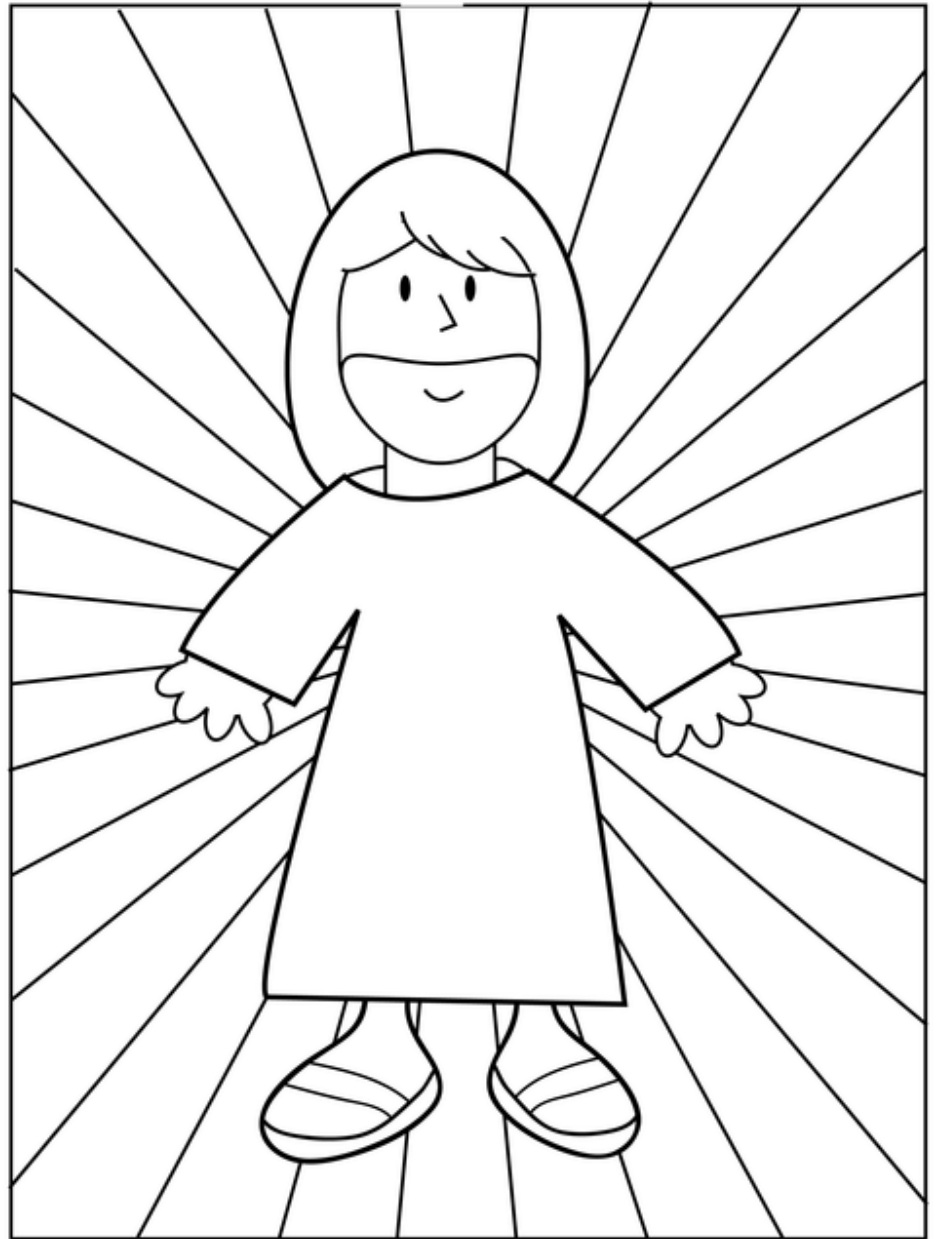




Cyrus was a
Messiah...

Jesus is
THE
Messiah!



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11



Bible Study: Read Isaiah 44-45 and Ezra 1. Consider the profound extent of prophecies telling how God would anoint Cyrus, the patriarch of the Persian Empire, to subdue nations on God's behalf, though Cyrus did not acknowledge Him! It is an amazing example of the common theme woven through all of Scripture that God uses imperfect people to accomplish his purposes ALL THE TIME.



The Gospel in the Story: Chapters 44 and 45 of Isaiah read like a love letter from YHWH, containing messages of love, sovereignty, and commitment from God to His people with promises of redemption, assurances of His eternal presence, and salvation despite their wicked rebellion. These chapters are not unlike the book of Hosea, who prophesied to the Northern Kingdom, and witnessed Israel's defeat by the Assyrians. It is essentially a love letter to an unfaithful wife! And it is filled with promises of redemption. The amount of sheer GRACE that is expressed in these texts is astounding, and the extent of the invite from the Creator of everything, is amazing: God proclaims, "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God and there is no other." (Isa. 45:22). The Good News of Jesus was and is available to *all* who repent of their sins and put their faith in Jesus.

Application:

Head: **What did we learn?**

Q: Why did God allow Babylon to defeat the Southern Kingdom? A: For the same reason the Northern Kingdom was defeated by the Assyrians: The leaders and people had turned away from God, and were putting their hope in false idols and other kings.

Q: If the leaders and people were so wicked, why did God promise to save some of them and love them like cherished children? A: Because He PROMISED – first Adam, then Noah, then Abram and the patriarchs, then Moses and David, that He would gather a chosen family, made up of people from all nations, to bring Glory to His Name.

Heart: **Memory Verse**

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Hands: **How does this affect the way I live?**

Spend time meditating on the *undeserved favor* each member of the family who claims Christ as Lord has received; that while you were wicked rebellious sinners, Christ died for you.

Home: **How does this affect my household?**

Consider the weightiness of God's Glory that he would go to that extent to put His Amazing Love on display for all to see.

Consider verse 5 in Isaiah 44; and ponder the different ways to say "I belong to YHWH God." Maybe, as a family, pick a phrase that would be the "household proclamation" of how you find your identity in Christ.

Heaven: **How does this help us share our faith?**

Pray together for God's eyes, and His words to share this Good News with others in your lives.