



GROUP DISCUSSION | October 16 | Week 3 | Ezra 4:1-24

SERIES OVERVIEW

This 6-week series addresses what God did for the Jewish people as recorded in the book of Ezra and how He also reclaims and redeems our lives for His purpose in this world.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Think of this discussion guide as a springboard. Use what's helpful to your group and lean into discussion that's sparked from the insight and input of your group.

CONNECTION

Philip shared a story about how he encouraged his daughter at a cross-country meet to "Run your race and finish strong!" She replied, "Dad, I will run my race and finish *eventually*."

When is a time you *eventually* finished something? What were some of the challenges that kept you from completion? How did you overcome?

TRUTH

Someone read Ezra 4:1-5; What sticks out from that passage?

Some scholars believe that the Israelites' refusal of help from the people of Samaria actually fueled the divide among these groups that would be passed through the generations all the way up and through the time of Jesus. In fact, shortly after these events, the Samaritans (not called Samaritans yet) build a temple of their own on a mountain overlooking Shechem and argue that *that* place - rather than Jerusalem - was the place of Yahweh's dwelling. With that in mind, why was the refusal to compromise in the least so significant for Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other Judahite leaders?

APPLICATION

The Israelites go on to face all kinds of opposition. (Feel free to read the rest of chapter 4). We shared these **3 Different Approaches Used to Hinder God's Work:**

1. Temptation to compromise the original plan (v. 1-3)
2. Discouragement, fear, and frustration (v. 4-5)
3. The use of official power to force progress to stop (v. 23-24)

How have you seen Satan use those approaches in your life or in the lives of people you know/believers?

Read James 1:2-4; what does it look like to "hold on to hope in the face of opposition?" How have you been able to "hold on to hope" through tough seasons? In what ways have you "matured" by persevering?

Where do you see a need for hope in your life? What opposition are you seeing? How can we pray for one another?

PRAY