

# **THE PERSIAN PROBLEM:**

**The difficulties encountered in the  
Holy Scriptures with the Kings of that Empire  
Historically and Biblically Resolved**

By

**FLOYD NOLEN JONES, Th.D., Ph.D.**

**2019**

Second Edition



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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the King James Bible (Authorized).

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am gratefully indebted to my friends Shirley Howard and Julie Gates who tirelessly assisted and proofed most of the data. May our Lord richly reward them.

I am also indebted to James Ussher (1581–1656), learned Archbishop of Armagh – the highest position in the Irish Anglican Church – scholar and historian of the first rank. Entering Trinity College at 13, he prepared a detailed work on Hebrew chronology in Latin at 15 and received a master’s degree when 18. An expert in Semitic languages and history, at 26, he earned a doctorate and became Professor of Divinity at Dublin. Ussher’s reputation of amassed learning and memory was characterized by the great John Selden as “miraculous”. His epitaph reads: “Among scholars he was the most saintly, among saints the most scholarly”.

Over a five-year period of research and writing, Ussher integrated biblical and secular world history (about 15 percent of the text is from Scripture) into a continuous account. While so engaged, he derived 4004 BC as the year of Creation. For nearly three centuries (until the mid-1900s when the satanic three-pronged attack against the Word of God in the areas of evolution, textual criticism and Bible chronology was launched) his dates were almost universally accepted. This assault has resulted in clouding the minds of the human race against the veracity and accuracy of the Holy Writ and, subsequently, to God’s claims on the lives of all mankind.

Today, Ussher is oft maligned by men not worthy of his glance whose mindset is confident that modern scientific dating methods have punctured and totally invalidated his findings. However, those who know the trade secrets and the nuances concerning the differing radiometric dating techniques, be they radiocarbon, potassium-argon, uranium-lead, etc., are neither impressed nor intimidated by such pretensions. We are aware that the numerous scientifically invalid philosophical assumptions imposed upon the mathematics force the answers to balloon to enormous proportions in order to obtain sufficient time to justify the apparent feasibility of the untestable, unfalsifiable hypothesis of evolution. Moreover, the evolution hypothesis violates probability laws and numerous scientific laws in differing disciplines. Having thoroughly perused *Annals*, it can only be concluded that those who deprecate this unrivaled piece of classical scholarship either have not so examined or lack the ability to perceive that which they have before them. For this author, Ussher is the unrivaled “prince” of chronologists.

Finally, I am grateful to the redoubtable Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1726), the greatest scientific, mathematical genius the world has yet to produce. He was as a remarkable Bible scholar as well. Newton was the discoverer of the law of universal gravitation, the formulation of the three laws of motion, the binomial theorem, the calculus (a basic tool in the more exact fields of science), and he anticipated the great conservation of energy law. As to Astronomy, Newton constructed the first reflecting telescope. He held the chair of Mathematics at Cambridge for 33 years, represented the university in Parliament, and for 24 years was president of the Royal Society (a group of scientists whose names during that span read like “Who’s Who”). In 1705 he was knighted and upon his demise in his eighty-fifth year, buried in Westminster Abbey. Newton made a hobby of chronology, becoming its avid student during the last 30 years of his life.

The more I poured over Sir Isaac’s classic *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, the more I came to appreciate the depths of his brilliance. The conclusions he reached therein over three hundred years ago rest on the solid foundation of classical research. Not only did he demonstrate that nearly all the old kingdoms greatly exaggerated the antiquity of their histories in an attempt to add to their status among nations, he convincingly showed that most of the gods and goddesses of the ancient world were in fact real people who lived in real time and truly performed great exploits. Only over time did they degenerate into the myths we have today. What Ussher is to biblical history, Newton is to the early history of the secular nations, and some of his biblical insights are astounding. This is because he began by assuming the biblical history to be correct — as does the present author.

## PREFACE

My nine year study concerning the various nuances utilized in the discipline of textual criticism as it supposedly attempts to “restore” the true biblical text to both the Church and the world has led me to the conclusion that its internal structure has been preserved in a specific rendering of the biblical record. That record is the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek *Textus Receptus* for the New (the unsurpassed English translation being the King James Bible).

The work before our reader just came about as a natural result of preparing my former publication, *The Chronology of the Old Testament: a Return to the Basics*. The final resolution and conclusion are the same in both, but the setting and lead-in are far different. Indeed, the title “The Persian Problem” is somewhat misleading: for as I sought to solve that which I perceived to be “the problem”, numerous other problems were brought to my attention and stood as roadblocks between myself and the final “Persian Problem”. Thus, in a very real sense, the project grew into “Persian Problems”, all of which were direct attacks against my previous commitment to accept the Holy Writ as the verbal, plenary, infallible Word of the living God.

The most disheartening finding was that the vast majority of well-known, high-profile so-called conservative scholars consistently abandoned any such commitment whenever their intellect was unable to fathom out a God-honoring solution to the various paradoxes they encountered in Scripture. In such cases they invariably resorted to the unworthy act of placing their intellect over the Word of God and judged it as containing “scribal errors” or “an unfortunate translation” rather than humbling themselves before the Creator and seeking insight as well as revelation from Him.

This was especially noted with regard to the “kings of the divided monarchy” portion of the Hebrew record. It has long been considered the “Gordian knot” of sacred chronology and is commonly purported as the most difficult and error prone period within the Holy Writ. However, it is actually capable of straightforward solution, and the dates preserved in the King James Bible are completely reliable and demonstrable (as are those in the other old English versions prior to AD 1611 such as the old AD 1560 Geneva Bible, Coverdale’s, Matthew’s, The Great Bible, The Bishop’s Bible, etc.). This is because they were all translated from the providentially preserved Greek *Textus Receptus* for their New Testaments and the Hebrew Masoretic Text for their Old Testaments.

Moreover, my research revealed that most of the conflict reported to exist between the God-given Hebrew Text and that of the Assyrian Annals, etc. is the result of misunderstanding, misreporting, misrepresenting, misapplication and/or the taking of unjustified liberties in the emendations and restorations by the translators of the Assyrian records.

Further, a solution to the 483-year Daniel 9:25 prophecy based upon a modification to the previous work of Ussher which he founded largely upon the writings of the great Greek historian of the fifth century BC, Thucydides of Athens, is offered as decisive and final.

In conclusion, the dates relating to the reigns of the kings found herein were taken from the Bible-honoring charts which I developed and that accompany my *Chronology of the Old Testament*. If the king mentioned in the present work is not named or alluded to in Scripture, the dates associated with him are those generally accepted in the standard references as long as they do not cause a contradiction with God’s Word. The biblical Hebrew dates were converted to Gregorian calendar dates with a calendar conversion program designed by the Harvard Center for Astrophysics. This program employs the ephemeris in Jean Meeus’ *Astronomical Formulae for Calculators* and is the standard formula used by astronomers today. These dates have been validated by a second computer calendar program that was developed in 2007 by my friend and colleague, Dr. Peter W. Moore of Houston, Texas.

Floyd Nolen Jones – March 7, 2016

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Assyrian, Babylonian Chronicles
ABL	Assyrian and Babylonian Literature
AM	<i>Anno Mundi</i> (Year of World)
ANET	Ancient Near East Text
ARAB	Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon
AUC	<i>Anno Urbis Conditae</i> – from the foundation of Rome
BC	Before the Birth of Christ
BM	British Museum
CCK	D.J. Wiseman’s <i>Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.)</i>
DTM	The author of a book on Darius the Mede that Dr. FNJ doesn’t wish to name
JP	Julian Period or astronomical calendar
KJB	King James Bible
LCL	Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
Loeb	Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
LXX	Septuagint
OT	Old Testament
Oly.	Olympiad
TSBA	Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archeology
YOR	Years of Rome (same as A.U.C.)

\* \* \*

c.	<i>circa</i> (“about/approximately”)
ch., chs.	chapter(s)
cp.	compare
ed., eds.	edition(s)/editor(s)
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (“for example”)
et al.	<i>et alii</i> (“and others”)
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> (“and so forth”)
ff.	and the following (verses, pages, etc.)
fl.	<i>Floruit</i> (“flourished”, used when birth and death dates are not known)
fn.	footnote
gen. ed.	general editor
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (“in the same place”)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (“that is”)
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place; no publisher
op. cit.	<i>opere citato</i> (“in the work previously cited”)
p., pp.	page(s)
rev.	revision/ revised/revised/reviewed by
rpt.	reprint/ reprinted
trans.	translated by/ translator/ translation
UP	University Press
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (“namely”)
vol., vols.	volume(s)
vs., vv.	verse(s)

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Compendium of the Old Testament Chronology

Genesis	Event	Yrs.	AM Age of Earth	Genesis	Event	Yrs.	AM Age of Earth
Ch. 1	Creation	0	0	7:6	The Flood when Noah was 600 <sup>1</sup>		1656
5:3	Seth born when Adam was	130	130	11:10	Arphaxad born when Shem was	100	1658
5:6	Enos born when Seth was	105	235	11:12	Salah born when Arphaxad was	35	1693
5:9	Cainan born when Enos was	90	325	11:14	Eber born when Salah was	30	1723
5:12	Mahalaleel born when Cainan was	70	395	11:16	Peleg born when Eber was	34	1757
5:15	Jared born when Mahalaleel was	65	460	11:18	Reu born when Peleg was	30	1787
5:18	Enoch born when Jared was	162	622	11:20	Serug born when Reu was	32	1819
5:21	Methuselah born when Enoch was	65	687	11:22	Nahor born when Serug was	30	1849
5:25	Lamech born when Methuselah was	187	874	11:24	Terah born when Nahor was	29	1878
5:28	Noah born when Lamech was	182	1056	11:26	Abraham born when Terah was	130	2008
11:10	Shem born when Noah was	502	1558	12:4	Abraham enters Canaan, age 75	75	2083

Scripture has several large time spans that enable us to begin at 2083 AM & quickly obtain a BC date for Creation.<sup>2</sup>

Scripture	EVENT	Years	AM Age of Earth
Gen. 12:4	Abraham enters Canaan and begins sojourn, age 75	75	2083
Gen 12:10; Exo 12:40; Gal 3:17	From when Abraham left Haran to enter Canaan until the Exodus from Egypt (to the very day)	430	2513
1 Kings 6:1	Exodus to start of Temple, 479 years (in the 480th year which is 479 years plus 16 days — p. 52, fn. 2)	479	2992
1 Kings 11:42; 6:1, 37–38	Start of Temple to division of the Kingdom. Solomon reigned 40 yrs, Temple begun <i>in</i> his fourth year	37	3029
Ezek 4:4–6	Division of kingdom to destruction of Jerusalem <i>in</i> the 390th year (inclusively numbered = 389 <sup>+</sup> )	389	3418

The Kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon in 586 BC.<sup>3</sup> Hence the date of the Creation is 586 + 3418 = 4004 BC.

<sup>1</sup> The year 1656 is obtained by adding the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah, during which the Flood took place, to 1056 — the year he was born as found at Genesis 5:28 on this same chart.

<sup>2</sup> A most important chronological key is to be found in the fact that Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was 40 years old when he began to reign (2 Sam. 2:10) over the kingdom of Israel. Since Ish-bosheth is not listed among the sons of Saul at the beginning of his father's reign (1 Sam. 14:49) but is included in the much later written complete list in 1 Chron. 8:33, he must have been born after Saul became king. Thus, Saul must have reigned at least 40 years.

With no other information upon which to draw, a chronologist working before New Testament time would be forced to so deduce and accept that length of reign for Saul and hope that it fit. There would have been no justification for arbitrarily taking any number greater than 40. From Acts 13:21 we know that it would have tallied, and done so on his very first attempt. Thus, the Acts verse must now be seen as confirmatory (and vice versa!).

The principle to be seen from this is that the Hebrews had access to all the information necessary for them to trace their own history from the Old Testament, and thus no New Testament information was or is necessary whatsoever to construct the chronology from Creation to the time of Christ. The O.T. is a complete self-contained revelation in all such matters. Furthermore, this is why the 480 years from the Exodus to the start of the Temple in the 4th year of Solomon's sole reign must be taken as the factual chronological key for that period and the Acts 13:17–22 passage understood and interpreted accordingly — and not the reverse as so many would have it. Indeed, we affirm that the 300-year statement of Judges 11:26 absolutely confirms 1 Kings 6:1 and its 480-year declaration.

<sup>3</sup> This study has meticulously and precisely derived the date of the fall of Jerusalem as 586 BC (also see Charts 5 and 5c). The years 588 and 587 also receive able support by careful men. Ussher, Browne, and more recently E. W. Faulstich held to 588, whereas H. F. Clinton, Sir Robert Anderson, W. F. Albright, and D. J. Wiseman championed 587 BC. Daniel was carried to Babylon in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim (606 BC) by Nebuchadnezzar who was then general-of-the-army as well as crown prince. This event began the 70-year servitude for Babylon (Jer. 29:10; Dan 1:1).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Conjugating verbs at 5 and reading sophomore university level at 8, Floyd Nolen Jones entered high school at 12, college at 16 and was selected freshman chemistry lab instructor at mid-year (normally awarded to seniors). He missed no problems in math until the fourth course – all taken during that same school year.

At 21, and having just begun his doctoral dissertation research in Geology with a specialization in paleontology, he was selected by Dr. Maurice G. Mehl, recognized as the world's leading authority in his field, to succeed him the following year to chair the paleontology department at the University of Missouri (Columbia). This decision was approved by Dr. Raymond Peck, Chairman of the Geology Department, and Dr. Elmer Ellis, then President of the University.

Following a 14-year professional career during which he held various positions of responsibility as: Paleontologist and Geophysicist with Texaco and District Geophysicist, Geophysical Manager, and Regional Geophysicist with Tenneco, Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones was selected to attend Division Manager School shortly before resigning from his scientific vocation in 1974 to pursue Biblical studies.

Having attained a Ph.D. as well as a Th.D., Dr. Jones majored in Geology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Theology, and Education from six institutions of higher learning. An honors graduate and an evolutionist, he also possesses 25 hours in Physics and is an ordained Minister (SBC). The recipient of three National Science Foundation scholarships (Auburn University and University of Texas), he was honored in *Outstanding Young Men of America* (1971).

Completely committed to the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, Dr. Jones has twice served as adjunct Professor at Continental Bible College in Brussels, Belgium and later chaired the Department of Biblical Chronology at Pacific International University.

A best selling author, he has produced a definitive published work on Bible chronology, an exhaustive historical work addressing many biblical problems relating to the Neo-Babylonian and Persian kings of the fifth and sixth centuries BC, an extensive analytical red-letter chronology of the life of Christ as well as several books in defense of the traditional biblical text that expose the soft underbelly latent in text criticism theory.

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## I. THE PERSIAN PROBLEM

An inherent built-in dilemma exists embedded within the pages of the God-given Holy Scriptures. It squarely confronts all historians and chronologers who attempt to identify and synchronize that part which relates to the various Persian kings whose names or titles are preserved therein. This difficulty, which we refer to herein as “The Persian Problem”, is a natural consequence of the Bible data relating to these kings of Persian. As this problem affects a significant portion of Scripture and causes doubt in the minds of many regarding the accurateness and faithfulness of its content, the bothersome issue demands our attention.

### A. THE PERSIAN KINGS OF SCRIPTURE AND THE PROBLEMS THEY PRESENT

What then is this problem, and how does it reveal itself? The “problem” actually consists of three separate parts. The first revolves around the identification of the “Artaxerxes” in the books of Ezra (chapters six–seven) and Nehemiah. This part of “the problem” is well known and should come as no surprise to our reader.

Truly, the chronology and history of this period depends entirely upon the correct identification of the Persian monarchs who occur in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. This is one of the greatest problems in biblical chronology. In order to resolve the matter, over the years Cyrus the Great, Darius I Hystaspis (the Great) of Marathon, Artaxerxes I Longimanus, along with Artaxerxes II Mnemon have been offered as being the “Artaxerxes” of Ezra 6:14, Ezra 7, and the Book of Nehemiah.

When one looks into the history of Persia for any clues that might assist him in resolving our stated dilemma, he is left greatly disappointed for almost no records exist. The Persians were so hated by the Greeks and later by the Muslims, that these two conquerors destroyed nearly all the Persian records. Thus, there are virtually no Persian sources to consult in order to learn first hand about their kings and how their history can be synchronized with the monarchs found in the Holy Writ.

Yet all is not lost. At least three clear, guiding Bible parameters do exist to assist the historian and/or chronologer in correctly discerning this

“Artaxerxes”. Taking the Scriptures at face value, we must look for:

- (1) the first “Artaxerxes” who reigned *after* Darius Hystaspis (Ezra 6:14),
- (2) one whose dominion extended for at least thirty-two years (Neh. 5:14) and
- (3) one whose accession to the throne was 483 years from Christ’s first advent – specifically, from His crucifixion (Dan. 9:24–27).

