



Sunday Sermon Discussion Outline

Pastor Philip Thomas, July 26, 2026

Ezra 1:1-11 – The Nature of Kings & The Nature of God

The book of Ezra opens with a proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia, that reveals the nature and priorities of rulers and leaders. Interwoven through the chapter are key statements about the nature of God that reveal his care and provision for his people.

The Nature of Kings:

- Gain the people's support by any means
- Appease all the gods
- Protect their interests

The Nature of God:

- Prepares us for what is to come
- Directs our hearts & wills
- Restores us to himself

We respond and apply the Word of God we have heard by discerning & committing to what is true.

May no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them; for at one time, you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. May you walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and may you discern what is pleasing to the Lord. May your love abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ. (Ephesians 5:6-10, Philippians 1:9-10)

Discussion Questions:

- What is the significance of the royal proclamation by Cyrus, king of Persia? What do we learn from Jeremiah, Isaiah, and other scriptures about Cyrus' proclamation that ended the seventy-year exile of the Children of Israel?
- Why is there a specific reference in this passage to the articles belonging to the temple of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god, being returned to Jerusalem?
- What do we learn about the nature of kings from biblical and historical records and artifacts?
- What do we learn about the nature of God from this passage?
- How can we discern what is true?