

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

### Ezra 4

#### Background

In ch. 4, Ezra is being **thematic** rather than **chronological**. Although the entire chapter deals with the **theme of opposition**, the events did not all occur during the same time period.

#### Digging In

Opposition to rebuilding the **temple**. (536-530 BC)

1. **Read Ezra 4:1-5.** What did the *enemies of Judah and Benjamin* offer to do?

What do you think their motives were?

2. Why do you think the Jews responded as they did? (v. 3)
3. **Read vss. 4-5.** List all the ways in which the *enemies* tried to obstruct the rebuilding of the temple.

Opposition to rebuilding the **walls of Jerusalem**. (486-445 BC)

4. **Read 4:6-23.** This opposition occurred later, during the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes. How did the officials try to add weight to their letter? (vss. 9—10)
5. What accusations did they lodge against the Jews? (vss. 12 & 15)
6. How did they appeal to the pride and self-interest of King Artaxerxes? (vss. 13-14, 16)
7. **Read 4:17-22.** How did the king respond?
8. What was the result?



Note: in v. 23 Ezra reverts back to the earlier opposition to the rebuilding of the **temple** during the reign of King Cyrus.

#### Getting Personal

- Give some examples of opposition to Christianity today.
- How can this cause Christians to become discouraged?
- What are some things that cause you to become discouraged, distracted or diverted from living for Christ and his kingdom?
- How can we stay the course in spite of opposition?
- List 2-3 verses that can help us to stand firm against opposition. (To get you started, what can we learn from 1 Cor 15:58?)