

# CYRUS THE GREAT IN BIBLE PROPHECY



Matt Drywood 2005



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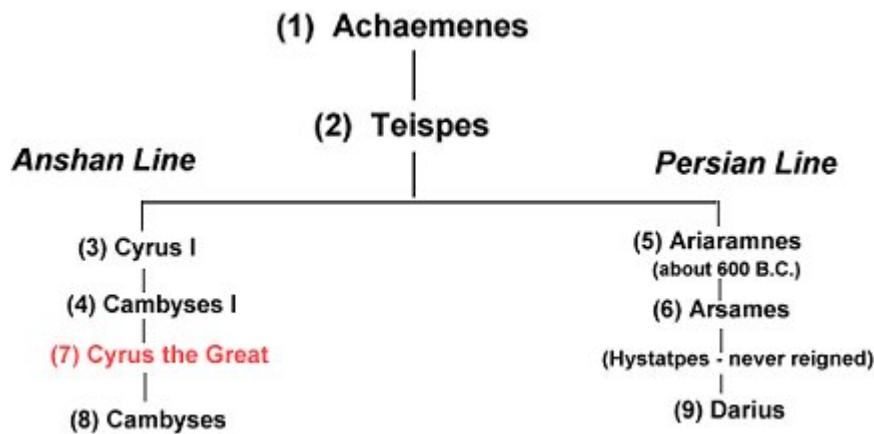
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## Who Was Cyrus?



The founder of the Persian monarchy was Achaemenes, Prince of the tribe of Pasargadae; his capital was the city bearing the same name, ruins of which still exist, dating from the era of Cyrus the Great. No definite acts can be traced to Achaemenes, after whom the dynasty was named; but the fact that his memory was highly revered tends to prove that he did in truth mold the Persian tribes into a nation before they stepped onto the stage of history. His son Teispes took advantage of the defenceless condition of Elam, after its overthrow by Assurbanipal, and occupied the district of Anshan, assuming the title of "Great King, King of Anshan." Upon his death one of his sons succeeded to Anshan (Anshan Line) and the other to Fars (Persian Line).

As shown in the above table, this division started the double line, a reference made by Darius in the Behistun inscription (*town in Iran, site of several ancient monuments, see pic*) :

*"There are eight of my race who have been kings before me; I am the ninth. In a double line we have been kings". Column One*



Cyrus the descendant of a long line of kings should actually be called Cyrus II, because he was named after his grandfather. He looked upon himself as the 'king of Anshan' and belonged to the ruling house of Persia, but Cyrus also had Median connections through his mother, whose father was supposedly Astyages, king of the Medes.

According to Herodotus, the last ruler of Media, Astyages (reigned 585-550 B.C), was defeated by Cyrus in 549 BC. Ecbatana, the royal city, was captured in 550 BC.

Herodotus (i.46) also says, Cyrus was the son of Cambyses I. He came to the Persian throne in 559 B.C. Nine years later he conquered the Medes, thus unifying the kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians.

Cyrus thus established himself king of the Medes and the Persians.

### **What Does His Name Mean?**

The name "Cyrus" (a Latin transliteration of the Greek *Κύρος*) is the Greek version of the Old Persian *Koroush* or *Khorvash*, meaning "like the sun"—in Persian *khour* means "sun" and *vash* is a suffix of similarity. In modern Persian, Cyrus is referred to as *ریبک شوروک* (Kouroush Kabeer—his native Persian name with the Arabic-derived word for "Great").

In Isaiah 41:25 , it speaks of the coming of "one . . . from the rising of the sun."

*I have raised up [one] from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as [upon] mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Isa 41:25*

Though not called by name, the allusion is clearly to Cyrus, who would bring good tidings regarding Jerusalem. We will learn of how this was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ later, who was the "*sun of righteousness*" (Mal 4:2) that would rise at a later time.

