



Story: Opposition to the Temple

Supplies Needed

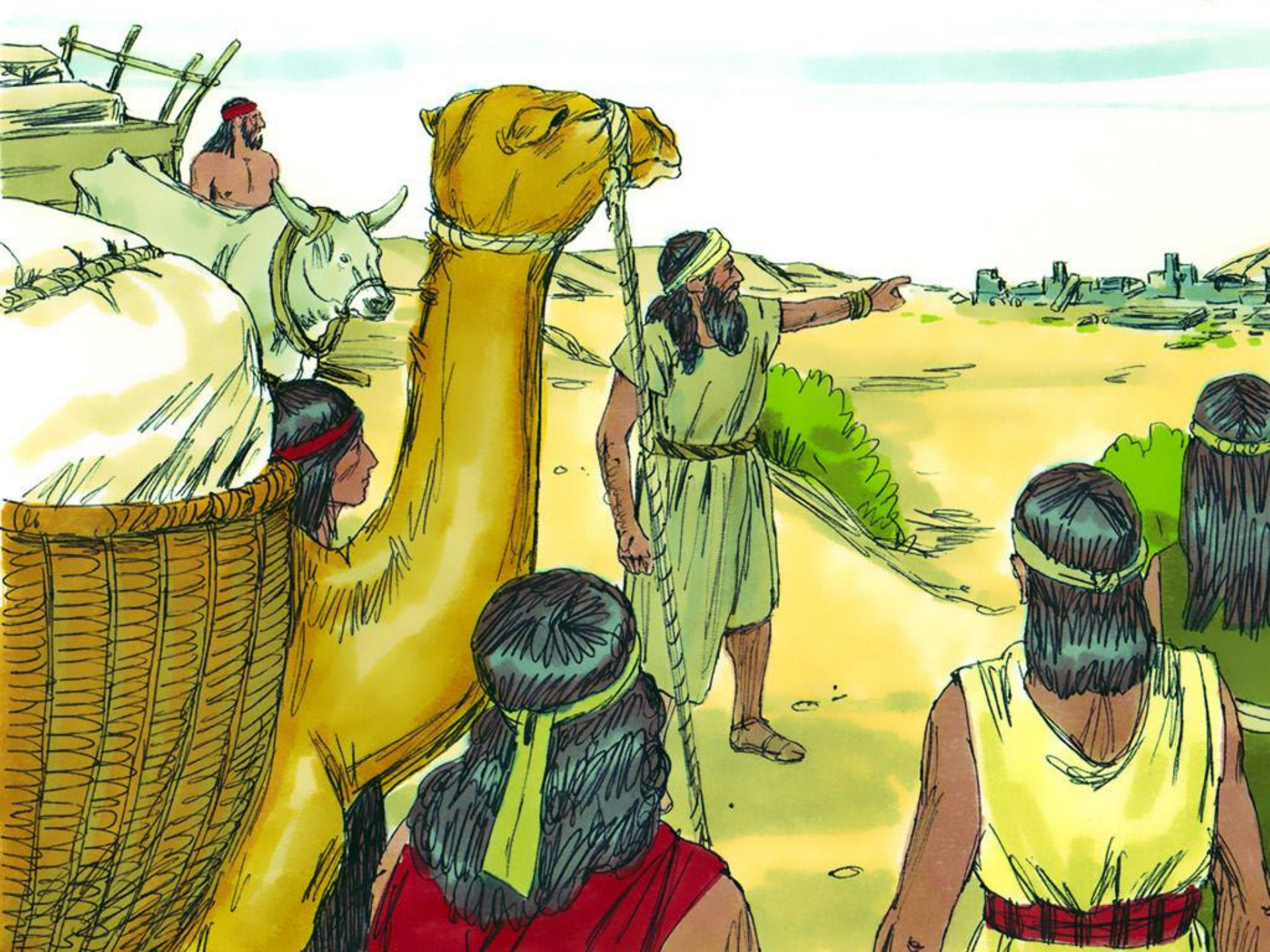
You will need the following:

14 Sheets of [Cardstock](#) (8.5" x 11")

14 3 mil Laminating [Film](#)

Directions

- Print pages 2-29 two-sided on cardstock. Laminate the pages.
- Hold up the pictures while you read the story.



Before holding up the picture:

What did we talk about last time in class? *(The Israelites returned to Jerusalem)*

