

# ***Allusions, Images, and Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy***

## ***Images of the End***

Lesson #13 for June 28, 2025

Scriptures: Matthew 12:38-42; Jonah 1:9; 3:5-10; Revelation 16:12-19; 18:4; Daniel 5:1-31; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23.

1. In this lesson we will study three stories from the Old Testament: (1) The story of **Jonah and Nineveh**; (2) The story of **the fall of Belshazzar and Babylon**; and (3) The story of **Cyrus the Persian king** who liberated the Jewish people so they could return to the land of Judah. All these stories talk about **Jewish individuals dealing with Gentile rulers**. What might that tell us about our responsibilities in our day? Is it possible that stories from more than 2500 years ago might help us with “present truth”?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **Because the Bible is essentially about the kingdom of God, its central message is oriented toward the end and the heavenly kingdom of God.** This eschatological illumination is testified to, and revealed, in the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible, which clearly and explicitly disclose the end-time scenario. This revelation also is found elsewhere in the Scriptures through specific events of judgment and salvation that shall transpire in the end times.

**In this ... lesson, three events have been selected that have one particular trait in common: they all take place at the end of the history of biblical Israel and involve the Gentiles, the “nations”** (*compare with Gen. 12:3, Gen. 22:18*). The **first event is dramatic**: this is the judgment and repentance of the whole people of Nineveh, following the prophet Jonah’s reluctant evangelistic campaign. The **second event is tragic**: this is the event of the judgment and non-repentance of Belshazzar that ends with the loss of his kingdom. And the **third event is glorious**: this is the **salvation of God’s people**, thanks to the contribution of the Persian king **Cyrus**. **That the end times are the occasion of the salvation of the nations, who finally join the ranks of Israel, is surprising; yet, it is symptomatic of the cosmic character of the eschatological moment, according to Paul’s prediction: “until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so, all Israel will be saved”** (*Rom. 11:25, 26, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 171.<sup>†‡§</sup>

### **Assyria (Nineveh): The Story of Jonah**

2. **Read Jonah 1-4. Do you see any parallels between the experience of Jonah and your own experience? What did Jonah say to the Ninevites besides the fact that their city was to be destroyed? Did he give them any instructions about how they could repent? Did he instruct them about how to change their ways?**
3. The story of Jonah is particularly significant because Jesus used it to compare Jonah’s experience of being three days and three nights in the belly of the giant fish or whale with His own experience of being three days and three nights in the earth. How do you explain this?

**Matthew 12:38-41:** <sup>38</sup> Then some teachers of the Law and some Pharisees spoke up. “Teacher,” they said, “we want to see you perform a miracle.”

<sup>39</sup> “How evil and godless are the people of this day!” **Jesus exclaimed. “You ask me for a miracle? No! The only miracle you will be given is the miracle**

of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup>In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the big fish [*whale, KJV\* & RSV\**], so will the Son of Man spend three days and nights in the depths of the earth. <sup>41</sup>On Judgement Day the people of Nineveh will stand up and accuse you, because **they turned from their sins when they heard Jonah preach**; and I tell you that there is something here greater than Jonah!”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Matthew 12:38-41). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup>

4. Compare that with what Jesus said as recorded in John 2:18-22 and John 10:18.

**John 2:18-22:** <sup>18</sup> The Jewish authorities replied with a question, **“What miracle can you perform to show us that you have the right to do this?”**

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered, “Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again.”

<sup>20</sup> “Are you going to build it again in three days?” they asked him. “It has taken 46 years to build this Temple!”

<sup>21</sup> But the temple Jesus was speaking about was his body. <sup>22</sup>So when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

**John 10:18:** “No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

5. **Jesus rose from the dead and came forth from the tomb by the power that was in Himself because He was God. There is no way anyone could doubt that the resurrection of Jesus was a miracle of God!**

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ’s tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, **the Saviour** [*sic-Br*] **came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. Now was proved the truth of His words, “I lay down My life, that I might take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Now was fulfilled the prophecy He had spoken to the priests and rulers, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John 10:17, 18; 2:19.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 785.2.<sup>†‡</sup>

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.3866&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.3866&index=0)<sup>†‡</sup>

6. Jonah was asked to go and preach to a group of people that he knew as mortal enemies. The history of the Assyrians (inhabitants of Ninevah) is replete with details of the unbelievable cruelty with which they dealt with their enemies.
7. We know nothing about the prophet Jonah outside of his book except for the passage in 2 Kings 14:25 which refers to him.

