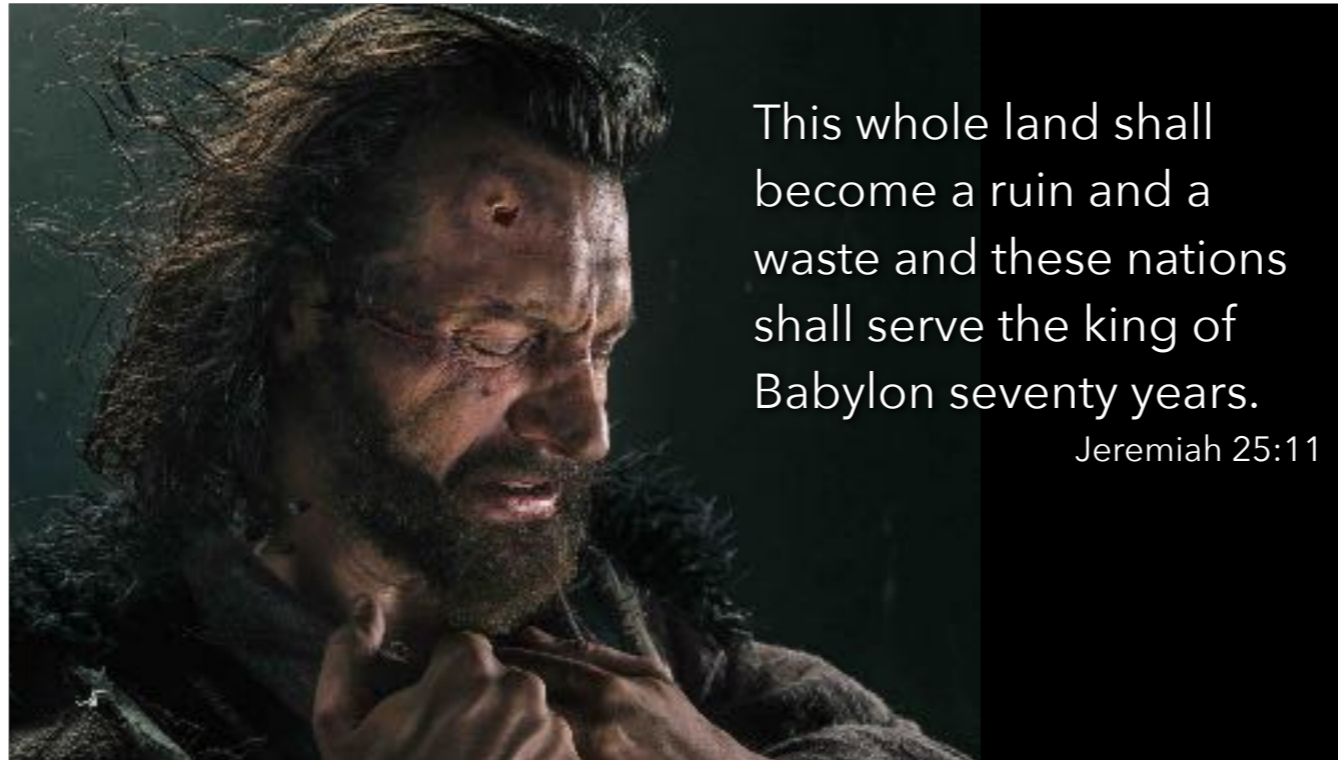




# Rebuild the House

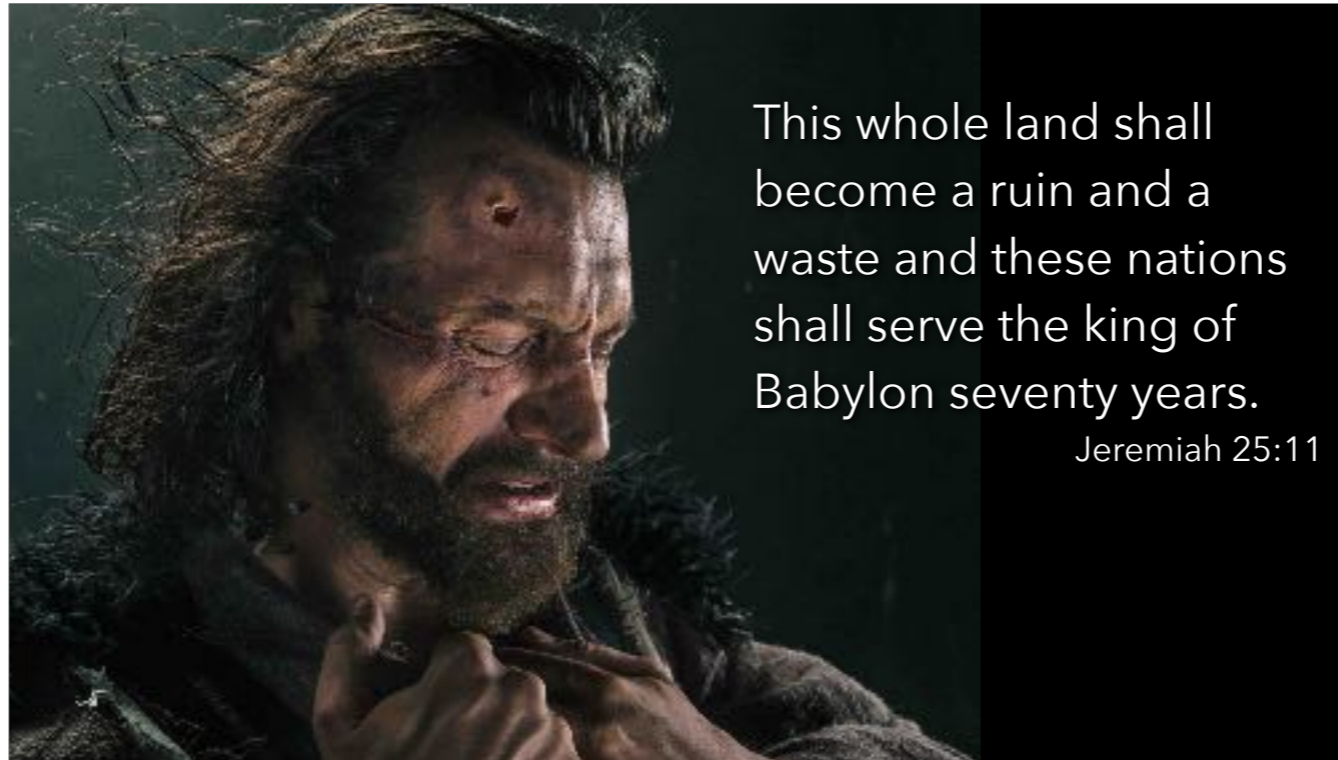
Ezra 1:3



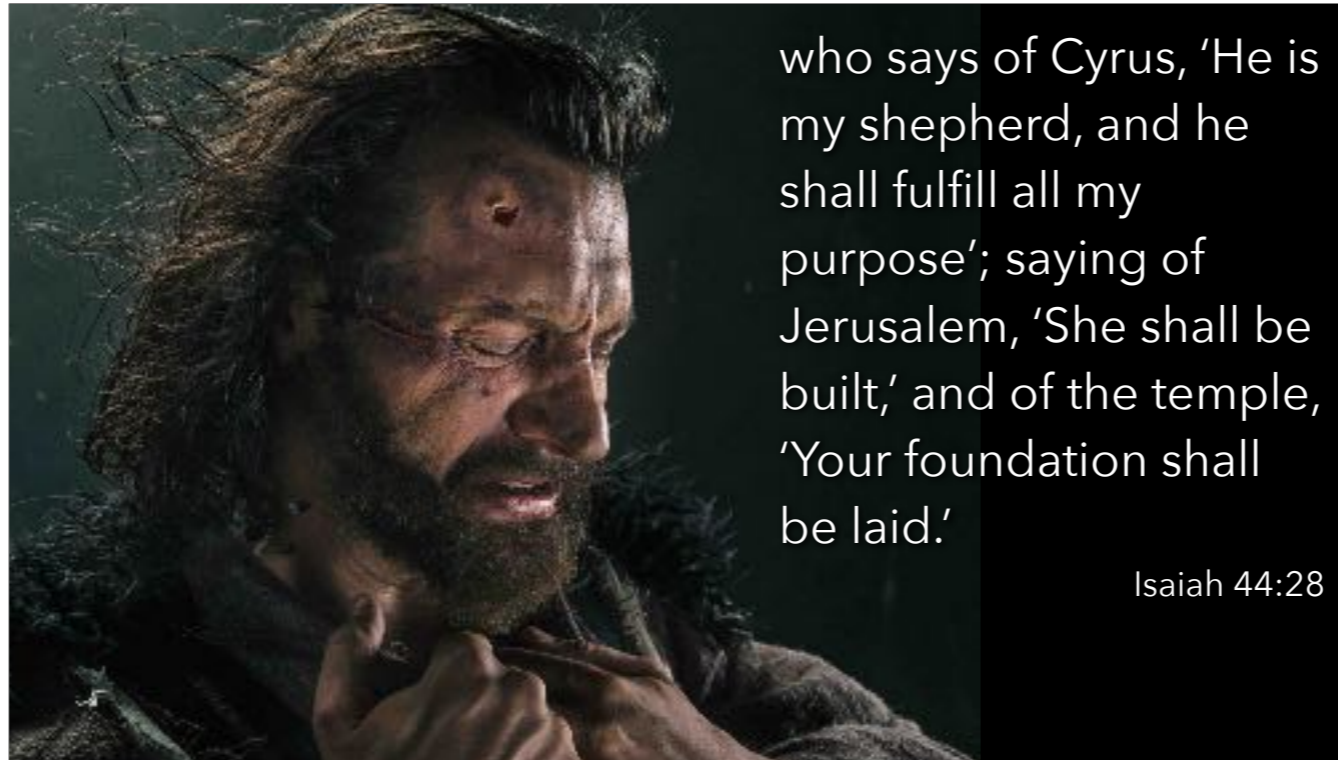
This whole land shall  
become a ruin and a  
waste and these nations  
shall serve the king of  
Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 25:11

- Jeremiah 25:11-14 (ESV) 11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. 13 I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. 14 For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”



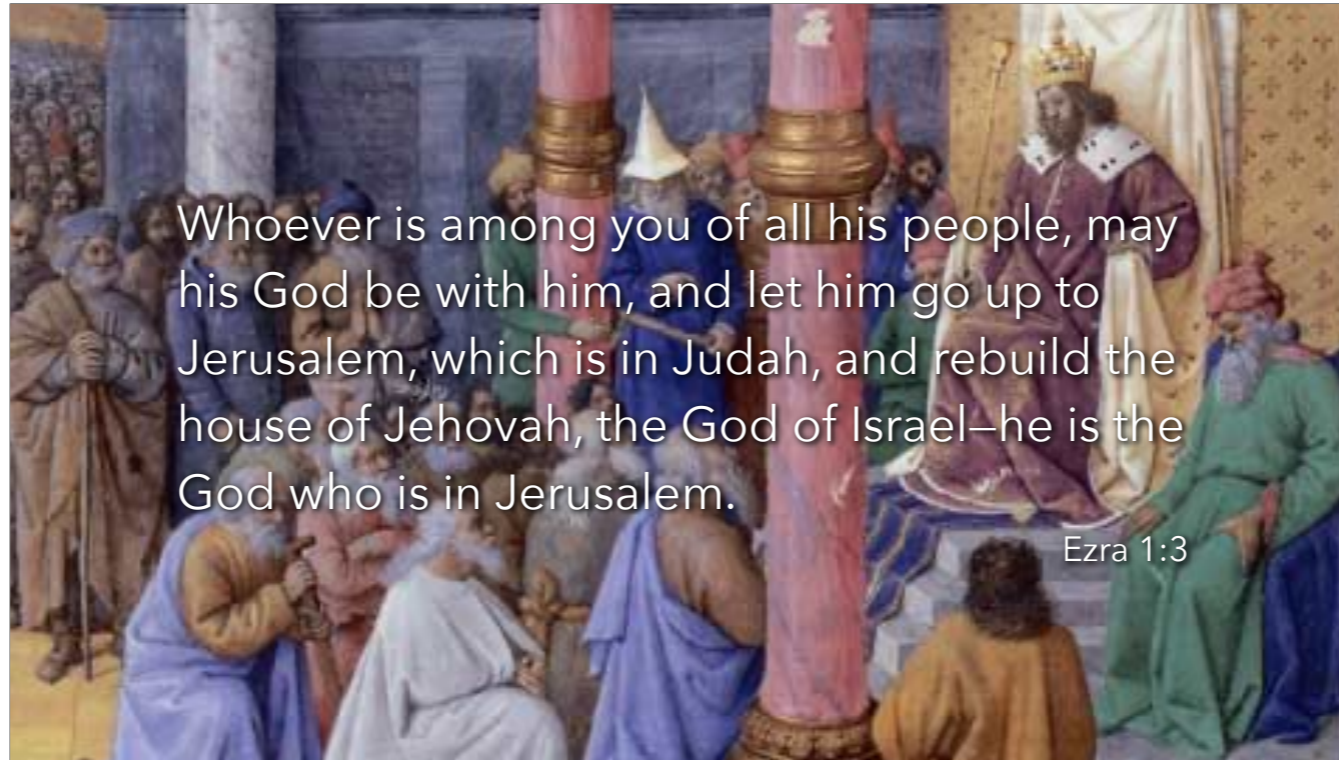
- Jeremiah 52:12-13 (ESV) 12 In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. 13 And **he burned the house of the LORD**, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.



