

Ezra 4:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Analysis

Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. This verse summarizes opposition's immediate impact while hinting at eventual resolution. The repetition 'ceased... So it ceased' emphasizes the completeness of work stoppage. However, the time marker 'unto the second year of the reign of Darius' signals this cessation was temporary, not permanent. God's work stopped but would resume—a pattern repeated throughout redemptive history.

The chronology here is complex. The temple was actually completed in Darius's sixth year (516 BC, Ezra 6:15), but this verse references his second year (520 BC) when construction resumed after earlier stoppage. Some scholars see chronological arrangement confusion, others view chapter 4 as topically organized. Regardless, the verse teaches that opposition may delay but cannot ultimately defeat God's purposes. What human hostility stops, divine sovereignty resumes.

Theologically, this temporary cessation tested faith. Would the returnees conclude God's purposes had failed? Would they abandon hope? The seemingly conclusive 'ceased' could have appeared final. Yet 'until' signals hope—this wasn't conclusion but intermission. Faith must distinguish between delays and defeats, trusting God's sovereignty over apparent setbacks.

Historical Context

Darius I (Darius the Great, 522-486 BC) consolidated power after defeating rivals following Cambyses II's death. His reign brought stability enabling renewed temple work. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah emerged during Darius's second year (520 BC), motivating the community to resume building despite Artaxerxes' later opposition during a different episode.

The complex chronology in Ezra 4-6 reflects topical rather than strict chronological arrangement. The chapter surveys various opposition instances across multiple reigns to show the persistent pattern of hostility God's work faced. This literary choice emphasizes thematic unity over chronological sequence, teaching that opposition is constant but never ultimately successful.

Archaeological evidence and Persian records confirm temple completion under Darius. The Behistun Inscription documents Darius's reign and policies. His favorable disposition toward Jerusalem contrasted with the later temporary prohibition under Artaxerxes. God providentially used different Persian rulers' varying dispositions to accomplish His purposes, demonstrating sovereignty over imperial politics.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do believers maintain faith during periods when God's work 'ceases' due to opposition?
2. What does the eventual resumption after 'cessation' teach about perseverance and patient hope?
3. How should Christians interpret apparent defeats in ministry—as final answers or temporary tests?

Interlinear Text

ד' י' אֱלֹהֵי אֵל	בֵּית עֲבִידֵי ת	בָּטַל אֵל	בְּאֵד יוֹ		
of God	of the house	the work	ceased	Then	
H426	H1005	H5673	H989	H116	H1768
תְּרִיט יוֹ	שָׁנָה ת	עַד	בָּטַל אֵל	וְהָיָה	בִּירוּשָׁלַם
the second	year	unto	ceased	So it ceased	which is at Jerusalem
H8648	H8140	H5705	H989	H1934	H3390
פָּרַס:	מֶלֶךְ	דָּרָה וְשׁ	לְמַלְכֹת וְ		
of Persia	king	of Darius	of the reign		
H6540	H4430	H1868	H4437		

Additional Cross-References

Haggai 1:15 (Kingdom): In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.