

Ezra 10:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

Analysis

And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei. These three names continue the catalog of those who violated the marriage covenant. Bani means 'built' (bānûy, בָּנָי), Binnui means 'built up' or 'my building,' and Shimei means 'famous' or 'Yahweh has heard' (Shim'î, שִׁמְעָה). The first two names share the building theme, possibly indicating family relationship. The irony is sharp: those whose names meant 'built up' were actually tearing down the community's spiritual foundation through covenant violation.

Shimei was a common Levitical name (1 Chronicles 6:42), raising the possibility that some listed here were from priestly or Levitical families. If so, this intensifies the tragedy—those responsible for teaching covenant faithfulness were themselves violating it. The concise listing provides no excuses or explanations, only stark accountability.

Theologically, this demonstrates that no one's status exempts them from covenant requirements. Whether priests or laypeople, leaders or followers, all stood equally accountable before God's law. The building imagery in the names underscores the paradox: they built their own houses through forbidden marriages while undermining the house of God.

Historical Context

These men belonged to different family clans (the list spans Ezra 10:18-44), showing the problem of mixed marriages spread across the entire community

rather than isolated to particular groups. This broad distribution made Ezra's reform more urgent—the corruption wasn't peripheral but threatened the community's core.

The name Shimei connects to various Old Testament figures, including the Benjamite who cursed David (2 Samuel 16:5-13) and Levites serving in the temple (1 Chronicles 23:7-10). Common names across tribes made genealogical records essential for proper identification.

The requirement to publicly confess and divorce (Ezra 10:19) created economic hardship, as divorcing men had to provide for displaced wives and children. This costly obedience demonstrated genuine repentance, not merely verbal acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the 'building' imagery in names challenge understanding of what truly builds up God's community?
2. What does equal accountability across social classes teach about divine justice?
3. How should churches practice restorative discipline that maintains both truth and compassion?

Interlinear Text

שְׁמָעִיּוֹן בְּנֵי בְּנֵי

And Bani and Binnui Shimei

H1137

H1131

H8096

