

**EZRA: STARTING OVER WELL AFTER GROUP FAILURE**  
**Part II: Taking "Politically Incorrect" Stands Of Group Holiness For God's Blessing**  
**(Ezra 2:61-63)**

**I. Introduction**

A. For renewal to occur following group spiritual failure, not only must God work in the hearts of others around us to motivate key parties toward doing God's will, but **courageous politically incorrect stands** of group holiness are needed if we would be blessed by a holy God's blessing.

B. Ezra 2:61-63 in view of its rich historical background and context exemplifies this need as follows:

**II. Taking "Politically Incorrect" Stands Of Group Holiness For God's Blessing, Ezra 2:61-63.**

A. In the process of organizing the returning Hebrew exiles, it was learned that some who had believed they were qualified to serve as priests lacked proof of their lineage in the genealogical records, Ezra 2:62a.

B. Well, the Law forbade all who were not of the priestly line from serving in the holy places, cf. Num. 8:19.

C. Thus, those who could not prove their priestly lineage were considered ineligible for priestly service, being excluded from the temple service until a high priest would rise to determine God's will regarding their lineage through means of the Urim and Thummim, Ezra 2:62b-63.

D. On the surface, this decision appears to be an obvious one to make, but viewing the **history** of the *people involved* reveals what a **courageous, "politically incorrect" stand** it would have been (as follows):

1. First, some of the **people** regarded as **ineligible** included descendants of a **renowned, godly believer**:

a. One group considered ineligible as priests came from a daughter of Barzillai, the Gileadite, 2:61c.

b. Well, Barzillai had proved to be a remarkably courageous, loyal, dedicated helper to David in his flight from Absalom: (a) When David fled from Absalom's rebellion, Barzillai the Gileadite had met David at Mahanaim across the Jordan with much livelihood necessities for his needy party, 2 Sam. 17:27c-29. (b) Such support took a lot of courage, for had David not become victorious over Absalom, Barzillai would have lost his property and been killed. (c) Making Barzillai's courage all the more remarkable was the fact he stood to lose a fortune, for he was a very wealthy man, 2 Sam. 19:32c NIV (d) Also, Barzillai was eighty years old when he had helped David, making his trip from Rogelim to Mahanaim to meet David, a distance of 27 miles (Torrington to Hartford) overland and exposed to possible attack from Absalom's nearing forces on his right flank a health-threatening one, 2 Sam. 19:31-32; Aharoni & Avi-Yonah, The Macmillan Bible Atlas, p. 71, map 109.

c. Thus, to decide that those who felt they were priests but whose lineage had been affected by the inclusion of the daughter of such a remarkable believer who **happened** to be a **non-Levite** would have been about as "politically incorrect" a decision to make as was possible at the time!

2. Then, the one making the decision was as "politically incorrect" a party so to rule as was **possible**:

a. The presiding ruler who made the decision that those with questionable genealogies should not even eat of the holy things until God's will had clarified through the high priest their lineage was the Tirshatha, or Persian governor, Ezra 2:63 KJV with Ezra 2:63 NIV, ESV.

b. This man was called the Persian name of Sheshbazzar though his Hebrew name was Zerubbabel, the one who laid the temple foundation, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, ftn. to Ezra 1:8 with Ezra 5:16 & Zec. 4:9.

c. Well, Zerubbabel was the descendant of the wicked King Jeconiah, the king **God condemned never** to have a **descendant rule** on David's **throne** in **punishment** for his **sin**, Ibid., Ryrie Study Bible, KJV; 1 Chr. 3:16-19 and Jer. 22:24-25, 30 with Ibid., Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, ftn. to Jer. 22:24-30.

3. So, the **descendant** of *evil* Jeconiah, a king whose **descendants** were **judged** by **God no longer** to **rule** on **David's throne**, decided the **descendants** of the *godly* Barzillai were "ineligible" for priestly service due to **doubts** about the purity of their priestly **lineage** -- a very "politically incorrect" ruling!

E. Nevertheless, this decision was **RIGHT** so the nation could return to **holiness** in **heeding** the Lord's will!

***Lesson:*** *Though the descendant of a wicked king whose descendants were divinely kept from ruling on David's throne due to the original king's sin had to decide the descendants of a godly man were ineligible to serve in the temple due to questions on the purity of their lineage, as "politically incorrect" as it was, this DECISION nevertheless was the RIGHT one, and it was MADE for spiritual renewal.*

***Application:*** *For God's blessing, may we ALSO stand for His will even if it is "politically incorrect"!*