

Ezra 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

Analysis

The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. The family of Zaccai (זַכַּי) bears a name meaning 'pure' or 'innocent,' derived from the root zakah (זָכָה), which signifies moral purity, legal innocence, or ritual cleanness. This name takes on profound significance in post-exilic context: a family bearing 'purity' as identity returning to restore temple worship centered on purity laws and atonement. Their 760 members embodied the tension between past defilement (exile as judgment for sin) and future purification (restoration and temple rebuilding).

The name Zaccai appears related to Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), whose name means 'pure' or 'righteous'—creating ironic contrast with his corrupt tax collecting until Jesus declared salvation had come to his house. This linguistic connection reminds us that purity is gift of grace, not achievement. The Zaccai family, purified through exile's refining fire, now returned to participate in renewed worship.

Theologically, this verse illustrates the remnant doctrine: God preserves a purified people through judgment. The family name itself became prophetic—those once defiled by idolatry, now purified through discipline, returning with renewed commitment to holiness. This anticipates New Testament teaching on sanctification and the church as purified bride (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Historical Context

The number 'threescore' (60) plus seven hundred totals 760, using the King James rendering of the Hebrew numerical system. The specific count suggests official

census taken for administrative purposes. Persian authorities monitored population movements carefully, requiring documentation for tax assessment and regional organization.

The emphasis on purity-related names among returning families may reflect the exile generation's recognition that sin caused captivity. Families bearing names like Zaccai represented renewed commitment to covenant faithfulness and ritual purity that previous generations had neglected, leading to judgment.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the name 'pure' challenge modern assumptions about self-achieved righteousness versus God-given holiness?
2. What role does suffering play in God's purifying work, based on Zaccai's return after exile?
3. How should churches today balance emphasis on purity/holiness with grace toward those being sanctified?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי י	זַכַּי י	שֶׁבַע ע	מֵאֹת	וּשְׁלֹשִׁים:
The children	of Zaccai	seven	hundred	and threescore
H1121	H2140	H7651	H3967	H8346

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