

1 Chronicles 8:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal;

Analysis

Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal—this genealogical snippet lists three Benjamite names in the Elpaal clan. **Ishmerai** (יִשְׁמֶרַי 'Yahweh guards'), **Jezliah** (יְזַלְיָהוּ 'God will draw out'), and **Jobab** (יֹבָב 'a desert') demonstrate typical Hebrew naming patterns: theophoric names incorporating Yahweh/El (first two) alongside common nouns (third).

These obscure names appear nowhere else in Scripture—no heroic deeds, prophetic words, or dramatic failures recorded. Yet their inclusion in Chronicles testifies to a profound theological truth: every covenant member matters to God's record-keeping, not just heroes and kings. The Holy Spirit inspired preservation of otherwise forgotten names, suggesting God's encyclopedic memory of His people (Malachi 3:16; Philippians 4:3) and anticipating the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27).

The name **Jobab** ('desert') appears as both an Edomite king (Genesis 36:33) and these Benjamite clan members, showing name-sharing across ethnic boundaries. That 'desert' became a personal name may reflect circumstances of birth (born during wilderness wandering?) or character traits (austere, hardy). Scripture's willingness to memorialize even 'desert'-named minor figures shows God values all His image-bearers, not merely the illustrious.

Historical Context

This genealogy belongs to Benjamin's families dwelling in Jerusalem after some period of displacement (v. 28 says 'these dwelt in Jerusalem'). The context suggests post-exilic resettlement (Nehemiah 11 lists Benjamites who settled Jerusalem), though the genealogy extends back to pre-exilic ancestors. The Chronicler's preservation of these names validated the tribal claims of returning exiles, confirming their legitimate descent from ancient Benjamite clans despite 70-year Babylonian interruption.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's preservation of 'nobodies' like Ishmerai, Jezliah, and Jobab in Scripture encourage you about your own significance in His kingdom?
2. What does the inclusion of seemingly unimportant genealogical details teach about God's comprehensive care for every member of His covenant community?

Interlinear Text

יִשְׁמֵרַי	וְיֵזְלִיָּהּ	וְיֹבָב	בְּנֵי	אֶלְפָּעַל:
Ishmerai	also and Jezliah	and Jobab	the sons	of Elpaal
H3461	H3152	H3103	H1121	H508

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