

Day 189

The Fall of Israel to Assyria 723BC

2 Kings 17.3 – 5; 18.9 – 11; 17.6 – 41; 18.7b-8

Israel has ignored and despised the warnings of the prophets such as Amos and Hosea, Elijah and Elisha, and now the Lord is calling time on the idolatry and rebellion of the successors of Jereboam in Samaria.

17.3-5 The King of Assyria, Shalmaneser V, attacks Israel when he finds out that, in spite of being a client nation of Assyria, Hoshea has been secretly courting Pharaoh So of Egypt to form an alliance against their mutual enemy. Hoshea is captured and imprisoned, and Samaria is besieged. This is in Hezekiah's third year of his reign in neighbouring Judah.

18.9- 11 (mirrored in 2 Kings 17.6) The siege of Samaria lasts three years, from 726BC to 723BC. Little is said about that terrible time in the northern capital, except that at the end of it, the people of Israel are deported *en masse* to Assyria, to the Habor River region.

17.7-17. The reasons for this downfall are clear – idolatry and broken covenant with the Lord their God who was their Deliverer and Rescuer, ignoring the prophets and their roots. In particular, Israel set up the calf-idols at Dan and Bethel, as well as Asherah poles and Ba'al stones.

17.18-20 In case Judah feels complacent, the Lord charges them with the same waywardness and idolatry. They have actually, in the time of earlier kings, copied the Israelites. The fall of Judah is yet to come, and is averted for the time being by the heart-change of Hezekiah and later Josiah.

17.21-23 The root of the problem goes back to Jereboam Ben Nebat, first king of the breakaway kingdom, and his political exploitation of the faith in the Lord for his own territorial security. His state religion has led to the deportation of his people.

17.24 – 41 Under the Assyrians' policies of enforced migration, the land is resettled by incomers from the north, who take over the land left by the exiles. Because they are not living in the Lord's land in the Lord's way, it becomes a threat to them, and the wild animals, in particular lions, attack and kill people in their communities.

The new inhabitants complain that because they are displeasing the local deity, these terrible things are happening. Thus the King, by this time Sargon II, who came to the Assyrian throne in 723BC, sends back to them some of the Israelite priests to teach them about the Lord (YHWH) and how to worship Him. However, although they give the nod to the worship of the Lord, they set up all their own temples and rites of their homeland gods as well, including the abominable child-sacrifices to Adrammalech and Anammelech of Sepharvaim.

This gives rise to the people known later as **Samaritans**; they become hated by the Jews, because they mix Yahwist worship with their own idol-worship. Even in Jesus' day the enmity continued, which gave Jesus a number of opportunities to teach on loving

all men regardless of creed or practice. And the woman at the well is a Samaritan, a descendant of these Gentile incomers.

18.7b – 8. Amazingly, tiny Judah under Hezekiah refuses to bow to Assyria, and moreover, defeats the encroaching Philistines, pushing them back to the Gaza strip.

Day 190

Judah Continues under Hezekiah; Isaiah's Ministry Keeps Going...

Isaiah 18.1 – 7; 19.1-25; 20.1 – 6; 30.1 – 31.9

Judah is a tiny nation sandwiched in between great powers at a time of huge flux.

Ethiopia (Cush) is exerting rule over Egypt at this time, and Assyria is continuing its oppression like an international mafia, holding nations in tribute or removing them from the map.

18.1-7 Ethiopia, a land of seemingly exotic-looking people with strange languages, now powerful and strengthening more, is seen by the Lord and is marked for His intervening action of judgment. The day will come when the Ethiopians also will acknowledge Jerusalem and will bring their gifts to the Lord.

19.1 – 25 Here is a word from Isaiah to Israel's ancient oppressors the Egyptians. The Lord will sow civil war there, and they will be oppressed by a powerful nation (presumably Ethiopia.) There will be drought, and the Nile will be lessened – the Nile is the life-source, even today of Egypt – and eventually the people will call on the Lord for help and both Egypt and Assyria will eventually acknowledge the Lord as God, for a blessing to the earth.

20.1 – 6 The Lord now commands Isaiah to go naked as a sign to Egypt and Ethiopia that the power of Assyria will overwhelm them and will lead their people away naked. Also, those who sought to forge alliances with the southern powers (like Judah) will be left defenceless.

