

Ezra 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe,
and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the
Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the
Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites,
and the Elamites,

Analysis

Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, This verse begins enumerating the coalition opposing Jerusalem's rebuilding. The long list of diverse peoples demonstrates the breadth and coordination of opposition. These groups represented various populations resettled in Samaria and surrounding regions by Assyrian and Babylonian deportation policies, creating a multi-ethnic coalition united by shared hostility to Jewish restoration.

The 'Dinaites' may refer to judges or legal officials; 'Apharsathchites' possibly Persians; 'Archevites' possibly Urukians (from Uruk); 'Babylonians' from Babylon; 'Susanchites' from Susa; 'Dehavites' uncertain origin; 'Elamites' from Elam. This demonstrates how imperial resettlement policies created diverse but unified opposition. These peoples shared concern that Jewish restoration threatened their established positions and interests in the region.

Theologically, this coalition prefigures the diverse opposition Jesus faced—Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and Romans who normally disagreed but united

against Christ. Similarly, the early church faced opposition from both Jews and Gentiles. When God's kingdom advances, strange alliances form among normally competing factions, revealing spiritual warfare's reality. Satan coordinates diverse forces against God's purposes.

Historical Context

Assyrian kings, particularly Sargon II and Esarhaddon, systematically deported and resettled populations to prevent nationalist revolts. They moved conquered peoples from their homelands to other regions, breaking ethnic cohesion while repopulating decimated areas. The Bible records this regarding Israel's northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:24-41), where foreigners were resettled in Samaria after the ten tribes' exile.

These resettled populations brought their own religions, creating the Samaritan syncretism that became so problematic. When Jewish returnees insisted on exclusive Yahweh worship and refused Samaritan participation in temple rebuilding (Ezra 4:1-3), long-term hostility resulted. The Samaritans and associated peoples viewed Jewish exclusivity as threatening both their religious legitimacy and political position.

This historical background explains the deep-rooted animosity between Jews and Samaritans evident throughout biblical history, including Jesus's era (John 4:9). The conflict wasn't merely ethnic but theological and political, rooted in competing claims about true worship and covenant identity.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What modern coalitions oppose Christian mission despite ideological differences?
2. How should believers respond when facing coordinated, multi-front opposition?
3. What does the breadth of opposition reveal about the spiritual significance of God's work?

Interlinear Text

אֶד וְיָ	רָח וּם	בְּעֵל	טַעַם	וְשִׁמְשִׁי	סֹפֵר אֶ
Then	wrote Rehum	the chancellor	H2942	and Shimshai	the scribe
H1116	H7348	H1169		H8124	H5613
וְשָׂרִי	כְּנֻתָּהּ וְ	דִּי יִנְיָא	וְאַפְרִסְתִּי	טַרְפְּלִי אֶ	
and the rest	of their companions	the Dinaites	the Apharsathchites	the Tarpelites	
H7606	H3675	H1784	H671	H2967	
אֶפְרָסִי אֶ	אַרְכָּנִי	בָּבְלִיָּא	שׁוּשַׁנְכִי אֶ	דְּהָוִי אֶ	
the Apharsites	the Archevites	the Babylonians	the Susanchites	the Dehavites	
H670	H756	H896	H7801	H1723	
עַלְמֵיָא:					
and the Elamites					
H5962					

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 5:6 (Parallel theme): The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

Ezra 6:6 (Parallel theme): Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence:

2 Kings 17:24 (References Babylon): 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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