

Ezra 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

Analysis

And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. This verse establishes material support for returnees, creating partnership between those going and remaining. The verb 'help' (nasa) carries sense of lifting up or bearing a burden, indicating substantial support beyond token gesture.

The list—silver, gold, goods, beasts—mirrors Israel's exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36). This typological connection suggests the return from exile recapitulates the original exodus, forming a second redemptive moment. God orchestrates circumstances so His people leave captivity enriched.

The distinction between mandated support and 'freewill offering' recognizes different participation levels. Those remaining had obligation to support returnees, while additional offerings expressed voluntary devotion. This prevented resentment while encouraging generosity beyond minimum requirements.

Historical Context

Persian imperial policy included financial support for religious institutions, viewing this as securing divine favor and political stability. Cyrus's decree aligned with broader Persian practice while specifically advancing Jewish interests. Archaeological evidence shows Persian rulers regularly provided resources for temple construction throughout the empire.

The mention of 'beasts' was crucial for the arduous journey across Mesopotamia. Without such support, many families would lack means to make the journey or establish themselves in Judah.

The 'freewill offering' had deep roots in Jewish practice. The original tabernacle had been built through freewill offerings (Exodus 35:29), ensuring that God's house expressed genuine devotion rather than coercion.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the exodus typology deepen understanding of God's redemptive patterns?
2. What principles for Christian giving emerge from the distinction between required and freewill offerings?
3. How can believers support those called to costly obedience or missionary service today?

Interlinear Text

וְכָל	הַנִּשְׁאָר	מִכָּל	מִקֹּמ וְ	אֶשׁ ר	ה וְא
H3605	And whosoever remaineth	H3605	in any place	H834	H1931
	H7604		H4725		
גַּר	שָׁם	יִנְשָׂא וְהוּ	אֶנְשִׁי י	מִקֹּמ וְ	בְּכֶסֶף
where he sojourneth	H8033	help	H376	in any place	him with silver
H1481		H5375		H4725	H3701
וּבָזָה ב	וּבְרֵכ וְשׁ	וּבְבֵהֶמָּה ה	עִם	ה נִדְבָה ה	
and with gold	and with goods	and with beasts	H5973	beside the freewill offering	
H2091	H7399	H929		H5071	
לְבֵית	הָאֱלֹהִים י	אֶשׁ ר	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:		
for the house	of God	H834	that is in Jerusalem		
H1004	H430		H3389		

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 29:3 (Good): Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,