

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 124.1)

### LESSON 47 (CORE)

#### “Let Us Rise Up and Build”

Hook	Similar to the tree in the woods question... is a true statement or good action still true or good if it doesn't bring any benefit, or even causes harm?
Goal	
Overview	
Conclusion	

The goal is to be unfailingly constructive. What WORKS? Even if something is right and good, if it doesn't WORK there is no point

“True or good matter not, if ineffective”

What does “oppose the work on the Lord” mean?

Manual Goal: To encourage class members to help build Zion and to show Christlike love to those who oppose the work of the Lord.

EGD Goal: To encourage members to reflect on how to constructively share truth, goodness, and love

Effective: What are reasonable goals

#### I. Sunday School

- a. Introduction (we don't really know these stories, no primary songs about this period of Jewish history)
- b. Review the historical context (timeline, cast of characters)
- c. Review the reading
- d. Lessons from the reading
  - i. Encouragement in the midst of opposition
  - ii. Validity of multiple sides (read my grandparent example)
  - iii. Overzealousness and priorities (mixed marriages, abandoning families)
  - iv. Nehemiah's character
- e. Focus: “Rise up and build” In ways do we do this in our lives?
- f. Remaining “constructive”: How do we determine, or more challenging, anticipate whether something is/will be constructive?
- g. Discuss: True or good matter not, if ineffective
- h. How do we navigate differing conceptions of truth constructively?
- i. How do we navigate differing conceptions of goodness constructively?
- j. Other comments on constructiveness in relationships

- k. What does “opposing the work of the Lord” even mean? (Challenge the Ezra-Nehemiah marriage issue) Do we label people adversaries before we even know them?
- l. Conclusion I

To understand the post exilic period: Imagine your grandparents moved into a house that had been abandoned. It is in a rough neighborhood, but they do their best. Your parents live in the house, and it is where you grew up as well.

Suddenly your third cousins (the grandchildren of your grandfather’s sister) come into town and say that it is THEIR house and they have the right to live there. Also, you aren’t as good as they are. Also, you need to divorce your wife and abandon your children. Also, they are going to rebuild a structure at the center of the conflict that destroyed your entire city.

Timeline:

597: Elites of Jerusalem and Judea exiled  
 586: Jerusalem and the temple destroyed  
 539: Cyrus conquers Babylon  
 538: Cyrus issues a decree that exiles can return to Judea and rebuild the temple  
 539-520: Efforts to rebuild the temple are frustrated (almost 20 years)  
 520: Returnees begin to rebuild the temple  
 516: temple is dedicated  
 458: Ezra arrives in Jerusalem (128 years after it was destroyed!)  
 445: Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem to rebuild the city

Cast of characters:

Sheshbazzar: 539, initial return of the Jews. He is called a “prince” (Ezra 1:8), possibly son of Jehoiachin, was given the temple ritual objects (“vessels”) to return. He was possibly removed from power by Cyrus’ son Cambyses

Zerubbabel (530-522): Governor of Judea, possibly grandson of Jehoiachin (Sheshbazzar would have been his uncle). Disappears very suddenly, likely perceived as a threat.

Jeshua: First high priest after exile. He and Zerubbabel held sacrifices and festivals and laid the foundations of the temple but were frustrated in their efforts.

Haggai: 29 August, 520. Prophesied awesome things would happen if the temple were rebuilt

Zechariah: Prophesied 520-518. Seeks to encourage returnees, assures them God will soon intervene and take care of things.

Ezra: Seen as an ideal priest-prophet-scribe- proto-Rabbi, sent by Artaxerxes (458?) to “establish the Torah” among the Jews.

Nehemiah: Cupbearer for Artaxerxes, high Persian official (also likely a eunuch, which is why he was unwilling to flee to the Temple as protection from his enemies (Neh. 6.10-

14). Asked Persian king for permission to protect his city and people, so was sent as the Persian governor of Judah, came with authority and even soldiers.

Sanballat: Led the Samaritans in opposition to Nehemiah's attempts to rebuild Jerusalem (they likely saw themselves as Jews and lived in both Judea and Samaria; Ezra and Nehemiah considered them an impure mixed race)

How to compose a successful critical commentary:

1. You should attempt to re-express your target's position so clearly, vividly, and fairly that your target says, "Thanks, I wish I'd thought of putting it that way."
2. You should list any points of agreement (especially if they are not matters of general or widespread agreement).
3. You should mention anything you have learned from your target.
4. Only then are you permitted to say so much as a word of rebuttal or criticism.

<http://www.brainpickings.org/2014/03/28/daniel-dennett-rapoport-rules-criticism/>