

- Order of Service -

Call to Worship

Welcoming Prayer

Reading Isaiah 44:28-45:5, Ezra 1:1-2

- Eph 1:7
- 256, Are you washed in the blood?
- 265, Jesus paid it all
- Shared reading
- All Glory be to Christ

Announcements and Prayer requests

Greeting

Message in the Word -

God's Word controls kings, governments and history-pt I

The prophetic and authoritative power of God's Word

Isaiah 44:28-45:5, Ezra 1:1-2

Sending prayer

You may notice we don't pass an offering plate

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -

Grace Bible Fellowship

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love. truth. grace.

We are identified with Jesus Christ in his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly seating



King Cyrus the Great, Persian empire

- Teaching -

Eric Peterman

God's Word controls kings, governments and history-pt I

The prophetic and authoritative power of God's Word

Isaiah 44:28-45:5, Ezra 1:1-2

- August 13th, 2023 -

God's Word controls kings, governments and history-pt I

The prophetic and authoritative power of God's Word

Isaiah 44:28-45:5, Ezra 1:1-2

With all the changes in our society, the confusion and clashes in our government and among nations, one is inclined to wonder, "Just who is in charge of all this?" God's people have historically taken comfort in the answer to that question, found in the pages of the Bible: God is in charge. He is not confused or conflicted. He has a design, a direction and a plan, and the hearts of kings and presidents and generals are in His hand. Kingdoms and nations rise and fall, but through it all, God is on His throne, and His people are His beloved and He is working all things for their good.

Let us at Grace Bible Fellowship know and trust Him!

Today you'll have noticed that we opened with two bible readings. One from Isaiah 44-45, and one from the introduction to Ezra. Both of them mention the Persian king Cyrus, known in history as Cyrus the Great. The reason we did that is to demonstrate the premise of the sermon, and that is that God has not only the little things, but the big things, including kings and kingdoms in His sovereign hand. You see, Isaiah 45 was written in the mid 700's BC, and it prophesies a heathen king by name, and the powerful kingdom he led, around 200 years before either existed! In fact a very different empire and political geography existed when Isaiah wrote: The mighty Babylonian empire. And in Isa 45:4 God tells us that He will in future bring about the mighty Persian empire (displacing the great Babylonian one, which God had previously used to displace and punish the Assyrians for their abuse of God's people) and seat the great Cyrus there for the sake of, for the ultimate benefit of, little old Israel and His ancient promises to her.

For an idea of the spiritual lay of the land in Israel and Judah in the mid 700's when Isaiah prophesies, look at **Isaiah 44:9-21**.

Here God warns his people Israel that their own toying with the beliefs of the heathen nations and their idolatries will issue forth in an being carted off to Babylon. The Lord lays out the stupidity of the Babylonians and their manufacturing of idols in order to inoculate, to vaccinate Israel against the coming exposure, and to remind them that He is the Living God and to keep themselves spiritually distinct, faithful and monotheistic, trusting in the living God alone and not falling for the silly god's of their prophesied, coming captors.

This specific warning via Isaiah sets the backdrop and the intestinal fortitude for the opening of the later book of Daniel, with Shadrach, Mishach and Abednigo (Hananiah, Azariah and Mischael in Hebrew) and not eating the Babylonian meat offered to idols, not bowing to worship the image, Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, and later, Daniel being thrown in the lion's den. Isaiah's warning saved and secured and emboldened these men. **Lesson: Know your scriptures and think through their implications before the crisis of faith and its temptation occurs. It's too late when you're in it!**

In 44:28 Cyrus is called My Shepherd. And in 45:1, Annoined – Messiah! Cyrus the heathen, is God's temporal deliverer and protector of God's people and serves as an illustration of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. Cyrus serves as God's vassal ruler, and like the true Messiah, his mission was to deliver and to judge (open doors).

Let's move forward to the late 600's-early 500's BC and hear the amazing prophetic word of Jeremiah regarding Judah and then of mighty Babylon. **See Jeremiah 25:8-16**. Here we see the assigned 70 years of captivity for God's people, as well as the prediction of the end of the mighty Babylonian kingdom, which occurred and fulfilled Jeremiah's prophesy.

On the very night the Persians captured Babylon in October 539 (or 538), by damming and lowering the Euphrates, slipping under the dry riverbed grates, they opened the gates/doors of the city from the inside. (Daniel 5 and Belshazzar's Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin).

Now let us move forward just one year and see how this all works out in the Lords' hand. Turn to Ezra 1:1-2. The year is 538 BC. Cyrus had ruled over Persia from 559, and his forces had just captured Babylon.

Then God's word through Jeremiah his earlier prophet began to move and shake the spirit of the mighty heathen Cyrus, king of Persia! And so Cyrus begins to set in motion the great series of returns of the exiles to Jerusalem under Zerubabel, Ezra, Nehemiah and so on. The small, crushed nation, chosen and disciplined by God began the returns that resulted in the rebuilding of the temple and the wall of Jerusalem!