Accordingly, these three conditions are why Longimanus (sole reign = 465–424 BC) has for many years been almost universally acknowledged as the correct choice. Moreover, after not a little investigation, the present author agrees with this selection.

However, no matter how the chronologer or historian attempts to resolve the matter, he is always left with an unpleasantness of varying degrees – something still remains that he wishes wasn’t there. Someone’s *age* is always left older than the researcher’s comfort zone (as well as that of his reader) wants to allow. The Christian layman, general public, and most pastors as well as seminarians are normally unaware of the fact that the identification of this “Artaxerxes” immediately affects the ages of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Mordecai.

Yet regardless of which is selected, an annoying age issue will continue to remain. Our reader will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that biblical scholars have, in their own minds, “solved” this dilemma by “inventing” a second Ezra and a second Nehemiah in the books that bear their names as well as a second Mordecai for this time-span. A quick check of almost any Bible dictionary will verify this.

However, academia as a whole has not discovered that this simple ploy not only does not resolve the problem – it creates one far greater! The scholars have failed to investigate for any side-effects that result from their decision to create a second Ezra, Nehemiah, and Mordecai.

Moreover, it will be found that the entire “Persian Problem” is convoluted. As each of the Persian kings from Darius the Mede to Artaxerxes I Longimanus is examined, new problems will be seen to arise. These invariably are used by Satan and other detractors of Scripture to undermine one’s faith in God and

His Word. Thus, this annoying oversight cannot be ignored – it must and will be addressed in our final chapter.

Here at the onset, it is most important to keep in mind that, to our knowledge, all chronologers agree that Xerxes ascended the throne of Persia in 486 BC<sup>1</sup> and that his son, Artaxerxes Longimanus, died in 424 BC. However, even among almost all the most well-informed academicians, it is not common knowledge that, with regard to the *biblical usage*, the first year Artaxerxes Longimanus was associated on the Persian throne is not correctly known!

This shocking fact and its resolution is the second part of our “Persian Problem”. As shall be shown, not properly arriving at this date undermines the validity of almost all the previous works by other chronologers. It is this date that is paramount. Undoubtedly, our reader will muse: “And why is this so?”

As Daniel 9:24–27 teaches that the Messiah will be slain 483 years after the issuing of a decree for the Jews to restore and build Jerusalem as well as its walls during “troublous times” and as Nehemiah 2:1–6:15 shows that this edict was given “in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes”, we see that it is not enough to merely determine which “Artaxerxes” of Persia is meant. We must also fix his *biblically intended* “first year” in order to establish the date of his 20<sup>th</sup>.

It is the firm setting of this date that is of utmost importance with regard to biblical chronology, for it is the only method available that will enable us to go forward 483 years and identify the crucifixion year of our Lord.

In chapter four, it will be established that although Cyrus the Great became king of the Persian province of Anshan in 559 BC and sovereign of Media in 550 BC, neither of these dates are that intended in 2 Chronicles 36:22 or Ezra 1:1 as “the first year of Cyrus”. As is commonly acknowledged, these passages refer to 536 BC, the year Cyrus replaced “Darius the Mede” and became sole ruler over the newly conquered Babylonian Empire, which included the kingdom of Judah. The bear had devoured the two winged lion (Dan. 7:4–5).

<sup>1</sup> Nearly all assign Persia the accession method for determining regnal years; hence, Xerxes first *official* year would have been 485 BC.

In a similar fashion, it shall be demonstrated in our concluding chapter that 465 BC (the accession year of Longimanus) is not the “first year of Artaxerxes” intended in Scripture! When we ascertain the date for his biblical first year, we will be able to very precisely determine the year of the Cross.

Still, it must be acknowledged that even though the selection of Longimanus as being the only king that meets all the qualifications for identifying the Artaxerxes in question, as we have already alluded, age quandaries will still be found present. These must be faced and judiciously resolved in such a manner that best honors the context of Scripture. Indeed, this is what our study is all about.

The third and least recognized part of “the Persian Problem” revolves around the circumstance that resulted when biblical scholarship set about to solve the age problem they saw with regard to Ezra and Nehemiah. Believing it had accomplished this task, they failed to compare the list of 31 priests and Levites returning with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus as sole Rex of Persia and Babylonia (536 BC) recorded at Nehemiah 12:1–9 with the list of priests and Levites who sealed a covenant with Nehemiah in chapter 10:1–10.

Had they so done, they would have discovered that in creating their imagined second Ezra and Nehemiah (as well as their second Mordecai) by incorrectly altering the natural contextual flow between Nehemiah 7:23 to chapter 8:1–2, the 445 BC date they forced on the latter passage in order to resolve the age quandary involving Ezra and Nehemiah actually created a far greater excessive age problem involving many more individuals over that time-span. Having not made this comparison, biblical academia is almost completely unaware of this – and this is at the very heart of “the Persian Problem”.

To clarify, the consensus of nearly all scholarship is that the covenant sealing in Nehemiah 10:1–10 took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, which for them was the year 445 BC. Yet when the two lists are correlated, it is seen that at least 16 and possibly as many as 20 of the 31 holding leadership positions who returned in 536 BC with Zerubbabel (hence 30 years and older) were *still alive* in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes.

This means that generation of leaders would still have been alive 91 years ( $536 - 445 = 91$ ) after they returned to Jerusalem! The *youngest* would then have been 121 ( $91 + 30 = 121$ ) and others much older. Indeed, such would *imply* that this entire generation lived that long. Yet for over 700 years prior to this, only one man is recorded in Scripture as having lived past age 100 (Jehoiada, 2 Chron. 24:15). Hence, it is incredible to imagine that all these leaders and possibly their generation suddenly lived so long.

Few chronologers have addressed this awkward issue, and their “creation” of a second Ezra and a second Nehemiah not only does not resolve the issue, it generates a worse one. Not having noticed the problem inherent in these two registers with relation to the dates they have assigned them, *every* single modern work dealing with the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah has chronologically misplaced all the material from Nehemiah 7:73b to 12:1–9. This will all be resolved in chapter seven.

As many excellent works have already been published that show why Cyrus the Great, Darius I Hystaspis, and Artaxerxes II Mnemon are not the “Artaxerxes” found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, this work will only quickly show why they biblically fail to so be and then move on. Furthermore, it is not the purpose of this study to identify and/or derive the lengths of reign of all the foreign kings found in Scripture such as the Pharaohs, Babylonians, Assyrians, Greeks, Persians, Syrians, etc. Their chronologies are of no interest here except where they touch the lives of the people of God.

Moreover, the problems of their chronologies are often within themselves insurmountable. Besides, they are not God breathed records as are those with which we have to deal; hence, they are subject to containing errors. Our task then will deal just with those Persian kings upon which our story touches. As we are only concerned with Old Testament chronology, the details regarding other Persian monarchs are of no consequence here.

Before further *confirming* that Longimanus is the Persian monarch in question, establishing his “first year”, and facing the age quandary associated with this choice, we shall first examine that which we do know from history of

those Persian kings that are found or alluded to within the Word of God. As we do this, we will find other difficulties regarding each of these kings and that most of them are due to the previously mentioned fact that almost all the Persian records were destroyed by the Greeks and the Muslims. Therefore, we will be forced to rely on the oft unreliable and prejudicial opinions of neighboring kingdoms – who likewise were frequently their enemies.

## B. WORLD VIEW AND FRAMES OF REFERENCE

Before we go farther, our reader should be apprised here at the onset that the unwavering position of this author is that true scholarship must always begin with the prayerful study of God’s Word. Yet even this is not enough. Regardless of one’s educational accomplishments, without the humble submission of the intellect before the Holy Writ, either skepticism, cynicism, Pharisaism, pride, legalism, agnosticism or atheism will be certain to follow.

The decision must be made that anything that contradicts Scripture – when both the immediate and the remote context are taken into account and correctly perceived – is either in error or has been misunderstood. Contradictions between the secular and sacred are all too often resolved by one impiously forcing an imperfect profane outline of various kings and their lengths of reign upon the perfect. This results in altering the perfect so as to make it fit the imperfect.

The fault lies in concluding that the Scriptures must be in error when they do not conform to the profane outline. When they are forced to conform, God’s holy, infallible words become twisted from their plain, obvious meaning. Regardless of one’s positive profession regarding their faith in the Holy Writ, such twisting occurs when the researcher refuses to submit his education, intellect, and will before the divinely inspired record of the Living God.

It is far better to admit ignorance than to fault the words our Creator has often promised to preserve. Selah! One’s comfort zone must yield, else sin abounds.

But before continuing, let us first review the fundamentals of chronology.

### C. FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRONOLOGY

Chronology is the science of dividing time into regular intervals and assigning dates to historic events in their correct order. Without it, we would find it impossible to understand the sequence of historical events. Chronology is the framework of history.

Historical events are meaningful only if the events are placed in their proper time sequence. Once the time sequence is distorted, the interpretation of those events becomes garbled and inaccurate. The basic unit of time in chronology is the year.

Two basic concepts are involved in the process of all chronological endeavors. The first entails anachronisms. An anachronism is the placing of a person or thing outside its proper time frame. The result would be the creation of an erroneous historical setting. Conversely, a synchronism is the proper chronological account of persons or events in history.

The goal of the chronologer is to achieve synchronism and remove the anachronisms that have been placed in history by predecessors. As historical events happened at precise moments of time, the chronologer must exert great care in not creating history while he is endeavoring to recover history. He must fit the events into their exact proper time sequence.

Further, the fact must not be overlooked that even if one takes the Bible merely as a history book, it is still remarkably unique because it provides an internal system of “checks and balances” which maintain accuracy in both chronology and synchronism. Moreover, the simple fact is that a literal reading of Scripture (*literalis sensus*) taken in context will provide a reliable chronology of the Bible.

### D. A NECESSARY EXPLANATION

Finally, an important observation is deemed necessary before continuing. As one reads through the following narrative, they will undoubtedly notice that several historical happenings are repeated almost *ad nauseam*. A few of the pictures as well as one chart also recur. The reason for this is that all the chapters from two through six, which deal with the various Persians kings alluded to or mentioned by name in Scripture and are largely biographic, were originally created as individual stand-alone files.

Hence, the oft repeated events or material of historic interest were placed in conjunction with each of the monarchs if such was necessary in order to complete his individual story. That is, each chapter was intended to be a completed unit within itself—no unification of them into a flowing history was planned to be forthcoming. When the decision to forge them into a single work came about, it was decided to keep them as they were in order that a reader could pluck a given chapter out and use it for whatever purpose they wished.

Being thus forewarned, we trust and pray that the annoyance of this redundancy will not overly fatigue and discourage our audience from continuing through all those chapters.

Having been given an understanding of just what the “Persian Problem” is all about and with these basics in mind, the reader is now prepared to begin their journey. Enjoy!

## II. THE MONARCHS OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Before an appreciation and understanding of the Persian problem regarding the identification of the Belshazzar of Daniel chapter 5, an overview of the Neo-Babylonian Empire's history is necessary.

Chaldea was the extreme southern sea land portion of Babylonia located at the head of the Persian Gulf. Scripture confirms this in that Abraham was from "Ur of the Chaldees" (Genesis 11:28, 31, 15:7). A cultural distinction existed between these Chaldeans and the Babylonians proper. In the 700s BC, the Chaldeans overpowered Babylonia. The first Chaldean king to rule over the Babylonians was Merodach-baladan (c.721 BC). He rebelled against and harassed the Assyrian kings Sargon and Sennacherib.

Nabopolassar (Nabu protect the son!) founded the Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian Empire in 625 BC, and the kings that followed him were all Chaldeans until the succession was broken and restored to the Babylonian line in the person of Nabonidus, the last king of that empire.<sup>1</sup> Originally considered two branches of the same Semite stock, about the time of and after Nebuchadnezzar the term "Chaldean" became synonymous with "Babylonian".

However, as the Chaldeans became obsessed with trying to foretell the future through the study of the stars, the term came to commonly mean astrologers, astronomers, or magicians. Thus, although it was originally a cultural name, after the terms "Chaldean" and "Babylonian" became practically synonymous, the term "Chaldean" lived on in the secondary restricted sense of a special class of "wise men". Scripture often intends the latter.

### A. NABOPOLASSAR

Nabopolassar was the father of Nebuchadnezzar. According to the Babylonian tablets and Ptolemy's Royal Canon Nabopolassar reigned 21 years (626–605 BC). A lunar eclipse on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April (Gregorian) in his 5<sup>th</sup> official

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<sup>1</sup> George S. Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1902), p. 368.

year enables us to fix that date as 621 BC.<sup>2</sup> In addition, an astronomical diary in the Berlin Museum designated as VAT 4956 gives about 30 verified observations of the moon and the five then known planets for the year 568 BC. Such a combination of astral positions is not duplicated again for several thousand years before or after this date.

The tablet twice states the observations were made in Nebuchadnezzar's 37<sup>th</sup> year.<sup>3</sup> These astral observations establish 605 as the year of Nabopolassar's death as well as being the year of Nebuchadnezzar's accession to the Babylonian throne. Indeed, no date in ancient history is more firmly established.

Having set that date, we are able to thereby secure the date of King Jehoiakim of Judah, for his 4<sup>th</sup> year of reign was the first of Nebuchadnezzar (605 BC, Jer.25:1), as well as that of King Zedekiah for that Babylonian monarch's 19<sup>th</sup> year was the 11<sup>th</sup> of Zedekiah's (586 BC). This is the year the Temple at Jerusalem was burned and the city fell to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Ki.23:36, 25:1–4 & 8–10).

Originally a petty Chaldean chieftain in southern Babylonia, Nabopolassar seized control and became king of Babylon shortly after the death of his overlord, King Ashur-banipal of Assyria. He quickly seized Nippur and Uruk from Sinshur-ishkun the Assyrian and in a few years had control of all Babylonia.

Making an alliance with Cyaxares I, king of the Medes, and sealing it with a marriage between the Median princess Amytis and his son Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar and his new ally wasted Nineveh in 612 BC. In 610 BC Haran, the last Assyrian stronghold, fell. When the 609 BC Assyrian counterattack failed,<sup>4</sup> that

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<sup>2</sup> Claudius Ptolemy, "The Almagest", *Great Books of The Western World*, R. M. Hutchins, ed., trans. by R. C. Taliaferro, (Chicago, IL: William Benton Publishers, 1952), Bk. 5, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Olof Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Rev. & Expanded, (Atlanta, GA: Commentary Press, 1998), pp. 158, 186. A lunar eclipse, Friday June 28 568 BC (Gregorian, Julian date = July 4), has also been reported in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar: Edwin R. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> It was on this occasion that Josiah, the godly king of Judah, attempted to stop the Egyptian army from

empire breathed its last. As a result, Nabopolassar became sovereign over the southern branch of the Assyrian Empire while the north and western portion fell to the Medes.

But this did not end Nabopolassar's problems in the region. After Ashur-banipal, the dying empire was but loosely held together during the latter part of Assyrian control, and much of it was already lost to Egypt. Pharaoh Necho II (609–593 BC) purposed to march his large army up to the Euphrates River to oppose this new "King of Assyria" whom, due to his sudden rise to power, the king of Egypt feared more than the dying Assyrian dynasty.

On his way to take part in the doomed 609 BC Assyrian counter attack on Haran, godly king Josiah of Judah confronted Necho in battle at Megiddo and was slain. The people of Jeru-

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passing through his territory: "In his days Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went **against** him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him (2 Kings 23:29, KJB – cp. Jer.46:2)".

The Hebrew word "al" (לַע, translated as the boldfaced "against" in the citation from the King James Bible) in the above verse has been *rejected* by most scholars as corrupt. Thus, they do not translate the Hebrew לַע. Based upon a conjectured restoration from the historical records of Babylon, they insist that Pharaoh Necho went to *join* the king of Assyria rather than that Josiah went to *oppose* the king of Assyria. What, then, is the solution to this seeming contradiction?

First, Josephus says Necho slew Josiah when the Egyptian army was passing through Judah on its way to the River Euphrates to engage the *Medes and Babylonians* who had just overthrown the Assyrian Empire (*Antiquities*, X.5.1). Thus, the simple resolution is that as the leader of the allied forces, Nabopolassar, king of Babylonia, now engaged in the well known and commonplace ancient custom of taking unto himself the title of any and all kings whom they conquered. The land had now become mainly the property of the king of Babylonia who therefore also captured for himself the appellation, "King of Assyria". A Scriptural example of this practice may be seen in Ezra 6:22 where Darius (I, Hystaspis) the king of Persia, having overcome Babylonia and Assyria, also bore the title "King of Assyria".

