

06 – Ezra 4:6-24 – Opposition works

Does it sometimes look to you as if those opposed to the Christianity are winning?

Sin

Satan.

Self centeredness

Secularism.

A history of kings

Cyrus - 550-530 BC

Cambyses - 530-522 BC

Darius - 522 – 486 BC

Xerxes (Ahasuerus) 486-465 BC.

Artaxerxes - 464 – 423 BC.

What is happening

... uses examples that occurred later under the reign of Artaxerxes.

... panders to the king's self-importance

... it pretends to speak for a huge part of the empire

... presents a one sided argument

... they use an argument that they know will get them lots of traction.

verse 24, “work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius”.

For us today

1) Opposition is constant

... one bad example is used extrapolated over all followers of Jesus over all time.

... fear is sown in the hearts of people in society

2) Often it is out of our hands

3) So what should we do

Firstly... know God well.

Secondly ... not be driven by fear.

Thirdly ... trust in the sovereign rule of God

Fourthly ... be prayerful

Fifthly ... pursue grace filled gospel driven living

1 Peter 2:12, Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that he visits us.

1 Peter 3:13- 17, “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. ‘Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.’ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

Finally... not be discouraged and we will persevere.