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The Geographical Place-Names Who Returned to Jerusalem from Captivity in Babylon Ezra 2: 20-35

The geographical place-names who returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon DIG: When grouping people by their points of departure, why do you think Ezra omits any reference to towns in the Negev, the large area south of Judah, which was occupied by the Edomites after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah in 597 BC? How do you account for some of the numbers in Nehemiah being different than the ones here?

REFLECT: Do you have any spiritual roots? If so, where did they come from? What person was influential in your spiritual growth? Was it a close relative? Father? Mother? Sister? Or grandparent? Or was it someone outside your family? A friend? Or perhaps a "random" meeting? Regardless, what are you doing to be the rich ground for the spiritual roots of those you love?

During the ministry of Zerubbabel (**to see link click Ag – The First Return**). **Compiled by the Chronicler from the Ezra memoirs**
(see **Ac – Ezra-Nehemiah From a Jewish Perspective: The Ezra Memoirs**).

The Chronicler identified two ways to validate **those** who had been **exiled**, had **their** roots
in **the Promised Land** and could be trusted as being a true member of the community
of **Isra'el**. Some members had records of a recognized family or clan (see **Al – The Clans Who Returned from Captivity in Babylon**); others, as we see here, could be verified through **their** traditional home town. **These place-names represent the places where these people lived before the exile and are mentioned in order of proximity to Jerusalem.** Most of the places-names are in Benjamite territory north of **Yerushalayim**. Significantly, no references are made in the Negev

south of **Judah**. When Nebuchadnezzar overran **Judah**, the Edomites had occupied the area. **Jeremiah** had prophesied: **The towns of the South will be shut up, with no one to open them (Jeremiah 13:19a).** Again, the author emphasized the continuity of **God's** covenant **people**. Thus, the identification of **the families** and **their** place of origin was important. **They** needed to recognize that **they** were the continuation of **ADONAI's** redemptive plan, and that **YHVH** had not forsaken **them**.

The sons of Gibbar – 95 (Ezra 2:20): It may have been another name for Gibeon, the well-known city where the sun stood still for Joshua (Joshua 10:12). In Nehemiah 7:25 the name appears as Gibeon. It would then be the modern el-Jib, about five miles northwest of Jerusalem,

The sons of Bethlehem, 123 (Ezra 2:21); The famous village and birth place of **Yeshua Messiah about five miles south of the Holy City, meaning "house of bread,"**

the men of Netophah, 56 (Ezra 2:22); The birthplace of Zalmon the Ahohite and **Maharai the Netophathite,** two of **David** mighty warriors (see the commentary on **The Life of David Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**). According to **First Chronicles 9:16** it was **a Levitical village**,

the men of Anathoth, 128 (Ezra 2:23); A priestly town, best known as the home of Jeremiah (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Ah – The Introduction to Jeremiah**); **identified with Anata, a village four miles northeast of Yerushalayim,**

the sons of Azmaveth (Beth-azmaveth in **Nehemiah 7:28), 42 (Ezra 2:24); So again in Nehemiah 12:29, but also in Nehemiah 7:28 it is called Beth-azmaveth. It is perhaps the modern el-Hizmeh, north of Anathoth,**

the sons of Kiriath-arim (Kiriath-jearim in **Nehemiah 7:29), Chephirah and Beeroth, 743 (Ezra 2:25); Nehemiah 7:29 has the more familiar name Kiriath-jearim, about nine miles northwest of Jerusalem,**

the sons of Ramah; Literally "the Ramah" or "the Height." It was Samuel's home, the modern er-Ram, about six miles north of Jerusalem. And Geba, 621 (Ezra 2:26); A priestly town of Benjamin; the modern Jeba, about eight miles north of Jerusalem,

the men of Michmas, 122 (2:27); Spelled Michmash in the book of Samuel (First Samuel 8:23), where it is the locality of a heroic exploit by Jonathan; the modern Mukhmas. It lay on the north side of the gorge on which Geba stood,

the men of Bethel; About two and a half miles north of Beeroth and twelve miles north of Jerusalem; now called Beitin. And Ai, 223 (Ezra 2:28); About one-and-a-half miles east of Bethel. In Nehemiah 7:32 the number is 123 (see **Cm – The Inspired List of Ezra 2 and the Human Register of Nehemiah 7**),

the sons of Nebo, 52 (Ezra 2:29); To be distinguished from Nebo in Moab and therefore called in Nehemiah 7:33 "the other Nebo." It is identified by some with Nob (see the commentary on **the Life of David Av – David at Nob**), **but its location is uncertain,**

the sons of Magbish, 156 (Ezra 2:30); Otherwise unknown; it does not appear in the list in Nehemiah,

the sons of the other Elam, 1,254 (Ezra 2:31); To distinguish it from the Elam in Ezra 2:7. The identity of the number necessitates this qualification,

the sons of Harim, 320 (Ezra 2:32); Not the same as in Ezra 2:39,

the sons of Lod; Built by Shemed of the tribe of Benjamin (First Chronicles 8:12). It is known as Lydda, seven miles southwest of Jaffa. Hadid; the modern el-Khadithah, known in Maccabean times as Adida, a fortified town on the east of Shephelah. And Ono, 725 (Ezra 2:33); The modern Ana, about six miles north of Lydda. In Nehemiah 7:37 the total is 721 (see

Cm – The Inspired List of Ezra 2 and the Human Register of Nehemiah 7),

the sons of Jericho, 345 (Ezra 2:34); The famous "City of Palms," near the Jordan River **about eighteen miles east of Jerusalem,**

the sons of Senaah, 3,630 (Ezra 2:35): Ancient authorities identified it with Magdalsenna about five miles north of Jericho. In Nehemiah 3 Hassenaah is a personal name. Nehemiah 7:38 gives the number as 3,930 (see **Ci – The Inspired List of Ezra 2 and the Human Register of Nehemiah 7**)**.**

We can be glad that **the righteous of the TaNaKh** chose to return to **Palestine** and continue to be used of **Ha'Shem**. Through **them** and **their** descendants we have the Scriptures, and through them **Yeshua Messiah** came into the world. Even though **they** were practically unnoticed by the world at that time, **they** were actually the center of **God's** redemptive plan.

Sometimes, as believers, we feel the same way, like we have no significance in today's world affairs. But the B'rit Chadashah clearly teaches that the invisible, universal Church, made up of **Jewish** and **Gentile believers (Ephesus 2:14a)**, is the center of **God's** attention and the primary means of fulfilling **His** mission in the world **(Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23, 3:10** and **21; First Timothy 3:15)**. We need to remember our heritage from the generations of believers who have preceded us and understand the influence our decisions will have for the future.