
REBUILDING
A STUDY IN EZRA & NEHEMIAH

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN DISCOURAGED

EZRA 4



A FILM BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

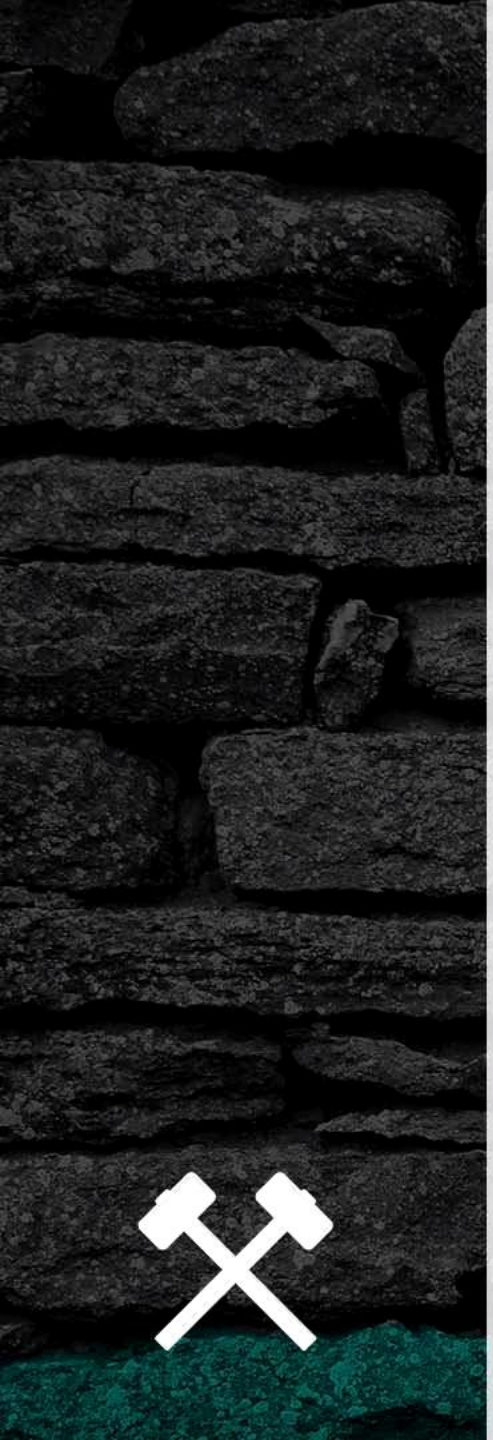
DUNKIRK

THE EVENT THAT SHAPED OUR WORLD

2017

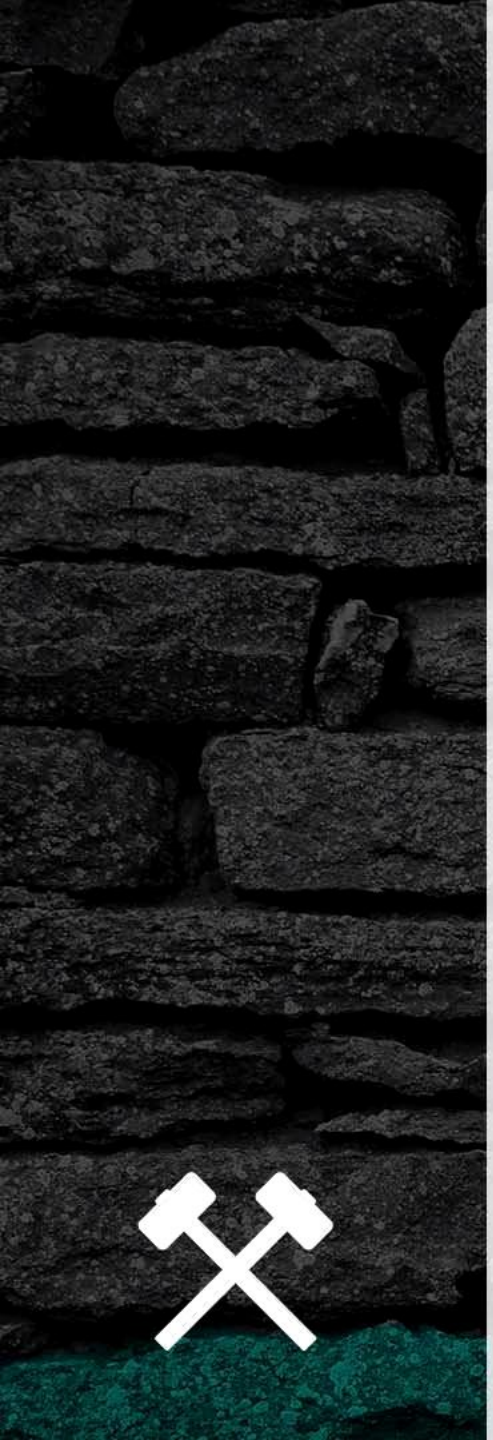
IN THEATERS AND SPECIAL ENGAGEMENTS IN 70mm, 35mm AND IMAX FILM

