

# Adversaries & Opposition

Proclamation Bible Study; Week of Sunday, November 10, 2019; Steve Thiel

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**Sermon Theme: Adversaries and opposition to the people of God and the work of God should not be a surprise; but expected. Jesus said, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” Therefore, let us look to Christ, the One who overcame death and the devil and empowers us to be more than conquerors, through Him who loved us!**

## **I. In the Days of Cyrus – Read Ezra 4:1-5, 24**

- A. As you read about the offer from the people of the land to help rebuild the temple and Zerubbabel’s answer of no, what are initial thoughts about his response? Does it seem like an overreaction?
- B. What details in verses 1-5 help us understand that Zerubbabel’s reaction to the people of the land was a great decision? How does 2 Kings 17:24-33 help us with that understanding?
- C. What do you think it looked like for the people of the land to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to build? Have you experienced any modern-day examples of this kind of persecution?
- D. If someone truly wants to help and his offers to do so are rebuffed, how might he convince those he wants to help of his sincerity? What would strangers have to say or do to convince you of their sincerity?
- E. Are there ways that enemies are opposing your attempts to advance God’s kingdom now? If so, explain. If you’re not experiencing any opposition, is it possible that you need to be more bold with the gospel?

## **II. In the Days of Future Kings – Read Ezra 4:6-23**

- A. How do these verses fit into the bigger scope of the chapter and the book of Ezra? What kings are we talking about here and when did they reign? What opposition were the people of God experiencing?
- B. What irony do you find in verse 15 regarding the reason why the city of Jerusalem was laid waste?
- C. How is this example consistent with the other examples you’ve experienced with adversaries and opposition? As you think about enemies at such a high level, what options do we have to oppose them?

## **III. In the Days of Our Life – Read John 16:33**

- A. After reading 2 Timothy 2:3-4, what do you think it looks like to be a “good soldier of Christ Jesus?” In what ways do you need to shift from having a peacetime mentality to a wartime mentality?
- B. In what ways does Hebrews 12:1-2 highlight Jesus’ confrontation with adversaries and opposition. How do these verses and all of chapter 11 encourage us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus?
- C. How is having an eternal perspective critical for enduring tribulation, distress, and persecution. How are Paul’s words in Romans 8:31-39 helpful in this regard?