



Key Points :

In Jeremiah 29 God promises to rescue the Jewish exiles in Babylon after 70 years. At the beginning of the book of Ezra those 70 years are up, and God proves once again that **we can always have hope because He will come through on His promises.**

In order to achieve this, God stirs the heart of King Cyrus of Persia (v.1) (who has just conquered the Babylonians) and an enemy of His people to answer their prayers. **God can use anyone to deliver on His promises.** And when God comes through on His promises it's not half-hearted - the offer is to *anyone* and there is a promise of *provision* too (v.3-4).

Finally there is an invitation for the exiles to receive freedom and to rebuild Jerusalem. And yet only a minority say yes - God gives hope, but some say 'no thanks'. **Hope is an invitation to rebuild** but each of the Jews, and each of us in our own context of rebuilding after the pandemic, need to choose to trust God, take a risk and accept the invitation.

Questions:

Conversation Starter

1. Have you ever been completely stuck before? Did you feel helpless or hopeless?

Start Thinking & Sharing

2. Why do you think God used King Cyrus to bring freedom to the exiles rather than a supernatural miracle (like the parting of the Red Sea in the Exodus)?

3. Why do you think the majority of exiles chose to stay in Babylon, in captivity?

4. Are there promises that you're waiting for God to fulfil? Are you prepared to wait 70 years for them?

5. How do you feel about rebuilding Springfield?

Start praying. Be bold, and pray specifically.

6. God, we know and trust that You have a plan for us - individually and as a church - and we thank you that we can ALWAYS have hope because of who You are and what You do. Help us to follow where You're leading and to say 'yes' to Your invitation. Amen

Start doing. Commit to a step, and live it out this week.

7. If there are reasons that you're feeling apprehensive about rebuilding, talk it over with someone this week, and take it to the Lord in prayer.