

Ezra 2:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,

Analysis

The children of Solomon's servants (בָּנֵי עֲבָדִי שְׁלָמָה)—A distinct category from Nethinim, these were descendants of Canaanite peoples Solomon subjected to forced labor (1 Kings 9:20-21). Sotai means "straying," Sophereth (סּוֹפֶרֶת) means "scribe" or "numberer," and Peruda means "kernel" or "separated."

That avdei Shlomo (Solomon's slaves) maintained distinct identity for 500+ years is remarkable. Their voluntary return from exile—where they lived as free men—to resume temple service demonstrates covenant loyalty transcending their servile origins. Paul later applies this metaphor: Christians are "bondservants of Christ" (Romans 1:1), finding true freedom in voluntary service.

Historical Context

Solomon employed forced labor from conquered Canaanite populations (Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites) for temple construction and other projects. Unlike the Nethinim (given to temple service), Solomon's servants performed royal and civil duties. Their descendants' inclusion in the return census shows full integration into post-exilic Judean society.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does the voluntary return of Solomon's servants teach about finding identity in service rather than freedom from obligation?
2. How does this passage challenge modern individualism's emphasis on autonomy over covenant community?
3. In what ways are you a voluntary bondservant of Christ, embracing servanthood as freedom?

Interlinear Text

בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים
The children	servants	of Solomon's	The children	of Sotai	The children
H1121	H5650	H8010	H1121	H5479	H1121
הַסְפֵּרֶת	בָּנִים	פְּרֹעָה:			
of Sophereth	The children	of Peruda			
H5618	H1121	H6514			

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 9:21 (Parallel theme): Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.