

## Greater than Cyrus

- ✓1- What preceded and precipitated the fall of Jerusalem and Israel's dispersion to Babylon, yet with **hope** and promise of returning to their temple.
- ✓2- Who was Cyrus and the forces that would conquer Babylon.
- ✓3- Prophetic events and dating the fall of Babylonian as linking the crossroads between Bible and secular history and chronology.
- ✓4- Importance to Israel of the Cyrus decree and the **Greater than Cyrus** now.

☛ Long before Cyrus were some words from Jeremiah. They were penned from Egypt after he was carried out of Israel along with the fleeing remnant of revolutionaries after the death of Gedaliah. The remainder were taken **to** Babylon. Yet here was a promised thread of **hope** for one day to retrace **from** Babylon.

*Jer. 50:5-8 "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. ... Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks."*

☛ Jeremiah had witnessed the rise of Babylon, that great power with roots way back in history. Sadly, Israel had forsaken the God who had brought them forth out of Egypt and the spirit of the Mosaic Law.

The Lord was about to allow them to learn the full consequences of their wayward course.

The Spirit of the Lord was transporting the mind of Jeremiah to a time **beyond his day** and this sad hour of Israel's history. Israel's long removal to Babylon was just beginning. He was given a glimpse of the time when this process would be reversed. But because of the long years to ensue, many would forget their way back to Zion by another generation of visionaries.

☛ Jeremiah had the writings of Isaiah from more than a century earlier. The clues are in **Isaiah 13<sup>th</sup>** chapter with a message for the Babylon of his day and the Babylon of the last days.

Here are verses 1, 4, 5, 11 & 13:

*The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.*

*The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.*

*They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.*

*Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*

"Behold", the Lord says in verse 17, "I will stir up the **Medes** against them."

What a remarkable prophecy, for at the time of these words the **Medes** were themselves a subject people under the **Assyrians**. And **Persia** was not even a major empire or contender in the days of Isaiah. Yet Isaiah revealed the name of the man that would rise from **Persia**, surpass **Media** and then form an alliance with those Medes to end Israel's 70 years with Babylon.

Every few centuries there appears on the stage of history one who truly makes a difference for humanity.

The coming of **Cyrus** resulted in the downfall of Babylon and the recovery of Israel. Again in Isaiah 45, the prophet was prompted to speak of **Cyrus** as the Lord's "**Anointed**", His "Messiah" or in the Greek version of the Scriptures, His "Christ." Isa. 45:1-4

*"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."***

This prophetic Cyrus was not even yet born in Isaiah's day. Cyrus was born about 580 BC, some 250 years after Isaiah, then rose to power even in the shadow of the Medes. Then he turned away from Media and formed his own Persian kingdom. With intermarriages he formed an alliance known as the **Medo-Persian empire**. He was a Persian king for 30 years from 559-529BC.

Revealing his name before his birth is no reason to doubt the Isaiah text. The Greek form of the name Cyrus is *Kurios* meaning "Lord." In Persian it has the meaning of "**like the Sun**."

Here is the Lord's anointed for the prophetic work. Here was the God of the Jews calling him **His shepherd**, and promising him victory over Babylon and deliverance of Israel.

But the Lord was, of course, using Cyrus to demonstrate His own great wisdom, foresight and power over the kings of the earth.

So now Jeremiah lived to see his people taken and the land desolated for their unfaithfulness according to the prophecies. The **land** must now enjoy its designated Sabbaths because Israel neglected the ordinance of Sabbaths and Jubilees.

Jeremiah watched from afar. But he didn't live to see this Cyrus who was revealed to Isaiah.

Still his own prophetic visions forecast the judgment upon the oppressor of his people.

Babylon would be overthrown his people delivered by the Great Cyrus.

Their release from Babylon and return to their own land was a remarkable period in history, yet not half so remarkable as the greater deliverance it prefigured, a deliverance in this our day.

Only the ruined walls of Babylon remained in the days of the apostle John on Patmos, yet in vision he saw another Babylon rise again. He watched, a further captivity take place and then a wonderful reversal of these events under the direction of another "**Anointed**" of Jehovah, the "**Christ**", of whom **Cyrus** was but a figure.

As Jeremiah saw the rise of that ancient power of Babylon, so the John class of this age, the Church, saw the rise of this same old system of religious and temporal power only in a new, more formidable form.

Hyslop, in his "*Two Babylons*" demonstrated just how apt the title of "Babylon" is to describe the great **church-state system** of another age. The great Papal system made war against the saints and overcome them, just as did Nebuchadnezzar against the Jews of old.

