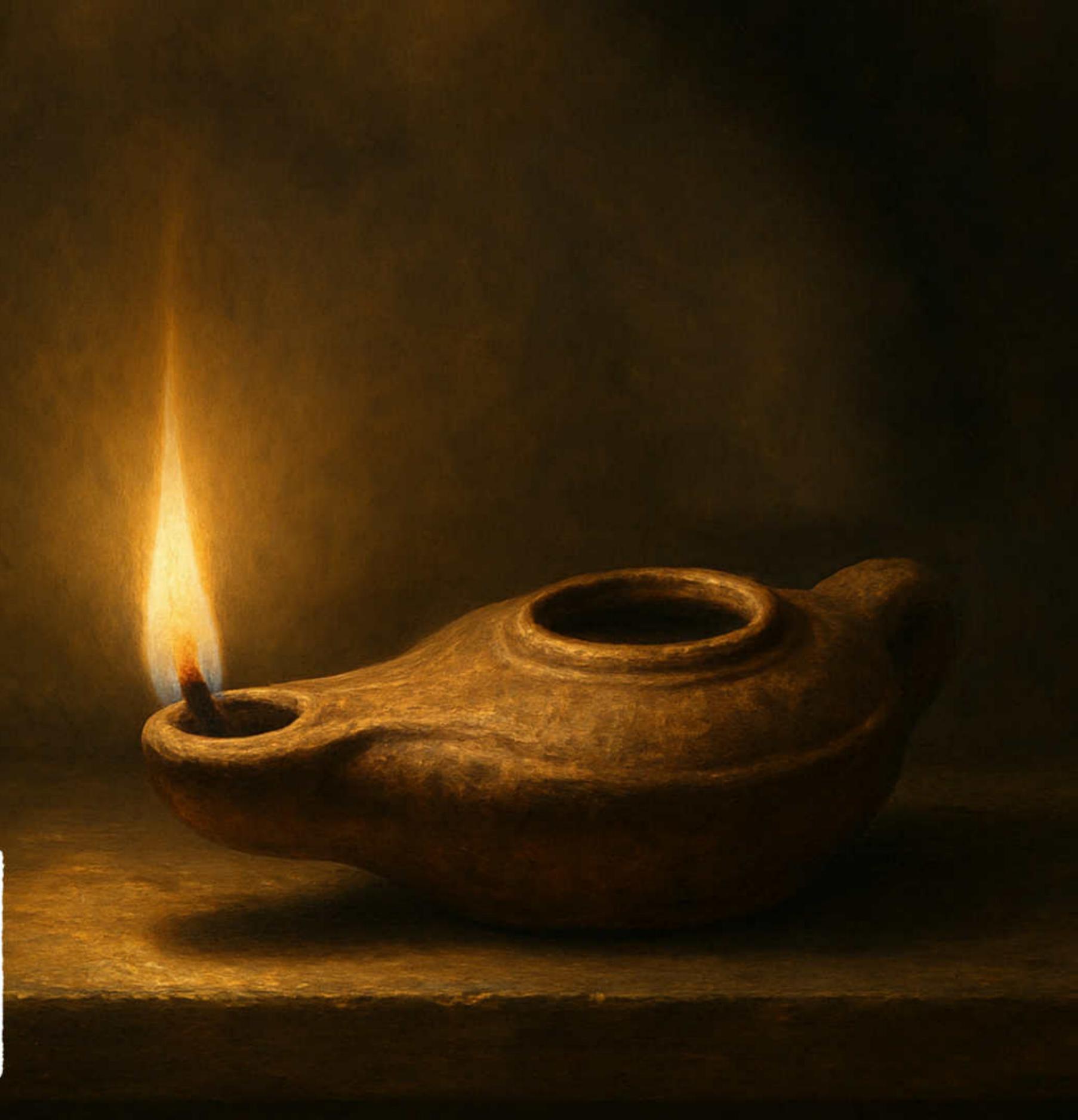


“Let Your Light Shine”  
Ezra 3:1-13



“Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5: 15-16)

