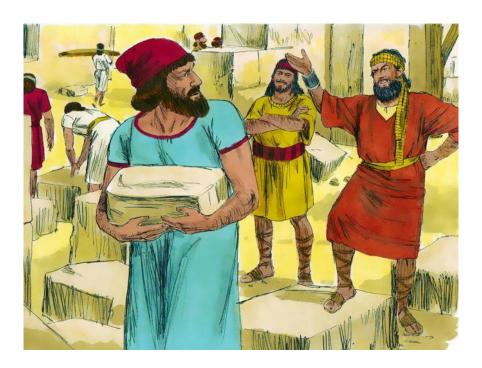
EZRA-NECHEMIAH CHAPTER 4: ANCIENT ANTISEMITISM

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(1) EZRA 4

(1) Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple to Hashem, the God of Israel; (2) then they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said to them, "Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as you do; and we sacrifice to him since the days of Esar Haddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here." (3) But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we ourselves together will build to Hashem, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." (4) Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, (5) and hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. (6) In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. (7) In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the text of the letter was written in Aramaic, and set forth in Aramaic. (8) Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as such: (9) Then Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions, the Dinaites, and the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Shushanchites, the Dehaites, the Elamites, (10) and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar brought over, and set in the city of Samaria, and in the rest of the country beyond the River, and so forth. (11) This is the copy of the letter that they sent to Artaxerxes the king: "Your servants the men beyond the River, and so forth. (12) Be it known to the king, that the Jews who came up from you are come to us to Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have finished the walls, and repaired the foundations. (13) Be it known now to the king that if this city is built, and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and in the end it will be hurtful to the kings. (14) Now because we eat the salt of the palace, and it is not appropriate for us to see the king's dishonor, therefore have we sent and informed the king; (15) that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers, so shall you find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time; for which cause was this city laid waste. (16) We inform

