

Stirred to Serve

Ezra 1:5-11

Intro: As we look at returning, rebuilding, and reviving: May we learn that God has to shake us to steady us. He must wound us to heal us. He must dismantle us to bring us together...may we be shaken well!!!!

If not we will always remain instead of returning to serve

READ TEXT

I. The Results of the Fathers-v.5

A. Those who were stirred (returned)

- **They left the fortunes of Babylon-ease of living**

They would have to build homes, cities, economy etc.

Nehemiah 1:3 (NKJV)

³ And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates *are burned* with fire."

Nehemiah 2:2-3 (NKJV)

² Therefore the king said to me, "Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid,

³ and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"

They were not returning to what they remembered or desired...it laid in ruins

Daniel 1:9...purposed not to take the delicacies of the king

Many times with act as though what the world has to offer is much better than what the Lord has for us to serve in...

- **They left the familiarity of Babylon**-it has been 70 years of a way of life.. they had settled in

They crucified... "whats in it for me?" " what can I gain by going to serve"?

- **They left the families of Babylon-tribes of Benjamin and Judah**

These two tribes made up the southern kingdom.

Judah is the largest of the tribes and the man became a **surety** and **substitute** for Benjamin in Gen. 44:30-34

Genesis 44:30-34 (NKJV)

³⁰ Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life,

³¹ it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

³² For your servant became **surety** for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'

³³ Now therefore, please let your servant **remain** instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.

³⁴ For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Benjamin was the smallest tribe: Mordecai and Esther were from the tribe of Benjamin: **Esther 2:5 (NKJV)**

⁵ In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name *was* Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimej, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

Esther 2:7 (NKJV)

⁷ And *Mordecai* had brought up Hadassah, that *is*, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman *was* lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

50,000 returned...the priest, the Levites, and singers

Ezra 2:64-65 (NKJV)

⁶⁴ The whole assembly together *was* forty-two thousand three hundred *and* sixty,

⁶⁵ besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers.

B. Those who settled (remained)

The homesickness in this crowd had lost its intensity and urgency throughout the years

- **They loved the fortune in Babylon-it is easy to stay around the Babylonians... the pots of the Egyptians**

Exodus 16:3 (NKJV)

³ And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat

and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

● **They loved the familiarity in Babylon-
Luke 23:8 (NKJV)**

⁸ Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.

- **They loved their friends in Babylon**

Remember: it had been 70 years since the captivity of the Jews, 70 years since they had been deported into Babylon. This being the case, many were born and reared in Babylon. It was the only home they had ever known. No doubt many of these had become settled in Persia and were comfortably living in a prosperous, affluent society. Many owned their own homes, property, and businesses, and lived rich social lives, engaging in pleasurable and recreational activities. To return would mean giving up all of this. They would be sacrificing all they had built up and secured over the last 50 plus years. **Returning to the promised land of God not only meant sacrificing all they had worked for but also giving it all up for a life of extreme hardship.** If they chose to return, they would have to start building their lives all over again, for Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah had been totally destroyed by the Babylonians.

Because of these and other weighty factors, "the decision to return was extremely difficult for many of the Jewish exiles"
Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

How many of us have had great opportunities offered for service, which we have let slip in like manner! To have doors opened which

we are too lazy, too cowardly, too much afraid of self-denial, to enter, is the tragedy and crime of many a life. It is easier to live among the low levels of the plain of Babylon, than to take the dangers and privations of the weary trek across the desert...Alexander Maclaren

II. The Returning of the Furnishings-v.7-11

A. The Inventory-v.9-10

- **The Vessels**
- **The Value-v.11-5400 total sum**

B. The Instruments

These were all used in the sacrificial worship of the Jews

Notice: the 29 Knives

Dan. 1:1-2 gives us commentary on the event

Daniel 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

Balshazzar used them in pagan worship

Daniel 5:1-4

Daniel 5:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand.

² While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the

gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which *had been* in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

³ Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

How many times have we used or misused the things of the Lord and defiled them?

We give God our leftovers instead of our best

Malachi 1:6-8 (NKJV)

⁶ "A son honors *his* father, And a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, Where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, Where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

⁷ "*You* offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'

⁸ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, *Is it* not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, *Is it* not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.

Conclusion: Do we return with repentance or remain in relaxation ?

But the Stirring of God will always bring an acknowledgement of our need and a prayer like this:

Ezra 9:5-15 (NKJV)

⁵ At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to

the LORD my God.

⁶ And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than *our* heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.

⁷ Since the days of our fathers to this day we *have been* very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, *and* our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as *it is* this day.

⁸ And now for a little while grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.

⁹ For we *were* slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰ And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,

¹¹ which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity.

¹² Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* as an inheritance to your children forever.'

¹³ And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and have given us *such* deliverance as this,

¹⁴ should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people *committing* these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed *us*, so that *there would be* no remnant or survivor?

¹⁵ O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day. Here we *are* before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"