

INTRODUCTION 引言

There is a familiar saying: history is His story. God has never stopped working in the world. The book of Ezra is a good example. At that time, the nation Israel no longer existed. God's people were living in Babylon. God disciplined them for their disobedience. Yet God spoke through prophet Jeremiah that He would bring them home after seventy years. God's words came true! No one expected Babylon to fall to Persia in 539 BC. Even more amazing was that the first Persian king, Cyrus, allowed the Israelites to return to Jerusalem. He hoped that showing kindness would win people's loyalty. Because of this, about 50,000 people went back to rebuild the temple Babylon had destroyed. It was not an easy task. Internally, God's people were not united. Externally, they faced pressure from non-believers. But God was working behind the scene. He guided people, events and political powers to accomplish His purpose. God has been doing the same thing in history, in this nation, in our church and in your life. He also invites you to join Him. Following God is never easy. But when we put Him first, He leads the way.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Resistance 攔阻

In our story, the Israelites faced resistance as soon as they began rebuilding the temple. Ezra 4:4–5 says: **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.** Those “people of the land” were likely foreigners who settled in Jerusalem after Israel went into exile. They looked for ways to stop the work. They intimidated God's people and hired false witnesses. As a result, the project stopped for almost 16 years. The Israelites were passionate for God, yet they met resistance. From this we learn our first spiritual principle: Opposition often comes when we are doing the right things for God. Satan attacks through pressure, rumors and false accusations. We become anxious, afraid and frustrated. But when we turn to God, He comes to our rescue. In the passage, God helped the Israelites through various leaders. Ezra 5:1–2 tells us: **1 Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. 2 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.** Those leaders guided the people and cheered them on. Haggai and Zechariah delivered God's messages. Haggai reminded them that God would bless them if they put Him first. Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, served as governor. Jeshua, a descendant of Aaron, served as priest. God surrounded His people with spiritual and civil leaders who worked together to support them. This leads to our second spiritual principle: God's Word and mature believers are sources of wisdom and encouragement. Where should you look for guidance when you face resistance? It is fine to seek help from friends, experts, or even artificial intelligence. But your goal should be more than solving a problem quickly or saving cost. Resistance is often a moment to examine your motives. If your desire is to serve God, He will help you navigate the situation. He speaks through His Word, and He puts godly people around

you to counsel you. God wants to rebuild your faith. Problems will eventually go away, but by removing resistance God matures you. He helps you walk closer with Him.

2. Reference 根據

God's people encountered resistance as they rebuilt the temple. Persian officials came to investigate and asked who gave them permission. In their reply, Israel's leaders made reference to two facts. Fact #1: Rebuilding the temple was God's desire. Ezra 5:11–12 says: **11 ... 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. 12 But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia.'** The temple was originally built by Solomon. It was destroyed not only because of foreign invasion, but also because God was judging His people. If rebellion led to the temple's destruction, then rebuilding it would honor God. This gives us another spiritual lesson: God can use even our failures to show His faithfulness. He is faithful to bless and faithful to discipline. If our defeat comes from sin, we ask God for forgiveness. We also admit our mistakes to those affected by our oversight. We show responsibility to people and accountability to God. In our setbacks, God proves Himself holy and righteous. Fact #2: Rebuilding the temple was also the king's decree. Ezra 5:13 says: **'However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt.'** Cyrus even ordered the return of the gold and silver taken from the temple. Later, Persian officials asked King Darius to verify the decree. He did—and the record was found. It included the temple's dimensions, the return of the utensils, and funding from the royal treasury. Darius honored Cyrus' command. The rebuilding could continue. He even supplied animals for sacrifices. God worked through two foreign kings—Cyrus and Darius—to accomplish His plan. This gives us the next spiritual lesson: God can use a secular government to carry out His will. I can think of one example: some local public schools allow Child Evangelism Fellowship to host after-school Bible clubs. The school district sees it as an extracurricular activity students can freely participate. The Bible teaches us that God gives earthly rulers their authority. We obey teachers, bosses and public leaders to show our submission to God. If we fear God, we do not need to fear a human system. We present our requests respectfully and truthfully. Then we wait for God to open the right door at the right time.