### **Biblical References to Cyrus**

[2 Chronicles 36:22,23 and Ezra 1:1- 4,7,8; 3:7; 4: 3,5; 5:13-17; 6:3,14, Isa 41:25, 44:28 - 45:13; Dan1:21, 6:28, 10:1]

The first thing to note here is that some scholars have made the claim that the references to Cyrus in Isaiah have been inserted after the fact. Thus they break down the book of Isaiah into different books.

*"Because the book of Isaiah includes prophecies concerning events during and after the Exile, critical scholars generally attribute portions of the book to one, two, or more prophets in addition to Isaiah (esp. Deutero-Isaiah, chs. 40-55; Trito-Isaiah, chs. 56-66)" (The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, 1987, p. 531).*

This takes away from whole premise of what Bible Prophecy is:

*“Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons , saith the King of Jacob. Let them [the idols] bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be , that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Yahwehs: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.” [Isaiah 41: 21- 24](#)*

Isaiah makes it plain(41:26) that the mission of Cyrus was a matter of prophecy, not educated speculation. It is a reflection of compromised faith to postulate a late date for these prophecies.

Let’s look at the other references that speak of Cyrus’ appearance on the historical scene and what he was to accomplish.

*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,*

*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. [2 Chron 36:22,23](#)*

We notice that this is in fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy, that is , after 70 years captivity by the Babylonians, they would be visited by another nation that would destroy them and that the Jews would be brought back from captivity.

*And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. [Jeremiah 25:12](#)*

*For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. [Jeremiah 29:10](#)*

And so it was done under the hand of Cyrus the great(Cyrus II). Here we will see the prophecy laid out by Isaiah. Cyrus was named by the prophet long before the monarch was even born. Isaiah prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa 1:1). His ministry thus occurred in the latter portion of the 8th century B.C. (ca. 740-701 B.C.). This was some one hundred fifty years before Cyrus came to the throne. We will

start at Isa 44:25, and continue through to chapter 45:13 as there is no break in the original text.

*I have raised up [one] from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as [upon] mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.*

*Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, [He is] righteous? yea, [there is] none that sheweth, yea, [there is] none that declareth, yea, [there is] none that heareth your words.*

*The first [shall say] to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.*

*For I beheld, and [there was] no man; even among them, and [there was] no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.*

*Behold, they [are] all vanity; their works [are] nothing: their molten images [are] wind and confusion.*

*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; 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:*

*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.*

*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.*

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

*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.*

*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].*

*Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.*

*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?*

*Woe unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?*

*Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.*

*I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, [even] my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.*

*I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall*



*build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. Isa 44:28 - 45:13*

Now, the rest of the occurrences in scripture to Cyrus are found in Daniel. We have an allusion to Daniel's prophecies in Isa 45:1 when we are told that this King Cyrus would "*loose the loins of kings to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut*".

It was during a night of drunken revelry that the Babylonian King Belshazzar, grandson to Nebuchadnezzar II, has his feast interrupted by a hand writing upon a wall. The account is found in Daniel 5. It is in the sixth verse that we read:

*Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. Daniel 5:6*

And so it was that the Babylonian Kingdom would be cut off as prophesied allowing the return of the Jews back to their homeland and that it was through the vehicle of Cyrus that God would accomplish this purpose. We see that the Daniel prophesied during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar right down until Cyrus was in power. History tells us that he lived to see the glorious time of the return of his people from the Babylonian captivity, though he did not die then. So "unto" in the text of Daniel is used in this way similar to Ps110:1.1 and12:8.



*And Daniel continued [even] unto the first year of king Cyrus. Dan 1:21*

*So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, [and] in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. Dan 6:28*

This later verse is better rendered "*even in the reign of Cyrus the Persian*", as Darius here is merely a title.

We now move on to the book of Ezra. You will notice that we tie in nicely with the information gleaned from 2 Chronicles 36:22,23 as the first two verses of Ezra 1 are identical. Both read:

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, 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,*

*Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. (2 Chron 36:22,23 and Ezra 1:1-2)*

This shows us how that at one time, these books were one book. The references to the “*first year of Cyrus*” here does not mean the first year of his reign, but rather the first year after his conquer of Babylon (539 BC).

