

RETURN TO JERUSALEM. EZ. 1:5-11. 5/26/24. #02.

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⁶Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. ⁸And all those who *were* around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all *that was* willingly offered. ⁷King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; ⁸and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. ⁹This *is* the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, ¹⁰thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar *kind*, and one thousand other articles. ¹¹All the articles of gold and silver *were* five thousand four hundred. All *these* Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.
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1. The stirring

- a. Just as God stirred Cyrus's heart to send the Jews back to the land, He stirs up a remnant of the Jews to return to Jerusalem
 - a1. Any work done for God is initiated by God (Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Nehemiah...)
 - a2. God moves in the hearts of chosen vessels to accomplish His will
- b. God moves by platoons & not battalions
 - a1. God did not stir up a mass of people to return, but only a small remnant
 - a2. God moved in the hearts of many to support the work
 - a3. God sent a mixed multitude back of Jews, Benjaminites, Levites, & priests
- c. Among those returning were leaders to form a nucleus to rebuild the nation
 - a1. The Jewish nation is a miracle: the only ethnic group to return after removal (even after 2 millennia, they are back today)

- a2. There are no Hittites, Babylonians, Ammonites, Philistines, Edomites, Canaanites, Moabites, or Amorites today
- d. Zech. 4:10 God can take small beginnings & do great things with it (Noah, Jacob, Gideon...)
- e. "Those who were around them" encouraged them by giving them goods, gold, silver, & livestock
 - a1. Not only the Jews, but the Persian neighbors supported the trip
 - a2. As Israel spoiled Egypt, so Jews took valuables from Persia

2. The temple vessels returned

- a. Cyrus returned all the temple items taken by Neb.
 - a1. Same vessels from which Belshazzar drank the night he died (Dan. 5:23)
 - a2. Ezra gives an account of the most prominent items returned (adding up to about 2500) out of a total of 5400 items total
- b. The treasurer, Mithredath (after Mithras, the Persian sun god), to take care of the items
 - a1. The word *treasurer* in Persian is *gizbar*, which gives us Gasper or Casper, the apocryphal name of one of the wise men
 - a2. Responsible for items to be safely returned
- c. Sheshbazzar (probably the Babylonian name for Zerubbabel) was given charge over the return (not "prince", but ruler or governor)
- d. Notice that even 3 generations after the exile, the Jews were still referred to as "the captives"
 - a1. Any Jew away from God's Promised Land is not home (part of diaspora)
 - a2. Only the Jews returning were going home

3. The new Judea

- a. Judah would be a province in the Persian empire under a Jewish governor
- b. Only briefly under the Maccabees would Judah be free (169-63 BC) between Greece & Rome
- c. The Judaism Christ saw had its foundation here
- d. God's plan included this renewed Judah