

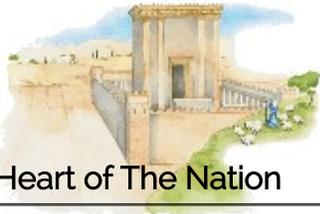
# A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18

The Book of

## EZRA

Restoring The Heart of The Nation



Opposition Arises

Ezra 4

Lesson 3

## Background Information

As soon as God starts to bless, the enemy starts to battle. The efforts to rebuild the Temple were frustrated when the local people offered to assist in the work. Although they claimed to worshiped the God of Israel, the Jewish leadership recognized the dangers involved and refused the offer. As a result, the people became adversaries and did all they could to dishearten the Jews in their task.

The descendants of those people who had not been taken to Babylonia as well as those who had been brought into that area by the Assyrians would have assimilated into the culture. These people served their own gods along-side of the Lord God of Israel, thus mixing the true worship of God with the worship of false gods. There were enemies in the land! First they tried to infiltrate and build along-side of the Jews. When that didn't work, they tried to discourage the Jews using intimidation and fear to frustrate their purpose. When that didn't work, they used their "official influence" through legislation, to hinder the building project bringing it to a temporary stop. But God is still at work!

Trusting God's promises and clinging to Him through every kind of trial does not come automatically, it's hard work! The world needs to see God's power at work in God's people, preserving them through the troubles they encounter in this world. God works in His people who choose to do what He says and set themselves apart remaining faithful to Him, in spite of the fiery darts of the enemy. The enemy of our soul will try to discourage us from pursuing God, by tempting us to compromise, and if that doesn't work he pulls out his weapons of intimidation and fear to stop us in our tracks. God glorifies Himself when the weak overcome the strong by their vigilant faith in Him.

*Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

*2 Cor 12:10*

## Treasures of the Heart

*"You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God;  
but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel ...*

*Ezra 4:3*



## Ezra 4:6-16

6 In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 In the days of Artaxerxes also, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the letter was written in Aramaic script, and translated into the Aramaic language. 8 Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes in this fashion:

9 From Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions — representatives of the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the people of Persia and Erech and Babylon and Shushan, the Dehavites, the Elamites, 10 and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper took captive and settled in the cities of Samaria and the remainder beyond the River — and so forth.

11 (This is a copy of the letter that they sent him)

To King Artaxerxes from your servants, the men of the region beyond the River, and so forth:

12 Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious and evil city, and are finishing its walls and repairing the foundations. 13 Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished. 14 Now because we receive support from the palace, it was not proper for us to see the king's dishonor; therefore we have sent and informed the king, 15 that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. And you will find in the book of the records and know that this city is a rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited sedition within the city in former times, for which cause this city was destroyed.

16 We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River.





## What does it mean?

**What lesson can I draw from my observations?** Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else. (aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 4:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:6-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:17-24 \_\_\_\_\_

## How can I apply it?

**Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?"** How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? (aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 4:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:6-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:17-24 \_\_\_\_\_

## What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

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What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

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## Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Ezra 4:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:6-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 4:17-24 \_\_\_\_\_

# Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

## Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

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## Time to build

Take note of how each challenge is met. Ask yourself: How was it responded to? How did it affect those who interacted? What building materials were used? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.)  
**What did you learn that can help you next time you meet a similar challenge?**

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## *Radiating His Truth*

*Satan is a destroyer, and he gets angry when God's people unite to build*

*Warren Wiersbe*





