

Cyrus the Great GOD'S INSTRUMENT

Isaiah 44:28-45:13

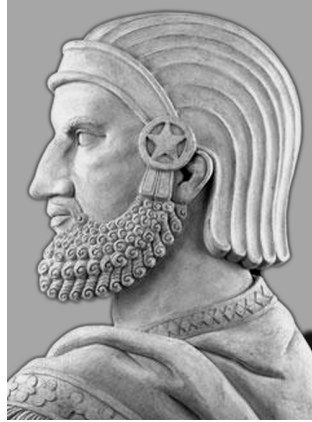
The Persian ruler Cyrus the Great played a key role in the history of Israel. Following the Babylonian captivity, God stirred the heart of this pagan ruler so that he willingly allowed a remnant of Israelites to return to the land to build the Second Temple (*Ezra chapter 1*).

God had promised that after seventy years had been accomplished, He would cause His people to return to their land (*Jer. 29:10*). Cyrus was His instrument to make all of this happen. The prophet Isaiah mentioned Cyrus by name in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1.

Why is this significant? At the time that Isaiah wrote this prophecy, Cyrus did not even exist on the earth. In fact, Cyrus would not be born until more than a hundred years after Isaiah gave this prophecy. God called him by name more than a century before he even was given his name! This is a chief reason why unbelieving scholars insist that Isaiah could not have written this portion of the book of Isaiah. How could Isaiah have known about a Persian king who would not even be born until long after his own death?

It is true that Isaiah could not have known this, but the omniscient God certainly knew all about Cyrus long before he was born. God knew what his name would be, even as He knew each one of us long before we were born (and died for us before we were born). It was not Isaiah that spoke about Cyrus, but God: "Thus saith the LORD" (*Isa. 45:1*). Isaiah was merely the penman, the prophet, God's mouthpiece. In the very next chapter God explains how He is able to do this: "I am God, and there is none like Me, **declaring the end from the beginning**" (*Isa. 46:9-10*). **Foretelling people and events is not a problem to our great God!**

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org



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