

Daily Devotional, December 31, 2020

'The Lord Stirs up the Spirit of Kings', (Ezra 1:1-4, NKJV)

“Now 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, saying,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:

All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who 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 build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:1-4).

Ezra repeats these words which he had written at the close of 2 Chronicles. When the Spirit inspires a man to write the same words twice, then it must be needful for us to let the words sink into our souls. Israel had been promised a return from the Babylonian captivity, and Cyrus had even been mentioned by name by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 45:1; Jeremiah 25:12, 29:10). It seemed good to the Lord to have a pagan king command the rebuilding of the temple. This was something that many of the kings of Israel of old did not even have respect for doing.

Sometimes God will provide a way for His people from a most unlikely source, individual, or nation. May we all be sensitive as to how God works things out in our lives, opening doors and closing others. Sometimes he will close all other doors so that we can only enter only the one open door. Other times, the Lord will use an unbeliever to promote the glory of God through the free expression of your faith. These things do not happen always or often, so learn to recognize, thank God for, and enter into the opportunities of divine providence as they arise. The work of the building of the temple continued under Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah. These faithful men took advantage of the good favor of the Lord upon them in their day. Christian friend, I am quite sure that God is giving you opportunities to serve Him now. Make a resolution, a solemn vow, to follow through the blessings that the Lord would like to work through you to others for the glory of His kingdom and His name.