

# Ezra – Chapter One

## “God Stirs Up People to Do His Will”

**The reason for the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the captivity and exile of the people from Judah:** 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 (The Sabbath – Leviticus 25-26)

**The devastating nature of the capture and captivity of the leaders and people:** 2 Kings 24:17-25:21

**It was prophesied that God would use Cyrus and the Medes and Persians to overthrow the Babylonians and allow His people to return to Judah and rebuild the temple.** Isaiah 13:17 and 44:28-45:7 Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10

### **1-4: God Stirred Up Cyrus to Issue the Decree** (also 2 Chronicles 36:23-24)

First year = of Cyrus’ reign over Babylon

“Stirred up” = raised, raised up, roused, awakened

#### **The Decree:**

Rebuild the Temple

Whoever Desires May Return

People Around the Returnees Are to Help Them



#### **The Cyrus Cylinder in the British Museum**

The cylinder was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in modern day Iraq in 1879. The cylinder text praises Cyrus and denounces the Babylonian king whom he conquered as an oppressor of the people. It claims the chief Babylonian god Marduk chose Cyrus to restore peace and order in Babylon and that he was well-received by the people when he entered the city. It also describes his policy of the repatriation of deported peoples and the restoration of their religious sanctuaries.

#### **Derek Kidner (Tyndale Old Testament Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah):**

“A notable feature of the Persian empire was its integration of a great diversity of peoples into a single administrative system, while maintaining at the same time a tradition of respect for their local customs and beliefs ... they were encouraged to seek the king’s welfare by observing the proper forms of their own religions.”

#### **Translation of a portion of the Cyrus Cylinder containing his own words:**

“I returned to these sacred cities ... the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations ... May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me ...; to Marduk, my lord, may they say this: ‘Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son ...’”

**(over)**

## **5: God Stirred Up People to Return and Rebuild the Temple**

Not an easy decision – Jeremiah 29:4-14

God had to stir them up: “move” them (same word as in v. 1)

## **6: God Stirred Up People Around Them to Give**

## **7-11: God Stirred Up Cyrus to Return the Articles from the Temple**

2,499 articles in vv. 9-10 are representative of all 5,400 in v. 11

### **Doctrinal Conclusions**

#### **1. God Stirs Up People Who Are Not His Own**

1 Chronicles 5:26  
2 Chronicles 21:16  
Proverbs 16:1, 9, 33  
Proverbs 20:24  
Proverbs 21:1  
Jeremiah 25:9

#### **2. God Stirs Up His People to Do His Will**

Exodus 35:21  
Haggai 1:14  
Philippians 2:13

#### **3. God Uses His Word to Stir Up His People**

Daniel 9:1-3ff  
2 Peter 1:13 and 3:1

#### **4. God Uses His People to Stir Up One Another**

Hebrews 10:24-25