

Ezra 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

Analysis

The temple rebuilding required oversight: 'Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.' The verb 'set forward' (paqad, פָּקַד) means to oversee, supervise, or appoint—these Levites provided leadership and coordination. The emphasis on family units ('sons,' 'brethren') highlights multi-generational involvement in God's work. Jeshua was the high priest (2:2), while Kadmiel and Henadad led Levitical families. Their 'standing together' (yachad, יָחַד) demonstrates unity—essential for completing difficult tasks. This verse teaches that God's work requires godly leadership, coordinated effort, and unified commitment. The combination of priestly oversight (Jeshua) and Levitical service (other families) models both spiritual authority and practical labor working together.

Historical Context

After 70 years in Babylonian exile, Cyrus's 539 BC decree allowed Jews to return and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The first returnees (c. 538 BC) numbered about 50,000 under Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 2). They first rebuilt the altar (3:2-3), then laid the temple foundation (3:8-13). The Levitical families named here

descended from those who returned from exile, continuing their ancestral duties of serving in temple worship and maintenance. The 'house of God' (beth elohim, בֵּית אֱלֹהִים) had lain in ruins since Nebuchadnezzar's 586 BC destruction. Rebuilding represented not merely construction but covenant renewal—God's presence returning to dwell among His people. Opposition soon arose (chapter 4), halting work until 520 BC when Haggai and Zechariah's prophetic ministry reinvigorated the effort. The temple's completion in 516 BC fulfilled Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy (Jeremiah 29:10). Early church tradition saw the rebuilt temple as anticipating Christ, the true temple (John 2:19-21) and the Church as God's dwelling (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:19-22).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the example of unified, multi-generational leadership and service ('together... with their sons and brethren') inform church ministry and family discipleship today?
2. What 'rebuilding' tasks in your church or community require the combination of spiritual oversight (like Jeshua) and practical coordination (like the Levites)?

Interlinear Text

וַעֲמַד	יֵשׁוּעַ	בְּנֵיהֶם	וְאֶחָיוֹם	קַדְמִיָּאל	בְּנֵיהֶם
Then stood	Jeshua	and his sons	and his brethren	Kadmiel	and his sons
H5975	H3442	H1121	H251	H6934	H1121
בְּנֵיהֶם	יְהוּדָה	כָּאֶחָד	לִנְצֹחַ	עָלֵה	הַמְּלָאכָה
and his sons	of Judah	together	to set forward	the workmen	
H1121	H3063	H259	H5329	H5921	H4399
בְּבֵית	הָאֱלֹהִים	בְּנֵיהֶם	חֲנָדָד	בְּנֵיהֶם	וְאֶחָיוֹם
in the house	of God	and his sons	of Henadad	and his sons	and his brethren
H1004	H430	H1121	H2582	H1121	H251
הַלְוִיִּם:					
the Levites					
H3881					

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 2:40 (Parallel theme): The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four.