/WarnerBrosSchweiz /WarnerBrosSchweiz

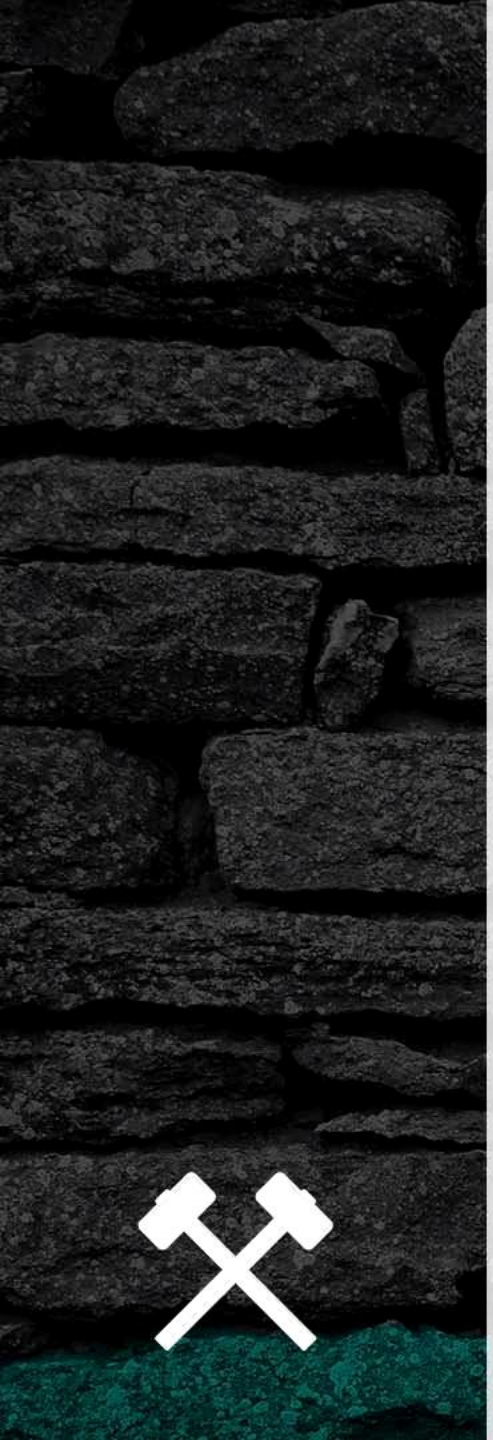


Ezra 4

v. 1-5	Cyrus	(539-530 BC)
v. 6	Xerxes	(485-465 BC)
v. 7-23	Artaxerxes I	(464-424 BC)
v. 24	Darius I	(522-486 BC)



Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here."
Ezra 4:1-3



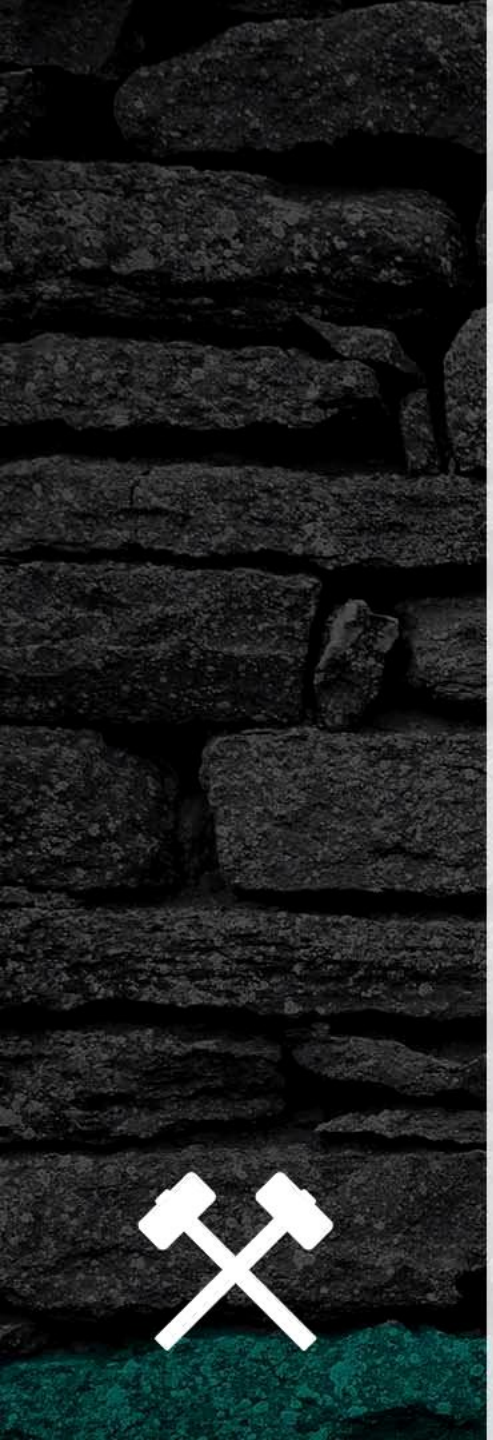
...they did not fear the Lord. Therefore, the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them.

2 Kings 17:25

But every nation still made gods of its own...

