

Return From The Diaspora

Ezra 3:12-13 ¹²*But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, ¹³so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.*

For seventy years the Jewish people were exiled from their land. They had been carried off to Babylon and forced to stay there. Later on, Babylon was conquered by Cyrus of Persia. God spoke to Cyrus, a pagan, concerning the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, which fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Cyrus proclaimed the Jewish people were to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of Solomon, which had been destroyed. In addition, he commanded his subjects to give the Jews gold, silver, livestock and a freewill offering for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus returned items plundered from the original temple.

When the foundation of the new temple was laid, there was a mixture of emotion. **The people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.**

The elderly, who were over seventy years old, remembered the glory of Solomon's temple as well as being overcome with finally returning home. Heartfelt weeping exploded from their innermost being. Simultaneously, the younger generation who had grown up in Babylon experienced great joy at the laying of the temple's foundation and the anticipation of a new life.

The intermingling of the sounds covered every gamut of emotion. Even those who were distant from the construction site heard and wondered at the diverse sound of mourning intermixed with rejoicing.

For seventy years, the Jews were in the Diaspora being strangers in a strange land unable to worship God in His temple.

Do you feel that way?

Are you estranged from the Lord?

Are you held captive not by a foreign people but by addiction, false teaching or spiritual laziness?

Do you want to come home again?

Do you want to experience God's presence?

Did you have a strong walk with the Lord, at one time, but now you cannot even find the pathway?

Does your spiritual life need to be reinvigorated?

The Jewish people used cedar logs for building materials. Your building materials could consist of:

- ❖ Reading the Bible on a daily basis
- ❖ Claiming Bible promises for your life and those you care for
- ❖ Thanking God for choosing you as His child
- ❖ Shifting your focus from yourself to others
- ❖ Singing praises to God
- ❖ Associating with people who love God
- ❖ Removing things from your life that pull you away from God
- ❖ Breaking unhealthy relationships

You can pray these things into your life.

Dear Father,

I have been separate from You for a long time. My heart hurts missing our past relationship. I renounce _____ and everything that divides me from You. I give You permission to remove these harmful things, whether they are relationships, habits and/or addictions, from my life.

I ask You to teach me healthy ways to live my life that will restore me to Yourself. Show me anything else in my life You find unholy and unhealthy. I place myself in Your hands. I desire to obey You and follow You all the days of my life.

Help me experience once again the joy of knowing and walking with You. Let my life be like the shouting of the Jewish people heard at a great distance. Let others wonder at the change in my life.

I am so grateful to You, my Father and my King, that You hear my prayer. I am expecting a new beginning, a return from my Diaspora.

In the name of Your son, Yeshua (Jesus) I pray,

Amen