

Sunday School Lesson

November 14, 2021

RESISTING OPPOSITION

Ezra 4:1-15; Nehemiah 4:1-8

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Sunday November

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**Returning to Rebuild
Ezra 1:1-15 and
Nehemiah 2:17-18**

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**Resisting Opposition
Ezra 4:1-15 and
Nehemiah 4:1-8**

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**God's Master
Builders
1 Corinthians 3:1-13**

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Power to Build Acts 1:1-8

Questions for Us Today

How do you handle opposition to what you are trying to do for the Lord?

3

How do you handle unfinished business?

How can we be leaders like Nehemiah?

Glossary

Imprecatory

4

Postexilic

Syncretistic (Syncretic)

Sunday School Lesson Segments

November 14, 2021

1. Context

2. Ezra – Points of Information

3. Nehemiah – Points of Information

4. Lesson Text

Resisting Opposition – Context

- **Persian Rule**
- **Returns from Exile – At Least 3 Waves**
- **Leadership Patterns**
- **Opposition**

Points of Information – Ezra

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As in the Book of Nehemiah, the Book of Ezra speaks of the time after the captivity [exile] of the Jews in Babylon: the postexilic period. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were one Book in ancient times. In the Hebrew Bible, they remain combined as one: Ezra-Nehemiah.

Points of Information – Ezra

Ezra led a second wave of the Jews back to Jerusalem, from the 70-year captivity in Babylon. The first six Chapters of the Book of Ezra tell of the first wave, led by Zerubbabel and others – comprised of about 50,000 people. Chapters 7 through 10 tell of the second wave, which totaled around 2,000 people.

Points of Information – Ezra

When Ezra stood in a pulpit and read (preached) the Word to the people, it was a model for our congregational worship.

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Just as we stand for the reading of Scripture, the people stood in respect for the reading of the Law by Ezra and they wept.

Nehemiah 8:1-9.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

10

Although he was born in Babylonian exile, Nehemiah wanted to go to Jerusalem to help his fellow Jews.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

11

As a cupbearer for the Persian king, Artaxerxes, Nehemiah's job was to taste the king's wine and food first, to ensure that they were safe for the king to consume.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

12

Nehemiah took a great risk by appearing with a sad face in front of the king. By tradition, this could have been punishable by death. However, Nehemiah prayed first; then, he requested that King Artaxerxes allow him to go to Jerusalem and help his own people. The king gave him permission to do so.

Nehemiah 2:1-8.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

13

When Nehemiah got to Jerusalem, before starting a construction project, he stealthily inspected the gates and walls "by night." He found that although a large number of his people had already returned from exile to the Holy City, the rebuilding of the walls and gates had not been completed.

Resisting Opposition

Ezra 4:1-15; Nehemiah 4:1-8

Ezra 4:1-2 (NRSV)

When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of families and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of Assyria who brought us here."

Ezra 4:3

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of the families in Israel said to them, "You shall have no part with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus of Persia has commanded us."

Ezra 4:4-5

Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, and they bribed officials to frustrate their plan throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Ezra 4:6

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

Ezra 4:7

And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to King Artaxerxes of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated.

Ezra 4:8-10

Rehum the royal deputy and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes as follows (then Rehum the royal deputy, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the envoys, the officials, the Persians, the people of Erech, the Babylonians, the people of Susa, that is, the Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River wrote – and now

Ezra 4:11-12

this is a copy of the letter that they sent):
"To King Artaxerxes: Your servants, the people of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now may it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.

Ezra 4:13

Now may it be known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom or toll, and the royal revenue will be reduced.

Ezra 4:14-15 (NLT)

"Since we are your loyal subjects and do not want to see the king dishonored in this way, we have sent the king this information. We suggest that a search be made in your ancestors' records, where you will discover what a rebellious city this has been in the past. In fact, it was destroyed because of its long and troublesome history of revolt against the kings and countries who controlled it."

Nehemiah 4:1 (NRSV)

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he mocked the Jews.

Nehemiah 4:2

He said in the presence of his associates and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish it in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish – and burned ones at that?"

Nehemiah 4:3

Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "That stone wall they are building – any fox going up on it would break it down!"

Nehemiah 4:4-5

Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their taunt back on their own heads, and give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover their guilt, and do not let their sin be blotted out from your sight; for they have hurled insults in the face of the builders.

Nehemiah 4:6

So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work.

Nehemiah 4:7-8

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and the gaps were beginning to be closed, they were very angry, and all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

Remember these 4 P's:

Prayerful

Persistence

Pays

Plenty

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