



# Minor Prophets

## Lesson 14

### Ezra 4-6 The Return

*The Word of the Lord has come to fruition. The nation of Judah was overtaken by the Babylonians and the people killed or dispersed. But the 70 years of their captivity that had been prophesied had come to an end. Cyrus, the ruler of Persia who had conquered the Babylonians, was now sending the captives back to their land. But when the Babylonians deported the Jews from their land to Babylon, they imported foreigners into Judah to rebuild the area. These people had been there for the 70 years the Jews had been gone. They had*

*intermarried with the poorest Jews that had been left in the area and were now inhabiting the area of Samaria. 2 Kings 17. Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom but was now under the control of the Babylonians and reinhabited with non-Jews. These people are thought to be the ancestors of the hated Samaritans at the time of Jesus. They were not happy that the original occupants of the land were returning and rebuilding.*

### READ EZRA 4

- 1. The word "adversaries" in 4:1 means a narrow or tight place; a foe. How did the people of the land try to trick the Jews and infiltrate their ranks?*
- 2. Surely the idea of having help in the overwhelming task of rebuilding had to sound tempting to the Jews. Why did they so adamantly refuse this offer of help? See also 2 Kings 17:23-34*



*“They did this on the claim that ‘we seek your God as you do’. They probably said this with all sincerity; they genuinely believed that they sought the same God in the same way. Yet they also added, ‘and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria.’ This means they sacrificed without either a temple or a priesthood, which was obviously against the commandment of God. This completely contradicted their claim, ‘we seek your God as you do.’”*

*~David Guzik commentary*

3. *How did their adversaries respond to the rejection? Vs. 4*



*The information given in verses 4-23 are a brief history of the several ways over the next approximately 15 years that the work of rebuilding was opposed and eventually stopped. This took place during the reigns of the next two kings, Ahasuerus or Xerxes (485-465 BC) and Artaxerxes (464-424 BC). Verse 24 picks back up at the current time when Zerubbabel is in the initial stages of rebuilding and facing opposition.*

4. *Describe Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe’s attempt to stop the building during the time of Artaxerxes. 4:7-23.*

5. *What effect does Zerubbabel say all this opposition had on their progress? Vs. 24*

READ CHAPTER 5-6

6. *What prophets are active in trying to encourage the building to resume? 5:1*



***Prayer requests:***

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***Group time notes:***

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