The rest of the references to Cyrus found in the book of Ezra show us how God put it in the mind of Cyrus to allow (grant) the Jews to return from Captivity to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. This he did while allowing them to bring back all the vessels from the temples that were taken by Nebuchadnezzar II. It was with the great treasures that they received back that allowed them to put into service the masons and carpenters etc... to commence this great task.

*Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, [he [is] the God,] which [is] in Jerusalem.*

*And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that [is] in Jerusalem*

*Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;*

*Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. Ezra 1: 3-4,7-8*

*They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia. Ezra 3:7*

*But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.*

*Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,*

*And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. Ezra 4: 3-5*

*But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon [the same] king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.*

*And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that [was] in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto [one], whose name [was] Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;*

*And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that [is] in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.*

*Then came the same Sheshbazzar, [and] laid the foundation of the house of God which [is] in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and [yet] it is not finished.*

*Now therefore, if [it seem] good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which [is] there at Babylon, whether it be [so], that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter. [Ezra 5: 13- 17](#)*

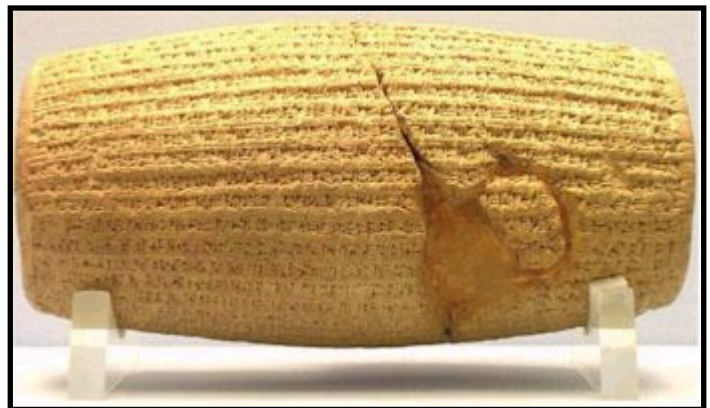
*In the first year of Cyrus the king [the same] Cyrus the king made a decree [concerning] the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, [and] the breadth thereof threescore cubits;*

*And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished [it], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. [Ezra 6: 3, 14](#)*

## **Archaeological References to Cyrus**

### **Cyrus Cylinder**

Cyrus was now master of an area stretching from the Mediterranean to eastern Iran and from the black sea to the borders of Arabia. It was with some justification, then, that in the so-called 'Cyrus Cylinder' (*housed at the British Museum*) - a barrel shaped clay cylinder inscribed in Babylonian cuneiform



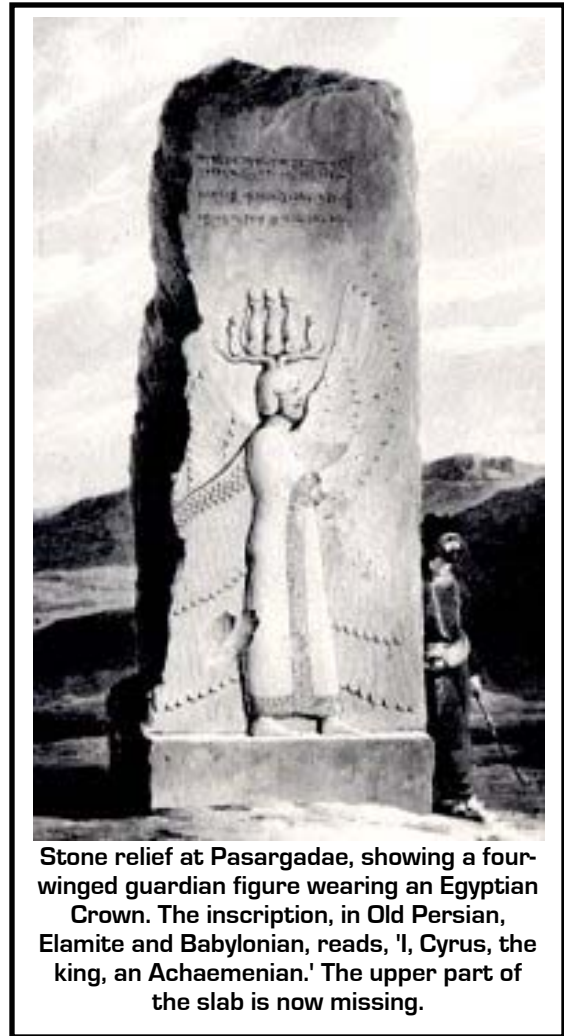
recording the capture of Babylon - Cyrus describes himself as the 'ruler of the world.' Cyrus also relates how he repatriated various peoples and restored the 'images' [of the gods] to their shrines. The Jews are not mentioned by name, but it is clear from the Book of Ezra (I, 1-3) that the captives deported by Nebuchadnezzar were at this time allowed to return

