

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

Volume 6

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Number 2

Rise Up and Build

The seventy years of exile which God had brought upon His people in punishment for their sins was drawing to a close. Jerusalem lay in overgrown ruins, and the land had received rest from the unfaithfulness of the Jews. Now it was time for the nation of God's people to be restored. As we can read in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, this restoration took place in three major stages.

Restoring Worship

The first major stage of the restoration of Israel began in 539 BC when the Persian king, Cyrus acting under the direction of the LORD God of heaven, sent the Jews home to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The major leaders of God's people at this time were Zerubbabel, their governor, and Joshua the High Priest. They led a group of over 42,000 of God's people on a return journey to the land of promise (Ezra 2:64). As soon as they return, they began observing the feasts and sacrifices

of Moses' law. With the prompting and encouragement of God's prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was begun (Ezra 3:11-13), and after a lengthy delay (Ezra 4), finally finished (Ezra 5-6). God's people could fully worship Him again!

Restoring the Law

The second major component of the restoration of Israel took place under the leadership of Ezra, the scribe. He led another large group of Jews back to the Promised Land (Ezra 7-8). When he got there, he discovered that the people had become lax in their observance of God's commands. He took bold and direct action to restore the knowledge and observance of God's law among the surviving remnant of God's people. This included calling them to repentance when it was discovered they had become involved in unlawful foreign marriages (Ezra 9-10), and teaching them God's law so that they could renew their covenant

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Can You Be Religious AND Tolerant?

Many people in our society are quick to point out how Bible-believing Christians are “intolerant”. If you dare present how God plainly condemns homosexuality - then you are “intolerant”. If you speak God’s truth with regard to the facts concerning abortion, you again are labeled as “intolerant”. So the question begs, “Can I be religious - and be tolerant?” I would suggest that –yes, we can. However, that will depend on what definition of the word “tolerant” you use. You see, many people will argue that the “tolerance” they speak of is merely patience and understanding... but is that really their motive?

During the Captivity, we read of the young man Daniel who was hand-picked for government service. Daniel was one “in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.” (Daniel 1:4-

5) Although Daniel was offered the best to eat and drink, he did not partake because he “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” (Daniel 1:8) Daniel was patient and respectful in his demeanor, but would not violate his conscience by going against the laws of God.

Within the Early church, we see patience exhibited by both Peter and John, as they were taken into custody by the Sadducees because “they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2). They marveled at them, “realizing that they had been with Jesus, and seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.” (Acts 4:14) “And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:18-20) Facing later opposition against speaking the truth, Cont. on Page 3 ►

Rise Up and Build - from Page 1 ► Sabbath day and other days of the week (Neh. 13:15-22), and between what was right and wrong (Neh. 5:1-13).

Restoring the Walls

The third major stage of restoration was led by a man named Nehemiah. As a cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes, he asked for and received permission to go lead the rebuilding of the physical walls of Jerusalem. When he arrived, his prayerful and dynamic leadership resulted in the walls being completely rebuilt in just fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15). God's people had physical security provided in a way that made it clear that God was their true protection. As their governor for the next twelve years, Nehemiah made sure that more walls were built in the hearts, minds and lives of the people, between themselves and the pagan people of the land (Neh. 13:1-9, 23-31), between the

In many lives, homes, communities and nations throughout the world today, restoration is desperately needed. Wherever true restoration occurs, it involves the same three components that were manifest in the great restoration of the Old Testament. Worship must be restored according to the pattern of God's word. The law of Christ, rather than of Moses, must be proclaimed and observed, and walls must be built and defended in the lives of God's people that mark the boundaries of God's heavenly city. Are you taking part in the great restoration? As the men of Jerusalem said to Nehemiah, "Let us rise up and build!" (Neh. 2:18)

◀Brent Paschall▶

Religious and Tolerant- from Page 2 ►

"Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

You might be wondering how these examples exhibit tolerance. These are actually examples that indeed show patience. Daniel and Peter weren't disrespectful in their demeanor... but they were understanding and patient while standing firm in their convictions. You see, there is a big difference in the

tolerance that some demand... and acceptance! People today aren't asking you to be merely patient. No – they want your approval for their behavior. Asking me to be patient with a homosexual or pro-choice individual is one thing – but demanding acceptance and approval is quite another. With regard to how we speak upon these matters, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

◀Ian Rice▶

FEBRUARY 2012 DUTY ROSTER

Weekday	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED
Date	2/1	2/5	2/8	2/12	2/15	2/19	2/22	2/26	2/29
Opening Prayer		Tim P.		Ed M.		Bill A.		John M.	
Morning Message		Eric B.		Jimmy F.		Leo R.		Don H.	
Announcements	John M.	Larry P.	Ed M.	Leo R.	Alan M.	Don H.	Leo R.	Matt M.	Jimmy F.
Leading Songs	Eric B.	Bill A.	Larry P.	Matt M.	David T.	Randy F.	Matt M.	Brad F.	John M.
First Prayer	Jonathan L.	David T.	Brad F.	Alan M.	Randy F.	Jerry D.	Jonathan L.	Leo R.	Kevin H.
Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution		Jimmy F.		David T.		Alan M.		Randy F.	
Assist		Jeremy P.		James M.		Kevin H.		Eric B.	
Assist		James M.		Bill A.		Ed M.		Jonathan L.	
Assist		Jerry D.		Randy F.		Larry P.		Jeremy P.	
Read Scripture		Alan M.		Jeremy P.		David T.		Tim P.	
Preaching		Brent P.		Randy F.		Brent P.		Brent P.	
Wed. Exhortation	Larry P.		Matt M.		John M.		Jimmy F.		Leo R.
Closing Prayer	Tim P.	Ed M.	Jonathan L.	Kevin H.	James M.	Jimmy F.	Eric B.	Alan M.	Brad F.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message

10:00 - Bible classes for all ages

11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

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