

# Rebuild Don't Relax, Part 3

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## Review

rebuilding our spiritual lives (*based on the story of the Jews rebuilding theirs under Cyrus the Great*) — **Community, Prayer, Word, Worship = Foundation...**

- **Luke 6:47-49**

Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.

**Application** — *floods rise, streams beat on everyone, unshakeable foundation is on the Rock!*

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## “Obedience to God is an invitation to Opposition”

- New Testament visual, **Matthew 14:22-25** — Jesus commanded disciples to cross Sea of Galilee, while He stayed and prayed. They obeyed, tortured by waves, opposed by wind — didn't quit rowing. He walked nearby them on the water (*before he got in the boat and calmed the sea*). Realistic view of your spiritual life at times, not all the time, but sometime. He is praying for you and He is nearby.

**You must value getting obediently to the other side more than you dread the opposition.**

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## Historical overview of opposition Jews faced while rebuilding

- Cyrus the Great 536-530BC, ruled over Jewish people, gave them permission to return and provisions to rebuild
- Cambyses/Ahasuerus I 530-522BC, in 14 years Jewish people didn't complete Temple. They got lazy and relaxed, built their own places, settled in, even though it was only a three-year job... beware!
- Artaxerxes/Smerdis 522-521BC, 10 month rule, he stopped all rebuilding.  
*Remember: missed opportunities are delayed accomplishments or deleted victories.*
- Darius 521-486BC, rebuilding begins again in 519, finish Temple in 516 (*three years*)
- Xerxes/Ahasuerus II 486-465BC, time of Esther, evil Haman wants to kill all Jewish people in the world

- Artaxerxes Longimanus 465-424BC, 445 (20 years into his reign) allows Nehemiah to return and rebuild Jerusalem and its wall. Jewish leaders, Sanballat (*name means “enemy hiding”*), Tobiah (*name means “Lord is good”*), Gesham (*name means “rainstorm”*) oppose continually.
- Constant opposition from 536-445BC, 90 years, 6 kings or their Cronies.

***Reveals** — enemy is persistent and patient — we must persevere with purpose — opposition doesn’t stop — it just changes faces!*

## **Types of opposition we face during our own rebuilding**

### • **Ezra 4:1-7**

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. 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.

### **I. Infiltration — deception of the mixed multitude verses 2-3**

- Samaritans, posing as family members and fellow worshipers, inhabitants of other nations, who worshipped a multiplicity of Gods, *while adding YHWH to the list*

***Application** — sounds like a warm “Kumbaya moment” — a politically-correct, unholy infiltration of mixed multitude.*

- **Nehemiah’s time**- more deceptive there, “family members,” false prophets
- **Galatians 2:4-5 — Paul/Judaizers**  
And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.
- **Cults and Apostates** of today- BEWARE who you let in and rebuild with, even for a moment!

***Application** — “While I’m rebuilding my life, I’m not willing to forsake my God and His holy ways in order to welcome the unholy ways of infiltrators.” Can’t say infiltrator w/o saying traitor.*

## **2. Discouragement — weakening through persistent harassment** **verse 4 — always something**

- **Nehemiah 4:1-4**

But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?" Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall." Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity!

- Obedient rebuilding attracts the discouraging opposition of the enemy — PRAY!

## **3. Trouble — producing fear and terror** **verse 4 — take eyes off God, put eyes on men, to save themselves**

- **Nehemiah 6:9-14**

For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah, God hears, the son of Delaiah, God delivers, the son of Mehetabel, God bettered, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you." And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me. My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

**FEAR, False Evidence Appearing Real, always comes to oppose God’s work in your life, by taking eyes off God — and putting on inadequate self or overwhelming circumstances... “many men are coming to kill you tonight”**

***Nehemiah’s response** — men like me don’t flee, we don’t try to save our lives, won’t sin like that! I love that Nehemiah knew who he was, and Who’s he was, produced courage — not fear!*

#### 4. Frustrate Purposes — bring chaos and confusion to plans verse 5

- **Nehemiah 4:7-9**

Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

***Application** — chaos and confusion are tactics in order to frustrate your rebuilding purpose. “So much is going on, why am I even doing this, who am I to do this, does it even matter, etc.?”*

**Response** — make your prayer to God — keep rebuilding — set a watch day and night — don’t allow infiltrators in to bring confusion and frustration. Beware of who you’re rebuilding with.

#### 5. False Accusation — created letter in vs.7-24 to Artaxerxes Smerdis verse 6

- rebuilding rebellious, evil city, vs.12
- loss of revenue, vs.13
- king dishonored, vs.14
- king harmed, vs.15
- king lose control, vs.16 (same accusation in Nehemiah 6:6-8 rebuild, rebel, king, prophets, etc.)

***Application** — never be surprised who, will say what about you, as you go about rebuilding. You’ll need thick skin and a soft heart, spine of steel, heart of flesh, in order to endure.*

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#### **Opposition doesn’t stop, it just changes faces!**

- two different stories, same tactics of enemy, just different faces, different players
- Understand the opposition but focus on God’s goodness and power!

***So very important** — What is God saying when opposition is happening, when the rebuilding is slowing or stopped altogether? When people are saying, “it’s not the time to rebuild?”*

- **Haggai**

**1:2** — you say it isn’t time to rebuild

**1:5** — consider your ways

**1:13** — I am with you!

**2:1-18** — look to the future, greater glory coming

**2:19** — from this day forward I will bless you

**2:23** — I have chosen you

• **Zechariah 4:6**

This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

**In all our rebuilding, with all its varied opposition, our ultimate trust is not in our own power, but in the power of God's Spirit!  
He will help us rebuild, He will help us experience the greater glory of a rebuilt life, He will get us obediently to the other side!**

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**Discussion Questions**

1. What does it mean, "Obedience to God is an invitation to opposition"?
2. Sanballat's name means, "enemy hiding." Tobiah's name means, "Lord is good." Have you worked with any Christians in the church like these men? How did you handle it?
3. What are some of the (cultural) ideas trying to infiltrate your life/lives of your family today? Your church?
4. How do you stand firm for the truth even through criticism and harassment?
5. What FEAR (False Evidence Appearing Real) is currently taking your eyes off God? How do you combat it?
6. What does God say when opposition is happening, and you are saying, "It's not time to rebuild"? Read Zechariah 4:6.