

## Sunday School Lesson

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Yahweh's designation of Cyrus as his "anointed" one was primarily for the sake of Israel. Besides Yahweh there was no God. Marduk was a meaningless name. Yahweh — not Marduk — gave strength to Cyrus, that men might know that Yahweh was the one ultimately responsible for all things.

Cyrus' appearance as Yahweh's instrument brought such a change in the world situation that Second Isaiah painted a

glowing picture of faithfulness (righteousness) and deliverance from the old corrupt way of life (salvation) raining from heaven and thrusting up from the depths of the earth.

Yahweh's reply to those who might be scandalized by his use of a pagan king to accomplish his will was blunt and to the point: "Who are you to question me?" He could use anyone he chose to build his cities and set his exiles free.

The nations would come to the Israelites and admit that only through Israel was God

known to men. They would not become Israelites, but they would worship the God of Israel. God had hidden himself from the nations, but he had spoken through Israel so that all nations might come to him. In him alone were found faithfulness and strength.

The weakness of the idols was shown by their failure to perceive what was happening in the coming of Cyrus. From Yahweh, however, came forth the word that not only proclaimed what was happening but accomplished it as well.

Even those Israelites who were angry with Yahweh over the Exile would be made ashamed. They would come and share in his triumph, acknowledging that his works were works of faithfulness, after all.

## WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS TO US

A few years ago Frank Laubach wrote a book titled *The World Is Learning Compassion*. Yet anyone who reads a newspaper or watches television has good reason to question the optimism of such a judgment. The world continues to be plagued

not only by violence but by indifference as well. In fact, there probably is more indifference to the needs of people than there is violence.

## Has God Abandoned Us?

Are we to imply from this fact that the words spoken by the unknown prophet of the Exile were true in his day but that God no longer works for his people's good? Many persons do believe that God does not deal with us today as he did with men "in Bible times."

Biblical faith, however, turns

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