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A verse-by-verse
series through the
book of Ezra

BUILDING

WEEK 3:

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Written by Rev. R. Brady Henderson
For the First Baptist Church of Gaston



MONDAY, MAY 19TH, 2025

‘YOUR NAME!’

Due to our special Mother’s Day service last Sunday, I did not write a weekly devotional since we weren’t in the book of Ezra. That being said, I missed spending the mornings with you in this devotional series.

Yesterday, we read tons and tons of names in Ezra chapter 2. I hope and pray you were able to walk away knowing that the listing of those names meant the personal faithfulness of the returnees and God’s faithfulness—His Faithfulness and sovereignty to get them through 70 years of Babylonian exile to return to the land that was given to them and was originally promised to Abraham. These names would be the very individuals who would be a part of rebuilding the temple in the chapters to follow in Ezra. As I mentioned yesterday, I believe these names are mentioned because the writer wants us to know who is a part of the rebuilding of this temple. Who are the individuals who chose to obey God, become the ‘remnant’, and are a big reason why the Jewish nation survived until New Testament Times.

Though Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 are rarely taught and preached in Christian circles, they give us an example of real people who made real sacrifices for God. Their identity was based on the Lord. We have minutes and records from several of the last building endeavors at FBCG. Names are listed for contributions and sacrifices made so that we can worship this Sunday in a nice building. What will your name be remembered for? Hopefully, it will be remembered to uplift God’s Kingdom.

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Application for Today: The purpose of your name is to give Glory to the One True Name, Jesus Christ. But if your name is going to be remembered for anything, may it be remembered for seeking to grow and uplift the Kingdom of God.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God how you can be more faithful to Him in your time, talents, and treasure.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying specifically for chairs that will be in classroom #3.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



TUESDAY, MAY 20TH, 2025

‘GO HOME!’

In Ezra 2:1-2, before the large lists of names get started, the author begins with the leaders. The group of men who were going to be leading these returnees home. They were going back to the land that they had inhabited prior to the Babylonian exile that Jeremiah prophesied would happen. Imagine the conversations that took place as they took the 503-mile journey on foot to go home. Perhaps the senior adults talked about growing up in the Holy City and all the things they remembered, including Solomon’s temple and all its beauty. I’m sure they talked about the priests who worked in the temple and all the older saints who mentored them when they were young. They probably even recounted the dark day when Babylon came in and destroyed Jerusalem.

Those who were born in Babylon and had been given Persian names, were probably anticipating going back to the land of their Fathers. In Ezra 2:2, God even gives them a subtle but strong reminder that they were still God’s people with the use of 12 names as the leaders leading them back. Symbolic of course, as we looked at yesterday, of the 12 tribes of Israel. Even Ezra, whom I believe to be the writer of this book, had to be proud to write down his father’s name in Ezra 2:2, as one of the men who was leading the charge to go home. Indeed, they would go home. Have you gone home? Like are you really and truly at home with your walk in the Lord? The way to go home is to first fall in the arms of our Heavenly Father, and then stay there for all of eternity. We can do this by listening to Him, obeying Him, and learning from Him.

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Application for Today: Spend the rest of the day thinking of what it means to Go Home to God. Not a physical place but a personal place in your heart. It takes leaving the comforts of Babylon, but it is worth it to be closer to our Lord.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God how you can be more obedient to Him in the little things.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying specifically for the countertops that will be in the men's restrooms.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 21ST, 2025

‘ADONIKAM!’

Very quickly yesterday I pointed out Ezra 2:13 and the name that is found in that verse. ‘The sons of Adonikam, 666.’ This is the only time in the Bible that this name is mentioned. During my sermon preparation last week, I spent some time doing a lengthy word study on this particular word. What I found was quite revelatory to me.

