



Start at the Beginning

January 2, 2011

Ezra 1:1-11

¹ 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 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 Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴ And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him 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. 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, ¹⁰ gold 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 when the exiles came up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Discussion Questions

Have you ever jumped into a project or decision only to realize later that you skipped something important at the beginning?
How did it turn out?
How could it have turned out?

Why does God include all this ‘history’ in the Bible?
What can we learn from Jewish history lessons?
Why or why not?

Which Jewish leader created this plan for God’s people to return to Jerusalem and build the temple?
According to this passage, who was responsible for beginning the building of the second temple?
Who was responsible for ensuring the necessary resources were in place to begin building the temple?

How can the answer to those questions help us face moving ahead in our building plans and in our own lives?
What does it require of us to do this?

What is the hardest part of Building God’s Way so far?