

Ezra 2:62

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

Analysis

These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood—The Hebrew yitchasem (their genealogical registration) was searched but not found (אֲלֹא תִּמְצָא). The verb ga'al (polluted/defiled) carries cultic overtones: ritual impurity disqualifying from sacred service.

This isn't moral judgment but covenantal reality: priestly service required Aaronic descent (Numbers 3:10; 16:40). Those unable to prove lineage were excluded (אֲלֹא תִּמְצָא) not as punishment but as protection—unauthorized priesthood brought divine judgment (Numbers 16; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21). Similarly, Christian ministry requires genuine calling and apostolic succession in doctrine, not self-appointment (Hebrews 5:4).

Historical Context

Post-exilic Judaism developed strict genealogical requirements for priests following Ezekiel 44:15-16. Without documentation proving Aaronic descent, these families could not serve at the altar, wear priestly garments, eat priestly portions, or pronounce the Aaronic blessing. This safeguarded worship purity but created hardship for sincere families who lost records in exile.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does legitimate spiritual authority depend on verifiable calling and sound doctrine, not self-designation?
2. What modern forms of "unauthorized priesthood" occur when people assume ministry roles without genuine divine calling?
3. How does Hebrews 5:4 ("no one takes this honor on himself") apply to pastoral and leadership selection today?

Interlinear Text

המִתְיכַשׁ יְמִין
בְּלֹשׁ אֶתְּנָתְּנָה
כְּתָבָם
אֵלֶּה
These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy

H428

H1245

H3791

H3187

מִלְאָלָל
אֵלֶּה
כְּתָבָם
בְּלֹשׁ אֶתְּנָתְּנָה
but they were not found therefore were they as polluted

H3808

H4672

H1351

H4480

פְּרָנָה
put from the priesthood

H3550

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 3:10 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

