

Ezra 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

Analysis

The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. This census begins the genealogical register of returning exiles with the family of Parosh (פֶּרֶשׁ), meaning 'flea' or possibly 'blooming'—a name suggesting humble origins transformed by God's grace. The precise enumeration of 2,172 individuals demonstrates meticulous record-keeping that served legal, theological, and historical purposes.

The Hebrew word *bene* (בְּנֵי, 'children') denotes both literal descendants and clan members, encompassing family units that preserved covenant identity through seventy years of captivity. These numbers weren't merely statistical—each represented a soul who chose costly obedience to return. The Parosh family's prominence (largest group listed) suggests significant leadership role in the exile community.

Theologically, this verse teaches that God's redemptive work includes detailed record of individuals. Unlike pagan empires that treated masses as expendable, Scripture names families and numbers souls, reflecting the God who 'knows them that are His' (2 Timothy 2:19). The parallel account in Nehemiah 7:8 lists identical numbers, confirming historical reliability.

Historical Context

The census format follows ancient Near Eastern administrative practices, particularly Persian imperial records that documented populations for taxation and military conscription. However, Ezra's register served distinct theological purpose: establishing genealogical legitimacy for land claims, priestly service, and covenant identity. Families had preserved genealogies through two generations of exile, demonstrating extraordinary commitment to heritage despite assimilation pressures.

The return occurred in 538 BC under Zerubbabel's leadership, approximately fifty years after Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem. Those returning faced ruins, hostile neighbors, and massive rebuilding task. The detailed numbers (often totaling odd figures) suggest authentic historical sources rather than symbolic approximations.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's preservation of family identities through exile teach about His faithfulness to generational covenant promises?
2. How should the church today balance concern for numerical growth with care for individual souls known by name?
3. What costly decisions might modern believers face that parallel the choice to leave comfortable exile for difficult obedience?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁנִים:	שִׁבְעִים	מֵאָה	אַלְפֵי יָם	פְּרָעֵי שׁ	בְּנֵי י
and two	seventy	an hundred	two thousand	of Parosh	The children
H8147	H7657	H3967	H505	H6551	H1121

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 8:3 (Parallel theme): Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.

Ezra 10:25 (Parallel theme): Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.