

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of January 5, 2020

Providence & Promise

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Ezra 1:1-11](#)

¹In 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:

²“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”

⁵Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. ⁶And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered. ⁷Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. ⁸Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. ⁹And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, ¹⁰30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels; ¹¹all the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

- Why Ezra?
 - Largely unfamiliar
 - The faithfulness of God
 - The sovereignty of God
 - Our needs are greater than we know, but God knows
- Let's remember a few things:
 - The catastrophe of the exile (605BC, 587BC)
 - Zedekiah, the last King in Judah
 - “By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there we hung our lyres.
For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion!
How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?” ([Psalm 137](#))
 - Babylon has since fallen and now Persia is the dominant world power. Night has fallen on Israel. Ezra opens in 538 BC.
- Cyrus is God's tool. Governments, politicians, and civil servants who have no saving knowledge of the Gospel, may implement policies that enable the Kingdom of God to advance. Indeed, to fulfil prophecy.
- “The LORD stirred” (1)
- The LORD keeps His promises; [Jeremiah 25:11-12](#) & [29:10](#)
- The LORD provides
- Not everyone returned
- Pots and pans (7-11)
- From Babylon to Jerusalem: Quite a pilgrimage?
- Some of the closing words of the Bible: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great” ([Revelation 18:2](#))