who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'

Isaiah 44:28

- Isaiah 44:28 - 45:1 (ESV) 28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd,
- and he shall fulfill all my purpose';
- saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,'
- and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"
- 1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
- whose right hand I have grasped,
- to subdue nations before him
- and to loose the belts of kings,
- to open doors before him
- that gates may not be closed:



- Ezra 1:1-3 (ESV) 1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:
- 2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.



- Ezra 1:3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 1:5 Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 2:64: 49,697



- An Obvious Opportunity
  - 2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
    - The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and
    - he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.
  - 3 Whoever is among you of all his people,
    - may his God be with him,
    - and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah,
    - and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—
      - he is the God who is in Jerusalem.



## An Obvious Opportunity

- Cyrus points to God, not himself (doesn't take credit for this idea for himself)
- He's allowing the captives to go free without any hardship
  - So different than the Pharaoh.
  - With his blessing and his support!





- Some opportunities don't begin within.
  - They come to us from without.
  - I've struggle with these kinds of opportunities.
    - They don't feel like they really come from God.
    - Maybe it's a trick of Satan?
    - Maybe I'm just trying to do what I want to do?
  - If the opportunity arises from another brother, or church, or realization from Scripture, or answered prayer, we feel more confident. Less questioning.



- And yet still “unexpected”? (prophecy is one thing ... )
  - Through Cyrus ... conqueror the Babylonians
  - At end of exile
  - How many Israelites would have been completely taken by surprise by this offer to go home?
  - Consider it a trap?



- How do we know when an opportunity is from God?
  - Clearly this was a very specific part of God's plan.
  - We don't have anything specific from God's word.
  - We need to be alert to such opportunities, and pray about the best way to use them.
    - Get insight from brethren.
  - Don't dismiss it just because it's from outside.



- God stirred up ...
  - stir = awaken, rouse
  - Does this imply that the people (or most) had become complacent, comfortable with being in Babylon? Why wouldn't they?