3. Reverence 崇敬

Eventually, God gave the Israelites success. They finished the temple in about five years. After that, they showed reverence to God. First, they held a dedication ceremony. Ezra 6:16–18 says: **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. 17 They offered at the dedication of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their divisions, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.** They followed God's Law. The Levites offered many animals. When Solomon dedicated the first temple, he offered two hundred times more animals. Some older people were disappointed because the new temple was smaller. But God looks at the heart, not the size of a building or the amount of an offering. That takes us to the next spiritual lesson: Who we worship

is more important than how we worship. The style of songs and the format of sermons are secondary. Worship is not about what you get, but it is about what you give to God. If your heart is set toward God, no one needs to remind you to come on time, silence your phone, or not to talk to your neighbors. Other than the dedication ceremony, the Israelites also kept their festivals. Verse 22 gives an example: **And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.** The Feast of Unleavened Bread follows the Passover. The Passover represents God's redemption. The Feast of Unleavened Bread remembers God's sanctification. He cleanses His people and gives them a fresh start. Altogether, the Israelites not only dedicated a building to God; they also rededicated themselves to Him. A repeated theme in this verse is joy. Their nation still needed to be rebuilt from ruins, yet joy was present. This gives us another spiritual lesson: Joy is a natural response when we obey God. Doing what God says is not always easy. Non-believers may make life difficult when they learn that you are a Christian. They may see your honesty as foolish, question your judgment, or resist your leadership. Even when you serve in the church, there will be criticism rather than compliment. You may feel upset and discouraged. But when you are doing God's will, there must be joy. Stay faithful. Trust God. He will produce fruit at the right time.

CONCLUSION 結論

The Israelites turned opposition into opportunities. God helped them rebuild the temple when they relied on Him. What is God rebuilding in your life? Perhaps He is rebuilding your faith after an unanswered prayer, a painful loss or hardship in life. Maybe He is rebuilding your priorities—reading the Bible daily, serving in ministry or simply coming to church every Friday and Sunday. Maybe He is rebuilding your commitment to put Him first above career, money or children. For some of us, God needs to rebuild a broken relationship with another believer or a family member after conflict. God-size issues require God-size grace. Rebuilding takes time, effort, courage and dedication. The following story illustrates these necessary elements. In May of 2011, an EF-5 tornado struck Joplin, Missouri. It was the costliest tornado in U.S. history. Lives were lost and properties were damaged. St. Mary's Catholic Church was also leveled. Before rebuilding the church, members realized they needed to rebuild their devotion to God and their relationships with one another. Therefore, they kept meeting—in homes, in borrowed spaces and even in parking lots. With help pouring in from around the world, they rebuilt the church in three and a half years. When it reopened, the congregation was filled with gratitude and joy. Their story became a testimony of what unity and perseverance can accomplish. When God rebuilds something in your life, He is not just restoring what was lost. Perhaps He is preparing you for something bigger and more glorious. Opposition may slow you down, but it cannot stop God's work. If you stay faithful, He will turn your rubble into a testimony of His grace.

INTRODUCTION 引言

有一句熟悉的話說：「歷史是祂的故事。」神從未停止在世界中工作。以斯拉記就是很好的例子。那時候，以色列這個國家已經不再存在了。神的子民住在巴比倫，因為他們的不順服而被神管教。然而，神透過先知耶利米預告：七十年後，祂要帶領百姓回家。神的話真的應驗了！沒有人想到巴比倫會在公元前 539 年被波斯打敗。更令人驚訝的是，波斯的第一位君王古列竟然允許以色列人回到耶路撒冷。他希望藉著施恩能贏得百姓的心。因此，大約五萬人回到耶路撒冷，重建被巴比倫摧毀的聖殿。這不是一件容易的事。內部來說，神的子民並不同心；外部來說，他們面對非信徒的壓力。然而，神在幕後工作，祂帶領人、事件和政治局勢來成就祂的旨意。神一直在歷史中、這個國家、我們的教會和您的生命中如此行。祂也邀請您參與祂的計畫。跟隨神從來不容易，但當我們把祂放在首位，祂就會帶領我們前行。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Resistance 攔阻

