

Ezra 10:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

Analysis

And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month—the investigation concluded exactly three months after it began (Tebeth 1 to Nisan 1). The phrase vaykhalu (וַיְכַל, 'they finished') indicates completion, thoroughness. No cases were left unresolved or swept aside.

The timing is significant: Nisan 1 marked the religious new year and approached Passover (Nisan 14). Resolving the crisis before Passover allowed the community to celebrate redemption with renewed covenant purity. This echoes the original Passover requirement that participants be ceremonially clean (Exodus 12:43-49, Numbers 9:6-14).

The 113 guilty men (counted in vv. 18-44) represented about 2% of the 5,000+ returnees, suggesting most had maintained covenant faithfulness. Yet even this minority threatened corporate identity, requiring thorough action. The completion demonstrates that comprehensive reform, though painful, is achievable through diligent leadership and community commitment.

Historical Context

The three-month timeline (December 29 to March 27, 458 BC) allowed careful investigation of each case. The list in verses 18-44 includes priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and laypeople—showing covenant violation crossed social boundaries. Completing the process before Passover held theological significance:

just as Israel left Egypt purified for covenant relationship, so the restored community purified itself for covenant renewal.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does the thorough completion of all 113 cases teach about the importance of following through in church discipline?
2. How does the timing before Passover demonstrate the connection between judgment, purification, and celebration?
3. What encouragement does the 2% violation rate offer regarding the faithfulness of God's remnant even in difficult times?

Interlinear Text

וְכָרְיִ וֹת נְשִׁ יִם בְּהַשׁ יִבּוּ אֲנָשִׁ יִם בְּכֶ לִיכָּל וּ	And they made an end	H3605	H376	that had taken	wives	strange
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