

# *Bible Study*

## THE STING OF ACCUSATION

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Facing opposition seems to be a constant issue for the ancient Jewish people, doesn't it? We saw how the Jews were opposed by their enemies as they tried to rebuild the temple. This took place when Z, Joshua, and the other exiles first returned to Jerusalem, before the time of Haggai. Today, we're going to fast forward a few decades after Haggai, to the time when Ahasuerus (Xerxes), then Artaxerxes ruled the throne of Persia. We're about to see how opposition to the Jews reared its ugly head again as they worked to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

Let's start by reading **Ezra 4:6**. **4** Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; **2** Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of ...

What did Judah's enemies do?

\_\_\_\_\_ seems to be a favorite \_\_\_\_\_ for the enemies of God's people.

**Ezra 4:12** False Pretenses

**Ezra 4:13** No financially support

**Ezra 4:14** Courting the King

**Ezra 4:15** Exaggeration

**Ezra 4:16** Lies

When the opposition comes at you, trying to take you down and discourage you, the tactics are similar to what's found in **Ezra 4**. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Lies against you can cut to the core. It's hard to stand steady when your failures are exploited and your weaknesses exaggerated. When your character is attacked by slander and gossip, it's heartbreaking to watch influencers and teammates distance themselves from you. Accusation hurts.

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Has there been a time when you felt this sting? If so, briefly describe the situation and the hurt. If not, have you seen this happen to someone around you? Explain.

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Circle what was the most painful:

- The lies
- The exaggerations
- The gossip
- The isolation

How did you respond?

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My friend, if you or someone you love has experienced any of the attacks listed above, the pain from that situation is probably easy to recall. If that wound is still fresh or you still struggle with it at times, ask God to give you perspective and healing. Remember you have a Savior who understands that pain. **He is “close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps. 34:18, NIV).**

\_\_\_\_\_ is a sharp arrow in the quiver of opposition. It hurts when it hits, and it causes all sorts of pain if it sticks. When we’re unjustly accused and feel the press of \_\_\_\_\_, we can get so discouraged, can’t we?

That discouragement isn’t isolated to us or the ancient Jews. Check out these three Psalms and jot down phrases that describe the psalmist’s despair.

**Psalm 80:4-6**

- will your anger smolder
- eat and drink tears
- object of derision

**Psalm 88:1-9**

- overwhelmed w/trouble
- removed by closest friends
- lowest pit

**Psalm 102:3-11**

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Those are quite the depressing lists, aren't they? The psalmist felt wasted, abandoned, and overwhelmed. He fought insomnia. His enemies reproached him. He felt isolated and alone.

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Oh, but that's not all! He said he had no strength, his heart was broken, and he felt forsaken even by God. Perhaps that was also how the Jews felt when their enemies set out to discourage them.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ hurt. They *weaken our hands* as **Ezra 4:4** reads in the King James Version. We feel like we can't hold on, that we're not strong enough for the task, and we want to just throw in the towel.

Know this: when you get your priorities right and put your hands and heart to doing what God has called you to do, the voices of opposition will shout loud and long. You see, the enemy of your soul traffics in \_\_\_\_\_. **It may take the form of people who are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or just plain \_\_\_\_\_.** As Paul said in **Ephesians 6:12** – **“Our struggle is not against flesh and**

**blood”** (NIV) Satan has a goal. And it is not to help you be who God calls you to be and do what God calls you to do.

His goal is plainly stated in **John 10:10**. Write it out here so you don't forget it! my enemy's goal is to:

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How did Jesus describe Satan in **John 8:44**?

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Satan is a liar and a joy-stealer. He seeks to destroy our work or reputation. He - \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

So how do we handle accusation and opposition? Sometimes the only thing that will give you the *umph* you need when the accusation is stiff, the opposition is rough, and the discouragement is deep, is God's Word.

**Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9B, CSB.**

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**Your strength will lie in quiet confidence. Isaiah 30:15b, CSB**

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**No weapon formed against you shall prosper. Isaiah 54:17a**

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**For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Philippians 2:13, NIV**

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**For God has not given us a spirit to fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. 2 Timothy 1:7, CSB**

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When opposition starts to get loud, take courage and lean hard on God's Word and make His voice the loudest you hear.

**In spite of opposition – It Is Still Our Time.**