

ISAIAH 41-53

Introduction

Cyrus The Great, of Persia



As an introduction to the next 12 chapters of Isaiah, it is important to write about King Cyrus of Persia. The next 12 chapters make reference to him. He is seen as a Righteous Warrior, of temporal salvation. There is also a Servant Figure (like Moses or David), of spiritual salvation, who can be seen in what Bernhard Duhn (1892) termed the “Servant Songs”. These “Songs” can be found in:

Isaiah 42: 1-9

Isaiah 49:1-12

Isaiah 50:4-9

Isaiah 52 & Isaiah 53

These songs have strong reference to qualities of the coming Messiah. A Messianic view of Christ is portrayed in these visions of the Ideal Davidic, Chosen King/Suffering Servant. Christ will fulfill his work, as God’s Son, in the Meridian of Time and at his Second Coming. See Matthew 12: 14-21. King Cyrus fulfilled his work, as God’s Instrument, during his own day and time. The following was the best descriptions of King Cyrus of Persia that I found:

From "Got Questions Ministries" – GotQuestions.org
Question: "Who was Cyrus in the Bible?"

Answer: Cyrus is a king mentioned more than 30 times in the Bible and is identified as Cyrus the Great (also Cyrus II or Cyrus the Elder) who reigned over Persia between 539—530 BC. This pagan king is important in Jewish history because it was under his rule that Jews were first allowed to return to Israel after 70 years of captivity. Cyrus captured Babylon and overthrew the Chaldean Dynasty.

In one of the most amazing prophecies of the Bible, Isaiah predicts Cyrus' decree to free the Jews. One hundred fifty years before Cyrus lived, the prophet calls him by name and gives details of Cyrus' benevolence to the Jews: "This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him . . . 'I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me'" ([Isaiah 45:1, 4](#); see also [41:2-25](#); [42:6](#)). Evincing His sovereignty over all nations, God says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please" ([Isaiah 44:28](#)).

Cyrus's decree releasing the Jewish people, in fulfillment of prophecy, is recorded in [2 Chronicles 36:22–23](#): "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, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up." Other Old Testament books that mention Cyrus include Ezra and Daniel.

King Cyrus actively assisted the Jews in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem under Ezra and Zerubbabel. Cyrus restored the temple treasures to Jerusalem and allowed building expenses to be paid from the royal treasury ([Ezra 1:4–11](#); [6:4–5](#)). Cyrus's beneficence helped to restart the temple worship practices that had languished during the 70 years of the Jews' captivity. Some commentators point to Cyrus's decree to rebuild Jerusalem as the official beginning of [Judaism](#).

Among the Jews deported from Judah and later placed under the rule of Cyrus include the prophet Daniel. In fact, we are told Daniel served until at least the third year of King Cyrus, approximately 536 BC ([Daniel 10:1](#)). That being the case, Daniel likely had some personal involvement in the decree that was made in support of the Jews. The historian [Josephus](#) says that Cyrus was informed of the biblical prophecies written about him (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XI.1.2). The natural person to have shown Cyrus the scrolls was Daniel, a high-ranking official in Persia ([Daniel 6:28](#)).

Besides his dealings with the Jews, Cyrus is known for his advancement of human rights, his brilliant military strategy, and his bridging of Eastern and Western cultures. He was a king of tremendous influence and a person God used to help fulfill an important Old Testament prophecy. God's use of Cyrus as a "shepherd" for His people illustrates the truth

of [Proverbs 21:1](#), “The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.”

From “King Cyrus” Wikipedia:

Cyrus the Great respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered.^[13] This became a very successful model for centralized administration and establishing a government working to the advantage and profit of its subjects.^[8] In fact, the administration of the empire through [satraps](#) and the vital principle of forming a government at [Pasargadae](#) were the works of Cyrus.^[14] What is sometimes referred to as the [Edict of Restoration](#) (actually two edicts) described in the Bible as being made by Cyrus the Great left a lasting legacy on the [Jewish religion](#), where, because of his policies in Babylonia, he is referred to by the [Jewish Bible](#) as [Messiah](#) (lit. "His anointed one") ([Isaiah 45:1](#)),^[15] and is the only non-Jew to be called so.^[16]

The **Edict of Cyrus** is part of the biblical narrative about the Return from Babylonian captivity. The edict is thrice mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, each time with minor textual variations and additions. It is presented as authorizing and encouraging the Jews exiled by Nebuchadnezzar to relocate to the Land of Israel and actively engage in rebuilding the temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The historical background of the narrative is confirmed by archaeology.

