

Ezra 8:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

Analysis

Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males. The Adin family contributed fifty males—modest compared to Shechaniah's three hundred but still significant commitment. Ebed means 'servant' or 'slave,' a name expressing humility and dedication to God. Jonathan means 'Yahweh has given,' acknowledging children as divine gift. The conjunction 'also' (gam) may emphasize continuation of the list or highlight Adin's participation despite smaller numbers.

The fifty males likely represented 125-175 people total with families. While numerically smaller, their commitment was equally costly. The journey's dangers, Jerusalem's uncertainty, and Babylon's comforts affected all families equally regardless of size. This teaches that faithfulness isn't measured by numbers but by obedience to calling. Ebed's name—'servant'—captures the posture required: submission to God's purposes over personal preference.

That Scripture records both large families (300 males) and smaller ones (50 males) demonstrates that God values all who respond, regardless of prominence. Kingdom work needs both the conspicuous (large, visible contributions) and the faithful (smaller but genuine responses). Each family's participation mattered for community restoration.

Historical Context

The Adin family previously sent 454 members with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:15). That only 50 males returned with Ezra suggests either the family was smaller in 458 BC or most chose to remain in Babylon. The variance between first and second returns shows that initial enthusiasm (538 BC) often exceeded later commitment (458 BC). By Ezra's time, Babylon-born Jews had established lives spanning three-four generations, making return increasingly costly.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Ebed's name ('servant') challenge contemporary Christianity's emphasis on leadership over servanthood?
2. What encouragement does Scripture's recording of both large and small family contingents offer to those feeling their contribution is insignificant?

Interlinear Text

בְּנֵי	עַד יֵן	עַבְדֵּי	בְּנֵי	יֹונָתָן	וְעַמּוֹ
Of the sons	also of Adin	Ebed	Of the sons	of Jonathan	H5973
H1121	H5720	H5651	H1121	H3129	
וְחִמְשֵׁי יָם	הַזָּכָרִים:				
and with him fifty	males				
H2572	H2145				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 7:20 (Parallel theme): The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five.

Nehemiah 10:16 (Parallel theme): Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

Ezra 2:15 (Parallel theme): The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

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