

Ezra 2:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The men of Netophah, fifty and six.

Analysis

The men of Netophah, fifty and six. Netophah (נְטוּפָה, Netophah, 'distillation' or 'dropping') was a village near Bethlehem, home to some of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:28-29). The shift from 'children' to **men** (אֲנָשִׁים, anshei) in this verse suggests military or civic designation rather than genealogical. These fifty-six may have constituted Netophah's fighting-age males, emphasizing community organization for defense.

The name 'distillation' evokes drops of water or dew, suggesting either a location with springs or metaphorical reference to divine blessing distilled on God's people. Micah 5:7 describes the remnant 'as dew from the LORD'—small but life-giving. Netophah's small population embodied this principle: a tiny community preserving covenant faith.

Netophah's connection to David's mighty men linked returnees to martial faithfulness. These weren't passive refugees but 'men'—active participants in rebuilding and defending. The restoration required both spiritual devotion (priests/Levites) and physical courage (warriors/builders). Nehemiah later organized builders to work with sword in one hand, trowel in the other (Nehemiah 4:17).

Historical Context

Netophah's proximity to Bethlehem (about three miles) created natural association between communities. Both towns maintained Davidic connections, preserving memory of Israel's golden age. Archaeological surveys identify Netophah with

Khirbet Bedd Faluh, showing Persian-period occupation consistent with this return account.

The designation 'men' rather than 'children' may indicate military census format. Ancient Near Eastern records distinguished between total population and fighting-age males. This shift in terminology suggests returnees organized for defense from the beginning, anticipating opposition (which soon materialized from Sanballat and others).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the connection to David's mighty men inspire courage for spiritual warfare today?
2. What does the 'men' designation teach about Christian maturity and active engagement versus passive religion?
3. How can small communities leverage spiritual heritage and mutual commitment for disproportionate kingdom impact?

Interlinear Text

וְאַנְשֵׁי נְטוּפָה סֵמֶשׁ יְמִינָה: הַשְׁעָרָה:

The men of Netophah fifty and six

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