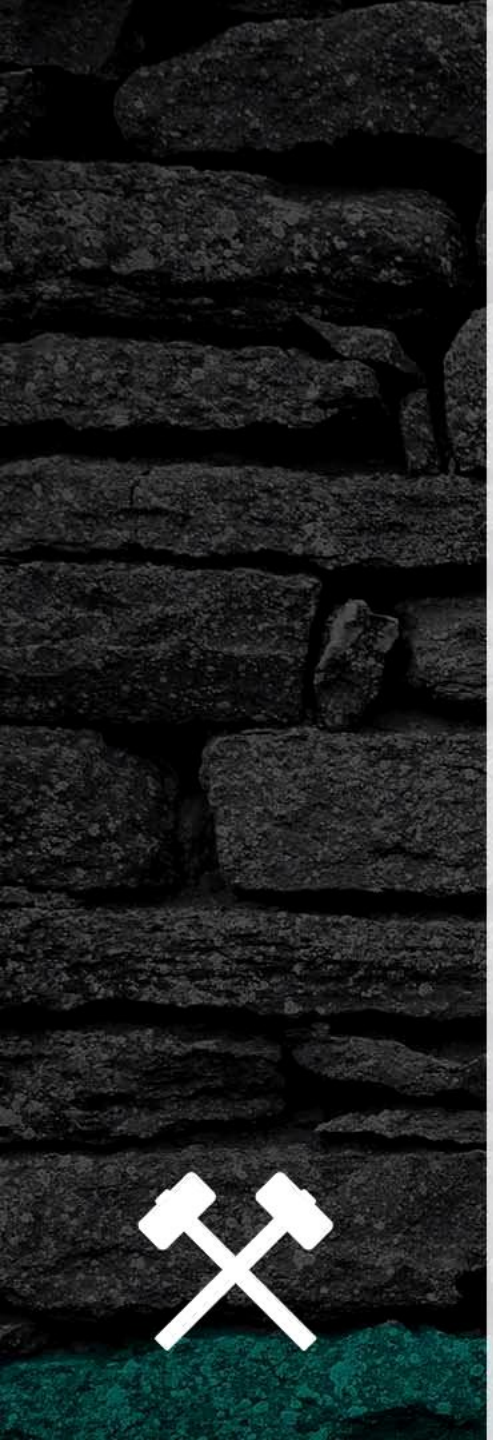
2 Kings 17:29





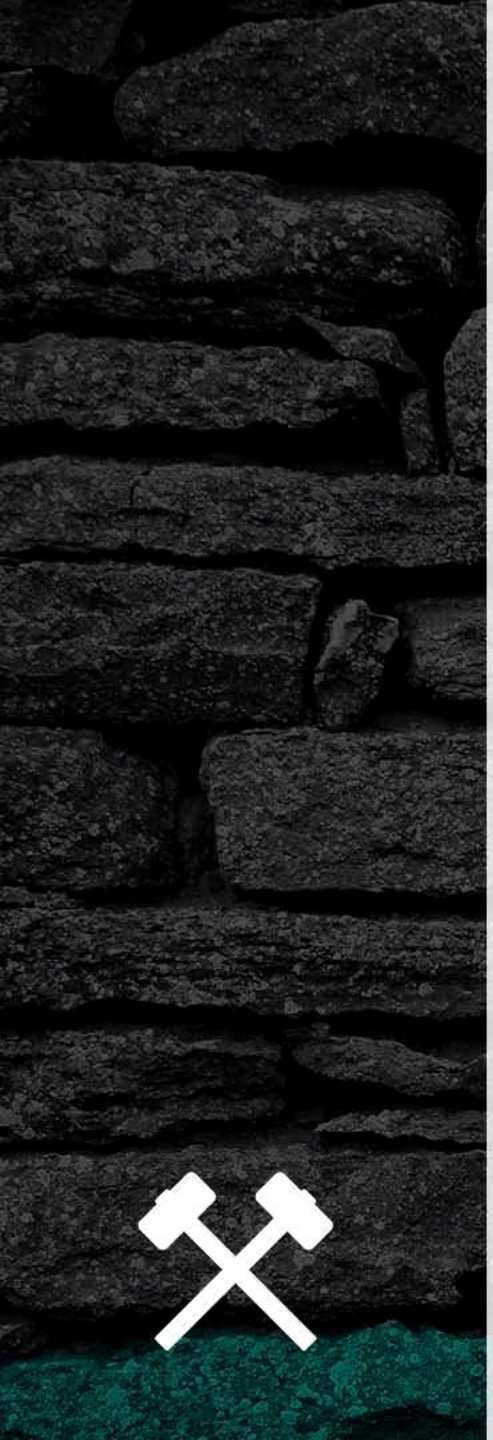
...and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech...

2 Kings 17:31



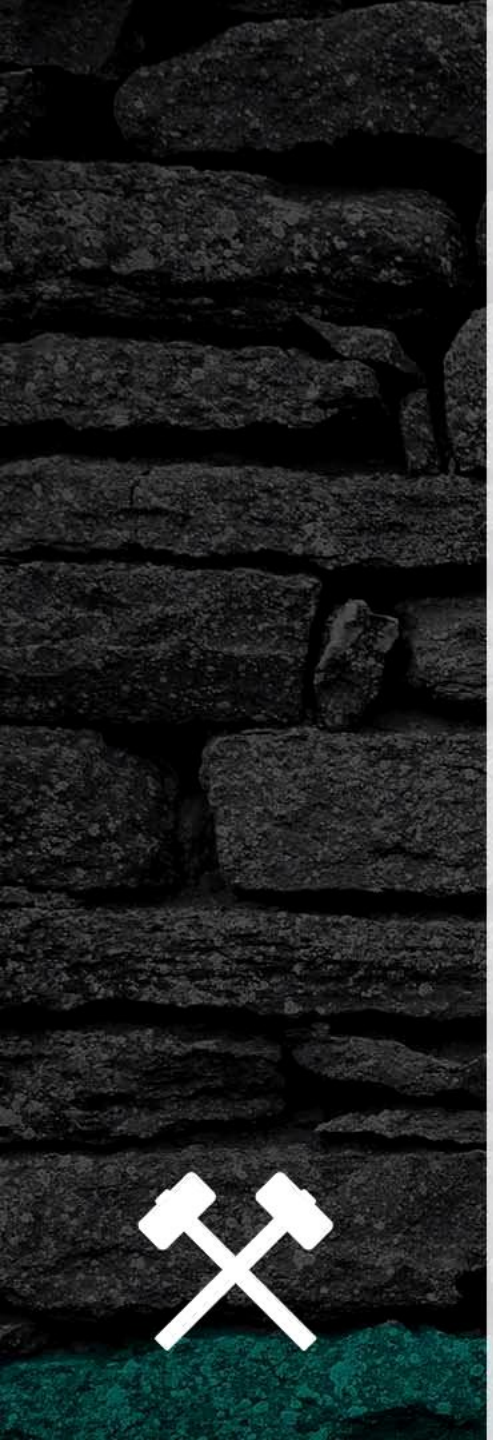
So they feared the Lord but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away....

