

Ezra 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

Analysis

Jeshua (Hebrew Yeshua, meaning 'Yahweh saves') served as high priest, while Zerubbabel (grandson of King Jehoiachin) provided political leadership as Davidic heir. Their partnership represents the biblical pattern of priestly and kingly offices working together—a foreshadowing of Christ who unites both roles. The phrase 'builded the altar' precedes temple reconstruction, showing proper priorities: worship and sacrifice before architectural accomplishment. The altar's construction 'according to the law of Moses' demonstrates commitment to biblical authority despite changed circumstances. They didn't innovate or adapt worship to post-exilic realities but submitted to divinely revealed patterns. This rebuilt altar stood on the original site, providing continuity with pre-exilic worship and validating the restoration's legitimacy.

Historical Context

Jeshua ben Jozadak descended from Zadok's priestly line, maintaining the Aaronic priesthood's continuity through exile. His father Jozadak had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (1 Chronicles 6:15). Zerubbabel ('seed of Babylon') bore a Babylonian name yet remained committed to Jerusalem's restoration. As governor appointed by Persia and Davidic descendant, he embodied the tension between

political subjugation and messianic hope. The altar's reconstruction required locating the original site where Abraham had offered Isaac and where Solomon's temple altar had stood. This precise positioning maintained geographical and theological continuity with God's prior revelation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the partnership between priest (Jeshua) and governor (Zerubbabel) prefigure Christ's dual role as priest and king?
2. What does building the altar before the temple teach about the primacy of worship and sacrifice in spiritual restoration?
3. How can believers balance respect for historical worship patterns with avoiding legalistic attachment to forms that lack biblical mandate?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּקֹם	יֵשׁוּעַ	בֶּן	יֹאצָדֶק	וְאָחָיו	הַכֹּהֲנִים
Then stood up	Jeshua	the son	of Jozadak	and his brethren	the priests
H6965	H3442	H1121	H3136	H251	H3548
וַיִּבְנֶה	בֶּן	שְׁאֲלִיֵּאל	וְאָחָיו	וַיִּבְנֶה	אֶת
and Zerubbabel	the son	of Shealtiel	and his brethren	and builded	
H2216	H1121	H7597	H251	H1129	H853
עַל	וְעַל	לְהִקְדִּים	וְעַל	עַל	וְעַל
the altar	of God	of Israel	to offer		burnt offerings
H4196	H430	H3478	H5927	H5921	H5930
כַּכֵּן	כַּכֵּן	כַּכֵּן	כַּכֵּן	כַּכֵּן	כַּכֵּן
thereon as it is written	in the law	of Moses	the man	of God	
H3789	H8451	H4872	H376	H430	

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 3:17 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Jeconiah; Assir, Salathiel his son,

Luke 3:27 (Parallel theme): Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Ezra 2:2 (References Israel): Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

Haggai 1:1 (Word): In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,