

HOPE AMIDST DESTRUCTION.

EZRA 1:1-4



A dramatic landscape featuring a sun rising over a valley. The sun is positioned in the upper right quadrant, casting a bright glow and creating a lens flare effect. The foreground is dominated by a dark, rocky cliffside on the left, which slopes down towards the right. The valley below is filled with rolling hills and fields, bathed in the warm, golden light of the rising sun. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic. The word "PRAYER" is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

PRAYER

An aerial photograph of a mountain range with a river valley. The mountains are dark and rugged, while the valley floor is a mix of brown and green, indicating a river and some vegetation. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

Read

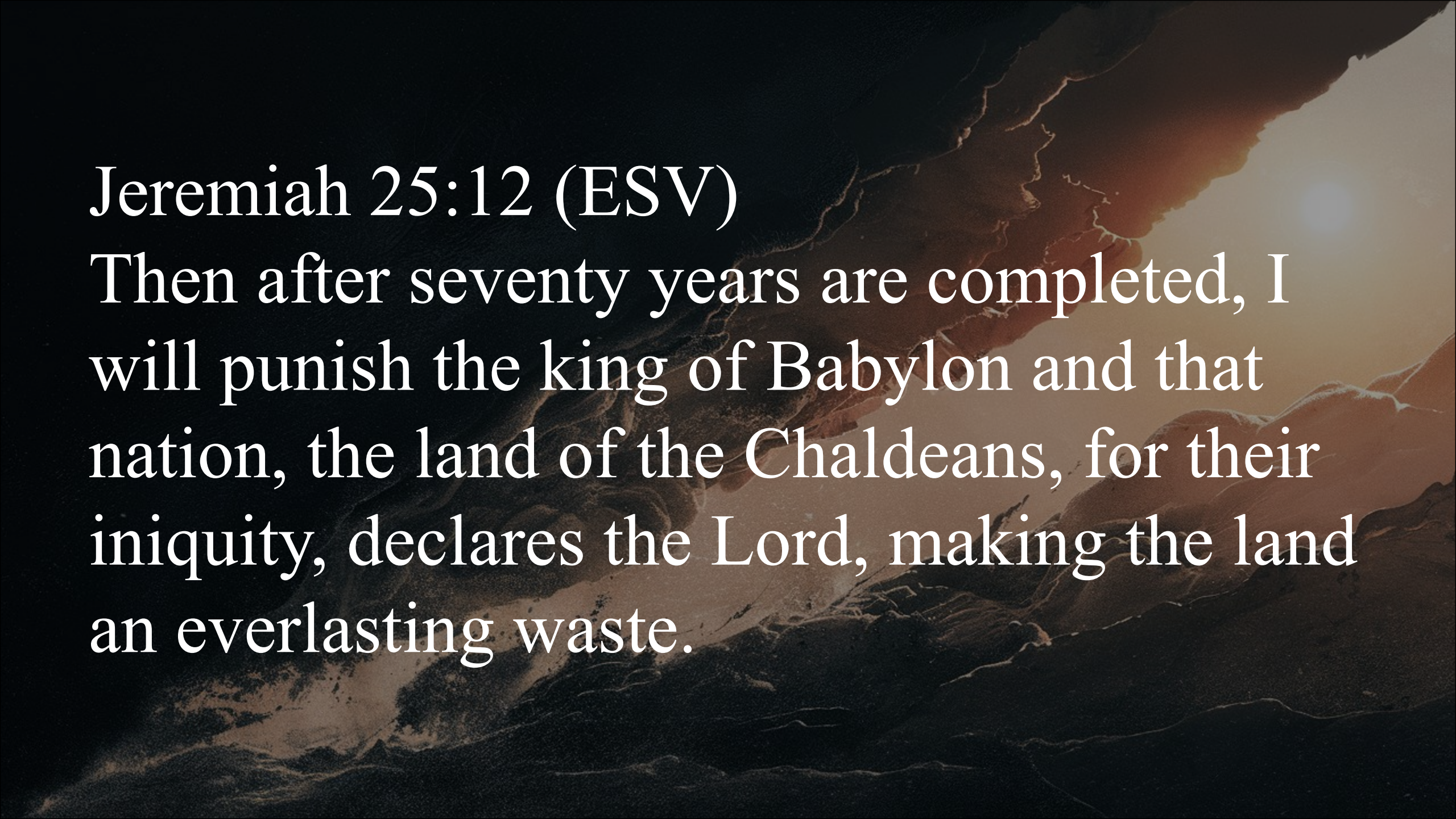
2 Chronicles 36:14-23

ESV Pew Bible: Page 456-457



Read Ezra 1:1-4

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Jeremiah 25:12 (ESV)

Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste.

