

Exegetical Notes, 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-2
“A Great Change Has Occurred”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19329
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

2 Chronicles 36:22-23 & Ezra 1:1-2

Verses 2 Chronicles 36:22 & Ezra 1:1

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

- 2 Chronicles closes with the exact same words as the book of Ezra opens. Scholars agree that this is a “scribal error.” At some point in time, a scribe who was copying the Bible made a mistake. He closed 2 Chronicles correctly. But when he began to copy Ezra, the next book in the Biblical order, he began with the closing words of 2 Chronicles instead of the first words of Ezra. However, we believe that the Holy Spirit of God protects the Biblical texts. Therefore, this “scribal error” must be intended by the Holy Spirit. Our question is what the Holy Spirit intended by this redundancy.
- At the time these words were written (538 B.C.), world powers were shifting. The great empire of Babylon had fallen to Cyrus, the King of Persia. Cyrus was a ruthless man who rose to power through military means defeating all those who opposed him. He was not a Jew nor sympathetic to Jewish concerns at the beginning of his reign. However, the Bible says that he was made king, “in order to fulfill the word of YHWH spoken by Jeremiah.”
- The reference is to Jeremiah 25:11-12. God promised that, after 70 years in Babylonian captivity, a new king from a different culture would restore Israel. Cyrus was that king.
- So, though Cyrus was not so inclined at first, God moved his heart to allow Israel to return home and to rebuild her Temple so by reestablishing the worship of YHWH.

Verses 2 Chronicles 36:23 & Ezra 1:2

“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

“The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD their God be with them.”

- Cyrus’ heart was moved to acknowledge YHWH as the Hebrew God and to allow the Temple to YHWH to be rebuilt in Jerusalem.
- Cyrus remained a polytheist. He did not acknowledge God as the one and only god. However, his heart was moved by the Holy Spirit so that he acted in compliance with the word and will of YHWH.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *A Great Change Has Occurred*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)