

Ezra 10:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

Analysis

Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah—**אֶזְרָאֵל** (Azarel, 'God has helped'), **שְׁלָמִיה** (Shelemyah, 'Yahweh is peace/recompense'), **שְׁמָרִיה** (Shemaryah, 'Yahweh guards/keeps'). These names appearing in a list of covenant-breakers creates tragic irony: men bearing names celebrating Yahweh's help, peace, and protection have violated covenant by marrying pagan wives. The list in chapter 10 methodically documents every man guilty of mixed marriage following Shecaniah's proposal (10:3-4) for covenant renewal requiring dismissal of foreign wives and their children.

The inclusion of theophoric names (containing divine names: -el for Elohim, -iah/-yah for Yahweh) throughout this list heightens the tragedy—these weren't nominal Israelites but men whose very names proclaimed covenant identity, yet they'd compromised that identity through forbidden alliances. The naming isn't punitive shaming but necessary accountability: the written record (v. 44) documents who participated in covenant renewal, protecting the community from later disputes about who had complied with the covenant terms.

Historical Context

This list concludes Ezra's dramatic confrontation with mixed marriage crisis (chapter 9-10). Upon discovering widespread intermarriage with pagan women (9:1-2), Ezra tore his garments and prayed agonizing confession (9:5-15). The people's response—led by Shecaniah despite his own family's guilt (10:2-4)—was extraordinary: voluntary covenant to dismiss foreign wives. The three-month investigation (10:16-17) examined each case individually, suggesting careful

adjudication rather than blanket condemnation. By 458 BC (Ezra's arrival), mixed marriages had become normalized; the covenant renewal restored theological boundaries necessary for Israel's distinct witness.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the irony of covenant-breakers bearing Yahweh-honoring names teach about the gap between profession and practice?
2. How does the careful documentation of every guilty party demonstrate accountability while also enabling restoration?
3. In what ways should church discipline balance public accountability with pastoral care for genuine repentance?

Interlinear Text

עֲזַרְאֵל וְשְׁלֵמִי הוּא שְׁמַרְיָה:

Azareel and **Shelemiah** **Shemariah**
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