

Ezra 10:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah,
Shemaiah, Shimeon,

Analysis

And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, The **Harim** (חַרִּים, Charim, meaning "dedicated" or "consecrated") family ironically bears a name suggesting holiness yet produced covenant violators. Eliezer (אֱלִיעֶזֶר, "God is help") leads this list—the same name as Abraham's faithful servant and Moses' son, now associated with unfaithfulness. The name proclaims divine assistance, yet Eliezer sought help through pragmatic intermarriage rather than covenant obedience.

Malchiah (מַלְכִּיָּה, "Yahweh is king") appears repeatedly in these lists, indicating it was common name in post-exilic community. Each occurrence highlights the gap between confessing Yahweh's kingship and submitting to His covenant rule. Shemaiah (שֶׁמַּיָּה, "Yahweh has heard") and Shimeon (שִׁמְעוֹן, "hearing") both derive from shama (to hear/obey), emphasizing covenant listening—yet these men failed to hear or obey the law prohibiting intermarriage. The verse ends mid-sentence, continuing in verse 32, creating literary suspense that mirrors the community's unresolved crisis.

Historical Context

Harim was a priestly family (1 Chronicles 24:8) with 1,017 members who returned (Ezra 2:39). That priests violated intermarriage prohibitions was especially grievous—they were meant to teach covenant law and model holiness. Priestly intermarriage endangered the sacrificial system itself, as priests with foreign

wives would be ritually compromised. The 458 BC crisis threatened not just social cohesion but cultic purity essential to proper worship and atonement.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does priestly involvement in covenant violation teach about the danger when spiritual leaders compromise?
2. How do the names emphasizing "hearing" (Shemaiah, Shimeon) challenge believers about the connection between hearing God's word and obeying it?
3. In what ways might contemporary church leaders face temptations toward pragmatic compromise that others look to them to resist?

Interlinear Text

וּבְנֵי י	חֲרִים	אֶלִּיעֶזֶר	יִשִּׁי ה	מַלְכִּי ה	שְׁמַעְיָה	שִׁמְעוֹן:
And of the sons	of Harim	Eliezer	Ishijah	Malchiah	Shemaiah	Shimeon
H1121	H2766	H461	H3449	H4441	H8098	H8095

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 3:11 (Parallel theme): Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.