

Ezra 2:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,

Analysis

The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam—The Nethinim enumeration proceeds with three additional families. **Rezin** (רְצִין, retsin, "firm" or "delight") shares its name with the Aramean king who threatened Judah during Isaiah's ministry (Isaiah 7:1). This doesn't imply direct connection but illustrates how common ancient Near Eastern names crossed ethnic boundaries. A Nethinim family bearing this name suggests possible Aramean ancestry incorporated into Israel's service.

Nekoda (נְקֹדָה, neqoda, "distinguished" or "speckled") appears both among Nethinim (here) and among laypeople unable to prove Israelite descent (Ezra 2:60). The name possibly references marking or distinction—perhaps ancestors who bore distinguishing marks or the family's distinct status within the Nethinim. **Gazzam** (גָּזָם, possibly "devourer" or "wood-cutter") may indicate ancestral occupation—wood-cutting being a primary Nethinim responsibility (Joshua 9:21, 23, 27).

The practical name Gazzam (wood-cutter) reminds us that Israel's theology remained grounded in material reality. Worship required firewood for altars, water for washings, vessels cleaned, animals slaughtered, courts swept. The Nethinim's physical labor enabled spiritual service—a principle echoed in Christian monasticism's laborare est orare (to work is to pray) and Reformed theology's doctrine of vocation.

Historical Context

The appearance of Nekoda in two contexts (Nethinim and laypeople) creates complexity. Either two distinct families shared the name, or some Nethinim had lost clear genealogical records during exile (like Nekoda in 2:60 who couldn't prove lineage). The seventy-year exile challenged record-keeping; some families preserved documents, others relied on memory and community recognition.

Gazzam's possible meaning (wood-cutter) directly connects to Nethinim origins as Gibeonite woodcutters and water carriers (Joshua 9). That families proudly maintained names referencing menial labor demonstrates remarkable dignity in humble service. Rather than seeking to obscure servile origins, they embraced their calling as sacred heritage.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does Gazzam's name (possibly "wood-cutter") teach about finding dignity and identity in humble, practical service roles?
2. How does Nekoda's appearance in two different contexts reflect the complex social reality of post-exilic community identity and genealogical verification?
3. In what ways does the Nethinim's embrace of service-related names challenge modern culture's pursuit of impressive titles and prestigious identities?

Interlinear Text

The children	of Rezin	תַּלְיִן	אֶל-	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	תַּלְיִן	אֶל-	בְּנֵי	תַּלְיִן	אֶל-	בְּנֵי	תַּלְיִן	אֶל-	בְּנֵי	
H1121	H7526	H1121		H5353		H1121		H1502							

