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Lighthouse Bible Church

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Ezra 4:1-24

Title: A temporary halt

Enemies noticed the building of the second temple, and they were unhappy about it (Ezra 4:1-2). These were Samaritans of mixed lineage.

Those same enemies tried to make the case that they wanted to build to the same God, but the Israelites quickly saw through it (Ezra 4:3).

Deuteronomy 6:4, John 4:17-25

Remember how the people of Israel feared the enemies around them (Ezra 3:3)? Some now are putting fear in them, again (Ezra 4:4-5).

Other groups sought to stop this building, too, later on.

Nehemiah 6:1-8

Darius (Ezra 4:5) is a Persian king who reigned from around 521 to 486 BC. He's mentioned in two other OT books.

Haggai 1:1-6

Zechariah 1:1-6

**Think of Ezra 4:6-23 as parenthetical.
They cover events that happened years
later than the more immediate ones
we've read about.**

How do we know:

- **Ahaseurus followed Darius I (roughly 30 years)**
- **Artaxerxes is after Xerxes**

Perhaps Ezra chose to insert the details in Ezra 4:6-23 to make the point that opposition to the rebuilding had a long precedent.

**In Ezra 4:6, we see the beginning of the
reign of Ahasuerus. His Greek name is
Xerxes. Reigned in Persia from 486 to
464 BC**

**He eventually became ruler over
Medo-Persia, which was a vast area.**

Esther mentions him: Esther 1:1-5

**Here's the kingly order chronologically:
Cyrus, Darius I, Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I**

Notice that the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem call the city rebellious and evil (Ezra 4:11-12). That's a way to discredit them to the Persian king.

**In Ezra 4:13, the same enemies
reference tax revenue — if the people
succeed in rebuilding this temple, they
say, they will no longer pay taxes into
the king's coffers.**

The stakes get even higher in Ezra 4:16.
They tell the king he will have no
possession of those lands if the building
is up.

Nehemiah 1:1-6 documents this same opposition. Let's turn there.

Ezra 4:17-22 details a king who decided to have the work on the city cease. Ezra 4:24 picks back up with the opposition to Zerubbabel under Darius I.

**A couple years later, that work started
back up again for the city's ruins
specifically, but not the temple itself.**

Nehemiah 2:1-8

The work of rebuilding the temple stopped for 16 years, and resumed in 520 BC. Haggai and Zechariah detail the Israelites getting back to that work, which we should read next week.

The Israelite leaders were forthright in their denial of those who sought to build with them. Be watchful — don't attach yourselves to others who do not know God.

We should expect some sort of persecution as a result of doing the work the Lord wants us to do. Don't bend in the face of that persecution.