

Blessed be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us study God's Word today.

One of Satan's favorite tactics to stop the work of God is intimidation and threats. He uses fear to paralyze God's people, hoping they will delay or abandon their divine calling.

In the Old Testament, we see this in action. When God restored the Israelites to their land after 70 years of Babylonian captivity, He commanded them to rebuild His temple. Initially, they obeyed and began construction. But their enemies, seeing the work progress, devised schemes to halt it. They sent a false report to King Artaxerxes, claiming the Israelites were rebuilding a rebellious city.

The king issued an immediate decree to stop the work. Fearing human authority more than God's command, the Israelites complied.

Ezra 4:11-24 (ESV) recounts:

This is the copy of the letter that they sent to King

Artaxerxes: 'Your servants, the men who came over the river, are building the rebellious and bad city. If this city is rebuilt and the walls are finished, they will not pay tribute, tax, or toll, and the royal revenue will suffer loss.' ... Therefore command was given to stop this work; and the work of the house of God in Jerusalem ceased.

The Israelites' fear illustrates a timeless spiritual truth: obedience to God often requires courage to resist earthly powers. Human opposition may seem greater than divine command, but God's authority is ultimate.

For a long time, the work remained halted—until God sent His prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir the people to rebuild without fear. They reminded the Israelites that God's presence accompanies His commands.

Ezra 5:1-2 (ESV)

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.

When the people obeyed, they began gathering materials and preparing to rebuild. Even when enemies reported them again, God turned the king's heart in their favor. Instead of obstructing the work, the king supported it financially, allowing the temple to be completed successfully. God blessed Israel because of their obedience.

Theological insight: God is sovereign over earthly rulers (Proverbs 21:1, ESV: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will"). Opposition may arise, but God's plan cannot be thwarted when His people act in faith.

Application for today: If the Israelites had waited out of fear, nothing would have happened. God's work requires boldness, faith, and obedience, trusting that His presence goes with His commands.

Jesus said:

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Theological insight: Christ's promise of His presence is the foundation of courage. Even if laws or threats oppose us, God's authority is supreme. Preaching the Gospel is a divine mandate, not optional, and no human power can override it.

This principle is reinforced in Acts 5:17-32, where the apostles were imprisoned for preaching. An angel freed them and commanded them to continue preaching. They obeyed God rather than men, illustrating the supremacy of divine authority over earthly power.

Romans 8:31 (ESV)

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Practical encouragement: Stand and preach the Gospel today. Do

not fear opposition, dangers, or societal pressures. Jesus Christ is with those who proclaim His Word, and nothing can prevent His plan from being fulfilled.

Salvation invitation:

If you have not yet received Christ, repent today. Turn away from all sin, surrender to Jesus, and He will fill you with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, ESV: "Repent and be baptized... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit").

Maranatha!

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