在我們的故事中，以色列人一開始重建聖殿就遇到攔阻。以斯拉記 4:4-5 說：4 那地的民，就在猶大人建造的時候，使他們的手發軟，擾亂他們；5 從波斯王古列年間，直到波斯王大利烏登基的時候，賄買謀士，要敗壞他們的謀算。「那地的民」很可能是一些外族人，他們在以色列人被擄後住在耶路撒冷。他們想盡辦法阻止重建。他們恐嚇神的子民，還收買假證人。結果，工程停止了將近十六年。以色列人為神的工作心裡火熱，卻仍然遇到攔阻。從這裡我們學到第一個屬靈原則：當我們為神做正確的事時，反對常常會出現。撒但會用壓力、謠言和誣告來攻擊我們，使我們焦慮、害怕、沮喪。但當我們轉向神，祂就會來拯救我們。在經文中，神透過一些領袖來幫助以色列人。以斯拉記 5:1-2 說：1 那時，先知哈該和易多的孫子撒迦利亞奉以色列神的名向猶大和耶路撒冷的猶大人說勸勉的話。2 於是撒拉鐵的兒子所羅巴伯和約薩達的兒子耶書亞都起來動手建造耶路撒冷神的殿，有神的先知在那裡幫助他們。那些領袖帶領百姓，並鼓勵他們。哈該和撒迦利亞傳達神的信息。哈該提醒他們，只要把神放在首位，神必賜福。所羅巴伯是大衛的後裔，被波斯任命為猶大省長；耶書亞是亞倫的後裔，因此是祭司。神讓祂的子民身邊有屬靈與行政的領袖，一同支持他們。這帶出第二個屬靈原則：神的話語和成熟的信徒是智慧與鼓勵的來源。當你面對攔阻時，該向哪裡尋求指引？向朋友、專家，甚至人工智能尋求幫助都無可厚非。但你的目標不應只是快速解決問題或節省成本。攔阻往往

是反思動機的時刻。如果你的心願是服事神，祂會帶領你經過困難。祂藉著祂的話語對你說話，也把敬虔的人放在你身邊給你建議。神要重新建立你對祂的信心。問題終究會過去，但在除去攔阻的過程中，神正在塑造你，使你與祂更緊密同行。

2. Reference 根據

當神的子民重建聖殿時，他們遇到了攔阻。波斯的官員前來調查，並詢問是誰給了他們許可。以色列的領袖在回覆中提到兩個根據。事實一：重建聖殿是神的心意。以斯拉記 5:11-12 說：11 ...『我們是天地之神的僕人，重建前多年所建造的殿，就是以以色列的一位大君王建造修成的。12 只因我們列祖惹天上的神發怒，神把他們交在迦勒底人巴比倫王尼布甲尼撒的手中，他就拆毀這殿，又將百姓擄到巴比倫。』聖殿原本是所羅門所建造的。它被毀，不只是因為外族入侵，也是因為神在審判祂的子民。如果悖逆導致聖殿被毀，那麼重建聖殿就是在尊崇神。這帶給我們一個屬靈功課：神甚至能使用我們的失敗來彰顯祂的信實。祂信實地賜福，祂也必然管教。如果我們的失敗是因為犯罪，我們就向神求赦免，同時向因為我們疏忽而受影響的人承認錯誤。我們向人負責，也向神負責。在挫折中，神顯明祂的聖潔與公義。事實二：重建聖殿也是王的命令。以斯拉記 5:13 說：『然而巴比倫王古列元年，他降旨允准建造神的這殿。』古列甚至下令將從聖殿奪走的金銀器皿歸還。後來，波斯官員請大利烏王追查這個命令。他照做了，並找到了記錄。文件中說明聖殿的尺寸、器皿的歸還，以及由王室財庫支付重建費用。大利烏遵行古列的命令，重建工程得以繼續。他甚至提供獻祭所需的牲畜。神透過兩位外邦君王——古列和大利烏——成就祂的計畫。這帶來另一個屬靈功課：神能使用世俗的政府來完成祂的旨意。我想到一個例子：有些本地的公立學校允許萬國兒童佈道團在課後舉辦聖經俱樂部。學區把它視為學生可自由參與的課外活動，這十分難得。聖經教導我們，神賜給地上的掌權者管治的權柄。我們順服老師、主管和公眾領袖，是在表達我們對神的順服。如果我們敬畏神，就不需要害怕人的制度。我們以尊重和誠實的方式提出請求，然後等候神在祂的時間打開適確的門。

