

Ezra 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Analysis

And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

This verse introduces a chronological shift, moving from Cyrus's time to the reign of Ahasuerus (likely Xerxes I, 486-465 BC), who ruled between Darius and Artaxerxes. The Hebrew word *sitnah* (סִטְנָה) means 'accusation' or 'opposition,' sharing roots with 'Satan' (the Accuser), highlighting the spiritual dimension of opposition to God's work.

The enemies' strategy shifted from direct physical interference to legal accusations through official channels. This pattern repeats throughout redemptive history—when God's work advances, opposition adapts its tactics. The timing 'in the beginning of his reign' suggests strategic calculation; new rulers were especially susceptible to concerns about provincial loyalty and rebellion. False accusations targeting God's people became a weapon as dangerous as physical force.

Theologically, this verse teaches that advancing God's kingdom will inevitably face opposition, often through 'legal' or 'official' channels that appear legitimate but serve hostile purposes. The pattern anticipates Jesus facing false accusations before authorities and the early church battling slander and legal persecution.

Historical Context

Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) is famous from secular history for his failed invasion of Greece (480 BC) and from Scripture as Esther's husband. The book of Esther recounts events during his reign, showing both God's providence and the precarious position of Jews in the Persian Empire. The timing of opposition against Judean returnees coincided with broader imperial concerns about western provinces after the Greek wars.

The enemies mentioned here—likely Samaritans and surrounding peoples—saw Jerusalem's reconstruction as threatening their own political and economic interests. By framing Jewish rebuilding as potential rebellion, they exploited Persian paranoia about provincial loyalty. Ancient Near Eastern empires were hypersensitive to anything suggesting independence or revolt, especially in strategically important regions like Palestine.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'official' or 'respectable' forms of opposition do Christians face today that mask spiritual warfare?
2. How should believers respond when misrepresented or falsely accused by authorities or institutions?
3. What does this pattern of opposition throughout redemptive history teach about spiritual warfare?

Interlinear Text

מְלָכוֹת וְ	אַחַשְׁוֵר וְשׁ	בְּתַחֲלֵי ת	מְלָכוֹת וְ	כָּתַב וְ
And in the reign	of Ahasuerus	in the beginning	And in the reign	wrote
H4438	H325	H8462	H4438	H3789
שֶׁטֶן הַ	עַל	יֹשְׁבֵי יְ	יְהוּדָה הַ	וִירוּשָׁלַם:
they unto him an accusation	H5921	against the inhabitants	of Judah	and Jerusalem
H7855		H3427	H3063	H3389

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 9:1 (Kingdom): In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Esther 1:1 (Kingdom): Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)