

Ezra 8:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering: all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Analysis

Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity—בְּנֵי־הַגּוֹלָה הַבָּאִים מִהַשְׁבִּי (benei-hagolah habbaim mehasshevi, sons of the exile, those coming from the captivity). The גּוֹלָה (exile/deportation) and שְׁבִי (captivity) are parallel terms for Babylonian exile. Calling them בְּנֵי (sons/children) emphasizes generational identity—many in Ezra's caravan were born in Babylon, not original deportees. Their self-identification as 'children of the exile' shows covenant consciousness: despite foreign birth, they understood themselves as displaced Israelites whose true home was Judah.

Offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering—the עֹלוֹת (olot, burnt offerings) were totally consumed on the altar (Leviticus 1), symbolizing complete dedication. The numbers are theologically significant: שְׁנַיִם אֲשֶׁר פָּרִים (sheneim asar parim, twelve bulls) represent the twelve tribes (all Israel united), תִּשְׁעִים וְשִׁשָּׁה עֵלִים (tish'im v'shishah eilim, 96 rams = 12×8), שִׁבְעִים וְשִׁבְעָה כְבָשִׁים (shiv'im v'shiv'ah kevasim, 77 lambs = 7×11), שְׁנַיִם אֲשֶׁר צִפְרֵי־עִזִּים (sheneim asar tsefirei-izzim, twelve male goats for a sin offering). The multiples of twelve emphasize national unity—'all Israel' includes the northern tribes lost to Assyrian exile (722 BC), affirming hope for full restoration.

All this was a burnt offering unto the LORD—the comprehensive עֹלָה לַיהוָה (olah l'YHWH) dedicates their arrival, treasure, and future work entirely to Yahweh.

Historical Context

Burnt offerings were the most costly sacrifices—entirely consumed, giving nothing back to the worshiper. The enormous quantity (twelve bulls, 96 rams, 77 lambs) represented substantial wealth, yet the returning exiles offered lavishly after already delivering 24 tons of silver and 3.75 tons of gold. This extravagant worship reflects gratitude for safe journey and commitment to covenant restoration. The twelve-tribe symbolism was poignant: the northern kingdom had been lost for 260+ years, yet the remnant still worshiped as 'all Israel,' maintaining hope for national reunification under Messiah.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does identifying as 'children of the exile' despite being born in Babylon teach about maintaining covenant identity across generations?
2. How does the twelve-tribe symbolism demonstrate hope for full restoration despite centuries of division and loss?
3. In what ways should worship offerings demonstrate grateful extravagance rather than grudging minimum compliance?

Interlinear Text

הַ בָּאִים	מִהַשְׁבִּי	בְּנֵי					
which were come out	of the captivity	Also the children					
H935	H7628	H1121					
			הַקֹּרְבָּנוֹת	עוֹלָה			
			offered	all this was a burnt offering			
			H7126	H5930			
לֵאלֹהֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	פָּרִים	שְׁנַיִם	עֶשְׂרִי	עַל	כָּל	יִשְׂרָאֵל
unto the God	for all Israel	bullocks	twelve	H6240	H5921	H3605	for all Israel
H430	H3478	H6499	H8147				H3478
אֵילִם	תִּשְׁעִים	וְשֵׁשׁ	כְּבָשִׂים	שִׁבְעִים	וְשִׁבְעִים	צִפִּירֵי	
rams	ninety	and six	lambs	seventy	and seven	he goats	
H352	H8673	H8337	H3532	H7657	H7651	H6842	
חַטָּאת	שְׁנַיִם	עֶשְׂרִי	הַכֹּל	עוֹלָה			
for a sin offering	twelve	H6240	H3605	all this was a burnt offering			
H2403	H8147			H5930			
לַיהוָה:							
unto the LORD							
H3068							

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 6:17 (Sin): And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.