

Ezra 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

Analysis

The refusal: 'But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God.' This firm rejection risked creating enemies of potential allies. The phrase 'Ye have nothing to do with us' asserted incompatibility. The reason: 'we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.' They appealed to divine authorization through Cyrus's decree, not mere ethnic exclusivity.

Historical Context

The refusal to include Samaritans in temple building was controversial then and now. However, allowing syncretistic worship would have violated covenant distinctiveness God demanded. The appeal to Cyrus's authorization provided legal justification—he decreed that Jews, not Samaritans, build the temple. This firm stance created lasting Samaritan-Jewish hostility (continuing into New Testament, John 4:9). However, covenant purity required it. Theological boundaries sometimes demand social consequences.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the refusal of seemingly helpful offers teach about prioritizing covenant faithfulness over pragmatic alliances?
2. What does appealing to Cyrus's authorization demonstrate about using legitimate authority to support necessary boundaries?

Interlinear Text

כֹּאשׁ י	וְשָׁא ר	וְיֵשׁ וַעַ	זֶרֶבְבָּד ל	לָהּ ם	וַיֹּאמֶר
of the chief	and the rest	and Jeshua	But Zerubbabel	H0	said
H7218	H7605	H3442	H2216		H559
וְלֹ נֹ	לָ כֶּם	לֹא	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	הָאֲבוֹת	
H0	H0	H3808	of Israel	of the fathers	
			H3478	H1	
אֲנִי חֲנוּ כִי	אֱלֹהֵי י	בִּית	נִבְנֶה ה	נִבְנֶה ה	
H587	H3588	an house	unto them Ye have nothing to do with us to build	unto them Ye have nothing to do with us to build	
	H430	H1004	H1129	H1129	
כֹּאשׁ	מֶלֶךְ	צִוֵּנוּ	כֹּאשׁ ר	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֱלֹהֵי י
Cyrus	as king	hath commanded	H834	of Israel	God
H3566	H4428	H6680		H3478	H430
					לַיהוָה
					unto the LORD
					H3068
מֶלֶךְ	פָּרְס:				
as king	of Persia				
H4428	H6539				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 2:20 (References God): Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.