

# When Opposition Arises

Ezra 4

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As we continue our series entitled “Rebuilding Together,” we come to Ezra 4, where the people of God experience intense opposition to rebuilding the Temple.

## **Ezra 4:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, <sup>2</sup> they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, “Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.”

<sup>3</sup> But Zerubbabel, Joshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, “You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us.”

## **Principle: God’s People Live in Occupied Territory**

**2 Kings 17:24–41**

**What about us?**

## **Principle: God’s People Will Always Face Opposition**

**Ezra 4:4-7, 23**

<sup>4</sup> Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. <sup>5</sup> They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>7</sup> And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes. The letter was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language.

<sup>23</sup> As soon as the copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum and Shimshai the secretary and their associates, they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop.

# How should we respond when opposition comes?

## We need to keep doing the work God has called us to do!

### **Ezra 4:24**

<sup>24</sup> Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

### **1 Peter 2:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

## Love our Adversaries

### **Matthew 5:44**

Jesus said, "Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you."

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

## We follow Jesus, the overcomer!

### **John 16:33**

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.