

Ezra 4 – 31 January 16 & 14 February 16

Introduction –

In Ezra the Children of Israel begin to walk with God in a new phase of life, coming back from the captivity.

They've learned to

- 1) Step out in faith
- 2) Overcome sin and excel even after the ideal situation is lost
- 3) Choose to rejoice and be content

Now beginning with Ezra chapter 4 they will begin to learn how to deal with those that are adversarial towards them and towards their cause of spiritual growth.

How to guard against 4 tricks of the enemy while building your family's spiritual life.

Chapter 4:1-3

1. “Let us build with you”

- a. **The 1st trick to guard against is that the enemy [the world, flesh & devil] will offer to build your family's spiritual life with you.**
- b. Birds lodging in the branches from Matt 13:31-32.
 - i. Often those w/ no true desire to worship Jesus will purport to have the same desire to train and instruct our family as you.
 - ii. King Herod to the Wise Men.
 - 1. Tell me when you find Him, I too wish to worship Him.
- c. **The Answer**: Don't allow non-believers to train up your family even if they purport to be true believers.
- d. Example: Jehosophat allowed intermarriage with the evil family of Ahab.
- e. Example: Act 8:1-25 – Simon the Sorcerer in Samaria.
 - i. Wanted to buy the ability to impart the HS.
 - ii. Your money perish with you b/c you thought the gift of God could be bought.

- iii. Simon; starts the “Gnostics” and ends mentally burying himself alive.
- f. **Real Life**: Do you need to analyze the role you’re allowing non-believers to have in the moral & spiritual maturing of your family?

2. Who are these adversaries?

- a. The Assyrians
 - i. They settled others peoples in the land of the 10 northern tribes. (722 BC)
 - ii. The peoples asked the Assyrians to send them some native Israelites & priests to learn of the land and animals.
 - iii. The people assimilated Jehovah into their overall religious life and where known by the many city’s name the Samaritans.
- b. NT days
 - i. 400 years later; Jews still had no dealings w/ them, but also went too far into treating them poorly.

1. “How are you a Jew asking me for a drink of water, since we have no dealings with each other?”
 - ii. Acts 1 – You’ll be my witnesses in...
 - iii. Act 8:1-25 – Simon the Sorcerer in Samaria.
- c. Samaritans still today
 - i. There are about 800 of them today.
 - ii. They still worship today at Mt Gerizim.

Chapter 4:4-5

1. When you’re guarded against the enemy joining your spiritual endeavors, there’s no choice but for them to turn against you.
2. When the enemy is working against you; take joy b/c you’re being effective!!
 - a. Read Matt 5:11-12

Chapter 4:6-7a

1. **The 2nd trick to guard against is that the enemy [the world, flesh & devil] will persistently try to hamper you.**

2. Are we prepared to let it slide off our back?
3. Some of us respond in the Spirit to the big hard things, but come unglued by small nagging things.
4. Joseph constantly bugged by Potiphar's wife.
5. David always on the run from Saul.
6. **The Answer**: Commit to enduring wisely. (Act smart given your individual circumstance)
 - a. Read I Sam 18:7-16 – Behave wisely.
 - b. Read Psm 101 – ‘Honoring God 101’
 - c. Read Matt 10:16 – Use your circumstances to honor God the best.
 - d. **Real Life**: Do you need to yet learn the things that hamper your personal spiritual life? Learn them and then you'll walk thru that circumstance with wisdom.
 - i. Not sure what things hamper you? Ask your spouse....if you're brave enough!

Chapter 4:7-16

1. **The 3rd trick to guard against is that the enemy [the world, flesh & devil] will lie about your spiritual plan and spiritual character.**
 - a. Ezra – There's building this city to become sovereign and ignore Persia. (LIE)
 - b. Acts 2 – “These men are drunk” (LIE)
 - c. Speaking of Jesus
 - i. “The man casts out demons by the power of Satan.” (LIE)
 - ii. “He said he would destroy the temple” (LIE)
2. **The Answer:** Renew your mind by, not focusing on people's thought of you, but by remembering that God is being honored and you're going to be rewarded.
 - a. Let God be true and every man a liar.
 - b. Read Matt 5:10-16
3. **Real Life:** Do you need to stop worrying about what others think of your Christianity? Do you need to focus your mind on pleasing God instead of people?

Chapter 4:17-24

1. **The 4th trick to guard against is that the enemy [the world, flesh & devil] will use your past sin against you.**
2. **The Answer:** When Satan reminds you of your past, just remind him of his future. (Quote a verse)
3. **Real Life:** Do you need to stop laying in regret and start planning for a God honoring future?
4. So here at the end of chapter 4.
 - a. Foundation of temple is laid and now has to stop building for what will be about 10 yrs.
 - b. **Their circumstance is seen as a step backwards in the people's building plan, but God will use it as a step forward in His plan to build the people.**
 - c. **All circumstance that God allows in needful!!**

Conclusion –

Guard against the enemies tricks while building your family's spiritual life.

- 1) Guard against their involvement in your spiritual things.
 - a. Analyze the role your allowing non-believers to have in your family's life.
- 2) Guard against their persistent hampering and hassling.
 - a. Learn what hampers your spiritual development and commit to enduring wisely given your circumstances.
- 3) Guard against their lies about your plans and your character.
 - a. Focus, not on people, but believe that you ARE honoring God and there's even a reward in it for you.
- 4) Guard against your enemy bringing up your past sin and shame.
 - a. Remind Satan of his future, remember your future, remember the coming of Christ is nigh!