

# First Light

## God is on the Move

The beginning of Ezra tells the story of the first wave of God's people returning from exile. Cyrus gives the invitation to any Jew who wants to return. Then, those who are willing pack up and begin the journey homeward. This story is particularly apt for our time as we now become the people returning from our own version of exile.

I'm particularly drawn to God's activity in this story. First, in verse 1, we read "The Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make the proclamation." And then in verse 5, we read "Everyone whose heart God had moved prepared to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem."

As we navigate our own journey out of exile, it's natural to fret about what the state of the church might be. It's also natural to play our roles as churchgoers, as leaders, as stakeholders in the kingdom.

But, don't forget that God himself is playing a role too. He initiated the return of Israel from their exile. And he will initiate the return of his church from this exile. He built his body to be together, and he will see it through to that end. Out of verse 5, we can pray that 1) hearts will be moved, 2) preparations will be made, and 3) the house will be rebuilt.

---- Phil Brookman