(א) וַיִּשָׁמְעוּ צָרֵי יִהוּדָה וּבִנְיָמִן כִּי בְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה בּוֹנִים הַיכָל לַי"י אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. (ב) וַיִּגְשׁוּ אֶל זַרַבַּבֶל וָאֵל רָאשֵׁי הַאַבוֹת וַיֹּאמְרוּ לַהֶם נִבְנֵה עָמַכֶם כִּי כַכֶם נָדָרוֹשׁ לֵאלֹהֶיכֶם [וָלוֹ] (ולא) אַנַחָנוּ זֹבָחִים מִימֵי אֶסַר חַדֹּן מֵלֶךְ אַשׁוּר הַמַּעֲלֵה אֹתָנוּ פֿה. (ג) וַיּאמֶר לָהֶם זְרַבָּבֶל וַיֵשׁוּעַ וּשָׁאַר רָאשֵׁי הַאַבוֹת לִישָׂרָאֵל לֹא לַכֶם ולנו לבנות בַּיָת לָאלהֵינוּ כִּי אַנַחָנוּ יַחַד נָבְנֵה לִי"י אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צְנָנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ כּוֹרָשׁ מַלֶךְ פַּרַס. (ד) וַיִהִי עַם הַאַרֵץ מִרַפִּים יִדִי עַם יָהוּדָה [וּמָבַהֶּלִים] (ומבלהים) אוֹתַם לְבָנוֹת. (ה) וְסֹכָרִים עַלֵיהֶם יוֹעַצִים לְהָפֵר עַצָּתָם כָּל יְמֵי כּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס וְעַד מַלְכוּת דַּרִיַנִשׁ מֵלֶך פַּרַס. (ו) וּבְמַלְכוּת אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ בִּתְחַלַּת מַלְכוּתוֹ פַּתָבוּ שָּׂטְנַה עַל ישָׁבֵי יִהוּדָה וִירוּשַׁלָם. (ז) וּבִימֵי אַרְתַּחָשַׁשְׂתַּא כַּתַב בִּשְׁלַם מְתַרְדַת טַבָאֵל וּשָׁאָר כְּנָוֹתָו עַל אַרְתַּחָשַׁשְׂתָּא מֱלֶךְ כַּּרָס וּכְתַב הַנִּשְׁתְּוָן כָּתוּב אֲרָמִית וּמְתֻרְגָם אֲרָמִית. (ח) רחוּם בִּעֵל טִעֵם וְשִׁמְשֵׁי סָפְרָא כְּתַבוּ אָגְרָה חַדָה עַל יִרוּשָׁלֶם לְאַרְתַּחִשַׁשְׂתָּא מַלְכַּא כָּנַמָא. ט) אַדַין רָחוּם בָּעֵל טָעֶם וְשָׁמְשֵׁי סַפָּרֵא וּשָׁאַר) כָּנָנִתָהוֹן דִּינָיֵא נַאֲפַרְסַתְּכָיֵא טַרְפָּלָיֵא אֲפַרְסַיֵא [אַרְכַּוַיֵא] (ארכוי) בַבְלַיֵא שׁוּשַׁנְכַיֵא [דַהַיֵא] (דהוא) עַלְמָיֵא. (י) וּשָׁאָר אָמַיָּא דִּי הַגְּלִי אָסְנַפַּר רַבַּא וְיַקִּירַא וְהוֹתֵב הָמוֹ בִּקְרִיָה דִּי שַׁמְרַיִן וּשָׁאָר עֲבַר נַהַרָה וּכְעֵנֶת. (יא) דְּנָה פַרשַגַן אָגַרתַא דִי שָׁלַחוּ עַלוֹהִי עַל אַרַתַּחָשַׁשְׂתָּא מַלְכַּא עַבְדֵיךְ אֵנַשׁ עַבַר נַהַרַה וּכְעָנַת. (יב) יִדִיעַ לָהָנָא לְמַלְכַּא דִּי יִהוּדַיֵא דִי סָלְקוּ מָן לְנַתַּדְ עֲלֵינַא אָתוֹ לִירוּשָׁלֵם קְרִיתַא מַרַדְתָּא וּבָאישָׁתָּא בָּנַיִן [וְשׁוּרַיָּא] (ושורי) [שַׁכִלִילוּ] (אשכללו) וָאָשַׁיַּא יַחִיטוּ. (יג) כִּעַן יִדיעַ לַהַנָא לִמַלכַּא דִּי הָן קריִתָא דַדְּ תִּתִבָּנָא וְשׁוּרַיַּא יִשְׁתַּכָּלְלוּוְ מָנְדָה בָלוֹ וַהֶּלַךְ לַא יִנְתְּנוּוְ וָאַפָּתֹם מַלְכִים תִּהַנִזְק. (יד) כָּעַן כָּל קַבֵּל דִּי מָלַח הֵיכָלָא מְלַחָנָא וְעַרְוַת מַלְכַּא לָא אָרִיךְ ַלַנָא לְמֶחֶזֵא עַל דְּנָה שָׁלַחָנָא וְהוֹדַעָנָא לְמַלְכָּא. (טו) דִּי יָבַקַּר בָּסְפַר דָּכְרַנַיַּא דִּי אֲבַהַתַךְ וֹתְהַשְׁכַּח בִּסְפַר דְּכָרָנַיָא וְתִנְדַע דִּי קְרִיתָא דָךְ קריַא מַרַדַא וּמָהנִזקת מַלְכִין וּמִדְנַן וָאֵשְׁתַּדּוּר עַבְדִין בָּגַוַה מָן יוֹמָת עַלְמָא עַל דְּנָה קַרְיִתָא דָךְ הַחַרָבַת. (טז) מָהוֹדְעִין אֲנַחָנַה לְמַלְכַּא דִּי הֶן קרְיָתָא דָךְ תִּתְבָּנֵא וְשׁוּרַיָּה יִשְׁתַּכְלְלוּוְ לְקָבֵל



the king that, if this city be built, and the walls finished, by this means you shall have no portion beyond the River." (17) The king sent an answer: "To Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions who dwell in Samaria, and in the rest of the country beyond the River: Peace and so forth. (18) The letter which you sent to us has been plainly read before me. (19) I decreed, and search has been made, and it is found that this city of old time has made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. (20) There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all the country beyond the River; and tribute, custom, and toll, was paid to them. (21) Now make a decree to cause these men to cease, and that this city not be built, until a decree shall be made by me. (22) Take heed that you not be slack herein. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?" (23) Then when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. (24) Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem; and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