The following is found in the Book: "The Literary Message of Isaiah by Avraham Gileadi":

Pg. 121

Figure 9: Redemptive Functions of Jehovah's Ideal Agent of Punishment and Deliverance

<u>Davidic Figure</u>	<u>Righteous Warrior Figure</u>	<u>Servant Figure</u>	<u>Cyrus Figure</u>
Spiritual/ Temporal	Spiritual/ Temporal	Spiritual	Temporal

Pg. 122

Figure 10: Typologies of Jehovah's Ideal Agent of Punishment and Deliverance

<u>Davidic Figure</u>	<u>Righteous Warrior Figure</u>	<u>Servant Figure</u>	<u>Cyrus Figure</u>
Abraham	Abraham	Moses	Moses
Moses	Cyrus	David	David
Joshua		Cyrus	Cyrus
Gideon			
David			
Solomon			
Hezekiah			

ISAIAH 41

All Poetry

(Chapters 41-46 speak of a Righteous Warrior, Cyrus, and Servant Figures like Moses and David. They also contain a large Chiastic Chaos/Creation Pattern – * See Below)

Verse 1

(and)

Keep silence before me, O islands,
Let the people renew their strength (be still)!

Let them come near; then let them speak, (state their case)
Let us come near together to judgment. (stand trial)

(Idolaters on Trial – Lord Judging)

Verse 2

Who raised up the Righteous Man from the east?
Who called him to (the place of) his foot? (Jerusalem)

(and)

Who gave the nations before him?
Who made him rule over kings?

(Righteous King, like unto David - In Isaiah's prophesy he is speaking here of King Cyrus, of Persia – Moses also came from the east (exile) moved Israel westward - In a Millennial sense - Christ will come from the East at his Second Coming and will rule over kings and nations. UI pg. 352)

(and)

He (The Lord) gave them (the nations) as the dust to his (Cyrus') sword,
He (The Lord) gave them (the nations) as driven stubble to his (Cyrus')
bow.

Verse 3

He pursued them and passed safely,
He pursued them and passed safely, even by the way that he
had not gone with his feet.

(The Lord provides the means for Cyrus to pass safely, perhaps referring to his personal safety while leading his armies. This phrase also may indicate the use of horses for travel by Cyrus. UI Pg. 352)

Verse 4

Who hath wrought it and who hath done it?
Who hath called the generations from the beginning?
(Calling forth dynasties ahead of time?)

I, The Lord, The First and The Last,
I, Am He.

Verse 5

The isles saw it and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid.

They drew near,
They came.

(They [\(the Idolaters\)](#) flock together and come to one another's aid.)

Verse 6
(and) They helped every one his neighbour,
Everyone said to his brother, "Be of good courage."

Verse 7
[\(This verse belongs in Isaiah 40, per Prof. Gileadi.\)](#)

Verse 8
But, thou Israel, thou art my servant,
Jacob, I have chosen; the seed of Abraham my [\(beloved\)](#) friend.

Verse 9
(and) Thou, Israel, I have taken from the ends of the earth,
Thou, Israel, I have called from the chief men thereof.

And I said unto thee, thou art my servant:

(and) I have chosen thee,
I have not cast thee away.

Verse 10
*Fear thou not, for I am with thee,
Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.*

(yea) I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee,
I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

[\(Righteous King – Like Cyrus – His Military Mission of Protection to all nations – Right Hand is the Covenant Hand\)](#)

Verse 11 (Behold) All they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and
confounded,
All they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall
perish.

Verse 12
(even) Thou shalt seek them and not find them,
Thou shalt not find them that contended with thee.

(and) They that war against thee shall be as nothing,
They that war against thee shall be as a thing of nought.

Verse 13
(and) *For I, the Lord, thy God, will [\(hold you by\)](#) thy right hand,
[\(I will\)](#) say unto thee, "Fear not, I will help thee."*

Verse 14 (and) *Fear not, thou worm of Jacob, (see Ps. 22:6) I will help thee.*
Fear not, ye men of Israel.

(and) I will help thee, saith the Lord,
Thy Redeemer, (is) the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 15 (Behold) **I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having
teeth:** (Powerful instrument in God's Hands)

(and) Thou shalt thresh the mountains and thou shalt beat them small.
Thou shalt make the hills as chaff.

Verse 16 (and) Thou shalt fan them and the wind shall carry them away,
The whirlwind shall scatter them.

(and) Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord,
(and) Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 17 (and) **When** the poor and needy seek water and there is none,
When their tongue faileth for thirst.

I, the Lord, will hear them,
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

Verse 18 (and) I will open rivers in high places,
I will open fountains in the midst of the valleys.

(and) I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
I will make the dry land springs of water.

Verse 19 **I will plant in the wilderness:**

(and) The Cedar,
(and) The Shittah Tree,
(and) The Myrtle,
The Oil Tree.

I will set in the desert:

(and) The Fir Tree,
(and) The Pine,
The Box Tree,
All these trees, together.

Verse 20 **That** they may see; that they may know.
 (and) **That** they may consider; that they may understand together.