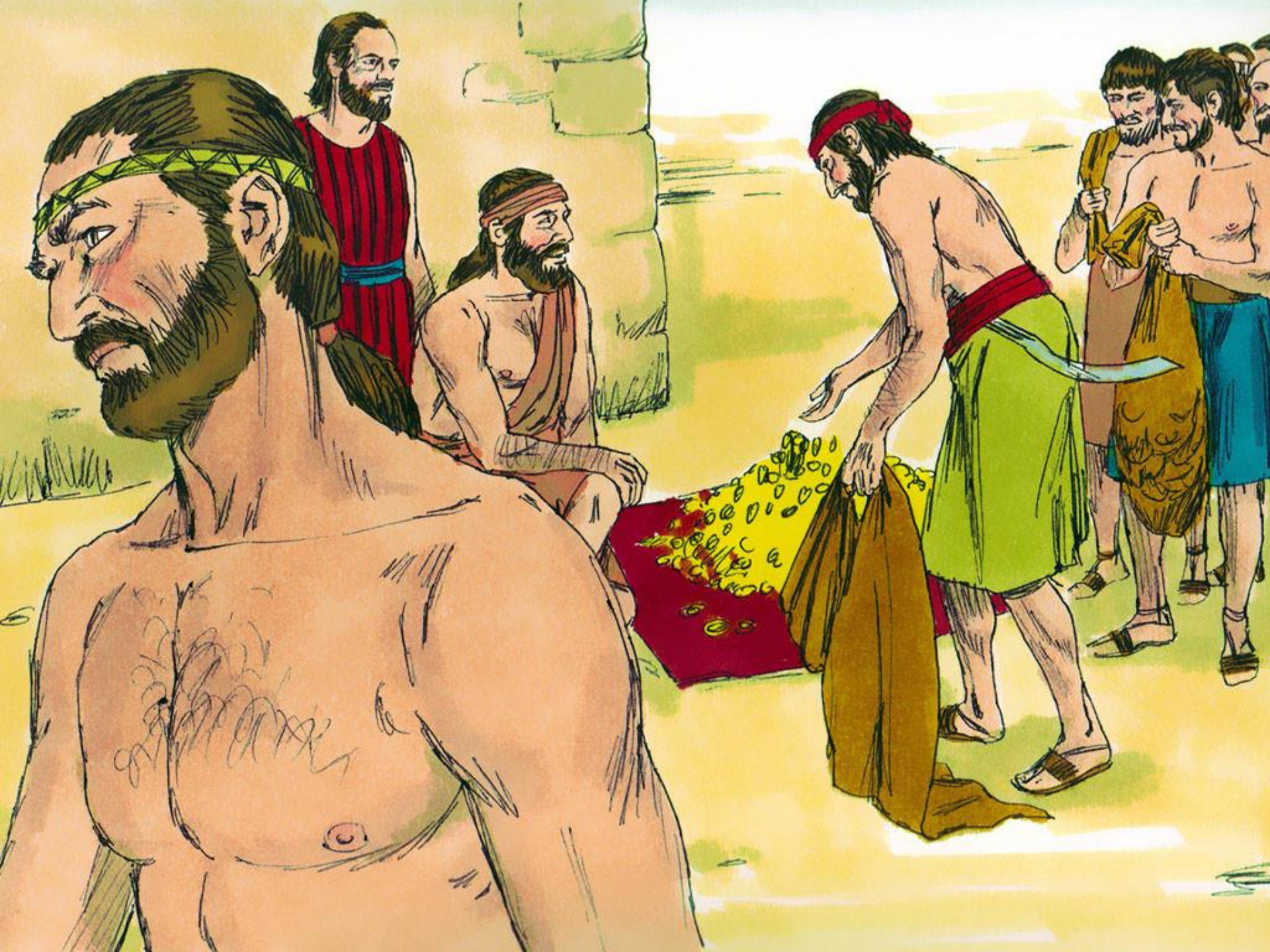
How many years had the Israelites been in captivity? *(70 years)*

Who had prophesied the number of years of Israel's captivity? *(Jeremiah)*

What did King Cyrus give to the Israelites to take back to Jerusalem? *(Cyrus returned 5,400 valuable objects of gold and silver which the Babylonians had stolen from the Temple.)*

Hold up picture:

Over 42,000 Israelites made the long trip back to Jerusalem. When they arrived back in Jerusalem, what did they find? *(The city in ruins)*



Hold up picture:

In order to rebuild the Temple, they would need many different materials. Many of the families gave generously to help pay for the rebuilding work. They donated over 1,100 pounds of gold and 6,500 pounds of silver. They also donated 100 sets of special clothes for the priests to wear while they served at the Temple.



Hold up picture:

Do you remember the names of the two men who rebuilt the altar outside the Temple so they could start offering burnt sacrifices again? (*Jeshua and Zerubbabel*)



Hold up picture:

Two years after the Israelites had arrived, Jeshua and Zerubbabel oversaw the rest of the craftsman who began rebuilding the Temple. They appointed Levites 20 years and older to oversee the work on the house of the Lord.