2 Kings 17:33



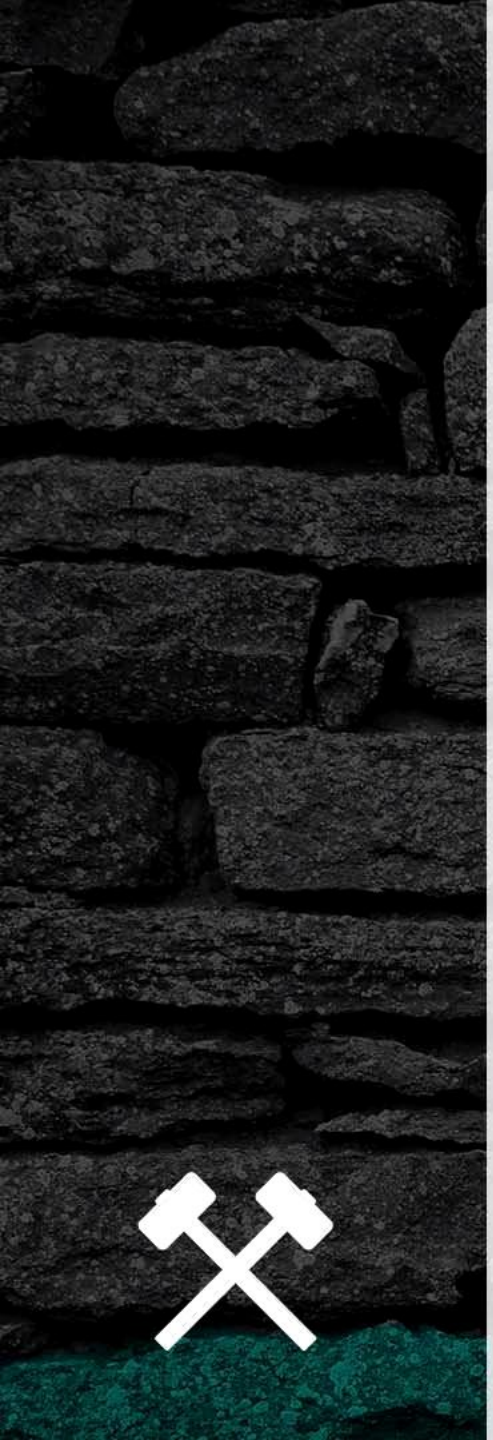
"Imagine a battalion fighting to plant their flag on the hilltop. If they betray everything the flag stands for in the fight to the top of the hill, what have they accomplished when they plant that flag? If they adopt all the practices of their enemies in their desperation to win the battle, have they defeated their enemies? This is what is at stake in Ezra 4. If Israel allows these adversaries to build the temple, they might as well not build it at all."

James Hamilton



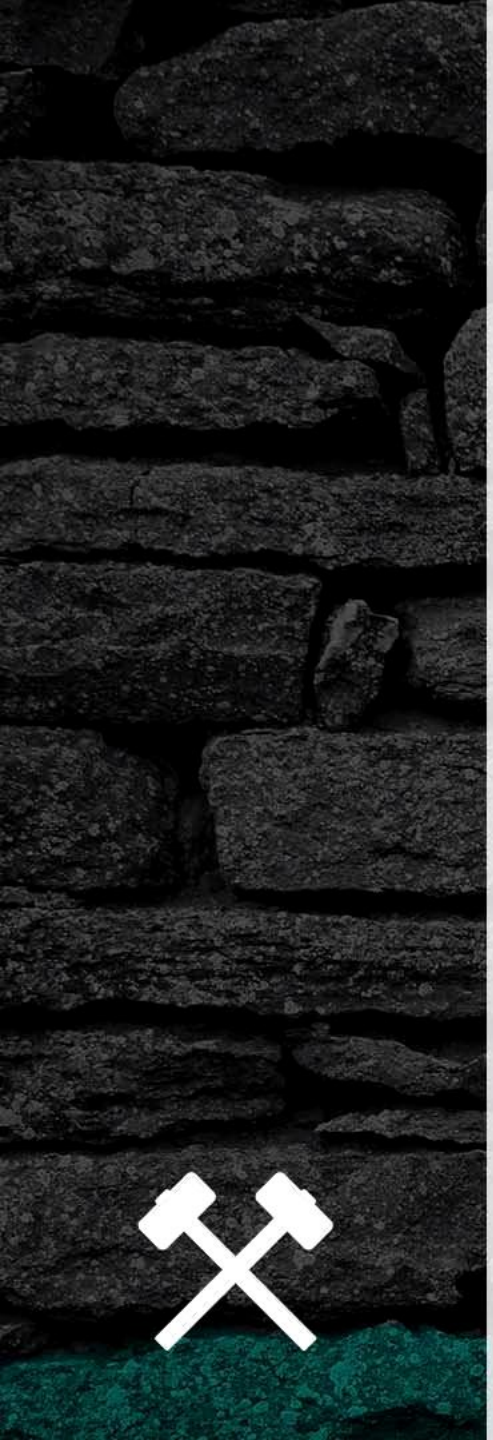
"Opposition to the work of God often comes from those claiming to be the people of God."