Thus, taking into account Josephus' statement, the 2 Kings 23:29 passage is seen to refer to Necho's going up to join the beleaguered remnant of the Assyrian army which had been driven out to only a small corner of the kingdom and thereby engage Nabopolassar, the new power in the region who now possessed the title "King of Assyria", and his allies near Haran and Carchemish on the Euphrates. For a more detailed analysis of this perceived problem, see: Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*: 2009 edition, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books Pub.), pp. 184–187.

salem placed the dead monarch's 23 year old son, Jehoahaz, on the vacated throne. Three months later and still in BC 609, Necho summoned Jehoahaz 200 miles north of Jerusalem to Riblah on the Orontes River where he was bound and removed to Egypt (2 Ki.23:31–33). Necho II put the southern kingdom under tribute and placed Jehoahaz's twenty-five year old brother, wicked Jehoiakim, on the throne as his vassal (2 Ki.23:29–37).

## B. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

In BC 606, crown prince and general of the army Nebuchadnezzar entered Palestine and besieged Jerusalem. He carried captive to Babylon a great number of the Jews, among whom were Daniel and his companions (Dan. 1:1–2; Jer.29:10).<sup>1</sup> In attempting to secure for himself a significant share of the fallen Assyrian Empire, that same year (the 20th year of Nabopolassar – 606 BC) Pharaoh Necho II marshaled the army of Egypt, marched c.500 miles and crossed the strategic ford at Carchemish on the Euphrates River. The Babylonian forces stationed nearby were overcome and withdrew.

This secured for his empire possession of Syria and Palestine. The stronghold at Carchemish threatened the entire western part of Nabopolassar's recently won empire. Consequently, this ailing new "king of Assyria" placed his military under the command of crown prince Nebuchadnezzar who marched his army 470 miles, crossed the Euphrates and met Necho on Syrian soil at Carchemish in 605 BC (Jer.46:2). Completely routed during the renown furious battle, Necho II fled southward with the Chaldean army in full pursuit all the way down to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> From that time "the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land" (2 Kings 24:7; i.e., Necho II).

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<sup>1</sup> The Babylonian records say nothing of this incursion. Still, it must be remembered that their yearly accounts are very brief and list only major undertakings. Compared to the Egyptian threat, Jerusalem may not have been considered important enough at that time to be mentioned in the *Annals*.

<sup>2</sup> D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, [hereafter cited as *CCK*], (London: 1956), BM 21946 (Obverse), pp. 67–69; also see: Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*: 2009 edition, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–192.



Seizing the moment of victory, Nebuchadnezzar immediately brought Syria and Phoenicia under his control as well as the whole of Palestine.

At first, Nebuchadnezzar bound Necho's vassal, Jehoiakim, in fetters and intended to carry him captive to Babylon (2 Chr.36:4–6). However, Jehoiakim was somehow able to convince the Chaldean king of his loyalty, for instead of being deported he was left on Judah's throne as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal.

The Babylonian Chronicles state that at the time of the crown prince's celebrated victory at Carchemish, Nabopolassar died on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Ab (8 August, Gregorian) in 605 BC. Upon receiving the alarming news, crown prince Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon from the fighting near Hamath and took the throne on 1 Elul (30 August, Gregorian), calling that his year of accession.<sup>1</sup> Had his father's death not transpired at that time, Nebuchadnezzar would

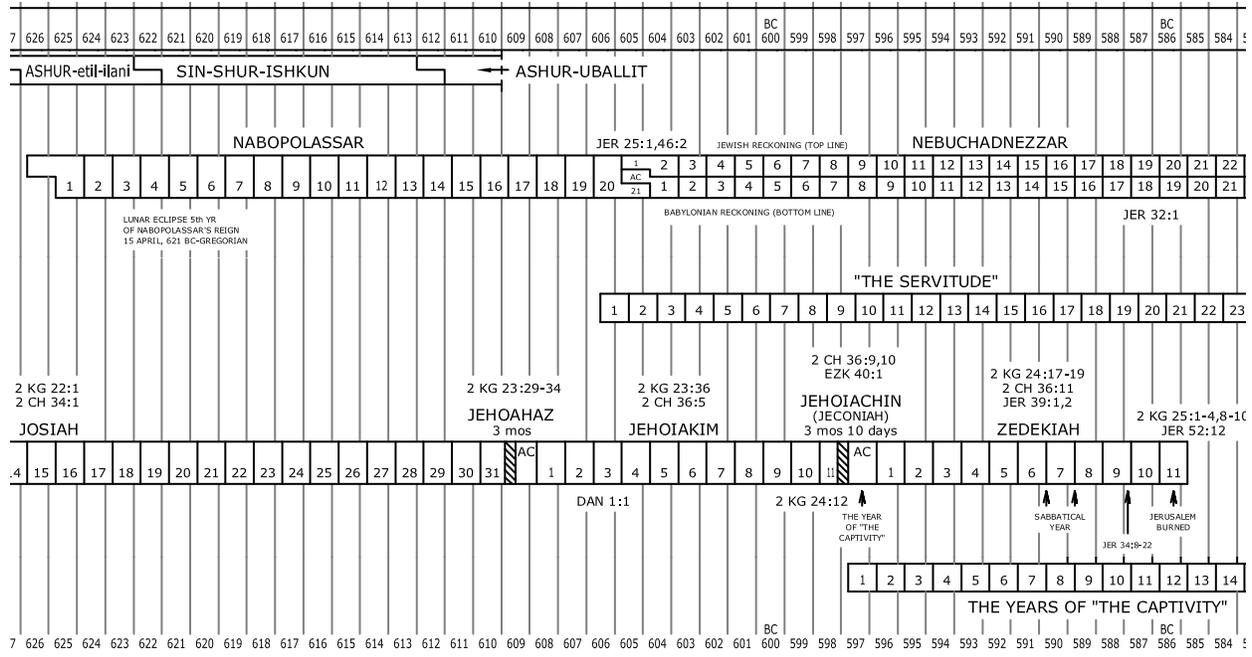
<sup>1</sup> Wiseman, *CCK*, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

have undoubtedly invaded Egypt and almost certainly met with success.

Three years later, after Egypt repulsed Babylon in a bloody battle in the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar (601 BC),<sup>2</sup> Jehoiakim rebelled against his Chaldean sovereign (2 Kings 24:1). After first taking care of more pressing problems, Nebuchadnezzar finally came again to Jerusalem to quell the revolt, (BC 598).

During the siege, Jehoiakim died in some undisclosed manner and was "buried with the burial of an ass" (Jer.22:19, meaning one unclean). His body was cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem to rot in the heat of the day and the frost of the winter night during the siege of 598/597 (2 Chr.36; Jer.36:30). With the siege still raging, his son Jeconiah (same as Jehoiachin and Coniah) took the throne for three months and ten days (2 Chr.36:9).

<sup>2</sup> Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1998), §435, p. 255; (BM 21946) – i.e., the 4th year by Babylonian reckoning.



Now the date for his brief reign may be absolutely determined. Ezekiel declared that the date he received his vision of the Millennial Temple was, to the very day, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jeconiah’s deportation (referred in Scripture as the “captivity”, cp. Ezk.33:21; 2 Chr.36:10). He goes on to say he saw the vision on 10 Nisan (Ezk.40:1). As his reign terminated only ten days after the Jewish new years day, the very exact detailed chronological data concerning Jeconiah allows us to precisely fix his short rule.

Since it ended 10 Nisan in 597 (16 April, Gregorian), we merely go back 3 months and 10 days which places the beginning of his reign at 1 Tebeth (11 December) 598 BC. We note that December would have frosty nights (cp. Jer.36:30), and 2 Chronicles 36:10 corroborates the Ezekiel date when it says that “when the year was ended, King Nebuchadnezzar brought him (Jeconiah) to Babylon” – testifying that he was taken to Babylon and placed in prison (2 Ki.25:27) shortly after 1 Nisan (emphasis FNJ’s).

Moreover, a large portion of the population of the city, and the sacred vessels of the Temple accompanied Jehoiachin in this second major deportation to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, another of Josiah’s sons and uncle to Jehoiachin, on the throne of Judah in his stead.

Ignoring the warnings given by Jeremiah (2 Chr.36:12; Jer.37:1–2), Zedekiah instead gave in to pressure from the leaders and people of Judah whose opinions were swayed by false prophets promising deliverance from the foreign yoke (Jer.27:12 to 29:9).

At the beginning of Jehoiakim’s reign (609 BC), the Lord told Jeremiah that ambassadors would come from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah (593/592 BC, some 16 years after being told, Jer.27:1–11, cp. 28:1 for the date) to enlist his help in a united revolt against Nebuchadnezzar. Here we note that Jeremiah predicts Zedekiah, who had been passed over by his nephew Jeconiah, would eventually become king. God further instructed Jeremiah that when these representatives came to warn them that their realms must all submit to Nebuchadnezzar or suffer terrible consequences.

Apparently, to assure the great king of his loyalty, in his 4<sup>th</sup> year Zedekiah sent an embassy to Babylon (Jer.29:3). Later that same year (593), Zedekiah himself appeared before king Nebuchadnezzar, undoubtedly to personally re-pledge his fidelity (Jer.51:59). Yet when Hophra (same as Apries) became king over Egypt in 588 BC, he eagerly joined the cause of the conspirators.

In his 9<sup>th</sup> year (588), Zedekiah entered into the Egyptian led alliance and rebelled against Babylon. However, the allies were unable to quickly act in concert. Indeed, Hophra made it impossible to so do, as he attacked Tyre and Sidon by sea.<sup>1</sup> Edom and Moab had already made peace with their overlord and Ammon does not appear to have taken an active part in the conflict.<sup>2</sup>



Nebuchadnezzar advanced and wisely set up his command post well northward at Riblah on the Orontes where he could observe Egyptian movements with safety. From there, he sent a large force against Judah which overran the realm. The strong-

holds of Azekah, Lachish as well as Jerusalem (Jer.34:7) were besieged. Of the alliance, only Hophra came to Judah's aid.<sup>3</sup> His approaching army merely caused the Babylonians to temporarily break off their siege on Jerusalem, and Egypt again proved unable to stand against the Chaldeans. In 587, Hophra's army withdrew leaving Judah alone to face the onslaught. As prophesied, the Babylonians returned to their siege mounds (Jer.37:5–11, 34:21–22) and Jerusalem perished (bust of Amasis II).

After a siege of almost 18 months, Jerusalem was taken and utterly laid to waste (BC 586). The Temple of Solomon was set ablaze, and most of the leading inhabitants were carried away to Babylon. This was the last of the three major deportations (in 606, 597, and 586 BC). Zedekiah was captured and taken some 200 miles north to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in the land of Hamath.

The last thing he ever saw was the slaying of his sons, for his eyes were then put out by order of the Babylonian king because he had broken his oath of loyalty to that monarch (2 Kings 25:6–7). Thus, Zedekiah was made as physically blind as he had been spiritually. He remained a prisoner for the rest of his life.

<sup>1</sup> James H. Breasted, *A History of The Ancient Egyptians*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 408–409.

<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, *op. cit.*, p. 342

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, X.7.3.

Although unable for many years to mount a major offensive against Nebuchadnezzar and attempt to regain by the sword their lost possessions in Syria and Palestine, Egypt did not give up on achieving their desires. Pharaoh Hophra (Grk. = Apries, 589–570 BC) instigated rebellions in Palestine through members of the old alliance with the hope of regaining his lost territory. Edom, Moab, Sidon, and Ammon were all punished by the Chaldean monarch for their part in these rebellious acts.

Tyre was more difficult, and extracting retribution against her was less successful. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre from BC 586 to 573 and finally destroyed the mainland portion of the city (old Tyre). But the island city (new Tyre) located about a half mile offshore survived because the Babylonians had no navy.

Egypt's punishment for inciting these Palestinian states was next. Many Greeks had settled in the city of Cyrene on the coast of Libya, and they had forced the Libyans from their lands. These displaced Libyans appealed to Pharaoh Hophra for help, and he soon mustered a great army and sent it against Cyrene; however, they were completely routed by the Greeks.

The few surviving Egyptian troops became convinced that Hophra had knowingly sent them to their doom so that he could more safely rule over the remaining Egyptians. When they revolted, Hophra sent Amasis II (a general and relative of the royal house) to persuade them to end the rebellion. Instead the people made him king, and he prepared to march against Hophra.

Upon learning this, in 573 BC Hophra sent an esteemed noble from his own court to take Amasis alive and bring him back to the palace. Being unable to persuade the newly proclaimed king to return, the courtier hastened back without him to warn Hophra of the danger. But seeing his noble return without Amasis, Hophra gave him no chance to speak and ordered his nose and ears cut off. This unworthy act caused the populace to defect to Amasis.<sup>4</sup>

Taking advantage of Amasis' call for assistance against his former king, in 572 BC Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt and defeated Hophra.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4 Vols., G.P. Goold, ed., trans. by A.D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), Bk. 4. 159 and Bk. 2. 161–162

Nebuchadnezzar placed Amasis over Egypt as his vassal. Apparently Amasis treated Hophra kindly and tolerated a co-regency with him, wherein the latter played only a feeble roll.<sup>1</sup> But then in 570, Hophra rebelled and was slain.

Nebuchadnezzar's placing of Amasis on the throne proved unwise. Just as Ezekiel had predicted on the first day of Nisan in 571 (29:17–20 = March 3 Gregorian), only two years later (568 BC) the Chaldean had to suppress an uprising led by his Egyptian puppet.<sup>2</sup>

This revolt led to the 40-year Egyptian devastation prophesied by Ezekiel. It reads:

And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. (Ezekiel 29:12–15)

A dated clay tablet, now in the British Museum, records the year of the prophecies fulfillment.

"In the thirty-seventh year (568 BC), Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Egypt [Mi-sir] to make war. [Ama]sis (570–526 BC), king of Egypt, called up [his army], from the town Putu-Iaman (location?)...distant regions which (are situated on islands) amidst the sea"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In support of this, Breasted (*op. cit.*, p. 411) says that a monument exists showing the two rulers together.

<sup>2</sup> This initiated the 40-year devastation of Egypt predicted by Ezekiel on December 31, 588 BC (Gregorian, Ezk. 29:1; also Jer. 46:2 & 13–26 given in 605 BC). In the 27th year of the "Captivity", God promised all of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar (571 BC; Ezk. 29:10–20). An Egyptian inscription confirms that the Babylonian monarch conquered Syene (Egypt's southernmost town = Aswan). As Egypt had caused Israel to be a wilderness people for 40 years, Egypt would be a wilderness for 40 years.

<sup>3</sup> BM 33041, see Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum, op. cit.*, pp. 30 and 94. For the above text see *ANET*, page 308. Also see:

As a result of this campaign, Amasis II was forced to abandon any hope of retrieving Syria-Palestine. Xenophon records that Cyrus the Great reigned over Egypt.<sup>4</sup> This would have been a natural result of his 539–537 conquest of the Neo-Babylonian Empire which held sway over Egypt at that time. With Egypt still a desolation, it would have easily been seized.

After taking the city of Babylon, Cyrus placed his 62 year old uncle Darius the Mede (one Cyaxares II, the son of Cyrus' maternal grandfather Astyages,<sup>5</sup> king of Media) on the throne to organize and hold the capitol as he marched at the head of the army during 538 and 537 while subduing the remainder of the Babylonian empire.

Thus, the 40-year period of devastation on Egypt predicted by Ezekiel ended in 530/529 BC with the death of Cyrus. At that time Egypt briefly recovered her liberty, but in 525 BC Cyrus' son Cambyses invaded and retook her from Psammetik III, the son of Amasis II.<sup>6</sup> From that time until now, Egypt has been an often subjugated and inconsequential nation – exactly as God's prophets predicted.

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Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press Pub, 1988), page 911 (Nebuchadnezzar). The text was published in *TSBA*, Vol. VII, pp. 210–225 by T.G. Pinches in 1882.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, G.P. Goold, ed., The Loeb Classical Library (hereafter designated as Loeb), Volume VI, Trans. by Walter Miller, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 8.6.20 and 8.6.21 adds that Cyrus also controlled Ethiopia.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, i.5.2; viii.5.1, 17–20; viii. 6.1, 19–20; see Daniel 5:31 and 9:1 which records that Darius the Mede was "made king". This implies that someone of greater authority than Darius was present to so do (i.e., Cyrus).

Josephus says Darius the Mede was Astyages' son and had another name among the Greeks (*Antiq.* X.11.4.).

<sup>6</sup> It would naturally follow that upon learning of Cyrus' death, Egypt would revolt and Cambyses would attempt to re-subdue it.

Herodotus said the main reason the Perisians gave for Cambyses' invasion was that he asked Amasis for his daughter in marriage but later found out Amasis had instead sent Nitetis, the beautiful daughter of Hophra, his deposed predecessor (3.1). Amasis had so done because he knew Cambyses only wanted her, not as a wife but as a concubine for the harem.



