

Ezra 10:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this matter: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

Analysis

Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this matter—the Hebrew *amdu al-zot* can mean either 'stood against this' (opposing the process) or 'were appointed over this' (administering it). Context suggests opposition, as **Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them** in resistance.

This verse reveals that reform faced internal opposition, even from Levites who should have championed covenant purity. The opposition wasn't unanimous rejection but minority dissent—four named individuals against the proposal. Their objection may have been procedural (questioning the process) or substantive (rejecting divorces). The text doesn't elaborate their reasoning, maintaining focus on the majority's covenant commitment.

The presence of dissent demonstrates the painful reality of necessary reform—not everyone supports even biblically mandated correction. Yet the minority opposition didn't derail the process, showing proper balance between hearing objections and maintaining conviction.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern legal reforms typically faced resistance from affected parties and their allies. The fact that a Levite (Shabbethai) opposed the reform shows even

religious leaders sometimes prioritized personal interests over covenant faithfulness. In post-exilic Judah, intermarriage often connected to economic and political alliances with neighboring peoples, giving some influential families incentive to resist dissolution of these marriages.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How should church leaders respond when facing minority opposition to necessary disciplinary action?
2. What does Meshullam and Shabbethai's opposition (as Levites) teach about the danger of religious leaders compromising conviction?
3. How can churches maintain unity while addressing serious sin, even when some members object to discipline?

Interlinear Text

תַּקְוִתִּי הַ בֶּן יְהוָה אֶל יְהוָה | יְהוָה אֶל יְהוָה אֶל יְהוָה |
H389 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah
H3129 H1121 H6214 H3167 H1121 H8616

וְמִשְׁלַח מִשְׁבַּת | וְמִשְׁלַח מִשְׁבַּת |
were employed about this matter and Meshullam and Shabbethai
H5975 H5921 H2063 H4918 H7678

כָּלִים עִזּוּם: |
the Levite helped
H3881 H5826

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 11:16 (Parallel theme): And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.

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