

A Rebuilding the Temple:

❖ **The enemies want to help.**

- When the Israelites began to rebuild the Temple, their neighbors—the Samaritans—offered help: “Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do.” (Ezra 4:2)
- That help was rejected because of two main reasons:
 - (1) Their worship was actually idolatry.
 - (2) They were confessed enemies of the Israelites (Ezra 4:1).

❖ **The work is finished.**

- The Samaritans persisted in preventing the rebuilding of the Temple during the reign of Cyrus, Cambyses and false Smerdis.
- God sent them "signs" to make them reconsider this (Haggai 1:5-11). They didn't, so God sent two prophets whose message was heard: Haggai and Zechariah.
- When they resumed the work, God encouraged king Darius to support them (Ezra 5).

B Rebuilding the city:

❖ **The work halts.**

- The temple was finished by year 515 BC. The rebuilding of Jerusalem began right away.
- Then, the Samaritans put up resistance again. They made the Israelites stop during the reign of Ahasuerus [Xerxes] (Ezra 4:6).
- In 457 BC, Artaxerxes sent Ezra and gave Juda autonomy. The rebuilding of the city was resumed.
- In 465 BC, the work halted again (Ezra 4:23). The Jews were filled with fear, as they felt impotent before such violent opposition.

❖ **Nehemiah takes action.**

- It took 15 years to finish a 52-day work. It was not easy. There was much opposition. Nehemiah had to take action:
 - (1) People were distributed along the wall. Each family had their section.
 - (2) Surveillance was set 24/7 in shifts.
 - (3) The builders had the weapons at hand while working.
 - (4) A trumpet player stood next to Nehemiah to sound the alarm right away if needed.
- They prayed first, then took action. They did their part and God did the rest.

❖ **Facing opposition.**

- According to Nehemiah's account, opposition came in many ways:
 - (1) Mockery: 4:1-3.
 - (2) Physical attacks: 4:7-8.
 - (3) Internal issues: 5:1.
 - (4) Conspiracy: 6:2.
 - (5) Treason accusations: 6:6-7.
 - (6) False prophets: 6:10-13.

The events in Ezra 3-7 are not written in chronological order as we usually do.

After the opposition of the Samaritans, it is mentioned that Darius allows the rebuilding of the Temple to be resumed (Ezra 3:1-4:5).

In Ezra 4:6-23, there is opposition to the rebuilding of the city AFTER Darius' decree.

Then, the rebuilding of the temple continues from Ezra 4:24 on, according to Darius' decree.