**God's purpose for His people is to be light in a dark world, a people who reflect His glory.**



# The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (536 BC to 436 BC)

- **606 BC - Babylon takes political prisoners (first wave of exiles ).**

*God promises that the exile will be 70 years long (Jeremiah 25:11-12).*

**70 years**

*586 BC - Babylon destroys Jerusalem and the Temple.  
The people of Judah are taken into exile.*

- **536 BC - The Book of Ezra Begins!!! The People of Judah Return!**

**Ezra 1:** God stirs the heart of Cyrus to allow the people to return, and God stirs the heart of the people to return.

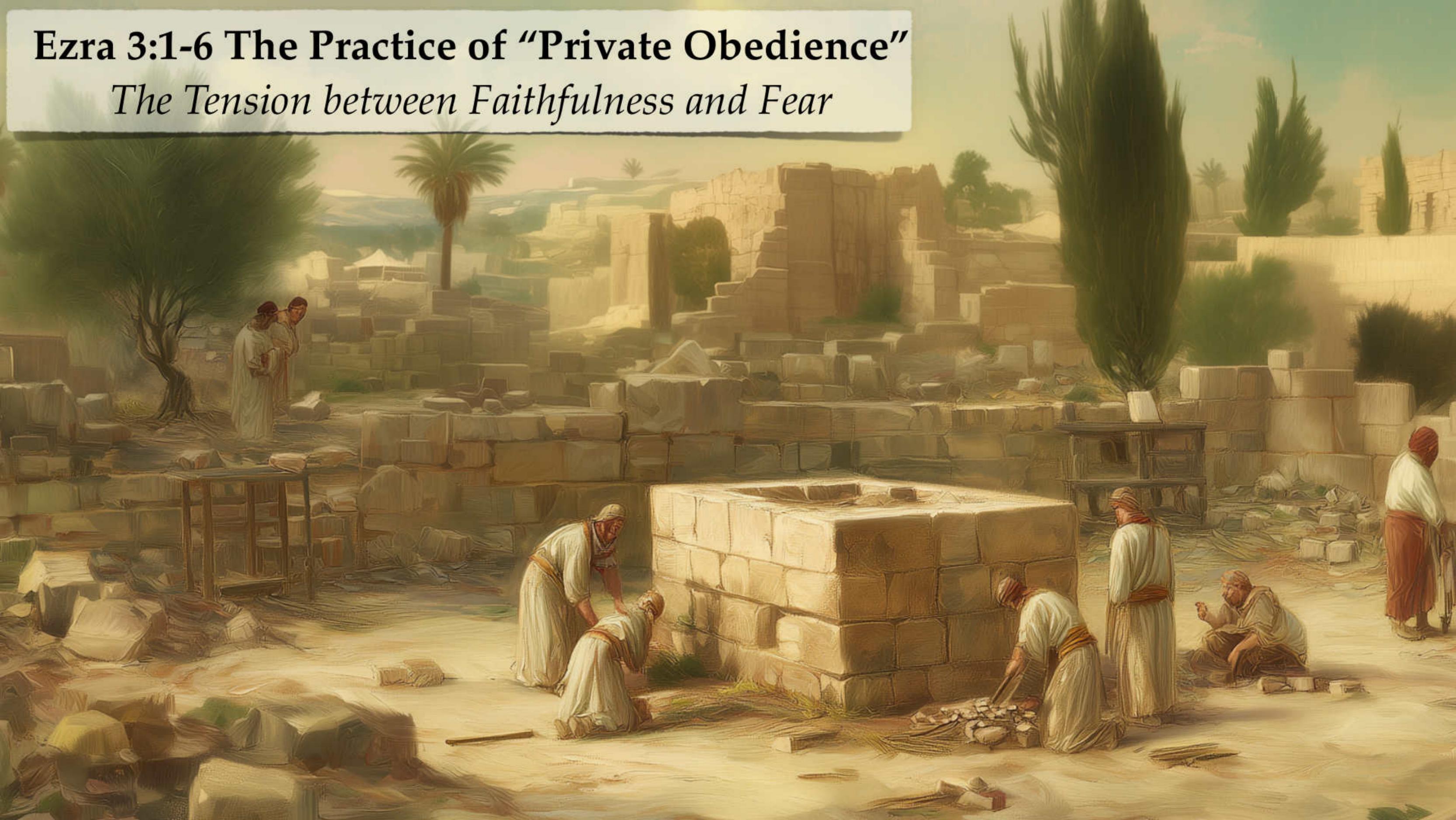
**Ezra 2:** A Census of the people who returned and the miracle of identity after 70 years of exile (Priests, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants).

