

EZRA

NEHEMIAH

Renewal Amongst the Ruins



“He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. 8
He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he
commanded, for a thousand generations.”

-Psalm 105:7-8



Ezra 1

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:

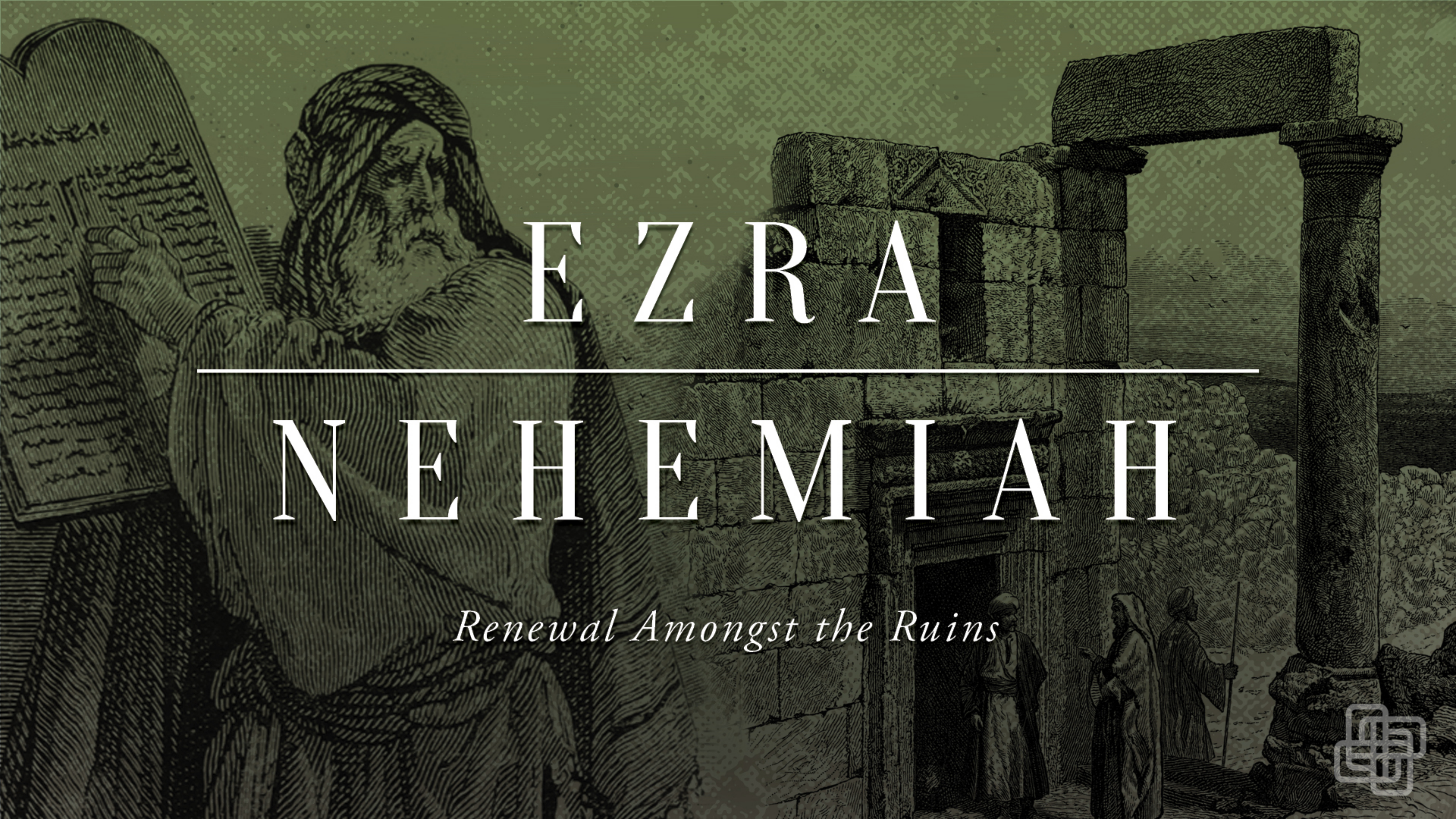
2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah,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



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. 6 And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered. 7 Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. 8 Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 10 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels; 11 all the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.





