

## Jeremiah and 70 Years

### Commentary for April 1, 2012 — A Central Prophecy in the Bible

The 70 years prophecy in Jeremiah is interwoven throughout much of the rest of the Bible after the time of Jeremiah. If the prophecy is not directly mentioned, it is in the background. Dr. Martin's presentation this month, originally from November 1999, is "Jeremiah, Part 3." This article covers Jeremiah's 70 years prophecy and also Daniel's 70 "weeks" prophecy that derives from Jeremiah's original prophecy. Read the "[April 2012 Newsletter](#)" for more information about Jeremiah's writings.

There are 7 mentions of the 70-years prophecy given to Jeremiah in the Bible. Dr. Martin discusses each of them in this month's article. The 70-weeks of years extension presented by Daniel even has a portion that deals with time future to us today. Cyrus, King of Persia, in his first year of reign made a proclamation for the people of Israel to return to Judea, rebuild Jerusalem, and their Temple. This fulfilled the 70 years prophecy. We have confirmation of this in 2 Chronicles chapter 36, confirmed by Ezra chapter 1. It is likely that Ezra wrote Chronicles as well as the book with his name.

This is a prime example of what is termed "intertextuality," the use of one text by another. It is the mention of information from one source inserted as evidence in another source. Frequently the latter mention is a midrash, or an interpretation or commentary on the first source. Sometimes the second mention expands and changes significantly the meaning of the first source. One example that relates to Jeremiah's 70-years prophecy is at the end of Second Chronicles and the beginning of the Book of Ezra. The translation comes from the Rotherham Bible, which is a literal translation:

<i>2 Chronicles 36:20–23</i>	<i>Ezra 1:1–4</i>
<p>"20 and he exiled the remnant left from the sword, into Babylon, — where they became his and his sons, as servants, <u>until</u> the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21 <u>to fulfill the word of God, by the mouth of Jeremiah</u>, until the land had paid off her sabbaths, — all the days of her lying desolate, she kept sabbath, <u>to fulfill seventy years</u>. 22 But,</p> <p><b>in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to accomplish the word of God by the mouth of Jeremiah, YHWH aroused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made proclamation throughout all his kingdom, moreover also in writing, saying:</b></p>	<p><b>"1 In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, to fulfill the word of YHWH from the mouth of Jeremiah, YHWH aroused the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, moreover also in writing, saying:</b></p>

<p>23 Thus, says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth, has YHWH God of the heavens, given unto me, and, he himself, has laid charge upon me, to build to him a house, in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people with whom is YHWH his God? Then let him go up.”</p>	<p>2 Thus, says Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth, has YHWH God of the heavens, given to me, — and, he himself, has laid charge upon me, to build for him a house, in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up</p> <p>to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, — and <u>build the house of YHWH God of Israel</u>, (he, is God!) which is in Jerusalem; 4 And, whosoever is left, of all the places where he does sojourn, let the men of his place uphold him, with silver and with gold, and with goods and with beasts, — <u>along with a voluntary offering for the house of God</u>, which is in Jerusalem.”</p>
--	--

Of course, the return spoken of marks the end of the 70-years prophecy. King Cyrus of Persia is mentioned in Isaiah and the return is from the exile prophesied by Jeremiah. Cyrus is mentioned often in Ezra (1:1–2, 7-8, 3:7, 4:3, 5, 5:13–14, 17, and 6:3, 14). He even had the utensils returned for use in the rebuilt Temple (Ezra 1:7–11).

Complications arose when the rebuilding was opposed by local Gentile peoples and construction was halted. So a letter was sent to the Persian king Darius. The Jews reminded him of all that his predecessor Cyrus had commanded:

**“But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, ... those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto ... Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.**

**... let there be search made in the king’s treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem.**

• *Ezra 5:13–17*

### ***The ASK Topical Index***

Again, I want to call your attention to a new feature on the ASK website. I hope you have at least looked at the [“ASK Topical Index.”](#) I believe this index will be a very useful adjunct to the search engine. For many purposes it will be a more efficient use of your time to find information of interest separated by topic. Try to use it and let us know if it is useful for you.

David Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)