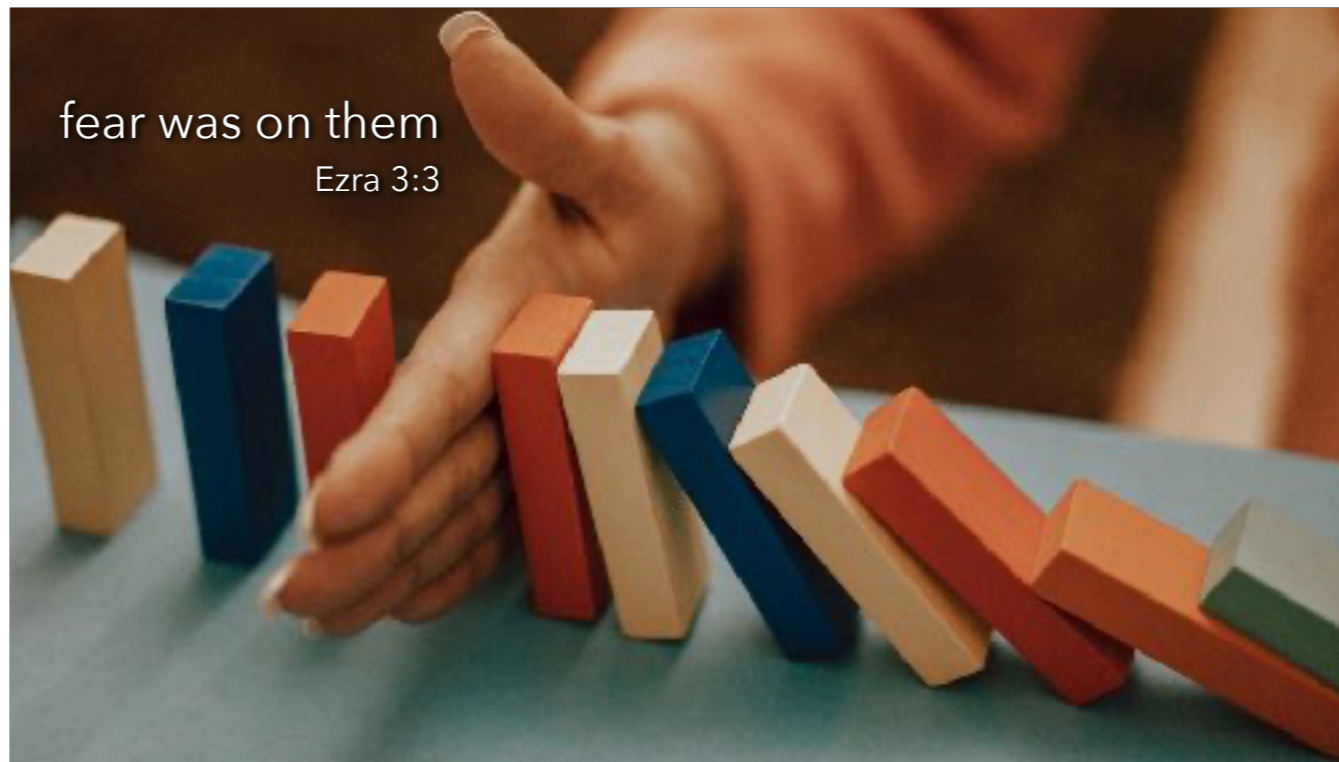
- Is there anything in this that implies that God acted directly on them?
  - I don't see that in the text?
  - But why do we think it has to be direct action by God?
  - Couldn't just the news of this been enough to stir them?
  - Add the remembrance of the prophecy.



- Just because it's an opportunity doesn't mean that everyone is stirred up to do it.
  - Why would anyone stay in Babylon?
  - Does the time in wilderness point to any reason some may stay?
  - (Things are pretty good here. Why leave?)
  - health, age, family, things are going well, better education
  - too hard, no reason, lost faith,
- How did these "groups" think of each other?
  - Rancor? Support? Understanding? Compassion?