Let us walk through the events of this ancient transfer of power and see how those bound by the rivers of Babylon found their freedom, and how the greater than Cyrus has freed his people in these end times. Here was a man of courage, determination and even faith in his destiny. . . .

The principle historical sources for information come to us from Greek historians: **Herodotus**, **Xenophon** and **Ctesias** who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC within ear shot of the events.

Here is what we can piece together as authentic and in accord with the scriptures:

After his dynasty was recognized in Asia Minor, Cyrus moved westward to subdue the last holdouts against his domain: Babylon and its supporters was the first universal empire of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of glory.

In Daniel's dream of **the Ram** the **Persian horn** became higher than the **Median horn**.

Cyrus the Persian came against the Babylonian Empire. For a short time he arranged a co-regency to coexist with Media who would soon die of its own accord anyway. Yet it is regarded as the **Medo-Persian empire**. It was shown in the chest and 2 arms of silver in the great image and as **the ram with 2 horns** in Dan 8:3 "*But one horn was higher than the other*".

It occupied the world stage for 200 years until Alexander the Great of Greece superseded Persia.

Early in the year that we reckon as **540 BC**, Cyrus stood at the gates of that last western frontier. But Babylon was not invaded immediately. This year was spent in consolidating allies, resources and securing vows of support and removing the last resistance for a final assault on the fortress of Babylon.

Briefly here are some events of this year: We will quote only 3 from Xenophon:

☛ [7.4.1] Then the Carians fell into strife and civil war with one another; they were intrenched in strongholds, and both sides called upon Cyrus for assistance. So while Cyrus himself stayed in Sardis to make siege-engines and battering rams to demolish the walls of such as should refuse to submit...

☛ [7.4.12] **Cyrus, leaving behind a large garrison of foot-soldiers, started from Sardis in company with Croesus; and he took with him many wagons loaded with valuables of every sort.** And Croesus also had come with an accurate inventory of what was in each wagon; and as he handed the lists to Cyrus he said: "From this, Cyrus, you may know who renders to you in full that of which he has charge and who does not."

☛ [7.4.16] **On the way to Babylon he subdued Greater Phrygia and Cappadocia and reduced the Arabians to submission. From all these he secured armor for not less than forty thousand Persian horsemen,** and many horses taken from the prisoners he distributed among all the divisions of his allies. And **thus he arrived before Babylon with a great host of cavalry, and a great host of bowmen and spearmen, and a multitude of slingers that was beyond number.**

**Now coming to the year we know as 539,** there is much to do before entering under the city gates. Nearly another year is used to construct a grand strategy.

We continue with Xenophon's record:

[7.5.7] **When they had encamped, Cyrus called together his staff-officers and said: “Friends and allies, we have viewed the city on every side. But I am sure I cannot see how any one could take by storm walls so massive and so high...”**

[7.5.8] **“But,”** said Chrysantas, **“does not this river flow through the midst of the city? And it is more than two stadia in width.”** ... Aye,” said Gobryas, **“and ... so that the city is better defended by the river than by its walls.”**

[7.5.9] **“Chrysantas,”** Cyrus answered, **“we must apportion the work among ourselves as quickly as possible, to each contingent its proper share, and dig a ditch as wide and as deep as possible.”**

[7.5.10] Accordingly, **he took measurements in a circle round about the city,** leaving just enough room by the river for the erection of large towers, **and began on either side of the city to dig an immense trench;** and the earth from it they threw up on their own side of the ditch.

[7.5.11] First of all, he began to build towers by the river, **laying his foundations with the trunks of date-palms** not less than a hundred feet long...

[7.5.12] These he used as “mud-sills,” in order that, even if the river should break into his trench above, it might not carry his towers away.

[7.5.15] **At last the ditches were completed.** Then, when he heard that **a certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink** and revel all night long, Cyrus took a large number of men, just as soon as it was dark, and **opened up the heads of the trenches at the river.**

[7.5.16] **As soon as that was done, the water flowed down through the ditches in the night,** and the bed of the river, where it traversed the city, became passable for men.

[7.5.17] **When the problem of the river was thus solved, Cyrus gave orders to his Persian colonels, infantry and cavalry,** to marshal their regiments two abreast and come to him, and the rest, the allies, to follow in their rear, drawn up as before.