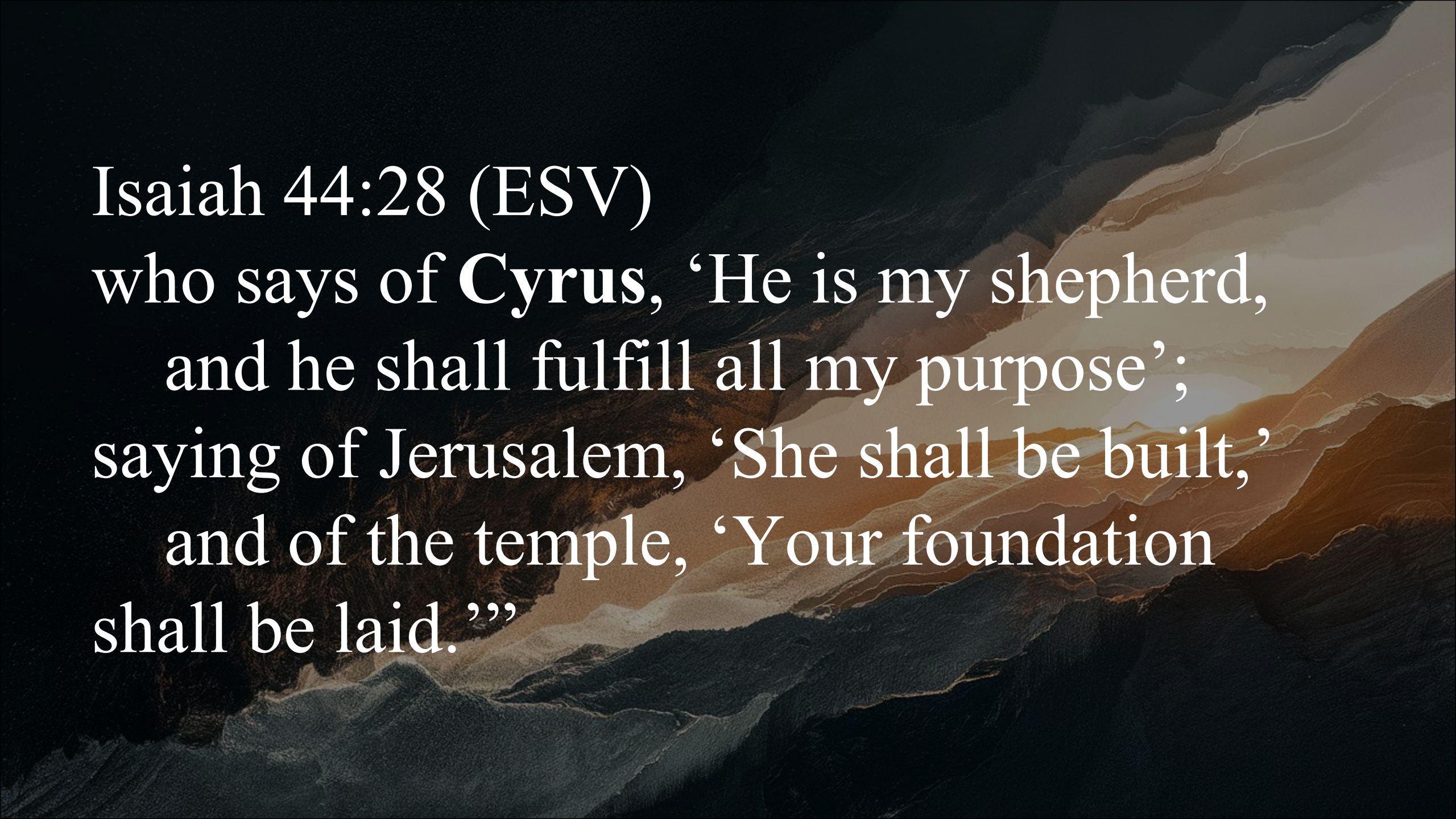


Jeremiah 29:10 (ESV)

“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.

Ezra 1:1 (ESV)

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:



Isaiah 44:28 (ESV)

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 45:1 (ESV) - Cyrus, God's Instrument

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:

Daniel 9:2-3 (ESV) [1/2]

2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.



Daniel 9:2-3 (ESV) [2/2]

3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.



