

NOW IS THE TIME!

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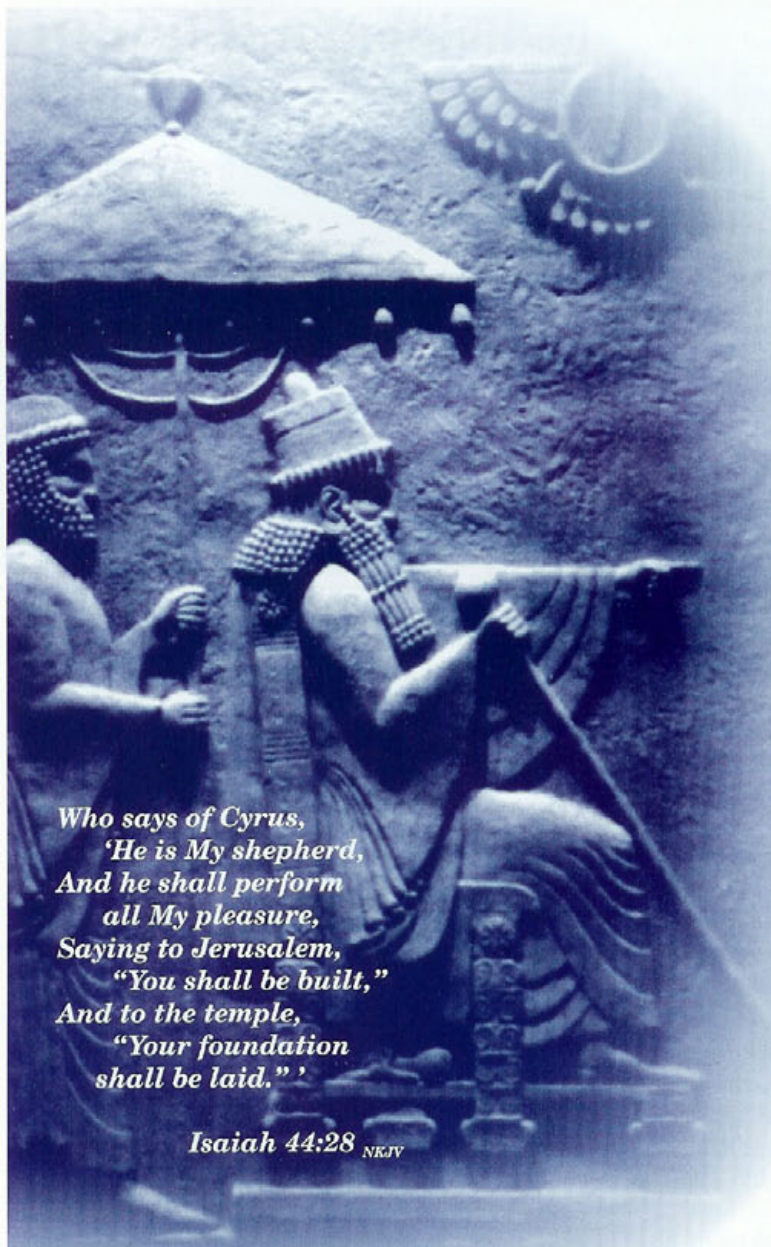
KING CYRUS - FULFILLING DESTINY

We cannot help but wonder what is coming up next in our nation, in the Body of Christ, in Israel and in the rest of the world after the tragedies of September 11. The threat of more violent attacks, the uncertainty and the fear many sense as our nation faces war, delicately trying to balance relations with other nations to have them as allies in this battle. There is mounting pressure on our government from Moslem nations, to change our policy in the Middle East conflict, in a way that would put Israel in a place of compromise. This could prove to be devastating for America if it happens. However, **in the midst of it all, how many believe that we in the Church have been called "for such a time as this?"**

We often quote this phrase from the Book of Esther, with a seemingly great sense of purpose and resolve but not knowing where to go on from there. The question is what have we been called for "for such a time as this"? When we find out why, then what comes next? I believe as we look at the life of the ancient King Cyrus of Persia there are keys that will help us to answer these questions.

King Cyrus Performed All of God's Pleasure

King Cyrus lived 500 years before Christ. He was a Gentile living in a Gentile nation, however, he came to believe in and acknowledge the God of Israel as the true God. Cyrus had been called to be a very important part of God's plan for His covenant people, the Jews. Isaiah had prophesied about Cyrus, 200 years before he was born, saying, *"Thus says the Lord...who says of Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid,'....I will go before you and make the crooked places*



*Who says of Cyrus,
'He is My shepherd,
And he shall perform
all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem,
'You shall be built,'
And to the temple,
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shall be laid.' '*

Isaiah 44:28 NKJV

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straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that you would know that I, the Lord, Am the God of Israel. **For Jacob My servant's sake and Israel My elect I have called you...** "Isa.

