

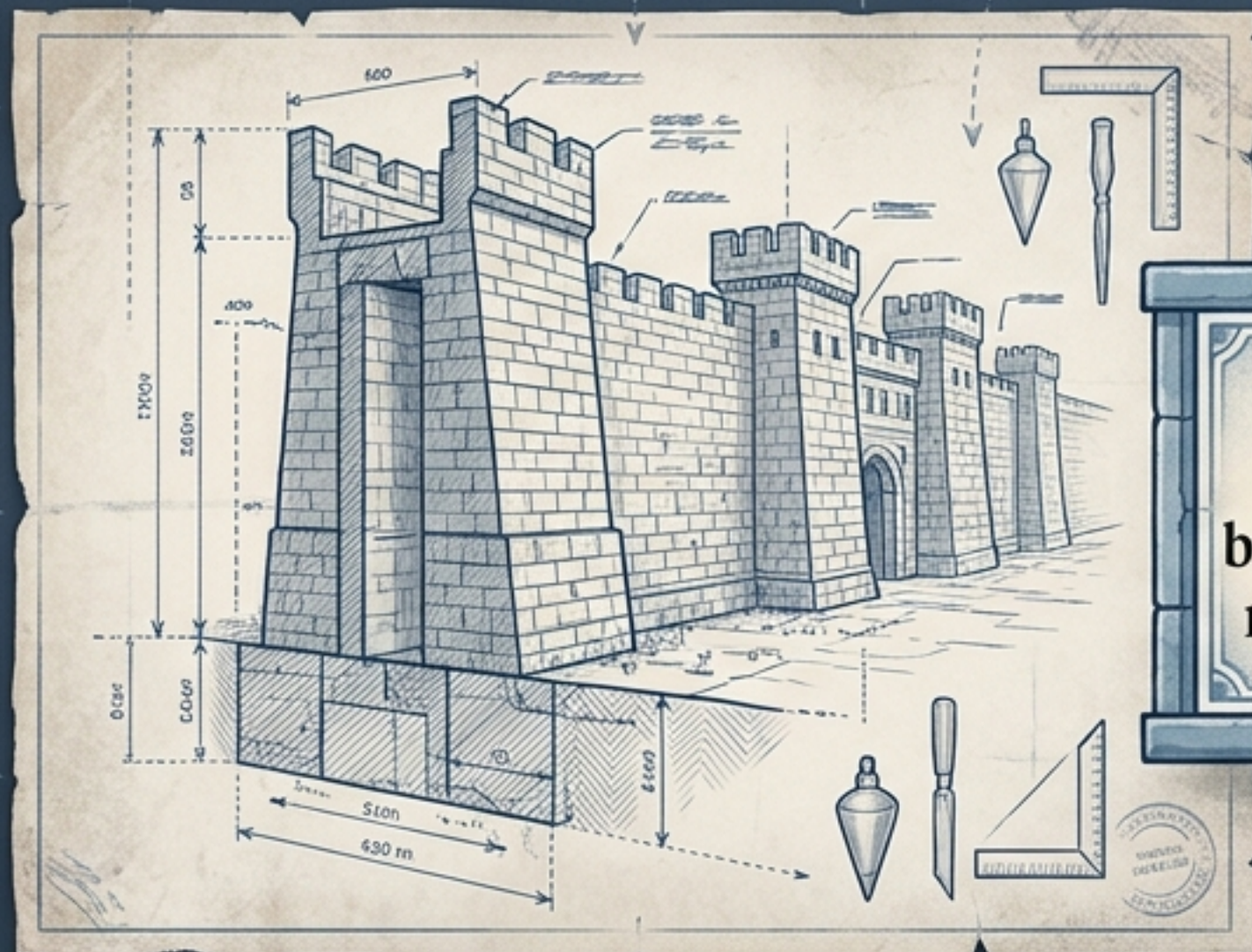


Return & Revival: Rebuilding the People

A Study of Nehemiah 8:1-12

Taught by Peter Foxwell | The Cornerstone Church

Securing the City.



Nehemiah
rebuilt the walls,
but the Word of God
rebuilt the people.

Securing the Soul.



In 445 BC, Nehemiah organized construction teams against severe opposition to rebuild the physical walls of Jerusalem. The city was made structurally secure.

A secure city with spiritually asleep people is ultimately unprotected. The physical structure was only the prerequisite for the true restoration.