**2 Kings 14:25:** He [Jeroboam] reconquered all the territory that had belonged to Israel, from Hamath Pass in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. This was what the LORD, the God of Israel, had promised through his servant the prophet Jonah son of Amittai, from Gath Hopher.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup>

8. The Ninevites were evil. However, what do we know about the history of Israel and Judah?

**2 Chronicles 33:9: Manasseh led the people of Judah to commit even greater sins than those committed by the nations whom the LORD had driven out of the land as his people advanced.—Good News Bible.\*†**

9. It is interesting to note that the cuneiform representation of the name Nineveh means “big fish in the city.” How do you suppose they got that name? They were not close to the ocean.

[BSG:] The story of Jonah at Nineveh is an illustration of how God deals with His people and with the nations. In it we clearly see how God extends grace to sinners and how He still punishes them for their unforsaken sins.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 172.‡

10. How does the story of Jonah relate to us?

[BSG:] At the same time, we, too, have been charged with preaching a potentially unpopular message in spiritual Babylon. To say “come out of her, my people” (*Rev. 18:4, NKJV*) is to tell the world they must repent—a message that has almost always provoked a negative response from many people, even when delivered in the kindest way possible. Who of us when witnessing has not received negative, or even hostile, responses? It just comes with the job.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, June 22.‡§

11. **How do you say, “You must repent!” in the nicest, kindest way?**

12. How much of Jonah do you find in yourself? Do you feel comfortable going out to witness to people that you believe are antagonistic to your views?

13. **The surprising thing about the story of Jonah and Nineveh is that the people repented! What do you suppose it was that caused that change in attitude? What wicked behavior did they give up?** A disbelief in the God of Jonah? Their terrible treatment of their enemies? In any case, God accepted their repentance.

[EGW:] ... Their doom was averted, the God of Israel was exalted and honored throughout the heathen world, and His law was revered. Not until many years later was Nineveh to fall a prey to the surrounding nations through forgetfulness of God and through boastful pride.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings\** 270.4-271.0.‡ [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.1201&index=0>]‡

14. Can we expect a similar experience and response to the message we deliver in the last days?

[BSG:] **Can we expect something like this in the last days, with the final message to the fallen world? Yes—and no.** That is, there will be, all over the world, many people who heed the call, “ ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’ ” (*Rev. 18:4, NKJV*). **All over the world, people will take their stand and, in defiance of the beast, will “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (*Rev. 14:12*). These people, like those in Nineveh, will be spared the judgment that falls upon the lost.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, June 23.†‡§

15. Conservative scholars would consider this message of Jonah to be a *conditional prophecy*. What is a *conditional prophecy*?

[BSG:] **Some prophecies**, such as God’s announcement that Nineveh would be destroyed, are **conditional**. (Nineveh would be destroyed **unless the people turned away from their evil** [see *Jer. 18:7–10*].) Yet, some prophecies

don't come with these conditions. They are going to be fulfilled, no matter the human response. The Messianic prophecies of Christ's first and second comings, the mark of the beast, the outpouring of the plagues, end-time persecution—these are not conditional; **they will take place regardless of what humans do.** What humans do, and the **choices they make, will determine instead what side they will be on as final events,** foretold by the prophets, unfold.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday.<sup>†‡Ω§</sup>

**Jeremiah 18:7-12:** <sup>7</sup> “If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down, or destroy any nation or kingdom, <sup>8</sup>but then that nation turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would. <sup>9</sup>On the other hand, if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation or kingdom, <sup>10</sup>but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would. <sup>11</sup>Now then, tell the people of Judah and of Jerusalem that I am making plans against them and getting ready to punish them. Tell them to stop living sinful lives — to change their ways and the things they are doing. <sup>12</sup>They will answer, ‘No, why should we? We will all be just as stubborn and evil as we want to be.’ ”—*Good News Bible.*<sup>\*†</sup>