[7.5.18] They came, according to orders, and **he bade his aides, both foot and horse, get into the dry channel of the river and see if it was possible to march in the bed of the river.**

[7.5.19] And when they brought back word that it was, he called together the generals of both infantry and cavalry and spoke as follows:

[7.5.20] **“My friends,”** said he, **“the river has made way for us and given us an entrance into the city. Let us, therefore, enter in with dauntless hearts, fearing nothing** and remembering that those against whom we are now to march are the same men that we have repeatedly defeated, when they were all drawn up in battle line with their allies at their side, and **when they were all wide awake and sober and fully armed;**

[7.5.21] whereas now **we are going to fall upon them at a time when many of them are asleep, many drunk, and none of them in battle array.** And when they find out that we are inside the walls, in their panic fright they will be much more helpless still than they are now.”

Well you know the rest of the story and confirmed by the histories.

Here is the historical precedent for Jesus' words in Matt 24:42-50 and also Rev 18:2

~ The thief and the householder and the sentence upon mystical Babylon.

☛ Dan. 5 records Belshazzar feasting, when the fingers of a man's hand mysteriously appeared and wrote unintelligible letters on the plaster wall. When the astrologers and magicians could not discern the meaning, Daniel was called before the King and promised a golden chain, a royal robe and the third ruler in the kingdom if he could divine the meaning.

But Daniel declined the offer and said for him keep the gifts and give the rewards to others.

Still Daniel gave the meaning: **Numbered, Numbered, Weight, Divided.**

“Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians”

That night the Cyrus forces entered the city on October 29 without resistance and slew this magistrate. But why is victory given to the **Medes** and **Persians**? And why does **Dan 5:31** say: “*And Darius the Median took (Hebrew: received) the kingdom, being about 62 years old*” ?

☛ Well the Cyrus operations were not independent of Media. And there is a clue in the correct Hebrew rendering: “Darius the Mede **received** the kingdom...” He was not the military general and strategist. But he **received the appointment** and recognition in sharing the throne.

As noted by Keil & Delitzsch, Barnes, Clarke, Gill and JFB: Cyrus had previously risen to fame, not by mastering and subduing the Medes, but by striking a **coalition by marriage of a Median daughter** and thus sealing an agreement of honor as long as his uncle by marriage should live. It seems Cyrus' own father, Cambyses, did the same in marrying the Median daughter of Astyages.

Students of the text say: “This was Cyaxares, son of Astyages, king of Media, and maternal uncle to Cyrus, who allowed him the title of his conquests, as long as he lived.”

✓ **This was the Biblical Darius the Mede** who was allowed rulership to continue his title while **Cyrus the Persian** consolidated his kingdom. Darius was **62** while Cyrus was but **41** years old.

✓ **Darius and Cyrus were not the same person.** As we noted in Dan 8:3

“*the two horns were high; but **one was higher** than the other, and **the higher came up last**”*

So this **Cyrus-Persian** horn would surpass the **Darius-Media** horn.

☛ Daniel prospered in **both** the reigns of Darius **and** in the reign of Cyrus. Dan 6:28,

☛ We notice in Dan 9:1 that **only the first year** of this Darius (of his rule in Babylon) is recorded as the son of **Ahasuerus**, being a title for Median **Astyages**. His son being **Cyaxares** that we know with the Biblical name of **Darius**. Notice the expression that he was “*made (appointed) king over the realm.*” This is the same as **having received** the kingdom in 5:31. This was part of the wisdom of Cyrus, who was biding his own time. Darius was part of the old family.

☛ Here is how I understand the **family trees**:

For this reason many students note these words of Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* history:

[8.5.17] **As they continued their march and came near to Media, Cyrus turned aside to visit Cyaxares. ... the first thing Cyrus told Cyaxares was that a palace had been selected for him in Babylon, and official headquarters, so that he might occupy a residence of his own whenever he came there; ...**

[8.5.18] **Cyaxares ... then introduced to him his daughter, who brought him a golden crown and bracelets and a necklace and the most beautiful Median robe that could be found.**

[8.5.19] **As the princess placed the crown on Cyrus's head, Cyaxares said, “And the maiden herself, my own daughter, I offer you as well, Cyrus, to be your wife. Your father married my father's daughter, whose son you are. ... And with her I offer you all Media as a dowry, for I have no legitimate male issue.”**

☛ History is agreed that the city walls of Babylon fell late in **539**.

But that is not the point of prophecy. We have not yet come to “the **first year of Cyrus**.”

☛ Darius assumed the throne as a weak caretaker in a transition government.

His counselors arrange for Daniel’s night with the lions (Dan. 6)

His first year covered most of what we call our calendar **year 538**. Daniel 9:2 records that he now understood by the book the number of **70 years** for the desolations of Jerusalem. **The land must rest for longer than any 50th Jubilee cycle** of which they had earlier neglected or compromised. It was resting for 70 years, for both those only inadequately kept in the past, plus the remainder until the true Messiah would introduce the **Millennial Sabbath** with a release from bondage.

