

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

וְכַעַן | הֵן | עָלֵינוּ: מֶלֶךְ אַ ט בּ ! תִּבְקֹר
Now therefore if to and let the king it seem good let there be search
H3705 H2006 H5922 H4430 H2869 H1240

בְּבָבֶל | דָּ י תִּמָּה מֶלֶךְ א דִּי גִנְזֵי א בֵּית
house treasure H1768 and let the king which is there H1768 at Babylon
H1005 H1596 H4430 H8536 H895

שָׁ ים מֶלֶךְ א כ וּרֹשׁ מִן דִּי אֵיתִי | הֵן
therefore if it be H1768 of Cyrus and let the king was made
H2006 H383 H4481 H3567 H4430 H7761

וְרָע וְת בִּירוּשָׁלַם דָּ הַ אֱלֹהֵי א בֵּית לְמִבְנֵי א טֵעַ מ
so that a decree to build house of God this at Jerusalem his pleasure
H2942 H1124 H1005 H426 H1791 H3390 H7470

עָלֵינוּ: יִשְׁלַח דָּן ה עָלֵינוּ: מֶלֶךְ א
and let the king to this matter send to
H4430 H5922 H1836 H7972 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.