30.1 – 14 The Lord now speaks to Judah and castigates her for her reliance on alliances with Egypt. The Lord says this is because they are a hard-hearted people, who will not listen to the prophets He has sent to them – the outcome can only be tragedy.

30.15 – 18 The Lord has been offering Judah salvation and deliverance, so that they can remain at peace, but they have been riding around looking for protectors from the Assyrians.

The Lord reminds them that His nature is one of compassion and favour, and He desires to restore what is disordered, if only the nation will depend on Him.

30.19- 33 The Lord promises His loving intentions toward Judah, when they are in right relationship with Him. A time of hope is coming, when Assyria will be put down, and Judah will worship the Lord at Jerusalem again.

31. 1 – 9 The great powers of Assyria and Egypt, which Israel have been living in the shadow of, will be reduced to nothing. The Lord calls for Israel to leave their idols and return to Him. His hand will protect Jerusalem, and even though it goes through a time of suffering, the Lord will restore it.

These are awesome words against strong nations; only the Lord can fulfil these promises to His troubled people. All they need to do is to be whole-hearted in their love and devotion to Him. Hezekiah will demonstrate some of this in the coming days of his reign.

Day 191

Hezekiah's Last Years (died 696BC)

2 Kings 18.13 – 16; 2 Kings 20.1-11; Isaiah 38.9-20; 2 Chron.32.25-30; 2 Kings 20.12-19; 2 Chron 32.31; 32.1 – 15; 2 Kings 18.17- 35; 2 Chron. 32.16,18,19; 2 Kings 18.36 – 19.36; 2 Chron.32.21 – 23; 2 Chron.32.23; 2 Kings 20.20 – 21; 2 Chron.32.32-33a

It is quite miraculous that while nations around Judah are falling to the might of the Assyrian Empire under Sennacherib, Judah manages to continue its existence. Granted, the nation is in tribute to the great power, but God delivers them from their vassal state through His intervention. These are days of God's showing His faithfulness to His promises through the prophets, and Isaiah is there, mediating the Lord's word to this mostly Godly King, Hezekiah.

2 Kgs 18.13 – 16 Sennacherib of Assyria invades Judah around 701BC, having already wiped northern Israel off the map in 723BC. He captures all of the fortified cities. However, it seems that the Assyrians are after capital rather than land, and so they are paid off by Hezekiah with the Temple treasures, including the gold from the doors and doorposts. The Assyrians take the metals and leave.

20.1 – 11 (mirrored in 2 Chron.32.24, Isa 38.1-8,21-22) Hezekiah becomes ill around this same time, and Isaiah tells him he will die. However, Hezekiah prays and reminds God with weeping of his seeking to follow the Lord's ways.

Immediately, the Lord speaks to Isaiah and sends him back to Hezekiah to say that the Lord will give him another fifteen years of life, and that Jerusalem will be defended personally by the Lord out of faithfulness to the covenant made with David.

The healing is released to Hezekiah through the action of applying a fig poultice to the tumour which is threatening the King's life. But Hezekiah also looks for confirmation that this is a reliable word. As a response, the Lord grants Hezekiah the sign of the reversal of the sun's shadow on the steps of Ahaz, a measure of the sun's progress over Jerusalem. This is a sign full of grace and wonder, given that it comes out of the King's doubt in Isaiah's word.

Isa 38.9-20 This is a Psalm of Hezekiah which is recorded among Isaiah's prophetic output; this demonstrates the close bond between Isaiah and the King during his life, and the influence which Isaiah had upon the throne.

The Psalm is in two parts; the first is a lament over impending death, with a cry for the Lord to rescue. The second part is a rejoicing in God's miraculous provision and thanks for restored health.

There is one thing worth noting here; Hezekiah acknowledges the formative nature of his suffering in Isa.38.17, the Hebrew of which is

הִנֵּה לְשָׁלוֹם מַר-לִי מָר *Hineh, leShalom mar-li mar*

Literally, 'Behold, for wholeness-peace embittered me bitterness'. Hezekiah is testifying that the anguish of soul he suffered had an effect on his life, and because of the Lord's intervention, he is able to give thanks for his deliverance. The outcome is praise and worship to God.