**Ezra 3:** The movement from fearful "Private Obedience" to bold "Public Faithfulness."  
*(Rebuilding of Altar and Temple foundation)*

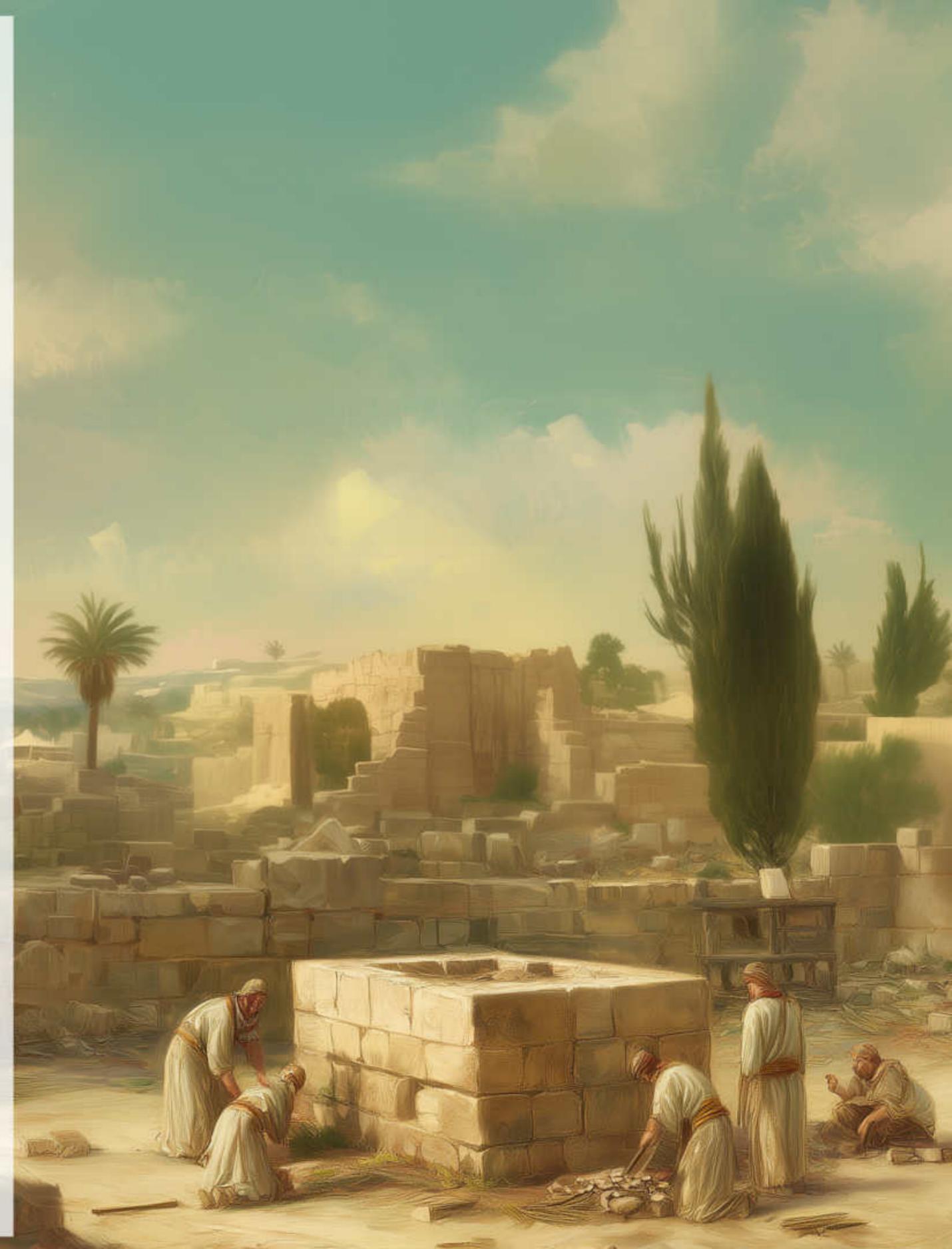


# Ezra 3:1-6 The Practice of “Private Obedience”

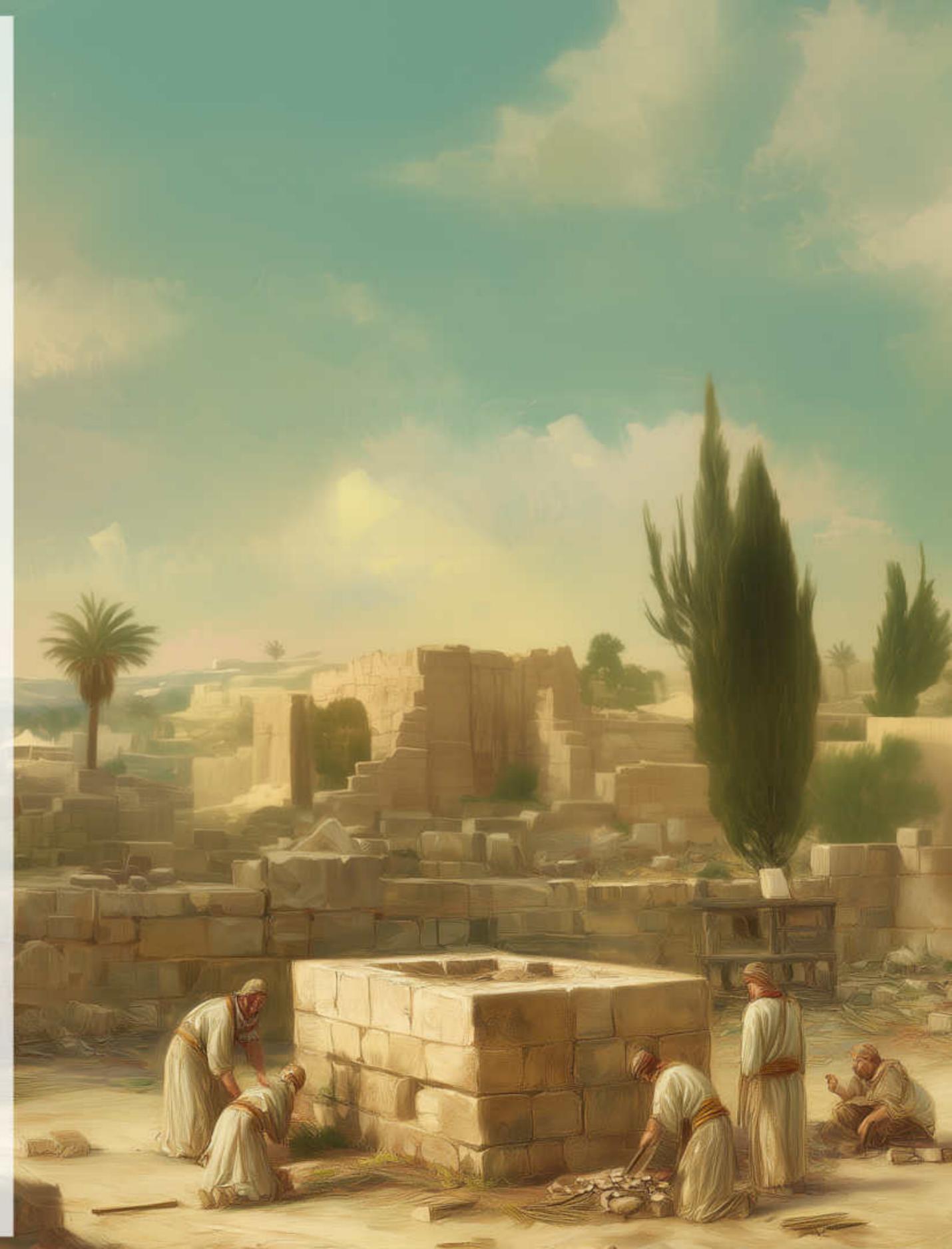
*The Tension between Faithfulness and Fear*



