

Restoration of Exiles: A Study of Ezra  
Chapter 4

1. How do you feel about Zerubbabel and the other leaders rejecting the offer for help building the temple (vv. 1-3)?
2. Who were the people who offered to help? (vv. 1, 3). Were they Jews? (v. 3).
3. Can you think of situations today in which it would be right for us to refuse someone's help with something?
4. How did the people of the land who had offered to help respond to this rejection? (v. 4)
5. Generally speaking, how long did this continue? (Note: Cyrus' reign began in 650 and Darius' reign ended in 486.
6. What do you learn from this?
7. As an example of opposition, vv. 6-16 mention three letters written by the adversaries of the Jews to two different Kings of Persia: 1) to Ahasuerus (v. 6), 2) to Artaxerxes (v. 7), and 3) also to Artaxerxes but from different people (v. 8, the text of this third letter is included in vv. 9-16). These are illustrations of the kinds of opposition the returned Jewish exiles faced.
8. What is the gist of the third letter of opposition (vv. 8-16)?
9. In vv. 17-22 we have a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes sent in reply. What is his answer? Did the locals carry out the king's wishes? (v. 23)
10. Opposition like this was one reason the people stopped rebuilding the temple (v. 24). As best as we can tell, they stopped for working for over 15 years. Do you think there may have been other reasons?
11. How would you apply this section about opposition (vv. 4-24) to us today? Do you think you will face opposition to the plans you have for when you "come out of exile" to Covid 19?