

## **Mede-Persia: King Cyrus**

- Cyrus attacked Babylonia in 539 and his soldiers killed Belshazzar. (Daniel 5:30)
- Cyrus' tolerant religious policy and of resettlement
- He issues an edict for the Jews to return to Judah (2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4)
- Joseph the Jewish historian says Cyrus was impressed by Isaiah's prophecy.
- Isaiah 44:28; 45:1 'my shepherd; my anointed'
- If Isaiah was written by Isaiah son of Amoz of Jerusalem, then this is a remarkable prophecy 200 years before the event.
- God can use 'unbelievers' as instruments of his purpose. (Jer 29:7; 1 Tim 2:1)

## **Ezra 'the scribe'**

- Books of Ezra and Nehemiah
- Ezra was not part of the first return but 60 years later. (Ezra 7:1-6)
- Descended from Aaron and the Levites and his genealogy (Ezra 7:1-5) included Zadok the priest (who anointed King Solomon 2 Sam 8:17) and Hilkiah who re-discovered the lost Book of the Law at the time of King Josiah (1 Kings 1:32-39)
- In Babylon he was a scribe, but back in Jerusalem was a priest.
- His inner spiritual life and sincerity
- No problem with accepting money from secular sources (Ezra 7:11-20), but not physical protection (Ezra 8:21-23)
- When he arrived at Jerusalem, there had been a departure from the faith (Ezra 9:6-15)
- His prayer of confession (Ezra 9:6-15)
- The response of the people (Ezra 10:1-15)
- Joy and grace to follow tears of repentance.
- As a preacher and teacher in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8 c/f Peter in Acts 2:37-41)
- The Feast of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:13-18)
- Ezra's prayer of thanksgiving (Nehemiah 9)

## **Conclusion**

What has been the purpose of all this?