

Ezra 2 - What's In A List of Names?

In some ways it can be like reading a phonebook - you recognize some - but most are unknown. BUT each name represents a person, a family, their trials and struggles, hopes and dreams.

- Each INDIVIDUAL is important to the LORD
- A PURPOSE for each...He MOVED THEIR HEARTS to go back to **Jerusalem** Ezra 1:5
- It would have been a difficult **900 mile journey**...that would take **4 months** to get there
- And they were going to **a city that had been burned and destroyed** -

WHAT MOVED THEM?.....Life in Babylon wasn't TOO BAD

Jer 29:4-7 NIV ..."**Build** houses and settle down; **plant** gardens and eat what they produce. 6 **Marry** and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. **Increase** in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, **seek the peace and prosperity of the city** to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because **if it prospers, you too will prosper.**"Jer 29:10-11 NIV This is what the LORD says: "When **seventy years** are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to **bring you back to this place.** (11) For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Something of ETERNAL VALUE was built into their heart and became a driving force

- Babylon, a place of prosperity
- Jerusalem, a burned out and devastated city

While in Babylon they remembered what they had in Zion

Psa 137:1-6 NIV **By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept** when we remembered Zion. 2 There on the poplars we hung our harps, 3 for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" 4 How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. (6) May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.

- While they were provided for and enjoyed the natural things of life in Babylon
- They missed the WORSHIP of Zion
- While in Babylon there was a growing HUNGER for the LORD.....for WORSHIP

This Psalm was written about the returning exiles...

Psa 126:1-6 NIV A song of ascents. **When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.** (2) Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

A list of largely UNKNOWN people - but PASSIONATE for Worship of God

- They risked the security of the KNOWN - and moved to the UNKNOWN
- They came with a vision to rebuild the temple and restore worship
- They came back to uphold and preserve the word of God - Messiah came through them

Breakdown of the List

- List of Leaders vs 1-2by **Descendant** vs 3-20 by **Town** vs 21-35List of **Priests**, Levites, Musicians, Gatekeepers, Temple Servants vs 36-58Even **Those Who Could Not Prove Their Descent** vs 59 -63

What's In A List of Names - I Will Share Two Hidden Gems

- A Story about the town of **Anathoth vs 23** And a Story about **Asaph vs 41**

ANATHOTH - As Jerusalem is about to be overrun Jeremiah was told to buy a field here

- Jer 32:6-7 NIV Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: 7 Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, '**Buy my field at Anathoth**, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.'

He bought the land, signed & sealed the deed and the LORD told him to put them in a clay jar

- Jer 32:10-15 NIV I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales..... 14 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: **Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time.** 15 For this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: **Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.'**

The LORD's Heart of Hope and Restoration - The Work He did in their hearts...

- Jer 32:36-44 NIV "You are saying about this city, 'By the sword, famine and plague it will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon'; but this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 37 I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. 38 **They will be my people, and I will be their God.** 39 **I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them.** 40 **I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.** 41 **I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.** 42 "This is what the LORD says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. 43 Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians.' 44 Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because **I will restore their fortunes, declares the LORD."**
- The Lord knows the beginning from the end - as He was sending them to exile He was preparing them to return
- Though things look bleak...it is not the end...He has a plan...He works HIS thing in our hearts
- Learn to hear and respond **128 people are coming back to this place** that was desolate wasteland...a place to call home again...He is faithful to His promises

List of Priests, Levites, Musicians, Gatekeepers, Temple Servants - Ezra 2:36-58

This was a step of faith because there was no temple, yet so many came whose life and ministry were based upon working in the Temple...they had a vision to rebuild.....and among them was.....**vs 41**

The musicians: **the descendants of Asaph**, -- who is ASAPH?

David used Asaph as a musician - & his offspring were still musicians at the time of Ezra

- 1Ch 15:15-17 NIV....David told the leaders of the Levites to **appoint their fellow Levites as musicians to make a joyful sound with musical instruments....**Asaph was one of them
- 1Ch 16:5-12 NIV **Asaph** was the chief, **Asaph was to sound the cymbals**, (7) That day **David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the LORD** in this manner: (8) Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. (9) Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. (10) Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. (11) Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. (12) Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
- 1Ch 16:37 NIV **David left Asaph** and his associates before the ark of the covenant of the LORD **to minister there regularly**, according to each day's requirements.

The Sons of Asaph prophesied accompanied by music

- 1Ch 25:1-2 NIV David, together with the commanders of the army, **set apart some of the sons of Asaph**, Heman and Jeduthun **for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals**.

137 years AFTER David --- When King Jehoshaphat was surrounded by the enemy - a son of Asaph prophesied

- 2Ch 20:13-17 NIV All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD. (14) **Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.** (15) He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. (16) Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. (17) You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.'"

157 years AFTER Jehoshaphat -- Sons of Asaph were there during Hezekiah's revival

- 2Ch 29:1-6 NIV Hezekiah was twenty-five years old 11 My sons, do not now be negligent, for the LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him." 12 Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden

the son of Joah; 13 **and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;**

In Hezekiah's revival they sang songs of Asaph the seer (songs were almost 300 years old)

- 2Ch 29:30 NIV **King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer.** So they sang praises with gladness and bowed down and worshiped.

76 Years AFTER Hezekiah in Josiah's revival the musicians were descendants of Asaph

- 2Ch 34:1-3 NIV Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. (2) He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. (3) In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols.
- 2Ch 35:15 NIV **The musicians, the descendants of Asaph,** were in the places prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun the king's seer. The gatekeepers at each gate did not need to leave their posts, because their fellow Levites made the preparations for them.

Asaph Wrote 12 psalms - 50 and 73-83

ASAPH Wrote This --- He Lived This --- His children is a testament to his Passion for Christ

Psa 78:2-8 ESV I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, 3 things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. 5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, 6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, 7 so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; 8 and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

14 Generations

14 generations from David to Carrying into Babylon (+ 70 more years...**almost 500 years**) and still the sons of ASAPH are faithful to their calling.- Something about the LORD that was passed from generation to generation for almost 500 years...

- what about Legacy vs Ancestry
- Look to what we can become vs what we have come from

What Will You Do?

Alliance Phone Book...- every name is a life a story, a family, a history and a future - a chance to leave a legacy - a chance to walk in faith, a chance to take a risk with God, a chance for a new beginning, a chance to live life with eternal purpose...to be a worshipper...Will You Let Him MOVE your heart?