

Subject:

Resistance to Restoration

Object:

Discern False Friends from the Faithful

Text: Ezra 4



So the new residents worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed for themselves priests of all sorts to serve in the shrines of the high places.

They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods according to the customs of the nations from which they had been carried away. To this day they are still practicing their former customs. None of them worship the LORD or observe the statutes,

2 KINGS 17:32–34



Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, 'Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.'

NUMBERS 11:4-6



When Solomon was old
*his wives turned away
his heart after other gods...*

For Solomon went after
Ashtoreth the goddess
of the Sidonians, and after
Milcom the abomination
of the Ammonites...

Then Solomon built a
high place for Chemosh...
and for Molech...

And so he did for all his
foreign wives, who made
offerings and sacrificed
to their gods.

1 KINGS 11:4-8 (EXCERPTS)



they approached
Zerubbabel and the
heads of fathers' houses
and said to them,
**'Let us build with you,
for we worship your
God as you do, and we
have been sacrificing to
him ever since the days of
Esarhaddon king of Assyria
who brought us here.'**"

EZRA 4:2



But Zerubbabel,
Jeshua, and the rest
of the heads of fathers'
houses in Israel said
to them, 'You have
nothing to do with us
in building a house to
our God; **but we alone
will build to the LORD,
the God of Israel,**
as King Cyrus the king
of Persia has commanded
us.'”

EZRA 4:3



Then the people of
the land discouraged
the people of Judah and
**made them afraid
to build** and
bribed counselors
against them to
frustrate their purpose,
all the days of Cyrus
king of Persia, even
until the reign of
Darius king of Persia.

EZRA 4:4–5



CYRUS' LAST MARCH

— 530 BC —



PERSIAN EMPIRE

MASSAGETAE

Traditional location
of Cyrus' death

Pasargadae

AHASUERUS • VERSE 6

At the beginning of his reign,
“they wrote an accusation
against the inhabitants of
Judah and Jerusalem.”

ARTAXERXES • VERSE 7

Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel,
and their associates send
a letter to the king.
“The letter was written in
Aramaic and translated.”

ARTAXERXES • VERSE 8

Rehum dictates and
Shimshai records a letter
opposing Jerusalem.

EZRA 4:6–8

Summary with ESV excerpts



“You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old.”

EZRA 4:15 (EXCERPT)



Historical illustrations from Jeremiah 41; Ezra does not identify the specific records read.

We make known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River.

EZRA 4:16



Jerusalem as portrayed by the accusers

it has been found that this city
from of old **has risen against
kings**, and that rebellion and
sedition have been made in it.

And **mighty kings** have been
over Jerusalem, who ruled
over the whole province
Beyond the River, to whom
tribute, custom, and toll
were paid.

EZRA 4:19–20



Therefore make a decree that **these men be made to cease**, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me.

And **take care not to be slack** in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?

EZRA 4:21-22



they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease.

24 Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

