

Promise Keeper

Ezra 4:1-24

- Last week the people built an altar and sacrifices were made to The Lord, also the foundation of the house of The Lord was laid, causing the people to rejoice in The Lord. Now this week after the Altar is built, worship has begun, the foundation of the temple is laid, we'll see the spiritual warfare intensifying. **Nugget:** always remember when God raises His people up to build, Satan will then rise up to oppose.

V1-24

- **V1-2** when the adversaries hear about what the people of Judah are doing in Jerusalem they don't like it, but instead of coming directly at them trying to stop them, they decide the more subtle approach of **infiltration**. The people of Samaria try to establish a bond with the people of Judah by asking if they can help them build the temple with them, saying they seek your God as you do since the days of Assyria
- These are the people left from the former Northern Kingdom who had been conquered by the Assyrians over one hundred and eighty years ago, since then they had intermarried with nations all around them and had long abandoned worshipping Jehovah God two centuries ago, which is why they were conquered in the first place. So all of this is a ruse, a ploy, to get Judah to let down their guard, and let them in, so that they can destroy the work of God from within before it truly gets started.
- **2 Kings 17:32-33** tell us the attitude of worship the Samaritans had > "they feared The Lord, yet served their own gods, according to the rituals of the nations whom they were carried away". Sadly this is much of the attitude we see today concerning The Lord, a recognition of Him, but a servitude toward the gods and rituals that they've been exposed to, that fit their personal lifestyles.
- **V2** to the undiscerning this sounds harmless and seemed like a good deal, as we desperately could use more help, and they are in a similar situation as us, and they seem nice, smiling as they offer us more resources what harm could it do right, wrong! With their difference of cultures and beliefs in false gods if allowed to mingle in they then would influence others that Jehovah God is not The only way.

- **V3** Zerubbabel and the leadership saw right through their plan refusing any help from them, telling them that they alone are charged with the task of building to The Lord. This is so important because you will be tempted by unbelievers to think that in allowing them to help you further the Kingdom of God that its okay with The Lord.
- It's never okay to partner with unbelievers in the things of God, as you are working in cross purposes, years ago ministries adopted this philosophy of letting the unsaved serve in ministry in hopes that this will somehow lead them to Christ. They called it seeker friendly ministry, well it increased the attendance of the churches, but it led to watered down messages that didn't include the mention of sin and repentance, thus giving its congregants a false belief of salvation, today we still see the residue.
- **V4-5 Intimidation**- after infiltration didn't work now they threaten anyone who would help Judah in their building project. They trouble the workers, go on a smear campaign by hiring counselors for the sole purpose of discouraging Judah from continuing on in the building of the work of God.
- **V6-16 Instigation**-after infiltration and intimidation comes instigation as they write an incrimination letter to the King of the Medes-Persians, Xerxes. They lay the accusations on thick > **1st** they remind Xerxes of the rebellious history Jerusalem had and if restored they would rebel against you and declare their independence.
- **2nd** an independent Judah would mean a loss of revenue as they surely wouldn't pay taxes. **3rd** a successful rebellion would bring dishonor to you, and provoke others to do the same, and you certainly don't want that. Remember were only looking out for you as we support you and have your best interests **V14**.
- **4th** if you allow this city to be rebuilt then get read to lose a part of your empire, as they will start conquering other nations and territories but not in your name in theirs. These are the tactics that Satan still uses today, first he will start with infiltration, when that doesn't work intimidation, and finally instigation, we must stay alert!
- **V17-24** in **V15** the letter asks the king to search the archives and see if what their saying is true, we know that Satan accusations will usually have some measure of truth mixed in with lies for without any truth it wouldn't be effective would it. The King informs them that he's heard the letter did the research and found that the Jewish people have indeed been governed by both mighty and rebellious kings.

- During Judah's declining years their Kings had broken treaties with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, and because of that dishonest history King Xerxes orders that the work be stopped. History tells us that once the work had been stopped that the adversaries then went in and wrecked much of the work that had been completed, it wouldn't be until ninety yrs later when Nehemiah leads a group back that the walls of Jerusalem would go up. This is what happens when you have a bad reputation.
- Because of their past misdealing's the work stops for fifteen years, this proves that the enemy will never succeed completely in stopping the work of God but because of our sinfulness it can be delayed. When people look at our work record and honesty will them hearing you're a believer then surprise them or simply say I knew it, that it was something about you that was different.
- There are two types of attitudes behind someone asking a person where they go to church > **1st** I want check out where you go to church, as I see how you conduct yourself and treat others, I want to see what your learning so I can apply it to my life. **2nd** then there's the where you go to church, do they know how you're acting, I'm avoiding that place at all costs. When they searched the records of Judah it indicted them instead of exonerating them, let this be a lesson to all of us, check our records.