Having completed the subjugation of Phoenicia, inflicting chastisement on Egypt and instituting a policy of transporting the inhabitants of conquered lands to other parts of the empire, Nebuchadnezzar thereby obtained command of a vast number of laborers. He now set himself to rebuild and adorn the city of Babylon (Dan.4:30) as well as add to the greatness and prosperity of his kingdom by building new streets, canals, and the famous great wall of Babylon (Neo-Babylonian empire in green).

He repaired Esagila, the great temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon, as well as Ezida, the temple of Nebo (Nabu) in Borsippa. He built the renowned hanging gardens to remind his wife Amytis of her native Median hills, and a huge reservoir for irrigation near Sippar. Thus, Babylon surpassed in grandeur and magnificence everything of like kind mentioned in history up to his time (Dan.2:37).

He is represented as a “king of kings”, (Ezk. 26:7) ruling over a vast empire of many provinces, with a long list of rulers under his authority (“princes, governors, captains”, etc., Dan.3:2–3, 27). Archeology has shown that Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest monarch Babylonia ever produced. Nine-tenths of the city of Babylon and nineteen-twentieths of all the other ruins that cover the land in almost countless profusion are composed of bricks stamped with his name.

He appears to have built or restored almost every city and temple in the entire country. His inscriptions give an elaborate account of the immense works which he constructed in and

about Babylon itself, giving evidence to the boast, “Is not this great Babylon which I have built?” (Dan.4:30, below is Nebuchadnezzar’s double walled city of Babylon)



After the incident of the “burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3) into which Daniel’s three Hebrew friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) were cast, Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted for seven years (c.570–564 inclusively numbered, in Scripture a “time” is a year – Dan.12:7; Rev.12:14) with a peculiar madness as a punishment for his pride and vanity (Dan. 4). He imagined he was a beast. He ate grass and slept outdoors. After repenting, God restored him to and even above his former glory.<sup>1</sup>

Except for fragments of an inscription dated in his 37th year, records from the 11th to the 43rd year of Nebuchadnezzar are almost entirely lacking. The Babylonian records do not resume until the third year of Neriglissar. Probably only a year or so after God restored his mind, Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC after a brief illness. He was about 83 years old.

### C. EVIL-MERODACH

Nebuchadnezzar was followed by his son Evil-merodach (Amel Marduk). In the first official year of his reign (561 BC), which was the 37th

<sup>1</sup> A possible confirmation of the Scripture narrative is afforded by the recent discovery of a bronze door-step, which bears an inscription to the effect that it was presented by Nebuchadnezzar to the great temple at Borsippa as a votive offering given in thanks for his recovery from a terrible illness.

year of Jeconiah's captivity, Evil-merodach brought that Judaic king out of the prison and gave him a favored position above all the other kings that had been subdued by the Chaldean Empire. Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) was given fresh clothing, a regular daily allowance, and granted to eat at the kings table for the rest of his life (2 Ki.25:27–30).

Berosus, however, describes the Chaldean as "lawless and impious" (Josephus, *Contra Apion*, i, 20). After a two year reign (561–560 BC), Evil-merodach was slain by his brother-in-law Neriglissar (Nergal-shar-ucur) who had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

#### D. NERIGLISSAR

Neriglissar (Akkadian being Nergal-sar-usur = Nergal, protect the king) is the Nergal-shar-usur who was one of Nebuchadnezzar's princes that held the office of "Ramag" (Jer.39:3 & 13). He was known to the Greeks as Neriglissar.

The son of Bel-sum-iskun, a private citizen, he had been an army commander under Nebuchadnezzar and married a daughter of that king. Neriglissar murdered his brother-in-law, Evil-merodach (the son of Nebuchadnezzar) and took the throne. He apparently died of natural causes after ruling only four years (559–556 BC).

#### E. LABASHI-MARDUK

Labashi-Marduk (Laborosoarchod), the son of Neriglissar, followed his father as king. Nabonidus derided him as "a minor who not yet learned how to behave"<sup>1</sup> and Berosus as "not knowing how to rule" (Jos., *Contra Apion*, i, 20).

He was assassinated in 556 after reigning but nine months by Berosus' reckoning or 3 according to the Uruk King List. As previously cited, the conspirators then ended the Chaldean dynasty by choosing one of their own number, Nabonidus the Babylonian, as king.

#### ADDENDA: THE 40-YEAR DEVASTATION OF EGYPT (Cont. from fn. 1, page 10)

The Egyptian records do not mention this 40-year devastation predicted by Ezekiel (see 29:1 and 29:2–20, 30:10–26) or the return from this exile. Consequently, after admitting that before 568 BC the Chaldeans were already at Egypt's frontier and that the outcome was unknown, Dr. J.H. Breasted impudently went on to write (p. 415) that Nebuchadnezzar did not conquer Egypt so that "Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who were awaiting with feverish longing the complete overthrow of the hated Pharaoh's kingdom, must have been sorely disappointed that the catastrophe which they had confidently predicted to their countrymen failed to occur".

However, every competent historian, archaeologist, Egyptologist, etc. knows that inscriptions and other ancient records are not always reliable in all details. The account given in one place may vary considerably from that of another. An achievement of one king may be claimed by the king who succeeds him. Sometimes both opposing kings claim victory for a battle. Specific details of a victory may grow in splendor in the reports of succeeding years, and it is extremely rare that the loss of a battle or war is admitted by these nations – much less the losing side to preserve such a record for future generations. The preserved biblical Hebrew record stands out in bold contrast to all this.

Almost everything we know of Amasis comes from Herodotus (LCL, Bk. 2, §161–182). Even though Herodotus and the scant few damaged Egyptian records speak of a period of prosperity under Amasis' reign and most scholarship refers to him as the last great Pharaoh, in view of the above such should not be taken as disproving Ezekiel's prophecy. Moreover, Herodotus, a Greek, is writing a century after the fact from information he has gleaned in his travels from interviews with the Egyptian priesthood. These priests are well known for lying and exaggerating their origins as well as protecting the reputation of their native land as Sir Isaac Newton well documented over and over again in *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*.

In his *Ad Fragmenta*, Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609 AD) wrote: "The priests of Egypt told Herodotus of such things as he desired to know. They spoke only of the things that glorified their country but concealed the rest. This showed their cowardice and slavery, by concealing the payment of tribute they made to the Chaldeans" (see Ussher, *Annals*, 2003 ed. § 881, p. 108).

Indeed, Egypt's records are yet to admit of the man Moses, the biblical plagues, the death of their firstborn or the parting of the Red Sea and the subsequent drowning of the cream of their army as is preserved in the Holy Hebrew Scriptures. Neither do their records admit to the devastating 605 BC defeat they suffered from Nebuchadnezzar and his forces at Carchemish.

<sup>1</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [hereafter cited as *ANET*], (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 309 (iv).

Moreover, had this 40-year devastation not occurred, both Ezekiel and Jeremiah would have immediately been exposed as false prophets, and the Jews would not have accepted their writings into the Hebrew Canon.

To cover up the humiliating defeat at the hands of Babylon, the Egyptian priests later concocted the story that Egypt was never more prosperous than during these 40 years. Yet archaeologically, this period of Egypt is almost totally lacking. Were this a time of prosperity and building – a golden age – why do we not find tablets boasting of such. Could it be they are missing because the Egyptians were scattered throughout the surrounding countries? It should be seen as most significant that Herodotus does not even once mention the name of the great Nebuchadnezzar in his history. Surely, our reader can discern that the only logical reason for this is his sources within the Egyptian priesthood withheld Nebuchadnezzar's name from him in order to conceal the fact of this humiliating 40-year period of devastation from him.

Berosus states that after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt in his father's 21<sup>st</sup> year (605), he took great numbers of the captives to Babylon (Josephus, *Antiquities*, x, 11, 1). Is it not therefore logical to assume that sometime following Nebuchadnezzar's subjection of Ammon & Moab, after the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign, at which time he fell upon Egypt (Josephus, *Antiquities*, x, 9, 7) he then likewise carried away Egyptian captives along with the Jewish prisoners. Other Egyptians would surely have fled into nearby nations to escape capture.

Believing they find supporting evidence in the rule of Amasis over the isle of Cyprus, historians have taken the Egyptian priests at their word. Every modern history text portrays Egypt militarily strong during this period. Amasis is acclaimed as the builder of an empire that included Cyprus, whereas Nebuchadnezzar, they say, was limited to the mainland because he had no navy. But in view of the God-given Hebrew record (Ezekiel 29:2–20, 30:10–26; Jer. 42:19–44:30, 46:13–26), it is most likely that when Amasis revolted in 570, Nebuchadnezzar came in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (568 BC) and forced him to flee.

Using his great navy, Amasis sailed the army to Cyprus, subdued the island and dwelt there during most of the 40-year devastation. Were Amasis truly a great builder, perhaps Cyprus is the place to look for Egypt's ruins over this 40-year span. Moreover, the predicted desolation does not demand an immediate total overthrow (cp. 30:21–22).

An alternate solution is to take the 40-year span as beginning with the Babylonian 572 defeat of Hophra. This battle was decisive to the extent that after it Nebuchadnezzar had the power to place Amasis, a general of the Egyptian army, over Egypt as a Babylonian puppet [Wiseman, *op. cit.*, p. 94 where Wiseman cites T.G. Pinches, *TSBA*, Vol. VII, (1882), pp. 210–225; also see *ISBE92*, Bromiley gen. ed., Vol. 3, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1992), p.

507]. It would thereby end around BC 533 (inclusively numbered), Cyrus' 4<sup>th</sup> year as sole-ruler over Israel. Xenophon tells us that Cyrus reigned over Egypt (*Cyrop.* 8.6.20), and such a restoration would perfectly fit with Cyrus' well known lenient policy toward his subjugated people.

Another possibility is to begin with Hophra's 587 BC futile attempt to rescue Jerusalem from the Babylonian siege (Jer. 37:5–11, Ezk. 17:15–17, cp. Jer. 34:21–22). Numbering inclusively, forty years from 587 would place us in BC 548, the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Nabonidus and his 6<sup>th</sup> year at Tema.

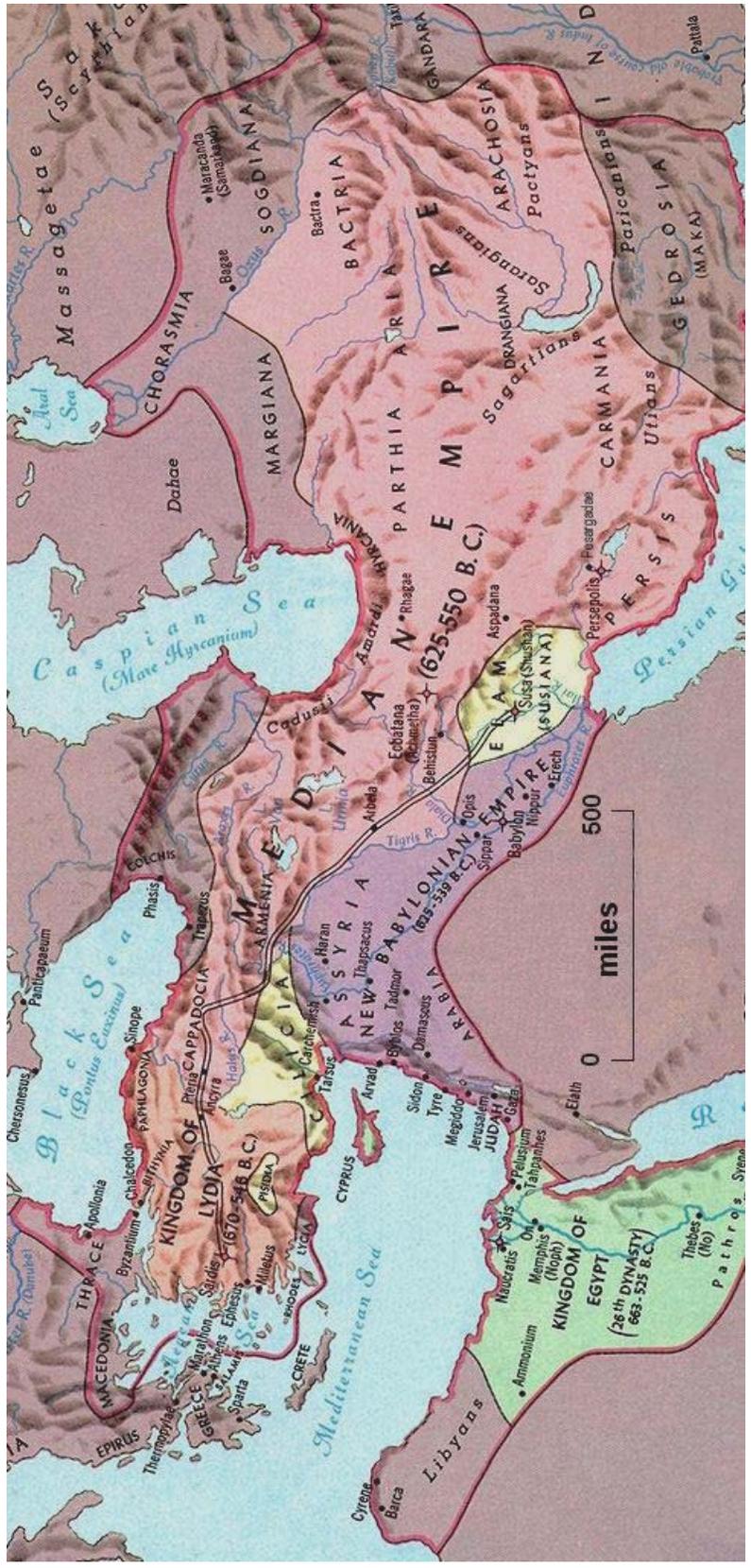
In Ezekiel 30:10–19, God speaks of His great displeasure against the many idols of Egypt and warns of impending judgment on many of her cities and their gods. In verses 15 and 16, the Lord says He will pour His "fury on Sin, the strength of Egypt" and that "Sin shall have great pain". Specific cities that are associated with these idols are given in verses 13–18, yet we find the anomalous capitalized word "Sin" in the midst of them. The context of these passages infers that a city is intended, yet there is no such Egyptian entity.

The Hebrew שִׁן does spell "Sin" (literally, "cin"). Nonetheless the fortress city Pelusium, located about one mile inland, which guarded the northeast frontier of Egypt seems to fit the context and description given in verses 15 & 16. What is the answer?

It is proposed that a double meaning may well be intended. "Sin" was the moon god, the so-called Divine Crescent, and Nabonidus was his fervent devotee. During his approximately 14-year stay at Tema, Nabonidus rebuilt Sin's devastated temples all over the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The possibility, in this scenario, is that after six years in Arabia, Nabonidus allowed the Egyptians to return and rebuild the temple of Sin at Pelusium and thus the play on the Hebrew word.

At such places of apparent disagreement, the trend in modern scholarship for the past 150 years has been to accept the secular materials, as correct, and where there are discrepancies, the biblical record is over-ruled. In effect, this assigns infallibility to the secular historical records where they relate to the biblical time frame, yet academia admits that errors exist elsewhere.

All this is done as though the Hebrew record, which is by far the most complete, is of no consequence as to its veracity. Even were we to disregard the supernatural nature of the Scriptures, we would expect these men to accept the Hebrew record as valid an historical witness as the records of other kingdoms. Their conduct is, to say the least, inconsistent with the usually accepted practice in the disciplines of history and archaeology.



### III. BELSHAZZAR AND NABONIDUS: LAST KINGS OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Critics long denied the existence of a Chaldean king that the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel called “Belshazzar”.<sup>1</sup> More than a century of archaeological discoveries has changed this. In the late 1800s, archaeologists began finding contemporary Babylonian records which established that Nabonidus (Babylonian = Nabu-na’id) was the last sovereign king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Nabonidus was not a Chaldean but a Babylonian noble.<sup>2</sup> He was the only son of Nabu-balatsu-iqbi, a “wise prince and governor”, at Haran.<sup>3</sup> His mother, Adad-

guppi, was an influential devotee of the gods – especially of Sin, the Divine Crescent (the moon), who was to her “king of all the gods”.<sup>4</sup>

#### A. THE HISTORICITY OF BELSHAZZAR AND NABONIDUS

By the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar (BC 597) Nabonidus had already attained a high rank in the court.<sup>5</sup> The mother of Nabonidus states on

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dream to me. Marduk, the great lord, and Sin, the light of heaven and earth, stood one on either side. Marduk said to me, “Nabonidus, king of Babylon, carry up bricks with thy horses and chariots, and restore E-hul-hul; make Sin, the great lord, to dwell in his abode”. Fearfully I spoke to the lord of the gods, saying, “O Marduk, that temple which thou dost command me to rebuild, the Umman-manda surrounds it and he is exceeding strong”. Then Marduk said to me, “The Umman-manda of whom thou speakest shall no longer be, neither he nor his land nor the kings who accompany him. What time the third year comes round, they (the gods) will cause Cyrus to advance against him, Cyrus king of Anzan, his petty vassal, with his small army. He will overthrow the far-flung Umman-manda. He will capture Ishtumegu (Astyages) king of the Umman-manda and take him to his land as a prisoner”. Such was the word of the great lord Marduk, and of Sin, the light of heaven and earth, whose commands suffer no change. I was afraid at their high command, I was seized with anxiety and my countenance was troubled. I caused my wide-flung troops to advance from Gaza on the border of Egypt, from the upper sea beyond the Euphrates to the lower sea. The kings, the princes, the governors and my far-flung troops, whom Sin, Shamash and Ishtar my lords entrusted to me, came to restore E-hul-hul the temple of Sin my lord who assisteth me, the temple that is in Harran which Ashurbanipal, the king of Assyria, the son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, a prince who preceded me, had restored. In the proper month on a favorable day I laid the foundation. [Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts: Relating to the Downfall of Babylon*, (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1924). pp. 44–45].

