

Ezra 8:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.

Analysis

And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males. The phrase 'last sons' (benê 'aḥărônîm, בְּנֵי אַחֲרֹנִים) indicates these were the final members of Adonikam's clan to return, following earlier family members who returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:13). The careful naming—Eliphelet ('God is deliverance'), Jeiel ('God sweeps away'), Shemaiah ('Yahweh hears')—demonstrates covenant identity maintained through exile.

The detail 'threescore males' (60 men) shows genealogical precision crucial for land inheritance and tribal identity. This wasn't casual census but legal documentation establishing rights in the restored community. That these were specifically 'males' (zěkhārîm) reflects ancient Near Eastern practice of counting fighting-age men as representative of larger family groups including women and children.

Theologically, the 'last sons' motif reflects divine patience—God continued gathering scattered exiles over decades, not demanding immediate response. Every family group, however small, mattered in the restoration project. The preservation of names demonstrates God's concern for individuals, not merely aggregate numbers.

Historical Context

This verse comes from Ezra's second return (458 BC), approximately 80 years after Zerubbabel's first return (538 BC). The Adonikam family had been split across two major migrations, with 666 members returning first (Ezra 2:13) and these 60 men returning with Ezra. This demonstrates the prolonged nature of the return—not a single exodus but waves of migration spanning generations.

Ezra assembled his caravan at the river Ahava (Ezra 8:15), conducting census and organization before the dangerous four-month journey. The meticulous record-keeping served multiple purposes:

1. establishing land claims
2. determining temple service assignments for Levites
3. preventing fraudulent claims to Jewish identity.

The context shows Ezra's concern for balanced representation.

He discovered no Levites initially (Ezra 8:15) and had to recruit them specifically, showing the importance of proper religious leadership alongside lay returnees.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's patience with 'last sons' who returned decades later teach about divine timing and human readiness?
2. How does the careful preservation of names and numbers reflect the value of individual contribution to corporate purposes?
3. What motivates the 'last' to finally respond when earlier opportunities were declined?

Interlinear Text

וּמִבְנֵי י	אֲדֹנִיקָם	אֲחֵרִימִם	וְאֵלֶּה	שְׁמוֹתָם	אֵלִיפֶלֶט
sons	of Adonikam	And of the last	H428	whose names	are these Eliphelet
H1121	H140	H314		H8034	H467
יְעִיֵּל	וְשִׁמְעִיָּה	וְעִמָּהֶם	שָׁשָׁלִים	הַזָּכָרִים:	
Jeiel	and Shemaiah	H5973	and with them threescore	males	
H3273	H8098		H8346	H2145	

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 2:13 (Parallel theme): The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.