

Notes on Ezra Chapter 2

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II. Names of Those Who Returned – Chap. 2

Verses 1-60

1. Skim chap. 2 and summarize what it describes. These people came with whom (2:2)?

This chapter contains an enumeration of the people who returned according to their families. As described in chap. 1, they were among those who had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, but were now allowed to return each to his own city.

These returned in the first group that returned in 536 BC, led by a group of men named here (cf. the list in Neh. 7:7).

Jeshua most likely was the priest (probably the high priest) referred to in 3:2 and elsewhere in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Zerubbabel is also referred to frequently throughout these books (3:2,8; etc.). He evidently led this first group of captives who returned. He is listed in the lineage of Jesus (Matthew 1:12,13; Luke 8:27). This would indicate that he was a prince with right to the throne. However, the nation was led at this time, not by kings but by governors subject to the Persians. No king would reign as a legitimate descendant of David till Jesus became the spiritual King of the church.

There is some confusion regarding the name of his father: Shealtiel (Ezra 3:2 and the references above in Matthew and Luke) or Pedaiah (1 Chron. 3:19). A number of possible explanations exist but are not worth discussing in detail.

These verses record in detail the numbers of people from various cities, occupations, etc., who returned.

Verses 61-63

2. What problem did some priests have (vv 61-63)? What was done about them? (Think: Why would this be a problem?)

Certain men claimed they had a right to serve as priests, but they had no genealogy to prove their ancestry. Priests had to be descendants of Aaron (Numbers 16:39,40). Since there was no proof this was true in these men's case, they were excluded from being priests until such time as there was a priest who could consult Urim & Thummim to determine the legitimacy of their claims (Exodus 28:30).

Note that this was not meant as a conclusion that these men were evil sinners of some kind. They were still allowed to be part of God's people. The point is that they could not serve in special capacity as holders of office without having the required qualifications of that office. The same is true regarding men who seek to serve as elders and deacons today. The fact a man **lacks** evidence of qualification is sufficient basis to exclude him. We need not prove him guilty of evil.

Verses 64-70

3. How many people returned (vv 64,65)?
4. What did the people do to help the work (vv 68,69)?

The total number of people who returned were 42,360 who were reckoned as part of the congregation of Israel. Also there were 7337 who were servants that accompanied them (but apparently not of the lineage of the nation).

Also described are the number of animals they had and the amount of gold and silver that was contributed for the rebuilding of the temple.

All these people returned to the land of Israel and lived their in their cities.

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