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THE BOOK OF EZRA

Two Books From One:

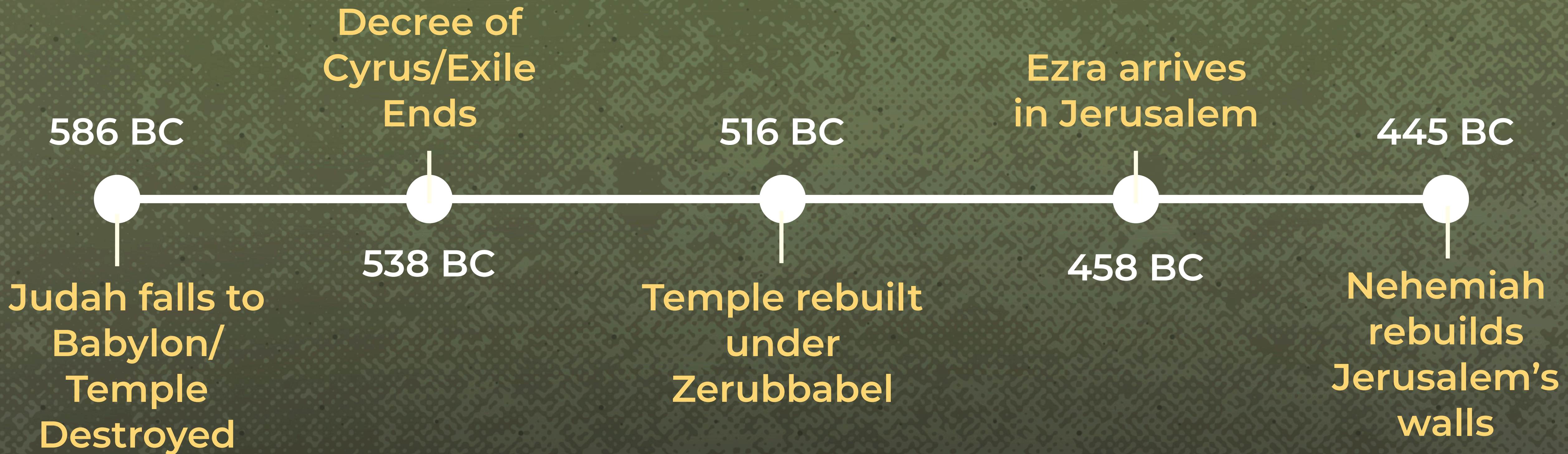
- One Book in Tanakh (Hebrew Bible)
- Early rabbinic writings confirm books as a unity
- Melito of Sardis (2nd Century) held to this as well
- Josephus & Eusebius (early church historians) affirm as one book
- Origen (3rd century) was first to separate into two books
- Jerome standardized it in Latin Vulgate (late 4th century)

Authorship:

- Debated between Ezra & Chronicler (1 & 2nd Chronicles)
- However, Ezra uses first person language (Ez. 8)
- Some say Ezra wrote both (Jewish Talmud affirms this position)



TIMELINE OF EZRA/NEHEMIAH



THE BOOK OF EZRA

Timespan:

- Roughly 100 years from (beginning of Ezra to the end of Nehemiah)
- Covers 3 journeys of God's people back to the land

Key People:

- 3 Persian Kings
 - Cyrus: King who issues the decree for Jews to return to the land
 - Darius I: King when the Temple was being rebuilt/completed
 - Artaxerxes I: King during Nehemiah, who allowed rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls
- Zerubbabel: rebuilds the second temple
- Ezra: taught the Law
- Nehemiah: rebuilt the city walls



RENEWAL BEGINS WHEN GOD SPEAKS OVER THE RUINS (v. 1)

538 BC

Polytheistic
pagan king

Promise bound in covenant;
God keeps His word

1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of

Jer. 16:15, 24:6, 29:10-14, 30:3, 32:37; Isa. 44:28)

pawn to carry divine purposes

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:

"God is rarely early, never late, always in time."



TWO (OF MANY) PROPHECY FULFILLED

“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 (150-200 years prior to the birth of Cyrus)

“For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”

-Jeremiah 29:10-14 (70 years prior to Judah falling to Babylon)



2. RENEWAL IS A CALL BACK TO THE SOVEREIGN GOD, NOT JUST OUT OF TROUBLE (vs. 2–4)

Pro. 21:1

2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the

Political Move to earn subjects loyalty & gratitude

kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is

Cyrus worshipped Marduk (Babylonian patron deity)
in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him

The call was back God’s divine presence; God was after their heart’s worship
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. 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.”

***God doesn’t react to
history, He is rules it.***



“I returned to these sacred cities...the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned to them their habitations...May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily for Bel and Nebo for a long life for me...; to Marduk, my lord, may they say this: ‘Cyrus: the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son..’”