Demystifying Revival: A Diagnostic Matrix

The Myths (What it is NOT):

- An event we can schedule or plan.
- Extreme, weird, or loud spectacular behavior.
- An exclusive state for elite super-Christians.
- Manufactured through special meetings or forced public confessions.

The Marks (What it IS):

- A return to the fullness of the Christian faith and lifestyle.
- Returning to loving Jesus above all else.
- A fresh commitment to follow Jesus and his teachings.
- Realigning our lives after drifting from wholehearted devotion.

The Spiritual Rubble of 445 BC

The Jews returned to the Promised Land, but they returned to a city of physical rubble and deep spiritual amnesia.



Geographic Disconnect.

The returning generation had never lived in the Land. They had never seen Jerusalem or the Temple in their glory days.



The Language Barrier.

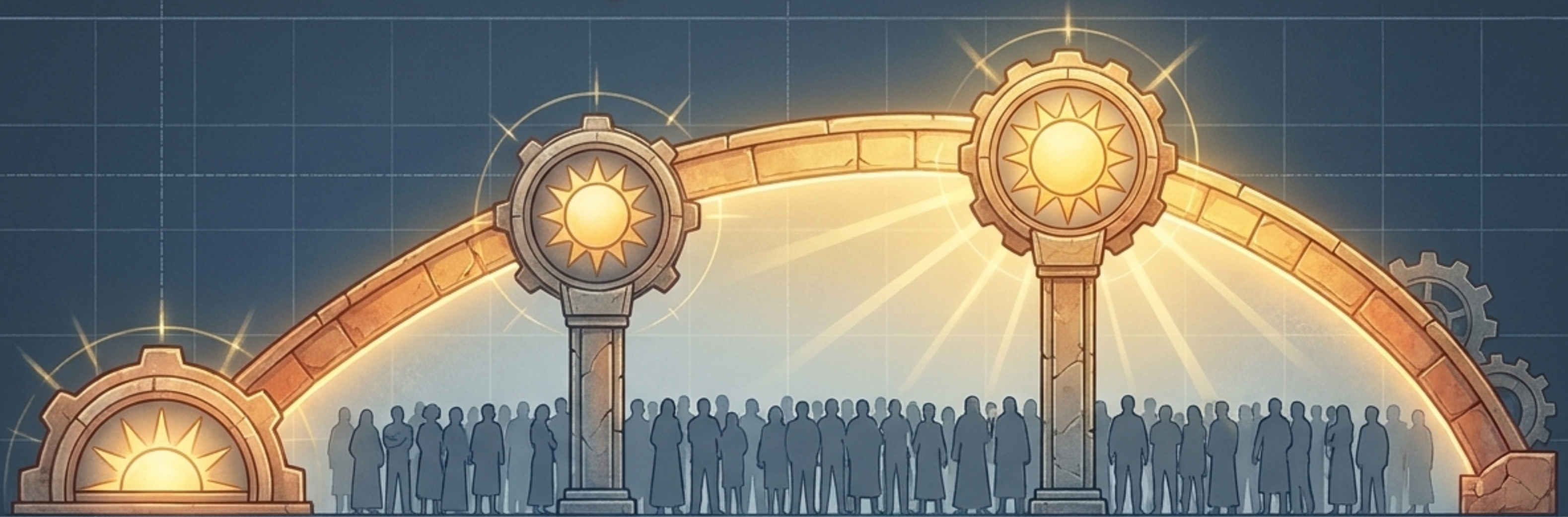
They no longer spoke Hebrew, the language of their Scriptures. They spoke Aramaic, the language of the Babylonian Empire that had captured them.



Liturgical Amnesia.

They did not know their religion. Most had never participated in temple rituals, and the vast majority had never read the Bible.

The Catalyst at the Water Gate



The Gathering.

The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23). The assembly includes men, women, and all who could listen with understanding.

The Reading.

Ezra reads the law aloud for six unbroken hours. The congregation stands in complete reverence.

The Response.

The people raise their hands, shout Amen, Amen!, kneel low, and worship with their faces to the ground.

They were hearing God's Word for the very first time. It brought a massive congregation to its knees.

