



Heroes and Villains: Cyrus: G-d's Anointed One (8:30 PM)

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*Dedicated by Dr. Ellen Warner and Dr. Jeff Lipton
in honour of the December/Tevet birthdays of their children Eiran and Nechama*

1. Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel Before Bilateral Meeting, Mar. 5 '18
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-prime-minister-netanyahu-israel-bilateral-meeting-2/>

I want to tell you that the Jewish people have a long memory. So we remember the proclamation of the great King Cyrus the Great — Persian King. Twenty-five hundred years ago, he proclaimed that the Jewish exiles in Babylon can come back and rebuild our temple in Jerusalem. We remember, 100 years ago, Lord Balfour, who issued the Balfour Proclamation that recognized the rights of the Jewish people in our ancestral homeland.

We remember seventy years ago, President Harry S. Truman was the first leader to recognize the Jewish state. And we remember how a few weeks ago, President Donald J. Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Mr. President, this will be remembered by our people throughout the ages. And as you just said, others talked about it. You did it.

2. Tara Isabella Burton, *The biblical story the Christian right uses to defend Trump*, Mar. 5 '18
<https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/3/5/16796892/trump-cyrus-christian-right-bible-cbn-evangelical-propaganda>

The comparison comes up frequently in the evangelical world. Many evangelical speakers and media outlets compare Trump to Cyrus, a historical Persian king who, in the sixth century BCE, conquered Babylon and ended the Babylonian captivity, a period during which Israelites had been forcibly resettled in exile. This allowed Jews to return to the area now known as Israel and build a temple in Jerusalem.

The Story

3. The Decree of Cyrus Ezra 1:1-4 (1815)
4. Another version Ezra 6:3-5 (1825)
5. Action Ezra 1:5-11 (1815)
6. The return of the Temple vessels <http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/873680/>

What motivated Cyrus?

7. Elias Bickerman, *The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 65:3 (1946)
Since there was a return from the Captivity under Cyrus, the king must have issued a proclamation summoning the Exiles to go back to Jerusalem. But it is another question whether the text of the proclamation is trustworthy as given by the Chronicler or has been more or less altered from its original form by the hagiographer.

8. The 70 Year Prediction Jeremiah 25:8-14 (1129), Jeremiah 27:1-22 (1133-1135)
9. The Chosen One Isaiah 44:24-45:7 (1033-1035)
10. An introduction to Isaiah <http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/891725/>

11. The Cyrus Cylinder, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



12. Professor Lucas Schulte, *Good Public Relations: What Persian Propaganda Tells Us About the 'Nehemiah Memoir'*

<http://asorblog.org/2016/11/02/what-persian-propaganda-tells-us/>

Inscriptions ranging from the first Persian king, Cyrus, through Artaxerxes in the book of Nehemiah, reveal elements in common in both Babylonian and Egyptian texts. The Cyrus Cylinder describes a Babylonian god, Marduk, choosing Cyrus to rule kindly over the Babylonians as "King of Babylon." This inscription demonstrates important Persian propaganda innovation: they used the language (in this case, Babylonian cuneiform), inscription style (foundational cylinders that had been used for centuries), local gods (Marduk and Nabu), and the local royal title ("King of Babylon") of their subject peoples. No previous kings in the ancient Near East had used this combination of methods! Chapters 40-55 of the book of Isaiah depict a similar image of Cyrus in a Judean religious context: [G-d] gives Cyrus authority over Judah and the nations, and Cyrus is even given the royal title of "messiah."

13. Manipulating kings

Nevuchadnezzar	Jeremiah 27:6-8 (1135)
Cyrus	Isaiah 45:4 (1033)

14. Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, Commentary to Exodus 25:39

Regarding the king of Assyria, Kings II 19:7 says, "I will place a spirit in him... and he will return to his land." Regarding Cyrus, "G-d awakened the spirit of Cyrus" to allow Israel to ascend to Jerusalem... In all of these verses, the spirit is not the intellectual foundation, but the force moving the will to a deed that is ethically good or bad.