

Ezra 2:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,

Analysis

The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub—

Three more Nethinim families appear in this census. **Lebanah** (לְבָנָה, lebanah) means "white" or "moon," possibly indicating pale complexion, lunar-cycle birthing, or metaphorical purity despite servile status. **Hagabah** (חֲגַבָּה, from hagab, "locust" or "grasshopper") may reference smallness or humility—the ancestor's self-perception before God. **Akkub** (עַקְעָב, "insidious" or "footprint") appears elsewhere as a Levitical name (1 Chronicles 9:17), suggesting possible intermarriage or adoption of Levitical families into Nethinim service.

The name Hagabah is particularly evocative—locusts symbolized smallness and insignificance (Numbers 13:33, Isaiah 40:22). Yet God's economy inverts worldly hierarchies: those who seem like grasshoppers in human eyes are counted, named, and honored in Scripture's genealogies. This anticipates Jesus's teaching that "the last shall be first" (Matthew 20:16) and Paul's truth that "God chose the lowly things of this world... to nullify the things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:28).

That Akkub appears as both a Levitical name and a Nethinim family suggests fluid boundaries between these service classes. Both served the temple, both required faithfulness, both participated in Israel's worship life. The distinction between Levite and Nethinim involved ancestry and specific duties, not spiritual worthiness or covenant standing.

Historical Context

The Nethinim's role evolved over Israel's history. Initially restricted to menial tasks, by post-exilic times they had gained respect and recognition. Ezra and Nehemiah mentioned them prominently (Ezra 2:43-58; 7:7, 24; 8:17, 20; Nehemiah 3:26, 31; 7:46-56; 10:28; 11:3, 21), indicating their importance to Second Temple worship. Their tax exemption under Persian law (Ezra 7:24) elevated their status to that of priests and Levites.

The mention of Akkub as both Levitical gatekeeper (1 Chronicles 9:17) and Nethinim family head suggests complex social dynamics in temple service. Families could transition between categories, or the name could indicate close working relationships between Levites and Nethinim. Both groups faced similar challenges during exile—maintaining identity without functioning temple.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the name Hagabah (locust/grasshopper) challenge our assumptions about God's valuation of the humble and small?
2. What does the fluid boundary between Levitical and Nethinim families teach about God's focus on faithful service rather than rigid class distinctions?
3. How can modern churches avoid creating improper hierarchies between 'clergy' and 'lay' servants when Scripture honors all who serve faithfully?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי
תַּנְהִלָּה	לְבָנָה	תַּנְהִלָּה	חֲגַבָּה	תַּנְהִלָּה	חֲגַבָּה	תַּנְהִלָּה	עֲקָבָה
The children	of Lebanon	The children	of Hagabah	The children	of Akkub		

H1121

H3838

H1121

H2286

H1121

H6126