to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. This document was part of the doctrine which Cyrus sought to put into practice with a view to bringing peace to mankind, and later it was hailed as the first Charter of Human Rights. Although sections of the cylinder have been destroyed through time, the principal message of Cyrus' Declaration is readily apparent:

*"I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters, son of Cambyses, ...king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, ...descendant of Teispes, ...progeny of an unending royal line, whose rule Bel and Nabu cherish, whose kingship they desire for their hearts' pleasures.*

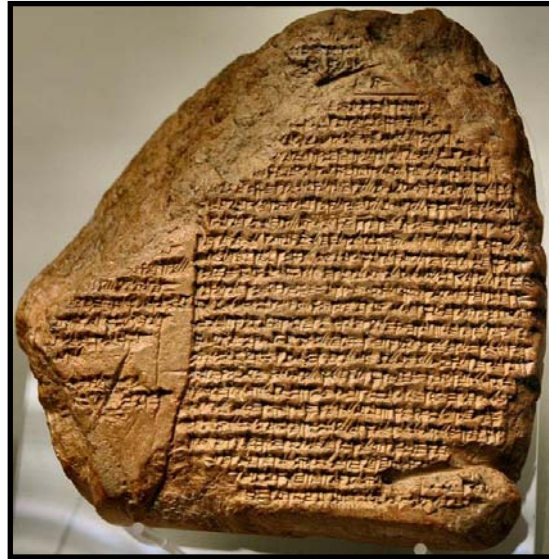
*When I, well-disposed, entered Babylon, I established the seat of government in the royal palace amidst jubilation and rejoicing. Marduk, the great God, caused the big-hearted inhabitants of Babylon to come to me. I sought daily to worship him. My numerous troops moved about undisturbed in the midst of Babylon. I did not allow any to terrorize the land of Sumer and Akkad. I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries to promote their well being. The citizens of Babylon ...their dilapidated dwellings I restored. I put an end to their misfortunes...*

*...the cities of Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnuna, the cities of Zamban, Meurnu, Der, as far as the region of the land of Gutium, the holy cities beyond the Tigris whose sanctuaries had been in ruins over a long period, the gods whose abode is in the midst of them, I returned to the places and housed them in lasting abodes. I gathered together all their inhabitants and restored to them their dwellings..."*



## *Chronicle of Nabonidus*

The Chronicle of Nabonidus tells us the story of the rule of the last king of independent Babylonia. The text is badly damaged and contains many lacunas. However, it makes clear that the rise of Cyrus was not unexpected. We meet him for the first time in Nabonidus' sixth year (=550 BCE), when he defeats the Median leader Astyages. A second reference can be found in year nine, when he defeats the king of a country that is probably to be identified with Lydia (547 BCE).



In addition, we learn that Nabonidus was not in Babylon for ten years. Instead, he seems to have tried to subject Arabia.

