

Ezra 2:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,

Analysis

The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai—Three more Nethinim families appear in this carefully maintained census. **Uzza** (אֲזָא, uzza, "strength") shares its name with the man who died touching the ark (2 Samuel 6:6-7), though no connection is implied. The name celebrates divine or human strength—appropriate for servants performing physically demanding temple labor. That common Israelite names appeared among Nethinim demonstrates their integration into covenant community.

Paseah (פָּסֵחַ, paseach, "limping" or "lame") presents an unusual name possibly referencing physical disability or the Passover (from same root pasach, to pass over, skip, limp). If the former, it demonstrates that physical limitations didn't disqualify from temple service—the Nethinim welcomed even the disabled. If the latter, it connects the family to Israel's foundational redemption from Egypt. **Besai** (בִּסְיָ, possibly "with filth" or "treading down") suggests menial work—the family embraced names reflecting their humble service.

The possible inclusion of disabled servants (if Paseah indicates lameness) aligns with David's compassion and God's heart for the marginalized. While priests faced physical requirements (Leviticus 21:17-23), Nethinim service apparently offered opportunities for those with disabilities. This foreshadows Jesus's ministry gathering the lame, blind, and outcast into kingdom service.

Historical Context

Uzza and Paseah both appear elsewhere in Scripture in different contexts (2 Samuel 6:6-8; 1 Chronicles 4:12), showing these were common ancient Israelite names. The widespread use of similar names across social classes demonstrates cultural continuity despite different service roles. Post-exilic community shared naming conventions, theological vocabulary, and covenant identity regardless of ancestry or status.

The reference to Paseah in 1 Chronicles 4:12 among Judahites and here among Nethinim illustrates how families from various backgrounds entered temple service. Some Nethinim may have descended from Israelites who voluntarily joined this service class, others from incorporated foreigners. Regardless of origin, their willing return from exile and dedication to temple restoration demonstrated genuine covenant commitment.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paseah's possible meaning ("lame") challenge assumptions about who can serve in God's house and what qualifications matter most?
2. What does Besai's name (possibly referencing filthy or menial work) teach about the sanctity of all labor performed as service to God?
3. How can the church today better welcome and utilize the gifts of those whom society marginalizes due to physical limitations or humble social status?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי י	עֶזְרָא	בְּנֵי י	פָּסֵחַ	בְּנֵי י	בְּסָי
The children	of Uzza	The children	of Paseah	The children	of Besai
H1121	H5798	H1121	H6454	H1121	H1153

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