DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

R.C. Sproul said, “If God is not sovereign, then God is not God.” Why does it matter that nothing operates outside God’s control? Where do you find it hardest to believe that God is in charge, and where do you find it most comforting?

Read Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. God called Cyrus, a pagan Persian king, “My shepherd” and “His anointed.” Why do you think God chose to work through someone like Cyrus? Who in your life, or in the world, might God be using in ways you wouldn’t expect? Especially during and after this political season?

Cyrus’s decree said, “Let him go up.” It was an invitation, not a command, and many exiles chose to stay because Babylon had become home. What “Babylons” are comfortable for you, places, habits, or routines you’ve settled into that God may be calling you out of? What or where are you wondering if He may be calling you to? What would it cost you to “go up” to that place?

Pastor Mark reminded us, “You are not the Holy Spirit. You cannot stir anyone.” Who is someone in your life who is far from God? Take time as a group to pray that God would stir their heart. Then talk about what it looks like to live in a way that might make them curious about Jesus.

E2E- Part 119
Ezra
Mark Kring, Senior Pastor
October 25, 2026

MESSAGE

1. Everyone has a worldview, and it shapes how we respond to what happens around us. What you believe about God determines what you do next.

2. Ezra looks at history through the lens of God’s sovereign rule. No one and nothing can overrule Him.

3. God raised up Cyrus for His purposes. Even when things are in turmoil, God is working a plan, He is always at work, and He does not slumber.

4. God is sovereign over all things. Regardless of who is in power, God’s purposes will be accomplished, but that does not remove our responsibility to respond and make right choices.

5. Ezra shows two major things: God is sovereign over all things and He stirs people to action. God leaves us to decide how we will respond. My response is my responsibility.

6. Cyrus’s decision to release the Jews did not just happen. God had already spoken through Isaiah and Jeremiah, and at the right time He stirred Cyrus to fulfill His Word. God was at work behind the scenes.

7. God opened the door for His people to return to Jerusalem, but no one was forced to go. Each person had to make a conscious decision to respond to what God was doing.

8. God stirred the hearts of those who returned to rebuild the Temple. They may not have understood their part in the bigger picture, but they were helping prepare the way for the Messiah.

9. God takes the initiative and some respond. He can stir even the hardest heart, and Ezra is a story of hope and restoration. No matter how long someone has been away, God is ready to forgive and receive them back.

GREEK & HEBREW WORDS

Sovereign (sov·er·eign - ˈsä-v(ə-)rən) :- supreme ruler, an entity holding ultimate power and authority

Uwr (oor); (through the idea of opening the eyes); to wake (literally or figuratively):—(a)wake(-n, up), raise (up), stir up

Miktab (mik-tawb´); - a thing written, a document (letter, copy, edict, poem):—writing, (en)grave

QUOTES

"What you believe about God determines what you do next."

"If God is not sovereign, then God is not God…"
- R.C. Sproul

Your Great Name

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Worthy Of It All/I Exalt Thee

NOTES