

+++ Therefore Were They as Polluted

Ezra 1:2 – 2:70

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~ Our Spiritual Safari rolls on through our second report from the historical record of Ezra; and if you have read our first report, then you know there is a profound spiritual message in this book for all of us. If you have not had an opportunity to read our previous report from Ezra, I suggest you go back and do so now. Judah, at the time in which we are studying, has been languishing in captivity in Babylon for seventy years. A remnant is now going to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple under the direction of Zerubbabel; and because of the permission granted in the decree proclaimed by Cyrus....

I

² Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

~ The Lord God of Heaven is the True and Living God of Israel, friends! Proclaiming His message is what the Bible is all about. The expression God of Heaven appears exclusively in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. The title was commissioned when the throne of David was removed from the earth, and He turned over His people Israel into the hands of the Gentiles by sending them into Babylonian and Assyrian captivity for seventy years.

Hosea said, “.... *God returned to His place.*” That means back in Heaven. God forsook the temple in Jerusalem, and the theocracy that was the nation Israel, and He resumed as the Lord God of Heaven. That’s what He is today to His people. The Lord God of Heaven will remain exactly that until He returns to establish His literal and physical Kingdom in Jerusalem; at which time He will be the “*Lord of the whole earth.*” These are basic and fundamental terms to learn if we want to understand prophecy correctly.

My personal estimation is that David will sit on the throne in Jerusalem when Jesus returns to the earth and establishes His Kingdom.

Cyrus is definitive when he says, “... *He hath charged me...*” – and the word used for “*charge*” means “*commanded!*” The Lord God of Heaven *commanded* Cyrus — and Cyrus obeyed! Interestingly, the people were not commanded to return for the restoration work; they were granted *PERMISSION* to go up! Further, those who did not return were to make an offering to those who were going to return. Well, the remnant who volunteered to go back was an extreme minority.

Some likely believed they had good and legitimate reasons not to return and, apparently, an overwhelming majority chose to remain in Babylon. Naturally, life in a prosperous and affluent city — where many of them had grown up and become established — versus going back to a land desolate and destroyed where they would have nothing — was not a difficult decision to make! Now, don’t sit in judgment of them, because maybe they honestly believed it was God’s will for them to stay in Babylon. Unfortunately, later, in the Book of Esther, we’re going to hear the account of what happened to those who stayed behind, and it isn’t a pretty story; so, we know it wasn’t God’s will for them to stay. Either way, we should note there is no enmity between the two groups. Those who stayed behind supported those who went back and did the proper, correct and complete work restoring the temple and rebuilding the holy city.

Today, we should support others on the mission field. Quite frankly, there are some missions in which I do not see *ANYTHING* happening; and I don’t think we should support those missions that do not tangibly and consistently teach the Word of God in a consistent, educated, sincere, and systematic manner. We need to understand what and where we are giving to in the Lord’s work — and why, friends. The people who did not return from Babylon and participate in the rebuilding of the temple and city felt a right responsibility to those who did. Those who returned were all from the poorer and humble sort, too. See, the meek will God guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His ways to. Those who returned are the ones who had understanding at the time in which we are studying....

³ Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

⁴ And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

⁵ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.

⁶ And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

⁷ Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

⁸ Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

⁹ And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

¹⁰ Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

¹¹ All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

II

¹ Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

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

³ The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

⁴ The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

⁵ The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.

⁶ The children of Pahathmoab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

⁷ The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

⁸ The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

⁹ The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

¹⁰ The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two.

¹¹ The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.

¹² The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.

¹³ The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.

¹⁴ The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.

¹⁵ The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

¹⁶ The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

- 17 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.***
- 18 The children of Jorah, an hundred and twelve.***
- 19 The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.***
- 20 The children of Gibbar, ninety and five.***
- 21 The children of Bethlehem, an hundred twenty and three.***
- 22 The men of Netophah, fifty and six.***
- 23 The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.***
- 24 The children of Azmaveth, forty and two.***
- 25 The children of Kirjatharim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.***
- 26 The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.***
- 27 The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and two.***
- 28 The men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred twenty and three.***
- 29 The children of Nebo, fifty and two.***
- 30 The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six.***
- 31 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.***
- 32 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.***
- 33 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.***
- 34 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.***

- 35 The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.***
- 36 The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.***
- 37 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.***
- 38 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.***
- 39 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.***
- 40 The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four.***
- 41 The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight.***
- 42 The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, in all an hundred thirty and nine.***
- 43 The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,***
- 44 The children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon,***
- 45 The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,***
- 46 The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmal, the children of Hanan,***
- 47 The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,***
- 48 The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,***
- 49 The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,***

50 The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,

51 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

52 The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

53 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah,

54 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

55 The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,

56 The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

57 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami.

58 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two.

59 And these were they which went up from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel:

60 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.

61 And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:

62 These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

63 And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

64 The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

65 Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.

66 Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;

67 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place:

69 They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

70 So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

~ That's quite a list of names; I hope you read it carefully. Hebrew names were difficult enough to pronounce; but after the captivity, they *REALLY* became difficult. When the Persian, Babylonian and Hebrew languages are mixed in a multitude, they become almost impossible to pronounce; let alone discern. The Nehemiah in verse two is *NOT* the Nehemiah who wrote the book of Nehemiah because that Nehemiah did not return in the beginning, you will recall. The author of the book Nehemiah returned to Israel much later — but he didn't stay long, either. Likewise, the Mordecai

we have in the same verse is *not* the same Mordecai from the Book of Esther.

This uninteresting and, frankly, boring list is one in which we should invest some time reading. It would be very valuable to make that effort. For instance, verse twenty-three lists a hundred and twenty-eight men from Jeremiah's town, Anathoth. That's where Jeremiah bought the field as Israel was on the verge of captivity, you will recall from chapter thirty-two in his prophecy. That's not a good real estate investment Jeremiah made. But God told Jeremiah to buy the field; and I am sure Jeremiah had some questions for God at that time. See, God knew they were coming back. There are so many beautiful spiritual lessons right here for us today that someone should write a book on them. Another interesting fact is the singers in verse forty-one; the Praise Team was larger than the entire returning class of Levite priests.

If you are being blessed by these Spiritual Safari reports, then we should be partners in the enterprise of taking the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles. Not everyone is called to return and rebuild the temple and walls, though; and not everyone is called to teach the Bible. However, that doesn't relieve you of your responsibility to fully and completely support the man who believes God and teaches the Word of God to you in a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led manner. Our judgment at the Bema seat of Christ for rewards in Heaven will depend directly on our giving; don't kid yourself — and our works will be inspected in light of our generosity, too. You can just write that down.

There are also some distressing accounts in chapter two of Ezra. Verse sixty-one begins the account of the priests who were returning and how they had to give a reckoning of their pedigree. Unfortunately, some didn't know who their parents were. And, as you can see — they were simply put out from service. A child of God today must know he is a son of God; we are to know *Whom* we have believed — and what He did for us. Are you able to declare *YOUR* pedigree? Well, our Spiritual Safari concludes this report with the children of Israel returning to the land and, in our next report, we'll see the altar set up again and the ancient Mosaic System of Levitical Law and worship will be re-established in Israel, post-captivity ~

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