

Isaiah 41:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

Analysis

This verse prophetically describes Cyrus of Persia (named in 44:28, 45:1), whom God raises from the east as His instrument. The Hebrew 'tsedeq' (righteousness) indicates God's righteous purpose in raising this pagan king. Cyrus will conquer nations and subdue kings, yet does so as God's unwitting servant, demonstrating that even unbelieving rulers fulfill divine purposes.

Historical Context

Written 150 years before Cyrus's birth, this prophecy was fulfilled when Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC and decreed the Jews' return. His rapid military success vindicated God's sovereign control of history.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of pagan rulers like Cyrus demonstrate His sovereignty over all nations?
2. In what ways does this prophecy strengthen your trust in God's control of seemingly secular events?

Interlinear Text

מִי H4310	הָעִיר Who raised up H5782	מִמֶּזֶךְ ח man from the east H4217	צַדִּיק the righteous H6664	יִקְרָא הוּ called H7121	לְבָגְלוֹ him to his foot H7272
יָתַן H5414	לְפָנָיו before H6440	גוֹיִם the nations H1471	וּמֶלְכֵי יָם over kings H4428	וַיַּרְדֵּהוּ him and made him rule H7287	יָתַן gave H5414
כְּעָפָר them as the dust H6083	חֶרֶב to his sword H2719	כֶּקֶשׁ stubble H7179	וַיִּדְרֵהוּ and as driven H5086	קִשְׁתּוֹ to his bow H7198	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:1 (Kingdom): Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

2 Samuel 22:43 (Parallel theme): Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.

Isaiah 41:25 (Resurrection): I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

Isaiah 46:11 (Parallel theme): Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

Isaiah 40:24 (Parallel theme): Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

Ezra 1:2 (Kingdom): Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Isaiah 45:13 (Righteousness): I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 Chronicles 36:23 (Kingdom): Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.