**A full second year is never ascribed to Darius** in Babylon.

As Daniel had nothing more to record of his second year, it is noted that this older of the 2 rulers died and never completed a second year in Babylon.

☛

✓ For this reason Jewish history considers the **first year of Cyrus** as a **sole regency in Babylon** beginning late in **537 until Autumn of 536**. It was with this first inaugural year that Cyrus made his **amnesty** decree of Ezra 1:1-4 and 2Chron 36:22-23. This was a **banner year** for Jews.

Numerous historians mark the significance of this event in this year. Here is one of many:

**Easton’s Bible Dictionary**, 1893-1897

*The “first year of Cyrus” (Ezra 1:1) is not the year of his elevation to power over the Medes, nor over the Persians, nor the year of the fall of Babylon, but the year succeeding the two years during which “Darius the Mede” was viceroy in Babylon after its fall. At this time only (B.C. 536) Cyrus became actual king over Palestine, which became a part of his Babylonian empire. The edict of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem Marked a great epoch in the history of the Jewish people (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4; 4:3; 5:13-17; 6:3-5).*

Essentially the same is presented by:

McClintock & Strong, Cyclopeda

Henry Browne: *Ordo Seclorum*, Chronology of the Holy Scriptures. London 1844

Smith’s Bible Dictionary

Fausset’s Bible Dictionary

So it had been more than 3 years since Cyrus first marched into the empire of Babylon.

☛

✓ This year of Cyrus was the **lynchpin** between all the Bible dating and subsequent secular history. It is used as a reliable date in history beyond which the Bible does not give us direct links ...

☛

Now it will be noted that this first year of sole regency of Cyrus is regarded in Hebrew archives as “*The first year of Cyrus king of Persia*” Ezra 1:1.

This verse introduces the records that were also a part of the State Documents of Persia.

Verses 2-4 record the amnesty decree allowing Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. It became the legal document that surfaced some years later in the Persian library under another Darius (Hystaspes) when fear and opposition stopped the work for a time.

The events are recorded in Ezra **4:1-4, 24; 5:12-14; 6:1-5**

The account in 2Chron 36:18-22 began with first removing the vessels and burning the temple **until** the decree to restore those vessels and restore the temple. This window of time is said “*To **fulfil** the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, **until** the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to **fulfill threescore and ten years.**”*

Jeremiah prophesied of 70 years for faulty Sabbaths recorded in Jer 25:11 and 29:10 and the desolation of Jerusalem for Sabbath failure is further noted in Jer 17:27 and 34:17, 22.

Now I know these texts have been micro analyzed for all the Hebrew grammatical forms of verbs, articles, prepositions, etc., and separating the prophecies to different 70 year terms.

✓ But regardless of the efforts to accommodate secular history and pagan records, I see Jeremiah’s prophecies consistent with the singular divine judgments of Lev. 26:33-35 and that the State records of Chronicles and Persia were that the decree of Cyrus was to complete a singular judgment of 70 years against the **land** and thus the **throne** and **population**.

\* It must extend to the first and singular reign to Cyrus, not Darius.

I know it has been customary to reach further back in history and consider some other ancient secular dates as also reliable and from other events to reason that some Bible accounts should be read differently. That proposes a **shorter** time from the **desolating** of the land until Cyrus, or a shorter period of the **Judges** or fewer years in the **kings** of Israel. . . But —

Christ returned at the right year in the chain of history and prophecy beginning the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

\* And so the end-time event confirms the steps leading to it.

☛ Christ, the *Lord of the Sabbath*, the **greater than Cyrus**, has also returned to us just 6000 years since the eviction and exile from Eden began human bondage to the Prince of this world.

The “*times of restitution*” occur at the antitypical Jubilee, the greater Sabbath.

I am convinced that just as ancient Cyrus was the turning point between the **Sacred chain** of history and the Prophetic link to a **Secular record**...

The antitypical Cyrus has now returned in and is the link between the past secular history that has now introduced the grand prophetic **Sabbatic year**, the year of Jubilee, the sacred Millennial day. Christ’s second advent, introduces this 7<sup>th</sup> day.

These events are **connected**.