<sup>1</sup> The name means “(may) Bel protect the king”.

<sup>2</sup> Chaldea was the extreme southern sea land portion of Babylonia located at the head of the Persian Gulf. Scripture confirms this in that Abraham was from “Ur of the Chaldees” (Genesis 11:28, 31, 15:7). A cultural distinction existed between these Chaldeans and the Babylonians proper. In the 700s BC, the Chaldeans overpowered Babylonia. The first Chaldean king to rule over the Babylonians was Merodach-baladan (c.721 BC) who rebelled against and harassed the Assyrian kings Sargon and Sennacherib. Nabopolassar founded the Chaldean or Neo-Babylonian Empire in 625 BC, and the kings that followed him were all Chaldeans until the succession was broken and restored to the Babylonian line in the person of Nabonidus, the last king of that empire (Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, p. 368). Originally considered two branches of the same Semite stock, about the time of and after Nebuchadnezzar the term “Chaldean” became synonymous with “Babylonian”. However, as the Chaldeans became obsessed with trying to foretell the future through the study of the stars, the term came to commonly mean astrologers, astronomers, or magicians. Thus, although it was originally an ethnic name, after the terms “Chaldean” and “Babylonian” became practically synonymous, the term “Chaldean” lived on in the secondary restricted sense of a special class of “wise men”. Scripture often intends the latter.

<sup>3</sup> The Nabonidus Inscription no. 1, 1, 1–50 reads: I am Nabonidus, the great king, the mighty king, the king of the four quarters, the worshipper of E-sag-ila and E-zida, whom Sin and Ningal destined for kingship in his mother’s womb. I am the son of Nabu-balatsu-iqbi, the clever prince, who worships the great gods. As to E-hul-hul the temple of Sin, which is in Harran, in which Sin, the great lord, hath dwelt from all time, the dwelling which is his heart’s delight, his heart was wroth against that city and that temple; and he caused the Umman-manda to advance against it, and he destroyed that temple and turned it into a ruin. During my righteous reign the great lords, in love for my kingship, graciously turned to that city and that temple and had pity thereon. At the beginning of my lasting kingship they revealed a

<sup>4</sup> Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, *op. cit.*, p. 367; *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill C. Tenney, gen. ed., Vol. 4, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), p. 351 (Nabonidus).

<sup>5</sup> D.J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, (Oxford, England: Oxford Uni. Press, 1983), p. 11. This author (FNJ) concludes that the “Labynetus” (Herodotus I, 74 where he is called “prince”, not king), who was the Babylonian emissary associated with Syennesis of Cilicia to make peace between Alyattes of Lydia [Croesus’ father] and Cyaxares I the Mede at the time of the famed 585 BC solar eclipse predicted by Thales of Miletus, was probably Nabonidus. There had been war between the Lydians and Medes for five years; each had won many victories over the other. When, in the sixth year of the conflict, the combatants saw the day turned into night, they ceased fighting and were ultimately reconciled through the efforts of the two emissaries by a marriage between Alyattes’ daughter Aryenis to Astyages, son of Cyaxares I (see chart, page 150). At that time, the

her tomb inscription that “I have made Nabonidus, the son whom I bore, serve Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, and Neriglissar, king of Babylon, and he performed his duty for them day and night by doing always what was their pleasure”.<sup>1</sup>

As to his attaining the Babylonian throne, Nabonidus seems to have been a usurper. A basalt stele in Istanbul, first published in 1896, reports Nabonidus’ rise to power.<sup>2</sup>

“After (his) [Neriglissar] days had become full and he had started out on the journey of (human) destiny his son Labashi-Marduk, a minor (who) had not (yet) learned how to behave, sat down on the royal throne against the intentions of the gods and (next three lines missing).

“They carried me into the palace and all prostrated themselves to my feet, they kissed my feet greeting me again and again as king. (Thus) I was elevated to rule the country by the order of my lord Marduk and (therefore) I shall obtain whatever I desire – there shall be no rival of mine!

“I am the real executor of the wills of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, my royal predecessors! Their armies are entrusted to me, I shall not treat carelessly their orders and I am (anxious) to please them.

“Awel-Marduk, son of Nebuchadnezzar, and Labashi-Marduk, son of Neriglissar, [called up] their [troops] and ... their ... they dispersed. Their orders (7–8 lines missing)”.

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mediators fixed the Halys River as the main boundary between Lydia and Media. Were Nabonidus about 40 years old in 585 when Nebuchadnezzar sent him to secure the peace between the Medes and Lydians, he would have been nearly 70 when he was given the throne in 555 and around 87 when Babylon fell (his mother lived to 104).

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 561. Earlier on this same page, Adad-guppi states that Nabonidus was her only son.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309. In the Babylonian citations throughout this work, italic designates a doubtful translation of a known text or for transliterations. Square brackets indicate restorations in the text due to damage and unreadability; parentheses enclose words that are not part of the original text but have been inserted to make the translation easier to understand; obvious scribal omissions are placed between triangular brackets, and half square brackets designate a text which has been partly restored. A lacuna (a blank space or missing part, i.e., a gap) is indicated by three dots, four if the lacuna comes before a period at the end of a sentence. See Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, Intro. p. xxii.

The previous text implies that, to his surprise, immediately after assassinating Labashi-Marduk, Nabonidus’ fellow conspirators fell down before him and proclaimed him king. The lines which would actually prove that Nabonidus was a usurper have been deleted or destroyed, quite probably by Nabonidus himself. Berosus,<sup>3</sup> as recorded in Josephus (*Contra Apion*, i, 20), also relates that Nabonidus received the throne as the result of a conspiracy.

“Neriglissoor ... reigned four years; his son Laborosoarchod (same as Labashi-Marduk, FNJ) obtained the kingdom, though he was but a child, and kept it nine months; but by reason of the very ill-temper and ill practices he exhibited to the world, a plot was laid against him also by his friends, and he was tormented to death. After his death, the conspirators got together, and by common consent put the crown upon the head of Nabonnedus, a man of Babylon, and one who belonged to that insurrection”.

With regard to this, S.R. Driver writes:<sup>4</sup>

“... Nabonidus (Nabu-nahid) was the last king of Babylon; he was a usurper, not related to Nebuchadnezzar and one Belsharuzur is mentioned as his son”.

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<sup>3</sup> Berosus was a Chaldean priest of Bel (Bel-Marduk) who flourished c.290 BC. He translated into Greek the standard Babylonian work on astrology and astronomy. About 268 BC, Berosus wrote a history of Babylonia which, according to Josephus and Clement of Alexandria, was entitled “Chaldaica”. Berosus professes to have derived the materials for this history from ancient Babylonian chronicles and inscriptions preserved in the temple of Bel in Babylon.

Written in Greek, the work was divided into three books. The first dealt with human history from the beginning of the world to the Flood, the second from the Flood to Nabonassar (747 BC), and the third from Nabonassar to Alexander the Great and even as far down as the reign of his patron Antiochus I Soter (280–261 BC), to whom he dedicated his famous history of Babylonia.

Most of his statements, despite the manifold and unconscionable handlings to which his work underwent at the hands of later Greek and Roman writers, show a remarkable agreement with the cuneiform records and inscriptions found in the libraries and temples of Babylonia and Assyria.

Unfortunately, the greater part of this work has perished. All we have today are fragments preserved principally by late Greek historians and writers, such as Alexander Polyhistor, Abydenus, and Apollodorus whose writings are quoted by Josephus, Nicholas of Damascus, Julius Africanus, Eusebius, Syncellus, and a few others.

<sup>4</sup> S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Pub., 1898), p. 468.

The texts before the sixth and after the 11<sup>th</sup> year of King Nabonidus in the so-called “Nabonidus Chronicle” (or the “Annals”) are broken and for the most part illegible. However, in the seventh, ninth, tenth and eleventh years of his reign, the Babylonian text states that the king was in Tema while the prince, the officers and the army were nearly 500 miles away in Akkad (northern Babylonia).<sup>1</sup> Each of the initial statements for these years is supplemented by the following.

The king did not come to Babylon for the ceremonies of the month Nisanu, Nebo did not come to Babylon, Bel did not go out from Esagila in procession, the festival of the New Year was omitted.

This means that during the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> years of Nabonidus, the idol of Nebo (= Nabu) was not brought to Babylon to be carried through the streets in procession along with the idol of Bel at the usual Akitu (i.e., New Year’s) Festival. In these festivities, the king renewed his royal authority from the god by “taking the hand of Bel”, but because Nabonidus was in Tema this custom was not observed.

The damage to the Annals after the 11<sup>th</sup> year is such that no positive statement can be made regarding years 12 through 16; however, these ceremonies probably did not take place during them as well. The following is from Nabonidus’ ninth year (boldfaced text FNJ’s).<sup>2</sup>

- 10 The ninth year. Nabonidus, the king, (was) <in> Tema (while) the prince, the officers, (and) the army (were) in Akkad. The king  
11 did not come  
10 to Babylon in the month Nisan.  
11 Nabu did not come to Babylon. Bel did not come out. The Akitu festival did not take place.  
12 The offerings were presented (to) the gods of <Babylon> and Borsippa *as in normal times* in Esagil and Ezida.  
13 On the fifth day of the month Nisan **the queen mother**  
14 **died** (Adad-guppi, page 21, § 3, FNJ)  
13 in Dur-karashu which (is on) the bank of the Euphrates upstream from Sippar.  
14 The prince and his army were in mourning for three days (and) there was (an official) mourning period. In the month Sivan

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian And Babylonian Chronicles* (Hereafter cited as *ABC*), A. Leo Oppenheim, et al. (eds.), *Texts From Cuneiform Sources*, (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin Publisher, 1975), pp. 107–108.

- 15 there was (an official) mourning period for the queen mother  
14 in Akkad  
15 In the month Nisan **Cyrus** (II), king of Parsu, mustered his army and  
16 crossed the Tigris below Arbail. In the month Iyyar [he marched] to Ly[dia].  
17 He defeated its king, took its possessions, (and) stationed his own garrison (there) [...]  
18 Afterwards the king and his garrison was in it ([...])

The above raises the question: what was Nabonidus doing in Tema? The answer is couched in the problem that Nabonidus inherited when his fellow conspirators placed him on the Babylonian throne. On his mother’s (Adad-guppi, possibly of Assyria) tombstone, she states that her only son had been brought up to worship “Sin” the Divine Crescent as king of the gods and that he had reinstalled and “performed all the forgotten rites” of that pagan deity.<sup>3</sup>

Nabonidus even made his daughter, Bel-shalti-Nannar, high priestess of the moon-god at Ur.<sup>4</sup> However, the chief god of Babylonia as well as the patron god of the city of Babylon was Bel-Marduk<sup>5</sup> and all this immediately placed Nabonidus in a religious conflict with the Chaldean priesthood.

For nearly three years Nabonidus’ kingship and, indeed, his very life lay in constant jeopardy. He bitterly complains that, although king, he feels rejected and all alone.<sup>6</sup> He goes on to say that the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk, and Larsa as well as the leadership of the main urban centers of all Babylonia had disdained and acted irreligiously against the Divine Crescent. He claims “Sin” punished them by bringing disease and hunger on these cities.

Nabonidus relates that in a dream Sin instructed him to leave and go to Tema as well

<sup>3</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 561; also p. 312 (ii).

<sup>4</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill C. Tenney, gen. ed., Vol. 4, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), p. 351 (Nabonidus); *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, H. S. Gehman, ed., (Phil., PA: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 647; Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts: Relating to the Downfall of Babylon*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–56.

<sup>5</sup> This “god” is often referred to as only Bel or Marduk, and Marduk is often rendered as Merodach.

<sup>6</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 562 (i).

as Haran where he was to rebuild E-hul-hul, Sin's temple. But how could he so do and still maintain the loyalty of his army while at the same time placating the priesthood?

Nabonidus accomplished this by a brilliant ruse. First, he claimed that Nebuchadnezzar had appeared to him in a dream standing in a chariot accompanied by an attendant and that Marduk had called him by name.<sup>1</sup>

Then he alleged that in another dream Marduk himself had chosen him to appease the angry Assyrian gods, whose sanctuaries the Mandahordes (the Medes) had destroyed some 54 years earlier. He was "told" to restore their temples throughout the empire – especially that of E-hul-hul, Sin's temple in Haran.<sup>2</sup> Having declared that he was merely obeying Marduk, what could the Chaldean priesthood do? Nabonidus' ploy had checkmated them.

In the "Verse Account of Nabonidus", the king relates that he entrusted the kingship to his firstborn son and left Babylon with a large military force. After rebuilding the temple of Sin at Haran (553–552 BC), he conquered Tema in northern Arabia, built a palace there to rival Babylon's and fortified the city with walls.<sup>3</sup>

In the ninth year of his reign (547/46 BC), Adad-guppi died on the fifth day of Nisan. Although Nabonidus was not present in the city to preside over the earlier Akitu Festival, he almost certainly left Tema to attend his mother's funeral<sup>4</sup> which apparently was conducted in Haran. Writing in the tenth year (544/43 BC) of his self imposed exile, Nabonidus said he did not return to Babylon during that span but, with Tema as his home base, he moved about the empire rebuilding the ruined temples of Sin.<sup>5</sup>

From the Nabonidus Chronicle, we learn that in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of his exile he also remained in

Tema<sup>6</sup> and did not return to Babylon.<sup>7</sup> However, commercial tablets show that he kept in touch with, his capitol city.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it is likely he only returned to Babylon in Tishri of his 13<sup>th</sup> year<sup>9</sup> (543) and in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (his final year, 539), a few months before the city fell to the Medo-Persian coalition.

Nabonidus' devotion to Sin, his continued absence from Babylon which resulted in the cancellation of the annual religious processions in honor of Nebo and Bel-Marduk as well as the New Year festivals eventually aroused the Chaldean priesthood and many of the general populace against him.

Looking again at the first line of the quotation from Nabonidus' ninth year (see p. 17), another question arises.

10 The ninth year. Nabonidus, the king, (was) <in> Tema (while) the prince, the officers, (and) the army (were) in Akkad.

The second question is – who is the prince, this son of Nabonidus that the Annals portray as being entrusted with some ambiguous authority in Babylon during the absence of his father?

<sup>6</sup> The question that must be met is why did Nabonidus make Tema, an oasis in the western Arabian Desert, his base of operations all those years? In addition to his being safe there from the Chaldean priesthood, most suggest that it was an astute economic move to control the trade routes from Egypt to Babylonia. Surely, a better place could not have been found from which to control the north-south trade routes as well as those moving east to west.

Tema was renowned for its caravans as far back as the time of Job (6:19). Regarding this, Sidney Smith observes: "It is curious that there is no mention of any conflict with Egypt at this time, for this control of Arabian trade by the Babylonian must have been disadvantageous for the Delta" (*Babylonian Historical Texts: Relating to the Downfall of Babylon*, op. cit., pp. 81–82). Smith wonders why Pharaoh Amasis II took no steps against Nabonidus' Tema enterprise.

Although the liberals will not accept it, the reason is that, as predicted by Ezekiel and Jeremiah (Ezk.29:2–20, 30:10–26; Jer.42:19–44:30, 46:13–26), Egypt was in the midst of a 40-year period as a wilderness. Nebuchadnezzar had forced Amasis II into exile, and the Pharaoh was probably based on the island of Cyprus during this 40-year period of Egyptian devastation (see: Addenda, *The Persian Problem*, page 12).

<sup>7</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, op. cit., p. 306 (ii).

<sup>8</sup> *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 351 (Nabonidus).