2 Chron.32.25 – 30 Like all men, Hezekiah is fickle, and he forgets the grace of God later; however, the good news is that he responds to the Lord's anger, and repents of his pride, and stalls the coming judgement upon the nation. In fact, the Lord prospers Hezekiah, and he has reserves enough to undertake public works, including new town development and improvements to the city water-supply.

2 Kings 20.12- 19. (mirrored in Isaiah 39.1-8) The ancient saying goes 'Beware of Greeks bearing gifts'. That perhaps should also go for Babylonians as well. Prince Merodach-Baladan of Babylon hears of Hezekiah's illness (and presumably also his healing) and comes to visit, to bring a gift. Babylon has been a thorn in Assyria's side for a long time, and perhaps there was a sense here of a fellow rebel nation which might be a useful ally against the Empire.

But while in Jerusalem, the Babylonians 'case the joint' as it were, and when they have gone, Isaiah reveals that the Babylonians will be back, to carry off all they have seen, including the people of the royal household.

However, Hezekiah, demonstrating a quite selfish short-termism, accepts the Lord's word, but is happy, because it will not happen in his lifetime!

2 Chron.32.31 In fact, the Chronicler comments that the Babylonian envoys were a test from God to see whether Hezekiah would give God glory, or whether he would promote himself....

2 Chron 32.1-8 Like all *Mafiosi*, Sennacherib comes back for more booty. His armies lay siege to Judean towns, including Jerusalem. Hezekiah now doesn't give in so easily, but prevents the Assyrians from benefitting from the water-supply, strengthens the walls of the city, adding another outer barrier for protection, and strengthens his army, telling them not to be afraid, because while the Assyrians are relying on their own strength, Judah has the Lord to stand with them.

2 Kings 18.17 – 25; 2 Chron 32.9-15 (mirrored in Isa 36.2-10) From Lachish, where he is besieging the town, Sennacherib sends messengers to Jerusalem on a propaganda exercise, to demoralize the Judeans. They say that Egypt will be of no help against the Assyrians, neither will the God they are relying on – the Assyrians have swept away many idols in their advance, the Lord will just be another one. They even say that the Lord Himself has commanded the destruction of the city.

2 Kings 18.26 – 35; 2 Chron. 32.16,18,19. (mirrored in Isa.36.12-20) The Assyrians are very clever in their actions, because they are all the time speaking this in Hebrew, the Judean language, which can be understood by all the locals overhearing them. Eliakim and Shebna, royal ministers, request that the talks be conducted in the Assyrian language, Aramaic, so as not to upset the people, however, the messenger,

who is a commander, makes a direct appeal to the people in Hebrew, inviting them to rebel against Hezekiah's leadership, and to make peace; their God cannot deliver them.

2 Kings 18.36-37 (mirrored in Isa.36.21-22) But Hezekiah is one step ahead; he has commanded the people not to respond to the approaches of the Assyrians.

2 Kings 19.1-4 (mirrored in Isa 37. 1-4) Shebna and Eliakim, distraught, come to Hezekiah, who sends them to Isaiah, in ritually repentant sackcloth garments. They tell Isaiah what the commander has been saying, and ask his help.

2 Kings 19.5 – 36 (mirrored in Isa.37.5 – 35 and 2 Chron 32.17, 20) Isaiah assures them that the Lord will stand with them. Just at this point, the Assyrians fight a battle at Libnah and attention is turned from Jerusalem. However, a letter is sent to Hezekiah to let him know that he is still on the agenda for being dealt with. Hezekiah takes the letter and spreads it out before God at the Temple, appealing for His rescue.

In response, Isaiah has an encouraging word, saying that the Lord has heard the King's prayer. The prophecy is of God's anger against those who have talked Him down and insulted Him. God will repel them and send them away, but for Judah, they will have a jubilee year, where there will be enough of a harvest for three years and Jerusalem will not be touched.

2 Chron.32.21 – 23 In a miraculous intervention, akin to the Egyptian plague, the Lord wipes out one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians overnight, and Sennacherib withdraws in disgrace, fulfilling the Lord's word. When surrounding nations hear, they bring gifts and offerings to the Lord at Jerusalem.

2 Kings 20.20,21a; 2 Chron. 32.32,33a. Hezekiah's added years come to an end, and he dies, celebrated as a Godly and honoured King, faithful to the Lord, buried in the tombs of his ancestors.