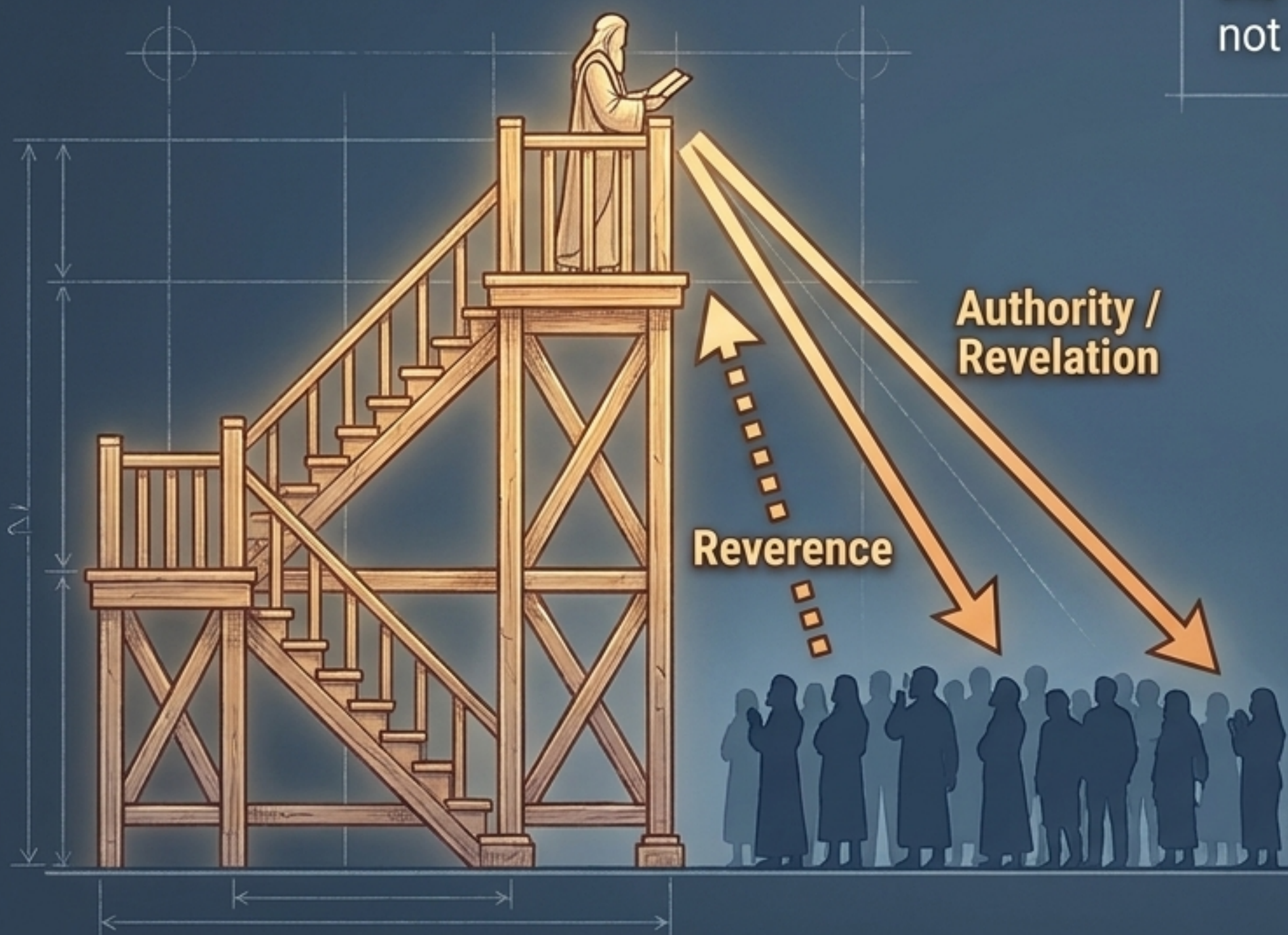
The Architecture of Preparation

Generation after generation, God sends revivals to wake up sleepy Christians. We cannot manufacture the fire, but we are commanded to build the fireplace.



Pillar 1: The Architecture of Reverence

Ezra's raised platform was functional (acoustics) but primarily theological. It visually placed God and His Word above everything else, giving Him the honor He deserves. We stand because this is not an ordinary text; it is divine revelation.



Expert Marginalia

The Westminster Larger Catechism (Q. 157)

How is the Word of God to be read?

1. With high and reverent esteem; persuaded it is the very Word of God.
2. With desire to know, believe, and obey.
3. With diligence and attention.
4. With meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

Pillar 2: Bridging the Gap of Understanding

Reading the Bible is not enough if the meaning is obscured by language, culture, or time. The Levites translated and explained the law so the people could actually comprehend it.

This is why God calls and equips preachers to explain background, context, and theological connections.