<sup>9</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, op. cit., pp. 562–563 (i–iii)

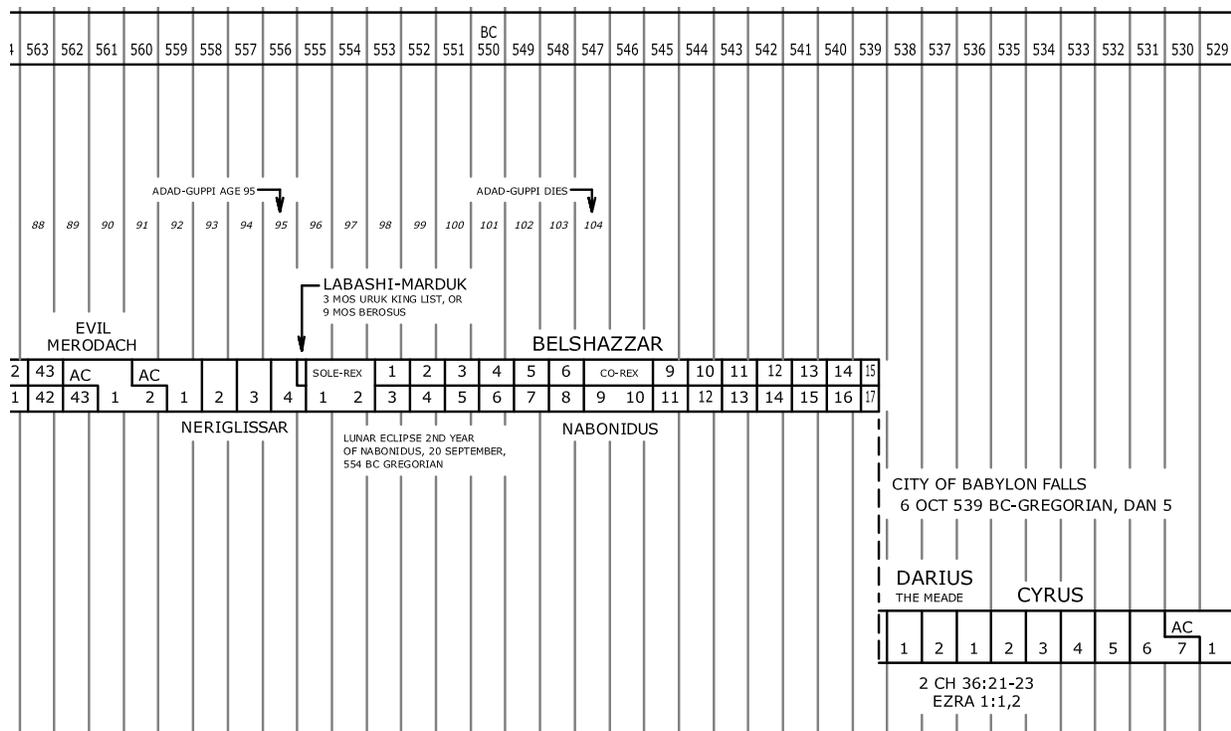
<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, op. cit., p. 310 (vi); again, from the aforementioned basalt stele in Istanbul.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311 (x); also p. 309 (ii). The Medes destroyed Haran and its temple of Sin in the 16th year of Nabopolassar, 610 BC; see *ANET*, p. 560 (i). From 610 to 556, Nabonidus' accession year, is 54 years.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313 (ii).

<sup>4</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, op. cit., p. 562.



A.T. Clay has translated a small Babylonian tablet written by an astrologer which identifies the crown prince.<sup>1</sup>

“In the month of Tebitu, the 15th day, of the 7th year of (the rule of) Nabonidus, king of Babylon, Shumukin reported (text: present tense) as follows: ‘In a dream I saw the Great Star, Venus (i.e., Dilbat), Sirius, the moon and the sun and I shall (now) study this (constellation) with regard to a favorable interpretation for my lord Nabonidus, king of Babylon, as well as to a favorable interpretation for my lord Belshazzar, the crown-prince!’

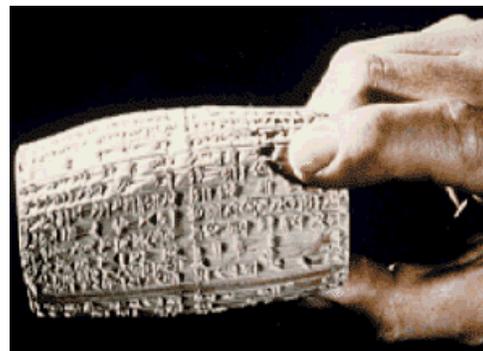
The 17th of the month Tebitu of the 7th year of (the reign of) Nabonidus, king of Babylon, Shumukin reported (text: present tense) as follows: ‘I have observed the Great Star and I shall study (this) with regard to a favorable interpretation for my lord Nabonidus, king of Babylon, as well as to my lord Belshazzar, the crown-prince!’“

Thus, according to contemporary Babylonian records, Nabonidus had a son by the name of Belshazzar. Moreover, Belshazzar was the eldest son of Nabonidus, the last sovereign of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This same Belshazzar

is called “prince” and/or “crown prince” in the celebrated “Nabonidus Chronicle”.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, this identification is confirmed by the famous Nabonidus Cylinder (below) which was discovered in 1853 at Ur. Part of the inscription which is addressed to “Sin” the moon god reads:

“I am Nabonidus, king of Babylon, patron of Esagila and Ezida, devotee of the great gods. ... As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sin against your great divinity, and give me life until distant days. And as for Belshazzar my firstborn son, my own child, let the fear of your great divinity be in his heart, and may he commit no sin; may he enjoy happiness in life”.



<sup>1</sup> A.T. Clay, *Yale Oriental Series: Babylonian Texts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1915), Volume I, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET, op. cit.*, p. 306; also Babylonian Chronicle 7 in Grayson, *ABC, op. cit.*, pp. 106–108.

## B. BELSHAZZAR ASSOCIATED ON THE THRONE WITH NABONIDUS

Furthermore, the following text from “The Verse Account of Nabonidus” makes it abundantly clear that shortly before Nabonidus started on his expedition to Tema at the beginning of the third year of his reign, he associated his firstborn son on the throne of the Babylonian Empire with himself.<sup>1</sup> However, Belshazzar’s authority as “king” did not equal that of his father as can be seen from the Nabonidus Chronicle (also referred to as the “Annals”) citation on page two of the present work.

There we read that during the seventh, ninth, tenth and eleventh years of Nabonidus, the idols of Nebo and Bel were not brought to Babylon and carried in procession through the streets, and the annual New Year’s festival was not observed *because* Nabonidus was in Tema. Thus, Nabonidus did not relinquish his position as first ruler over the land, and Belshazzar’s authority was not sufficient to initiate the yearly festival. Hence, although Belshazzar officially bore the title “king”, he was not given full co-regent powers by his father and must therefore be seen as a pro-*rex* or “sub-king”.

when the third year was about to begin—  
He (Nabonidus) entrusted the “Camp” to his oldest (son)-the firstborn,  
The troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his (command).  
He let (everything) go, entrusted the kingship to him  
And, himself, he started out for a long journey,  
The (military) forces of Akkad marching with him;  
He turned towards Tema (deep) in the west.  
He started out the expedition on a path (leading) to a distant (region). When he arrived there,  
He killed in battle the prince of Tema,  
Slaughtered the flocks of those who dwell in the city (as well as) in the countryside,  
And he, himself, took his residence in [Te]ma, the forces of Akkad [were also stationed] there.  
He made the town beautiful, built (there) [his palace]  
Like the palace in Su.an.na (Babylon), he (also) built [walls]  
(For) the fortifications of the town and [...].  
He surrounded the town with sentinels [...].

Although this eldest son is not actually named in the above, in view of the two previous citations (especially that of A.T. Clay’s), who else but Belshazzar could he possibly be? Nab-

onidus then undertook the distant campaign and conquered Tema in Arabia. He established his residence there and built that city to rival the glory of Babylon.

But this discovery brought about another problem for the critics because the Belshazzar of the tablets is the son of Nabonidus, the last King of Babylon, whereas the Belshazzar in the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel is said to be “the son of Nebuchadnezzar”.<sup>2</sup>

The apparent discrepancy is immediately cleared up by the prophet Jeremiah for he writes that the monarch who would be occupying the throne at the time of the overthrow of the Neo-Babylonian Empire would be the *grandson* of Nebuchadnezzar.

And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. (Jer.27:6–7)

The paradox vanishes when we remember that there is no word for grandson in these Semitic languages. Hence, the Bible refers to such as being a “son’s son” or will even use the word “son” in a broad sense that could apply to any direct male descendent. Thus, the Daniel and Jeremiah descriptions are not in conflict. Daniel chapter five calls Belshazzar the “son” of Nebuchadnezzar in the expanded biblical sense of the word,<sup>3</sup> while Jeremiah clarifies that he is a grandson.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 5:2, 11, 13, 18, and 22.

<sup>3</sup> Many such examples could be cited, e.g. Mat.1:1 where Christ Jesus is called the son of David who is then called the son of Abraham; 2 Ki.14:1–3; 2 Ki.16:1–2 etc. Even son-in-laws are often referred to as being “sons” (I Sam.24:11 & 16; 26:21). The same practice is common today. Often individuals refer to an in-law as “son”, “daughter”, “mother” or “father”.

<sup>4</sup> Recently E.W. Faulstich has vigorously revived the theory that there were two Belshazzar’s, one the son of Nabonidus and another who was the actual son of Nebuchadnezzar (*History, Harmony & Daniel*, pp. 13–17). Faulstich envisions the latter as merely reigning as co-regent during the first three years of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness whereupon he is assassinated in 574 BC by the Medes, about 35 years *before* the fall of the city of Babylon. Faulstich then claims that the Median King Astyages, the brother of Nebuchadnezzar’s first wife Queen Amytis was invited to reign over Babylon until

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, pp. 313–314.

Nebuchadnezzar's sanity returned. That is, for Faulstich, Amytis' brother Astyages was "Darius the Mede" and he reigned the final 4 years of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity. Thus, Eugene W. Faulstich curiously maintains and strives at great length to establish that Daniel chapter 5 is not describing the fall of the city of Babylon.

This supposition is not tenable as Jeremiah 27:7 dooms it: "And all nations shall serve him (Nebuchadnezzar; see vs. 6), and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him". This Scripture demands that a direct descendant of Nebuchadnezzar – his son's son – would be on the throne when the kingdom came to its end – not a non-related son of Nabonidus as Faulstich offers. The Jeremiah passage further calls for *only* one son and one grandson of Nebuchadnezzar to occupy the throne. As Evil Merodach was the son and immediate successor of Nebuchadnezzar, this leaves no room for another actual son named Belshazzar to reign.

Adad-guppi, the mother of Nabonidus King of Babylon, relates on a tomb inscription found in Haran that she was born in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Ashur-banipal, King of Assyria (650 BC – *ANET*, pp. 560–562). She further records the kings of Babylon during her lifetime as being Nabopolassar, then Nebuchadnezzar, Evil Merodach, Neriglissar and Nabonidus. That she makes no mention of any "Belshazzar" defeats the supposition of "two" Belshazzars. Adad-guppi lived 104 years.

The only evidence for an actual "son" of Nebuchadnezzar named Belshazzar is found in the Apocryphal Book of Baruch 1:11–12: "And pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days on earth may be like the days of heaven. And the Lord will give us strength, and he will give light to our eyes, and we shall live under the protection of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and under the protection of Balthasar his son, and we shall serve them many days and find favor in their sight".

Baruch is dated by the chronological reference: "in the fifth year, on the seventh day of the month, and at the time when the Chaldeans captured Jerusalem and burned it down" (c.BC 582, Baruch 1:2). Faulstich maintains that the context of these verses in "Baruch" indicates that Belshazzar is not only Nebuchadnezzar's son, but that they were also contemporaries ruling in a co-regency. The latter assertion is a much overstated assumption for the above does not demand that "Balthasar" is the same person as the Belshazzar of Daniel five. Indeed, Belshazzar is not a personal name but is an appellation or title meaning "Bel protect the king". Likewise, "Balthasar" is merely the Greek form of the Hebrew word translated "Belshazzar" and is also a title. As such, it could apply to any of Nebuchadnezzar's sons such as Evil Merodach or even one who may have been in line to ascend to the throne but died before his father, the king. Belshazzar is already installed upon the throne as his father's pro-regent. The quote may mean no more than that as crown prince, he would follow Nebuchadnezzar on the throne. Secondly, the Apocrypha, due to its fabricated and fictional nature, is hardly to be esteemed as a completely reliable source

Moreover, Daniel 6 overthrows this theory. Darius the Mede is not merely "filling in" for Nebuchadnezzar during part of his 7 years of madness. Daniel 6:1–3 describes a

For Belshazzar to be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar as the Jeremiah passage demands, Nabonidus had to have married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. The daughter's mother was almost certainly Nebuchadnezzar's second wife Nitocris (see the family ties of Babylonia, Media, Assyria, and Persia; page 150). The ancient records conflict regarding these two women, but the problem is readily resolved if the daughter was given the same name as her mother.

Unfortunately, here Josephus contributes to the confusion. This first century historian quotes

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*complete reorganization* and establishment of a Kingdom and its form of government. Further, Darius' law (vs. 8) would not have referenced as that of the Medes *and* Persians were he only "assisting" Nebuchadnezzar and his sister, Amytis. It would have been Babylonian law – and that law could have been altered, thus eliminating Darius' dilemma as to how to rescue Daniel from the lions. Besides, the populace and military would hardly have tolerated a foreigner on the throne – especially a foreign relative of an "imported" queen.

Furthermore, Isaiah serves up the death knell to this theory. Isaiah 21:2, 4–5 clearly alludes to Belshazzar's feast (Dan.5) and verse 9 attests to Babylon's fall to the Persians (Elam) and Medes (vs.2) at that time! Faulstich also endeavors to prove from the Babylonian Chronicles that the city of Babylon experienced a "peaceful overthrow", but Isaiah 13:1 together with verses 16–19 must then be taken into account and explained.

Lastly and decisively, the Book of Daniel begins with Nebuchadnezzar's deportation of Daniel et al., and Jeremiah (27:7) had prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar's grandson would be overthrown by a coalition of nations. The Book of Daniel continues with a great historical overview including:

1. The humbling and conversion of Nebuchadnezzar (ch.4),
2. The "Feast" and slaying of Nebuchadnezzar's "son" (ch.5),
3. A Mede is seen making laws of the Medes and Persians and Cyrus is mentioned (ch.6),
4. The Medo-Persian Empire is depicted as a bear with one side (the Persian) higher than the other (ch.7),
5. The Medo-Persian Empire (8:20) is depicted here as a ram with 2 horns, one being higher than the other, which is defeated by a goat with one large horn – namely, Greece under Alexander the Great (ch. 8),
6. Four successive Persian Kings are alluded to, beginning at the reign of Darius the Mede down to Xerxes (11:2); Alexander and the four generals who inherited and divided his kingdom into four lesser kingdoms are disclosed followed by an historical sketch of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria from the time of Alexander's generals to the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes, BC 175–164 (ch.11).

All of this history related to Israel as well as the empires and their rulers who became her overlords – and we are to believe that Daniel left out the "fall of Babylon"! We think not! Is not the matter fully & forever discredited?

Berosus, the Chaldean priest, and correctly assigns 17 years to the reign of Nabonidus (*Contra Apion*, i, 20). But he then confuses the biblical Belshazzar with Nabonidus, making them one and the same individual.<sup>1</sup>

### C. CONFIRMATION OF BELSHAZZAR'S DEATH AT THE FALL OF BABYLON

The Babylonian Chronicles tell of the capture of the city of Babylon by Cyrus the Great in the seventeenth year of Nabonidus (539 BC).<sup>2</sup> However, it is claimed by most scholars that no Babylonian document has yet been found affirming that Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, was present or that any Babylonian king was slain at the fall of Babylon when Cyrus the Persian captured the great city. The following citation taken from the Babylonian Chronicle does record that shortly after Cyrus' capture of Babylon, both Ugbaru (same as Gobryas and Gubaru, see fn. 3 below), the Governor of Guti, and the *wife* (?) of Nabonidus died. (boldfacing added to text by FNJ)

- 12 ...In the month Tishri  
 13 when  
 12 Cyrus (II)  
 13 did  
 12 battle at Opis on the [*bank of*]  
 13 the Tigris against the army of Akkad, the people of Akkad  
 14 retreated. He carried off the plunder (and) slaughtered the people. On the fourteenth day Sippar was captured without a battle.  
 15 Nabonidus fled. On the sixteenth day Ugbaru, governor of the Guti, and the army of Cyrus (II)  
 16 entered Babylon  
 15 without a battle  
 16 Afterwards, after Nabonidus retreated, he was captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shield-(bearing troops)  
 17 of the Guti surrounded the gates of Esagil. (But)  
 18 there was no  
 17 interruption (of rites) in Esagil or the (other) temples  
 18 and no date (for a performance) was missed. On the third day of the month Marhesvan Cyrus (II) entered Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> This may be seen by comparing the story of the fall of Babylon in *Contra Apion*, I, 20 with the same in *Antiq. X.* 11.2 and 4. In *Antiquities*, Josephus says Baltasar (Belshazzar as may be seen in the context that follows) is also "Naboandelus". Yet in *Contra Apion*, I.20, the account told about a "Naboandellus" is clearly the historical record of Nabonidus.