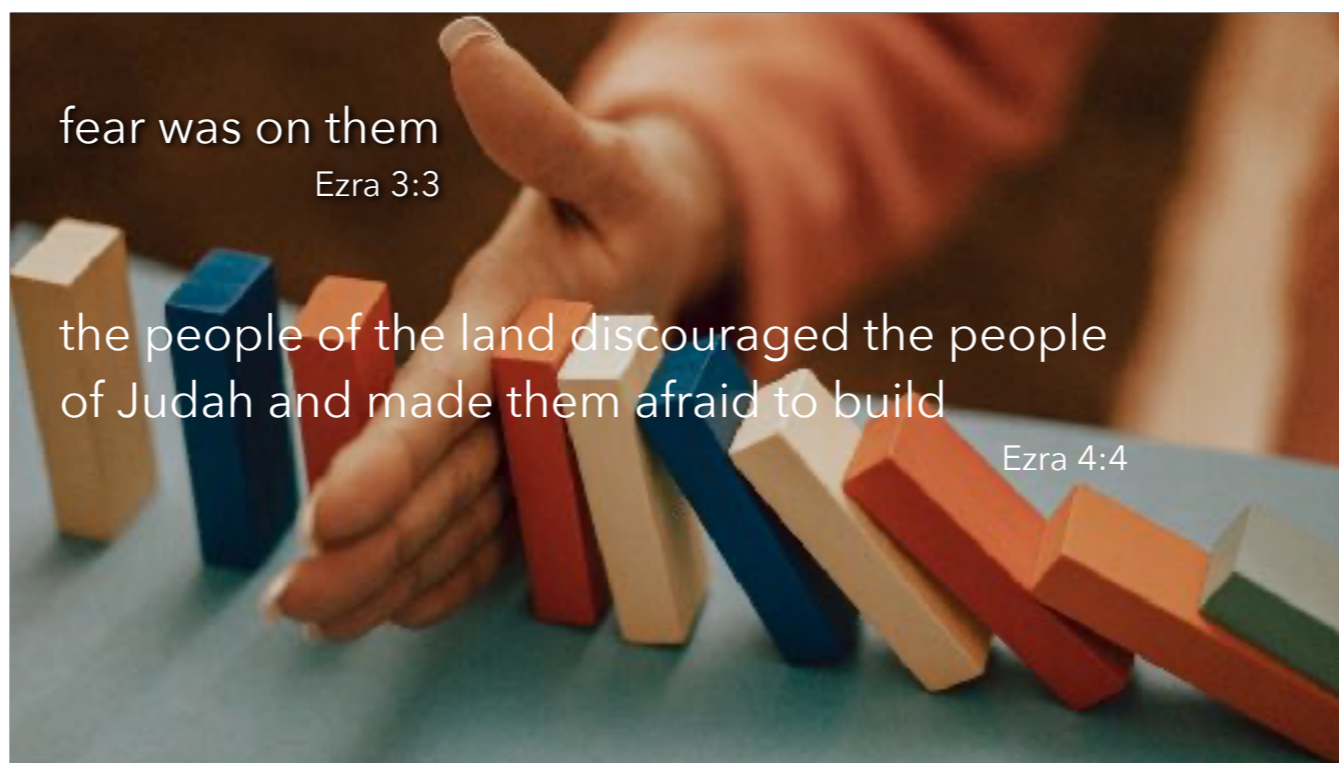


- The value of support in various ways
  - Ezra 1:4 And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”
  - This reminds us to find ways that allow others to help out even if they can't participate.
  - And if I can't participate, how can I contribute to the work?
    - freewill offerings
  - This is the picture of a body, family, nation working together: many parts, many roles.



- The Inevitability of Adversity
- Ezra 3:3 They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening.





