

In Unity and Strength: Facing Adversity Together

August 18, 2024 | *Ezra 4:1-5*



Observations from Ezra 4:1-5

What is happening in these verses?

The Adversaries of Judah and Benjamin: (Ezra 4:1-2)

- The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin, despite the offer to help, rejected their help because of their leadership and discernment.
- **Reference:** *2 Corinthians 6:14-16*

The Importance of Spiritual Discernment: (Ezra 4:3)

- The leaders used spiritual discernment to protect the mission given by God, rejecting the adversaries. Their intentions did not align with God’s purpose.
- **Reference:** *1 John 4:1, Colossians 2:8*

The Adversaries' Tactics Against the People of God: (Ezra 4:4-5)

- The adversaries employed various tactics: discouragement, fear, bribery, slander and libel, to stop the progress.
- **Reference:** *Nehemiah 4:8-9*

| Adversary’s Tactic | God’s Response in His Word | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| Discouragement | God encourages us when the enemy attacks. | Isaiah 41:10, Joshua 1:9 |
| Fear to Build | God is with us, and there is nothing to fear. | 2 Timothy 1:7, Psalm 27:1 |
| Bribery of Counselors (Advisors) | They will reap what they sow. | Proverbs 22:8, Galatians 6:7 |
| Slander/Libel (Later in Ezra) | Those who do wrong will be exposed. | Luke 12:2-3, Psalm 37:5-6 |

Ontario Community Church: **Encouraging, Equipping and Engaging lives for Christ.**

John 6:47 (ESV) “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever **believes** has eternal life”

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Lessons from Ezra 4:1-4

What can we learn (interpret) from these verses?

The Importance of Developing Our Spiritual Discernment

- Spiritual discernment helps us recognize good and evil; truth from lies; light and darkness.
- **Reference Verses:** *1 John 4:1, Matthew 7:15, Hebrews 5:14*

How do we develop our spiritual discernment?

1. **Learn the Word of God:** *2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 5:14*
2. **Be Guided by the Holy Spirit:** *John 16:13, Romans 8:14*

Standing Firm in the Face of Opposition

- Standing firm in our faith is critical when facing opposition to remain true to the mission God has given us.
- **Reference Verses:** *Matthew 28:19-20, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 6:13*

Recognize the Reality of Spiritual Warfare

- Spiritual warfare is a reality, and we must be equipped by knowing the tactics. Let us respond to with prayer, Scripture, trust in the Lord, and unity in the body of Christ.
- **Reference Verses:** *Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Timothy 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9*

Application from Ezra 4:1-5

How can I apply / live out these verses?

Grow in Discernment

- We grow in discernment by studying God's Word, seeking wisdom from God, and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- **Reference Verses:** *James 1:5, Proverbs 2:4-5, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22*

Support One Another in Faith

- Supporting each other in faith strengthens the body of Christ (like a bundle of sticks) and helps us stand firm together against opposition.
- **Reference Verses:** *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Hebrews 10:24-25*

Trust in God's Sovereignty

- Trusting in God's sovereignty gives us peace and confidence, knowing that He

is in control and His plans for us are good.

- **Reference Verses:** *Romans 8:28, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 41:10*



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