


**Don't Let Opposition Surprise
You!**

Ezra 4:1-24





*There is yet to be a work
attempted for God that did not
produce criticism or opposition.*

Ezra 4 Covers 50 Years

Verses	Years
V. 1-5	Continuation of Ch. 3
V. 6	40 Years Later
V. 7-23	10 Years Later
V. 24	Back to V. 1-5

I. Opposition is Real

1. Nature of the adversaries

When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel, 2 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.” – Ezra 4:1-2.

I. Opposition is Real

2. Zerubbabel's response to opposition

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." – Ezra 4:3.

I. Opposition is Real

3. Effects of opposition

1. Discouragement: Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building – Ezra 4:4.

2. Fear: They were afraid to go on building – Ezra 4:4.

3. Multiplied opposition: 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 – Ezra 4:5.

II. Tactics of the Enemies - Exaggeration

12 The king should know that the people who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations 13 Furthermore, the king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and eventually the royal revenues will suffer. 14 Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king – Ezra 4:12-14.

II. Tactics of the Enemies - Exaggeration

15 so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that this city is a rebellious city, troublesome to kings and provinces, a place with a long history of sedition. That is why this city was destroyed. 16 We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates – Ezra 4:15-16.

How Respond to Criticism and Opposition



1. Expect Opposition.

- a. I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it – Matthew 16:18.*
- b. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world – John 16:33.*

How Respond to Criticism and Opposition

2. Rely on the Lord.

4 Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land! 5 Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.” – Nehemiah 4:4-5.

God can do his best work in us while we are down!

How Respond to Criticism and Opposition



3. Respect the Opposition.

4. Living Obediently does not always equal a positive outcome.

5. Never be afraid to test yourself by your critics words. “If what they are saying about you is true, mend your ways. If it isn’t true, forget it, and go about the business of serving the Lord” – H. A. Ironside.

How Respond to Criticism and Opposition

6. There is a blessing for you when you face opposition.

*10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you –
Matthew 5:10-12.*

How Respond to Criticism and Opposition

6. There is a blessing for you when you endure opposition.

*8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will **boast** all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I **delight** in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong – 2 Corinthians 12:8-10.*