

Why did the Jews resort to family names during the Persian period? Perhaps the Jews adopted them while in exile out of a sense of self-preservation. Perhaps, being forced to use foreign names in public they passed their personal names to their descendants. The practice does not have to be ubiquitous to explain what we find in the text. It only needs to be common.

Human nature demands closure. People are not comfortable with ambiguities in their history or in their belief system. Such dissonance is eliminated by making definite assumptions, even if the assumptions are untrue. These assumptions become traditions and orthodoxy engineered to explain things that really are unknown. The bible does provide sufficient data, but Gōd did not mean to lay everything out in a list of black and white truths to be read in serial fashion. The logic of organization in the bible is not formal and Greek. Rather it is Hebrew and prophetic. This is clear-enough in the near-far nature of prophecy. Why does Gōd arrange things so? He does it to require the faithful to search the truth out. He tells parables so that his people have to think.

But biblical prophecy is not obscure like the false prophets. It is not mumbo jumbo or dark sayings. Nor is the history of the Persian period. At the proper time, when all things are searched out, it will be plain that Gōd was plain in his word, and what he said will be the verified truth among his people in the days to come. Until Gōd was ready for the answer to be found, the matter remains sealed until the end of days (Daniel 12:9).

Zerubbabel to Nehemiah

Zerubbabel returned in **3612**, **529** B.C. with the new High Priest Yeshua. The contemporary Nehemiah listed in Zerubbabel's register (Nehemiah 7:7 and Ezra 2:2) is not the famed wall builder, but only of the same family.¹⁸¹ Nor is the Ezra, added to it in Nehemiah 12:1, the scribe who read the Torah in **445 B.C.** There were **84** years between the return under Zerubbabel and Nehemiah building the walls in **3696**, **445** B.C., and an additional **49** years between the wall building and Ezra's 7th year return under Artaxerxes II.

Moreover, there has, indeed, been much confusion about the similarity of names at the renewal of the covenant in Nehemiah 10 with the list in Nehemiah 12:1-9 of those who returned with Zerubbabel. It has been assumed that these are the same individuals, and then noted that **91** (or correctly **84**) years is much too long a time to separate the two lists.

However, the assumption that the names in Nehemiah 12:1-9 are for the same individual men as in chapter 10 is mistaken. These names are family names, and do not refer to the same men, but only to the same family bearing a common surname.

Again, the Scripture says exactly this: Just prior to Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem Joachim was the High Priest, and in Nehemiah 12:12-21ff the individual who represented each of the families mentioned in 12:1-9 and chapter 10 are named. The family surnames are stated in chapter 10:1-9 and 12:1-9, but the individuals representing the families are named in 12:12-21.

For example, in 12:12, Hananiah is designated the head of the family of Jeremiah. Moreover, Jehohanan is named as the head of the family of Amariah. Clearly, an individual is not the representative of just another individual. Therefore, Amariah and Jeremiah are family names just like all the other names in the list down to vs. 21.

The key is that none of the individual names associated with the family names are found with both Zerubbabel and Nehemiah or Ezra. The few similar individual names belong to different people. Only the family names are the same in both periods and refer to the same family group.

The succession of High Priests starting with the return under Zerubbabel confirms the chronology:

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| 1. Jeshua | 11-3616 (with Zerubbabel, 529 B.C.) |
| 2. Joiakim | 11-3663 |
| 3. Eliashib | 11-3696 (with Nehemiah, 445 B.C.) |
| 4. Joiada | 11-3733 |
| 5. Jonathan ¹⁸² | 11-3745 (contemporary of Ezra, 397 B.C.) |
| 6. Jaddua | 11-3787 (lived till Alexander's Conquest) |

Analysis of Daniel 9:24

The Daniel 9 section explains the chronology of the matter, however, as the interpretation of the text has been disputed, it is necessary to address some points. First it should not be assumed that because there are disputes that the matter is unclear. The reason that there are disputes is that Satan seeks to concentrate his attack just where matters are most clear. He puts the most effort into mudding things most important.

“Daniel 9:24 Sevens—seventy are determined concerning your people, and concerning your holy city, to finish the transgression, to seal up sins, to wipe away iniquity, and to bring everlasting righteousness, and to complete the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies”

Sevens : שבעים. The New International Version renders, “Seventy sevens”. The Stone Edition Tanach renders, “Seventy septets”. BDB says “**n.m. period of seven** (days or years), **heptad, week ... heptad** or *seven* of years, late.” However, the German *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, ©1985, is much more up to date, “**שבעות** **Einheit von Sieben, Siebent**” = *unit (period) of seven, seventh*. **Siebent** = *seventh*. Perhaps שבעים = שביעים instead of שבעים? However, it does not make any difference because the prophecy works out both ways regardless of reading different vowel points.

to finish the transgression : הפשע לכלא. *The transgression* is definite and singular. It refers to the rebellion of Israel and Judah against the Most High. This was the subject of Daniel's prayer in the preceding part of the chapter. It means that this time period is determined for Israel and Judah to repent of their transgression. As long as this has not happened, the prophecy is not complete.

to wipe away iniquity : ולכפר. The contextual use of the verb *kippur* clearly includes the sense of cleansing or expiation. The idea of “wipe away” unifies all the contexts and brings linguistic concordance to the sense of the word. “*On account of Akkadian b) to wipe off, to expiate has been suggested as original meaning of כפר*.” (pg. 452, Baumgartner). Two things are to be considered, a. wiping out the penalty, and b. wiping out the contamination of sin itself, i.e.

¹⁸¹ Likewise, Jeremiah in 12:1 is not the prophet.

¹⁸² This High Priest is mentioned in the Elephantine Papyri and by Ezra when he went to Jerusalem (Ezra 10:6). Josephus says he was compelled to slay his brother.