**Ezra 3:1-6** When the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem. 2 Then arose Jeshua the son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen, and they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 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.



4 And they kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required, 5 and after that the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the appointed feasts of the LORD, and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill offering to the LORD. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.”



# Ezra 3:1-6 The Practice of "Private Obedience"

*The Tension between Faithfulness and Fear*

3:1 "When the seventh month came..."

The seventh month was the most holy (See Leviticus 23).

- Feast of Trumpets (Day 1)
- Day of Atonement (Day 10)
- Feast of Booths (Day 15)

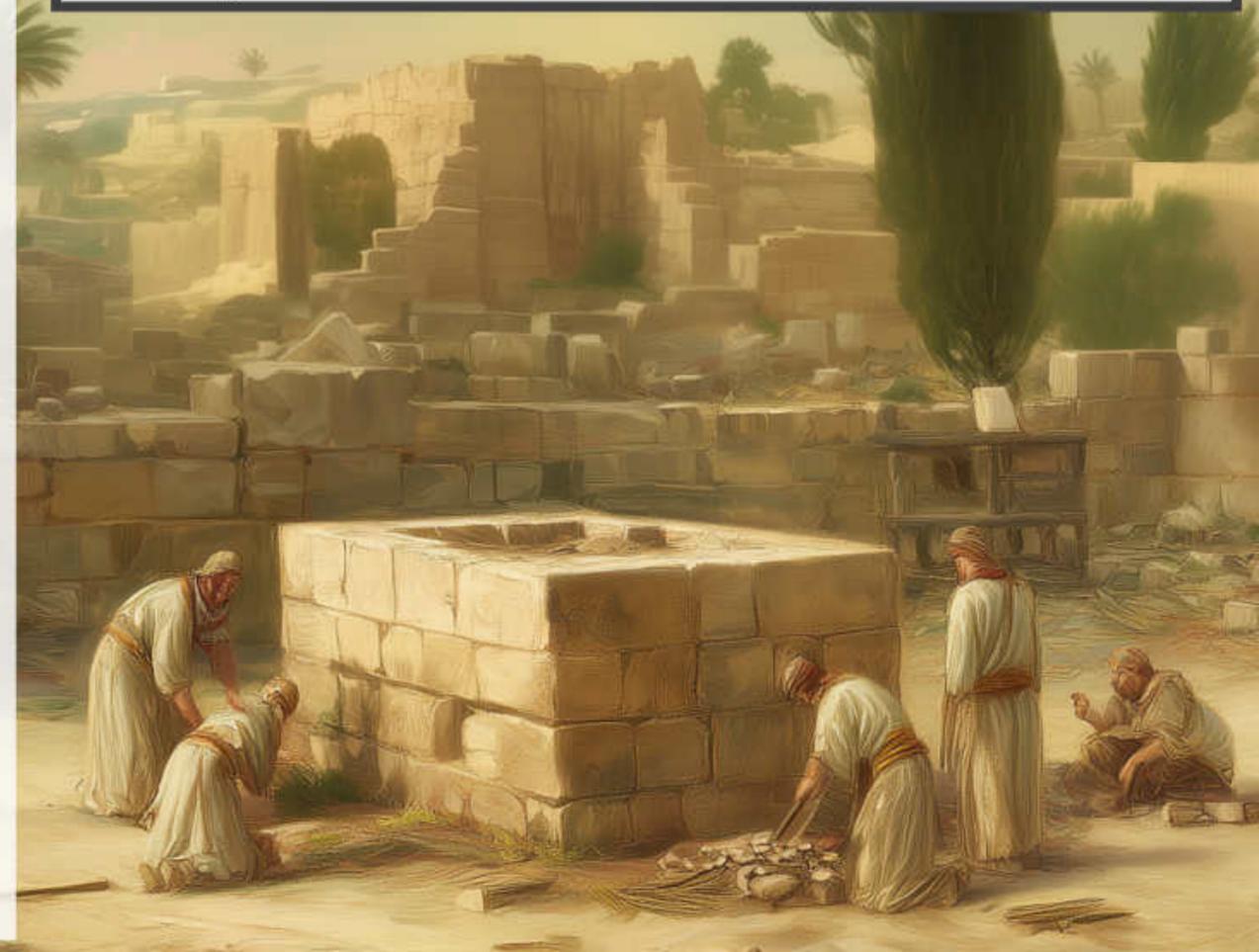
3:2 "Then arose Jeshua... with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel... with his kinsmen." "