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306; same as Babylonian Chronicle 7 in Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–111.

- 19 ...were filled before him. There was peace in the city while Cyrus (II)  
 20 spoke  
 19 (his) greeting to  
 20 all of  
 19 Babylon.  
 20 Gubaru, his district officer, appointed the district officers in Babylon.  
 21 From the month Kislev to the month Adar the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon  
 22 returned to their places. On the night of the eleventh of the month Marhesvan **Ugbaru died**.<sup>3</sup>  
 In the month [...]  
 23 **the king's wife died**.<sup>4</sup> From the twenty-seventh of the month Adar to the third of the month Nisan [there was] (an official) mourning period in Akkad.

As to such ancient testimony as the above, Professor A.H. Sayce is typical of the attitude of today's academia when he writes: "We now possess the actual records of Nabonidus and Cyrus...They are records the truth of which cannot be doubted".<sup>5</sup> What "simple child-like faith" he has in the ancient secular records as opposed to the total lack of faith he exhibits in the ancient historical records of the Hebrew people.

<sup>3</sup> Compare with the first (#15) above where Ugbaru (same as Gobryas, see *ANET*, p. 306) is said to be "governor of the Guti". If *ABC* & *ANET* have translated correctly whereby Ugbaru died the month after the fall (Tishri, [vs. 12] into Marhesvan = October into November), then Ugbaru can hardly be Darius the Mede as some have concluded (unless Ugbaru, governor of Gutium, in #15 is not Gubaru in #20 as Whitcomb argues, see his pages 10–24). Daniel 6 and 9:1 contextually demand a far longer span than that of but one month for this Mede.

As "Gubaru" (the 3<sup>rd</sup> #20 in the above Babylonian Chronicle 7, Grayson, *ABC*, p. 110) is said to have appointed district officers, many take him to be Darius the Mede, but he is only said to be a district officer – not a king. Indeed, the verse is dealing only with appointments within *the city* of Babylon (*ABC*, the first # 19), not those of the empire. A. Leo Oppenheim (*ANET*, p. 306), T.G. Pinches (in Boufflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, p. 127), and R.F. Harper (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Loeb, Vol. VI, [Harvard Uni. Press, 1989] Appendix II, p. 458), expose the weakness of such an identification when they make Gobryas, Ugbaru and Gubaru one and the same man.

<sup>4</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pages 109–111 [Chronicle 7. iii. 12–23 – called the Nabonidus Chronicle]; also *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306 where Pritchard gives A. Leo Oppenheim's 1950 translation.

<sup>5</sup> Archibald Henry Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894), p. 498.

This may be seen in Sayce's statements regarding the above Annalistic Tablet account of the fall of Babylon and Belshazzar.<sup>1</sup>

But Belshazzar never became king in his father's place. No mention is made of him at the end of the Annalistic tablet, and it would therefore appear that he was no longer in command of the Babylonian army when the invasion of Cyrus took place. Owing to the unfortunate lacuna in the middle of the tablet we have no account of what became of him, but since we are told not only of the fate of Nabonidus, but also of the death of his wife, it seems probable that Belshazzar was dead.

At any rate, when Cyrus entered Babylonia he had already disappeared from history. Here, then, the account given by the Book of Daniel is at variance with the testimony of the inscriptions. But the contradictions do not end here. The Biblical story implies that Babylon was taken by storm; at all events it expressly states that 'the king of the Chaldeans was slain.'

Nabonidus, the Babylonian king, however, was not slain, and Cyrus entered Babylon 'in peace.' Nor was Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar, as we are repeatedly told in the fifth chapter of Daniel".

Such is characteristic of the inaccuracy and obstinacy of the critics. That which follows will expose the truth of this charge regarding Sayce's remarks concerning Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon. For now, we merely note that the Annalistic Tablet does not say Belshazzar was at the head of the Babylonian army when Cyrus invaded as Sayce would have us believe.

It reveals Nabonidus was over the army at Sippar and that he fled when the city opened its gates to Cyrus. Sayce assumes that we have no account of Belshazzar because part of the inscription is missing (the lacuna), and further presumes, with no evidence whatever, that he died before the city of Babylon fell.

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, *op. cit.*, pp. 502, 525–526. An Assyriologist, Professor Sayce (1845–1933) was the son of a vicar of the Church of England and educated at Queens College, Oxford. Ordained and died unmarried, he became deputy professor of comparative philosophy in 1876 and first professor of Assyriologist at Oxford from 1891 until his retirement in 1919. Although he was a staunch opponent of rampant higher criticism, he was not a biblical literalist. A liberal, he was a member of the Old Testament revision committee which produced the corrupt 1881 Revised Version.

With regard to Sayce's first remark, Scripture never says Belshazzar "became king in his father's place". To the contrary, it clearly implies that he reigned as Nabonidus' pro-rex or sub-king; hence, as Belshazzar held the second position he could only offer Daniel the rank of "third ruler in the kingdom" (Dan.5:16 & 29). Were he even a co-regent, he would have been equal in authority to his father and could have then offered Daniel the second position. Moreover, as we shall soon see, the Chronicle is not silent concerning Belshazzar; it explicitly refers to him and records his death!

Returning to the citation from Grayson on page 22, our translator has not been forthright in verse 23 when he states (as did Sayce in 1894) that the king's *wife* died. On his same page (111), the *transliterated* section displays the word for wife, "assat", in *half square brackets*.

This means the text is damaged at that place and has been partly restored (see page 16, fn. 2), yet Grayson has *translated* "wife" without any qualifying designation. As a result, nearly all commentaries, Bible dictionaries as well as other published works dealing with this subject do not so note and, believing the matter is therefore indisputable, the reader is misled as to the reliability of the text.<sup>2</sup>

But there is a far greater problem hidden here. In *ANET*, A. Leo Oppenheim renders the above #s 22 and 23 as:

In the month of Arahshamnu, on the night of the 11th day, Gobryas died. In the month of [Arahshamnu, the ...th day, the wife of the king died. From the 27th day of Arahshamnu till the 3rd day of Nisanu a(n) official "weeping" was performed in Akkad, ... .

Although not readily apparent, the difference is most significant, but the obvious different spelling of the first month involved in verse 22 is not part of the problem. Marhesvan is but the Hebrew name for Arahshamnu, the Babylonian 8<sup>th</sup> month (part of October & November).

The greater problem is that Grayson indicates he can, by all appearance, unmistakably read

<sup>2</sup> It should not be imagined that Grayson is being singled out and personally faulted for this. To not qualify the translated words from within half square brackets is the standard procedure by Assyriologist. Being misleading, it is this practice itself that is being called into question.

“the king’s wife died” on line 23 where, as already noted, half square brackets surround the word for wife in his transliterated first column. However, *ANET* places part of the word “wife” in *full* square brackets while at the same time implying that he can clearly identify the last cuneiform symbol which translates “fe”. Having so done, A. Leo Oppenheim (*ANET*, page 306) feels justified in translating the damaged word as “wife”. Although arriving at the same determination, these two renowned works are clearly not arriving at the same conclusion with regard to the unreadability of the damaged text.

Furthermore, they give different months for beginning the time of mourning for the dead member of the king’s household. Grayson (*ABC*) gives “the 27th of Adar”, and Adar is the last or 12<sup>th</sup> month in the year. But *ANET* (A. Leo Oppenheim’s 1950 translation) reads “the 27<sup>th</sup> day of Arahshamnu” which, as already stated above, is the 8<sup>th</sup>. Hence, we see that these readings are not nearly as absolute as usually represented. What, then, is the actual case?

Remember, the real issue before us is the claim that no Babylonian document to date affirms that Belshazzar was slain or even present the night the city of Babylon fell to Cyrus and Darius the Mede as Daniel 5:31 declares. Yet, the above Babylonian citation from both *ANET* and *ABC* does unmistakably state that some member of the king’s family did die about that time. The question that must be answered is – does the damaged text actually demand or even infer that it was the king’s wife?

This Annalistic Tablet is also called the Nabonidus Chronicle. The 4 by 3½ inch sun-dried clay tablet was found by the eminent Assyriologist Hormuzd Rassam<sup>1</sup> (1826–1910). It was first deciphered by the noted British Museum cuneiform authority Dr. Theophilus G. Pinches who published a copy with translitera-

<sup>1</sup> Rassam (1826–1910) was born of Christian parents at Mosul, Turkey. Early in his career he was an assistant to Sir Austen H. Layard on two expeditions (1845–1847 and 1849–1851).

Educated at Oxford (Magdalen College), he was sent back to Nimrud, Assyria under the direction of the British Museum and Sir Henry Rawlinson (1852–1854). From 1876 to 1882 Rassam’s archaeological investigations, especially at Nineveh, resulted in many important discoveries.

tion and translation in volume VII of the 1882 *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archeology* (*TSBA*, pp. 139 ff.)

Rassam stated: “Where the tablet is damaged there is not room enough for the character for ‘wife,’ and the verb to all appearance is not in the feminine ... the traces point to *u mar*, ‘and the son of.’ I do not think that there is any doubt that the Book of Daniel is as correct as it can be”. (Hormuzd Rassam pictured below)

Thus Rassam testifies that the text *cannot* read “wife” and that he would translate the passage “and the [son] of the king died”.<sup>2</sup>



Thus, his witness denies that the damaged area, which he calls “the traces” (i.e., of the text), is legible enough for the last cuneiform symbol to be translated as “fe”. Significantly, Rassam’s quote is recorded in Boutflower’s book *In and Around the Book of Daniel* and Dr. Pinches himself (receiver of the first lecturer appointment given in Assyriology at University College London in 1904) wrote the preface wherein he stated: “...there is no more interesting examination of the Book of Daniel than the present work”.<sup>3</sup>

The translations on the following page clearly corroborates Rassam, for both unambiguously state that it was the *son* of the king that died around the time of the fall of the city of Babylon!

<sup>2</sup> Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1963), p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. Dr. Pinches endorsement must be seen as most noteworthy.

## 17 year of Nabonidus – Nabonidus Chronicle

R.F. Harper, *ABL* (in LCL) 1904

“17<sup>th</sup> year ... In the month Tammuz {June-July}, when Cyrus gave battle in Opis (and) on the river Salsallat {Tigris} to the troops of Akkad, the people of Akkad he subdued (?). Whenever the people collected themselves, he slew them. On the fourteenth day Sippar was taken without battle. Nabonidus fled. On the sixteenth day, Gobryas {Ugbaru}, the governor of Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Nabonidus, because of his delay, was taken prisoner in Babylon. Until the end of the month, the shields of Gutium surrounded the gates of Esagila. No weapons were brought into Esagila and the other temples, and no standard was advanced. On the third day of Marheshvan {Oct-Nov} Cyrus entered Babylon. The harine lay down before him. Peace was established for the city. Cyrus proclaimed peace to all Babylon. He appointed Gobryas {Ugbaru}, his governor, governor in Babylon ...

On the night of the eleventh day of Marheshvan {Oct-Nov}, Gobryas {Ugbaru} against ... (and) he killed the son of the king”.  
(data within the pointed brackets { } supplied by FNJ)

Moreover, even Professor S.R. Driver<sup>1</sup> and the renowned British Semitist and biblical scholar Harold H. Rowley (1890–1969), both liberal biblical skeptics, concur with the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* and the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, that the Chronicle testifies it was the king’s son that died.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Driver reads: “Gubaru made an assault and slew the king’s son”. Raised a Quaker, Driver (1846–1914 AD) held the Regius chair of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford. He succumbed to the German critical approach to the OT and spread the poison over Britain. He was a member of the OT revision company which produced the corrupt 1881 Revised Version.

The above “Harine” is a transliteration of the Akkadian into English. Harper left it in this form because its exact meaning was, and still is, uncertain. *ANET* renders it “green twigs” (p. 306). It well may mean “branches” indicating the people were laying such before Cyrus during his triumphal entry much the same as when our Lord entered Jerusalem (Mat.21:8).

<sup>2</sup> *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 516 (Belshazzar); *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, (hereafter cited as *ISBE37*) James Orr, Gen. Editor, Vol. 1, (Chicago, Ill: The Howard-

T.G. Pinches, *TSBA*, 1882

In the month Tammuz  
Cyrus delivered battle at Opis on the river Zalzallat (Tigris)  
against the troops of Akkad.  
The men of Akkad raised a revolt’

some men were slain.

On the 14th day of the month Sippar was taken without fighting: Nabonidus fled. On the 16th day Ugbaru (Gobryas), the governor of the country of Gutium and the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Thereupon Nabonidus was captured after he had been surrounded in Babylon. Till the end of the month Tammuz the shield-bearers of the country of Gutium surrounded the gates of E-sag-lia. No ones weapon entered E-sag-lia and the shrines, nor did a flag come in.

On the 3rd day of Marchesvan Cyrus entered Babylon. The roads before him were full of people. Peace was established for the city, peace to the whole of Babylon did Cyrus proclaim. Ugbaru (Gobryas), his governor, appointed governors in Babylon,

and from the month Chisleu (Nov-Dec) to the month Adar (Feb-Mar) the gods of the country of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon, returned to their own cities.

In the month of Marchesvan on the night of the 11th day Ugbaru (Gobryas) went against ... and the son (?) of the king died.

It will also be seen that Dr. Robert F. Harper’s 1904 translation of this same Nabonidus (Akkadian = Nabu-na’id) Chronicle, as found the prestigious Loeb Classical Library edition by the Harvard University Press,<sup>3</sup> as well as that of Dr. Pinches’, which has been included for comparison, reads very differently in many

Severance Co., 1937), p. 433 (Belshazzar); H.H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede*, (1935), p. 20.

The reason for the wide disparity in translation is because the early expeditions took place when “the sun never set on the British Empire”, and various Christian institutions from England financed most of these endeavors. Thus, men of faith were usually engaged in the work. However, since the early 1900s funding has mainly come from sources that do not accept the divine inspiration of Scripture, and these employ scholars of like minds for the tasks.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Loeb, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 458.

The translation was taken from: Robert F. Harper *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature, Selected Translations*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co. Pub., 1904); see the above cited Loeb edition of *Cyropaedia*, Volume VI, Appendix II, p. 460.

particulars from either *ANET* or *ABC*.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this is not the only issue. The square bracket at the end of #22 indicates that Grayson cannot read the month involved (see FNJ's page 22).

However, *ANET* places the name of the month within the fully squared brackets, indicating a restoration to the text due to damage and unreadability, which he undoubtedly determined and justifies by the fact that the month "Arahshamnu" appears in the text just before and after the damaged area. Still, this assumption may well not be correct. The point is that the month could be referring back to the first #12 and thus have read "Tishri" (Tashritu) in which case the Chronicle would exactly agree with the Daniel 5 account.<sup>2</sup>

And why should this be acceptable? Because as disagreements exist between highly qualified professionals concerning the damaged unreadable text, the only logical alternative is that other materials, if there are any, should and must be allowed to give their testimony in order to shed light on the matter. Are we, then, overbold when we reply that in this instance the Holy Hebrew Scriptures should be consulted and their historical testimony accepted where they "add light" on the archeological discoveries.<sup>3</sup> After all, numerous archaeological

findings in the past have shown the Scriptures to be completely reliable.

Moreover, in view of the previous statements by Rassam, *ISBE37*, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Driver, Rowley, and Harper (in LCL), what are we to conclude concerning the oft heard claim that no Babylonian document affirms that Belshazzar was slain or even present the night the city of Babylon fell. All of the above give witness that the Nabonidus Chronicle does so testify. Indeed, who else could the slain son of the king be?

Furthermore, there does exist other historic confirmation to the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel in the matter of the death of the Babylonian king during the conquest of the city of Babylon at the hands of the Medo-Persian army. Xenophon's (c.430–354 BC) ancient account of Babylon's fall in his "*Cyropaedia*" must be taken as accurate, at least insofar as this particular is concerned.<sup>4</sup>

"When these words were spoken they advanced. And of those they met on the way, some fell by their swords, some fled back into their houses, some shouted to them; and Gobryas and his men shouted back to them, as if they were fellow-revellers. They advanced as fast as they could and were soon at the palace. And Gobryas and Gadatas and their troops found the gates leading to the palace locked, and those who had been appointed to attack the guard fell upon them as they were drinking by a blazing fire, and without waiting they dealt with them as with foes.

But, as the noise and tumult ensued, those within heard the uproar, and at the king's command to see what the matter was, some of them ran out. And when Gadatas and his men saw the gates open they dashed in pursuit of the others as they fled back into the palace, and dealing blows right and left they came into the presence of the king; and they found him already risen with his dagger in his hand. And Gadatas and Gobryas and their followers overpowered him; and those about the king perished also, one where he sought some shelter, another while running away, another while actually trying to defend himself with whatever he could. ...

