

**September 12, 2021 Ezra 4:6-24**  
**Accusations/Adversity Perseverance/Patience**  
**Enduring Through The Hard Times**

**PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

This is a lesson on trust and endurance. Not all went well for the Jews. Evil men will come against the nation and in this case win a skirmish, but not the war. Jesus set all of that straight with His finished work on the cross. Trust the Lord, wait on the Lord. Serve the Lord with your whole heart. Leave the results to Him.

Hard times will inevitably come, the question is, how will you respond in the hard times? Setbacks can and will come even as His people strive to serve Him and desire to accomplish His will. Do not let that take you by surprise. "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evil doer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:12-16 NASB)

God is not so much interested in time as He is timing. By the way, the Lord is sovereign over His creation, rest in that great truth.

The enemy put in writing an accusation against the Jews written in Aramaic. There is tremendous power in and much damage that can come from an accusation. In this case it was partly true. This is when your walk with God will be tested to the extreme. It may take awhile, it may be painful, it may be costly, but God will always accomplish what concerns His children. See **Isaiah 46:8-11**.

**APPLICATION:** Are you in a tough spot this morning? It may be due to sin in your life or it may have come from the outside. Maybe someone has made a false accusation against you. What do I do now may be the foremost question on your mind. In our current study the sin of the nation Israel had landed them in exile, they were suffering for this and after 70 years of chastisement and then after repentance they were being returned to the Promised Land. In doing the work of the Lord by resettling the land and restoring the temple, they find themselves being attacked by the enemy. First came an attempt to infiltrate, then came threat and false counselors. Then they pull out the big guns, the vast majority of inhabitants of the land got together and made accusations to stir up trouble for the people. Were they not trying to do the Lord's will and work? So what is going on? Why all of this strife in my life? God's people must have thought the same thing and sometimes they folded to the pressures and threats. Yet, God was and is faithful. They were to trust Him by faith when sight made no sense. It took time, but it did come to pass. Meditate on this, **8** "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you wrongdoers. **9** Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, **10** Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My plan will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' **11** Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a distant country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, I will certainly do it." (**Isaiah 46:8-11** NASB) Place all of your trust in the Lord as you pass through troubled waters. "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly

abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

(Ephesians 3:20-21 NKJV)

Does it ever seem that life is overwhelming you? Have, fiery trials come upon you as you seek to worship and obey God? Remember what Peter said, don't be surprised when these fiery trials come upon you: suddenly, unexpectedly, unfairly, and yet there they are.

In our pericope today we see just that. Be reminded that we have an enemy. He only comes to kill, steal, and destroy. But Jesus has come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.

Sometimes that means that you will go through times of suffering. Horrible suffering. There is something else Peter, moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote about this. **1 Peter 1:6-9** “6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Know this, you are not alone, Peter continued writing on this subject, “But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.” (**1 Peter 5:9** There is a promise made to believers in the following **verses 10-14** that will encourage anyone who is suffering for the cause of Christ.

There is yet another important perspective to consider regarding suffering that was penned by Paul in the book of **Philippians 1:29-30**, “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”