

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

אֶרְאֶה	וְיֹנָתָן	בֶּן־	עֲשָׂהָאֵל	וְיַחֲזִיָּה	בֶּן־	תִּקְוָה
H389	Only Jonathan	the son	of Asahel	and Jahaziah	the son	of Tikvah
	H3129	H1121	H6214	H3167	H1121	H8616
וְעָמְדוּ	עַל־	זֶאת	וּמִשְׁלַם	וְשַׁבְּתַי		
were employed	H5921	H2063	about this matter and Meshullam	and Shabbethai		
H5975			H4918	H7678		
הַלֵּוִי	עֲזָרָם:					
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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