



INTRODUCTION: The events in the book of Ezra take place around 536 BC. The temple had been destroyed by order of Nebuchadnezzar. Most of the people had been taken captive. Now 70 years have passed and Darius the Mede ruled over Babylon now. Because of his old age, he gives the governing authority of the land to Cyrus, the Persian. Now we don't know much about this pagan king, except the fact that he recognizes the God of Israel as "the God", and evidently God chose to use this Persian king in a special way to give a proclamation and provision for Israel in the form of an irreversible, unalterable decree (Ezra 1:2).

Like King Cyrus, God has given us an irreversible decree to the church is that we are to go, reach the lost, disciple them and plant churches where there are no churches. It is irreversible and unalterable. Our decree from our King is to preach the Gospel to all nations. Our decree tells us to do this both in Jerusalem and in Judea as well as in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF MISSIONS (EZRA 1:1-3)

God had specifically prophesied 150 years earlier, by the mouth of Jeremiah, that after 70 years God would perform His good towards them in causing them to return to their land. God further prophesied that He would use His servant, King Cyrus, specifically to rebuild His house.

Isaiah 44:28, "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

The word **proclamation** means an official formal public announcement. The New Testament word for proclamation is **preach**.

A. IT WAS MADE UNIVERSALLY (EZRA 1:1)

The name, Cyrus, in the Persian means "sun". King Cyrus, a type, or picture, of Christ, took all nations from Nebuchadnezzar, who in this case is a type of Satan.

Romans 1:3-4, "3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: "

1. This proclamation meant they were set free from captivity.

Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"

2. Christ came to deliver the captives, and once He has freed us, He now gives a proclamation that we all have been given the ministry of reconciliation. This proclamation has also been put into writing:

Matthew 28:18-20, "18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

B. IT MUST BE RECEIVED PERSONALLY (EZRA 1:2-3)

II. THE CALL TO MISSIONS

A. GOD STIRS UP THE SENDERS (EZRA 1:1)

B. GOD STIRS UP THE SENT (EZRA 1:5)

Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

III. THE CONTINUATION OF MISSIONS

A. THE COMMAND (EZRA 1:4)

B. THE COMMITMENT

1. They Gave Financially (Ezra 1:6)

Notice the phrase, "strengthened their hands." Something special happens when God's people give. 1) People get saved, 2) Churches get planted, 3) Missionaries get encouraged, 4) God's mission gets fulfilled, and 5) God is glorified.

2. They Gave Prayerfully (Ezra 1:7-8)

Cyrus retrieves the spiritual instruments that they were going to need.

II Corinthians 10:4-5, "4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

Are you a Sender or a Goer? What are you doing towards this calling God has put on your life?