Day 192

Manasseh Misleads Judah

2 Kings 20.21b; 21.1 – 9, 16, 10-15

There is no reason given why the Godly reforms of Hezekiah are so quickly abandoned by his son Manasseh, who comes to the throne around 696BC at the age of only twelve. It is possible that Manasseh's advisors are pagans who have resented Hezekiah's Yahwist agenda, or perhaps Manasseh bears a grudge against his father, and leading the nation away from God is his way of rebelling against Hezekiah's influence and establishing his own leadership as an apparently more tolerant and pluralist monarch.

Thus, Manasseh opens up the high places for worship again, puts back the Ba'alim and Asherahs, even placing an Asherah pole in the Temple. He puts other altars back into the Lord's house, and even puts his son through the fire, in sacrifice. He also practices divination and necromancy. The terrible reputation given to Manasseh because of this is that his evil deeds result in the spiritual state of Judah being worse for the land than it was under the Canaanites .

Manasseh is also prepared to shed much blood to get his objectives achieved, showing little mercy in pursuit of his changes.

However, the Lord has something to say, and the faithful prophets stand against Manasseh, prophesying disaster for Jerusalem and Judah because of his wickedness. The same judgment which has overcome Samaria and Israel will be applied to Judah, and this, the remnant of His people, God will give over to the enemy to deal with. In God's eyes, Manasseh just continues the tradition of rebellion which has been followed in Israel since the Exodus.

It is sobering, reading these words, to see how fickle and wayward human hearts really are. Always ready to twist the story to fit our own plot-line, whether nationally like Manasseh, or personally in one's own experience of life, we live often as though the Lord were the bottom of our list of priorities. Given that Manasseh is the son of such a Godly and reforming King, we have to recognise that human effort alone is not enough, and we cannot afford to live without constant reliance on and acknowledgement of the abyss of God's grace which is the only power able to hold us in His ways.

Day 193

The Book of Comfort

Isaiah 40.1 – 41.10

At this point, the book of Isaiah changes tone and tack. Up until now, it has been a book of warning and denunciation, with narrative interwoven explaining the story of the prophet and the kingdom around him. It now moves to being a book of hope, looking beyond the coming judgment to a restoration of Judah and Israel to the land.

Many serious scholars consider the latter part of Isaiah, from this point, to be authored by another writer, but included under the Isaiah banner. Many conservative Christians object to this idea, believing that this undermines the integrity of the Bible's unity. However, given the fact that prophets generally led schools or streams of prophets in their wake, it would not be doing harm to the Bible to suggest that a prophet of Isaiah's school wrote the second section, later than Isaiah, when Babylon was in power, and Cyrus the Great of Persia was emerging as a contender against their empire.

This does not mean that the same person could not have, by divine revelation, have delivered both sections, and tradition holds that to be the case, but we should not fear the concept of a multi-layered authorship under one heading, since content is far more important than the person of the messenger.

We also need to note seriously the significance of the second part of Isaiah for Jesus and His followers; John the Baptist uses words from Isaiah 40.3-5 to describe his ministry as forerunner to the Messiah; Jesus opens His public work with words from Isaiah 61, and Philip expounds Isaiah 53 to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.27ff as pointing to Jesus' death and resurrection, and leads him to faith thereby. These are therefore key chapters for the unfolding of God's purpose in His Son's incarnation.

40. 1 – 11 The prophet is speaking to a Jerusalem troubled and oppressed, telling her of God's deliverance, reminding her of her fragility and vulnerability apart from God's

intervention. The Lord will carry her tenderly and will keep her safe from her enemies, and she will be an ensign of God's faithfulness for the nations.

40.12 – 31 In these verses, the theme is taken up of God's power as Creator and His ability to weigh the nations with justice because of this. There is a universality to these words which emphasises God's overview of not just Israel but all the earth. This is in contrast to the inanity of cast idols, which are the works of men's hands, and powerless.

'Who is my equal?' the Lord asks in 40.25 (Heb וְאֵל-מִי תִדְמֶינִי וְאִשְׁוֶה Ve-el mi tedam-yuni ve-eshveh? Literally, 'And to whom will you liken me and will I be on the same level?') It is clear that the Lord has no rival, for no other made everything visible and invisible.

