

E. Erection of the Altar

The Jews built the altar of burnt offering in the seventh month of the first year they returned to Jerusalem, i.e. the month Tishri (part of September and October) in 536 B.C. (3:1-3).

Note: After the altar of burnt offering was built, the Jews kept the feast of tabernacles (3:4) and afterward, resumed the customary burnt offerings.

1. Daily -morning and evening;
2. At the new moon
3. on all "set feasts," and
4. on the occasion of freewill offerings (3:5,6a) They did this even though the temple had not yet been built (3:6b)

F. Recruitment of workers for the rebuilding of the temple

Masons and carpenters were hired to rebuild the temple and workmen from Tyre and Sidon were paid with food, drink, and oil to cut down cedar-trees on the mountain of Lebanon, convey the trunks of those trees to the nearest coast, and then float them in enormous rafts to Joppa which was the nearest seaport to Jerusalem. The trunks of those trees were then transported from Joppa to Jerusalem where they were used for the rebuilding of the temple (3:7)

G. Laying of the Foundation of the temple

The foundation of the temple was laid in the second month of the second year of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem i.e. in the month Iyar (part of April and May) in the year 535 B.C. (3:8).

Note: The work of laying the foundation of the temple was superintended by the Levites who were appointed for that purpose (4:8b,9)

H. Celebration because of the completion of the foundation of the temple

When the foundation of the temple was completed there was a celebration. The priests with their priestly garments and trumpets and the Levites (descendants of Asaph) with their cymbals were put in the positions that David had commanded they should occupy. Together they sang and played their musical instruments, and praised and gave thanks to the Lord. The people also praised the Lord with a great shout because the foundation of the temple had been laid, (3:10,11). However, there were some old timers present - priests, levites and heads of families - who had seen Solomon's temple and who wept because they knew the temple they were building would not be anything like Solomon's temple. The sounds of these two groups mingled together so that, at a distance, one could not be distinguished from the other (3:12,13).