

EZRA: STARTING OVER WELL AFTER GROUP FAILURE
Part III: Helping The Group By Performing Our Personal, God-Assigned Roles
(Ezra 2:70 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. Group renewal following group spiritual failure takes every believer doing his divinely-assigned part to make the whole group a smooth-running, edifying ministry, cf. Ephesians 4:16.
- B. Yet, if even one person fails in his ministry, it can have a "snowball" effect to harm the whole group.
- C. The solution comes by examining and heeding what Israel did in Ezra 2:70 in light of New Testament teachings on the matter of group welfare as it is applied to the Church era (as follows):

II. Helping The Group By Performing Our Personal, God-Assigned Roles, Ezra 2:70 et al.

- A. Under the dispensation of the Law, God had planned for Israel to occupy the Promised Land, Jos. 1:2-4.
- B. For this plan to **work**, the people were **assigned specific lots** to possess in the land, and **each person** was to dwell in his divinely-assigned lot, cf. Joshua 13:1-21:45.
- C. Thus, for Israel to be renewed for divine blessing following her return from the Babylonian Captivity, all involved needed to establish their homes in their properly allotted land parcels. According to Ezra 2:70, this is what occurred as follows:
 - 1. The priests, Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers and temple servants all lived in the towns originally allotted to them by Joshua, cf. Ezra 2:70a,b NIV, ESV with Joshua 20:1-21:45.
 - 2. The rest of the people then settled in their Biblical tribal allotments, Ezra 2:70c and Joshua 13:8-19:51.
- D. Applied to the Church dispensation, God has specific ministry and geographical assignments for Christians in the Church era to heed if they would fit into the plan of God toward any group renewal:
 - 1. Paul wrote the individual Christian should recognize the welfare of God's people does not rise or fall with him alone, but that he is part of the local (and universal) Body of Christ, Romans 12:3, 4-5.
 - 2. Accordingly, he is to use the spiritual gifting given to Him by the Lord to minister in that area of gifting for the spiritual edification of the Body of Christ, Romans 12:6-8.
 - 3. Now, for our personal information, we supply a list of the ministry gifts as follows:
 - a. The "starter" gifts, or gifts God uses **today** to ignite other believers unto service include: (a) apostle (Eph. 4:11), a foundation builder [although the office of apostleship is long since closed, the ability to start a foundational work may well still exist, cf. Bible Knowledge Com., N.T., p. 634-635]; (b) evangelist (Eph. 4:11), one equipped unusually to evangelize the lost; (c) pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11), one who is able both to shepherd others (guide, protect, provide) and teach God's Word; (d) pastor (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-4), an elder gifted to guide, counsel and protect other believers via upholding God's truths and (e) teacher (Rom. 12:7), one gifted in explaining the harmony and detail of Scripture's truth and making it applicable to one's walk with God.
 - b. The "sustainment" gifts God **today** uses to keep established works functioning include: (a) serving (Rom. 12:7), helping others be more efficient in their own ministries; (b) exhortation (Rom. 12:8), one who motivates other believers to apply God's truths to life; (c) discerning spirits (1 Cor. 12:10), one who readily discerns true from artificial ministry efforts; (d) showing mercy (Rom. 12:8), one who helps the hurting in their spiritual walk; (e) giving (Rom. 12:8), one who is used of God to give an unusually great amount to support other ministries and (f) administration (Rom. 12:8), one who can organize and govern other believers smoothly in a local church ministry.
 - c. Paul added believers excel in faith, knowledge or wisdom in the use of their gifts, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 9a.
 - 4. God also directs believers to specific geographical locations to use their spiritual gifts, Acts 16:6-10.

Lesson: *When Israel returned to her land from the Babylonian Captivity, the nation's renewal in part was facilitated by every Hebrew fitting into his divinely-assigned function and location, Ezra 2:70.*

Application: *(1) For GROUP spiritual renewal to occur, (a) EACH party (b) must heed GOD'S INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY assignment (c) in GOD'S INDIVIDUALLY assigned LOCATION (d) using GOD'S spiritual GIFT. (2) If OTHERS fail in their roles, instead of quitting in discouragement, we should be MORE committed than EVER to FULFILL OUR role as it is NEEDED all the MORE!*