The Lord upbraids Israel for asking where the Lord has gone, and whether she can still be in His sightline; this is the untiring, unslumbering God, and those who look for his provision, who hope in Him (Heb קֹוֶי kovey, that is a hoper or waiter, 40.31) will see their strength revitalised, like a plant springing up again, or like an eagle being carried up effortlessly on the thermal currents of the hot desert.

41.1-10 Again, the Lord addresses the nations as a whole – islands refers to the furthest reaches of the known world. God has called up a power from the east which is an instrument of His judgment, allowing them to sweep through the territories around the middle East. This is a time of the rise and fall of Empires – of Assyria, of Babylon, of Persia – nations are no longer separate entities, but are being absorbed into greater colonialising powers.

The pagan nations are busy uselessly bracing themselves and their idols for the onslaught, while the Lord is promising Israel His own protection to strengthen and uphold them, and for them to come through the storm defended by Him.

Day 194

The Lord's Redemption is Coming

Isaiah 41.11-43.13

It is worth remembering that Scripture has already introduced to us the concept of the kinsman-redeemer, the *go'el* (Heb גֹּאֵל) in the story of Boaz and Ruth; the young widow, destitute and alone, is loved, accepted and received by the relative of her dead husband to have children to maintain the name of the dead for the future.

This is how God presents Himself in the story at this point – in 41.14, and in more than half a dozen other references in the second half of Isaiah's prophecy – as *go'alekh* (Heb גֹּאֲלֶךָ) your redeemer, the one who will transform the situation for Israel, who will turn His people's fortunes around.

41.11-16 Instead of being war-ravaged, Israel will become the one who affects the nations, and who separates wheat from chaff among them. Certainly, how Israel is treated has always been a touchstone from ancient to modern times.

41.17-24 The Lord will show His faithfulness to His promises by providing fruit and provision even in barren places, and He will be known for this. (v.20) The idols have nothing to show for themselves against this kind of loving care.

- 41.25 – 29 Despite the Lord’s revealing to Judah the coming judgement through exile, they did not receive the word, and trusted instead in false prophets, meaning no one can help them to find the Lord’s direction for them.
- 42.1 – 7 In the Isaiah passages, called the Servant songs, there is presented a servant of the Lord, which may well indicate the corporate person of the people of Israel in this context – called to be a blessing to the world, to be the vehicle of God’s encounter with mankind. Yet there is also a sense of One specific one to come who will carry that calling personally – and Jesus says as much in the synagogue at Nazareth in Luke 4 when He reads from Isaiah 60.
- 42.8 – 9 The Lord guards His glory, and will not share His praise with idols.
- 42.10 – 22 The Lord is doing something glorious, worthy of great praise, which will release those disabled and distanced from hope. He will release His people from their bondage and the world from its chains.
- 42.23 – 25 Although the Lord has inflicted suffering on Israel, they still have not got the message, because of their hard-heartedness.
- 43.1 – 13 Yet now, the Lord reveals his redemption – and tells Judah not to be afraid, for the Lord will be with them, whatever their experience. Even though they are scattered, they are going to be gathered back so that God will receive the credit and the honour for the miracle of their rescue.
- 43.8-13 The Lord leaves them in no doubt that it His power, and no other’s, that brings such a turn around in events. The people of God will be His witnesses, His proof of the ability to intervene in man’s affairs for man’s best.

Day 195

Inane Idols, Conquering Cyrus and the Incomparable God

Isa 43.14 – 45.13

Isa. 43.14,15 Reminding Israel again of His relationship to her as her kinsman-redeemer (Heb גֹּאֲלֶיךָ *go’alchem*, ‘your redeemer’) the Lord promises the downfall of her future oppressor, Babylon, who will capture the Jewish people in the latter part of the 7th century BC and destroy Jerusalem in 586BC. The Lord also describes Himself as Israel’s King (Heb מְלֶכְךָם *malkhekhem* from the word *malakh* to reign, be king.)

43.16-21 The Lord uses the image of His deliverance of Israel from Egypt to remind them of His nature and character, and promises that He will do a new (or renewed) thing. (The Hebrew word for new, חֲדָשׁ *chadash* is connected to a root meaning to renew, polish up or sharpen as with a sword – see Gesenius on root חֲדָשׁ *chadash*) In this sense, the Lord will renew His saving action, making provision for Judah in her ‘wilderness’ experience in exile, as He provided for her in the desert of Sinai.

