

Ezra 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

Analysis

Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain. The compliance was universal—"all the men of Judah and Benjamin" (the two southern tribes comprising the returned remnant) assembled. The specific date—ninth month, twentieth day (mid-December by modern calendar)—places this in winter's rainy season, making travel and outdoor gathering particularly difficult.

The phrase "**sat in the street of the house of God**" (rechov bet ha-elohim) describes the temple courtyard or plaza, an open area where large assemblies gathered. The verb "**sat**" suggests they waited there, exposed to weather, in posture of submission and anticipation. Their physical discomfort mirrored their spiritual distress.

"Trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain" (mar'idim al-haddavar umehaggashim) shows dual fear. The Hebrew ra'ad (trembling) suggests terrified shaking, not mere nervousness. They trembled both from awareness of their covenant violation and from winter rainstorms. The great rain's

mention may carry theological overtones—God's displeasure manifested through uncomfortable weather, reminiscent of how disobedience brings curses while obedience brings blessing (Deuteronomy 28).

Historical Context

The ninth month (Kislev) corresponds to November-December, the beginning of the rainy season in Israel. "Great rain" (geshamim, plural suggesting ongoing storms) made sitting outdoors miserable and potentially dangerous. That the assembly proceeded despite these conditions underscores the summons' authority and the people's recognition of crisis gravity.

Temple courtyards accommodated thousands—1 Kings 8:65 describes Solomon's dedication assembly of the entire nation. Archaeological evidence suggests the Second Temple's courtyards could hold large crowds. Sitting in wet weather for what may have been hours (Ezra 10:10-14 describes extended proceedings) required physical endurance that reinforced the psychological weight of the occasion.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the people's trembling demonstrate healthy fear of God's judgment versus paralyzing anxiety?
2. What does their willingness to sit in winter rain teach about prioritizing spiritual crisis over physical comfort?
3. How might the "great rain" function both as natural event and as sign of God's response to covenant violation?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| וְקִבְצָה | 1 | כָּל | אֶנְשִׁי | יְהוּדָה | וּבְנִימָן | יְרוּשָׁלָם |
| gathered themselves together | | H3605 | H376 | of Judah | and Benjamin | unto Jerusalem |
| | H6908 | | | H3063 | H1144 | H3389 |
| בְּשֶׁתֶּן | שְׁנַת | לְשֵׁלֶת | בְּחֵדֶשׁ | הַתְּשִׁיעִינָה | בְּעִשְׂרֵה | יְמֵי |
| within three | days | H1931 | day of the month | It was the ninth | on the twentieth | |
| H7969 | H3117 | | H2320 | H8671 | H6242 | |
| בְּחֵדֶשׁ | וְנִשְׁבָּה | כָּל | בְּחֵדֶשׁ | בְּרַחְבָּה | בְּיַתְּרָה | |
| day of the month | sat | H3605 | and all the people | in the street | of the house | |
| H2320 | H3427 | | H5971 | H7339 | H1004 | |
| עַל | מְרֻעִיד | יָמָם | בְּדַבְּרָה | וּמִפְּגַשְׁתִּים | | |
| of God | trembling | H5921 | because of this matter | and for the great rain | | |
| H430 | H7460 | | H1697 | H1653 | | |

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