Solomon's Temple Trees from Lebanon

Sidon •

Tyre •

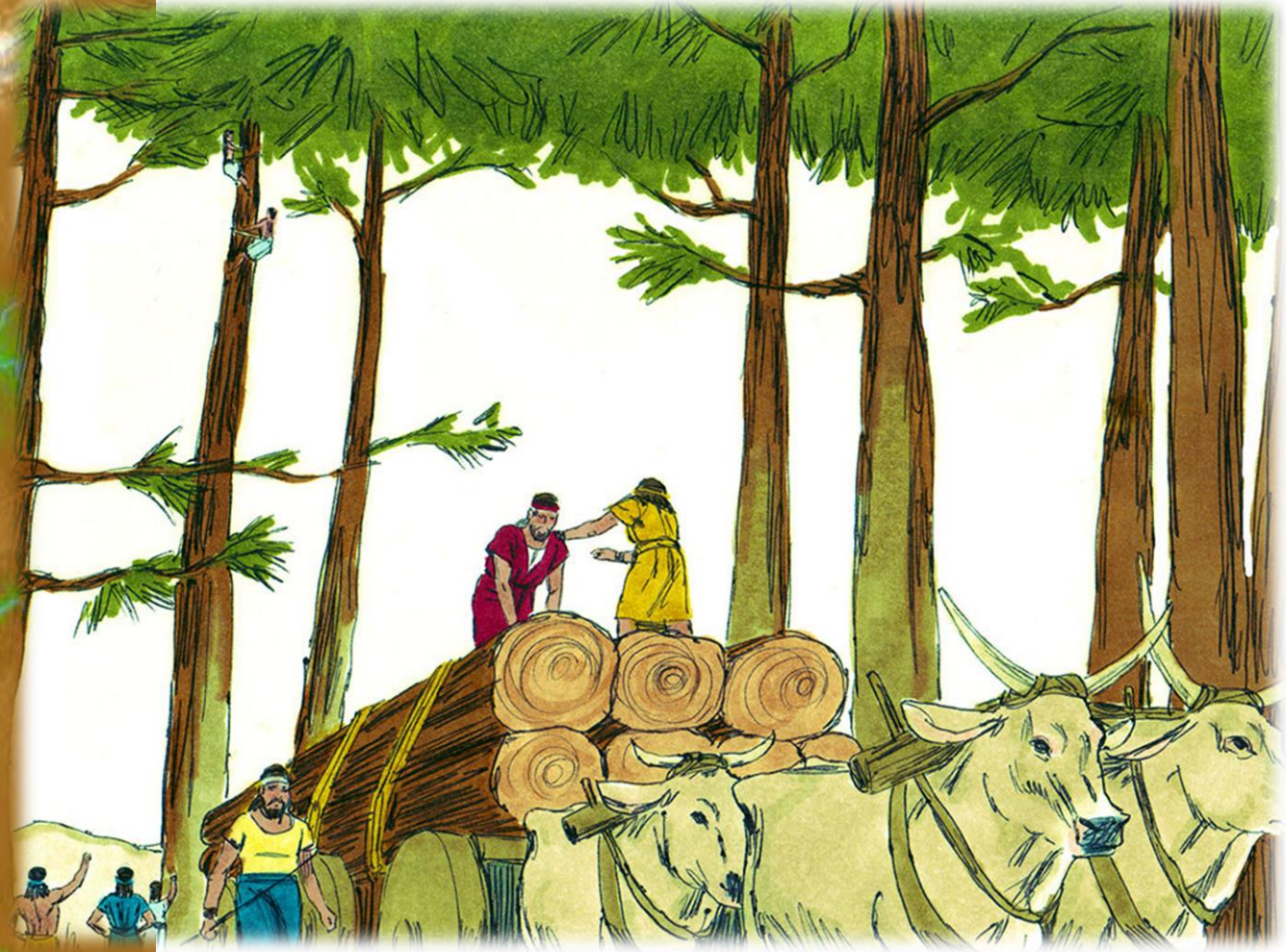
LEBANON

The trees were floated 90+ miles from Lebanon to Joppa and then transported over to Jerusalem, another 35 miles across land.

