

Kurash (Cyrus) the Great: The Decree of Return for the Jews, 539 BCE

From *The Kurash Prism*:

I am Kurash ["Cyrus"], King of the World, Great King, Legitimate King, King of Babilani, King of Kiengir and Akkade, King of the four rims of the earth, Son of Kanbujjiya, Great King, King of Hakhamanish, Grandson of Kurash, Great king, King of Hakhamanish, descendant of Chishpish, Great king, King of Hakhamanish, of a family which always exercised kingship; whose rule Bel and Nebo love, whom they want as king to please their hearts. When I entered Babilani as a friend and when I established the seat of the government in the palace of the ruler under jubilation and rejoicing, Marduk, the great lord, induced the magnanimous inhabitants of Babilani to love me, and I was daily endeavoring to worship him.... As to the region from as far as Assura and Susa, Akkade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to these sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned them to their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Kiengir and Akkade whom Nabonidus had brought into Babilani to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in their former temples, the places which make them happy.

From *The Hebrew Bible, Ezra 1:1-8*:

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing: "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: "All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord, the God of heaven, has given to me, and he has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him! Let everyone who has survived, in whatever place he may have dwelt, be assisted by the people of that place with silver, gold, and goods, together with free will offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.' Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and Levites---everyone, that is, whom God had inspired to do so---prepared to go up to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. All their neighbors gave them help in every way, with silver, gold, goods, and cattle, and with many precious gifts besides all their free-will offerings. King Cyrus, too, had the utensils of the house of the Lord brought forth which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his god. Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought forth by the treasurer Mithredath, and counted out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

From: Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, (New York: Parke, Austin, & Lipscomb, 1917), Vol. I: *Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 460-462; *The Bible (Douai-Rheims Version)*, (Baltimore: John Murphy Co., 1914).