



## This Weeks Message: LOST IDENTITY

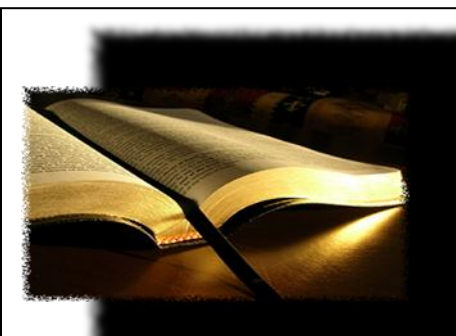
## Special Message for Graduating Seniors

**Ezra 2:61-63** *“And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.”*

What if you lost your identity? In Ezra chapter 2, we have a list of Jews that returned to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon (Ezra 2:1).<sup>1</sup> *“Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;”*

This was a time of national cleansing (purging). Because the Jews captivity was so long, some people thought that they would never return to their home land. Verses 61-63 reveals how priests were expected to provide proof of their lineage

**Family record or family tree** – a record of successive generations of kindred, pedigree, kinship group, clan, kin, tribe - group of people related by blood or marriage, blood line, ancestry, lineage, line of descent, origin, descent, stock, line - the descendants of one individual



In our story there were three priestly families, all of which forbidden to minister because they lost their record or connection to the past. This is the danger of moving away—there’s a possibility of losing or seeking an identity apart from one’s past.

The first two families, Habaiah and Koz, apparently lost their record through negligence. Moreover, they lost their right to serve when they lost their connection! In the OT Jews looked to their genealogy to secure their right to serve. However, in the NT looking to genealogies are forbidden (1Timothy 1:4; Titus 3:9).

In the NT the right to serve is found, not in our pedigree, but in our purity (2Timothy 2:19-21). In the NT purity has become the new pedigree, or eligibility for service. Ministry requires purity, and greater levels of ministry require greater

## Choices made in Babylon may forfeit your future.

*“This is the danger of moving away, there’s a possibility of losing or seeking an identity apart from one’s past.”*

levels of purity (2Timothy 2:22-24)!

Young people, you may think your choices today have little effect on your future. Remember, choices made in Babylon forfeited their future in Jerusalem. When it came time to stand in their calling, they were disqualified (1Corinthians 9:27).

The final family in our story was the family of Barzillai, who forfeited his name for a new one. Barzillai was not his original name. He adopted this name. Who was Barzillai, and why would anyone want to adopt his name?

Barzillai was a wealthy man who supported David during his flight from Absalom (2 Samuel 17:27).

Apparently this name was adopted because of ambition. Priestly names did not have the same significance in Babylon as they did in Jerusalem.

This is an example of those who look upon their ministry or their relation to ministers with disdain.

Don’t abandon your identity because it is not celebrated by a particular people or environment. If you do, you might regret it later (Hebrews 12:15-17).

Young people, some choices cannot be undone.

**SOME CHOICES CANNOT BE UNDONE**

Unfortunately, you could move your feet and you lose your seat (Jude 6)!

Paul was vilified for his ministry (Acts 22:21, 22). However, he “magnified” that which others scorned (Romans 11:13). We as believers need to take our example from Paul and magnify what others scorn. Remember, Christ will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him!

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ezra 2:63

I believe the Urim and Thummim are mentioned to emphasize how permanent exclusion comes from God, not man. Man may allow you to serve polluted, but God may.



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### Message for Graduating Seniors:

Ezra 1:61, 62

These men despised their priestly birthright while in Babylon, choosing to adopt a different birthright (one of prestige and fame). This is a lesson to those of us who, in certain environments, are moved to despise our priestly (godly) inheritance and identity. When you abandon your identity in an environment that does not celebrate priests, you will come to regret it later (Hebrews 12:16, 17).

Some of you will be tempted to despise and be ashamed of your godly inheritance and identity while in college. I admonish you not to adopt a new identity. This is a test. If you fail you will come to regret your choice. When it comes time to enter into your office you just might be rejected. Remember Jesus said that if you are ashamed of Him before your crowd, He will be ashamed of you before His crowd! Also, the angels that left their first estate were not only banished from the kingdom of heaven, but they were banished into eternal darkness and torment.