

ADVERSARIES TO THE WORK

EZRA 4

Text:

Introduction:

In chapter three we have seen great joy and great sorrow when the foundation of the Temple was finished. In chapter four the work is continuing and yet as the chapter begins the adversaries come out to thwart the work of God. Who were these adversaries? They were Samaritans, descendants of the mixed races of those who settled in the land by heathen kings.

See 2 Kings 17:24-41

There has always been opposition the work of God.

Notice:

1. THE TACTICS OF THE ADVERSARIES

A. They were subtle. They wanted to “participate”. They wanted to infiltrate.

Had they gotten a foothold in the work they would have destroyed the work.

To receive them would have weakened instead of strengthened.

Safety of the people meant separation. To mingle brings ruin and disaster.

B. They weakened the hands of the people. (vs. 4-5)

Ezra 4:4-5

⁴Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, ⁵And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- They troubled them. (vs. 4)
- They frustrated them. (vs. 5)

C. They worked to discredit the people through letter to the king.

- The Jews are building the city.
- Rebellion is eminent.
- The king's revenue will be damaged.
- We are looking out for the king's good

2. THE TACTICS OF THE DEVIL ARE THE SAME

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2 Corinthians 2:11

¹¹ Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

A. He is subtle through temptation. (Genesis 3:1)

B. He will weaken the hands of the people. (Ephesians 6:16)

C. He will seek to discredit. Doing right will cause those who are not to do or say:

“He must be compromising to have that kind of success.”

Like Daniel, pass a law that causes you to go against. (Daniel 6)

Close:

How do we get past the discouragement of the Adversary?

1. Stay in the Word of God. (Psalm 119)
2. Pray for wisdom. (James 1:5)

James 1:5

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

3. Make no provision for the flesh. (Romans 13:14)

Romans 13:14

¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

4. Do not give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-32)

Ephesians 4:26-32

²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. ²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. ³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

5. Fellowship with those who also want to do right. (2 Timothy 2:22)

2 Timothy 2:22

²²Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.