Joppa •

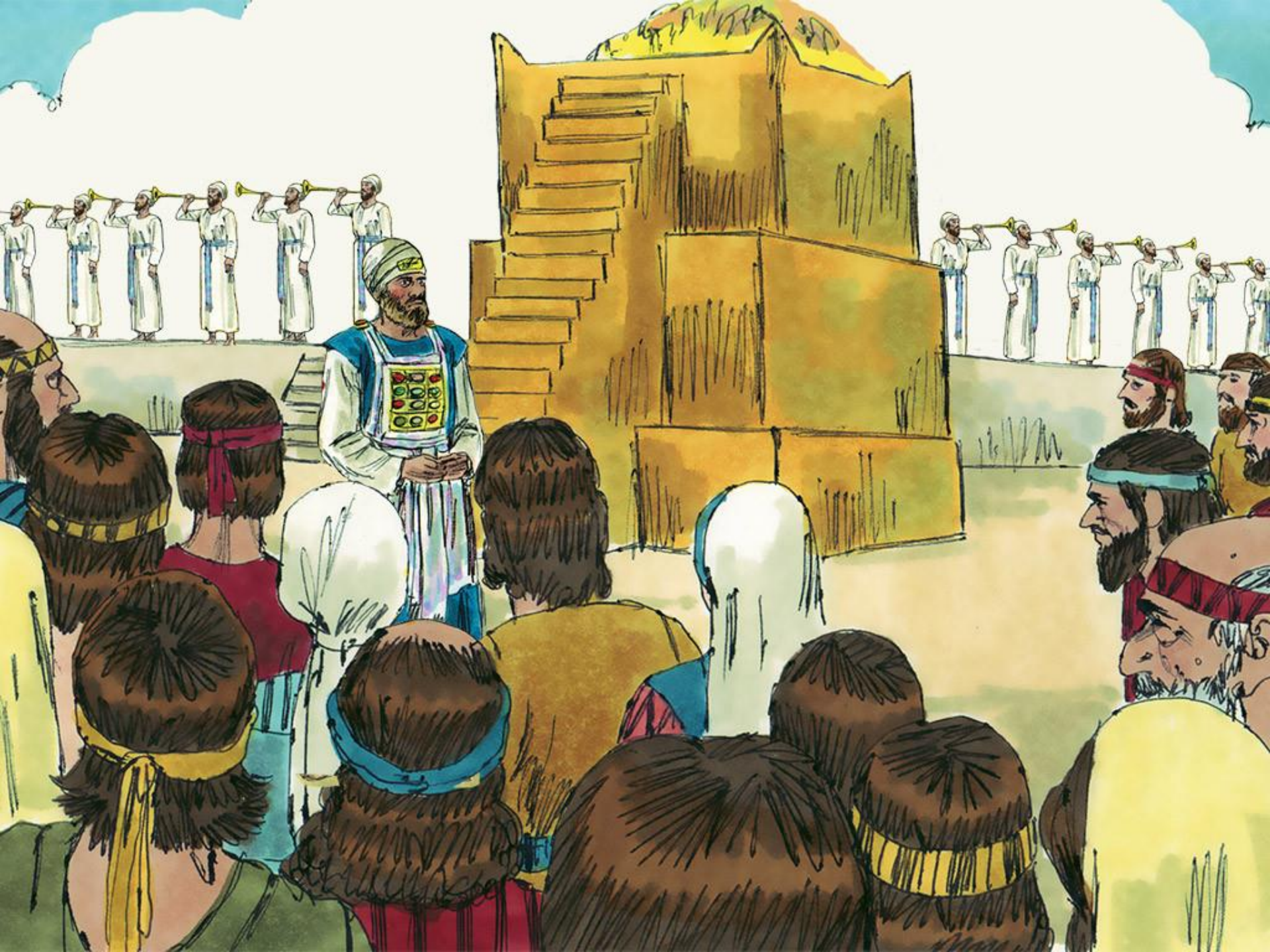
Jerusalem •

DEAD SEA



Hold up picture:

Gifts of food, drink, and oil were given to the people of Tyre and Sidon of Lebanon to the north to purchase large cedar logs. The logs were floated along the coast to the port of Joppa and then hauled overland to Jerusalem. This is the same way Solomon got cedar logs to build the first Temple. The Israelites did all of this because of the permission they had from King Cyrus of Persia.