[BSG:] In Jeremiah 18, Jeremiah observes a potter doing what a potter does: molding and shaping whatever he is working on. It is this **imagery**, that of a **potter molding his clay, that God uses to explain the principle of conditionality in biblical prophecy.** And just to make sure we understand, the Lord speaks through Jeremiah, saying: “ ‘The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it’ ” (*Jer. 18:7–10, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday, June 27.<sup>†‡§</sup>

16. ***What choices are you making now that could help determine which choices you will make when the issue of worshiping God or the image breaks upon the world?***
17. ***What are the most common sins of God's people today?***

## **Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Belshazzar's Feast**

[BSG:] After the city of Nineveh had been humbled (612 B.C.) by a coalition army that included both Medes and Babylonians (led by Nebuchadnezzar's father), the city of **Babylon experienced a revival**, the likes of which the city had not seen since the days of Hammurabi, their great lawgiver. Under Nebuchadnezzar, who was now free from the problem of Assyrian raids, the city of Babylon grew in wealth and influence to the point where the neighboring nations had little choice but to grudgingly acknowledge her **dominance**. She was **queen of the world**, and nations who wished to prosper declared their loyalty to her.

Meanwhile, **as far as we can tell, Nebuchadnezzar died as a believer, professing that Daniel's God was, indeed, the rightful ruler of all nations** (*Dan. 4:34–37*). The next account that Daniel provides is that of his successor,

the vice-regent Belshazzar.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, June 24.†§

18. **What do you think was/were the major factor(s) in Nebuchadnezzar’s “conversion”?**

**Daniel 4:34-37:** <sup>34</sup> “When the seven years had passed,” said the king, “I looked up at the sky, and my sanity returned. I praised the Supreme God and gave honour [sic-Br] and glory to the one who lives for ever [sic-Br].

“He will rule for ever [sic-Br],

and his kingdom will last for all time.

<sup>35</sup> He looks on the people of the earth as nothing;

angels in heaven and people on earth

are under his control.

No one can oppose his will

or question what he does.

<sup>36</sup> **“When my sanity returned**, my honour [sic-Br], my majesty, and the glory of my kingdom were given back to me. My officials and my noblemen welcomed me, and I was given back my royal power, with even greater honour [sic-Br] than before.

<sup>37</sup> **“And now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honour [sic-Br], and glorify the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right and just, and he can humble anyone who acts proudly.”**—*Good News Bible*.\*††

19. When Nebuchadnezzar’s sanity returned, he praised God and recognized the God of heaven. Contrast the story of Belshazzar. Read Daniel 5:1-31.

20. Is it clear that if you choose to defy and blaspheme the God of heaven, He will take action against you? Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson through his daughter Nitocris did not follow the example of his grandfather. **Daniel 5:22 implies that Belshazzar knew the story of Nebuchadnezzar.** Perhaps, he even witnessed some of it firsthand. It is clear that despite all that he knew about Nebuchadnezzar’s story, Belshazzar chose to act in direct defiance of *YAHWEH*. Why do you think Belshazzar, knowing what he knew, still chose to defy God? Do we ever have times when the truth that we know in our minds is in direct conflict with what we choose to do with our “hearts”?

[BSG:] The story of the judgment of the Babylonian king Belshazzar follows the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s judgment and repentance, as if the biblical author intended to bring out the contrast between the two Babylonian kings. **While both kings are proud and sin against God, the two kings do not receive the same judgment. Nebuchadnezzar is forgiven, and the chapter reporting his experience ends with his song praising God, who is able to abase the proud (Dan. 4:37). On the other hand, Belshazzar who knew about his forefather’s experience (Dan. 5:22) refuses to repent. On the contrary, he willfully repeats Nebuchadnezzar’s actions of usurpation (see lessons 5 and 12) and goes even further than his forefather in his iniquity.** While Nebuchadnezzar’s intention was only to bring the vessels of the [Jerusalem] temple into his own temple, **Belshazzar drinks, and gets drunk, out of those vessels.** Nebuchadnezzar contents himself with dismissing the

other metals of the statue (see *Daniel 3*) and retains only the gold, which represents himself. In the end, he finally understands his foolishness and directs his praise to the God of heaven who “lives forever” (*Dan. 4:34, NKJV*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 172.†§