Adonikam is a Hebrew word that looks like this in the Hebrew text, אֲדֹנִיקָם. When looking at the etymology of the name ‘Adonikam’, it consists of two elements. In other words, two different words are put together to form one word. The first part of the word is a stem of the Hebrew word ‘Adonai’, which means Lord. A noun in Hebrew. The second part of the word is a verb, ‘qum’, which means to stand or rise up. The name Adonikam is strangely and subtly added to the list. His descendants were 666, and Nehemiah lists 667 returned from the family of Adonikam. We don’t know who he descended from, but he did maintain his Hebrew name throughout the Babylonian captivity.

I do not want to add anything that is not there. But I can’t help but wonder and ask the Lord if He purposely had the name Adonikam in the group of returnees to foreshadow that His Son, Christ the Lord, would one day arise out of the tomb. Because out of these returnees, would come Christ the Lord. These returnees were his ancestors. What an interesting thought to ponder as we begin our Wednesday morning together.



Application for Today: Even the small details in scripture, such as a simple Hebrew name in a sea of many Hebrew names, can be a theological nugget that God can use to cause you to reflect more on Him.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God to show you small details that display His Big and Glorious plans for you, and our Church.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying specifically for the paper towel dispenser in the women's restrooms of the new building.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



THURSDAY, MAY 22ND, 2025

‘O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM!’

It’s a Thursday morning in the middle of May and I am writing a devotional on Bethlehem. We are only supposed to talk about and study Bethlehem around Christmas time right? Wrong! As I alluded to and discussed on Sunday, in Ezra 2:21, we find that 123 of the returnees came from Bethlehem. Let’s look at Ezra 2:21, ‘The sons of Bethlehem, 123.’ Three hundred years before the return of the exiles, Micah wrote this prophecy, that we usually talk about during Christmas time, in Micah 5:2. ‘But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.’ Micah 5:2

Even in looking at this list, we can see that the folks from Bethlehem were small in number amidst the clans in Judah, and probably poor. Their names weren’t mentioned, just the name of their town. A theologically significant town in the Old Testament as we have discussed before. But what I want to hone in on this morning is that imagine if the people of Bethlehem had decided to stay in Babylon? They wouldn’t have had to travel 500 miles on foot in the HEAT of the Middle East. (You think Columbia is hot? Ask some of the Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans in our Church...) They wouldn’t have had to take their time and money in building a temple that the senior adults were just going to complain about. They could’ve stayed comfortable. But they didn’t. They obeyed God, and it’s quite possible, rather likely, that Jesus descended directly from one of these 123 returnees from Bethlehem. Wow. Isn’t God’s Word just truly amazing?

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Application for Today: How you obey God and are faithful to Him today could directly affect how your descendants will or will not follow the Lord.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God to show you what kind of spiritual legacy He wants you to have.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying specifically for the hot water faucet in the kitchen that will be in the new building.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



FRIDAY, MAY 23RD, 2025

‘THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE!’

To the Jew who were returning to Jerusalem seeing their family name or their homeland in Ezra 2 or Nehemiah 7 would have been a big deal. Their family members would be able to look at the scrolls for years and say, ‘my family was faithful, we were the remnant, we returned!’. When I ended Sunday’s sermon, I did so by talking about the most important place where your name should be found. The importance of your name being called first at the doctor’s office, your name being on a billboard on the highway, or your name being listed on a bank account with countless digits beside it falls in comparison to your name being written in the lamb’s book of life. You want your children and their children to know that your name is written in the lamb’s book of life not based on what you say about Jesus, but what you have done for Him in your actions.

‘And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.’ Revelation 20:15

‘and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.’ Revelation 13:8

Don’t let your quiet time end this morning without knowing that your name is written in the lamb’s book of life! Ask Jesus to save you from your sin if you haven’t done so. If you are saved, it’s time you make sure you help others around you find out whether or not their name is in the lamb’s book of life.

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Application for Today: Once you know that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life, it's time for you to go and share the good news, constantly.

Prayer Point #1: Spend time today asking God to lead you to people who don't believe in Jesus. Trust me, if you ask Him, He will.

Prayer Point #2: Spend time today praying specifically for the chords that will be used to connect the audio/visual room with the microphones in the gym for worship services in the new building.

Prayer Point #3: Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.