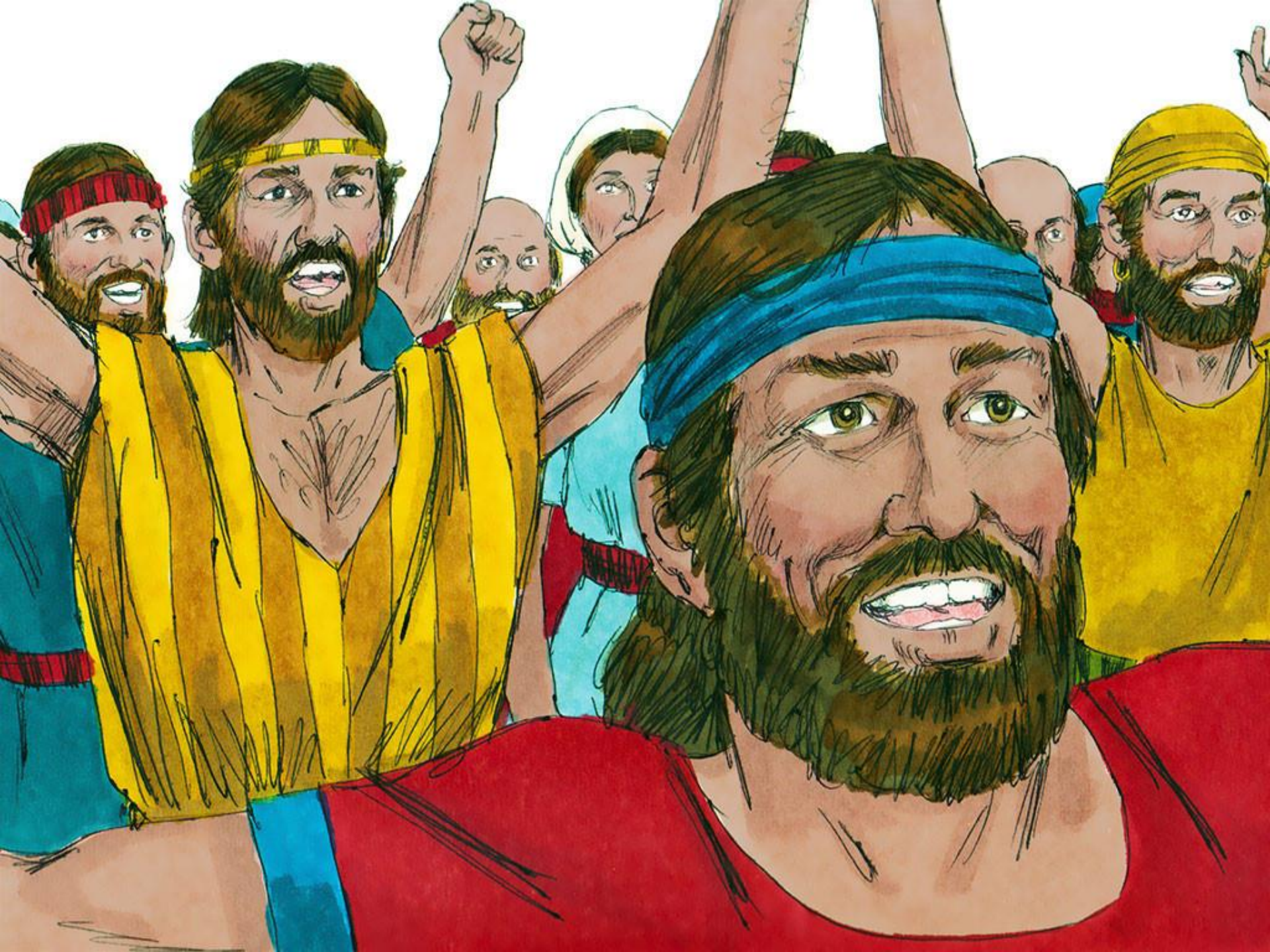


Hold up picture:

The first task to rebuilding the Temple was to lay the foundation of the Temple. After the foundation was laid, the people gathered to praise God. The priests stood in their priestly robes with trumpets and the rest of the Levites with cymbals led the worship. They praised God singing, “For He is good, His mercy endures forever toward Israel.”

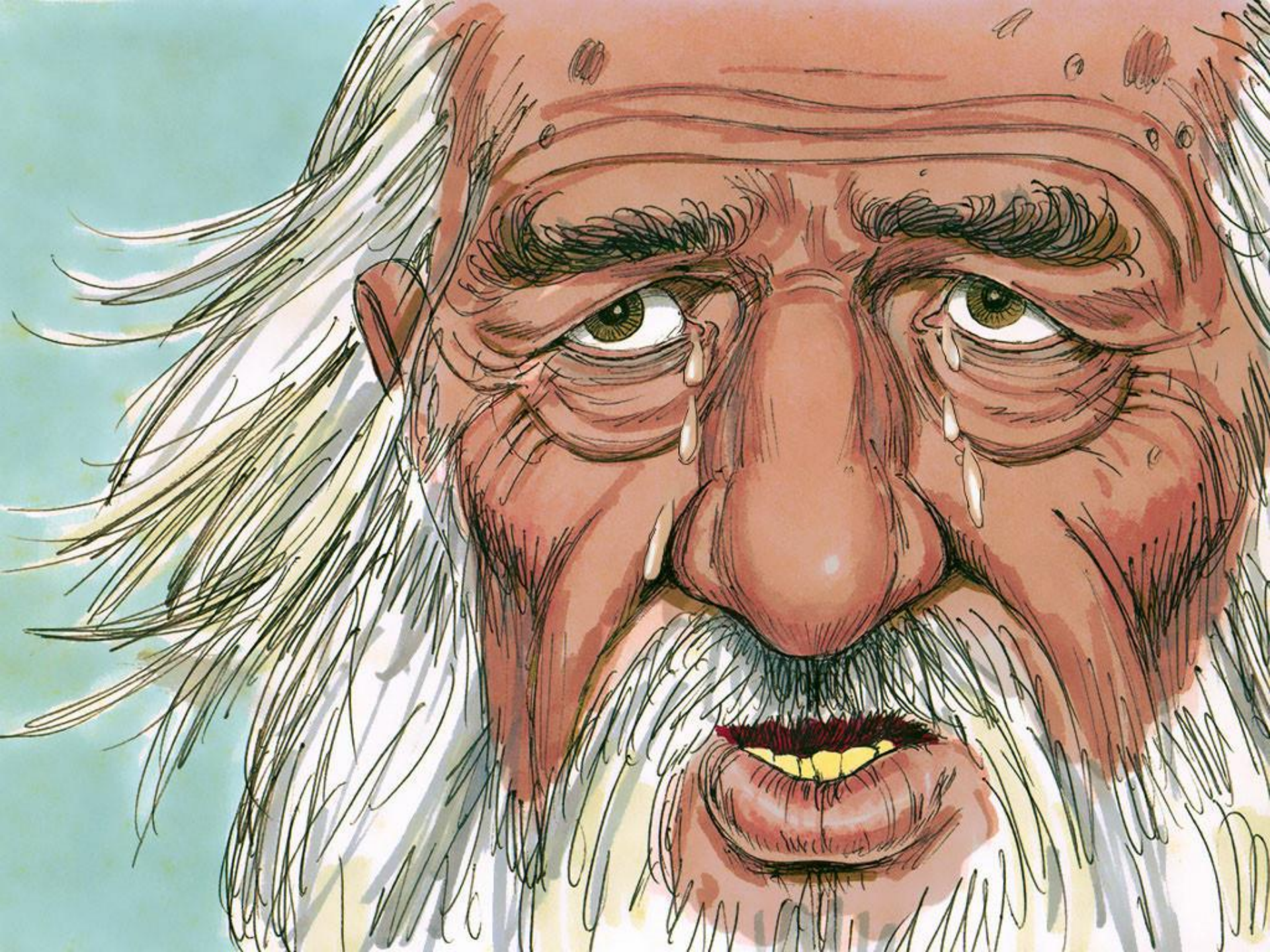
Ask:

What does mercy mean? *(Not getting the punishment you deserve)* Did the Israelites deserve to get the Promised Land back? *(No, they had broken the covenant with God by worshipping idols.)* God had mercy and compassion on His people by promising to bring them back to Jerusalem.