## *Historians on Cyrus*

### *Josephus*

*1. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city, that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity, and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them; for he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: "Thus saith Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea."*

*2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire*

*and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices.*

*3. When Cyrus had said this to the Israelites, the rulers of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites and priests, went in haste to Jerusalem; yet did many of them stay at Babylon, as not willing to leave their possessions; and when they were come thither, all the king's friends assisted them, and brought in, for the building of the temple, some gold, and some silver, and some a great many cattle and horses. So they performed their vows to God, and offered the sacrifices that had been accustomed of old time; I mean this upon the rebuilding of their city, and the revival of the ancient practices relating to their worship. Cyrus also sent back to them the vessels of God which king Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged out of the temple, and had carried to Babylon. So he committed these things to Mithridates, the treasurer, to be sent away, with an order to give them to Sanabassar, that he might keep them till the temple was built; and when it was finished, he might deliver them to the priests and rulers of the multitude, in order to their being restored to the temple.*  
*(Antiquities 11.1.2)*

## **Herodotus**

### ***Herodotus, Book I, para 189-191***

*[1.189] Cyrus on his way to Babylon came to the banks of the Gyndes, a stream which, rising in the Matienian mountains, runs through the country of the Dardanians, and empties itself into the river Tigris. The Tigris, after receiving the Gyndes, flows on by the city of Opis[i.e., Baghdad], and discharges its waters into the Erythraean sea [i.e., the Persian Gulf]. When Cyrus reached this stream, which could only be passed in boats, one of the sacred white horses accompanying his march, full of spirit and high mettle, walked into the water, and tried to cross by himself; but the current seized him, swept him along with it, and drowned him in its depths. Cyrus, enraged at the insolence of the river, threatened so to break its strength that in future even women should cross it easily without wetting their knees. Accordingly he put off for a time his attack on Babylon, and, dividing his army into two parts, he marked out by ropes one hundred and eighty trenches on each side of the Gyndes, leading off from it in all directions, and setting his army to dig, some on one side of the river, some*

*on the other, he accomplished his threat by the aid of so great a number of hands, but not without losing thereby the whole summer season.*

[1.190] *Having, however, thus wreaked his vengeance on the Gyndes, by dispersing it through three hundred and sixty channels, Cyrus, with the first approach of the ensuing spring, marched forward against Babylon. The Babylonians, encamped without their walls, awaited his coming. A battle was fought at a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian king, whereupon they withdrew within their defenses. Here they shut themselves up, and made light of his siege, having laid in a store of provisions for many years in preparation against this attack; for when they saw Cyrus conquering nation after nation, they were convinced that he would never stop, and that their turn would come at last.*

[1.191] *Cyrus was now reduced to great perplexity, as time went on and he made no progress against the place. In this distress either some one made the suggestion to him, or he bethought himself of a plan, which he proceeded to put in execution. **He placed a portion of his army at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough:** he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where [former queen] Nitocris dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly: **he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became fordable. Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the, river-side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man's thigh, and thus got into the town.** Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street gates which gave upon the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and so took the city. **Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare) long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt the capture but too certainly.** Such, then, were the circumstances of the first taking of Babylon."*

## Xenophon

Owing to the size of the place, states Xenophon, "...*the inhabitants of the central parts, long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had changed, but... continued dancing and reveling until they learnt of the capture.*" (*Cyropaedia of Xenophon; The Life of Cyrus the Great*)

## Also see:

**Ctesias of Cnidus** (*Greek physician who stayed at the court of the Persian king Artaxerxes II Mnemon from 404 to 398/397*)

### **Books 7-9: history of the Persian king Cyrus the Great**

**Fr.9 (= Photius, *Summary* #72.1-6):** §1, Cyrus the Great dethrones Astyages; §2, the Bactrians surrender to Cyrus; §3, Cyrus' war against the Sacae; §4, Cyrus' war against king Croesus of Lydia; §5, Cyrus' miraculous disappearance from captivity; §6, death and burial of Astyages.

### **Book 10: history of the Persian king Cyrus the Great**

**Fr.9 (= Photius, *Summary* #72.7):** §7, Cyrus defeats the Indian Derbices.

### **Book 11: history of the Persian king Cyrus the Great**

**Fr.9 (= Photius, *Summary* #72.8):** §8, death of Cyrus.

## Cyrus- Type of Jesus Christ

There is no doubt that Cyrus the Great was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ (*A type is a divinely purposed illustration of some truth later revealed*). This can be shown in so many different ways which we will show now.