Kevin DeYoung



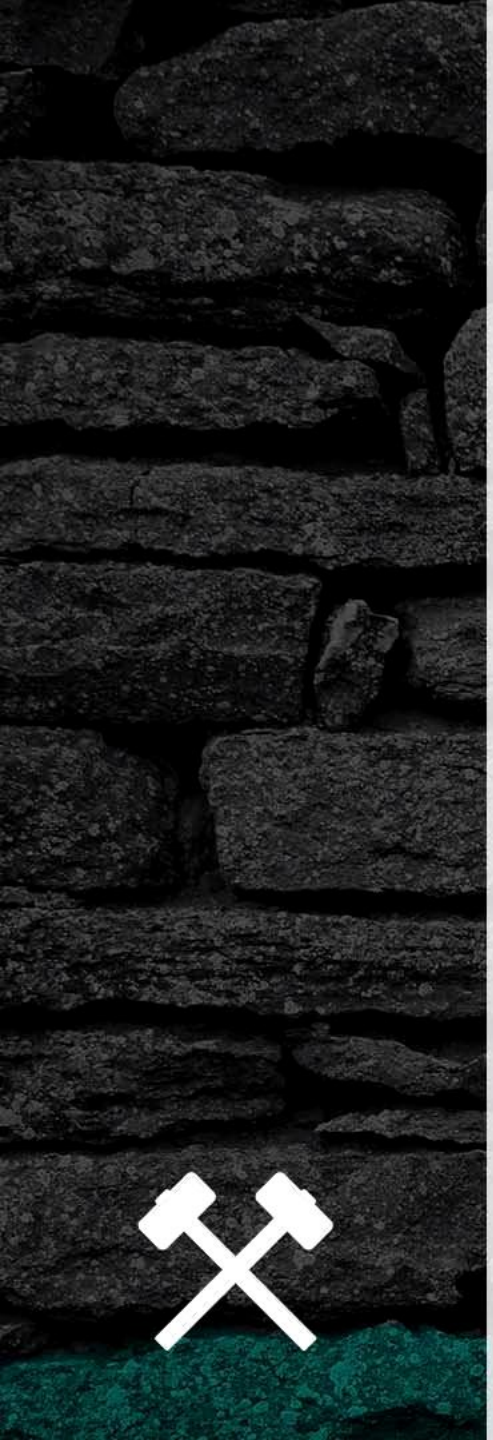
Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Ezra 4:4-5



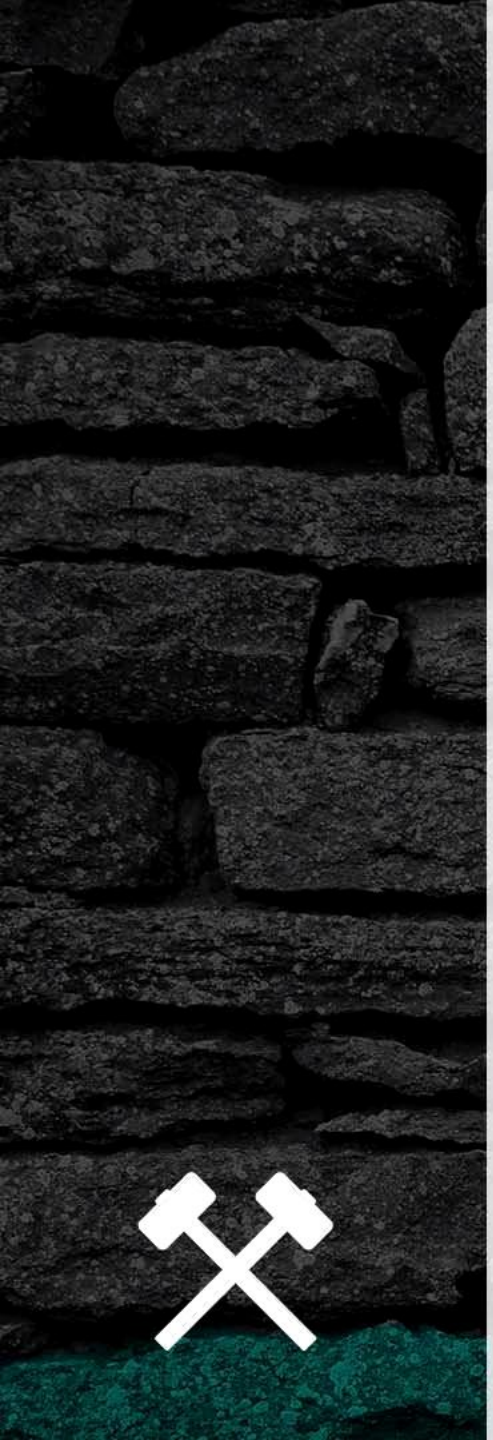
And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Ezra 4:6



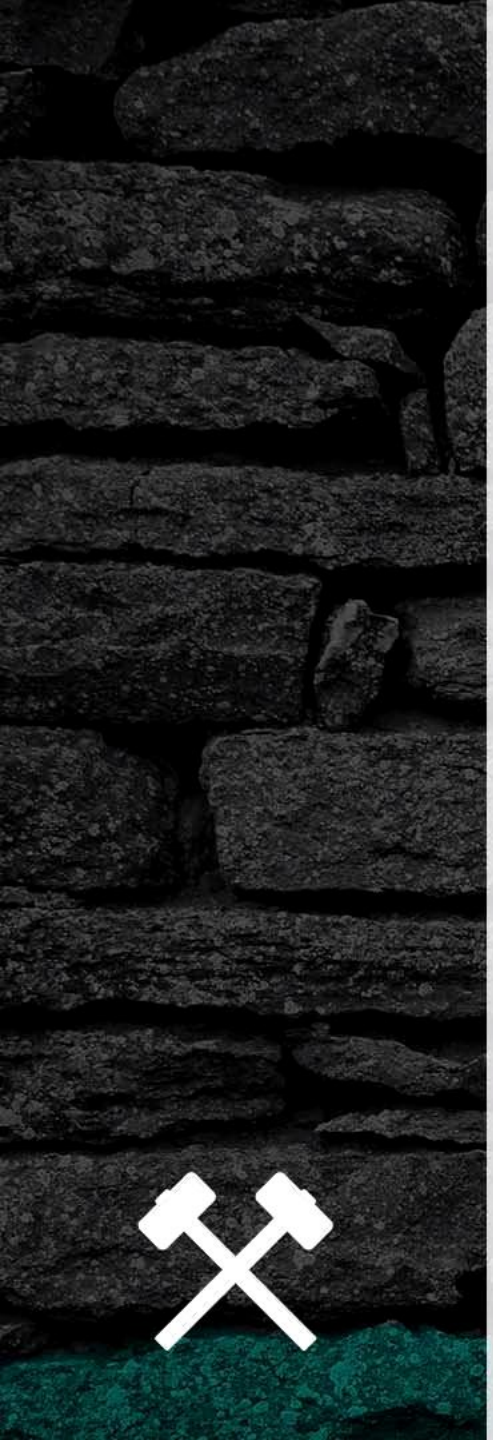
In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia. The letter was written in Aramaic and translated. Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows:

