

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- 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: *What is something that you have worked hard to accomplish that you are proud of?*

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

Numbers 22-24; Deuteronomy 23:3-6 – Nehemiah 13 opens with a reading of the Law of Moses. This final service recalls the law that excluded any Moabite or Ammonite from entering the camp. The unique exclusion comes from the story of Balak, king of Moab, who had hired Balaam the sorcerer to curse the Israelites as they approached the promised land.

Numbers 18; Deuteronomy 12:19, 14:27 – Tobiah the *Ammonite*, an outspoken enemy of Nehemiah's rebuilding project (Neh. 2:10, 19, 4:1-7, 6:1-14), is found residing in the temple. Not only had the Levites failed to keep the temple space pure, but the community had also neglected the Levites who were funded by the tithes of the community. Combine this with Nehemiah's accusation of the Levites abandoning their temple work and one can see how Zerubbabel's efforts had all been undone.

Genesis 2:1-2; Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 – Simultaneously, the Israelites began working on the Sabbath by the gates of the wall Nehemiah had built. Instead of the walls enhancing the blessings of Israel to the nations, Nehemiah's wall was the location at which God's most holy day was neglected.

Exodus 34:11-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-11; 1 Kings 11:1-8 – The book of Nehemiah concludes by recalling the problems Ezra faced with intermarriage to the extent at which Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 2:10, 19, 4:1-7, 6:1-14) was closely related to the high priest of Israel. Ezra's work had been undone.

What's Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny Strange led us into the sixth and final week of our series titled *The Revival that Almost Happened*. Pastor Danny pointed us to Nehemiah 13 to see how the revival work of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah came crashing down. As you read this final selection of Nehemiah, remember the tension that the Old Testament creates with the situation unfolding at the conclusion of Nehemiah. On one hand, we have seen God's people give it their best effort toward following the laws of God to experience revival. At the same time, we are left with the wearisome reality that nothing Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Nehemiah reformed lasted in the community of Israel! As you seek to apply these scriptures, spend some time praising the Lord for coming to us in the person of Jesus who would be the person who can lead us to true and everlasting revival.

“What if you spent a season letting Jesus holding everything together, and you cling to him?” – Pastor Danny Strange

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

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

<p>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!</p>	<p>Option 2: Meditation <i>Matthew 11:25-28</i> Are you weary? Do you feel burdened? Spend some time before this study reflecting on your own heart and in what situations you need to lean into Jesus!</p>	<p>Option 3: Prophetic Hope <i>Ezekiel 36-37; Jeremiah 31:31-34</i> 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!</p>
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Word #1: Reflect on the Revivals that Almost Happened (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Text: Nehemiah 13 The final passage of the Ezra-Nehemiah collection concludes with the crumbling of each revival effort that was made. This disastrous final chapter undoes the work of Zerubbabel and his desire for temple reform, the work of Ezra and his desire for Torah (Law of Moses) reforms, and the work of Nehemiah and his desire for socio-political reform. **As we reflect on the revival of Israel that almost happened, what is one of the most impactful lessons that you are going to remember? Do you find yourself in a similar situation where you are giving it your all to experience revival in your life (explain)?**

Prayer Tip: Pay attention to the feeling of weariness in anyone's life and be prepared to pray for a renewed filling of the Holy Spirit!

Word #2: Explore the Revival that only Jesus brings (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: John 15:1-17 After studying the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we are left to wonder; who would be the one to come and transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh so that we may be able to experience true and everlasting revival? **What stands out to you about these John 15 passages after considering our study on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah? What (1) needs to change and/or (2) do you need to let go in your life to truly abide in Jesus so that you may be able to experience revival?**

Prayer Tip: Look for any ways the Spirit might be bringing people closer to him through the stories of revivals that almost happened.

Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

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

- Pray for any lesson learned from Ezra – Nehemiah as well as any wearisome situations.
- Pray that your group would continue to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit for revival.
- 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 to 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](#) (Sunday 9/19 @ 6:30 PM on Zoom) and participate in our next churchwide [PrayFast](#) event (Tuesday 9/21 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](https://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](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-Celebrate New Life: Make sure to share with your group about the [baptism service](#) as well as the opportunity to [dedicate your child](#).

-Suggested Resources:

[Tim Mackie's 4 Hour Lecture](#) – an AMAZING resource to check out!

[Ezra and Nehemiah \(Kidner\)](#) – Great accessible Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah

[Ezra and Nehemiah for Everyone \(Ladouceur\)](#) – 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

-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