

## God Stirs Hearts

### I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online.
- B. **Slide1 Fresh Faith:** AL will help you **connect** with other new believers, **learn the basics of Christian teaching** and give you **steps to grow** in your faith. Option for mentorship by a more experienced believer to encourage and pray for you. Class is **free**, held Sundays at **noon** from **mid April-to-June 7th**. go to [Calvarymurrieta.com/classes](http://Calvarymurrieta.com/classes)
- C. **Slide2 Prayer:**

### II. Slide3a Intro: God Stirs Hearts

- A. **There is a story of a man who inherited a house from a relative he barely knew.** It had been sitting **untouched for decades**. When he first walked in, it was overwhelming. Dust covered everything, parts of the ceiling were sagging, and it felt more abandoned than livable. At first, he had no idea where to start. **But as he stood there, he began to notice small things. A fireplace that could be restored, hardwood floors hidden under the dust, beams that were still strong. Slowly, something shifted inside him.** What once felt like **a burden** began to feel like **a calling**. No one forced him and no one handed him a plan, but something in him said, this place can live again. So he started, one room at a time, and over time what was once abandoned became **alive again**.
  1. That moment, **that internal shift, is what Ezra 1 is about. God did not just give instructions. He stirred hearts. Because** real restoration does not start with tools, it starts with something **happening inside you!**
- B. **Slide3b Series Big Idea:** *God rebuilds His people through worship, His Word, and faithful obedience, even in difficult seasons.*

### III. Slide4 Book Intro (Ezra/Neh): (in Hebrew Bible 1 book)

- A. **World Powers:** (biblical time) **Egypt/Exodus. Assyria** (superpower N/Is.). **Babylon. Mede/Persian. Greeks. Rome.**

1. In a Divine twist of irony - The Lord raised up a nation (Persia), to overthrow the nation (Babylon), that He allowed to overthrow His nation.
- B. Where does Ezra fit in World History? Gautama (GOW-tuh-muh) Buddha the Indian mystic/founder of Buddhism, was in India. Confucius was in China. And Socrates was in Greece.
- C. Why Babylonian captivity 70 years? - see 2 Chron.36:21 & notes.
1. Daniel & Ezekiel were among those deported.
  2. Jeremiah's Prophecy & Promised Restoration! - This is what the Lord says: "You will be in Babylon for 70 years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. Jer. 29:10
- D. Ezra covers the 1st 2 returns to Israel. Nehemiah covers the 3rd return to Israel.
1. Return #1 - 49,897 people return [Zerub gov. leads, 538bc] Purpose? Rebuild Temple. [Ezra ch's 1-6] (Esther story in between)
  2. Return #2 - 1,754 return [Ezra is in, 80 yrs. later] Purpose? Rebuild the People. [Ezra ch's 7-10] [Neh]
  3. Return #3 - [Nehemiah leads 14 yrs. later] Purpose? Rebuild the Wall.

#### IV. GOD STIRS HEARTS (1-11)

- A. Slide5 God Moves a King (1-4) Read
- B. 1:1 In 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. 3 Whoever 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. 4 And 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."
1. God stirs the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia. [backstory: Is.44:28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my

*purpose*; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' ] (Isaiah writes 710bc. Cyrus isn't born yet 170 yrs later. And both Jer & the Temple were standing already!)

2. **Cyrus** - takes over the crumbling Babylonian empire. **One of his 1st acts of office** is to *reverse* the Babylonian policy of deporting conquered people from their homelands. (Assyria assured their enemies "remain conquered" by *taking some, leaving some*. i.e. Samaritans 1/2 Jew, 1/2 Assyrian)

a) **Cyrus** issues a decree, *Go back and rebuild the temple*. Even a pagan king becomes an instrument in God's hands.

b) **God is working at levels they cannot see**.

C. Have you ever had a moment where God was working behind the scenes before you even knew it? - Where might God be moving right now that you can't yet see?