Hold up picture:

Then all the people shouted with a great noise as they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord had been laid. And the sound was so great that it could be heard far away.



Hold up picture:

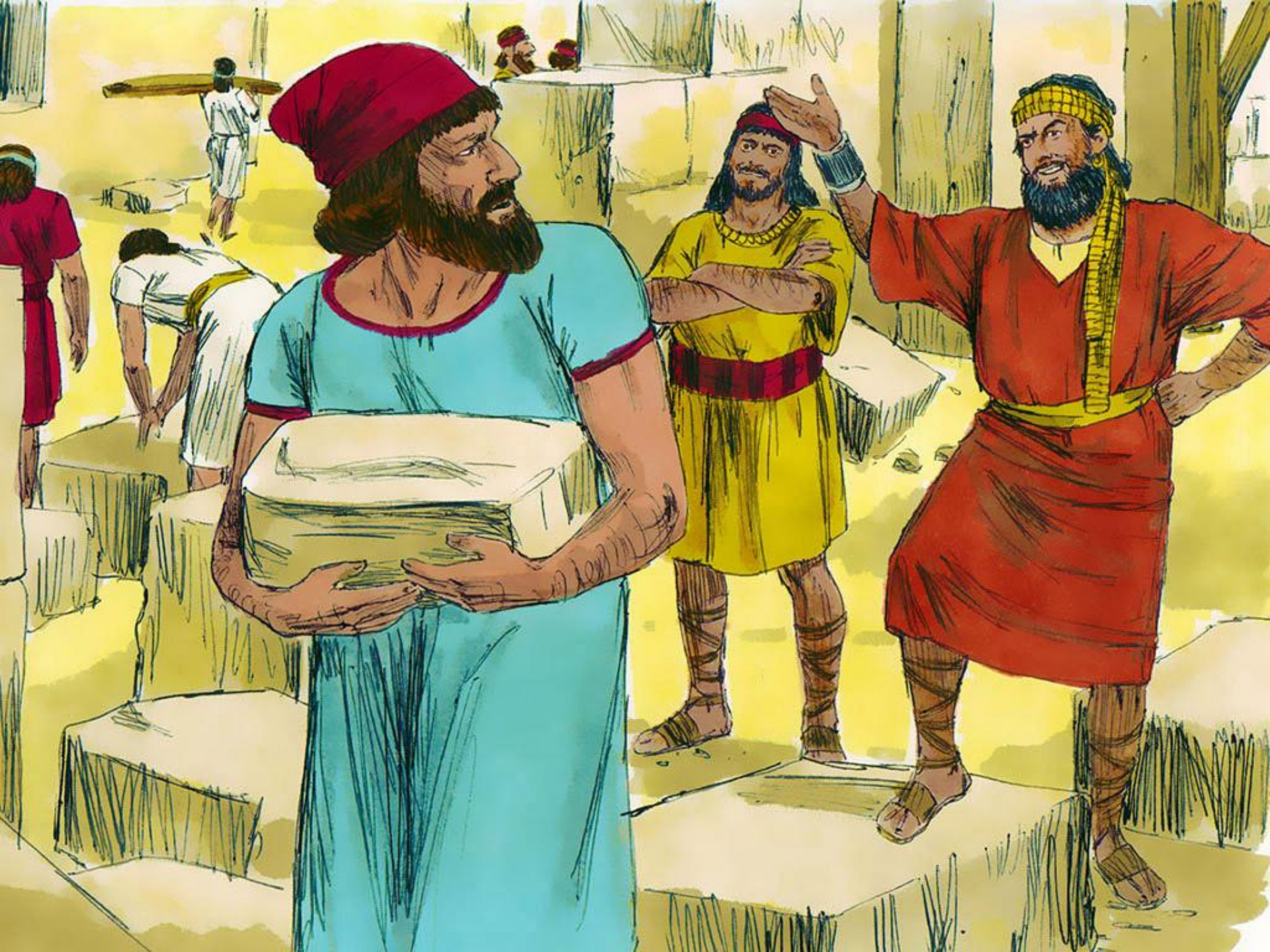
But the older people who had seen the first Temple before it had been destroyed wept. They could see that the base of the new Temple would be smaller than the original one. But everyone made so much noise that you could not distinguish between those rejoicing and those crying.