21. Nebuchadnezzar eventually seemed to accept God; Belshazzar chose to directly insult God.

[BSG:] Even the respective denouement of the story arc of each king marks the contrast between them. Nebuchadnezzar, who was forced to creep on the ground like an animal as a result of divine judgment against his pride, recovers his standing position. Then his “honor and splendor” were returned to him (*Dan. 4:36, NKJV*). Belshazzar, who was sitting on the throne and had been so sure of himself, now cannot stand up and does not control himself, his knees knocking against each other: “the king cried aloud” (*Dan. 5:7, NKJV*). The king calls his wise men for help, for he cannot read the inscription that the mysterious hand has written on the wall. Even his wise men are not able to understand it.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 173.†§

22. The queen mother, Nitocris, mentioned only briefly in this story, has an interesting history.

[BSG:] Then the queen mother, Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter and Nabonidus’ wife [Nitocris], comes and testifies of Daniel’s superior capacity, thus reminding Belshazzar of Nebuchadnezzar’s spiritual experience. Daniel, the representative of the God whom the king had insulted, is the only one who will be able to read and interpret the inscription of judgment, which predicts the end of Belshazzar’s kingdom (*Dan. 5:26–29*). The three words of the inscription on the wall encapsulate the judgment against Belshazzar and thus convey an idea about what the judgment will constitute: “numbered” means accountability; “weighed” indicates evaluation; and “divided” means “rejection.”—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 173.†§

**Daniel 5:26-31:** <sup>26</sup> “And this is what it means: *number*, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; <sup>27</sup>*weight*, you have been weighed on the scales and found to be too light; <sup>28</sup>*divisions*, your kingdom is divided up and given to the Medes and Persians.”

<sup>29</sup> Immediately Belshazzar ordered his servants to dress Daniel in a robe of royal purple and to hang a gold chain of honour [*sic-Br*] round his neck. And he made him the third in power in the kingdom. <sup>30</sup>That same night Belshazzar, the king of Babylonia, was killed; <sup>31</sup>and Darius the Mede, who was then 62 years old, seized the royal power.—*Good News Bible*.\*†§

## Persia: The “Drying” of the Euphrates, Cyrus the Anointed (Messiah/Christ)

[BSG:] One of Babylon’s strengths was the way that the Euphrates River flowed underneath its walls, providing the city with an unlimited supply of water. It also proved to be its weakness. **Nitocris**, an ancient Babylonian queen, had created earthen works along the river to develop it as a route to the city. In the process, she had diverted the river into a swamp to allow crews to work comfortably. Cyrus realized that he could do the same thing: dry up the Euphrates enough that he could comfortably march his troops under the wall [gates on the “low water” riverbed]. Once inside the city walls, he found the defensive walls that followed the river through the city unguarded, and the city fell in a single night.

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus tells us that “those who lived in the centre [*sic-Br*] of Babylon had no idea that the suburbs had fallen, for it was a time of festival, and all were dancing, and indulging themselves in pleasures.”— Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Tom Holland (New York: Penguin, 2015), p. 94.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, June 25.<sup>†‡§</sup>

23. **Nitocris was probably one of the daughters of Nebuchadnezzar II (the great) and wife of Nabonidus, mother of Belshazzar.** See some additional history in *Wikipedia*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nitocris\\_of\\_Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nitocris_of_Babylon)

<https://stantlitore.com/2020/02/19/nitocris-the-babylonian-queen-who-doesnt-have-time-for-your-nonsense/>

24. See the section of this article talking about the “Babylonian lake” and Nitocris.

<https://obscureantiquity.art.blog/2020/04/10/7-civil-engineering-wonders-of-the-ancient-world-that-you-never-heard-of/>

25. Can there be any doubt that this is the same feast as portrayed in Daniel 5?

26. It is very interesting to note some parallels between Daniel 5:18-31 and Revelation 16:12-19. Both talk about incidents in which the great river Euphrates dried up and forces came from the east. What does that have to do with the final events of this earth’s history? What other parallels do you see between Daniel 5:18-31 and Revelation 16:12-19?

**Revelation 16:12-19:** <sup>12</sup> Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The river dried up, to provide a way for the kings who come from the east. <sup>13</sup>Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs. They were coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup>They are the spirits of demons that perform miracles. **These three spirits go out to all the kings of the world, to bring them together for the battle on the great Day of Almighty God.**

<sup>15</sup> “Listen! I am coming like a thief! Happy is he who stays awake and guards his clothes, so that he will not walk around naked and be ashamed in public!”