Hebrew Text &
Divine Revelation

Levites / Teachers

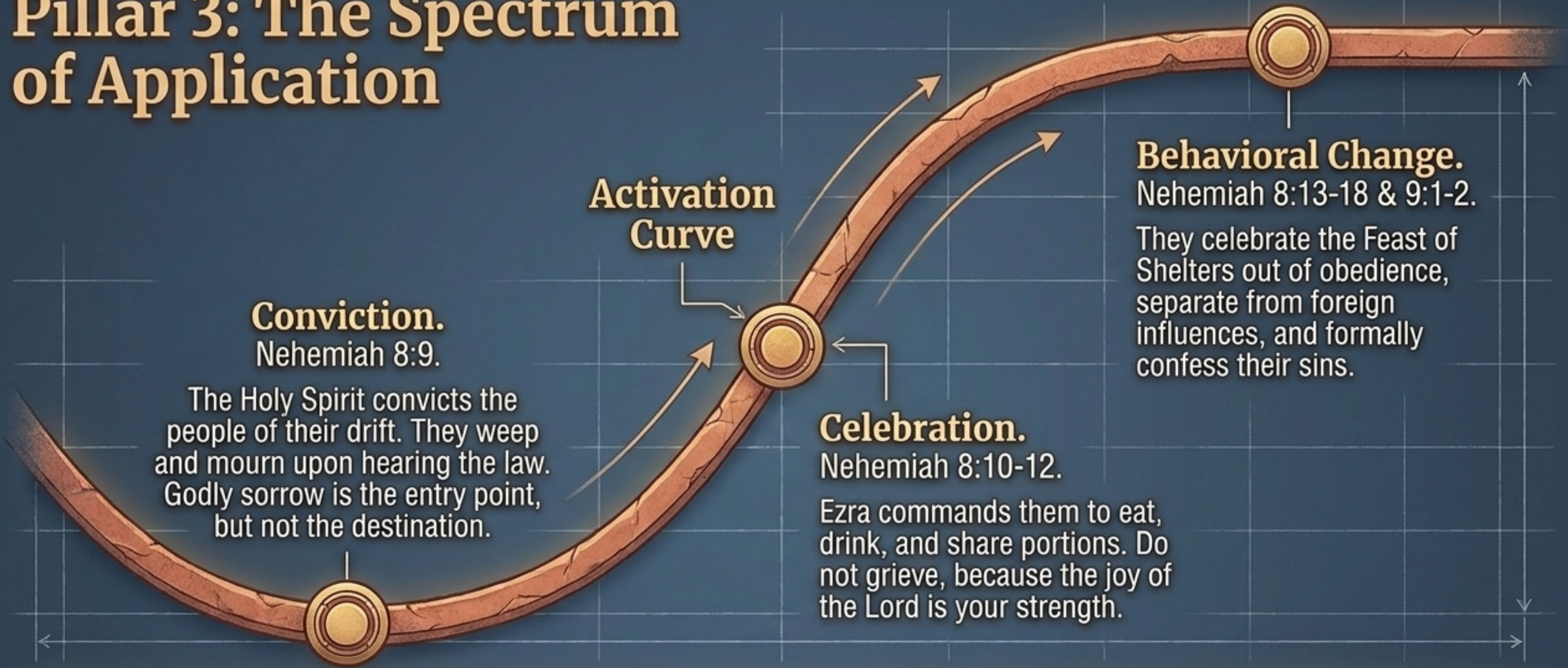
Aramaic
Speakers
& Babylonian
Worldview

The Sacred Anointing (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

The Holy Spirit's special empowering of a preacher... It is not merely eloquence, theological knowledge, or careful preparation; it is God taking hold of the prepared preacher and making him an effective channel of divine truth... through whom hearers sense the authority and presence of God.

Pillar 3: The Spectrum of Application

Activation Curve



Conviction. Nehemiah 8:9.

The Holy Spirit convicts the people of their drift. They weep and mourn upon hearing the law. Godly sorrow is the entry point, but not the destination.

Celebration.

Nehemiah 8:10-12.

Ezra commands them to eat, drink, and share portions. Do not grieve, because the joy of the Lord is your strength.

