

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 יָכְלוּ לְהַגִּיד בֵּית־אֲבוֹתָם וְנָרְעָם אִם מִשְׁכָּנֵאל הֵם)—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	הָעֹלִים	מִתֵּל	מִלַּח	תֵּל			
H428		H0	H8528	H0			
And these were they which went up from Telmelah							
	H5927						
בֵּית	לְהִגֵּד	וְכָל	וְלֹא	אִמֶּר	אֲדָן	כְּרוּב	תֵּלְחָרְסָא
H1004	H5046	H3201	H3808	H564	H135	H3743	H8521
house	not shew	but they could		and Immer	Addan	Cherub	Telharsa
הֵם:	מִשְׁכָּא	ל	א	וְזָרַע	אֲבוֹתָם		
H1992		H3478	H518	H2233	H1		
whether they were of Israel their father's and their seed							

Additional Cross-References

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