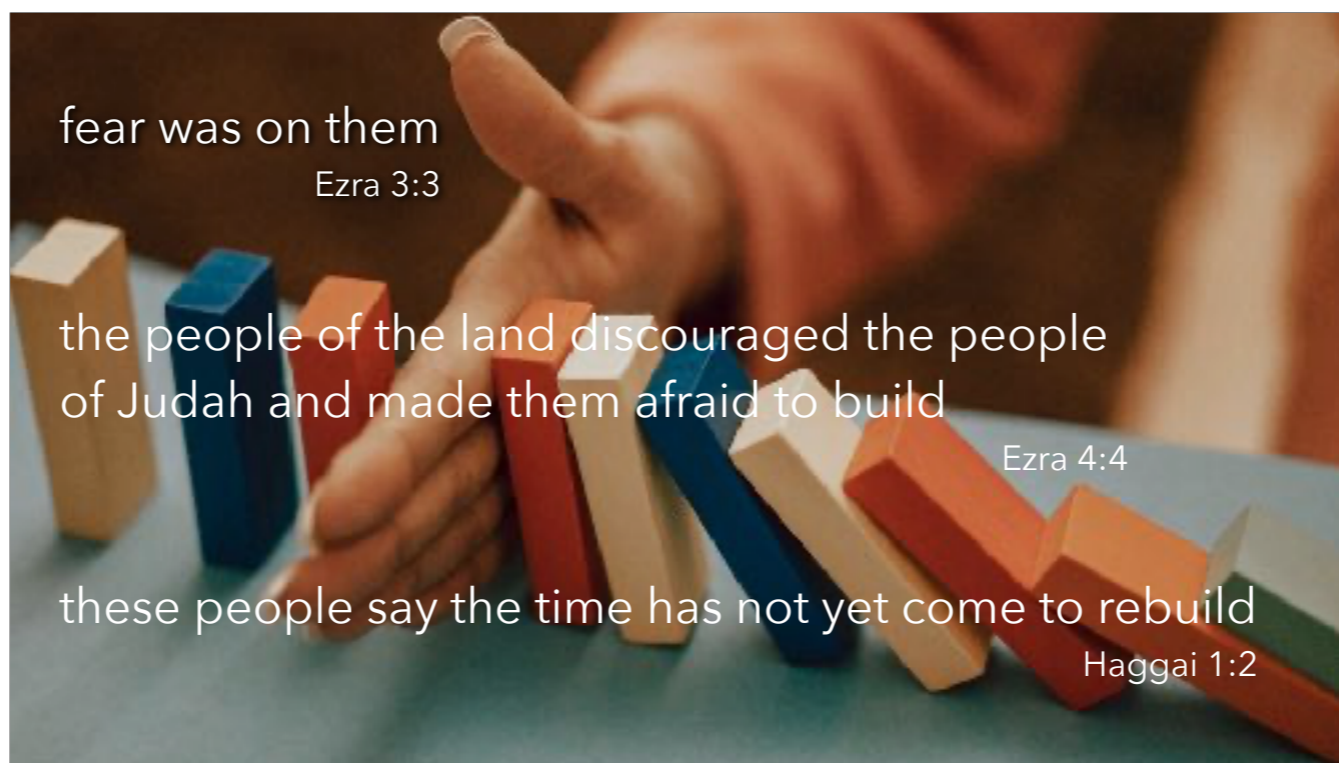
fear was on them

Ezra 3:3

the people of the land discouraged the people  
of Judah and made them afraid to build

Ezra 4:4

- Ezra 4:4-5 (ESV) 4 Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build 5 and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.



fear was on them

Ezra 3:3

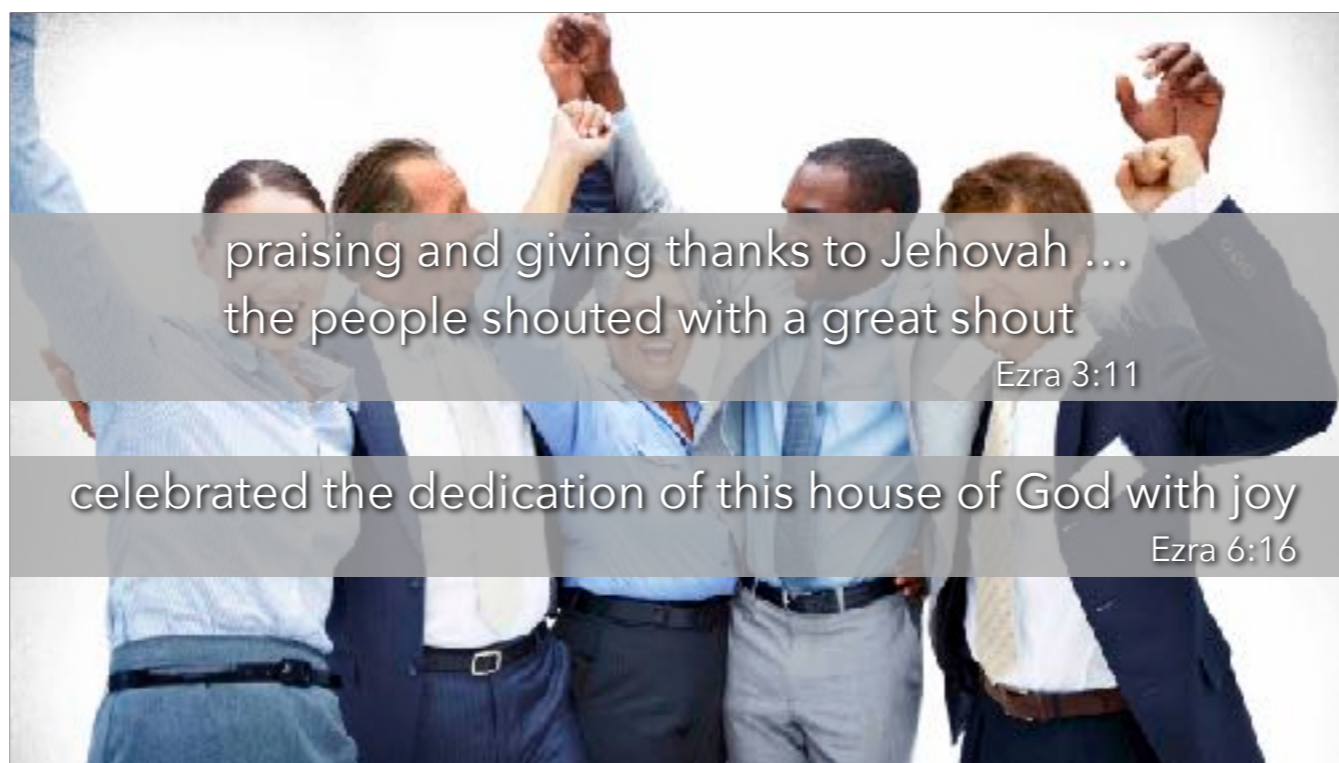
the people of the land discouraged the people  
of Judah and made them afraid to build