דְנַה חַלַק בַּעַבַר נַהַרָא לָא אִיתַי לַךְּ. (יז) פָּתָגַמַא שָׁלַח מַלְכַּא עַל רְחוּם בִּעַל טִעָם וְשִׁמִשֵׁי סָפָרָא וּשְׁאָר כְּנָוַתְהוֹן דִּי יָתְבִין בָּשָׁמְרָיִן וּשְׁאָר עֲבַר נַהָרָה שְׁלָם וּכְעֶת. (יח) נִשְׁתִּנָנָא דִּי שָׁלַחָתוּן עֲלֵינָא מָפַרַשׁ קֵרִי קָדָמַי. (יט) וּמִנִּי שִׁים טִעֵם וּבַקַרוּ וְהַשָּׁכַּחוּ דִּי קְרִיְתַא דַך מָן יוֹמַת עַלְמַא עַל מַלְכִין מִתְנַשִּׂאַה וּמְרַד וְאֶשְׁתַּדוּר מִתְעֲבֶד בַּה. (כ) וּמַלְכִין תַּקִיפִין הַווֹ עַל יִרוּשָׁלֵם וְשַׁלִּיטִין בָּכֹל עֲבַר נַהַרָה וּמִדָּה בָלוֹ וַהֶּלֶךְ מִתִיהֵב לְהוֹן. (כא) כָּעַן שִׁימוּ טְעֵם לְבַטַלָא גַּבָרַיַּא אָלֶךְ וִקְרִיִתַא דַךְ לַא תִתִבְּנָא עַד מָנִּי טַעָמָא יִתִּשָׂם. (כב) וּזָהִירִין הֵווֹ שָׁלוּ לְמֶעְבַּד עַל דְּנָה לְמָה יִשְׂגֵּא חַבָּלָא לְהַנְזַקת מַלְכִין. (כג) אֱדַיִן מָן דִּי פַּרְשֶׁגֶן נִשְׁתְּוָנָא דִי אַרַתַּחָשַׁשְׂתָּא מַלְכַּא קֵרִי קַדַם רְחוּם וָשְׁמְשֵׁי ָסָפְרָא וּכְנָוָתְהוֹן אֲזַלוּ בִבְהִילוּ לִירוּשְׁלֶם עַל יָהוּדַיָא וּבַטָּלוּ הָמוֹ בָּאֶדְרַע וְחַיָל. (כד) בָּאדַיִן בָּטֵלַת עֲבִידַת בֵּית אֱלָהָא דִּי בִּירוּשָׁלֵם וַהָּוָת בַּטִלָא עַד שָׁנַת תַּרְתֵּין לְמַלְכוּת דַּרְיַנֵשׁ מֵלְדְּ

WHO ARE THE ENEMIES OF YEHUDA AND BINYAMIN?

