

Read Ezra 3:1-7. An easily overlooked detail in verse 2 is that the Israelites worshiped according to the law of Moses. The Law gave God's people clear warnings against worshipping him like the surrounding nations (Deut. 12:30-31). One purpose of upholding the law was to make Israel into a community that stood in contrast to those surrounding them. The contrast was not intended to create an unhealthy distance from Israel's neighbors but to demonstrate the better way of the Lord.

4. Why is it important that Christianity not blend in with the surrounding culture?

5. One of the ways our corporate worship of God can become compromised is when we treat it as a product to consume. For example, rather than asking if the worship service glorified God and helped me engage with God and learn, I judge it by its "entertainment" value or some other lesser criteria. How consumeristic we are in our worship is hard to gauge because the reality is we have choices and those choices have impacted our tastes in music and communication styles in ways we can't simply ignore. But how can you keep from becoming consumeristic in your worship?

6. Read Ezra 3:8-13. A variety of worship forms can be observed in this scene —"liturgical" (v. 11), instrumental (v. 10), shouts of joy (vv. 11-13), and weeping (vv. 12-13). What can you learn from people who worship differently than you do?

7. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply?

SERIES: Exile & Return

SERMON 4: "God Always Delivers on His Promises. Always!"

TEXT: Ezra 1:1-5; 3:8-11

DATE: January 20/21, 2017

1. God always _____ on his promises.
Ezra 1:1-2

2. The Lord uses _____ ways to bring about his promises.
Ezra 1:2-5

