

Ezra 10:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

Analysis

And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah. This final trio in the immediate sequence includes Shelemiah ('Yahweh is peace/recompense,' Shelemyāh, שְׁלֵמִיָּה), Nathan ('he gave,' Nātān, נָתָן), and Adaiah ('Yahweh has adorned/witnessed,' 'Adāyāh, אֲדָיָה). Nathan shares a name with David's faithful prophet who confronted the king about adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12)—a bitter irony given the marriage violations here.

Shelemiah's name proclaiming 'Yahweh is peace' contrasts sharply with the disruption and division his forbidden marriage caused. True peace (shālōm) requires covenant faithfulness, not compromise for relational harmony. Adaiah ('Yahweh has adorned') suggests divine favor, yet that favor required holiness, not accommodation to surrounding culture.

Theologically, these names collectively testify that even those blessed with covenant identity, named after God's attributes, can fall through gradual compromise. The progression from exile to return to reformation shows God's persistent work to purify a people for Himself, willing to expose painful sin to preserve spiritual integrity.

Historical Context

These concluding names bring the total violators to 113 men from priestly, Levitical, and lay families (Ezra 10:18-44). The investigation led by Ezra, assisted by family heads, examined each case individually over three months (Ezra

10:16-17). This wasn't arbitrary judgment but careful legal process.

The assembly occurred during intense rain (Ezra 10:9, 13), adding physical discomfort to spiritual anguish. The timing in the ninth month (Kislev, November-December) meant cold, wet conditions, perhaps symbolizing the discomfort of confronting sin.

Ezra 10:44 notes that some of these marriages had produced children, intensifying the emotional difficulty. The requirement to send away both wives and children applied Deuteronomy 7:1-4, prioritizing covenant purity over family bonds. This radical obedience prevented the syncretism that had originally caused exile.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do believers navigate tension between compassion for individuals and maintaining community holiness?
2. What does the name Nathan (shared with David's confronting prophet) teach about accountability among God's people?
3. How can churches address cultural accommodation without fostering judgmental legalism?

Interlinear Text

וְשְׁלֵמִי הָנָתֵן | תְּעִדִּיה:

And Shelemiah and Nathan and Adaiah

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