Ezra 4:4

these people say the time has not yet come to rebuild

Haggai 1:2

- Haggai 1:2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD.”
- (Next Week explore more deeply)
- An open door to accomplish God’s will doesn’t mean that there will not be adversity or opposition.



praising and giving thanks to Jehovah ...  
the people shouted with a great shout

Ezra 3:11

celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy

Ezra 6:16

- Foundation

- Ezra 3:11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

- Temple

- Ezra 6:16 And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.



- Doing things in the right order matters.
- There are stages.
  - Why altar first?
    - Acknowledging our God (Worship, sacrifice, Thanks)
    - Noah's first act when leaving the ark: Genesis 8:20 -
      - God blessed Noah and sons: Genesis 9:1
    - The people turned to God first, and worshiped him properly.



- There are stages.
  - Materials had to be gathered
  - And the foundation had to be laid
  - And the walls and curtains etc. etc.



- These things take time.
  - Weariness
  - Loss of focus
  - Changed priorities
- When a task is accomplished (even partial), celebration is beneficial
  - Sense of achievement
  - Renews our dedication to the task
  - Refocus



- Psalms 126 (ESV)
  - 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
  - 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;
  - then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
  - 3 The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.
  - 4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb!
  - 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!
  - 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
  - shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.



- Why is important for us to celebrate?
- Hebrews 12:22-24 (ESV) 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and **to innumerable angels in festal gathering**, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.





- What is our obvious opportunity?
- We have some overall purposes ...
  - Spreading the good news
  - Encouraging one another



- As a congregation
  - This may take a determined effort, make a choice, make a plan, work the plan.
  - How do we reach our community?
  - How do we find better ways to encourage each other?



- As individuals

- It might be as simple as a conversation.
- In Rock Springs, one of the older gentlemen would go to the rec center daily. After walking, he'd sit on a bench. He would greet others as they continued around the track. Eventually a young woman began joining him and in time she and her husband were brought to Christ.



- Let's help each other to be the temple that our Father wants us to be
  - Ephesians 2:21-22 (ESV) 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**We implore you on  
behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

## Photo Credits:

All photos from istockphoto.com, crestock.com, bigstock.com, dreamtime.com, thinkstock.com, and shutterstock.com are copyright protected. They are used by permission. Please do not reuse without permission.)

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/jerusalem-rebuilding-second-temple-6198175>

123rf.com: 86203818; 22087630;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus\\_the\\_Great#/media/File:Cyrus\\_II\\_le\\_Grand\\_et\\_les\\_Hébreux.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great#/media/File:Cyrus_II_le_Grand_et_les_Hébreux.jpg)

iStock\_000025885857Medium

<https://pixabay.com/photos/balance-domino-business-risk-6815204/>

iStock\_000059219270

Lightstock: lighthouse-2372461\_1920

Open Doors

#08

Compiled and Presented by:  
Dave Stewart  
2022 September 11  
[www.1corinthians1614.com](http://www.1corinthians1614.com)

## Rebuild the House

Ezra 1:3

Synopsis: How do we know when an opportunity is from God? And how do we stir ourselves up to take advantage of the opportunity? How do we cope with adversity when it arises? And how do we celebrate the work being done?

\*Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**“Let all that you do be done with love.”**