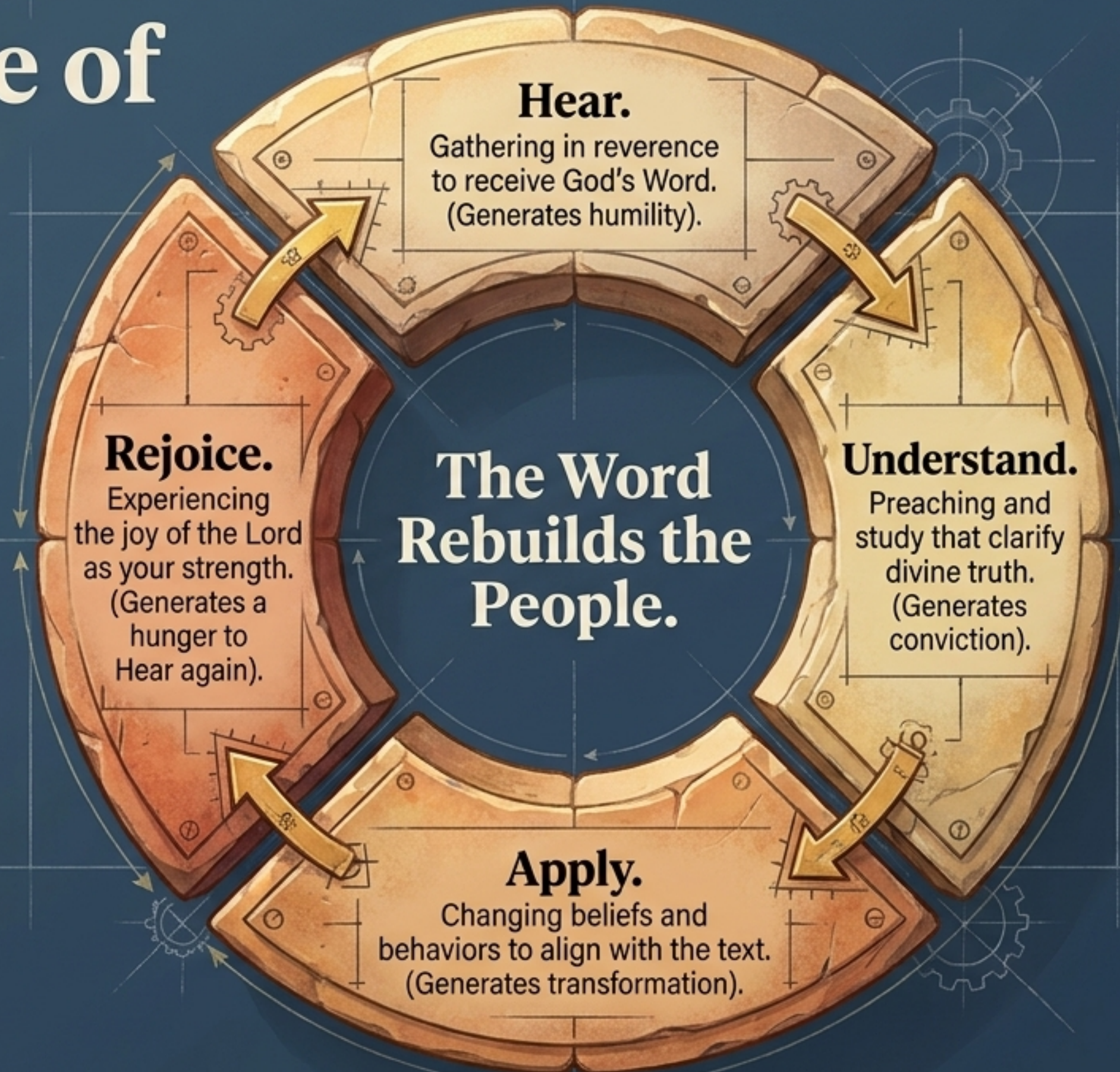
Behavioral Change.

Nehemiah 8:13-18 & 9:1-2.

They celebrate the Feast of Shelters out of obedience, separate from foreign influences, and formally confess their sins.

Application is the hardest step. Words on a page must become **directions** in our hearts (James 1:22-25), fighting against sinful nature, old habits, and spiritual opposition.