Ezra 4:7-8



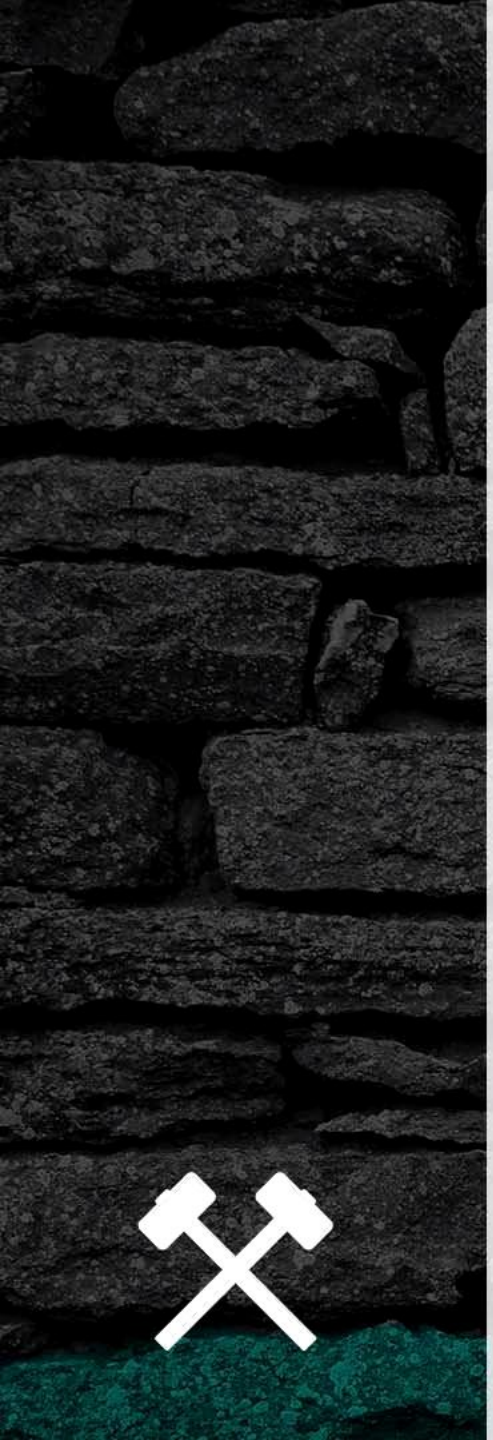
Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites, 10 and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River.

Ezra 4:9-10



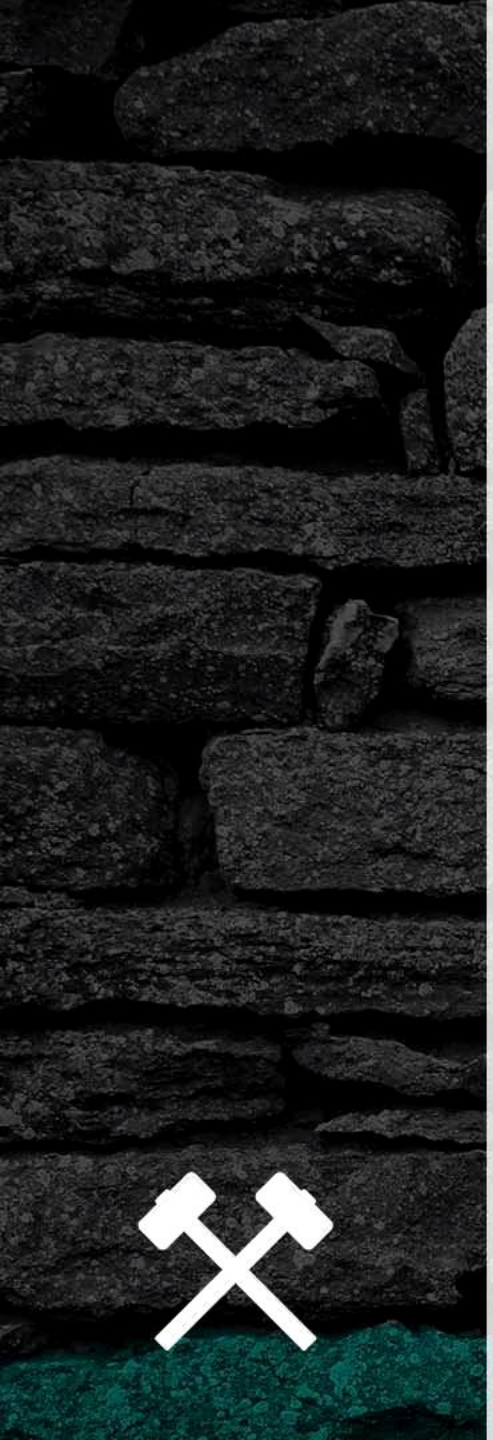
(This is a copy of the letter that they sent.)
“To Artaxerxes the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.