44:28, 45:1-4. Cyrus was to be a shepherd to the House of Israel in their time of exile, a shepherd that would perform all God's pleasure. God promised to go before Cyrus and remove every obstacle out of his way. God promised to give him authority and great wealth, because God was ready to move in a mighty way to fulfill His covenant with His beloved Chosen people.



He is My shepherd...I will go before you...

Babylon they
Passover and
themselves
idols of the
seek the Lord God
There was spiritual
those who
the Land.

kept the
separated
from the
nations to
of Israel.
again as their forefathers were.
God raised up Cyrus to fulfill His
heart's desire for His covenant
people.
This calling
would further
be fulfilled by
the spotless
Passover
Lamb who
was soon to
come, to bring
eternal salvation to
Israel and those who would
also believe from the
nations.

Anointed to Be A Shepherd After God's Own Heart

King Cyrus was a man who knew and totally embraced His destiny; he believed God, and acted accordingly. Because Cyrus embraced his destiny and trusted in God, God gave him authority over nations and sent Cyrus to call His covenant people back to Him. Cyrus loved and cared for the Jews; God anointed him to be a shepherd after His own heart. Cyrus not only led the Jewish people to return to their land but he selflessly gave himself and his resources freely to them, with a pure heart and pure motives, not looking to what he could gain in return. It says in Isaiah 45:13 that King Cyrus, "shall build My city and let my exiles go free, not for price nor for reward..." Cyrus also sent a decree to the people of his kingdom declaring that they were to provide all the housing, finances and provisions that were needed for the Jews as they traveled through their land to Israel. He then sent contributions for what was needed to rebuild the temple and to restore Jerusalem.

Cyrus brought back the valued

articles, that had been stolen from the previous temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians. He kept them for the Jews until the building of the temple was complete. Cyrus then sent a decree to all the surrounding nations declaring that the Jews were to be honored again as their forefathers were. God raised up Cyrus to fulfill His heart's desire for His covenant people.

Could King Cyrus be a type and shadow of the Church of our day? I believe we are now in our time of destiny, just as Cyrus, when God is gathering and restoring Israel as a nation; preparing her to fulfill her destiny to be a light among the nations in its fullest sense. It says in Romans 11, Has Israel stumbled that she should fall? "Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" God is again making Israel a blessing among the nations and preparing Jerusalem to welcome the soon coming Messiah, the King of Israel, the King of all Kings! Jerusalem will then fully become a praise is all the earth.

Just as God spoke through His prophet Isaiah of Cyrus's destiny many years before his birth, He has also spoken through His

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prophets of our destiny for the time we are living in. It is also a *kairos* (opportune) time! He has called us to help restore the Jewish people to their destiny. He has called us to be a shepherd to His people; to remove, in prayer,

the stones (strongholds and obstacles) out of their way (Isa.62:10, Jer.30:3,8, Isa.43:5-6, Jer.31:7-8). He is calling us to unconditionally love, support and be His voice to the Jewish people to

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to say what He has said, that it's the time to return to your Land, to build it up and to prepare for the coming King (Jer.16:14-16, Isa.62:1, Jer.33:6-9, Eze.37:25-28, Zech.8:3). He has called us to provide for their travel back to Israel and to "carry" them on our shoulders and in our arms, literally or with the offering of our finances (Isa 49:22, 14:1-2). He is asking us to comfort and serve them on their journey and after they arrive in the their Land (Isa 40:1, 60:10-12). God is calling us to honor Israel among all the nations. Not because they are perfect or have done everything right, but because of God's covenant with them and His love and purpose for them. Isaiah declares, in chapter 61 verse7 "*... instead of shame (Israel) you shall have double honor...therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs.*" God has good plans for His people!

Will we embrace our destiny or will we turn away from it? **What would have happened to King Cyrus if he had turned away from his destiny in unbelief?** He would have been powerless, unfulfilled and defeated. He would have missed God's presence and would not have seen His glory the way he did. Will we see the glory of God, will we experience true revival? I don't believe so, not until we humble ourselves before God and seek His face on behalf of His covenant people in our nation.... not until we embrace our destiny "*for such a time as this*". May we, as King Cyrus did, offer ourselves freely and completely to God, to do all His pleasure in these important days.