The Cycle of Spiritual Renewal



The Divine Division of Labor

Our Preparation

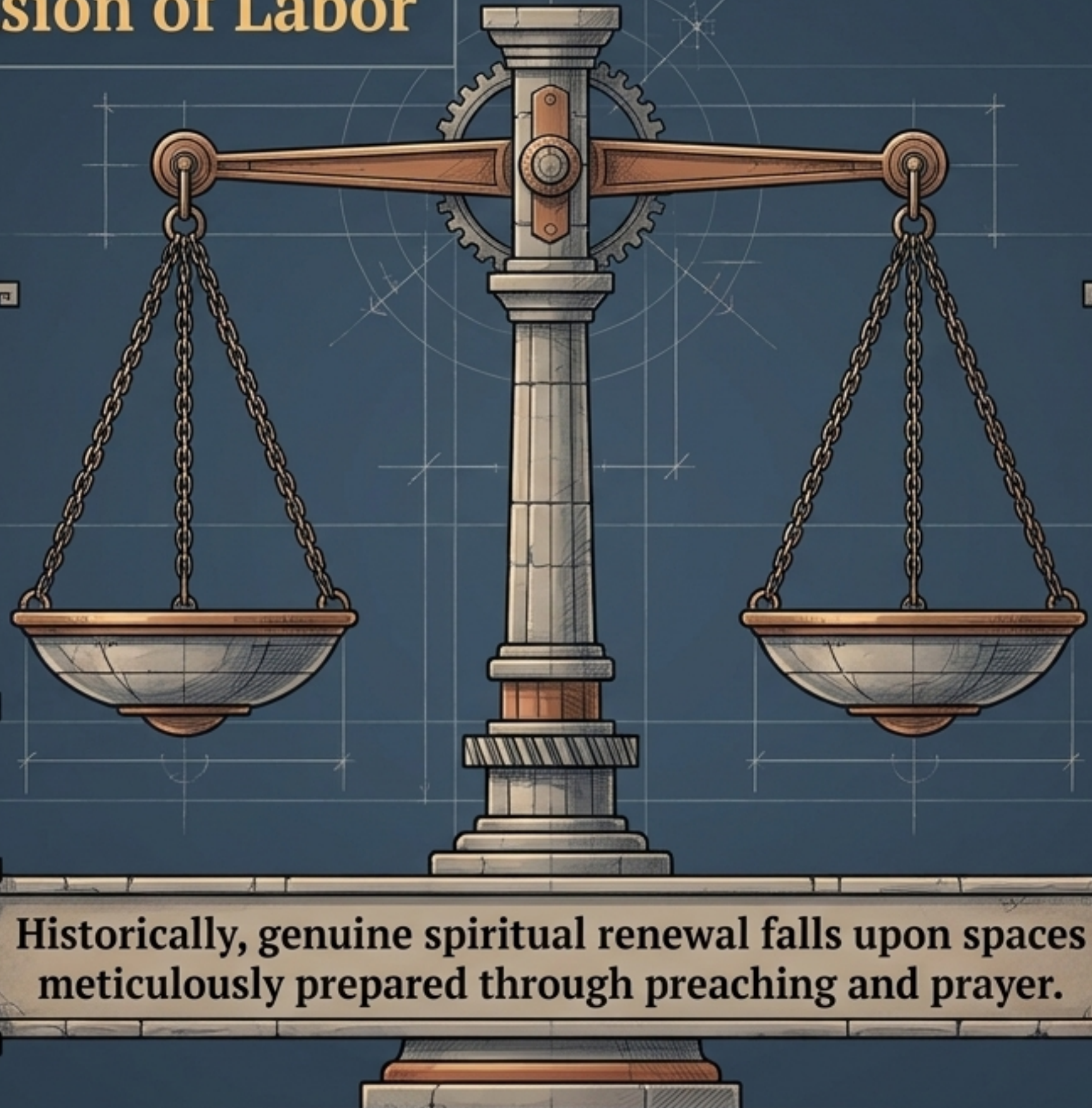
- We gather to pray and hear the Word.
- We study, examine, and meditate.
- We build the spiritual infrastructure.

Takeaway: We cannot manufacture the fire.

God's Revival

- God sends the renewal.
- God changes the heart.
- God preserves His people to advance His Gospel.

Takeaway: We cannot force God's hand.



Historically, genuine spiritual renewal falls upon spaces meticulously prepared through preaching and prayer.

The Blueprint for Cornerstone Church

How we prepare the way for the Lord today.

Scale 1: Individual Foundation

- ☐ **Private Prayer:** Praying daily, Lord, send a revival, and start with me.
- ☐ **Personal Study:** Reading the Scriptures to seek God and directly apply His Word.

Scale 2: Small Group Scaffolding

- ☐ **Group Intercession:** Adding specific, recurring requests for revival to fall during small group prayer times.

Scale 3: Congregational Architecture

- ☐ **The Annual Bible Conference:** A proposed gathering for 3-4 evenings of powerful, anointed preaching to collectively seek the presence of God.

Revival is God's work. Preparation is ours. Let's begin building.