

**A SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES,  
FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, BIBLE-CLASSES AND FAMILIES  
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**SECTION IV.  
THE SAMARITANS.**

The Samaritans, though accounted as little better than idolaters by the Jews, and though actually cut off from the sacred commonwealth of Israel, may, nevertheless, be looked upon as, in some sense, a *Jewish sect*; since they not only had their origin, in some degree, from the holy stock, but received the law of Moses as the rule of all their religion, and (Page 433) looked forward to the hopes of the Jewish church will all the confidence that was cherished by any of its tribes.

We have an account of their origin in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the second book of Kings. The king of Assyria, according to the cruel policy of that ancient age, carried the great body of the ten tribes away into a distant land, and settled their country with a colony of heathen strangers- a mixed multitude from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, on the other side of the Euphrates. These gradually amalgamated with each other, and with such of the Israelites as were still left in the land, so as to form a single people, who came to be called, from the name of their principle city, *Samaritans*. At first, they worshipped only the false gods of their native countries, but being chastised by the Lord in a remarkable way, they were led to desire some knowledge of the God of Israel and the manner of his worship, and gladly received to instruct them one of the captive priests of Israel whom the Assyrian king sent back from Babylon for the purpose: but they had no idea still of giving up entirely their old idols; they foolishly thought that every country had its particular gods; that the God of Israel was only one of the multitude among whom the earth was divided; and that, although it was unsafe to neglect him altogether in his own territory, there could be no impropriety, having now learned the manner of his worship, and being careful to show him respect and fear according to his appointed way, in showing honour, at the same time, to other deities, and in miserable idolatry of their fathers; so they *feared the Lord* after their own notion, and served their idol gods at the same time. In time, however, a more correct notion of religion began to gain ground; and at length, after the Jewish captivity, idolatry disappeared from among them altogether.

When the Jews, on their return, began to rebuild their temple, the Samaritans sought to associate themselves with them in the work; but that people would not consent at all to the proposal, perceiving that they were actuated by no good motives in urging it, and that, notwithstanding their fair professions, they had still little regard for the true religion, and were still in love with their idolatry. This refusal filled the Samaritans with rage, and led them to use every means in their power to hinder the building of the temple; in which attempts they were so successful, that the work was interrupted directly after its commencement, with a delay of full fifteen years. (Ezra, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> chapters.) The minds of the Jews were, (Page 434) of course, greatly embittered against them by this opposition, and the enmity was still more increased by the malicious arts which they afterwards employed to prevent Nehemiah from restoring the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh. 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> chapters.)

When Nehemiah undertook to reform the abuses that existed among the Jews, and among other things, required them to put away their strange wives, Manasseh, the son of Sanballat, prince of the Samaritans, refused to comply with the order, and being compelling to quit his own people, sought refuge with his father-in-law. (Neh. xiii. 28.) Sanballat, taking that advantage of the circumstances which he thought would be most offensive to the Jews, obtained permission from the Persian monarch, erected a NEW TEMPLE on mount Gerizim, and constituted his son-in-law the father of its priesthood. Thus a regular system of natural worship, corresponding