



# Worship Before Walls

Ezra 3, Haggai 2

*It seems like everyone has a plan right now. But, as much as ever, we are reminded that “The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps” (Prov 16:9). The Lord’s plan in times like these has been to invite people to return to Him and to renew their hearts! This summer, with Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther as our guides, and with Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi also calling out to us, we are trusting the Lord for a new season of spiritual renewal, even during such a time as this!*

- **Worship before Walls**

*Because of the fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord... -Ezra 3:3*

This summer, how can you prioritize worship in your heart and home?

- **Greater not Lesser**

*...Be strong all you people of the land... and work. For I am with you, declares the Lord Almighty... And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear... The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house... -Haggai 2:3-9*

This summer, how can you expect God to do greater things, even in the midst of hard things?

## ACTION STEPS

DAILY RENEWAL – Pastor Mike has developed a daily guide to help us spend time with the Lord each day this summer. The new guide includes meditations from Jeremiah and specific prayers based on God’s Word in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther! You can download it here: <https://www.forcey.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Renewal-Summer-2020.pdf>

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Watch this good introduction to Ezra and Nehemiah from The Bible Project - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkETkRv9tG8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkETkRv9tG8)
- Another good overview of Esther - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2mHeaHjWII](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2mHeaHjWII)
- Spend some time coming back to the “Heart of Worship” - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4RUjGsTfks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4RUjGsTfks)
- Read this sermon from Charles Spurgeon on Jesus the Desire of Nations - [www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/sermons/3442.cfm](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/3442.cfm)
- Watch this message to women by Priscilla Shirer - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sjvCx2o76M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sjvCx2o76M)
- Read “What is Worship” by John Piper - <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What stood out to you most from the message?
2. So, come one now, which one was your favorite rodent?
3. What has the verse “For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11) meant to you in the course of your life experience? In the last few months?
4. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are less familiar books of the Bible. Do you remember anything about them off the top of your head?
5. Are you focused too much on “walls” instead of “worship” in any area of your life? What would it look like for you to prioritize worship today? This summer? Beyond?
6. What decisions are you trying to make (and that others can pray for) that require you to really seek the Lord right now?
7. Read Haggai 2:3-9. What promise of God from that day can you apply to your life today?
8. Have you ever “called something lesser” that God “calls greater”? Explain.
9. What greater things have you seen the Lord doing in this season? What things can we expect him by faith to do this summer?
10. In Haggai 2, Jesus is called “the Desire of Nations.” Why do you desire Jesus today?