-The Cyrus Cylinder

(6th century BC Persian Artifact)



3. RENEWAL REQUIRES A WILLING RESPONSE TO GOD'S STIRRING (vs. 5–6)

5 Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and

Not everyone returned

the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the

Cyrus encourages generosity from those who stay behind

Lord that is in Jerusalem. 6 And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver,

God graciously provided in their obedience to go (Ex. 12)

with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered.

*God supplies renewal through obedience &
obedience is always the way into God's blessing
that brings us lasting joy.*



4. RENEWAL RECLAIMS WHAT WAS BROKEN AND MISUSED (vs. 7–11)

7 Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that **What Babylon stole—God restored** Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods.

8 Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 And this was the number of them:

30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 10 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, **Providential and provisional grace** and 1,000 other vessels; 11 all the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did

Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

God is powerful & kind to restore what our sin and prodigal lives set out vandalize.

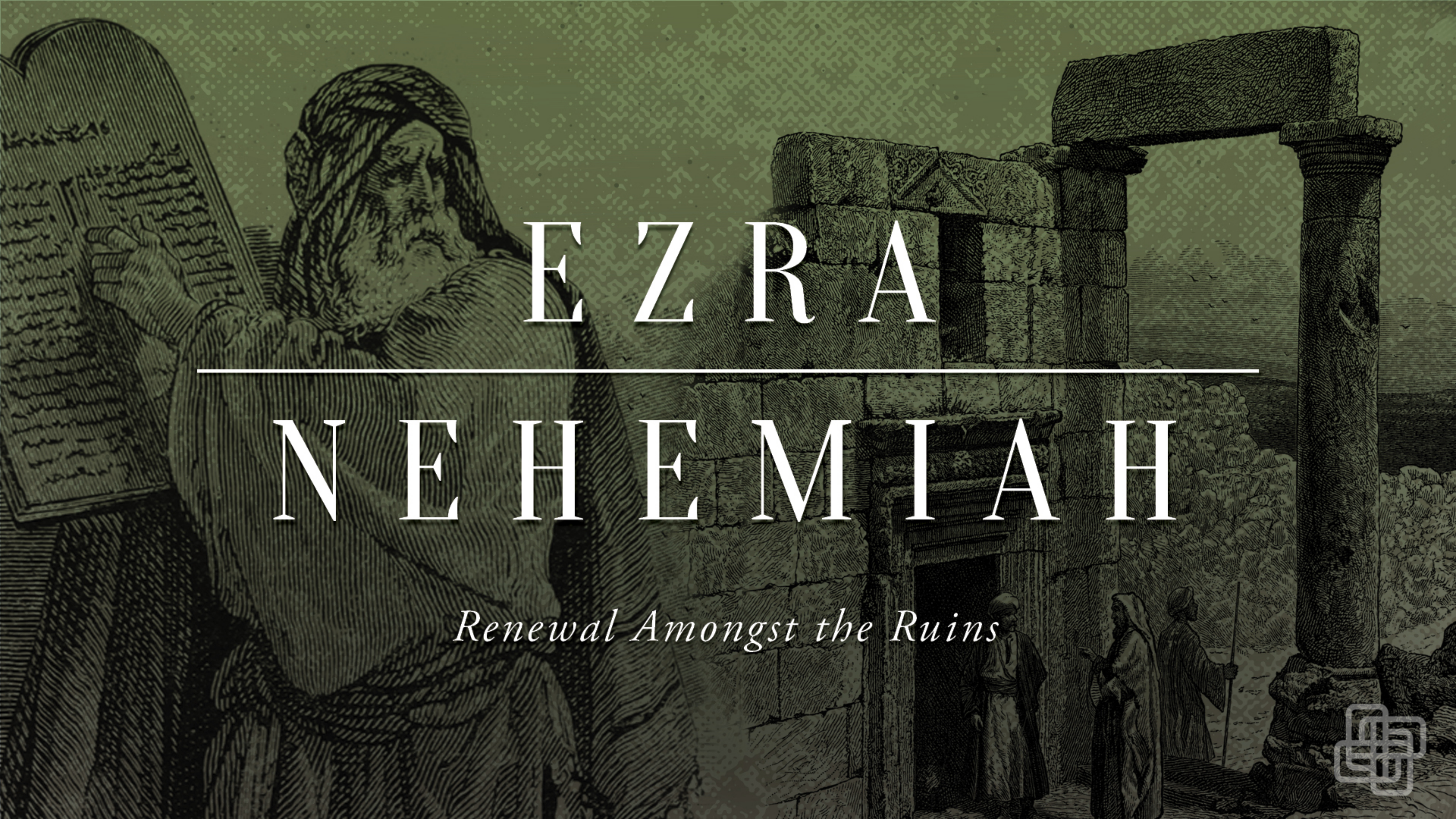


9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

-2 Corinthians 12:9-10

What if our invitation for renewal has nothing to do with our resolutions but everything to do with our repentance?