As was earlier mentioned in looking at the meaning of name Cyrus, this in itself indicates he was a type of Christ. Three different references provide three different meanings of the name. In Smith's Bible Dictionary, it says that "Cyrus" means "the sun", S-U-N. We know from Malachi 4:2 that the word "sun" is applied to Christ:

*"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Mal. 4:2*

And another verse in Luke 1 that refers to Christ:

*"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us" Luke 1:78*

The word "dayspring" here means the "sun-rising".



Eureka by John Thomas and Ministry of the Prophets by Robert Roberts both have the meaning of Cyrus as “like the heir” – H-E-I-R.

Scripture also tells us that Christ is the heir:

*“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” Heb. 1:1,2*

Also, in the parable of the householder in Matthew 21, Christ is the son and heir:

*“But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.” Matt 21:38*

Finally, a third meaning of Cyrus has been listed as “possess thou the furnace”. In Isaiah 31:9, we read:

*“And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire [is] in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.” Isa. 31:9*

We see from Isaiah 11:10 that Christ is the ensign:

*“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.” Isa. 11:10*

and we know from Psalm 48 that Jerusalem is the city of the great king. Christ will possess or rule over Jerusalem, in which we have read in Isa 31:9 is the furnace of the ensign.

Also, if we look at Egypt being the furnace, as it is often called an “iron furnace” in scripture, we know that

*“And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal [it]; and they shall return [even] to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.” Isa. 19:22*

Christ will be the arm of Yahweh to smite Egypt, and in this way he will possess the iron furnace.

When we look at what is said of Cyrus in Isaiah 44 and 45, we can match the description with that of Christ to clearly see the type.

Isaiah 44:28 reads:

*"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." Isa 44:28*

Cyrus being called a shepherd is a very obvious allusion to Jesus Christ. We read about Christ as a shepherd in Ezek. 34:23:

*"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, [even] my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." Ezek. 34:23*

Also Hebrews 13 calls Jesus Christ the "great shepherd of the sheep" in verse 20.

John 10 contains the parable of the good shepherd where Jesus identifies himself as the shepherd.

Also, 1 Peter 2 reads:

*"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 Pet. 2:25*

It is said that Cyrus will perform the pleasure of God. This connects with Isa. 53:10:

*"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand." Isa. 53:10*

Isaiah prophesies that Cyrus will lay the foundation of the temple. First of all, Christ will lead in the rebuilding of the literal temple:

*"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name [is] The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:" Zech. 6:12*

And in a spiritual sense, Christ IS the foundation of a spiritual temple:

*"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:" Eph. 2:20-21*

Isaiah 45 continues the description of Cyrus in verse 1:

*"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;" Isa. 45:1*

This is the only place in scripture where the term "his anointed" is applied to a heathen king. This should therefore prepare our minds that he is a type. We know throughout scripture that Christ is God's anointed, that he is the "Messiah" (which means "anointed").

Isaiah says that Cyrus' right hand was held by God. God also holds Christ's hand in Isaiah 42:

*"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;" Isa. 42:6*

God would "subdue nations before him", meaning Cyrus. We know that to be the case with Christ:

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt 28: 18*

The term "loosing the loins of kings" was fulfilled in Daniel 5:6, where it is said that *"the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."*

When Isaiah 45:1 says that the gates will be open before Cyrus, and not be shut, this can refer to many things in association with Christ. In reference to the New Jerusalem in Revelation, it is said that:

*"the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Rev. 21:25*

Very often the grave is spoken of as "the gate of the grave", such as in Isa. 38:10:

*"I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years." Isa. 38:10*

or in Job 38:17:

*“Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?...” Job 38:17*

But Christ opens the gates of the grave:

*“...all that are in the graves shall hear his voice” John 5:28*

We now move on to verse 2 of Isaiah 45:

*“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.” Isa. 45:2*

The first thought we may have when we read of the crooked places being made straight before him is John the Baptist. BUT these words have a slightly different meaning. Both Strong's and Gesenius give the meaning of “large, or swollen due to pride”. Gesenius reads here “I will level the lofty places”. We know that Christ will abase the pride of men.

