

FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Religion/Ceremony Celebration **History**
 Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh

Prayer

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 Grades 6-8 **Grades 9-12**

Lesson # (if applicable): Lesson 1

Subject of the Lesson: The Achaemenids: Cyrus the Great (Part 1 of 2)

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

CYRUS THE GREAT, KING OF PERSIA, 559 - 529 BC

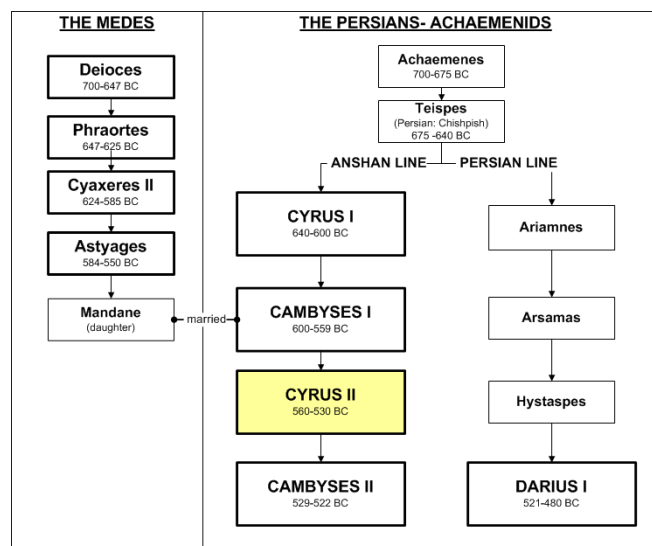
Over 2500 years ago, in the city of Anshan in Persia, a child was born who would be known to the world as Cyrus the Great. He was the only son of the Persian King Cambyses I and Princess Mandane of Media, daughter of King Astyages. He would eventually rule over one of the largest empires in the world.

Median Empire

Cyrus' grandfather was Astyages, King of the great empire of Media. It is said that Astyages had a dream in which the child of his daughter would grow up and take his Empire away from him. So Astyages sent his daughter, Mandane, far away to the small Persian city of Anshan to marry King Cambyses I. He did this so that her son would not have command of a large army with which he could attack Astyages and the Median Empire.



Cyrus the Great



When it was time for Cyrus' birth Astyages told his daughter to come to his palace to have the baby. When the baby was born the King told his General, Harpagus to take it away and have it killed. But instead, Cyrus stayed hidden, raised as the son of a shepherd. Later when Cyrus was ~10 he was discovered to be alive and sent to live with his parents in Anshan. Eventually, Cyrus became King of Anshan, but he and his kingdom were still under control of the Medians.

Cyrus united the other smaller Persian tribes under the Medians and became their leader. Astyages launched an attack on Cyrus placing General Harpagus in command of the Median Army. General Harpagus changed sides in favor of Cyrus and took a large portion of his army to fight on Cyrus' side. After three years Cyrus finally defeated Astyages. So, the dream came true. Cyrus captured Astyages but spared his life. He marries the former king's daughter, Amytis, to pacify other Median nobles and to better keep the Kingdom connected and unified.

Now Cyrus was King of the Medes and of Persia. But this was just the beginning. He moved on to conquer country after country, always respecting the people he conquered and never punishing them for having fought against him.





Empire of Cyrus II

Lydian Empire

Croesus of Lydia was a brother-in-law of Astyages and the richest man in the world at the time. Even today, when we want to say someone is very, very rich, we say 'He is as rich as Croesus'

Croesus thought it was a good time to attack Persia when there was only a young king (Cyrus) in charge. In those days, in some countries, whenever the king wanted to go to war, he first went to an Oracle to ask for advice. Croesus went to the Oracle and asked, 'Shall I go to war?' And the Oracle replied, 'A mighty Empire will be lost'. Croesus thought this meant the Persian Empire would be lost.

Encouraged by the Oracle, Croesus took his army and crossed into Persia. Both sides met in the little town of Pteria.