(2) MELAKHIM B 17:1-8, 24-33

(א) בִּשְׁנַת שָׁתַּים עֵשָׂרָה לְאָחָז מֶלֶךְ יִהוּדָה מָלַךְ הוֹשֵׁעַ כֶּן אֵלָה בְשֹׁמְרוֹן עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּשַׁע שַׁנִים. (ב) וַיַּעַשׁ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי י"י רַק לֹא ּכְּמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפַנַיו. (ג) עַלָיו עַלָה שַׁלְמַנָאֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ אַשׁוּר וַיִהִי לוֹ הוֹשֵׁעַ עֶבֶד וַיָּשֶׁב לוֹ מִנְחָה. (ד) וַיִּמְצָא מֵלֶךְ אַשׁוּר בָּהוֹשֵׁעַ קַשֵּׁר אֲשֶׁר שַׁלַח מַלְאַכִים אֵל סוֹא מֵלֶךְ מָצָרַיִם וָלֹא הֶעֵלָה מִנְחָה לְמֵלֶךְ אַשׁוּר כִּשַׁנַה רַשַּׁנַה נַיַּעְצָרֵהוּ מֵלֶךְ אַשׁוּר נַיַּאַסְרֵהוּ בֵּית כֶּלֶא. (ה) וַיַּעַל מֶלֶךְ אַשׁוּר בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ וַיַּעַל שֹׁמְרוֹן וַיָּצַר עָלֶיהָ שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים. (ו) בִּשְׁנַת הַתְּשִׁעִית לְהוֹשֵׁעַ לְכַד מֶלֶךְ אַשׁוּר אֶת שׁמָרוֹן וַיֶּגֶל אֶת יִשִּׂרָאֵל אַשׁוּרָה וַיִּשֶׁב אוֹתָם בַּחָלַח וּבְחָבוֹר נָהַר גוֹזָן וְעָרֵי מָדַי. (ז) וַיְהִי כִּי חָטָאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַי"י אֱלֹהֵיהֶם הַמַּעֲלֶה אֹתַם מֵאֵרֵץ מָצָרַיִם מִתַּחַת יַד פַּרְעֹה מֵלֶךְ מָצָרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֶרִים. (ח) וַיֵּלְכוּ בָּחָקוֹת הָגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ י"י מָפָּנֵי בָּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ּוּמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשׁוּ... (כד) וַיָּבֵא מֶלֶךְ אַשׁוּר מִבָּבֶל וּמִכּוּתָה וּמֵעַנָּא וּמֵחַמָּת וּסְפַרְוַיִם וַיֹּשֶׁב בְּעָרֵי שֹׁמְרוֹן תַּחַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּרְשׁוּ אָת שֹׁמְרוֹן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּעָבֵיהָ. (כה) וַיִּהִי בִּתִחָלַת שָׁבָתָּם שָׁם לֹא יָרָאוּ אֶת י"י וַיִשַׁלַּח י"י בַּהֶם אֶת הָאַרַיוֹת וַיִּהִיוּ הֹרְגִים בָּהֶם. (כו) ַניאמָרוּ לְמֵלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר לֵאמֹר הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הָגּלִיתַ וַתּוֹשֶׁב בְּעָרֵי שֹׁמְרוֹן לֹא יַדְעוּ אֵת מְשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהָי הַאַרֵץ וַיִשַׁלַּח בַּם אֵת הַאַרֵיוֹת וְהִנַּם מְמִיתִים אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵינָם יֹדְעִים אֶת מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹבֵי הָאָרֶץ. (כז) וַיְצַו מֶלֶךְ אַשׁוּר לֵאמֹר הֹלִיכוּ שָׁמָה אֶחָד מֵהַכֹּהְנִים אֲשֶׁר הִגְּלִיתֶם מְשָׁם וְיֵלְכוּ וְיַשָׁבוּ שָׁם וְיֹרֵם אֶת מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֵץ. (כח) וַיָּבֹא אֶחָד מֵהַכֹּהָנִים אֲשֶׁר הָגְלוּ מִשֹּמְרוֹן וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּבֵית אֵל וַיִהִי מוֹרָה אֹתַם אַיך יִירְאוּ אֶת י"י. (כט) וַיִּהְיוּ עֹשִׁים גוֹי גוֹי אֱלֹהָיו וַיַּנִּיחוּ בְּבֵית הַבָּמוֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשוּ הַשֹּׁמְרֹנִים גוֹי גוֹי בְּעָרֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הֵם יֹשְׁבִים שָׁם. (ל) וָאַנְשֵׁי בַבַל עַשׂוּ אֶת סָכּוֹת בָּנוֹת וָאַנְשֵׁי כוּת עֲשׂוּ אֶת נַרְגַל וָאַנְשֵׁי חַמַת עֲשׂוּ אֶת אֲשִׁימַא. (לא) וְהַעַוִּים עֲשׂוּ וָבָחַז וְאֶת תַּרְתַּק וָהָסְפַרְנִים שֹרְפִים אֶת בָּנֵיהֶם בָּאֵשׁ לְאַדְרַמֶּלֶךְ וַעֲנַמֶּלֶךְ [אֱלֹהֵי] (אלה) [סְפַרְנַיִם] (ספרים). (לב) וַיִּהִיוּ יִרְאִים אֶת י"י וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מָקצוֹתָם כּהֲנֵי בָמוֹת וַיִּהְיוּ עֹשִׁים לָהֶם בְּבֵית הַבָּמוֹת. (לג) אֶת י"י הָיוּ יְרַאִים וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם הָיוּ עֹבְדִים כְּמִשְׁפַּט הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִגְלוּ אתם משם.