Ezra 4:11-12



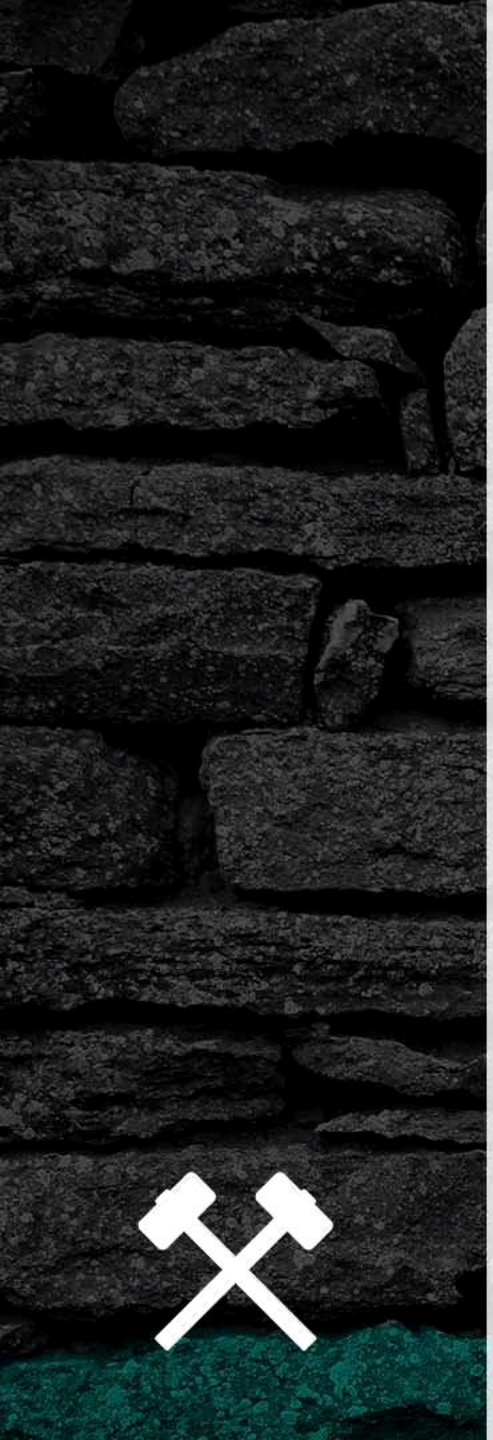
Now be it known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king...

Ezra 4:13-14



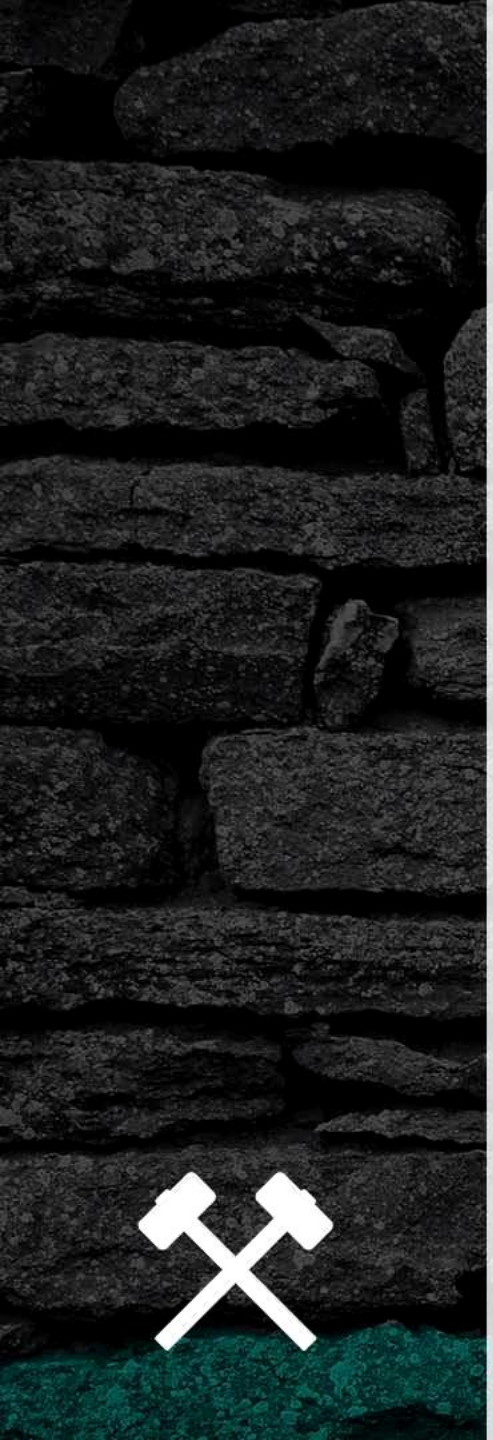
...in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was laid waste. We make known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River."

Ezra 4:15-16



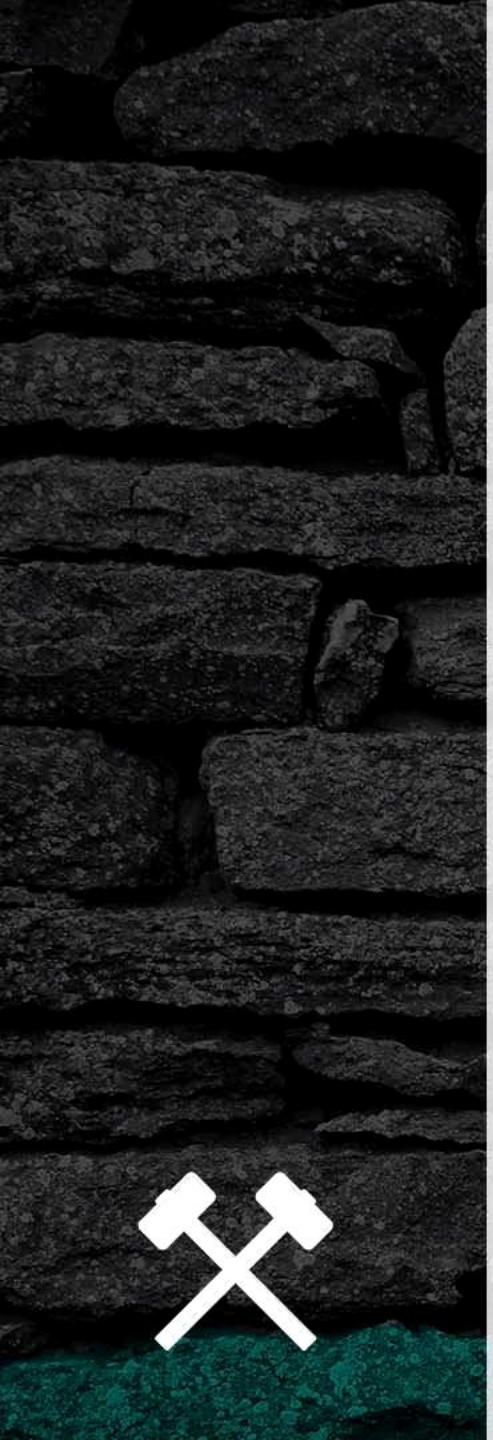
“Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?”