Croesus of Lydia





The battle was a stalemate, with both sides suffering heavy casualties by nightfall. Croesus retreated to his capital city, Sardis, the following morning thinking Cyrus would have to return to his palace because the Persians were far from home. They had traveled over mountains and streams with their horses and camels, having had to bring water and food with them as there was no place to get these along the way. But Cyrus chased Croesus to Sardis, arriving soon after Croesus got there.

This time, Cyrus sent his camels in front of his men. Croesus' horses had never seen camels and they panicked and ran. Croesus and his army raced into their fortress. They decided they would stay there for many months as they had enough food stored to take care of them. Winter was approaching, Cyrus and his men were out in the cold and would soon have to give up and retreat.

Cyrus was getting desperate. He promised a reward to any soldier who would find a way into the fortress. One day a soldier saw something gleaming in the sunlight. He looked carefully and saw it was a metal helmet. One of Croesus' soldiers had dropped it from the top of the castle and had climbed down a path to get it back. Now Cyrus had found a way into the castle. Croesus and his men were not expecting them and soon had to surrender.

All the riches of Croesus now belonged to the Persians and Cyrus had added yet another country to his Empire.

Lesson for Student:

1. Make a Power Point of the lesson to present to students.
2. Use the following learning prompts to make the lesson interactive:
 - a. **Setting Context** - presents the timeline and regional map from previous lesson
 - i. What time frame are we talking about?
 - ii. What places are we talking about?
 - iii. Who recognizes these places by their modern-day names?
 - iv. Have you been to any of these places?
 - v. Have you learned about them in other classes?
 - b. **The Early Years** – presents image of Cyrus II and his family tree, emphasizing his grandfather, Astyages, as King of the Medes.
 - i. What was Cyrus' relationship with the King of the Medes?
 - ii. Where is the Kingdom of Medes and Persia?
 - iii. Who was Cyrus I (not II)?
 - c. **The Relationship between Medes, Persians and Cyrus** - use the map to explain the dynamics between the Medians and the vassal kingdom of Persia. Share the story of

- Astyages' dream about his grandson, Cyrus II) being his downfall and the general he sent to kill him. Explain how Cyrus was able to gather the Persian tribes together and defeat Astyages with the help of the general.
- i. What do you think of this story? Do you think it is true?
 - ii. Where have we heard this story before? (Zaal, Oedipus, etc)
 - iii. What can we learn from the way Astyages ruled?
 - iv. What can we learn from the way Cyrus led?
- d. **Lydia and Croesus** – Where is Lydia and who was Croesus?
- i. Find Lydia on the map. What was the relationship of Lydia with 'Greece'/Athens and with Persia?
 - ii. What were Croesus's motives for attacking Cyrus?
 - iii. Discuss Croesus' visit to the Oracle of Delphi. Croesus asked, 'Shall I go to war?' And the Oracle replied, 'A mighty Empire will be lost'. Ask students to interpret the answer.
- e. **Cyrus Conquers Lydia** – The battles with Croesus
- i. Highlight and discuss the unusual moments in the battles
 1. What was unusual about their first battle? Camels, Not retiring for winter
 2. What happened at the siege of Sardis? How did Cyrus get into the city?

Activity:

1. Use the prompts
 - a. to start discussion about the lesson.
 - b. To make a Kahoot Game
 - c. To create a game (EX):
 - i. Divide the class into two teams and ask them to line up in front of a basket. Give the first team a ball to throw into the basket. If the team member makes the basket, then ask them a question about the lesson. The team will get one point for each correct answer.
 - ii. The other team can go next. If the team member makes the basket, ask the team member a question and if he/she answers correctly, their team gets a point.
 - iii. The team with the highest point wins.
2. Use ideas provided in the section "Teacher's Guide"- Activity Menu and Virtual Class Ideas to come up with a game or activity.



Source:

1. Compiled by Xerxes Kotval
2. https://www.worldhistory.org/Cyrus_the_Great/

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Date: 9/2022