<sup>16</sup> Then the spirits brought the kings together in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. [See Isaiah 14:13: The Hebrew for *mount of assembly* is *har mageddon*.]

<sup>17</sup> Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl in the air. A loud voice came from the throne in the temple, saying, “It is done!” <sup>18</sup>There were flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder, and a terrible earthquake. There has never been such an earthquake since the creation of the human race; this was the worst earthquake of all! <sup>19</sup>The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of all countries were destroyed. **God remembered great Babylon and made her drink the wine from his cup — the wine of his furious anger.**

<sup>20</sup>All the islands disappeared, all the mountains vanished. <sup>21</sup>Huge hailstones, each weighing as much as fifty kilogrammes [*sic-Br*], fell from the sky on people, who cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because it was such a terrible plague.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup>

27. What about us? Did Jesus have any related comments?

[BSG:] In explaining how to discern the signs of the times, Jesus warned His disciples, “ Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is

coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into' ” (*Matt. 24:42, 43, NKJV*). **Just as in the fall of Babylon, the sudden appearance of Christ will catch modern Babylon by surprise. It does not need to be this way, however; we have been given ample evidence of the soon coming of Jesus in a multitude of detailed prophecies.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday.<sup>†‡§</sup>

**Matthew 24:42-43:** <sup>42</sup> “Be on your guard, then, because you do not know what day your Lord will come. <sup>43</sup>If the owner of a house knew the time when the thief would come, you can be sure that he would stay awake and not let the thief break into his house.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] **The world will not be caught by surprise merely because it is ignorant of what God has predicted; it will be surprised because it has chosen not to believe what God has said would happen.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, June 25.<sup>†‡</sup>

**Revelation 16:15:** “Listen! I am coming like a thief! Happy is he who stays awake and guards his clothes, so that he will not walk around naked and be ashamed in public!”—*Good News Bible*.\*

28. ***It is God’s plan for us to be clothed “with the righteousness of Christ.” We must not allow those “clothes” to be taken away or stolen from us.***

[BSG:] When Cyrus sacked the city of Babylon, the years of captivity for God’s people were over, and the Persians permitted the Jews to return to the Promised Land and rebuild the temple. Under Cyrus, the Persian Empire became the largest in history, with what historian Tom Holland calls “the largest agglomeration of territories that the world had ever seen.”—*Dominion* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), p. 25....

Cyrus foreshadows what will happen when Christ returns for His church: He is the King who comes from the east (*compare with Matt. 24:27*), waging war against Babylon, and liberating His people finally to escape from Babylon and return to the Land of Promise. (*See Rev. 19:11–16.*) This is why God refers to **Cyrus as “His anointed”** (*Isa. 45:1, NKJV*); **not only did this famous Persian liberate God’s people, but his campaign against Babylon is also a type of Christ’s second coming.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, June 26.<sup>†‡§</sup>

29. Read Matthew 24:27; Revelation 19:11-16; and Isaiah 45:1 (as below).

30. In what ways do you think Cyrus compares with Nebuchadnezzar? Or, are they mainly contrasting? Think of the decree that Cyrus made to allow the Jews to go back home.

[BSG:] **The original order of Old Testament books** [with the discussion of Cyrus in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 at the end of the Old Testament] **has been changed in our day to end with Malachi, but originally, this is where the Old Testament ended—with this declaration from Cyrus. The next episode in the canon of Scripture would be Matthew, which begins with the birth of Christ, the antitypical Cyrus.** Cyrus would orchestrate the rebuilding of the earthly temple; Jesus would inaugurate His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, leading up to His return and our liberation.

**Cyrus, of course, was not a perfect representation of Christ;** no type lines up perfectly with antitype, and we must be careful not to read too much into every tiny detail. Nevertheless, he broadly functions as a type of “Savior.”