43.22 – 28 The Lord takes issue with the sin of Judah and Israel, and their lack of repentance, even though the Lord has the capacity to blot out the sin and forget them in His compassion and forgiveness.

44.1- 5 Here is the Lord's heart and compassion and calling upon His people being repeated again – His desire is to be in close relationship, to dwell with them, so that through them He can embrace the whole earth. For this, He will come as His Holy Spirit and cause each one to be filled so that they know whose they are, in witness to His love and power to rescue.

44.6-8 The Lord now makes statements of His nature, and for the first time here uses an expression of Himself which recurs in the Scripture – ‘the first and last’ (Heb אֲנִי רִשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי אַחֲרֹן *Ani rishon va-ani acharon* ‘I first, and I last’) repeated in Isa.44.6 and 48.12 and echoed in Revelation, when the Risen Lord calls Himself ‘first and last’ (Greek ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος *o prótos kai o éschatos*) in Rev 1.17, 2.8 and elsewhere.

The Lord asserts, then, that He is the only true God, who pre-exists and who outlasts all things, and to whom none other is comparable.

44.9-20 In comparison, the idols are inane and vacuous human artefacts, of whom their makers cannot bring themselves to ask ‘Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?’ (44.20 Heb הֲלוֹא שֶׁקֶר בְּיַמִּינִי *Ha-lo sheqer bimini?* – lit. ‘Is not deceit in my right hand?)

44.21- 28 The Lord emphasizes His saving and forgiving nature, and His redemptive power, which should give rise to great celebration – this God takes on the fallen and the destitute and makes them live again.

Not only is He the creator, but He is the source of all true wisdom and knowledge, making nonsense of the false prophets’ utterances.

In the last verse of this section comes the mention of the name of Cyrus, whom the prophet calls ‘my shepherd’ (Heb רֹעִי *ro’i* – exactly the same term used as in Psalm 23.1!) But this may well be a word-play around his name, which in Persian derives from a root meaning *to care*.

Cyrus (Heb כּוֹרֶשׁ *Koresh*, Greek κύρος *Kyros*) known as *the Great* , and second of that name, was the first Persian emperor. A Zoroastrian, and part of the Archaemenid dynasty, reigned from 559 to 530BC. His main role in the Bible story is that, in 540BC he defeated the Babylonians and took over their territories. His Act of Restitution led then, directly, to the return of the Jews to their homeland.

With this in mind, we can see how key a character Cyrus the Great was to be for the exiled Jews, since he would open the door for their return home after seventy years away. Therefore, ‘he will say of Jerusalem, let it be rebuilt.’ (44.24)

45.1-7 The prophetic words here in Isaiah give an insight into a developing theology in Israel of God as God as not just of Israel, but of the nations. He ordains even pagan rulers to be His instruments in the unfolding drama. The Lord would make it possible for him and his armies to raid the horded treasures of Babylon (the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places, 45.3) so that he would be the liberator of His captive people.

The Lord will grant Cyrus honour, even though the Persian does not acknowledge the Lord. As a Zoroastrian, Cyrus would believe in one divine Creator, *Ahura Mazda*,

as revealed through a prophet, Zoroaster, living sometime in the period 1500 to 1100BC. Although, therefore, Zoroastrians were monotheists, believing in one God, they believed that evil and darkness were not created by Ahura Mazda, but were of another source, *druj*, and that life was an enormous battle between good and evil. They also looked for a coming saviour (or *Saoshyant*) which may be linked also to the search of the *magi* in Matthew for Jesus' birthplace.

In view of this theology which Cyrus upheld, it seems significant that Isaiah emphasizes the Lord (YHWH) as creator of all, both light and darkness, and that He brings both prosperity and disaster – something which Zoroastrians did not believe.(45.7)

45.8 The outcome of Cyrus's advance will be the emergence of rescue for Israel, an opportunity for righteousness to be done.

45.9-13 And to those who question God's employing a foreign king in His purposes, the Lord answers that He reserves the right to act according to His own design and purpose, using whom He chooses. In the same way that He made the heavens by His own will and desire, He will use Cyrus as the instrument of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the liberation of the exiles of Babylon.