

## *side notes - Ezra*

### *Nice pagan kings?*

Why would a conquering king, like Cyrus or even Artaxerxes, actually be nice to the Jews (unlike Nebuchadnezzar many times)? God did it, working through the king:

**Ezra 1:1-2** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, **(2)** Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which *is* in Judah. [and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 36:22-23]

This was earlier prophesied by Isaiah:

**Isaiah 44:28** 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, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

**(Ezra 7:27)** Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem,

The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. **(Ezra 7:6)**

We can see God's working thru these pagan kings.

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### ***Why God "punishes"***

Why the exile? Israel (the 'Northern Kingdom') went to Assyria; Judah (the 'Southern Kingdom') to Babylon. Describing the Assyrian exile:

**(2 Kings 17:7)** For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods,

**(1 Chronicles 9:1)** But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.

Simple, but prolonged, as the accounts of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings gives us. God sent Judah to Babylon for their 'corrective discipline', to avoid and get-off the downward spiral of apostasy that was happening to the split kingdoms of Judah and Israel in 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings.

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### ***70 years in Babylon***

Because of their sins including idolatry, Judah (in the Old Testament) went to Babylon (and the 'Northern Kingdom' of Israel went into captivity in Assyria, as mentioned.) This is what Daniel was praying about in Daniel 9:2 as he was in Babylon at that time and was expecting or wondering about their deliverance. This is what Jeremiah the prophet prophesied about (God through him), telling they would accomplish 70 years in Babylon:

**Jeremiah 25:11-12** And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy

years. (12) 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

**Jeremiah 29:10** For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

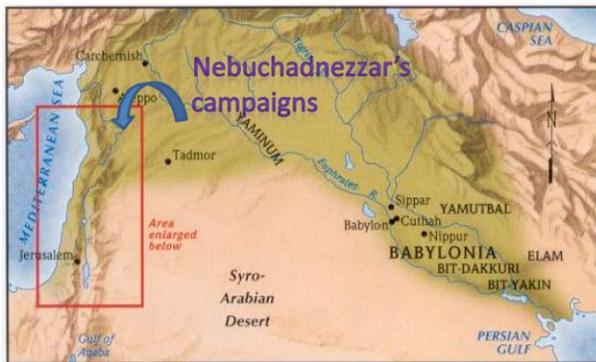
Babylon was in power in 605B.C. with Nebuchadnezzar's reign after conquering Assyria:



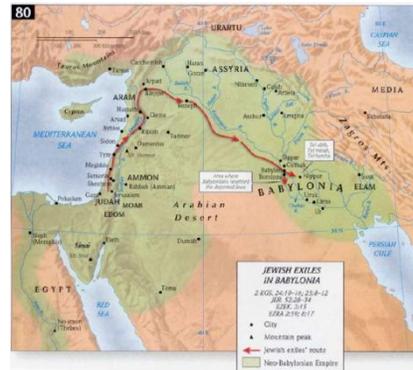


Babylon city in modern Iraq (Wikipedia).

The armies of king Nebuchadnezzar (known in history as Nebuchadnezzar II) of Babylon came to Judah and sacked it (Daniel 1:1, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 25:1-4) and took exiles captive to Babylon (i.e. Daniel 1:3).



**Nebuchadnezzar campaigns**



**then the exiles went to Babylon**

Later, between Cyrus the Great and Darius the Mede, they conquered Babylon in 539B.C. (Jeremiah 51:11, Daniel 5:30-31, Isaiah 45:1-2). Darius may have been appointed 'governor' or ruler with Cyrus taking the city; *history is sometimes unclear, missing information, or hard to figure out.*

605BC to 536BC is almost 70 years.

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