Hold up picture:

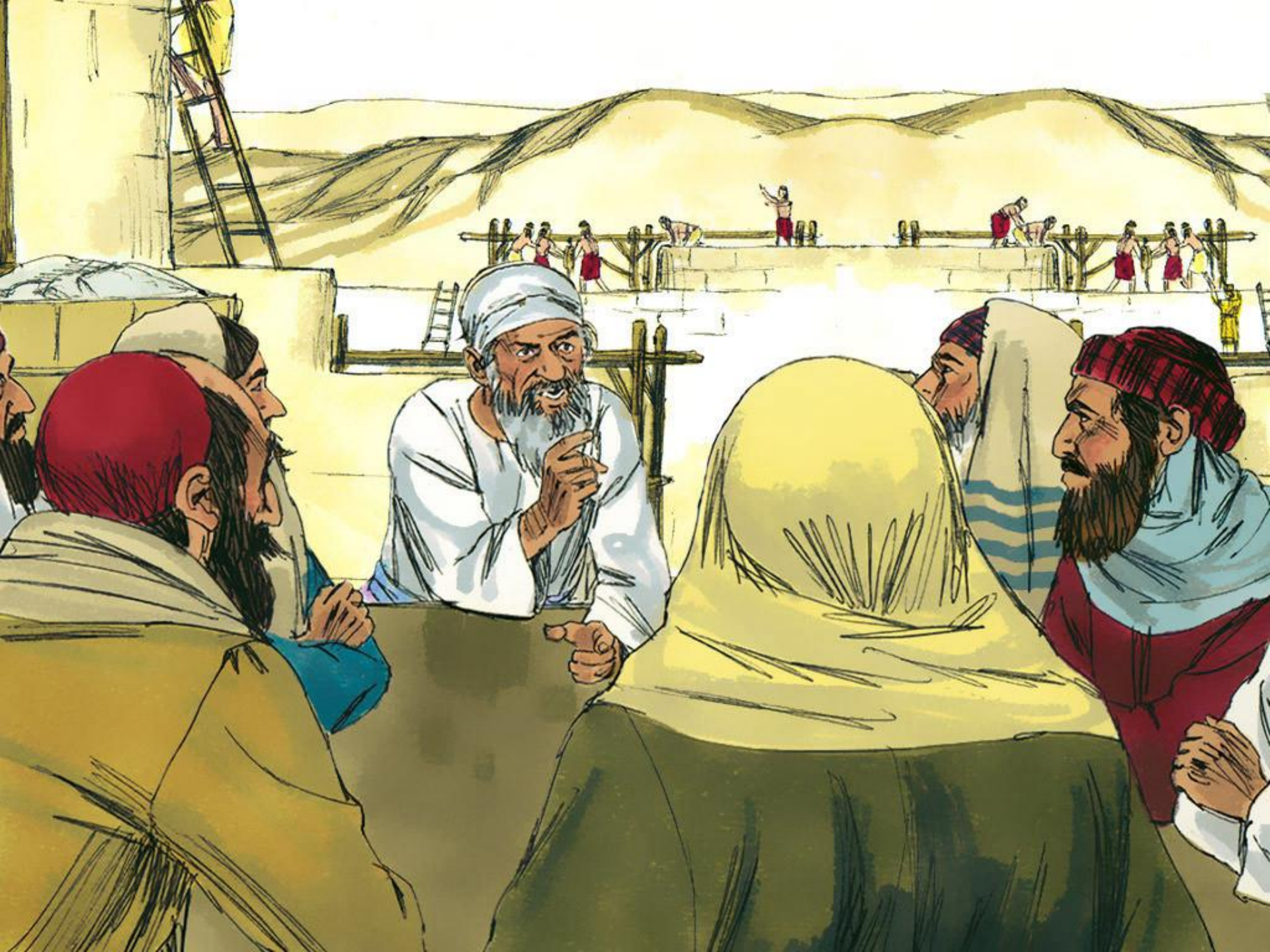
The rebuilding of the temple was underway, supervised by Zerubbabel and Jeshua. However, the Samaritans, (the people who had been living in the land of Judah before the Jews returned) worshipped many false gods or idols. Do you think they were happy to see the Israelites rebuilding the Temple?

(No, they weren't)



Hold up picture:

At first, the Samaritans offered to help the Jews rebuild the Temple. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua knew these people didn't worship the true God, so they said, "You have nothing in common with us. We alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus has commanded us."



Hold up picture:

That did not make the people living in Judah happy. So these Samaritans discouraged, troubled, and frustrated the Israelites while they were trying to rebuild the Temple.

Ask / Discuss:

Have you ever been bullied? The Israelites were trying to do the right thing by building God's Temple, but the Samaritans were bullying the Israelites trying to keep them from rebuilding the Temple. Does anyone know a different word for bullying that is used in the Bible? It starts with the letter P...

(Persecute) To persecute someone means to treat someone unfairly because of race, religious, or political beliefs and that is what these Samaritans were doing to the Israelites.



Hold up picture:

Then King Cyrus died, so the Samaritans wrote a letter to the new king of Persia, Artaxerxes. They told the king, “The Jews, who came from you, are building a rebellious and evil city. If this city is completed, the Israelites will not pay the king’s taxes.”

