

Ezra 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

Analysis

The opposition begins: 'Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel.' The identification 'adversaries' (Hebrew tsar, enemies/opponents) reveals hostile intent from the beginning. The phrase 'children of the captivity' became technical term for returned exiles. That enemies 'heard' about temple building shows God's work attracts attention—both positive and negative. Spiritual advance inevitably provokes opposition.

Historical Context

The 'adversaries' primarily were Samaritans—descendants of northern kingdom Israelites who remained after Assyrian conquest (722 BC) mixed with foreign settlers (2 Kings 17:24-41). They practiced syncretistic religion combining Yahweh worship with pagan elements. They viewed Jewish return and temple rebuilding as threatening their religious and political status. Archaeological evidence shows Samaritan communities were established and influential in the region. Their opposition would persist throughout Persian period and into New Testament era.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does automatic opposition to temple rebuilding teach about the inevitability of spiritual conflict when God's work advances?
2. How does identifying them as 'adversaries' demonstrate discernment that not all religious people support God's true purposes?

Interlinear Text

يָשַׁמְעָ	אָ	צָבָ	יְהוָ	וּבְנִ	כִּ
heard	Now when the adversaries	of Judah	and Benjamin		H3588
H8085	H6862	H3063	H1144		
בָּנִ	הַגּוֹלָה	בָּנִים	הִיכָּל	לִיהְנָה	אֱלֹהִ
that the children	of the captivity	builded	the temple	unto the LORD	God
H1121	H1473	H1129	H1964	H3068	H430
יִשְׁבָּאֵל:					
of Israel					
H3478					

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 1:11 (Parallel theme): All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.