

June 15, 1924
Ezra 3:8-13

8. Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem, and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Jehovah.

9. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel.

11. And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.

12. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy.

13. So 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 noise was heard afar off.

It is stated in the text of our lesson today that the incidents related occurred in the second year and in the second month of the coming of the children of Israel to the house of God at Jerusalem, after their captivity. What does this symbolize?

The occurrence of the incidents here related symbolizes the second movement of the mind, which is the expression of the idea. The house of God is the spiritual body idea; Jerusalem is the local manifestation.

The children of Israel had been held in captivity. Explain.

The captivity of the children of Israel and their years of bondage in Babylon represent man's consciousness falling away from spiritual standards into the confusion of material consciousness.

When one returns to spiritual standards of thought and begins to reconstruct his consciousness, what are the dominating religious ideas that enter into the work?

The directive egos of mind and body, represented by the priests and the Levites, direct the thoughts.

According to verse 10, the workmen were accompanied in their work by musical selections, rendered by the priests and the Levites. Explain.

The spiritual harmonies within the soul come forth when one realizes that the great source of all existence allows freedom of expression. Power of expression is innate and flows out through the affectional nature, love, represented by David.

What effect do praising and blessing and rejoicing in the heart have upon the constructive forces working in the body?

Christian metaphysicians find that the atomic activity constantly at work in the construction of the body is intensified by praise and joy, and that grief retards this activity.

To what extent should we follow the children of Israel in praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, saying: "For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel"?

Real Christians do, and should always in thoughts and songs, praise the Good for its loving-kindness, because by so doing they establish a thought consciousness of which the joy of the Lord is the foundation. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

What is the meaning of the statement in verse 12, that part of the people "wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy"?

All the griefs of the past, as well as all the joys of the past, are stored up in the subconscious mind. In the regeneration, thought mixtures of grief and joy are brought to consciousness—the grief to be wiped out, and the joy to be made enduring.

October 22, 1905
Ezra 3:10-13

10. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel.

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The return of the children of Israel, and the rebuilding of the temple, is a symbolical description of what occurs in the consciousness of one who has been mentally confused for a season and has returned to normal conditions. The priests are the thoughts that relate us to spiritual things, and the builders the thoughts that relate us to material things. In order to build harmoniously we must set our thoughts to work along all lines — this includes both the spiritual and material.

The one who would construct an harmonious consciousness, which includes mind and body, must see to it that joy has its place in his spiritual thoughts. Whenever the name David appears, we may know that some phase of the love or emotional nature is involved. The body is supplied with spiritual energies through the heart-centre, or *solar-plexus*, and the presiding genius of this function is David, or Love.

Singing, praising and giving thanks are known to the spiritually-minded as the great building impulses of the man. When we rejoice in spirit, and our hearts are filled with gratitude, and we express ourselves in thanksgiving to the Author of our being, there goes to every part of mentality and body thrills and waves of harmonious energy. These thrills and waves are the "trumpets" and "cymbals" in the hands of the priests and Levites.

The priests and Levites and ancient ones who "wept with a loud voice," are regrets. See to it that the shouts of joy over present achievements drown these out.

UNITY magazine.

August 6, 1922
Ezra 3:10-13

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What, in man's consciousness, is represented by the return of the children of Israel and the rebuilding of the temple?

All this represents the return to normal conditions in the mind and in the body of one who has been in a state of confusion.

What do the priests represent?

The priests represent the thoughts that relate us to spiritual things.

What do the builders represent?

The builders represent thoughts that relate us to material things.

What do we learn from the activity of the priests and the builders?

We learn that in order to build harmoniously, we must set our thoughts to work along all lines, and allow our thoughts to express in action.

What is symbolized by the trumpets, the cymbals, and the singing and praising of Jehovah?

This means that one who would construct an harmonious consciousness, which includes mind and body, must see to it that joy is an accompaniment of all his thoughts and acts.

When we rejoice in gratitude, and sing songs of praise and thanksgiving, how is the body affected?

Thrills and waves of harmonious energy are sent over the nerves to every part of the body, and all discords and congestions are harmonized, and a free-flowing energy is established.

August 25, 1929
Ezra 3:10-13

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The setting of today's lesson presents the children of Israel as they were just coming out of captivity. What does this mean in individual consciousness?

In individual consciousness the captivity of the children of Israel and their years of bondage in Babylon represent the falling away of man's consciousness from spiritual standards into the confusion of material consciousness. The Israelites' coming out of captivity means that man's spiritual thoughts have gained the supremacy, and that his bondage to sense is falling away.

When man returns to spiritual standards of thought and begins to reconstruct his consciousness, what are the dominating religious ideas that enter into the work?

The dominating religious ideas that enter into the work of reconstructing consciousness are man's highest religious ideas. The directive egos of mind and body, the priests and the Levites, assume exclusive power and carry on the work.

According to verse 10, the workmen were accompanied in their work by musical selections, rendered by the priests and the Levites. Explain.

When one realizes that the great Source of all existence allows freedom of expression, the spiritual harmonies within one's soul come forth singing praises to the Creator. Power of expression is innate and flows out through the affectional nature, love, represented by David.

What effect do praising and blessing and rejoicing in the heart have upon the constructive forces working in the body?

Christian metaphysicians find that the cellular activity constantly at work in the construction of the body is intensified by praise and joy, and that grief retards this activity.

To what extent should we follow the children of Israel in praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, saying, "For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel"?

Real Christians do, and should always in thought and song, praise God the good for His loving-kindness, because by so doing they establish a thought consciousness of which the joy of the Lord is the foundation. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

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May 23, 1948
Ezra 3:10-13

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What does joy do for us?

It restores normal poise and balance in us, no matter what trials or hard experiences we may have to meet. Joy is a part of all constructive living and thinking.

Should we thank God before or after we complete an undertaking?

We should thank God before we begin an undertaking, while we are working at it, and after we complete it. Thanksgiving should be the first act.

Will a work that is built without acknowledgment of God's presence or an invocation of His blessing endure?

It may, but it is more enduring when God is acknowledged and His blessing invoked.

How can persons everywhere contribute to the success of the United Nations?

By offering their prayers for its success and by dedicating it in thought and prayer to the accomplishing of peace among the nations of the world.

What other gains result from constructive prayer for world peace?

Individual peace of mind and freedom from the doubt, fear, and anxiety that hinder us in our present efforts to do our daily work well.

Have tears and other expressions of grief a rightful place in the work of establishing peace and harmony?

No. Negative expressions of grief tend to promote confusion and arrest progress in the work of establishing peace.