

#1208 America as Media-Persia – Cyrus the Great as the Lord’s Shepherd defeats Babylon and allows the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Second (Zerubbabel’s) Temple

Key Understanding #1: Cyrus the Great of Media-Persia (i) defeated Babylon in 539 B.C., (ii) allowed the Jewish captives to return to their homeland (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4), and (iii) allowed the building of the Second (Zerubbabel’s) Temple.

*2 Chronicles 36:22-23 (KJV) Now in the first year of **CYRUS KING OF PERSIA**, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,
23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and **he hath charged me to BUILD HIM AN HOUSE IN JERUSALEM, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? THE LORD HIS GOD BE WITH HIM, AND LET HIM GO UP.***

Here is #1208–Doc 1, a nice map that shows the empires of the era of sixth century B.C., and shows that the Persian Empire swallowed up the Median Empire, the Lydian Empire, the Babylonian Empire, and the Egyptian Empire. [The Persian (Media-Persian) Empire is outlined with the red line.] The map notes in red lettering (just below where it says *Median Empire*) that “the Edict of Cyrus (538 B.C.) allowed the Jews to return to their homeland.”

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Key Understanding #2: *The amazing prophecy of Isaiah.* Isaiah 44 and 45 were written roughly a century and a half before the time of Cyrus the Great, and yet Isaiah predicted his rise. The Lord calls Cyrus his “shepherd” and his “anointed” because God would appoint him to carry out the divine missions of the deliverance of the Jewish captives from Babylon (allowing them to return to their homeland) and the construction of the Second Temple. Cyrus (through Zerubbabel) delivering the Jews to their homeland in 538/537 B.C. is a deliverance that prefigures the greater salvation from sin through the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

While in Babylonian captivity, the Jews looked to prophecies about their release. Contrary to expectation, the non-Jewish king of Persia, Cyrus the Great, was the one to conquer the Chaldean (Babylonian) Kingdom, secure their release, and return them to their homeland. Cyrus is mentioned over 20 times in the Old Testament.

Books mentioning him are
2 Chronicles, Ezra, Isaiah, and Daniel.



Isaiah 44:28 (KJV) [Thus saith the Lord] *THAT SAITH OF CYRUS, HE IS MY SHEPHERD, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*



Isaiah 45:1-6 (KJV) *THUS SAITH THE LORD TO HIS ANOINTED, TO CYRUS, WHOSE RIGHT HAND I HAVE HOLDEN, TO SUBDUE NATIONS BEFORE HIM; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;*

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

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