

Built for Worship
Opposition works... (Ezra 4:6-24)

Opposition stories (v.6-7)

Opposition arguments (v.8-16)

1. Exaggerating those they claim to represent

2. Mixing facts with slander

3. Making leaps of logic and scaremongering

4. Being selective with data

Opposition effects (v.17-24)

“Now issue an order to these men to stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order. Be careful not to neglect this matter. Why let this threat grow, to the detriment of the royal interests?” (v.21-22)

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)

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Opposition works... (Ezra 4:6-24)

Questions to think and pray through over the week ahead

What are the threats to freedom of speech that you see happening in our society at present?

What specific threats to Christian freedom are there?

How does the stories in Ezra 4 demonstrate to us that opposition to God's work has been present right throughout history?

Look back through the letter from Rehum and Shimshai – how do they:

1. Exaggerate those they claim to represent?
2. Mix facts with slander?
3. Make leaps of logic and scaremonger?
4. Show selectivity of data?

Can you think of arguments against Christianity in our time that do some of these things?

Why do you think our government is persuaded by some of the arguments put forward by lobby groups? (Think of why king Artaxerxes was persuaded in this story)

Will you pray:

- For wisdom for Christian politicians, and that they might stand up for Gospel values
- For God to influence decision-makers for His purposes
- For Christians in other countries who have a much tougher time than us – for God's protection & strengthening for them, and for people to come to know Jesus through their witness
- For all of us not to be surprised that our society is going in this direction, but be ready to be counted for Jesus, and suffer in whatever way