

5. Again, in light of Jer 33:6-11, what encouragement does this bring to families who fail, fall or struggle with sin among it's members?

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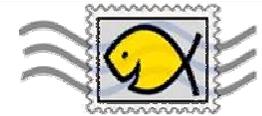
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 Can the people of God live through their fearful and fragile days? Yes, by faithfully running with their fears to worship the Saviour.

Though God has disciplined, He has not dashed all hope. His people will yet see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Faithfulness is about contentment, Content to run to God in the day of fear, content to trust God in our fragility and content especially when God prefers to work in plain, ordinary, non-sensational ways to bring about the joy of His people.



## EZRA CHAPTER 3



# BUILD!

Faithful, Fearful, Fragile - yet Building Together.

**BUILD!**

Ezra Chapter 3

**THE CIRCUMSTANCES - EZRA 3:1-6**

The focus here is on the altar not the temple itself (note Ezra 3:2). Observe how the text describes Israel and, by implication, us.

The Are Fearful (3:1-3)

1. What motivates their altar sacrifices?

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They are Faithful (3:2,4)

2. What is the connection between fear and faith in these verses? How can these two be complimentary and not contradictory?

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They are Fragile (3:4-6)

Note the reference to observing the “Feast of Tabernacles.” The “seventh month” in verse 1 indicates the time for this festival.

The Feast of Tabernacles was meant to remind Israel of their wilderness experience. During this week they were to live in lean-to’s or huts (“booths”), which conjured up so vividly their fragile existence in the wilderness years.

It was as if God were saying to Israel, “That’s always the situation of My people. Don’t ever forget that your life hangs by a thread.”

The Feast of Tabernacles, or “Wilderness-Reminder Week,” was The Lord’s annual reminder that our lives can often be bleak, uncertain, and insecure, and that He is our only Sustainer.

*(Davis, Dr R. IIM Magazine, Volume 2, Number 44, October 30 to November 5, 2000)*

**RESTORATION - EZRA 3:7-12**

3. In light of Jer 33:6-11 what are the likely reasons for the joy?

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4. What are the likely reasons for the grief?

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**DISAPPOINTMENT - EZRA 3:12-13**

**Discuss** the caution might we heed regarding our grieving for “the good old days.”

Nostalgia can kill a church. We can also have problems if a church does not meet our expectations in its ministry or fellowship.

In our culture of hyped-expectations, we tend to think that what is low-key, ordinary, plain, simple and quiet must be rather worthless and this attitude can infect God’s people.

It is possible to be faithful even when the thundering voice of God isn’t brandishing fire from heaven.

We can still engage in family worship, sincere public worship, loving prayer, consistent Christian living in school or workplace.

Don’t despise the “day of small things” (Zech. 4:10). What matters is not whether the Temple is grand in the sight of man, but whether she is genuine.

**The question is not “Is it Jazzy here?” but “Is Jesus here?”**