

“On the Way” 365 Bible Reading Plan

EZRA 4

Ezra 4

Ezra four continues the story of the rebuilding of the second Temple. The foundation is laid as recorded in Ezra 3:8-13 and there were mixed emotions that came with such a glorious occasion. The older wept and the younger rejoiced. One can only imagine the mixed emotion for those who in their younger days had seen the spectacular temple of the Solomonic age and Israel’s former days of glory. Now a new generation was, as it seems, starting over. Chapter four begins an offer from the people of the land to join in the endeavor of building. These people were not Jewish, but rather had been relocated to the land under the Assyrians during the fall of Samaria and the northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. The empire building strategy of the Assyrians was different than that of the Babylonians, which differed again from the Persians, under whom the people of Ezra’s day were operating. These people did not have loyalty to the God of the Jews but were simply wanting to have a “say” in what was going on in their domain. They were interested in control and taxes. These are two of the critical areas that still cause disputes among nations, people groups and gatherings, small and great. When the leaders of Israel rejected their offer to

participate, the opposition’s motives became clear. They immediately opposed the worthy project and began to stop, or in modern parlance, “cancel” the Jews and their work. Nothing new here. According to verses four and five, ***“The people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building and hired counselors (attorneys) against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus King of Persia, even until the reign of Darius King of Persia.”***

We must remember Ezra is recording this from records that were meticulously kept concerning these matters. These records were all written in the language of the day, Aramaic. The book of Ezra records all the official correspondence back and forth in the language in which they were written. Only Ezra’s narrative is in Hebrew. This is a great confirmation of the historical accuracy and validity of the book of Ezra itself.

Prayer and Action Steps

*Dear Lord, I thank you for guiding my steps each day. May I be aware that you are with me when opposition arises.
Amen*

Date _____ Scripture _____

- *Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.*
- *Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.*
- *Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.*

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act?

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions?

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible?

