

Following God's Guidance

Ezra 1:1-11

Ezra 1:1-5

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

² “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

“The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³ Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. ⁴ And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.”

⁵ Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

God's Providence

- “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain”
- Proverbs 21:1 “The King’s heart is in the hands of the Lord—he directs it wherever he pleases.”
- “The believer looks at politics through a different lens. We believe, first and foremost, that God is the God of the nations. Washington doesn’t call the shots; God does. The congress doesn’t direct the future; God does.”
- “The text of Ezra is rich and multilayered and builds on earlier revelation...this is no flat and dry chronicle; this pulses with the living words of God.”
- Isaiah 44:28 “He says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, ‘Let it be rebuilt,’ and of the temple, ‘Let its foundation be laid.’”

Importance of the Temple

- It was the means by which God dwelt among His people
- It was where forgiveness was found through sacrifice
- It provided a way out of guilt
- “The eye of faith is needed to see and grasp the meaning of what is happening..Ezra often fails to charm at the first reading, largely because it often seems so low-key and factual. Yet as we look at what is happening and catch the echoes of earlier Scriptures and see the book in the overall biblical picture we realize that God is working his purpose out.”

--Robert Fyall

Ezra 1:6-11

⁶ All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings.

⁷ Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god.

⁸ Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

⁹ This was the inventory:

Gold dishes 30

Silver dishes 1,000

Silver pans 29

¹⁰Gold bowls 30

Matching silver bowls 410

Other articles 1,000

¹¹ In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and of silver. Sheshbazzar brought all these along with the exiles when they came up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Temple Vessels

- Daniel 5: God has numbered the days of your reign and they have been brought to an end, Belshazzar, You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, your kingdom will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.
- The ark of the covenant was the very place where the glory of God was to fall among the people. It was significant—and yet it is not returned.
- Restoration—only in part

Application

- God is always in control- Jeremiah 29:11
- Do we pray for the world as if God has anything to say about it or do we simply pray for our personal needs?
- Be attentive to the Lord stirring your heart
- Trust in God: “Truth is, you know what tomorrow brings. There’s not a day ahead you have not seen. So, in all things be my life and breath. I want what you want Lord and nothing less.”