That the hand of the Lord hath done this,
 (and) **That** the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

(A regeneration of land/water, Reversal of Covenant Curses, New Paradise – New Creation)

Verse 21 “Produce your cause”, saith the Lord,
 “Bring forth your strong reason”, saith the King of Jacob.

Verse 22 Let them (your Idols) bring them forth,
 (and) Let them (your Idols) show us what shall happen.

Let them show the former things, what they shall be:

 That we may consider them,
 (and) That we may know the latter end of them.

Or declare us things for to come:

Verse 23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know
 that ye are gods,
 (yea) Do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it
 together.

Verse 24 Behold, ye are nothing,
 (and) Your work (is) of nought; an abomination is he that chooseth you.

Verse 25 I have raised up one from the north and he shall come.
 From the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name.

(From the North East, - Type of the Righteous Warrior/Servant - Cyrus - see vs. 2)

 (and) He shall come upon princes as upon mortar,
 (and) He shall come upon princes as the potter treadeth clay.

Verse 26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?
 (and) Who hath declared 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.
(No one has heard from you (Idols) any prophetic utterance.)

THE LITERARY MESSAGE OF ISAIAH

Figure 11 Chiasmic Chaos/Creation Pattern of Isaiah 41-46

- a₁—Jehovah raises up *righteousness* from the east (Isaiah 41:2).
- b₁—Idolatrous nations and rulers turn into dust and stubble (Isaiah 41:2-7); mountains and hills become dust and chaff (Isaiah 41:15).
- c₁—Jacob/Israel is not forsaken (Isaiah 41:17); Israel's Holy One regenerates and creates the wilderness (Isaiah 41:17-20).
- d₁—Idolaters are an abomination, worth nothing (Isaiah 41:21-24).
- e₁—Jehovah raises up (*šar'šrôš*) the *Warrior* figure from the sunrise (Isaiah 41:25ab).
- f₁—Dignitaries are trodden down as mud and clay (Isaiah 41:25cd); false diviners are but wind and chaos (Isaiah 41:29).
- g₁—The Creator of heaven and earth creates the *Servant* figure, endows him with his Spirit, appoints him as a *light*—the subject of nonweariness (Isaiah 42:1-6).
- h₁—Jehovah desolates the earth and its vegetation, dries up lakes and rivers—Jehovah's victory over his enemies (Isaiah 42:13-15).
- i₁—Jehovah guides the blind by his *light*, levels the uneven ground (Isaiah 42:16).
- j₁—Idolaters retreat in confusion (Isaiah 42:17).
- k₁—Jacob/Israel magnifies the law and becomes illustrious because of Jehovah's *righteousness* (Isaiah 42:21).
- l₁—Jacob/Israel is a prey, consumed by fire for transgressing Jehovah's law (Isaiah 42:22-25).
- m₁—Jehovah creates Jacob/Israel (Isaiah 43:1); Jehovah's people are immune to the elements as they return from exile (Isaiah 43:2-7).
- n₁—Babylon's citizens come down as fugitives (Isaiah 43:14).
- o₁—Jehovah, Israel's Holy One and King, creates Israel (Isaiah 43:15).
- o₂—Jehovah provides a way through the Sea, a path through the mighty waters (Isaiah 43:16).
- n₂—Babylon's armies of men, chariots, and horses are snuffed out (Isaiah 43:17).
- m₂—Jehovah regenerates the wilderness through which his people travel (Isaiah 43:19-20); Jehovah creates Jacob/Israel (Isaiah 43:21).
- l₂—Jacob/Israel's weariness and sins bring execration (Isaiah 43:22-28).
- k₂—Jehovah creates and succors Jacob/Israel (Isaiah 44:1-2); Jehovah pours out his Spirit and regenerates the wilderness (Isaiah 44:3-4).
- j₂—Idolaters and their works are but chaos and ashes (Isaiah 44:9, 20).
- i₂—Jehovah creates Jacob/Israel, removes his people's sins (Isaiah 44:21-24).
- h₂—Jehovah dries up the deep and its rivers (Isaiah 44:27).
- g₂—The Creator of *light* and peace names the *Cyrus* figure (Isaiah 45:4-7); Jehovah creates *righteousness*—by implication, the *Cyrus* figure (Isaiah 45:8).
- f₂—Those who dispute what Jehovah makes are but shards and clay (Isaiah 45:9-11).
- e₂—The Creator of heaven and earth raises up (*šar'šrôšô*) the *Cyrus* figure (Isaiah 45:12-13).
- d₂—Idolaters retire in shame and disgrace (Isaiah 45:16).
- c₂—The Creator of heaven and earth saves Jacob/Israel (Isaiah 45:17-28).
- b₂—Idolatrous nations live in darkness and chaos (Isaiah 45:19-20); their idolatry causes weariness and exile (Isaiah 46:1-4).
- a₂—Jehovah brings *righteousness* from the east, fulfilling his word (Isaiah 46:10-13b).