

Ezra 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

Analysis

The deceptive offer: 'Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur.' The claim 'we seek your God, as ye do' asserted religious compatibility. The reference to Esarhaddon (681-669 BC) verified longstanding worship. However, 2 Kings 17:33 exposes their syncretism: 'they feared the LORD, and served their own gods.' Their offer appeared cooperative but threatened to corrupt pure worship with pagan elements.

Historical Context

Esarhaddon ruled Assyria 681-669 BC, approximately 150 years before this encounter. His settlement of foreign peoples in Samaria (2 Kings 17:24) created the mixed Samaritan population. Their claim to worship Yahweh was partially true —they did offer sacrifices at various high places. However, they simultaneously worshiped pagan deities, violating the first commandment. Allowing them to 'build with you' would have legitimized syncretism and corrupted temple worship. The Jews' refusal, though creating opposition, maintained covenant purity.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the adversaries' claim 'we seek your God, as ye do' demonstrate that false religion often claims compatibility with truth?
2. What does the necessity of refusing seemingly cooperative offers teach about discerning between genuine faith and syncretism?

Interlinear Text

Then they came	H5066	וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיכֶם וְאֶל	H413	זְרַבָּבֶل	H2216	לְ	H413	רָאשׁ	H7218	וְ	H1	פָּאָב וְתָ
and said	H1992	וַיֹּאמֶר	H559	לְהֶם	H1129	נְבָנֵה	H5973	בְּ	H3588	מְ	H0	כְּמָ
with you for we seek	H1875	אַתָּה חָנוּ	H430	אֱלֹהִיכֶם	H3808	נִדְרָה וְשָׁ	H587	לְאֱלֹהִיכֶם	H2076	זָבֵחַ יְמִ	H2	
unto him since the days	H3117	מִיּוֹם	H0	אַסְרָה	H634	סְדָן	H634	לְרַב	H4428	אֲשֶׁר וְרַב	H804	מִן
which brought us up hither	H5927	בָּמָעֵל הָ	H853	אָתָּה נָ	H6311	פָּה:	H853	אֲשֶׁר וְרַב	H804	אֲשֶׁר וְרַב	H804	מִן

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 19:37 (Kingdom): And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 17:24 (Kingdom): And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

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