

Ezra 2:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

Analysis

The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua (הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי יְדַעְיָה וְיֵשׁוּעַ) (לְבֵית יֵשׁוּעַ)—The shift to hakohanim (the priests) marks a crucial transition in the census from laypeople to ministerial orders. Jedaiah means 'Yahweh has known,' appropriate for those who would mediate knowledge of God. This family descended from the high priestly line through Jeshua (Joshua), who would serve as high priest during the rebuilding (Ezra 3:2).

The 973 priests from this single family represented about 10% of all returning priests (4,289 total, vv. 36-39). Their placement first among priestly families reflects their prominence in the restoration. Significantly, Jeshua the high priest partnered with Zerubbabel the governor, illustrating the dual leadership (priestly and political) God established for the restoration—anticipating Christ's dual role as King-Priest after Melchizedek's order (Hebrews 7).

Historical Context

Jedaiah's line was one of the 24 priestly divisions established by David (1 Chronicles 24:7). Post-exile, only four of the original 24 divisions returned (Jedaiah, Immer, Pashhur, Harim), yet these were later subdivided to maintain the 24-course rotation. This demonstrates the community's commitment to preserving pre-exilic worship patterns despite reduced numbers.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the prominence of Jedaiah ('Yahweh has known') among returning priests emphasize the importance of being known by God rather than merely knowing about Him?
2. What does the preservation of priestly divisions despite drastically reduced numbers teach about maintaining biblical patterns of worship?
3. How does the Jeshua-Zerubbabel partnership model the balance between spiritual and practical leadership needed for any restoration effort?

Interlinear Text

הַכֹּהֲנִים	בְּנֵי י	יְדַעְיָה	לְבֵית	יֵשׁוּעַ	תִּשְׁעַת	מֵאוֹת
The priests	the children	of Jedaiah	of the house	of Jeshua	nine	hundred
H3548	H1121	H3048	H1004	H3442	H8672	H3967

שִׁבְעָה	וּשְׁלֹשָׁה
seventy	and three
H7657	H7969