#### D. **Slide6 God Stirs the People** (5-6) *Read*

E. *5 Then 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. 6 And 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.*

1. **Leaders, priests, and families** rise up to go.

a) **Note**, not everyone goes, only those *whose spirit God had stirred*.

b) **Restoration always begins internally** before it becomes **visible externally**.

2. What stirs your heart right now, comfort or calling? - What might God be nudging you toward that you've been ignoring?

#### F. **Slide7 God Provides What's Needed** (7-11) *Read*

G. *7 Cyrus 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. 8 Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer; who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 10 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels; 11 all 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.*

1. Temple **articles** are returned. **Resources** are supplied. What was **lost** is being restored.

a) If God initiates it, He also provides for it.

2. Do you tend to focus more on what you *don't have* or what **God has already provided**?

H. God moves **sovereignly**, stirs **personally**, and provides **faithfully**.

## V. Slide8a **THEMES OF THE CHAPTER**

A. God initiates restoration by stirring hearts.

B. **1. Restoration begins with God - not Us.**

1. **Israel** **didn't** organize *a comeback plan*.

a) **God** fulfilled His Word (Jeremiah's prophecy). **God** took the first step.

2. We don't rebuild our lives, **God** rebuilds us.

C. **Slide8b 2. God works through both Circumstances and People.**

1. He moves kings (Cyrus). He moves individuals (leaders, priests, families).

2. God works on *the global level* and *the personal level* at the same time.

D. **Slide8c 3. Not everyone responds the same way.** [Clash, Eng Punk Band, *Should I stay or should I go now?*]

1. **Some stayed in Babylon.** (*Why stay?* - 70 yrs ago/1956. New country to most. Homeland burnt/destroyed - Babylon/Luxury. **Trip difficult**).

2. **Some stepped into the unknown.** (*Why Go?* - God moved on hearts).

a) Restoration is offered broadly **but** embraced personally.

E. **Slide8d 4. When God Stirs, it requires a Response.**

1. **Stirring** is not the same as **obedience**. The people had to get up and go.

a) Feeling something  $\neq$  following through

2. If God is rebuilding something, **He** will stir hearts, **but we still have to respond**.

F. Is there an area of your life where God has been stirring you, **but** you haven't moved yet? - What would obedience look like for you this week, **not** someday, **but** now?

## VI. Slide9a **CHRIST CONNECTION**

A. **1. Jesus is the Greater Cyrus**

B. **Cyrus** released people from physical captivity. **Jesus** releases us from sin and spiritual exile.

1. **Jesus** is the true Deliverer who brings us **home**.

C. Slide9b **2. Jesus is the True Temple**

D. They were going back to rebuild **a building**.

E. Jesus said, *Destroy this temple/His body, and I will raise it again.*

1. Restoration is no longer about **a place**, it's about **a Person**.

F. Slide9c **3. Jesus is the One Who Still Stirs Hearts**

G. Just like in Ezra 1, **God** still initiates. **The Spirit** *draws, convicts, awakens*.

1. If you feel something *stirring* ... that's **not** random.

H. Slide9d **4. Jesus Makes Restoration Possible**

I. **Ezra** is about *returning home*. **The Gospel** is about *being brought all the way back to God*. [**not** partial restoration, full reconciliation!]

J. **If Time?** *When God Stirs Hearts* ...

K. **What it isn't** - not hype. Not just emotional momentum.

L. **What it is** - a personal moment *from God to a person*. God knows exactly where to press on your heart. [it's about: *stirring a heart, not dragging people*].

M. **How does God stir or press on our hearts?** - disrupts comfort. 1st stirs then resources (obedience b4 position). Thunder or quiet nudge. (we often miss cuz we expect God to be *louder*).

N. **And it may feel *inconvenient* before it feels **exciting****. It takes **courage**.

1. Slide10 "God **stirs** hearts, **but** **courage** moves feet."

O. God is still in the business of **stirring** hearts, and **rebuilding** lives.  
The question is: Will we respond?

P. Keywords: Ezra. Heart. Stir.