The breaking in pieces of the gates of brass, and the cutting in sunder of the bars of iron can refer to a few things. The word translated “break in pieces” is usually used for smashing idols or statues. The bars could refer to a bolt or bar to shut a door, and therefore could refer to the bars of the earth [the grave]. Also, metaphorically speaking, the bars of iron could refer to princes, since they guard the state. In either case, Christ will break each of these bars, whether they be the grave, or princes of the earth. And we know that brass and iron represent Greece and Rome in scripture and that Christ at his return will smash Nebuchadnezzar's image which includes the brass and iron elements of Greece and Rome.

Isaiah 45:3 reads:

*“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.” Isa 45:3*

The treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places could refer to a number of things. They could refer to literal wealth, in which case this is given to Christ in Isa. 60:

*“Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that [men] may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and [that] their kings [may be] brought.” Isa 60:11*

The “forces” of the Gentiles here is their wealth. And notice the reference to open gates again here.

The treasures of darkness could also be metaphorical for the saints, since we are told *"precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of all his saints" (Psa. 116:15)*, and we know that the redeemed saints will rise from the darkness of the grave.

Another way of looking at this metaphorically is in terms of the forces of nature. Jeremiah says that God brings forth the wind out of His treasures [Jer. 10:13; 51:16], and Job is asked if he had ever entered into the treasures of the snow [Job 38:22].

In Ezek 38:22, we can see that forces of nature are connected with Jesus Christ's judgment upon Gog:

*"I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that [are] with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Ezek. 38:22*

In Isaiah 45:4, we are told that God surnamed Cyrus although he did not know him. Cyrus was called by name in Isaiah before he was even born. This can be compared with the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 1:31:

*"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." Lk 1:31*

Finally we will look at the connection between Cyrus and Christ in verse 13 of Isaiah 45:

*"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts." Isa 45:13*

The term "raised him up" means "to awake, incite". In Isa. 50 which is a messianic prophecy we read:

*"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to [him that is] weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Isa. 50:4*

The word translated "righteousness" has about 4 or 5 meanings, but the one we will focus on now is the meaning of "liberation". Gesenius translates this phrase in Isa. 45 as *"I have raised him up that he might come with deliverance"*. In reference to Christ, we read Gesenius' translation in Isa. 42:6:

*"I have called thee with deliverance, that thou mayest come with deliverance..." Isa. 42:6 [Gesenius]*

Of Cyrus it is said that he "shall let go my captives".

There are three sense in which Christ will let captives go. In the first sense, Jews will be gathered from the dispersion:

*"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this [is] his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." Jer. 23:5-8*

Secondly, we have already seen how Christ will let captives go from the grave:

*"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein [is] no water." Zech. 9:11*

*"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein [is] no water." Isa 61:1*

*"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:15*

Finally, Jesus Christ will free the captives from the false religious system of Babylon.

In a general sense, both Cyrus and Christ conquer Babylon, restore captives, rebuild Jerusalem and lay the foundation of the temple. Just as literal Babylon fell in one night, spiritual Babylon will fall in one day:

*"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong [is] the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev. 18:8*

Cyrus' policy was to appoint sub-rulers, and we know from Rev. 5:10 that the saints will reign under Christ as kings and priests.

*"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. 5:10*

### **Death Of Cyrus**

Throughout his reign, Cyrus was continually preoccupied with his eastern frontiers. Nine years after the conquest of Babylon he was killed in battle, though the circumstances of his death are not clear. Cyrus' body was brought back to Pasargadae in Iran; his tomb, which still exists, consists of a single chamber built



on a foundation course of six steps. According to Arrian (AD c. 96-180), the body was placed in a golden sarcophagus, and the tomb, as Plutarch (AD 46-120) reports bore the inscription:

*"O, man, whoever thou art and whensoever thou comest, for I know that thou wilt come, I am Cryus, and I won for the Persians their empire. Do not, therefore, begrudge me this little earth which covers my body"*