3:3 "They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands"

3:4 And they kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written,

The **fear** does not describe WHY they placed the Altar, but **HOW**.

- *Minimal Participation*
- *Quiet Practice*
- *Safe Choices*



## Ezra 3:1-6 The Practice of “Private Obedience”

*The Tension between Faithfulness and Fear*

God didn't call His People to blend in with the other nations; He called them to stand out (be lights).

*Exodus 19:5-6, God told them: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples... and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

Their core identity was to be priests and a holy nation, lights that reveal the Lord to the world.

The **fear** does not describe **WHY** they placed the Altar, but **HOW**.

- *Minimal Participation*
- *Quiet Practice*
- *Safe Choices*



# Ezra 3:1-6 The Practice of "Private Obedience"

*The Tension between Faithfulness and Fear*

**Some of our fears:** *Fear of rejection - Fear of being left out - Fear of what others think - Fear of not fitting in - Fear of conflict.*

## Some Consequences of Hiding Our Light

- Missed opportunities to be salt and light in our world.
- Fail to live up to our identity as God's people.
- Rob others of the chance to see God's goodness through us.
- Rob ourselves of the experience of God working through us.

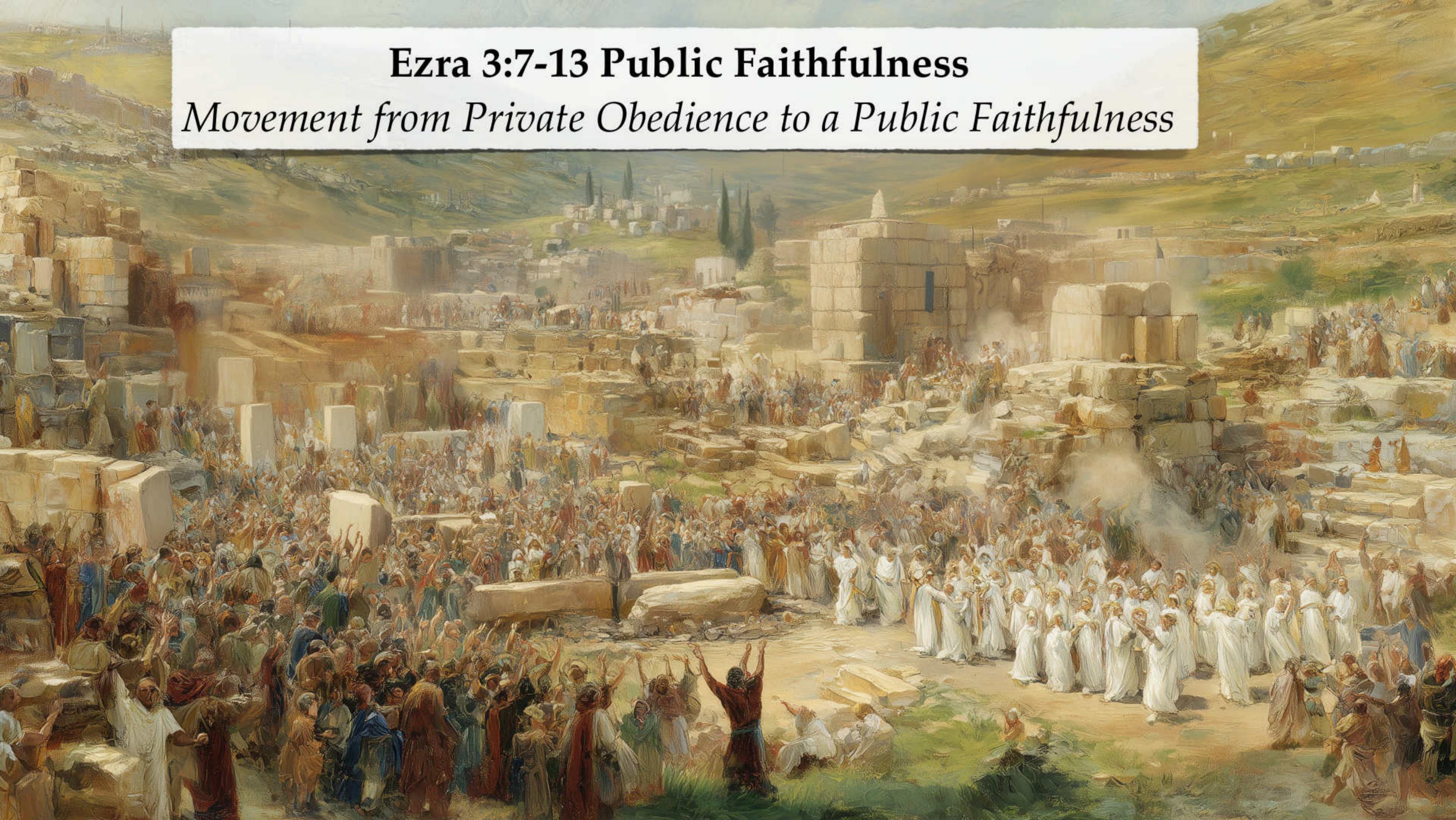
## The Impact of Fear Upon Faith

- *Minimal Participation*
- *Quiet Practice*
- *Safe Choices*



## Ezra 3:7-13 Public Faithfulness

*Movement from Private Obedience to a Public Faithfulness*



Ezra 3:7-13, "7 So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus king of Persia. 8 Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month (notice the passage of time), Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the LORD. 9 And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers.



10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel. 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. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away."



Notice the Differences between the setting of the Altar and the laying of the foundation.

- Instead of just two families doing the work, there are hundreds of people at work. The whole community was involved.
- The Altar was set quietly, but the Foundation of the Temple involved a loud celebration.

*"This is who we are. This is who we worship. This is what matters most to us."*



3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, **old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping,** for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away."

**"For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever"**

Authentic public faith isn't polished or predictable. It's real people, with real stories, encountering the living God—tears, laughter, doubt, and joy all included. When we stop managing appearances and respond honestly to God, our light shines. That kind of faith is magnetic—stirring hearts, drawing people in, and changing lives.

“Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

(Matthew 5: 15-16)



# **Responsive Reading**

(From Psalm 136:1–9, 23-26)

**All: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.**

Give thanks to the God of gods,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

to him who alone does great wonders,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

to him who by understanding made the heavens,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

to him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

to him who made the great lights,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

the sun to rule over the day,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

It is he who remembered us in our low estate,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

and rescued us from our foes,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

he who gives food to all flesh,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

**All: Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast  
love endures forever.”**