

# Ezra 2:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.

## Analysis

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**The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.** Bezai's family (בִּצְיָ, Betzai, possibly 'shining' or 'conqueror') numbered 323 returnees. The name appears again in Nehemiah 7:23 and 10:18, showing continued family prominence through restoration period. The root meaning suggests brilliance or victory—appropriate for those conquering exile's darkness through homeward journey.

The specificity of '323' (not rounded to 'about 300') indicates actual headcount, not symbolic estimation. Ancient census methodology counted males above certain age, meaning total family size including women and children likely exceeded 1,000 persons. This demographic reality explains how relatively 'small' census numbers could rebuild cities and cultivate land.

Bezai's family represents mid-tier clans forming the restoration's backbone. Neither elite leaders nor marginal participants, such families provided sustained effort for mundane rebuilding tasks. Kingdom work requires both visionary leadership and faithful laborers willing to lay stones, plow fields, and raise children in covenant community.

## Historical Context

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The census in Ezra 2 lists approximately 30,000 men, suggesting total returnee population near 50,000 when including women, children, and servants. This represented a small fraction of the exile community. Most Jews had established lives in Babylon and chose comfort over costly obedience—a pattern repeated

throughout redemptive history.

Families like Bezai's faced enormous challenges. Jerusalem lay in ruins, agriculture had reverted to wilderness, and hostile neighbors opposed rebuilding. The first returnees endured hardship so subsequent generations could worship in a rebuilt temple. Their sacrifice made possible the religious infrastructure from which Jesus would emerge.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does the numerical precision teach about God's attention to individual faithfulness amid corporate movements?
2. How can believers today balance legitimate enjoyment of God's blessings with willingness to sacrifice comfort for kingdom advance?
3. What motivates sustained effort in 'mundane' ministry when results seem slow and recognition minimal?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּנֵי י'	בְּצֵי י'	וּשְׁלֹשָׁה:	מֵא וְ	עֶשְׂרִים	וּשְׁלֹשָׁה:
<b>The children</b>	<b>of Bezai</b>	<b>and three</b>	<b>hundred</b>	<b>twenty</b>	<b>and three</b>
H1121	H1209	H7969	H3967	H6242	H7969

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