

# CHRISTMAS

FROM **SCRATCH**

## SHARE

Do you enjoy new things? Or do you prefer to keep things the same? Think about food, clothing, hobbies, etc.

## SEEK

### Being Christmas People, from Scratch

In Ezra 3.10-13, Levites from age twenty and above began overseeing the rebuilding of the temple. After the laying of the foundation, there were great shouts of joy. The trumpets were sounded, cymbals were ringing, and people put on their “Sunday best.” But those who had been around to see the original temple in all its splendor wept at the sight of the new foundation. Although one could hear the sounds of the party from miles away, it was hard to distinguish if these were sounds of joy or sorrow.

What a comparison for the Church today! Every congregation encounters a similar crossroads where the past must be honored while looking forward to the future. Sometimes there is heartbreak, mistrust, and accusations. People are torn apart by superiority and inferiority complexes, and young and old separate into camps instead of uniting in community.

Jesus' appearing brought great hope for the future along with great upheaval. When we consider Old Testament Jews colluding with New Testament Jewish and Gentile Christians in Christ, one would think the two would never come together! However, believers today read both Testaments, appreciating the past, present, and future. A community shaped by Christmas must therefore work through the disruptions of past, present, and future, focusing on the unity that the Church has always striven for because of Christ's uniting example.

# SEE

BE A COMMUNITY SHAPED BY CHRISTMAS

**TAKE A LOOK AT EZRA 3.10-13. WHY WERE SOME PEOPLE CELEBRATING AT THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW TEMPLE, AND WHY WERE OTHERS CRYING?**

**DOES THE CHURCH TODAY FACE CELEBRATIONS AND SADNESS OVER A SINGLE SITUATION?**

**IS THERE A WAY TO HEAR AND APPRECIATE BOTH THE CELEBRATIONS AND TEARS OF A SINGLE SITUATION IN THE CHURCH? WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO MOVE FORWARD WHEN SOME ARE HAPPY ABOUT A SITUATION IN THE CHURCH AND OTHERS ARE SAD?**

**IS THE ILLUSTRATION OF BELIEVERS READING BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS TOGETHER A GOOD EXAMPLE OF UNITY AND APPRECIATION OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE? WHEN YOU REFLECT ON JESUS' LIFE, WHAT DID HE DO TO BOTH AFFIRM AND CHALLENGE THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE?**

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another