

Week 27
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Transforming Daily
“... the Lord stirred up the spirit ...”
Ezra 1:1

Though the spirit stirred here by the Lord belonged to Cyrus, King of Persia, the principle is still the same. The background for the book of Ezra is simply the post-exilic return of a remnant of the children of Israel. Their return was by means of God's intervention between them and their captives. What's interesting is that had the Israelites moved when God stirred their spirits throughout the generations as Cyrus moved when God stirred his spirit here, there would have been no captivity and exile from which the Israelites needed to return.

Ironically, every time God called Israel to repentance, giving them another opportunity to submit and obey His Word, they always seemed to have to start where they left off. In this situation, the temple was destroyed and God was calling them back to rebuild it to restore a sense of national identity. Their purpose as a priestly nation was to distinguish themselves from other nations to show that there was a God (the God) in Israel, testified to by Cyrus in verses 2-4 of chapter one.

What has this got to do with the local church of the 21st century? As I said in the beginning, the principle is the same. The believer needs to remember that God still stirs the spirit or hearts of men, women, girls, and boys. He moves the believer in the same way for the same purpose, to show others (the lost) that the God of heaven personally cares for them. If the local church abdicates its responsibility to share that the God of heaven who personally cares for them and has shown His care by way of Jesus Christ's birth, life, death, burial and resurrection, then the spiritual (and possibly physical) ramifications from disobedience could be the loss of reputation, as well as the divine judgment of God on the local church.

The way for the local church to avoid this from happening is for each believer to move when God stirs their spirit. Has your heart been stirred by God's Word recently? Are you open to Him stirring your heart? How have you responded in the past when he Lord stirred up the spirit?