Bible says.
  - ***That isn’t what happened here.***

■ It means that you can obey the Bible while not having an exclusive club.

- While it is a different tone and feeling than Ezra 2, it’s an incredible thing when we can love one another despite our differences.

**Truth #3: *A Christ Shaking Joy. (v. 22)***

- Obviously, I know that the name of Christ is not mentioned in this text.
  - ***Within the context of verse 22, the Joy they had is from their obedience:***
    - They had stayed faithful to God.
    - God had moved in the hearts of Kings.
    - The temple had been rebuilt, and they did not have to pay for it!
  - ***But, within the lens of the NT we know that this passover feast would continue, until Christ had the last Supper, the final true Passover, with His disciples in the upper room the night before He was crucified.***
    - We know that Jews who observe the Passover today are doing so in vain, still living under the Torah (LAW).
  - ***For them, they experienced JOY in Yahweh being able to celebrate the passover for the first time in 72 years.***
    - But you and I can celebrate the Christ Shaking Joy that we do on a daily basis, because the remnant (these JEWS)

continued in observing the Torah until Christ came as a baby!

- *God used these Jews and allowed them to continue on and preserve so that He might send His Son through their descendants one day...*

■ *So the communion that we observe today, is in direct correlation with the Passover they had then.*

- Had not they not been obedient, the Jewish Remnant could've faded like the northern kingdom.
- 'And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.'
  - *The feast of unleavened bread that is mentioned here was to be celebrated as a part of the passover...*
    - Exodus 12:15-20, Leviticus 23:6-8, and Numbers 28:17 give the regulations of this.
  - *The fact that the Jews did keep the feast of unleavened bread, shows that they did not partially obey God, they fully obeyed Him because that would have come right after the Passover, anyway.*

■ *What's the difference between the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread?*

- Passover spoke mainly of God's mercy and of judgement passed over. (This goes all the way back to the first passover, when the Israelites were still in Egypt).

■ *The feast of unleavened Bread reminded the people of deliverance.*

- It was a reminder of the deliverance that God took them out of Egypt.
- It is odd that King Darius is referred to as 'King of Assyria'.
  - *Scholars have argued back and forth about this for a long time.*
    - It could be as simple as to designate him as a 'foreign ruler'.
    - *In the ancient world each new empire assimilated the last. The Persian kings were viewed as rulers of Babylon and since Babylon absorbed Assyria, they were technically rulers of Assyria as well.*
- While pagan domination over the Jews would eventually return (Nehemiah 9:36-37), God had

given Israel a small period of time where His favor was upon them.

- *Not just His favor, but His ability to change the hearts and minds of foreign rulers.*

- *So yes, these Jews were celebrating the passover and feasts as directed in the Torah, and that is significant, but they were also celebrating what God had done. Truly a miraculous work!*

- *For those of us in the room who are believers in Christ, I understand that we don't celebrate the passover and the different feasts of the Jews.*
  - And we shouldn't. Why? Because we are now in the New Covenant thanks to what Christ Jesus has done.
  - *But, in studying this section of the Old Covenant today in Ezra 6:19-22, we can see the importance of the Old Covenant and the role that it played in God's restoration plan.*
- *Because of the faithfulness of the OT followers of God, in this case the remnant there in Jerusalem in Ezra 6:19-22, we are able to experience the wonder of a relationship with Jesus! God saw them through as He will us.*
  - We don't participate in the passover because of what Jesus did. But, what did he do?

- Now let's flip over to the NT, 1st Corinthians 11, as the Apostle Paul recounted the last night that Jesus spent with His disciples before going to the Cross.

- **Preparing ourselves for the Lord's Supper.**

- **Self-Examination.**

- "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord." 1st Corinthians 11:27
- We must examine our own hearts and ask Jesus to Cleanse us.

- **Confess my Sins.**

- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1st John 1:9
- It's important that we confess our sins in prayer and ask that the Lord will forgive us.

- **He is faithful and just to forgive us.**

- **Recommitment.**

- "I appeal to you therefore, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” Romans 12:1

- Every day that we live on this earth following Jesus we just recommit ourselves to Him and away from sin.

#### ■ Restoring Relationships.

- “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24
- We should make things right with others before we partake in Communion.
  - If you have beef with someone, make it right.

#### ■ Let’s take a moment and have a time of invitation and personal reflection as we prepare our hearts to take part in communion.

- The **Bread** Represents the Body of Christ. That was crucified on Calvary’s Tree.

- The Body that was pierced for our transgressions.
- <sup>3</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “**This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.**”  
-1st Corinthians 11:23-24

#### ● The **Juice** Represents the **Blood** of Christ. The blood that was spilled out for you and for me.

- In the way we remember His body, we must also remember his blood that was spilled out for us!
- “In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26**  
For as often as you eat



this bread and drink the  
cup, you proclaim the  
Lord's death until he  
comes.”-1st Corinthians  
11:25-26