

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of February 2, 2020

Discouraged, Afraid, Frustrated

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Ezra 4:1-5](#)

¹ Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, ² they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here." ³ But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, "You have

nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."

⁴ Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build ⁵ and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- "Now when the adversaries...heard" (1)
- "So that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away." ([Ezra 3:13](#))

Ezra 4:1-5	The time of Cyrus to Darius	538-530 BC, reign of Cyrus 522-486, reign of Darius
Ezra 4:6-7	The time of Ahasuerus to Artaxerxes	485-464, reign of Ahasuerus (cf. Esther 1:1) 464-423, reign of Artaxerxes
Ezra 4:8-16	Rehum's letter to Artaxerxes	464-423, reign of Artaxerxes
Ezra 4:17-23	The response of Artaxerxes	
Ezra 4:23	Possibly the setting for the news Nehemiah received in 445 BC (cf. Nehemiah 1:1-3)	
Ezra 4:24	Return to the time of Darius	520 BC, "second year of...Darius"

- Why arrange the material this way?
- Opposition to God's people and work has been generational
- There is a solidarity here
- Discouragement is very hard to overcome
- "Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia." ([Ezra 4:24](#))
- Who are the enemies? Why is their offer rejected?
- Verses 4- 5 reveal the true intent of the inhabitants of the land
- Discouragement is a deadly disease. It saps energy, cripples motivation, and turns us in on ourselves
- Following Jesus is going to involve struggle and setback
- Faith in the promise of God is our best defense against this disease.