Ask / Discuss:

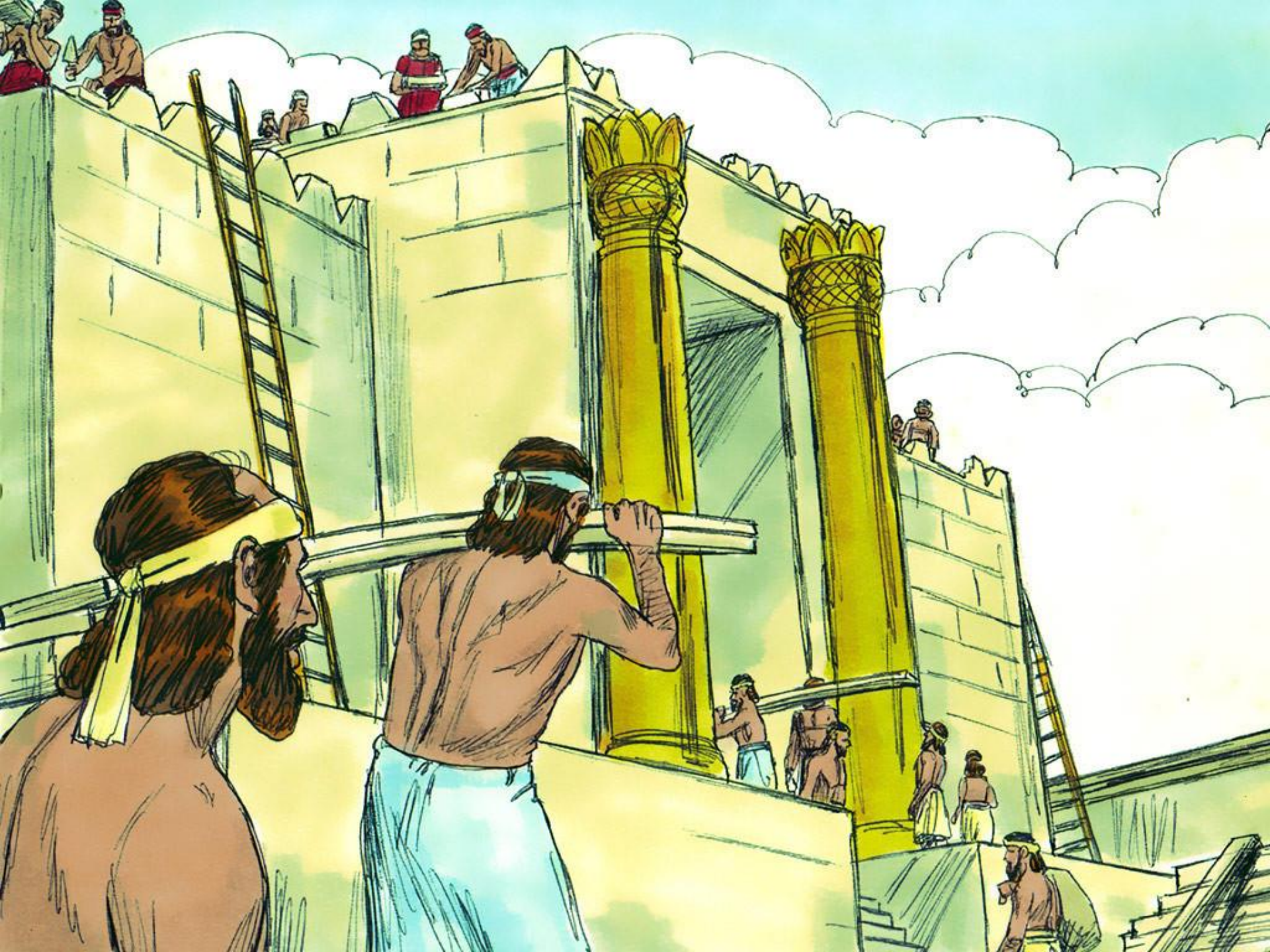
Were the Samaritans being truthful about the Jews? **(No)** Sometimes people will tell lies about us. In fact Jesus says in Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

How does Jesus want us to treat people to persecute us? How does Jesus want us to treat our enemies? **(Answers might vary)** Jesus tells us later in Matthew 5:43-44, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” So, if someone is bullying you, you should pray for them.



Hold up picture:

Do you think King Artaxerxes believed the lies the Samaritans said about the Israelites? He must have, because he sent a letter back to the Samaritans saying, “I give the command to make these men stop, that the city may not be built until the command is given by me.” So when the king’s letter was read by the Samaritans, they quickly went up to Jerusalem and by force made the Israelites stop working.



Hold up picture:

So the Israelites stopped working on the Temple, and it would sit unfinished for about 16 years.

Ask / Discuss:

How do you think God felt about the Israelites giving in to the bullies? *(Sad, Angry, Disappointed)*

What do you think the Israelites should have done? *(Prayed, Fought the Samaritans, Trusted God to protect them from the Samaritans and King Artaxerxes)* Should we let anyone keep us from doing the work of the Lord? *(No)*

Unfortunately, the Temple wouldn't be completed until the second year of King Darius's reign. During that time, two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, would rise up with messages from God encouraging the Jews to continue with the work on the temple. We will learn about Haggai and Zechariah in our next two lessons.