Congregational Response:

“May the Lord protect His people.
God is our refuge and our strength.”



Daniel 9:16-17 (ESV) [1/2]

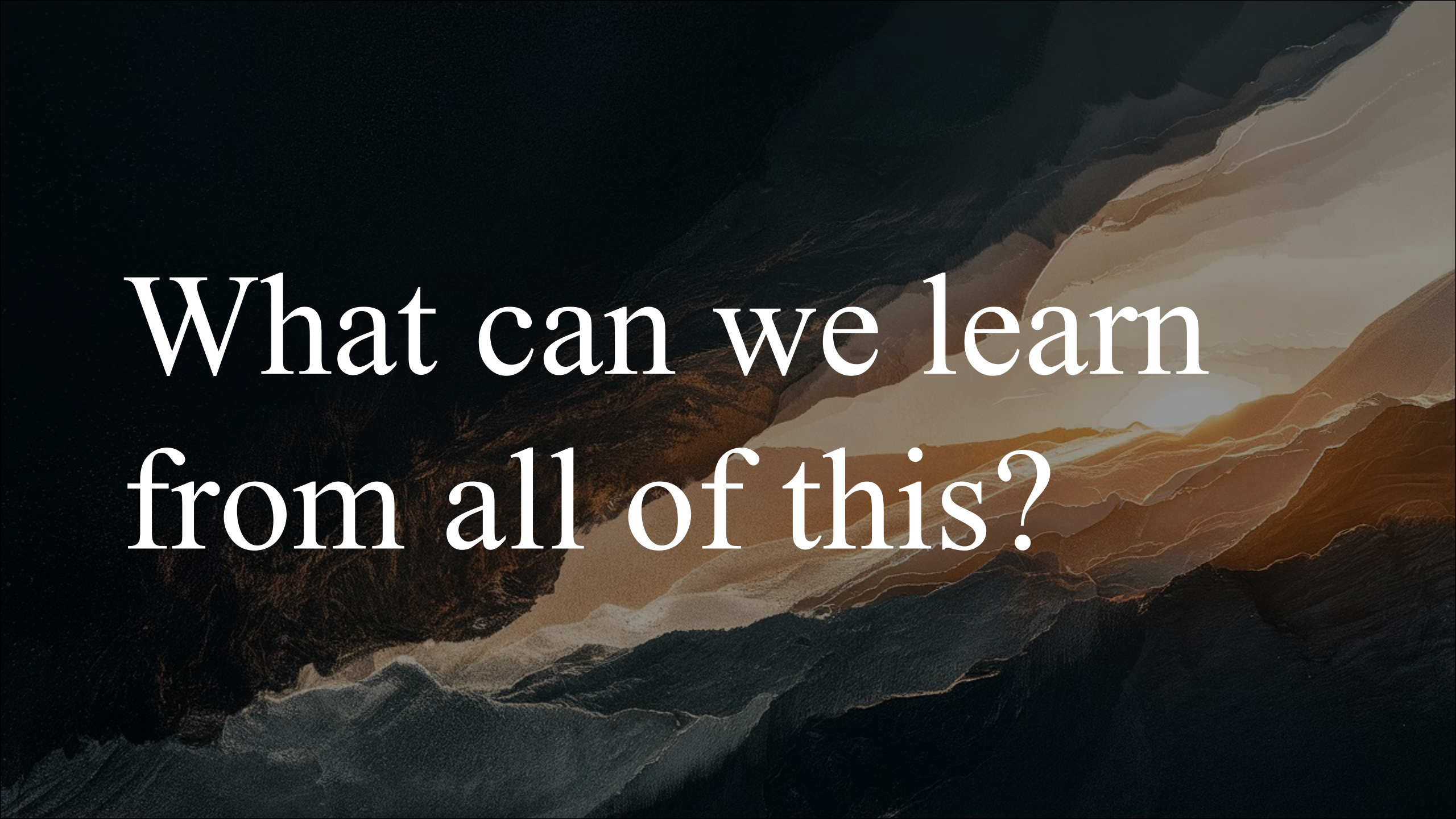
16 “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us.

Daniel 9:16-17 (ESV) [2/2]

17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord,[a] make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.



Read Ezra 1:1-4



What can we learn
from all of this?

A dramatic landscape featuring a wide river valley with winding paths, surrounded by rugged mountains. The sky is a mix of dark and light tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and majestic.

How can we apply
this to our lives
today?



PRAYER



BENEDICTON