

Ezra 6:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.

Analysis

Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. This verse records Darius's decree using the Aramaic term te'em (תְּמֵן, 'decree'), carrying legal force throughout the Persian Empire. The phrase 'of the king's goods' refers to imperial treasury, showing unprecedented royal support for rebuilding God's house.

The critical phrase **that they be not hindered** uses the Aramaic batel (בָּטֵל), meaning 'to cease' or 'be made ineffective.' Darius commands that nothing obstruct the work—an ironic reversal since earlier Persian officials had tried to stop construction (Ezra 4:23). God orchestrates circumstances so opposition becomes support. The specification of 'tribute beyond the river' (revenue from the Trans-Euphrates province) means local opposition would fund what they opposed.

Theologically, this demonstrates God's sovereignty over national treasuries. When God purposes to build His house, He moves kings to finance it. The command 'forthwith' (Aramaic osparna, 'diligently/immediately') shows urgency, reversing previous delay.

Historical Context

Darius I (522-486 BC) inherited Cyrus's tolerant religious policies. Archaeological discoveries, including the Behistun Inscription, confirm his administrative efficiency and concern for legal continuity. He sought to verify Cyrus's original decree (Ezra 6:1-5), establishing legal precedent for supporting temple construction.

The 'tribute beyond the river' referred to taxes collected from the satrapy west of the Euphrates, encompassing Syria-Palestine. Persian administrative documents show this region generated substantial revenue, making Darius's decree financially significant. Forcing regional taxes to fund Jewish temple construction reversed the power dynamic.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's ability to turn opposition into support encourage perseverance in ministry despite resistance?
2. What does Darius's decree teach about the role of civil government in protecting religious liberty?
3. How should believers respond when God provides resources through unexpected or even hostile sources?

Interlinear Text

שָׁבֵן עַם תַּעֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים וּמִנְפִּי
Moreover I make a decree what even of ye shall do to the elders

וּמְנַכֵּס יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָּל־יִהוּדִיא
Jews of these for the building house of God of this goods

נִפְקַד אֲסֵף רְבָא תַּבְּנֵה הַרְבֵּה מִלְּכָה א
that of the king's even of the tribute beyond the river forthwith expenses

לְבָטְלָה: לֹא אֱלֹהִים מִתְּנַחֲבָה אֲלֹהִים א
be given men of these even of that they be not hindered

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 6:4 (Kingdom): With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house:

Haggai 2:8 (Parallel theme): The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.