

Ezra 2:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

Analysis

The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. Harim (חַרִּים, Charim, meaning 'flat-nosed' or 'dedicated') appears multiple times in Ezra-Nehemiah, representing both a priestly family (Ezra 2:39, Nehemiah 7:42) and a lay family (here and Ezra 10:31). The distinction shows careful genealogical precision—priestly and non-priestly Harim families existed separately, requiring context to determine which group a reference indicates.

The number 320 represents substantial participation. Nehemiah 10:5 lists Harim among those sealing covenant renewal, and Ezra 10:21, 31 mentions Harim members among those who had married foreign wives and subsequently divorced them in repentance. This demonstrates the family's continued prominence and involvement in both covenant faithfulness and covenant-breaking, reflecting the community's mixed spiritual condition.

Theologically, Harim's inclusion illustrates that no family, however prominent, remains immune to spiritual compromise. The same family name appears in contexts of both faithfulness (covenant sealing) and unfaithfulness (intermarriage). This demonstrates the ongoing nature of covenant obedience—past faithfulness doesn't guarantee future perseverance. Each generation must choose loyalty to God, regardless of ancestral heritage.

Historical Context

Harim's priestly division (1 Chronicles 24:8) served in temple worship according to David's organization. The family's dual appearance—priestly and lay branches—shows how significant families developed multiple lineages over generations. During the exile, priestly families maintained distinct identity since temple service required verified Aaronic descent. Upon return, priestly Harim members resumed sacrificial duties while lay Harim members re-established in their ancestral towns. The 320 lay Harim returnees contributed to rebuilding Judean communities. Their later involvement in the intermarriage crisis (Ezra 10:31) and covenant renewal (Nehemiah 10:5) shows that even returning families faced ongoing spiritual challenges requiring repeated reformation and covenant renewal.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Harim's involvement in both covenant renewal and covenant-breaking illustrate the ongoing nature of spiritual warfare?
2. What does the distinction between priestly and lay Harim families teach about maintaining clear roles and identities within covenant community?
3. How can churches address the reality that prominent families may simultaneously contribute to faithfulness and unfaithfulness?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי י	חֲרִים	שְׁלֹשׁ	מֵאוֹת	וְעֶשְׂרִים:
The children	of Harim	three	hundred	and twenty
H1121	H2766	H7969	H3967	H6242

