

Ezra 3:1 And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4 They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. 5 Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the Lord. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, although the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not been laid.

Ezra 6:16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. 17 And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses. 19 And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. 20 For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the Lord God of Israel. 22 And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the Lord made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Covenant Renewal Worship: **“Being a Living Sacrifice for the Triune God”**

I. Introductory Comments:

A. The importance of Covenant Renewal Worship

- a) This morning begins the second of three sermons discussing worship***
- b) A Royal Audience with the King of the Universe***
 - (1) The call to worship**
 - (2) Confession & Forgiveness**
- c) Being a “Living Sacrifice” for our Triune God***
 - (1) Consecration: God teaches us through His Word & prepares us for His service**
 - (2) We offer our prayers and gifts**
- d) Communing with and serving our Risen Savior***
 - (1) Communion: The Lord’s Table**
 - (2) The Great Commission**

II. A brief review:

A. Worship is important

- 1. Before any work is done, worship is restored**
- 2. After the temple is completed the Passover is celebrated.**
- 3. In the New Jerusalem worship is celebrated on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week**

B. Why do we gather at church on Sunday? For Worship where God renews His Covenant

- 1. Worksheet provided for further study**
- 2. Five basic components – Covenantally**
 - a) God takes hold: We are called to worship**
 - b) God separates and makes something new: Confession & forgiveness**
 - c) God speaks: Consecrated by God's Word**
 - d) God grants ritual signs & seals: Communion**
 - e) God arranges for the future: Blessing & Great Commission**
- 3. Chart illustrates how this is pictured in various covenants, sacrifices, the Exodus & Creation: Most importantly, in the restoration we are studying**
 - a) Gathered as one man at Jerusalem [verse 3:1]**
 - b) Sin offering of 12 goats for 12 tribes [6:17]**
 - c) Burnt or ascension offerings abound!**
 - d) Passover celebrated [verses 6:19 & 20]**
 - e) Strengthened for work to be done [verse 6:22]**

4. **Some or all elements seen in almost all of Church history and every type of church**
5. **A covenantal understanding gives us the proper balance of these important elements**
 - a) **Evangelism?**
 - b) **Education?**
 - c) **Experience?**
 - d) **Exultation?**
6. **We should and must learn to worship well:**
 - a) **Learning the dance**
 - b) **Heartfelt but not spontaneous**
 - c) **Simple but profound**

C. Liturgy or order of worship is the “recipe” for worship

1. **Often a criticism**
2. **What is wrong with using a recipe?**
 - a) **Our ladies seem to effortlessly present a feast.**
 - b) **Would we want young people with no experience working without a recipe?**

III. The Call to Worship

1. **God acts and we respond**
 - a) **God calls together His particular people**
 - b) **God is calling us: We are NOT invoking His presence**
 - c) **This IS the Lord’s Day**
2. **Prompt and active participation is important**

IV. Confession & forgiveness

A. Why do we confess our sins?

1. **We are commanded to confess** I John 8-10; Psalm 51; Romans 7
2. **Old Testament sacrifices were a reminder**
 - a) **Ezra: morning & evening sacrifices – twelve goats**

B. We must know that we are forgiven: John 20:30

1. **The minister has no power to forgive sin, but is called upon to declare the truth of the Gospel.**
 - a) **Encourages even mature Christians**
 - b) **Teaches our young children**
 - c) **Witnesses to those who do not believe**

C. Preaches the Gospel to all those attending weekly

1. **I Corinthians 14:24,25 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.**
2. **Moderns often say sin makes non-believers uncomfortable: This is proper not wrong: “The covenant renewal service is for the people of God, not unbelievers. If unbelievers are present, let them observe humble Christians confessing their faults and receiving forgiveness from God their Father.”
Jeff Meyers**

D. When we know that we stand before our Holy Triune God in the righteousness of our Savior Jesus

Christ, we give thanks in song and prepare to offer ourselves as living sacrifices!

