

How do you rebuild a life that is shattered? Thank the Lord; the answer is in Jesus Christ. He is in the business of taking people who are broken, far away from God, and make them whole. We serve a God who desires restoration!

### Setting the Scene

- After 70 years of captivity, we know there is a period of 80 years of restoration. In the first part of Ezra (1-6), We see the call to rebuild the Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel (7-10), 2<sup>nd</sup> part: Ezra (scribe) leading the people towards Spiritual renewal, last part of this period is led by Nehemiah, who governs and directs the people in rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem.
- Ezra wrote 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah
- The Temple was considered the spiritual center of worship for the Israelites.

<sup>15</sup> My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. <sup>16</sup> For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart. <sup>17</sup> “As for you, if you faithfully follow me as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, 2 Chronicles 7:15-17

<sup>19</sup> Don't you realize that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup> for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.” Genesis 15:1

- The call is to pursue Christ not because we want something, but because we need Him.

<sup>3</sup> Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! Ezra 1:3

### How Does God Rebuild?

#### He Stirs Hearts (Ezra 1:1-7)

- God releases those who are in bondage.

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom... Ezra 1:1

ור (עורר, 5782), “to awake, stir up, rouse oneself, rouse.” This word is found in both ancient and modern Hebrew, as well as in ancient Ugaritic. It occurs approximately 80 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Its first use in the Old Testament has the sense of “rousing” someone to action.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek word translated “draw” is *helkuo*, which means “to drag” (literally or figuratively). Clearly, this drawing is a one-sided affair. God does the drawing to salvation; we who are drawn have a passive role in the process. There is no doubt that we respond to His drawing us, but the drawing itself is all on His part.<sup>2</sup>

- Also: Vs 5 – He stirs the hearts of the unsaved and saved.

<sup>44</sup> For no one can come to me unless the **Father who sent me draws them** to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. John 6:44

<sup>32</sup> And when I am lifted up from the earth, **I will draw** everyone to myself.” John 12:32

- He releases those who are captive.

#### He Unites Hearts (Ezra 3-4)

- Promise Land: Joshua (Book of Joshua), 2<sup>nd</sup> Time (Ezra 3:2, Zechariah 3), 3<sup>rd</sup> time, Jesus—who is our high priest (Hebrews 6:20) and king (Matthew 27:11). The name “Joshua” is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name “Jesus.” Thus, the priest-king Joshua was a foreshadowing of the coming Messiah, and the similarity extended even to his name.

<sup>1</sup> Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Vol. 1, p. 11). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/drawn-salvation.html>

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, <sup>19</sup> and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come. Luke 4:18-19

- He rebuilds that which is broken.

<sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup> For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. <sup>5</sup> There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is overall, in all, and living through all. Ephesians 4:3-6

- Ezra 3:1-6, Before building, they had to worship. The opposition is not always a sign you are going in the wrong direction. The enemy is going to whatever he can to tear down and destroy the Temple. This can come in discouragement and fear. Laziness and apathy can creep in, rather than facing the difficulty before you. Their response to opposition is worship. Worship unites hearts. (Ezra 3:10-13)
- We are united in the purpose of bringing God glory in the building up the body of Christ and the kingdom of God— through the gospel. If we keep Christ and the gospel as our central focus and our purpose, even our differences will be a source of unity

<sup>2</sup> These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. Luke 10:2

“The world breaks everyone, and afterward, many are strong at the broken places.” Ernest Hemingway

<sup>4</sup> Then the local residents tried to **discourage** and **frighten** the people of Judah to keep them from their work. Ezra 4:4

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, issue orders to have these men stop their work. That city must not be rebuilt except at my express command. Ezra 4:21

- Work is shut down for ten years. Sometimes situations happen beyond our control. We cannot give up.

### **He Propels Hearts (Ezra 5-6)**

- God raises spiritual leaders to help propel the people. (Haggai: “Why do you live in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruin.” (Hag. 1:4)
- Both questioned priorities and apathy. What do we value the most?
- Zachariah not only encourages the completion of the Temple but propels people to hope in the coming Messiah. (Zach. 9:9-10)

<sup>16</sup> ‘Afterward, I will return and restore the fallen house<sup>[a]</sup> of David. I will **rebuild its ruins** and **restore it**, <sup>17</sup> so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles—all those I have called to be mine. The LORD has spoken—

<sup>18</sup> he who made these things known so long ago.’ Acts 15:16-18

<sup>19</sup> “All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. John 2:19

**One Last Thought:** God knows and controls the future. He alone is our hope. He rebuilds, restores, and redeems those whose lives are shattered.