

FIRST RETURN FROM BABYLON, PART 1
(Ezra 1:1-11)

- I. Cyrus's PROCLAMATION (Ezra 1:1-4)
 - A. Introduction and background (1:1)
 - 1. Issued in 538 BC, Cyrus's first year of rule over BABYLON
 - 2. Fulfilled God's prophecy of 70 YEARS captivity (cf. Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10)
 - 3. Produced by GOD'S moving "the SPIRIT of Cyrus"
 - 4. It was proclaimed ORALLY and posted in WRITING
 - B. The DECREE (1:2-4)
 - 1. Intended to placate the GODS of the conquered PEOPLES
 - 2. PERMITTED Jews to return to Jerusalem to REBUILD the TEMPLE
 - 3. Encouraged those who REMAINED to make GENEROUS contributions to those who were LEAVING
 - a. Gifts for their PERSONAL SUPPORT
 - b. Donations for the TEMPLE
- II. God's PROVISION (Ezra 1:5-11)
 - A. He RAISED UP people WILLING to return

1. LEADERS from the tribes of JUDAH and BENJAMIN
 2. Some of the PRIESTS and LEVITES
- B. God prompted people to CONTRIBUTE GENEROUSLY
1. Personal gifts for the EXPENSES of those RETURNING
 2. “Freewill offering” for “the HOUSE of GOD”
- C. Cyrus RETURNED articles from the temple that Nebuchadnezzar had SEIZED
1. Handled by “Mithredath the TREASURER”
 2. Transferred into the custody of Sheshbazzar, “the PRINCE of Judah”
 - a. Possibly a Jewish leader to be SUCCEDED by Zerubbabel
 - b. Possibly Shenazzar (1 Chron. 3:18), descended from DAVID and an UNCLE of Zerubbabel
 - c. Probably ANOTHER NAME for Zerubbabel
 3. Safely TRANSPORTED from Babylon to Jerusalem

III. Lessons

- A. God works through the resources of this WORLD to accomplish HIS WILL for His people
- B. God’s WORD will not FAIL