**April 30, 2021**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

**37 Market Street, New Haven, CT 06513**

**Bishop M. Ruel McCoy, Sr., Servant / Shepherd**

**The Late Bishop E. Samuel Green, Establishmentarian**

**“UNTANGLED FROM ENTANGLEMENT”**

**Ezra 2:1-70**

***Ezra 2:1 "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;"***

The opening verses identify the leaders of this early return from Babylonian captivity that lasted 70 years. In the Bible, the captivity in Babylon is presented as a punishment for idolatry and disobedience to God in a similar way to the presentation of Israelite Egyptian slavery followed by deliverance. Israel’s rebellious behavior led to “entanglement”, but now God is “untangling” them from bondage with the expectation that they have learned their lesson. To entangle is to tangle; to twist or interweave in such a manner as not to be easily separated; to make confused and intricate; as, to entangle yarn or the hair while untangle is to remove tangles or knots.

***Jeremiah 29:10-11***

***10 For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.***

***11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.***

Every person was not in captivity for the entire 70 years. Just as the captivity took place in stages, the release took place in stages, too. God's thoughts are not evil toward them. He loves them. He promises them their freedom, after the 70 years. He has given them something to look forward to. This captivity is to make them repent and return to God. It is for their good, not God's. God's thoughts are upon them constantly. He loves them and wants to fellowship with them. The inanimate objects, they had been worshipping, had no power of thought. To mention the thoughts of God, shows Him to be a living Spirit.

***Galatians 5:1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."***

We are to stand up for God and continually stand in the salvation the Lord provided for us. We are no longer under the bondage of the law, we are free to serve the Lord.

***II Thessalonians 2:15 "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."***

A person who had just been set free, would never choose to go back into bondage, if they were thinking clearly. God did not want them to lose contact with their heritage. Each person went back to his city. The Hebrews put much importance on the genealogy of their families.

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

Zerubbabel is listed first. The list of names here was meant to confirm that the returnees were true Israelites. Many Bible readers might consider the list to be tedious reading, but Ezra 2 would have been a genuine encouragement to the original readers, who were decades removed from this first return in 539 BC and were part of the second return under Ezra. This is a listing of the leaders of the families. Even though we see the names Nehemiah and Mordecai, this does not mean that they are the same as the prominent men with that name. The names given above are just a listing of the chief, or prince, of each family.

***Ezra 2:3 "The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two."***

***Ezra 2:4 "The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two."***

***Ezra 2:5 "The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five."***

***Ezra 2:6 "The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua [and] Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve."***

***Ezra 2:7 "The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four."***

***Ezra 2:8 "The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five."***

***Ezra 2:9 "The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore."***

***Ezra 2:10 "The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two."***

***Ezra 2:11 "The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three."***

***Ezra 2:12 "The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two."***

***Ezra 2:13 "The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six."***

The number of descendents of Adonikam that go back into the land were 666. My eye immediately caught on this number, which is, also, the number of the mark of the beast. There are only two other Scriptures in the Bible on Adonikam.

***Ezra 8:13 "And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names [are] these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males."***

Putting these two Scriptures together, there is a message in it for the believers in the Lord. The latter sons, in a spiritual sense, are speaking of the believers in Christ. The two Scriptures combined seem to be a message for the believers about the mark of the beast. "Adonikam" means my Lord has arisen. "Eliphelet" means God is deliverance. "Jeiel" means carried away of God. "Shemaiah" means Jehovah hath heard. It appears from the combination of these names, that those who believe in the resurrection of the Lord will be carried away, because God has heard and He is our Deliverance. To me, this is saying believers will be saved from the mark of the beast by their catching away to God.

***Ezra 2:14 "The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six."***

***Ezra 2:15 "The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four."***

***Ezra 2:16 "The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight."***

***Ezra 2:17 "The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three."***

***Ezra 2:18 "The children of Jorah, an hundred and twelve."***

***Ezra 2:19 "The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three."***

Verses 3 through 19, above, are listing the families, and how many of each of them came back into the land.

***Ezra 2:20 "The children of Gibbar, ninety and five."***

***Ezra 2:21 "The children of Beth-lehem, an hundred twenty and three."***

***Ezra 2:22 "The men of Netophah, fifty and six."***

***Ezra 2:23 "The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight."***

***Ezra 2:24 "The children of Azmaveth, forty and two."***

***Ezra 2:25 "The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three."***

***Ezra 2:26 "The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one."***

***Ezra 2:27 " The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and two."***

***Ezra 2:28 "The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three."***

***Ezra 2:29 "The children of Nebo, fifty and two."***

***Ezra 2:30 "The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six."***

***Ezra 2:31 "The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four."***

***Ezra 2:32 "The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty."***

***Ezra 2:33 "The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five."***

***Ezra 2:34 "The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five."***

***Ezra 2:35 "The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty."***

This was a listing of the number of people who settled in each town. Gibbar, in verse 20 above, was speaking of Gibeon. Beth-lehem is a city that is just 4 or 5 miles out of Jerusalem. Anathoth was the birthplace of Jeremiah. It had been a city of refuge. Azmaveth was on the northern outskirts of Jerusalem. Kirjath-arim was in a very wooded area. At one time or the other, it had belonged to Judah and Benjamin. It appears, that the fathers, or grand-fathers, had told the younger generation where they were to return to after the captivity. Chephirah was about 8 miles from the outskirts of Jerusalem and was occupied by Benjamin's tribe. Beeroth was a city of Benjamin, as well. Ramah and Gaba were, also, Benjamite cities. Michmas was a town between Bethel and Jerusalem. It was of the Benjamites. Ai and Beth-el are joining cities about 12 miles from Jerusalem. All of these towns are near Jerusalem and seem to be surrounding her. We will not go into anymore of them, as we have received the picture.