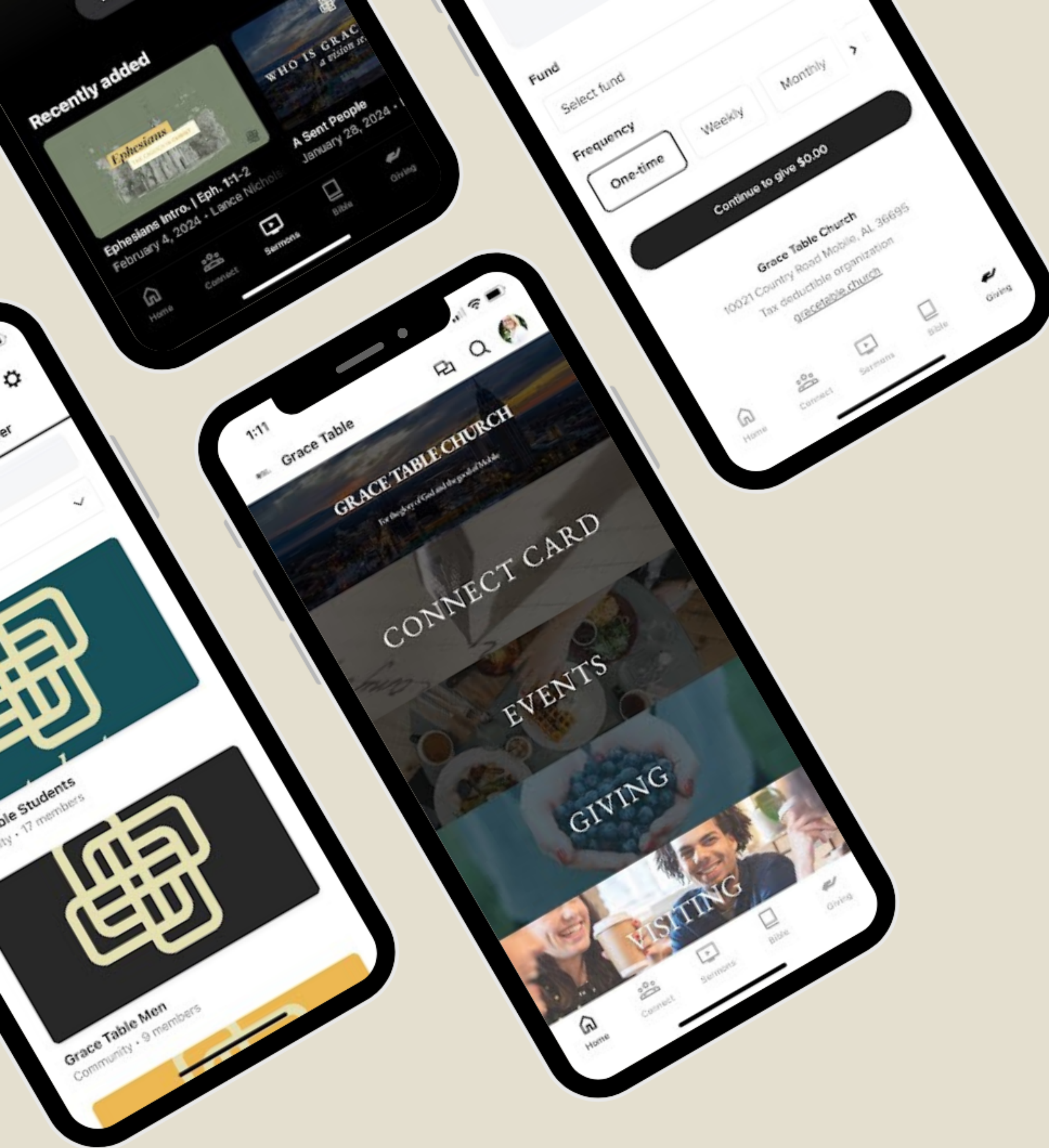


EZRA

NEHEMIAH

Renewal Amongst the Ruins





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women's retreat

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Gulf Shores, AL

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

2



**GRACE
TABLE
CHURCH**

Leader:

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

-2 Corinthians 13:14

People:

And also with you.

