

God's Sovereign Second Exodus

Proclamation Bible Study; Week of Sunday, October 27, 2019; Steve Thiel

God initiates again in a second exodus, liberating His people out of their Babylonian captivity and leading them back to the Promise Land. These events point forward to an even greater exodus in the Lord Jesus, when unbelievers are liberated from their sin and enabled to live for God's glory.

I. God's Sovereignty in the Present – Read Ezra 1:1-11

- A. As you think about Cyrus, the king of Persia, what are some reasons why he might be interested in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem? What might be some of the things that personally motivated Cyrus?
- B. How is God's sovereignty highlighted in Ezra 1:1-11? How do passages like Jeremiah 25:8-14 and Isaiah 44:24-45:7 help us understand that God is sovereignly controlling all of human history?
- C. Are you confident that God keeps His promises? Or are there some things that God has promised to do that you don't think He will fulfill? How does seeing the connection to Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years and Isaiah's prophecy of naming Cyrus give you confidence that God always keeps His promises?
- D. As you think of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, what questions come to your mind? Can you think of passages of Scripture that help you understand how to balance the two ideas together?
- E. In what ways do you see the Israelite's responsibility and faithfulness played out in Ezra 1-2? Would you have had the clarity and courage to travel back to Jerusalem to start your life completely over?

II. God's Sovereignty in the Past – Read Exodus 3:7-8; 19-22

- A. What connections do you make between Exodus 3:7-8 and Ezra 1? As you think of Exodus 3:19-20, in what ways does God sovereignly stir the heart of Pharaoh in the exodus story?
- B. As you think specifically about Exodus 3:21-22, how do you see the same type of plundering going on in the second exodus? Why do you think God does that? Why do you think the human authors highlight it? In what ways is repetition personally helpful for you?

III. God's Sovereignty in the Future – Read Acts 4:27-28 and John 8:31-36

- A. In what ways do you see God's sovereignty and man's responsibility played out in Christ's arrest, crucifixion, death and resurrection? How does Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28 highlight both realities?
- B. The first and second exodus are both physical and historical realities, but in what ways do they point forward to a spiritual exodus? How do Jesus' words in John 8:31-36 help us understand that connection?
- C. What might it look like to be enslaved to your sin? What do you think it looks like to be set free from the power of sin? What sins in your own life would you like to completely master? What do you think the process looks like to put sin to death and walk in righteousness? What makes that process possible?