

The king who replenished the temple of God with brazen vessels.

The king who bought peace by giving the vessels of the temple to his nation's enemy.

The king in whose reign the vessels here mentioned were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

The king who sacrilegiously used these vessels at a banquet.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Cyrus? **The King of Persia.**

Who were captives in Babylon? **The Jews.**

How long had they been there? **Seventy years.**

What had God promised by Jeremiah? **Their return to Jerusalem.**

Who taught Cyrus to be kind to the Jews? **The Lord.**

What did Cyrus send through all his kingdom? **A proclamation.**

What did he tell the Jews in this way? **That they might go back to Jerusalem.**

What did he say the Lord had told him to build? **A house for the Lord.**

Where? **In Jerusalem.**

Who put it into the heart of Cyrus to do this? **The Lord.**

Were the captives glad to go? **Yes, glad and thankful.**

What did their neighbors give them? **Much gold and silver.**

What for? **To help build the Lord's house.**

What did the king give them? **The vessels of the Lord's house.**

Who had carried these away? **Nebuchadnezzar.**

How many were there? **Five thousand four hundred.**

### Words with Little People.

#### HAPPY THOUGHTS.

God thinks about me when I am in trouble.  
He makes others think about me too.  
He sends help to me just in the right time and way.

#### A Lesson Verse.

With God all things are possible.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

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#### General Statement.

The Book of Ezra, from which our lesson is taken, is a continuation of the "Chronicles," the introductory sentences of the one book being a repetition of the closing words of the other. Its author, Ezra, was a priest of noble descent. He was also a "scribe," that is, one of a class of men who, originally official registrars or public clerks, afterward became royal secretaries, chroniclers, or amanuenses to the prophets, and, gradually, recognized exponents of the prophetic writings. By his editing of the sacred Scriptures and by his strong, simple, devout character Ezra made a deeper impression on the Jewish people than any other man who lived after Moses. Our lesson tells of the earliest "return" of captive Jews to their native land. It took place under the authority of King Cyrus, about eight years before that other "return" in which Ezra himself was engaged. The period of captivity for Judah was seventy years from the time when, in the reign of Jehoiakim, the land fell under the Chaldean yoke and its nobles were taken to Babylon, and fifty years from the destruction of the temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Severe as were the trials of the exiles, the captivity proved to be a greater benefit than any other event of Jewish history. The Jews went into exile weak and feeble, prone to wander from God and fall into idolatry. They returned thoroughly changed, with such intense devotion to their religion and their national traits that all the power of the world during the centuries since has not caused them to waver.

**Verse 1. In the first year.** Not the first year of Cyrus's reign over the Persians, but the first year of his reign at Babylon. **Cyrus king of Persia.** He was born King of Elam, which had sunk from its ancient glory into a Persian province. Cyrus revolted, reversed the relations of the nations, and added the kingdom of Persia to his empire between 549 and 546 B. C. He then conquered all the lands from India to the Mediterranean, including Asia Minor, and founded the most extensive empire of the ancient world. It was his mission to consolidate the kingdoms of the East, and to break up the corrupt Asiatic forms

of idolatry, and although he was not, as was long supposed, himself a worshiper of the true God, like the Persians whom he governed, he incidentally did much to open the path for the true faith. He was doubtless powerfully affected by the ancient prophecies concerning him, and, being a marvelously astute statesman and general, he could readily see the value of Judah to him as a base of military operations against Egypt. **The word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.** Though unconscious of his destiny, Cyrus was the hammer of God, breaking the chains of his people and the idols of the Gentile world. The prophecy