We understand the “*times of restitution*” **begin with the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium, the year of Jubilee.**

Apostle Peter described this day in his second letter, chapter 3, as the day of his *parousia*, the day when the ecclesiastical heavens and the civil earth face the judgmental fires even while they are willingly ignorant of the cause. Peter saw the **day of the Lord** as a singular prophetic day:

☛ “*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this ONE thing, that ONE day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as ONE day.*”

He was looking toward this day in which the heavens are dissolved and bringing in the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Not that it will be ONLY righteousness, but it will prevail. Truth will purge the darkness.

He does not see it as **two days** or anything more or less than **1000 years**.

The book of Jeremiah opens in the last 11<sup>th</sup> year of King Zedekiah and he prophecies in 1:10

“*I have **this day** set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to **build, and to plant.**”*

It is the work of ONE day to both **destroy** and to **plant**.



At first he is just seen as the **General of Jehovah**. Yet he is the real power of the new Kingdom. The householder did not know what to do with this intruder, but felt secure within his walls.

The supposed thief came in an hour that surprised him. His house is being broken up.

He used just 3½ years in gathering his allies and associates,  
while the world could only see the aging kingdoms of this world.

☛ He delivered the message: Rev 18:2-4 *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. ...*

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.**”* So it has been since 1878.

☛ But then this same antitypical Cyrus, **the anointed**, exercised his singular power of the throne. Here is the greater call and release foreseen by Isaiah and Jeremiah for Jews to flee Babylon. When the new King sat on his throne, the “Israelites Indeed” could return to their homeland, rebuild the temple with the gold and silver vessels of divine truths.

☛ +

The 7 angels come out of the antitypical temple, clothed in white linen and with the 7 last plagues.

Under his rule the apocalyptic plagues complete the dive wrath and dry of the river Euphrates that the way of the **kings of the east** might be prepared (Rev 16:12).

At the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet the kingdom of this world become our Lord’ and his anointed. Because he has taken his great power and reigned. The nations are angry, the dead are judged, the saints are rewarded and the destroyers of the earth are destroyed (Rev 11:15-18). It is the day of the Lord. All this could not happen until the Lord of the Sabbath returned to administer this new day.

☛ **We are living and grand and awesome times.**

When I was young I heard the old-timers say that we are awake and watching the dawn of the new day with the sun rising, while the world sleeps in the dark of their own nightmares.

**It is later than the sleepers think or want it to be.**

☛+ We see our King is marching on. He has arrived at the times of restitution with healing in his wings for those who welcome the king. (Mal. 4:2). The resurrection of the sleeping saints are awakened. But for those who do not accept the king, he is felt as a flaming sword.

Such was also the lot of those who **either bow to Cyrus or those who do not.**

It inspired me to watch the signs of this new day and rejoice. . . .



Yet some may **question** if it is **earlier** than we thought rather than **later**.

Are we still waiting for the new day? Maybe the Millennial day has not begun...

**Is this not the year of Jubilee?** ... Has the **Lord of the Sabbath** arrived before the Sabbath?

This is specious or fallacious reasoning.

The Jubilee - Sabbath is introduced with trauma on the old order.

The “Arm of Jehovah” is also the King and introducing the new order.

☛ **The king is at the gates.**

Even all Israel is not aware that it is the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah** that has opened the way.

... Nor are all aware today of the new King and Kingdom.

Some are waiting for the sunlight to flood the earth. Others are awake as the sun is already rising.

It is **not earlier** than you thought nor are we still waiting for the dawn of the millennial day.





Now it is not altogether without notice that the **Greater than Cyrus** returned in 1874. In 3-½ years of his presence as king, he took his great power to reject the house of Babylon in 1878. And just as Israel had endured 70 years removal from the land, so from 1878 there were also 70 years in returning them from the diaspora **to possess their land** in 1948.

And just as God arranged that 19 years to follow the last typical Jubilee before Jerusalem fell and the crown removed...

So also there was just 19 years following 1948 until Jerusalem returned as a united city in Israel in 1967.

It is **later** than some think !! Six days are past.

The seventh is already rising with the Jubilee trumpet.

As with King David, who defeated his enemies, waited in Hebron where some of his own stood with him, while even others questioned his kingship which had already began.

**Be not be the last to welcome back the King.** David's reign is counted from his anointing in Hebron and not later when the nation decided to accept him and move to Jerusalem.

The **Greater than Cyrus** has entered the gates and upset the drunken tables of Babylon, just as he did in his first advent.



He has made his decree to flee Babylon and **return to his temple with vessels of present truth.** The Lord of the Sabbath is ushering in the grand Sabbatic Year.

Six days are past. The year of Jubilee has come.

Let us carefully bear the vessels of the Lord with the sacred truths once delivered to the saints, and now restored to Zion.

The harvest message of present truth is in those vessels.