**PREPARATION**

* Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide
* You can watch the sermon online [HERE](http://3crosses.org/about-us/sermons/).
* Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
* You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

**Welcome:** *When you hear the word* ***leadership*** *what comes to mind?*

**Study Tip:** The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are deeply connected with many key promises in scripture! Throughout this series, we would like to share some helpful references that can deepen your study:

*Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26; Ezekiel 18:30-32* – Nehemiah is reminded of the destruction that would be brought upon the people of Israel if they had failed to obey the instructions of the Lord. Deuteronomy is a great passage of all the blessings and consequences that would occur depending on Israel’s faithfulness while Leviticus paints a beautiful picture of God offering the opportunity of repentance echoed in the prophet Ezekiel.

*Zechariah 2:3-11; Isaiah 2:1-5 –* Nehemiah’s main objective is to rebuild the city of Jerusalem starting with her walls. As the construction continues and he faces opposition from their neighbors, we are left to wonder whether Nehemiah was acting harshly considering these two passages about Jerusalem becoming a “city with no walls” and Isaiah’s vision of the nations coming to the Lord in Jerusalem.

*Genesis 12:1-3 –* Furthermore, any Israelite would have taken God’s promises into account when thinking about their treatment of the nations. The question remains, were Nehemiah’s actions in alignment with God’s vision for Israel, to become a nation that blesses the nations and does not wage war against them?

*Ezekiel 40-48; Revelation 21:9-27* – Nehemiah forces us to question what God’s vision for Jerusalem is. Ezekiel presents a hopeful vision of a restored Israel including a new temple in Jerusalem (consisting of walls). John’s vision in Revelation is one of beautiful walls that do not keep the nations out but invite the honor and glory of the nations. Is the problem the existence of walls, or the treatment of the nations?

What’s Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Buz Hannon led us into the fourth week of our series titled *The Revival That Almost Happened.* Pastor Buz led us into Nehemiah 1-7to look at the leadership of Nehemiah as he attempts to rebuild Jerusalem! As you read this week’s selection of Nehemiah, remember the tension that the Old Testament creates. On one hand, God’s vision of the New Jerusalem includes walls. At the same time, God wishes to make Israel a nation that is “without walls” in the sense that it would become a refuge for the nations! As you seek to apply these scriptures, spend some time reflecting on your own heart towards God’s calling in your life and pause to reflect on whether we have forgotten our relationship with God in favor of our mission!

**“What will we do with these walls? With this mission? With this project? Will we exchange the Mission for the Maker?’” – Pastor Buz Hannon**

**GROUP MEETING** (60 – 90 minutes)

**Worship** (10 – 15 minutes)

*Take a moment and prepare your hearts as your group enters the presence of God.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option 1: Worship Music**  Have someone share their favorite worship song. You can find it online, play it, and sing along! Have them explain why the lyrics mean so much to them! | **Option 2: Meditation**  ***Matthew 5:14-16*** Nehemiah is a story about rebuilding a city with walls that keep outsiders out. How are you being called to be a “city on the hill” in the power of the Holy Spirit? | **Option 3: Prophetic Hope**  ***Ezekiel 36-37; Jeremiah 31:31-34*** In the midst of exile, Israel would’ve held onto prophecies such as these! Before you jump into the study, meditate on the different “hopes” that you have! |

**Word #1: Explore your “revival project”!** (15 – 25 minutes)

*Primary Text: Nehemiah 1 – 2 (Skim 3)* Nehemiah differs from Ezra in that the revival Nehemiah seeks is civic and socio-political. At the same time,one of the common themes that has emerged over our study of Ezra and Nehemiah is that many of these revival efforts begin with a stirring of the Lord to, “step up and build something.” As we have reflected on revival over the course of this series, is there any “revival project” that the Lord has put on your heart? How might God be calling you to take steps towards faithfully carrying this out?

**Prayer Tip:** Ask your group if they would be willing to take their cue from the community of Ezra and commit to praying and fasting as you strive to become a community that resembles the love, truth, and grace of Jesus!

**Word #2: Identify obstacles to your “revival project”** (15 – 25 minutes)

*Primary Texts: Nehemiah 4 – 7:3* The Nehemiah project forces the reader to wonder whether Nehemiah (1) trusted his *giftedness* and overlooked *faithfulness,* (2) treated the nations *comparatively* as opposed to *cooperatively,* and (3) abused the workers valuing the *mission* above the *maker*. Out of the 3 categories presented, which one do you fall prey to the most amid your revival project God has called you to? After reflecting on three different *revivals that almost happened* what are some of the common themes that the Lord is starting to reveal to you and why do you believe He is pointing this theme out to you?

**Prayer Tip:** Look for common ideas and concepts that have come out of this study and prepare to speak into them through Prayer.

**Witness** (20 – 25 minutes)

*In light of this week’s discussion, here are some different ways that your group can pray!*

* Commit to praying and fasting for where your community would like to move.
* Pray that your group would listen and obey any stirring that the Holy Spirit is conjuring.
* Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
* Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to contribute in future group meetings.
* Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!
* Pray for God’s hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!

We invite your entire group to join the [**House of Prayer**](https://3crosses.org/pray/) (Sunday 8/15 @ 6:30 PM on Zoom) and participate in our next churchwide [**PrayFast**](https://3crosses.org/pray/)event (Tuesday 8/17 from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

**THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

-**Stay up to date with Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Life Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](http://3crosses.org/coronavirus/) . If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](http://3crosses.org/neighborhood/)

-**Read Ahead:** *Nehemiah 8-12:* After the striving and opposition of three major projects, It looks like everything is finally coming together! The temple is built, the Torah is read, the city is secure! Nehemiah leads them in an amazing worship service, a time of corporate confession and repentance, the people commit to doing better, they celebrate God’s faithfulness. But…Nehemiah doesn’t end in chapter 12. These changes don’t last. Just one page to the right, everything has fallen apart, and Nehemiah is assaulting his own people. Glimpses of revival are great, but we leave longing for something better. Something lasting!

-**Suggested Resources:**

[Tim Mackie’s 4 Hour Lecture](https://vimeo.com/211179978) – an AMAZING resource to check out!

[Ezra and Nehemiah (Kidner)](https://www.amazon.com/Ezra-Nehemiah-Tyndale-Testament-Commentaries/dp/0830842128/ref=pd_lpo_14_t_2/131-9135295-6803941?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0830842128&pd_rd_r=2e02cb8b-53a6-4098-9ecb-b640e4b687ba&pd_rd_w=hxYkm&pd_rd_wg=ZjKUc&pf_rd_p=a0d6e967-6561-454c-84f8-2ce2c92b79a6&pf_rd_r=MGPZJX1CK4SGVB4X0N62&psc=1&refRID=MGPZJX1CK4SGVB4X0N62) – Great accessible Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah

[Ezra and Nehemiah for Everyone (Ladouceur)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aDxNYYZliTlg8VplaxkgNh_vDIL4sBM0/view) – One Page fact sheet on book

**-Life Groups 2021:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at [avanegas@3crosses.org](mailto:avanegas@3crosses.org)

-**Revival at 3Crosses:** Encourage the group to pray alongside the church as we long to (1) see men, women and kids around our region turn to Christ, (2) see tons of new folks come and *gather* with us, (3) see people connect in community and start to *grow* in their faith, (4) see people activate their faith and start to *go* on mission with Jesus, and (5) prepare for a Holy Spirit inspired revival