V. Consecration: Being prepared by and instructed from God's Word to be His living sacrifices

A. Consecration is where we are instructed and prepared for service

1. Not simply the sermon
2. The entire covenant renewal worship service is saturated with the Word of God
3. Complete service is critical so the Spirit can use the Word to properly prepare us for service to God
 - a) Romans 12:1,2 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
4. The other parts of the order of worship are NOT just filler. Good example with an ascension offering:
 - a) II Chronicles 29:27-30 Then [King] Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. 28 So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. 29 And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. ... 31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord."

***B. We are not simply observers, put participants.
All ages are involved: Our children are in the Covenant***

1. Responsive readings
2. Psalms & Hymns
3. Lord's Prayer and our tithes & offerings
4. Those AMENS
5. Consecrated and prepared to be disciples!

***C. As forgiven sinners, the Word of God or the Law
now prepares us and instructs us: Commonly known
as the 3rd use of God's Law***

1. God's Law Word restrains sin
2. God's Law Word convicts us of our sin
3. God's Law Word instructs us in the way of
righteousness: Psalm 119!

***D. The sermon is the Word of God preached! Not just
a lecture or a speech with great rhetoric and oratory.***

***E. Again, we have been prepared to come into the
presence of our Holy God***

1. Psalm 24:3-6 Who may ascend into the hill of the
Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who
has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted
up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He
shall receive blessing from the Lord, And
righteousness from the God of his salvation.

F. The sacrificial picture is the Word of God used as a powerful tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit

1. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart
2. Should help us read those sacrificial accounts describing instruments and procedures with new eyes.

G. The pastor or teaching elder has a solemn responsibility in his calling: The Pastoral Epistles:

1. II Timothy 2: 14,15 14 Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
2. II Timothy 4:1-5 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- a) To faithfully preach the Word is not always the same as being “a great preacher.”

H. Ministry in the Word is a necessary priority

1. Acts 6:2-4 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy

Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

a) Note that it was Stephen who gave the great sermon to the Jewish leaders and was martyred.

I. Importance of Consecration: Paul gives two POWERFUL examples... The body and the bride

1. Ephesians 4:11-16 1 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

a) Diagramming this sentence would be a great home-school project!

2. Ephesians 5:25-33 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who

loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

a) Husbands & wives have a sobering responsibility as they live out their marriages in front of our covenant children and world around us!

VI. The Tribute Offering: Bringing our gifts to God

A. Tithes & offerings: The grain offering or Tribute offering placed on top of the ascension offering.

B. We include the promise to tithe in our membership covenant because...it is Biblical!

1. **Genesis 14:18-20** Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

2. **Lev. 27:30** And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord.

3. **II Chronicles 31: 4** Moreover [King Hezekiah] commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites,

that they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord. 5 As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. 6 And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the Lord their God they laid in heaps.

4. Nehemiah 10:38 [more to follow]

And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse.

5. Malachi 3: 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

6. Matthew 23: 23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

C. Those who argue that we are under “Grace” and not “Law” should give even more...cheerfully!

VII. Our prayers ascend before God’s throne

A. More will be said as we study Nehemiah

B. Our prayers ascend before the throne of God

1. Revelation 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

2. Revelation 8:3,4 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

VIII. In closing, proper worship involves the individual and the body of Christ

A. This truth is rooted in the very nature of the Triune God who we worship

1. As was stressed in the last message, our worship is and must be Trinitarian

a) What we believe impacts how we worship

(1) In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

(2) *Trinitarian worship is God moving to humanity – from the Father through the Son by the Spirit to redeem man and then humanity to God -- by the Spirit through the Son to the Father.*

B. God gives eternal meaning to both the individual and the society or the body: The one and the many

1. Pictured beautifully in Psalm 131: A Song of Ascents. Of David. Lord, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me. 2 Surely

I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the Lord From this time forth and forever.

2. After Covenant Renewal Worship we should be “calmed & quieted” as individuals and as a body of believers.

3.

C. Again, let us reflect on Paul's words to the Church at Colossi" We should see our need for Covenant Renewal Worship to properly understand and more importantly to live the truth of these verses.

1. "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:12-17