Ezra 4:21-22



Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Ezra 4:23-24



Work hard, then, on the disappointment... which is certainly coming to the patient during his first few weeks as a churchman. If once they get through this initial dryness successfully, they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore much harder to tempt.

C.S. Lewis in The Screwtape Letters



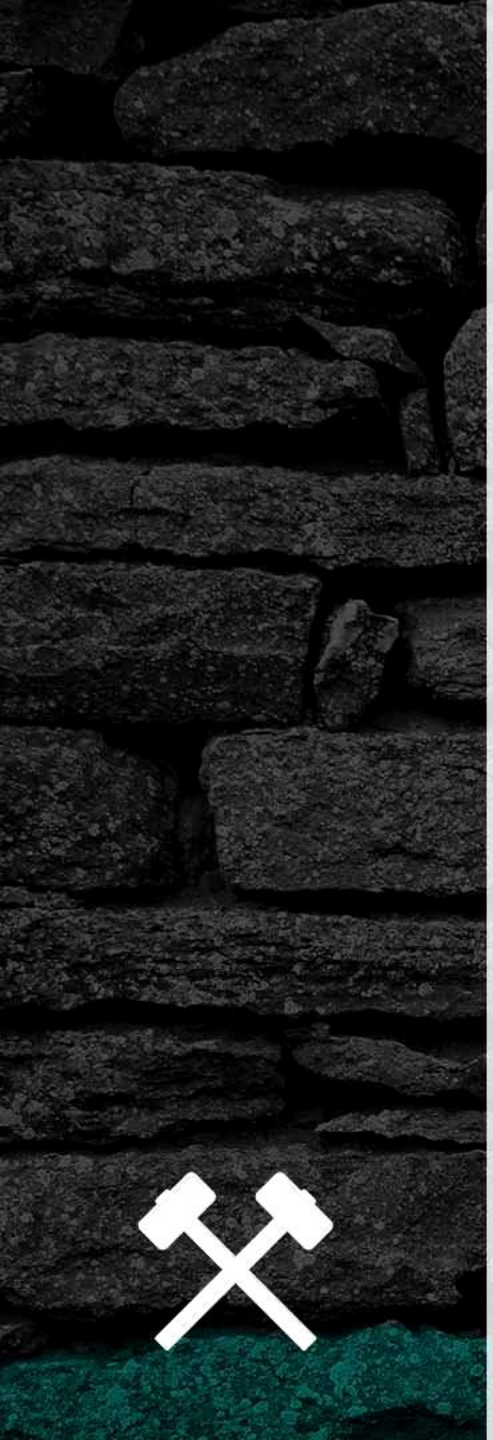
God uses discouragement to reshape us, but not destroy us.


The good guys don't always win.

Two Dangers:

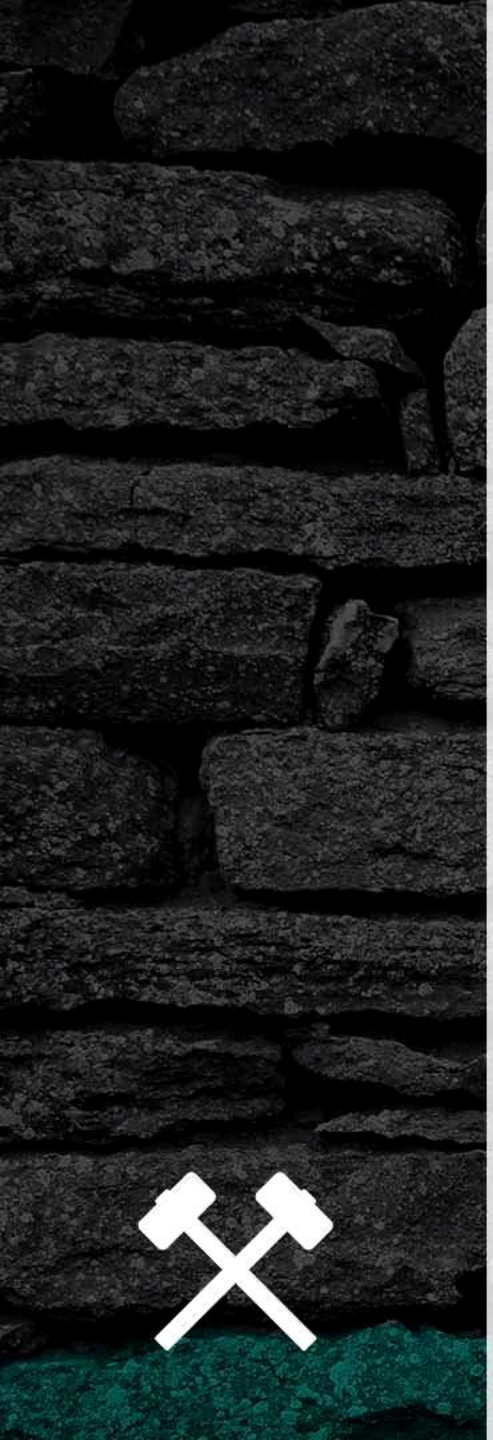
finding persecution everywhere

or believing it is nowhere



"The good guys don’t always win, but they never ultimately lose."

Kevin DeYoung



"We should not be surprised that a lifelong journey with God might bring us suffering and hardship. If the cross teaches us anything, it teaches us that sometimes God comes through after we've been killed."

Erwin McManus


REBUILDING
A STUDY IN EZRA & NEHEMIAH