3. Reverence 崇敬

最終，神使以色列人得著成功。他們在大約五年內完成了聖殿的重建。之後，他們向神表達崇敬。首先，他們舉行了獻殿儀式。以斯拉記 6:16-18 說：16 以色列的祭司和利未人，並其餘被擄歸回的人都歡歡喜喜地行奉獻神殿的禮。17 行奉獻神殿的禮就獻公牛一百隻，公綿羊二百隻，綿羊羔四百隻，又照以色列支派的數目獻公山羊十二隻，為以色列眾人作贖罪祭；18 且派祭司和利未人按著班次在耶路撒冷事奉神，是照摩西律法書上所寫的。他們遵行神的律法。利未人獻上許多牲畜。當年所羅門獻殿時，獻的牲畜數量是這裡的兩百倍。有些年長的人因為新聖殿比原來

的小而感到失望。然而，神看重的是人的心，不是建築的大小，也不是祭物的數量。這帶給我們下一個屬靈功課：我們敬拜的對象，比我們敬拜的方式更重要。詩歌的風格、講道的形式都是次要的。敬拜不是為了你能得到什麼，而是你願意獻什麼給神。如果你的心向著神，就不需要別人提醒你要準時來聚會、關掉手機、或不要與旁邊的人講話。除了獻殿的儀式之外，以色列人也守節。我們在第 22 節看到一個例子：**歡歡喜喜地守除酵節七日；因為耶和華使他們歡喜，又使亞述王的心轉向他們，堅固他們的手，作以色列神殿的工程。**除酵節在逾越節之後連續守七天。逾越節代表神的救贖；除酵節記念神使人成聖——祂潔淨祂的子民，給他們新的開始。整體而言，以色列人不只是把新聖殿獻給神，他們也重新把自己獻給神。在這段經文中，我們反覆看到的情緒是喜樂。他們的國家仍需從廢墟中重建，還有很多工作，但人們仍然有喜樂。這帶給我們另一個屬靈功課：當我們順服神之時，喜樂是自然的反應。遵行神的話並不總是容易。非信徒知道你是基督徒時，可能會找你麻煩。他們認為你的誠實很愚蠢，質疑你的判斷，不服從你的帶領。就算你在教會服事，得到的也可能是批評而不是稱讚。你會感到難過，也會灰心。然而，當你行在神的旨意中，必然會有喜樂。要保持忠心，信靠神。祂會在適當的時候結出果子。

CONCLUSION 結論

以色列人化危機為時機。當他們倚靠神之時，神幫助他們重建聖殿。那麼，神正在你生命中重建什麼呢？也許祂正在重建你的信心，可能是因為神沒有回應你的禱告、你失去重要的東西、或是你在生活中碰到難處。也許祂正在重建你的優先次序——祂希望你每天讀聖經、參與事奉，或是每週五和主日來參加聚會。也許祂正在重建你對祂的委身——把神放在事業、金錢或孩子之上。對我們當中的一些人，神可能正在重建一段因衝突而破裂的關係——無論是與另一位信徒，或是與家人。唯有神才能解決的問題，需要只有神才能賜予的恩典。重建需要時間、努力、勇氣和全人的投入。以下的故事說明了這些必要的元素。2011 年 5 月，一場五級的龍捲風襲擊密蘇里州的喬普林市——那是美國歷史上代價最高的龍捲風。生命被奪去，財物受摧毀，聖瑪麗天主教堂也被夷為平地。在重建教堂之前，會友們明白他們必須先重建對神的奉獻，以及彼此之間的關係。因此，他們繼續聚會——在家中、用借來的場所，甚至在停車場。在世界各地湧入的幫助下，他們在三年半之內重建了教堂。當教堂重新開放時，全部會眾充滿感恩與喜樂。他們的故事成為一個合一與堅持能成就大事的見證。當神在你生命中重建某件事時，祂不只是補償失去的東西。也許祂正在預備你去迎接更大更榮耀的事情。危機可能會讓你慢下來，但卻不能停阻神的工作。若你持守忠心，祂必會把你的廢墟轉變為祂恩典的見證。