

Ezra 10:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

Analysis

Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah—*(benei Nevo, sons of Nebo)* identifies a family clan. The irony of this clan name is striking: *נֶבוֹ* (Nevo, Nebo) was the Babylonian deity of wisdom and writing (Isaiah 46:1), also Mount Nebo where Moses died viewing the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 34:1). Whether the clan name predated the exile or reflects Babylonian influence, men from this clan committed the very sin Ezra condemns—religious syncretism symbolized by marrying women who worship foreign gods.

The seven names listed—*יעֵיל* (Ye'iel, 'God sweeps away'), *מַתִּיחָה* (Mattityah, 'gift of Yahweh'), *זָבָד* (Zavad, 'endowed'), *זְבִינָה* (Zevina, 'bought/purchased'), *יַדָּו* (Yaddav, perhaps 'he will know'), *יְאֵל* (Yo'el, 'Yahweh is God'), and *בְּנַיָּה* (Benayah, 'Yahweh has built')—contain multiple theophoric elements, again showing these were covenant-conscious men who nonetheless compromised. The detailed enumeration ensures every guilty party is documented, fulfilling the investigative commission's work (10:16).

Historical Context

The 'sons of Nebo' clan appears only here in Scripture. Whether they descended from a pre-exilic Israelite named Nebo or adopted the name in Babylon, their association with the pagan deity's name combined with their intermarriage guilt suggests they'd become particularly assimilated to Babylonian culture. The list's

organization by family clans (priests first, 10:18-22; then Levites, 10:23-24; then laypeople by clan, 10:25-43) shows the mixed marriage problem pervaded all social strata—no group was immune to the compromise.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the clan name 'sons of Nebo' (a pagan deity) reveal about the depth of cultural assimilation among exiled Jews?
2. How does the problem's presence across all social strata (priests, Levites, laypeople) demonstrate the pervasiveness of compromise?
3. In what ways do contemporary Christians face similar pressures toward cultural assimilation that compromise theological distinctiveness?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה	מִבְּנֵי	נְבָטָה	מַתִּיחָה	זָבָד	זְבִינָה	יְהִיאָה	יְהִיאָה	וְיְהִיאָה
Of the sons	of Nebo	Jeiel	Mattithiah	Zabad	Zebina	Jadau	and Joel			
H1121	H5015	H3273	H4993	H2066	H2081	H3035	H3100			

בְּנֵיהֶן:

Benaiah

H1141

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 2:29 (Parallel theme): The children of Nebo, fifty and two.