How fascinating that God would use a pagan king in such a marked manner to do His will. Despite how things appear to us on the outside, how can we learn the truth that, long term, the Lord is going to bring about end-time events as prophesied?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday.†§

31. How do the 70 years of Babylonian captivity ended by Cyrus relate to liberation from Satan?

[BSG:] The Persian king Cyrus occupies a unique place in the Scriptures. Cyrus is the only Gentile person who receives the title of “Messiah,” or anointed (*Isa. 45:1, NKJV*). The Bible goes so far as to relate Cyrus to the Messianic Savior, Christ Himself. Beyond the salvation of Israel from exile in Babylon by the messiah Cyrus, the prophet Daniel sees the universal Messiah who will deliver humans from the grasp of evil. Furthermore, the prophet does not just predict the event.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 173.†§

**Isaiah 45:1:** The LORD has chosen Cyrus to be king!

He has appointed [anointed] him to conquer nations;

he sends him to strip kings of their power;

the LORD will open the gates of cities for him.

To Cyrus the LORD says.—*Good News Bible.\**

32. Was Cyrus really a predictor or type of Christ? How do 70 years relate to 70 “weeks”?

[BSG:] By paralleling the 70 years of Cyrus with the 70 weeks of Babylonian captivity, **Daniel alerts the reader to the fact that these weeks are to be interpreted prophetically.** The 70 years refer to literal years leading to the coming of the messiah Cyrus (*Isa. 45:1*), who restored historical Israel to ancient Palestine. Indeed, the messiah Cyrus supports the historical character of the Messiah Jesus Christ and His event of salvation. The 70 weeks (of years) are prophetic weeks leading to the coming of the universal Messiah, who will save the world from sin and, thus, through atonement, provide forgiveness for sin. This parallel between the two messiahs also is found in the book of Isaiah, wherein the messiah Cyrus, in Isaiah 45, and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 echo each other on a significant number of linguistic and thematic levels.

**The messiah Cyrus played a decisive role in the fall of Babylon, the archenemy of Israel; he also restored Israel to their land (*Ezra 1:1–3*) and even assisted the Jews in the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem under Joshua the high priest (*Ezra 3:2, 3*). Significantly, the book of Revelation parallels Cyrus’s achievement with Christ’s second coming. The event of the drying of the Euphrates that allowed the king of the east, Cyrus, to enter and cause the city of Babylon to fall serves as a template to describe the coming of Christ at the time of the end (*Rev. 16:12*). Cyrus prepared the ground for the future coming of Christ and the salvation of humanity. Moreover, Cyrus was a type of Christ. The role Cyrus played in the first coming of Christ may well hint at the scenario that may take place at the end of time in connection with the second coming of Christ. Thus, we may well conjecture that the last events of salvation will involve individuals outside of the**

**regular ecclesiastic pattern.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 173-174.<sup>†‡§</sup>

33. Cyrus issued a decree that was very important in the history of God’s people.

**Ezra 1:1-3:** <sup>1</sup> In the first year that Cyrus of Persia was emperor, the LORD made what he had said through the prophet Jeremiah come true. He prompted Cyrus to issue the following command and send it out in writing to be read aloud everywhere in his empire:

<sup>2</sup> “This is the command of Cyrus, Emperor of Persia. The LORD, the God of Heaven, has made me ruler over the whole world and has given me the responsibility of building a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah.

<sup>3</sup> May God be with all of you who are his people. You are to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is worshipped [*sic-Br*] in Jerusalem.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*‡</sup>

34. What did Ellen G. White have to say about **history repeating itself**?

[EGW:] Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the Watcher and the Holy One. Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, **history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed.**

While nations have rejected God’s principles, and in this rejection have wrought their own ruin, yet a divine, overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages. It was this that the prophet Ezekiel saw in the wonderful representation given him during his exile in the land of the Chaldeans, when before his astonished gaze were portrayed the symbols that revealed an overruling Power that has to do with the affairs of earthly rulers.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings\** 535.1-2.<sup>†‡</sup>

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.2379&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.2379&index=0)<sup>‡</sup>

35. Ellen G. White wrote, “History has repeated itself.” Are there common threads in the nations listed in prophecy? Did they follow the same prophetic path? Is our world doing the same?

36. How often do we make the mistake of “listening to our heart” as opposed to following our minds and carefully reasoned logic based on the evidence God has provided? Is that always/ever a good idea? How are we to know whether to choose “the mind” or “the heart”?

[BSG:] **Think through the idea that it’s not often the mind, the intellect, that keeps people from faith, but the heart. How might this knowledge impact how you witness to others?**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday, June 27.<sup>†‡</sup> [Does emotion of the “heart” fail us?]<sup>‡</sup>

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Email: [Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)