

Lesson III.

THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY

October 15, 1911

Ezra 1 : 1-11. Study Ezra 1 : 1-11 ; 2 : 64-70—Memory Verses, ch. 1 : 3, 4.

Golden Text—He retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy.—Micah 7 : 18.



1 Now in the first year of Cy'rus king of Per'sia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremi'ah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cy'rus king of Per'sia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Per'sia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah, and build the house of the LORD God of Is'rael, (he is the God,) which is in Jeru'salem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jeru'salem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Ju'dah and Ben'jamin, and the priests, and the Le'vites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jeru'salem. 6 And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. 7 Also Cy'rus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jeru'salem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8 Even those did Cy'rus king of Per'sia bring forth by the hand of Mith'redath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Ju'dah. 9 And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, 10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Bab'ylon unto Jeru'salem.

THE LESSON RETOLD

At last, when the Jews had spent seventy years in captivity, the time came for them to go back to their own land, and God made Cyrus, who was now king in Babylon, willing to let them go.

So the words which God had spoken through His prophet Isaiah many years before, came true—that He would raise up a great king named Cyrus, who would send the people of Israel back to Jerusalem to build up the city again and the beautiful temple.

And Cyrus sent a proclamation or message throughout all his kingdom. This was the message: "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, 'The Lord has commanded me to build for Him a holy temple in Jerusalem. Who is there among the captives of Judah who

wishes to go back to his own land? Let him go now and build up the house of the Lord. And let the people of my kingdom help those who go, by giving them gold and silver, cattle and provisions to take with them.'"

So the Jews, who had been captives so long in this heathen country, gathered together joyfully, and prepared to start on the long journey back to their own beautiful land. And their friends in Babylon gave them generous gifts of money and clothes as the king had commanded.

Cyrus himself brought out the precious vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple in Jerusalem, and he counted them and gave them to a prince of Judah named Zerubbabel, who was one of the