

Ezra 2:59

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these were they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel:

Analysis

But they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel (וְלֹא יָכְלُו לְהִגִּיד בֵּית-אֲבוֹתֵם וֵירֶשֶׁם אֲמִתְמַשְׁכָּאֵל הַמּוֹ—These returnees from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer lacked genealogical records (sefer hayachas) proving Israelite descent. The verb nagad (to declare, make known) in the causative suggests they sought diligently to establish lineage but could not produce documentary evidence.

This represents every believer's crisis: can we prove we belong to God's people? The exile destroyed records; assimilation blurred identity. Yet the Tirshatha's provisional acceptance (verse 63) offers hope: our ultimate genealogy is not biological but spiritual—adoption as "children of God" through faith (John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17).

Historical Context

The five Babylonian locations (Tel-melah = "hill of salt," Tel-harsa = "hill of craftsmen," etc.) were Jewish settlements in exile. Seventy years in Babylon (605-536 BC) resulted in lost records, intermarriage, and uncertain lineage. Jewish identity depended on genealogical proof; without it, these families faced social and religious marginalization despite their evident desire to return and worship.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What happens when your spiritual credentials are questioned and you cannot prove your lineage?
2. How does adoption language in the New Testament resolve the genealogical crisis of uncertain spiritual heritage?
3. In what ways do you rely on external proof of belonging rather than resting in God's declarative adoption?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה		פָּעָלִים		מִתְּלֵהָלָה		תִּלְלֵהָלָה	
H428		And these were they which went up	H5927	H0	from Telmelah	H0	
Telharsa	Cherub	Addan	and Immer	H3808	but they could	not shew	house
H8521	H3743	H135	H564	H3201	H5046	H1004	
אֲבוֹתֶם	וַיַּרְא	אָמֵן	מִשְׁבָּא	תִּמְמָה			
their father's	and their seed	H518	whether they were of Israel	H3478	H1992		
H1	H2233						

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 7:61 (References Israel): And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel.

