

Ezra 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

Analysis

The chapter concludes with a respectful request: "if it seem good to the king, let there be search made." The Aramaic formula acknowledges royal prerogative while suggesting appropriate action. Tatnai did not prejudge the case but requested archival investigation—a procedurally correct approach that served divine purposes. The "treasure house" (beth ginzaya) in Babylon housed imperial records and valuables, including conquered temple treasures and administrative documents.

The request to "send his pleasure to us concerning this matter" deferred to Darius's judgment. This neutral tone—neither condemning nor endorsing the Jews—allowed the evidence to determine the outcome. God sovereignly orchestrated events so that opponents' investigation would discover Cyrus's decree, not in Babylon but in Ecbatana (Ezra 6:2), demonstrating that His purposes cannot be thwarted even when hidden in distant archives.

Historical Context

Persian royal archives were maintained in multiple locations—Babylon, Susa, Persepolis, and Ecbatana (the Median capital where Cyrus spent summers). The

Persepolis Fortification Tablets and Treasury Tablets confirm the empire's meticulous record-keeping. Ironically, Tatnai's request for investigation led to discovery of Cyrus's original decree, which not only authorized construction but mandated Persian financial support (Ezra 6:3-5)—far more than the Jews had requested.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Tatnai's neutral request for investigation—rather than immediate judgment—demonstrate God's providential protection of His people?
2. What does this chapter teach about trusting God when our work is scrutinized or our legitimacy is questioned by authorities?

Interlinear Text

וְכֹעַ	כִּי	אֲלֵיכָא	מֶלֶךְ	בָּט	תְּבָקֵר
Now	therefore if	to	and let the king	it seem good	let there be search
H3705	H2006	H5922	H4430	H2869	H1240
בֵּית	גְּדוּלָה	מֶלֶךְ	תִּפְמָה	בְּבָבֶל	בְּבָבֶל
house	treasure	and let the king	which is there	H1768	at Babylon
H1005	H1596	H4430	H8536	H8536	H895
שִׁים	מֶלֶךְ	כָּרֶשׁ	מֶלֶךְ	בְּיַם	שִׁים
therefore if	it be	of	Cyrus	and let the king	was made
H2006	H383	H4481	H3567	H4430	H7761
וְרֹעֵה	בֵּית	לִמְבָנָה	אֱלֹהָה	זֶה	בֵּיתְרוּשָׁלָם
so that a decree	to build	house	of God	this	his pleasure
H2942	H1124	H1005	H426	H1791	H7470
עֲלֵיכָא	עֲלֵיכָא	עֲלֵיכָא	מֶלֶךְ	וְרֹעֵה	וְרֹעֵה
and let the king	to	this matter	send	to	to
H4430	H5922	H1836	H7972	H5922	H5922

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 4:15 (Kingdom): That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed.

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