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KING OF KINGS

The Edict of King Cyrus

1 In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom: 2

“This is what King Cyrus of Persia says, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

EZRA 1:1-2 NLT

³ Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you!”

EZRA 1:3 NLT

Prophetic Bundle of Hope Activated!

“But when this happens, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, I will honor you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant. I will make you like a signet ring on my finger, says the Lord, for I have chosen you. I, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, have spoken!”

HAGGAI 2:23 NLT

(preaching during the time of Zerubbabel)

**See also Zechariah 6:11-13, Jeremiah 33:15 for
Messiah as “Branch” (of King David’s line)*

Return of Israelites

+

Rebuilt Temple

+

King David's Line

=

**Messiah rules over the nations from
Jerusalem right now!**

The Identity Crisis and Hostile Context of the Exiles

² Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. ³ They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in trouble and great disgrace...”

Building the Altar

1 In early autumn, when the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled in Jerusalem with a unified purpose. 2 Then Jeshua son of Jehozadak joined his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his family in rebuilding the altar of the God of Israel. They wanted to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, as instructed in the law of Moses, the man of God.

EZRA 3:1-2 NLT

³ Even though the people were afraid of the local residents, they rebuilt the altar at its old site. Then they began to sacrifice burn offerings on the altar to the Lord each morning and evening. ⁴ They celebrated the Festival of Shelters as prescribed in the Law, sacrificing the number of burnt offerings specified for each day of the festival.

EZRA 3:3-4 NLT

**See Nehemiah 8:2 “unified purpose” to hear the Law*

How to Ground Our Identity in the King

By Sharing the Work based on Same Purpose &
Tradition (Ezra 3:1-4)

Building the Temple Foundation

¹⁰ When the builders completed the foundation of the Lord's Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the Lord, just as King David prescribed. ¹¹ With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: "He is so good! His faithful love for Israel endures forever!" Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the Lord because the foundation of the Lord's Temple had been laid.

EZRA 3:10-11 NLT

¹² But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. ¹³ The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.

Renewing the Covenant-Mourning

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting [the law] for the people said to them, “Don’t mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God.” For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Renewing the Covenant-Celebrating

¹⁰ And Nehemiah continued, “Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength! ¹¹ And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, “Hush! Don’t weep! For this is a sacred day.” ¹² So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God’s words and understood them.

NEHEMIAH 8:10-12 NLT

We Are His Joy!

¹⁶ On that day the announcement to Jerusalem will be, “Cheer up, Zion! Don’t be afraid! ¹⁷ The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”

How to Ground Our Identity in the King

By Sharing the Work based on Same Purpose & Tradition (Ezra 3:1-4)

By Both Mourning and Celebrating Together (Ezra 3:10-13/Nehemiah 8:10-12)

The Words of the Law

¹ All the people assembled with a unified purpose at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had given Israel to obey. ² So on October 8 Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included men and women and all the children old enough to understand. ³ He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All of the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-3 NLT

⁴ Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. To his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. To his left stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

NEHEMIAH 8:4 NLT

The Words of the Law

⁵ Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet. ⁶ Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, “Amen, Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁷ The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherbiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places.

NEHEMIAH 8:5-7 NLT

8 They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage...

9 ...the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

12 [people went to] celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them.

How to Ground Our Identity in the King

By Sharing the Work based on Same Purpose & Tradition (Ezra 3:1-4)

By Both Mourning and Celebrating Together (Ezra 3:10-13/Nehemiah 8:10-12)

By Reverencing God's Word Together (Nehemiah 8:1-8, 9b, 12)

Prophetic Bundle of Hope Fulfilled?

- Temple Neglected (Neh 13:10-14)
- Sabbath Defiled (Neh 13:15-22)
- Mixed Marriages with those Practicing Pagan Religions (Neh 13:23-31)

The Heart of the Problem is the Problem of the Heart!

God promises he would “circumcise their hearts” so that they would love Him with their whole heart. (Deut. 30:6,10)

God promises he would gather them from among the nations and would replace their stone hard stubborn hearts with a tender responsive heart (Ezekiel 36:26-28)

God promises he would gather them and lead them back to Israel and make a new covenant with them which would be a covenant with a written law on their heart. (Jer. 33:31-35)

