

The Study Book of Ezra – Lesson 4

Facing Critical Moments with Opposition

4 They also asked, “What are the names of those who are constructing this building?” 5 But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received. ~ Ezra 5:4–5 NIV

Many times, in our lifetime, it will appear that the enemy is winning. It can even cause you to think about retiring, giving up, or wondering if God is even interested in your future.

The Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem under the decree of Cyrus but faced heavy resistance in rebuilding the temple. This occurred during the leadership period of Darius I of Persia. Ezra 5 is part of a larger narrative in which the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah apply.

“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” ~ Haggai 1:4 NIV

See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day. ~ Zechariah 3:9 NIV

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. ~ Zechariah 4:9 NIV

Key Ministry Statements

“You can be anointed for the assignment or even decreed by God to fulfill His call, but the enemy will do his best to destroy you.”

“Consider when the Spirit of God stirs up His people to do good, the enemy gets busy stirring up evil and plots.”

“The Jewish people continued their work despite opposition.”

A. Accountability Without the Coexistence of Fear

“Fear is false evidence appearing real.”

- Don’t hide
- Know your identity
- Have confidence

B. God Will Accommodate You with the Vision

- Consider God’s authority and sovereignty over events.
- Consider God’s covenant is long-term.
- Consider that God will restrain opposition without removing it from you.

“The very word authority has within it the word author. An author is someone who creates and possesses a particular work. Insofar as God is the foundation of all authority, He exercises that foundation because He is the author and the owner of His creation. He is the foundation upon which all other authority stands or falls.”

— R.C. Sproul

Understanding Ezra 5:5:

“But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews...”

The phrase “The eye of the Lord their God was upon them” is a beautiful metaphor for God’s watchful care.

C. Courage is Rooted in Our Divine Calling

- Operate boldly

- Accept and expect scrutiny
- Address publicly for the mission

Benediction

The Lord is watching over you.

- God is not distracted
- God is not distant
- God is not double-booked

“Courage flows from obedience, not defiance.”