(1) In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over Israel, and he reigned nine years. (2) And he did that which was evil in the sight of Hashem, yet not like the kings of Israel that were before him. (3) Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his servant and brought him tribute. (4) And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and he did not offer tribute to the king of Assyria as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. (5) Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and he went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. (6) In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and exiled Israel to Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (7) And it was so, because the Children of Israel had sinned against Hashem their God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods. (8) And they walked in the customs of the nations whom Hashem cast out from before the Children of Israel and of the kings of Israel which they practiced... (24) And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the Children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria and dwelled in its cities. (25) And so it was, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear Hashem; therefore Hashem sent lions among them, which killed some of them. (26) Therefore they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations which you have exiled and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the manner of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they do not know the manner of the God of the land." (27) Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Carry there one of the priests whom you exiled from there; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land." (28) So one of the priests whom they had exiled from Samaria came and dwelled in Beth-el and taught them how they should fear Hashem. (29) However, every nation made gods of their own and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities in which they dwelled. (30) And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, (31) and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. (32) So they feared Hashem, and they made for themselves priests of the high places from among themselves, who sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. (33) They feared Hashem and they served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been exiled.

(3) KIDDUSHIN 75B

ר' ישמעאל סבר כותים גירי אריות הן וכהנים שנטמעו בהם כהנים פסולים היו שנאמר {מלכים ב י"ז:ל"ב} ויעשו להם מקצותם כהני במות ואמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן מן הקוצים שבעם ומשום הכי פסלינהו.

ורבי עקיבא סבר כותים גירי אמת הן וכהנים שנטמעו בהן כהנים כשרים היו שנאמר ויעשו להם מקצותם כהני במות ואמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן מן הבחירים שבעם ואלא מפני מה אסרום

Rabbi Yishmael holds that Samaritans are lion converts, and the priests who assimilated among them were unfit priests, as it is stated: "And made unto them from among themselves priests of the high places" (II Kings 17:32). And Rabba bar bar Ḥana says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: What is the meaning of "from among themselves"? From the thorns that are among the Jewish people, meaning those of flawed lineage. And it was due to that reason that the Sages disqualified them.



And Rabbi Akiva holds: Samaritans are true converts, and the priests who assimilated among them were fit priests, as it is stated: "And made unto them from among themselves priests of the high places" (II Kings 17:32). And Rabba bar bar Ḥana says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: "From among themselves" means from the chosen ones, the upper echelon of the Jewish people. And for what reason did the Sages prohibit them from entering into the congregation.

WHY WERE THEY REJECTED?

(4) RASHI EZRA 4:2

ויאמרו להם נבנה עמכם – היו אומרים כך למען תתבטל מלאכת הבית על ידיהם שלא לבנות עוד.

and said to them, "Let us build with you..." They said this in order that through them the work of the Temple should be disrupted, that they should build no more.

(5) MALBIM EZRA 4:2

הכותים היו עובדים בשיתוף, כמ"ש את ה' היו יראים ואת אלהיהם הם עובדים, וחשבו שגם ישראל יעבדו באופן זה, וע"כ אמרו ככם נדרוש לאלהיכם בקרי ליה אלהא דאלהיא, וע"כ אמרו "ולו אנחנו זובחים", שאנו חושבים אותו לאל עליון נעלה על כל אלהים:

The Kutim served multiple gods, as in, "They revered Gd and served their gods." They thought Israel would also serve thus. Therefore, they said, "like you, we seek out your god" by calling him "the god of gods," and therefore they said, "to him we sacrifice," because we consider him to be the supreme god over all other gods.

