

Rebuilding Ezra 1 – 6

Rebuilding Introduction

- See *Time* article on 9/11. <http://time.com/world-trade-center/>
- Also see clip of Mayor Giuliani 's speech on the evening of 9/11/2001. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiA5NNjf7XQ>
- What about our personal Ground Zeroes that never make the national news?
 - Loss of a job
 - Bankruptcy
 - Death
 - Divorce
 - Serious Illness
- Add your own. These need rebuilding too.
- To paraphrase the mayor,
You're gonna rebuild.
And you're not only gonna rebuild.
You're gonna come outta this stronger than you were before.
- Jerusalem was destroyed.
- Leading citizens of Judah were taken into exile.
- A later generation had the opportunity to return.
- Their job was to rebuild – both their city and their nation.

God Is Behind Rebuilding Ezra 1

- 1:1 This verse reminds us that God had a plan.
- See Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-12.
- God was behind the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem.
- God is behind your rebuilding efforts too.
- Remember this when you begin to feel discouraged.

Start with the Altar Ezra 3

- The returned exiles didn't begin with the stock exchange.
- They didn't begin with the city hall.
- They didn't begin with the university.
- They didn't begin with the stadium.
- They began with the altar.
- Worship was their first priority.
- No matter what area of your life needs rebuilding ...
- No matter how big the project is going to be ...
- Add any other personal issue that might cause you to do something else.

- Start with the altar.
- Make worship your first priority.

Expect Opposition Ezra 4

- Israel's adversaries chose an interesting strategy.
- They began by trying to join the rebuilding efforts.
- Only when that failed did they resort to direct opposition.

- 4:3 we worship your God as you do
- This wasn't exactly true.
- In 2 Kings 17:33, we learned,
 - "... they feared the Lord but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away."

- In your personal rebuilding efforts expect opposition.
- There may be those who seem to want you to fail.
- There may be those who want to join you, but will ultimately get you off track.
- They don't really understand your Christian commitment.

- Sidetracks to right rebuilding:
 - After a failed business, a questionable business opportunity.
 - After a divorce, a temptation to immoral relationships.
 - After almost any tragedy, a desire to isolate to keep yourself emotionally safe.

Finish the Job Ezra 6:13-15

- The project took some 25 years from start to finish.
- It could have been done a lot sooner.
- Opposition and discouragement got in the way.
- But they eventually finished the job.

- In your personal project of rebuilding your life, you may have already faced delays and discouragement.
- You may be tempted to quit.
- Maybe you've quit already.
- Get back to work and finish the job.

You're gonna rebuild.
 And you're not only gonna rebuild.
 You're gonna come outta this stronger than you were before.

Worship and Rejoice Ezra 6:19-22

- The Passover was the perfect feast to celebrate.
- It reminded the Israelites that God saved them from bondage to give them a national life of their own.

- The exiles began rebuilding at the altar.
- They began with worship.

- When all is said and done they worship the Lord again.
- Christ our Passover lamb did for us what we could never do for ourselves by taking away our sin.
- Our entire life in Christ is based upon that.
- Worship is the place to start and the place to finish.
- It reminds us that rebuilding is not only God's will but God's work.
- We work with him – and he with us – all through the entire process.

Rebuilding Conclusions

- Personal Ground Zeroes:
 - Loss of a job
 - Bankruptcy
 - Death
 - Divorce
 - Serious Illness

Wherever tragedy has struck, rebuilding is probably needed.

You're gonna rebuild.

And you're not only gonna rebuild.

You're gonna come outta this stronger than you were before.

1. God Is Behind Rebuilding.
2. Start with the Altar.
3. Expect Opposition
4. Finish the Job
5. Worship and Rejoice

Check these out once again.

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