

03 – Ezra 3:1-6 – First things first**How seriously do we take the worship of God?**

... not asking what we do to worship God but I am asking about our heart desire to worship God.

The right timing

... Leviticus 23 - the seventh month of the year for God's people is a month filled with VERY important religious festivals.

... the seventh month has about 23 days directly focussed on festivals celebrating YHWH's rescue and redemption of his people.

A concern for right worship

v 1 ... they 'gathered as one'

v 1-6 ... They are very concerned to get their worship of YHWH right.

... it was false worship that had ended them up in exile... and they did not want to repeat that disaster.

Sacrifice before temple building

v 6... sacrifices were all done BEFORE the temple had even been started

... sacrifices came first this time for a few reasons.

Firstly, ... there was no right sacrificial worship that would have been happening in the tabernacle as the temple was being rebuilt.

Secondly, the altar, where sacrifices were made, is NOT in the temple but it is in the temple courts.

Worship in face of (potential) opposition

v 3 ... they offered sacrifices despite the fear of the people around them

... opposition does not stop them in their desire to worship God according to his written word.

Why not the day of atonement?

... day of atonement is NOT mentioned as being celebrated because it was not celebrated at this time.

... because it could NOT be properly celebrated without the ark of the covenant and without the temple being built and the holy of holies existing.

See Lev 16

For us today**1) No longer connected to the temple.**

... the right worship of God today is NOT connected to a temple in Jerusalem or to this building

2) Right worship still matters greatly.

... what does the right worship of YHWH look like for us today?

Firstly, Worship involves us.

Hebrews 10:24-25. *And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Secondly, Worship is always a response to God's mercy.

Romans 12:1-2, *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will”*

Thirdly, we worship God by serving God (not our worldly values).

v 2 we do not worship God well if we live like everyone else around us... conforming to the pattern of our world.

Finally, we worship God as we are transformed to reflect his will.

3) Potential opposition in right worship