(6) EZRA 1:2-4

- (ב) כּה אָמֵר כּרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס כֹּל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִי י"י אֱלֹהֵי הַשֶּׁמְיִם וְהוּא פָקַד עָלַי לְבָנוֹת לוֹ בַיִת בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בִּיהוּדָה. (ג) מִי בָכֶם מִכָּל עַמוֹ יְהִי אֱלֹהָיו עִמוֹ וְיַעַל לִירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בִּיהוּדָה וְיָבֶן אֶת בֵּית י"י אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁרָאל הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בִּיהוּדָה וְיָבֶן אֶת בִּית יִי אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הַנִּשְׁאוּהוּ אֲנְשֵׁי מְלְמוֹ בְּכֶסֶף וּבְזָהָב וּבִרְכוּשׁ וּבִבְהַמָּה עִם הַנְּדָבָה לְבֵית הָאֵלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשֶׁלָם.
- (2) "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'All the kingdoms of the earth has Hashem, the God of heaven, given me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. (3) Whoever there is among you of all His people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Hashem, the God of Israel, He is God, which is in Jerusalem. (4) Whoever is left, in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with animals, besides the freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem."



THEIR OPPOSITION

(7) METZUDAT DAVID EZRA 4:4-5

- (ד) מרפים הביאו מורך בלבבם למען ירפו ידיהם מן הבנין. ומבהלים היו מפחידים אותם מלבנות.
 - . היהודים עצת היהודים לייעץ את המלך אחר דעתם ולהפר עצת היהודים.

"Weakening" – Softening their hearts, so that their hands would be weak in building. "And frightening" – Frightening them from building.

"And hired" – They hired advisors for themselves, to counsel the king in line with their view, and to ruin the Jews' plan.

(8) R' TZVI SINENSKY, "TIMELESS OPPOSITION"

By the time of the exile and *Shivat Tzion*, Aramaic had developed as the lingua franca in Judea, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. It is therefore easily understood why biblical Aramaic appears in large quantities only in *Daniel* and *Ezra*, not earlier works.

Interestingly, scholars, who divide classical Aramaic into five discrete historical time periods, associate the Aramaic of *Daniel* and *Ezra* with at least some characteristics of the second stage, generally termed "imperial Aramaic." As Shaul Shaked has suggested (*Encyclopedia Iranica*, "Aramaic," p. 251), during the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, Aramaic was adopted by the Achaemenid dynasty, founded by Cyrus, as the official language governing all interactions between the empire and its far-flung constituents. This was an effective tool in maintaining the empire's unity. It is therefore not surprising that biblical Aramaic occurs most often in official Persian documents, especially in *Sefer Ezra*. The Aramaic sections of our book cite or summarize official communications with the Persian empire. Thus, *Ezra*'s Aramaic highlights both the general adoption of the language by the residents of Judea and the official records of the Persian government.

WHO IS ACHASHVEROSH?

(9) RASHI EZRA 4:6

ובמלכות אחשורוש – שמלך אחר כורש הוא אחשורוש שלקח אסתר.

And in the reign of Ahasuerus who reigned after Cyrus; he is the Ahasuerus who took Esther.

(10) HO'IL MOSHE EZRA 4:6

ושֹרים של דריוש בנו של Xarscia און פרס נקרא אומרים שבלשון אומרים שבלשון אומרים צפראשון:

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The letters שרש refers to Xerxes, who in Persian is called "Xarscia," and who was the son of Darius I.

(11) PERSIAN KINGS ACCORDING TO THE SECULAR CHRONOLOGY (CREDIT: R' MORDECHAI TORCZYNER)

☐ Cyrus (Koresh) 559 BCE – 530 BCE (reigned over Babylon from 539 BCE)	
☐ Cambyses II 530 BCE – 522 BCE	
☐ Darius I (Daryavesh?) 522 BCE – 486 BCE	
☐ Xerxes (Achashverosh?) 486 BCE – 465 BCE	
☐ Artaxerxes I (Artachshasta?) 465 BCE — ~424 BCE	
□ Darius II 423 BCE – 404 BCE	
□ Artaxerxes II 404 BCE - ~358 BCE	
☐ Artaxerxes III 358 BCE - ~338 BCE	

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FURTHER READING

 $\underline{https://etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/ketuvim/sefer-ezra/ezra-chapter-4-timeless-oppositions}$





OUTLINE

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