***Ezra 2:36 "The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three."***

***Ezra 2:37 "The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two."***

***Ezra 2:38 "The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven."***

***Ezra 2:39 "The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen."***

This, above, is a listing of the priests according to their families. The high priest was from the house of Jeshua. These are all in the service of the LORD in the temple worship.

***Ezra 2:40 "The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four."***

***Ezra 2:41 "The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight."***

***Ezra 2:42 "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."***

These were Levites in the service of the LORD, who functioned in other areas than the priests. We see a distinction of Asaph's family as singers. The porters were keepers of the gates and doors.

***Ezra 2:43 "The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,"***

***Ezra 2:44 "The children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon,"***

***Ezra 2:45 "The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,"***

***Ezra 2:46 "The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmai, the children of Hanan,"***

***Ezra 2:47 "The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,"***

***Ezra 2:48 "The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,"***

***Ezra 2:49 "The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,"***

***Ezra 2:50 "The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,"***

***Ezra 2:51 "The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,"***

***Ezra 2:52 "The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,"***

***Ezra 2:53 "The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah,"***

***Ezra 2:54 "The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha."***

"Nethinims" were those who were set aside to do menial work in the sanctuary. All of these served in the menial work connected with the temple service. This was an extremely important task.

***Ezra 2:55 "The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,"***

***Ezra 2:56 "The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,"***

***Ezra 2:57 "The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami."***

This is so strange that this group of people would have remained in a class of servants even during their captivity in Babylon. They had been the forced laborers in the time of Solomon.

***Ezra 2:58 "All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, [were] three hundred ninety and two."***

The Nethinims and the servants were, probably, grouped together, because in a sense, they were all servants. The Hebrews were very class conscious.

***Ezra 2:59 "And these [were] they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel- harsa, Cherub, Addan, [and] Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they [were] of Israel:"***

***Ezra 2:60 "The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two."***

***Ezra 2:61 "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:"***

***Ezra 2:62 "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."***

***Ezra 2:63 "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."***

These were people who could not trace their ancestry back to the Hebrews. They were, possibly, of mixed blood. We see in one instance where some children of the priests were grouped along with these because of mixed marriages that keep them from having distinct genealogies. This 70 year captivity had caused some of them to lose track of their family heritage. The priest who wore the Urim and the Thummim spoke as an oracle of God. God spoke to the people through the Urim and Thummim worn by the high priest.

***Ezra 2:64 The whole congregation together [was] forty and two thousand three hundred [and] threescore,***

This number is more than the numbers added together here, but this is just a listing of specific people, and there were many more who went.

***Ezra 2:65 "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."***

These singers were not of the Levites. They were servants. Just because a person is a servant, does not mean that he cannot sing.

***Ezra 2:66 "Their horses [were] seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five;"***

***Ezra 2:67 "Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; [their] asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty."***

This was the number of animals they took with them. This would be a tremendous help on this journey of approximately 1,000 miles. This trip would take several months at the very best. The animals would have helped in carrying their belongings. In case someone could not walk for some reason, they would ride. They were mostly used as beasts of burden, however.

***Ezra 2:68 "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:"***

This was like a thank offering to God for their safe return to their homeland. Each family had a leader, or a chief. He represented his entire family, when he gave.

***Ezra 2:69 "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."***

Being in captivity for so many years, they would not have great wealth to give. They gave as they were able. The dram was, possibly, a Persian gold coin. A dram was, probably, about 1/3 the weight of a shekel. That would be 1/6 of an ounce. This meant that altogether they brought approximately 160 ounces of gold. At $400.00 per ounce, that would be approximately $64,000.00 worth of gold. The silver would be 60,000 ounces. At $5.00 per ounce, there was $300,000.00 worth. This seems like a large amount to an individual, but we must take into consideration that there were thousands of people who offered this. The priests garments were made of linen.

***Ezra 2:70 "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."***

They were back to re-establish their homeland, and to build the temple in Jerusalem.

**QUESTIONS**

1. How long did the Babylonian captivity last?
2. The release was done in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Who had carried them into Babylon?
4. How did they know where to return?
5. Verse 2 is a listing of what?
6. How many were the descendents of Adonikam that went back into the land?
7. What is unusual about that number?
8. What were the names of Adonikam's sons?
9. Who are the latter sons speaking of, spiritually?
10. What does "Adonikam" mean?
11. What does "Eliphelet" mean?
12. What does "Jeiel" mean?
13. What does "Shemaiah" mean?
14. What does the author believe is the message in their names collectively?
15. What are the lists of verses 3 through 19 showing?
16. What are verses 20 through 35 showing about those who return?
17. What do these towns have in common?
18. Verses 36 through 39 list whom?
19. "Nethinims" are who?
20. Verses 44 through 54 list who?
21. What is strange about those listed in verses 55 through 57?
22. Why were the Nethinims and Solomon's servants counted together?
23. What was different about those listed in verse 59 through 63?
24. Who were the singers in verse 65?
25. How many animals did they take with them?
26. How long would the journey be?
27. Who were the chief of the fathers?
28. How much gold did they give in thanks?
29. How much silver did they give?
30. How many priestly garments did they give?