

# Ezra 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

## Analysis

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**The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.** The family of Zattu (זַטּוּ) bears a name whose etymology remains uncertain—possibly meaning 'olive' or 'branch,' connecting to agricultural imagery common in Israelite nomenclature. The Hebrew root may relate to zayit (זַיִת, olive), suggesting connection to the olive tree that symbolizes Israel (Jeremiah 11:16, Romans 11:17-24). Their 945 members formed substantial community committed to restoration.

The uncertainty around Zattu's precise meaning illustrates how exile threatened cultural memory—even prominent family names could lose clear etymology through displacement. Yet this family's commitment to return despite seventy years of captivity demonstrates that covenant identity transcends complete historical understanding. Faith often requires following God when details remain unclear.

Theologically, if Zattu indeed connects to olive imagery, this enriches meaning: olives require crushing to yield oil, and exile was the crushing that would produce the 'oil' of refined faith. The olive tree's resilience—regrowing from roots even after apparent destruction—parallels Israel's restoration from exile's devastation. Paul's olive tree metaphor in Romans 11 may unconsciously echo families like Zattu.

## Historical Context

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Zattu appears only in post-exilic genealogies (Ezra, Nehemiah), suggesting either:

1. the name originated during exile
2. pre-exilic records were lost, or
3. this represents clan reorganization during captivity.

The absence from earlier biblical texts doesn't diminish legitimacy—exile created new social structures while maintaining covenant continuity.

The precise count (945) indicates careful census, likely conducted before departure from Babylon. Persian administration required such records for managing population movements. The family's size suggests prosperity during exile, yet they chose to leave established lives for ruined Jerusalem.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What does willingness to follow God despite incomplete understanding teach about faith versus certainty?
2. How does olive tree imagery (crushing produces oil) illuminate suffering's redemptive purposes?
3. Why might some families lack clear historical records yet still possess genuine covenant identity?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּנֵי י	זַטּוּ וְא	תִּשְׁעַ ע	מֵא וְ	אַרְבָּעִים	וְחֲמִשָּׁה:
<b>The children</b>	<b>of Zattu</b>	<b>nine</b>	<b>hundred</b>	<b>forty</b>	<b>and five</b>
H1121	H2240	H8672	H3967	H705	H2568

## Additional Cross-References

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**Nehemiah 7:13** (Parallel theme): The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.

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