

## UNIT TWO - From Shivat Tziyon to Herzl: The Jewish People's Historical Connection to the Land of Israel (Part 2)



### Project Assessment Options

## Lesson Plan 2: Return, Rebuild, Remember - The Persian Period and Jewish Survival

### 1. Journal Response

**Prompt:** "Stay or Go?"

You are a Jew living in the Persian Empire around 538 BCE. You hear about Cyrus's decree: the Jews can return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple—but most people choose to stay.

**Reflect in your journal:**

- If you were living in Persia at the time, would you stay or go? Why?
- What do you think motivated the small group who returned, despite the hardships?
- How does this period show the importance of leadership, faith, or memory in shaping Jewish decisions?
- What message do you think the Purim story adds to our understanding of Jewish survival during this time?

*Write at least one paragraph (5–7 thoughtful sentences).*

## 2. Short Essay Visual Representation

### Prompt:

The Persian period marks a major turning point in Jewish history: a chance to rebuild a homeland after exile. But only a few took the leap.

Write a **short essay (2–3 paragraphs)** in which you:

1. Describe the importance of the Cyrus Decree and the return to Zion.
2. Analyze how leaders like Ezra, Nehemiah, or the heroes of Purim shaped Jewish identity.
3. Reflect on one lesson from this time period that you think still applies to the Jewish people today.

Use at least one quote or idea from the sources studied to support your points.

## 3. Visual Representation

Create a **symbolic visual or mini-poster** that captures the key themes of Jewish survival during the Persian period.

Your artwork should include **at least 3 symbols or key elements** (e.g., the Temple, a scroll, an empty throne, a hidden crown, the Cyrus Cylinder, a mask for Purim, or an open gate).

Label each element and write a short explanation (1–2 sentences) for what it represents.

Include a brief title and a quote or theme from the lesson that captures your message (e.g., “Return & Rebuild” or “No Coincidences in Jewish History”).