* They tried to fool them with .
* Cooperation with the world can lead to in the church.
* God’s people separate from the world so they can be a witness to the world.
  + The leaders were not concerned about their .
  + The leaders were concerned about their .
* Sometimes intolerance is the way to faithfulness.

# The World Seeks to Intimidate (Ezra 4:4-5)

* If the devil cannot fool you through friendship, he will intimidate through .
* If the devil cannot get you to compromise, he will try to make you .
  + Their intimidation was .
    - They “discouraged.”
    - They “made them afraid.”
    - They “bribed counselors.”
    - They “frustrated their purposes.”
  + Their intimidation was .

# The Adversary Aims to Isolate (Ezra 4:6-11)

* Different kings…
  + Ahasuerus (485–464 BC): Ruled during the time of .
  + Artaxerxes (464–423 BC): Ruling during the time of .
* Different nations…
  + the surrounding nations are mentioned against the exiles in this letter.
  + If the devil can’t make you afraid, he will make you feel .
* Different times…
  + Opposition from the world comes to all Christians. (2 Timothy 3:12)
    - Do not be when it comes to you. (1 Peter 4:12).
    - Do not be when the world hates you. (1 John 3:13)
  + Persecution is a path all Christians must walk. (Acts 14:22)
    - Suffering is a from God. (Philippians 1:29)
    - Trials are a for our faith. (Psalm 11:5; James 1:2-3)
    - Persecution brings an eternal . (Matthew 5:10-12)

# The Accuser Tries to Incriminate (Ezra 4:12-16)

* Their letter was a skillful combination of and .
* Satan tells the truth about our while ignoring the work of .

# Worldly Powers Attempt to Incapacitate (Ezra 4:17-23)

* If the world cannot stop you through fear…
* They will resort to using .

# The Faithful Persevere to Illustrate (Ezra 4:24)

* The church is a battleground, not a .
* The faithfulness of believers in the past should inspire suffering saints in the .
  + The enemy may succeed to God’s work…
  + But He will never successfully God’s work.
* They tried to fool them with **friendship**.
* Cooperation with the world can lead to **compromise** in the church.
* God’s people separate from the world so they can be a witness to the world.
  + The leaders were not concerned about their **popularity**.
  + The leaders were concerned about their **purity**.
* Sometimes intolerance is the way to faithfulness.

# The World Seeks to Intimidate (Ezra 4:4-5)

* If the devil cannot fool you through friendship, he will intimidate through **fear**.
* If the devil cannot get you to compromise, he will try to make you **cower**.
  + Their intimidation was **persistent**.
    - They “discouraged.”
    - They “made them afraid.”
    - They “bribed counselors.”
    - They “frustrated their purposes.”
  + Their intimidation was **powerful**.

# The Adversary Aims to Isolate (Ezra 4:6-11)

* Different kings…
  + Ahasuerus (485–464 BC): Ruled during the time of **Esther**.
  + Artaxerxes (464–423 BC): Ruling during the time of **Ezra**.
* Different nations…
  + **All** the surrounding nations are mentioned against the exiles in this letter.
  + If the devil can’t make you afraid, he will make you feel **alone**.
* Different times…
  + Opposition from the world comes to all Christians. (2 Timothy 3:12)
    - Do not be **surprised** when it comes to you. (1 Peter 4:12).
    - Do not be **shocked** when the world hates you. (1 John 3:13)
  + Persecution is a path all Christians must walk. (Acts 14:22)
    - Suffering is a **gift** from God. (Philippians 1:29)
    - Trials are a **test** for our faith. (Psalm 11:5; James 1:2-3)
    - Persecution brings an eternal **prize**. (Matthew 5:10-12)

# The Accuser Tries to Incriminate (Ezra 4:12-16)

* Their letter was a skillful combination of **truth** and **lies**.
* Satan tells the truth about our **sin** while ignoring the work of **Christ**.

# Worldly Powers Attempt to Incapacitate (Ezra 4:17-23)

* If the world cannot stop you through fear…
* They will resort to using **force**.

# The Faithful Persevere to Illustrate (Ezra 4:24)

* The church is a battleground, not a **playground**.
* The faithfulness of believers in the past should inspire suffering saints in the **present**.
  + The enemy may succeed to **delay** God’s work…
  + But He will never successfully **defeat** God’s work.