

Ezra 2:61

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name:

Analysis

And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai—The genealogical crisis deepens: even priests lacked documentation. Habaiah (הַבָּיִת) means "Yahweh has hidden," Koz (קָז) means "thorn," and Barzillai (בָּרְזִילָּי) means "iron" or "strong."

The third family took the name of Barzillai the Gileadite through marriage (2 Samuel 19:31-39)—choosing a wealthy benefactor's name over their priestly lineage. This is Esau's bargain repeated: trading birthright for immediate advantage (Genesis 25:29-34). Priestly ministry requires uncompromised identity; those who assumed secular names forfeited sacred function. Spiritual leadership demands clear testimony to God's calling.

Historical Context

Barzillai the Gileadite was the wealthy Transjordan noble who provisioned David during Absalom's rebellion. For a priestly family to adopt his name (likely through marriage to gain inheritance rights) represented assimilation and compromise. Post-exilic Judaism strictly regulated priestly genealogy; without documentation, these families could not serve at the altar or receive priestly portions.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What worldly name or identity have you assumed that compromises your calling as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)?
2. How does choosing comfort and status over spiritual heritage parallel Esau's forfeiting of his birthright?
3. In what ways does pastoral ministry today require uncompromised identity and clear genealogical connection to apostolic faith?

Interlinear Text

בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים
And of the children	of the priests	And of the children	of Habaiah	
H1121	H3548	H1121	H2252	
בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים	בָּנִים
And of the children	of Koz	And of the children	of Barzillai	which took
H1121	H6976	H1121	H1271	H3947
מִבְנָה וְתָ	בָּרְזִילִי	הַגִּלְעָדִי	אֲשֶׁר הָ	עַל
מִבְנָה וְתָ	בָּרְזִילִי	הַגִּלְעָדִי	אֲשֶׁר הָ	עַל
of the daughters	of Barzillai	the Gileadite	a wife	and was called
H1323	H1271	H1569	H802	H5921
שְׁמָם:				
after their name				
H8034				

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 17:27 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

1 Kings 2:7 (Parallel theme): But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

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