

September 5, 2021 Ezra 4:1-5
Expectation amid Opposition

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

These “enemies” who came wanting to help were **polytheists**. This means they worshiped many gods. They wanted to get whatever they could out of the God of Israel as they practiced syncretistic worship. This simply means they added the True God of Israel to their pile of false gods and hoped for the best. This is called **syncretism**. To join forces with these people was not acceptable and would be **dangerous** to true worship of God.

To join forces with these people would be to **compromise**. It would open the door to bad influence for generations to come. It is the same today with denominations joining forces yet they do not share the same doctrinal positions on issues that are crucial/foundational to what the Bible teaches.

As soon as the rejection came, so did the attacks. They tried to inflict the people with **discouragement** and **fear**. In the book of Acts Paul spoke of times to come after his departure; he warned the people of savage wolves who would be waiting in the shadows to come and pounce upon them. See **Acts chapter 20**.

The Lord’s work is always under attack from a relentless enemy but remember the words of John, “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” **1 John 4:4** NASB.

The enemy offered to help. This was solely an attempt to **infiltrate** the ranks and **sidetrack** the project. When this attempt failed they turned to threats, possibly threats on their lives, to **frighten** the people. They even hired counselors to **frustrate** the people, nothing was beyond them. They continued this way through the reign of Cyrus and that of Darius.

So, in light of this type of persecution and attack, think about what type of people we must be today in order to **prevail** in the work the Lord has called us to. God never said that to follow Him with your whole heart would be easy!

Application:

“Be gracious to me, God, for a man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. **2** My enemies have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. **3** When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. **4** In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? **5** All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. **6** They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. **7** Because of their wickedness, will there be an escape for them? In anger make the peoples fall down, God! **8** You have taken account of my miseries; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? **9** Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me. **10** In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, **11** In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can mankind do to me? **12** Your vows are binding upon me, God; I will render thanksgiving offerings to You. **13** For You have saved my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living.” (**Psalm 56:1-13** NASB)