

Ezra 2:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

Analysis

The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen—Harim (חֲרִים) means 'flat-nosed' or 'consecrated/devoted,' from the root related to herem (devoted to destruction or sacred use). This dual meaning captures the priestly paradox: those consecrated to God's service handle what is herem—both holy offerings and defiling sin offerings. Their 1,017 members made them the smallest of the four major returning priestly families, yet still substantial.

A descendant of this family, also named Harim, later signed Nehemiah's covenant (Nehemiah 10:5), showing continued faithfulness. The name's connection to 'consecration' proved prophetic—these priests would face the challenge of maintaining qodesh (holiness, קֹדֶשׁ) in a rebuilt temple without the ark, without Shekinah glory, in a time of diminished splendor. Yet they came, demonstrating that consecration matters more than circumstances.

Historical Context

Harim headed the 3rd priestly division (1 Chronicles 24:8). Post-exile, members of this family were among those who had married foreign wives (Ezra 10:21), requiring painful separation to maintain covenant purity. This illustrates the ongoing struggle to maintain holiness standards even among those whose name meant 'consecrated.' The restoration required not just returning to the land but returning to holiness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Harim's name ('consecrated') challenge you to pursue holiness regardless of whether you experience God's manifest presence or blessing?
2. What does the later intermarriage crisis among Harim's descendants teach about the ongoing nature of sanctification, even for those in ministry?
3. In what ways might you be called to maintain consecration in 'diminished' circumstances—when the glory seems absent?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי י	חֲרִים	אֶלֶף	וְשִׁבְעִי	עָשָׂר:
The children	of Harim	a thousand	and seventeen	
H1121	H2766	H505	H7651	H6240

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 24:8 (Parallel theme): The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,