While they were thus occupied, Gadatas and Gobryas came up; and first of all they did homage to the gods, seeing that they had

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robert F. Harper was on the staff of the 1888 University of Pennsylvania sponsored expedition to Nippur. This was the first American expedition ever to work in Mesopotamia. The expedition, which continued until 1900, found more than 30,000 cuneiform tablets and hundreds of other objects. A few years later, Dr. Harper founded Assyriological studies at the University of Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> To the possible objection that as the month "Arahshamnu" appears in the text just before and after the damaged area hence Tishri would be out of the monthly sequence, we note that such an anomaly already appears in the text. The 8th month Marhesvan (=Arahshamnu) in the second #18 (*ABC*) is recorded again in verse 22, yet "Kislev" (month 9) as well as "Adar" (month 12) are both mentioned in #21 which is an "out of sequence" irregularity between the Marhesvan's. As this condition presents no contextual problem, it is insisted that to consider "Tishri" as the reading at verse 22 would also not be unreasonable. Whereas all the cited references (*ABC*, *ANET*, *ISBE92*, Boutflower, Harper, etc.) agree that Gobryas is somehow engaged (died or fought against) on the 11th of Marhesvan, there simply is no agreement among them as to the month in which the person died that was related to the king.

<sup>3</sup> How often we hear the opposite; i.e., that the ancient secular records are needed to "add light" to Scripture.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VII, v, 26–33.

avenged themselves upon the wicked king, and then they kissed Cyrus's hands and his feet with many tears of joy.

And when day dawned and those in possession of the citadels discovered that the city was taken and the king slain, they surrendered the citadels, too".

Whereas Xenophon does not actually name the king of Babylon that was slain as being Belshazzar (or Nabonidus), his narrative does require the death of a monarch. Moreover, when the evidence furnished by:

1. the archaeological discovery of Babylonian texts referring to a Belshazzar as *de facto* king associated on the throne with Nabonidus,
2. the Nabonidus Chronicle, and
3. the account preserved for us by Xenophon

is considered, the biblical narrative whereby King Belshazzar is slain on the night the city of Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians as recorded in Daniel chapter 5 must be seen as historically substantiated.<sup>1</sup>



(Picture: the reverse side of the famous column iii on the Nabonidus Chronicle which resides in the British Museum. The text is 4 inches high by 3½ inches wide: its maximum dimensions are 5½ by 5½).

In his Canon, Ptolemy places the nine year reign of Cyrus after the Babylonian king, Nabonidus,<sup>2</sup> and the Babylonian Chronicles

<sup>1</sup> Although, no document of Babylonian origin affirms by name that Belshazzar was actually present at the fall of Babylon, there also is no positive evidence against his participation in the events of 539 BC. Moreover, his not being named in the Babylonian texts is of no force as the Holy Writ is unmistakably clear that he did so partake and was slain.

<sup>2</sup> With regard to this, S.R. Driver writes: "Darius, son of Ahasuerus, a Mede, after the death of Belshazzar, is 'made king over the realm of the Chaldeans (5:31. 6:1ff. 9:1. 11:1). There seems to be no room for such a ruler. According to all other authorities, Cyrus is the immediate successor of Nabu-na'id, and the ruler of the entire Persian Empire. It has been conjectured that Darius may have been an under-king – perhaps either identical with the Cyaxares II of Xenophon, or a younger brother of

(Chronicle 7) makes no mention of Darius the Mede.<sup>3</sup> Further, Daniel 5 makes no reference to Cyrus the Great. Thus, the Biblical and Babylonian documents of this segment of history do not perfectly dovetail in all their details. However, this should not cause great concern for, as the various translations of the Nabonidus Chronicle reveal, the secular data is damaged and open to widely varying interpretation regarding numerous particulars.

In bold contrast, Isaiah foretold that God would open before Cyrus "the two leaved gates" which were along the inner wall where the Euphrates flowed through the city of Babylon. Jeremiah added that Babylon would fall to a Median led coalition which would come from the north at which time the inhabitants would be drunken and the city waters dried up (Jer.50:9, 38 and 51:27–28, 36, 57) and ancient historians have validated both prophets in these details.

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Astyages – whom Cyrus may have made governor of Babylon. In 6:1, however, where he organizes the empire in 120 satrapies, and in 6:25, he seems to be represented as absolute ruler of the Babylonian empire, without any such limitation to his jurisdiction..." *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, op. cit., pp. 468–469.*

However, the reason Ptolemy gives Cyrus credit for a nine year reign (538–530 = 9 when inclusively numbered) is because Ptolemy's Royal Canon makes each king's year of accession the last year of his predecessor. For example, Cyrus died and Cambyses began to reign in BC 530, but the Canon gives the whole year to Cyrus and reckons it as his *last* year. Ptolemy does not address Cambyses' year of accession but would place 529 as his first year.

Further, Ptolemy made no allowance or notice for reigns of less than a year. Those kings were completely omitted and their months were included in the last year of the preceding or the first year of the following monarch. Significantly, Ptolemy made no indication or allowance for any co-regencies [see: Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 229*]. Consequently, although Darius the Mede bore the title of "King" and executed great power over the realm, his authority was not equal to that of Cyrus who "made" him a "sub-king" or pro-*rex* (Daniel 9:1). Cyrus retained overlordship above Darius – exactly as Nabonidus held lordship over Belshazzar – and thus Ptolemy passed over Darius the Mede in his Canon and awarded his years to Cyrus. This also explains why Belshazzar is not listed in the Royal Canon. As a co-regent, or far more likely only a pro-*rex*, his years are not given but were awarded to Nabonidus.

<sup>3</sup> Darius the Mede was Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages and uncle of Cyrus the Great. He was also the nephew-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar as that Babylonian monarch wed Astyages' daughter, the sister of Cyaxares II (see chart, page 150).

Remember, for many years historians and critics denied the existence of Belshazzar as well as the great Assyrian king Sargon. As the latter was only mentioned once in Scripture (Isa.20:1), and then not in a historical book, for decades his very existence was widely doubted while others believed Sargon was merely another name for one of the Assyrian kings mentioned in Kings or Chronicles. But in the late 1800s the archeologists spade discovered the biblical Sargon's inscriptions and sculptures at Khorsabad.

The lesson is clear. The Word of God can be trusted. It needs no verification as it is the only exact and true standard to which all other information, theories, and conjectures must yield. It is the "light shedder", and Christian scholars must shake themselves free from the detrimental influence of the skeptics. Their willful hostility to Holy Scripture, regardless of their brilliance or reputation, renders them unfit guides on any relevant matters.

#### **D. THE CHALDEAN KINGS OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE**

When Ashur-banipal king of Assyria died in 627 BC, Nabopolassar revolted from Assyria and in 626 became the first king of the Chaldean Dynasty of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The kings that followed him were all Chaldeans until the succession was broken when Nabonidus, a Babylonian and last king of that empire, came to the throne.<sup>1</sup>

Allied with Cyaxares I of Media and the Scythians, in 612 BC Nabopolassar forever broke the power of the Assyria Empire by wasting Nineveh, the Assyrian Capitol (Nahum, especially 3:1–3). After reigning 21 years, Nabopolassar died and his son, Nebuchadnezzar II, succeeded to the throne after he soundly defeated the Egyptian army of Pharaoh Neco at the 605 BC battle of Carchemish.

Nebuchadnezzar's 43 year reign ushered in the golden era of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The surviving Babylonian records, the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC statements of the Babylonian historian Berossus, the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are the sources

of our information regarding his throneship. These reveal numerous ongoing military conflicts with Egypt, Syria, and the land of Palestine. During these, the land of Egypt was laid waste for 40 years (Ezk. 29 & 30; Jer. 46) and the kingdom of Judah was subjugated.

Judah's initial suppression (606 BC, Dan.1:1) resulted in a significant portion of its populace (including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) being carried away to Babylonia. Later rebellions by Kings Jehoiakim (2 Ki.24:1) and Zedekiah (2 Ki.24:20) brought about the last two of the three major deportations (606, 597, and 586 BC which by Jewish reckoning are Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, his 8<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> years respectively) into Babylonia. Three minor exiles (during Nebuchadnezzar's 7<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> years – Jeremiah 52:28–30) are also recorded.<sup>2</sup>

After completing the subjugation of Syria-Palestine and inflicting punishment on Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar obtained a vast number of laborers by conveying many of the inhabitants of the lands he conquered to other parts of the empire. With these he rebuilt and adorned the city of Babylon (Dan. 4:30). He constructed new streets, canals, and the great wall of Babylon.

He repaired Esagila, the great temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon, as well as Ezida, the temple of Nebo (Nabu) in Borsippa. Nebuchadnezzar built the renowned hanging gardens to remind his wife Amytis of her native Median hills, and a huge reservoir for irrigation near Sippar. Thus, Babylon surpassed in grandeur and magnificence that of all the other ancient mid-Eastern cities up to his time (Dan.2:37).

After reigning 43 years (605–562), Nebuchadnezzar died and was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach (Amel-Marduk, 2 Ki.25:27). In the first official year of his reign, Evil-merodach brought 55 year old Jeconiah (Jehoiachin or Coniah) out of the prison in which Nebuchadnezzar had placed him. He had languished there 37 years. Moreover, Evil-merodach gave Jeconiah a favored position above all the other kings that had been subdued by the Chaldean Empire – a position he kept for the rest of his life (2 Ki.25:27–30). After a two year reign

<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 124–127.

(561–560 BC), Evil-merodach was slain by his brother-in-law Neriglissar (Nergal-shar-ucur).

Neriglissar was the prince of Nebuchadnezzar who held the office of “Ramag” (i.e., the Nergal-shar-usur of Jer. 39:3 and 13). Known to the Greeks as Neriglissar, he had been an army commander under King Nebuchadnezzar and married one of his daughters. He murdered his brother-in-law, Evil-merodach the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and seized the throne. After a reign of only four years (559–556 BC), Neriglissar died, apparently of natural causes.

Labashi-Marduk, the only son of Neriglissar, then ascended his father’s vacated throne. Nabonidus described him as “a minor who had not yet learned how to behave”<sup>1</sup> and Berosus spoke of him as “not knowing how to rule” (Josephus, *Contra Apion*, i, 20). After reigning but nine months according to Berosus (or more likely only 3 according to the Uruk King List), he was assassinated in 556 BC. As noted previously, the conspirators then ended the Chaldean Dynasty by choosing Nabonidus, a mere Babylonian and already an old man,<sup>2</sup> from among their own number as the next monarch.

### E. THE FALL OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Two years after the assassination of his predecessor, Labashi-Marduk, King Nabonidus named his son Belshazzar his pro-regent over Babylon and, with a large military contingency, moved to Haran. There, he restored E-hul-hul, the temple of the moon god Sin, which had been laid waste 54 years earlier by the Medes.<sup>3</sup> From Haran Nabonidus moved south to attack Edom and the prince of Tema (Teima), whom he slew. He then set up residence in that strategically located city.

#### 1. THE EMERGENCE OF CYRUS

Meanwhile, in 585 BC Astyages (his Greek name, Akkadian = Ishtuvegu) had succeeded his father Cyaxares I, Nabopolassar’s ally, to the throne of Media. At the beginning of Nabonidus’ reign, the Medes were in possession

of northern Mesopotamia and encamped about Haran.<sup>4</sup> Among those who came under the sway of Astyages shadow was the province of Anshan in north-eastern Elam (south-west Iran).

Anshan had long been a vassal to Media. Its chieftain king was the Persian Cambyses I (600–559 BC) of the house of Teispes. Cambyses I had taken to wife Mandane, the daughter of Astyages the Mede (see chart, page 150).



When Cambyses I died in BC 559, his son Cyrus II (the Great) inherited the vassal throne of Anshan. Around 553,<sup>5</sup> Cyrus II rebelled against Astyages, his maternal grandfather.

Harpagus, commander of the Median army whom Astyages had previously wronged, deserted the aged king and brought his army to the side of the able Cyrus (above: picture of Cyrus at the head of his troops). Astyages was soon captured near Pasargadae,<sup>6</sup> and in BC 550 the Persians took the Median capital city of Ecbatana without a battle.

By honoring the Medes and their culture, Cyrus quickly forged a huge unified empire. He was king of all Media and Persia. His territory spanned from eastern Iran to the Halys River in central Asia Minor.

Nabonidus relates he had been assured by Marduk in a dream during the third year of his

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 309 (iv).

<sup>2</sup> *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, Henry Snyder Gehman, ed., (Phil., PA: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 647 (Nabonidus).

<sup>3</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 311 (x); also p. 309 (ii); see my page 18, footnote 2.

<sup>4</sup> Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

<sup>5</sup> The Nabonidus Inscription as given on my page 15, fn. 3, indicates Cyrus’ rebellion came in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Nabonidus.

<sup>6</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, Loeb, Vol. VII, Book xv, 730.

reign (553 BC) that Cyrus the king of Anshan with his small army would overcome the Medes (Umman-mamda) and capture Astyages.<sup>1</sup> Nabonidus also relates that by 553 BC the troubles caused by Cyrus throughout the region had brought about the Medes withdrawal from around Haran. This opened the way for Nabonidus to lead an expedition to Haran to rebuild Sin's temple that the Medes had wasted 54 years earlier.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. CYRUS SUBDUES LYDIA

The extraordinary success of Cyrus greatly alarmed the older powers. Around 547 BC an alliance consisting of Lydia under King Croesus (the major power of Asia Minor), Amasis II of Egypt, Sparta, and the Babylonians was formed to stop the advance of Cyrus.<sup>3</sup>

From 560–546 BC, Lydia had been ruled by the legendary Croesus. He succeeded his father, Alyattes, as king when he was about 35 years old. Famed for his gold, the phrase “rich as Croesus” has for centuries been a byword for one with immense wealth. The last king of Lydia, his kingdom consisted of all the western portion of Asia Minor with the Halys River as its eastern boundary (see map, page 35).

In 547 BC, Cyrus appeared with his army at the river Tigris, the northern border of Babylonia, below Arbela.<sup>4</sup> A conflict between the troops garrisoning the frontier cities of the two empires seemed imminent, but news that Lydian forces had crossed the Halys into Median territory demanded the presence of Cyrus to his far western border. Thus, the inevitable clash between the Medo-Persian and Neo-Babylonian empires was postponed for several years.

Breaking off his intended move along the Tigris, Cyrus marched his army against Croesus, the most formidable of his opponents, before the Lydian's three allies could organize and join him.

Having obtained the ambiguous prophesy from the oracles at Delphi (“if Croesus should send an army against the Persians, he would destroy a great empire”),<sup>5</sup> Croesus was encouraged to engage the Persians. Mustering his army at Sardis, he crossed the Halys River, the boundary between Lydia and Media, and invaded Cappadocia as far as the major city of Pteria – a march of nearly 400 miles.<sup>6</sup>

Cyrus mustered a massive army and engaged Croesus near Pteria. The Lydians were warriors of renowned courage and horsemanship. Their custom was to fight on horseback with long spears. When nightfall parted the combatants, many had fallen on both sides and neither had gained an advantage.

As the Persians did not sally forth for another attack on the following day, Croesus assumed Cyrus did not want to press the battle any further. With winter approaching, Croesus retired westward to his capital at Sardis. From there he intended to assemble the united forces of his allies and march against the Persians in the spring.

However, upon seeing Croesus withdraw, Cyrus followed him back to his Lydian capital. After an open battle on the plain of Sardis,<sup>7</sup> the Lydians retreated into the city which fell in 546 BC after a 14-day siege.<sup>8</sup> Thus Croesus fulfilled the words of the oracle; he crossed the Halys and thereby destroyed a great empire – his own! Now Cyrus had the wealth of Lydia to finance his military. Croesus was spared and became a trusted advisor to Cyrus.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, Bk. I, 53.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 73 & 76; here Herodotus tells us the reasons for Croesus' invasion were: (1) to gain territory, (2) his trust in the oracle, and (3) his desire to punish Cyrus for holding Astyages, Croesus' brother-in-law, in subjection (Astyages married Croesus' sister, Aryenis – both being King Alyattes' offspring; see page 15, fn. 5).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 80. Herodotus tells us that, fearing the skilled Lydian cavalry, Cyrus heeded the council of Harpagus, the Median General, and placed warriors on his camels at the front of the charge. The Lydian horses were unsettled by both the sight and odor of Cyrus' camels and turned in flight. This forced the courageous Lydians to dismount and fight on foot, thus losing their advantage.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 76–84

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 85–90 & 155–156. Regarding Cyrus' treatment of Croesus, *ANET* disagrees with Herodotus by translating that Cyrus “killed” the king of Lydia [p. 306 (ii) under

<sup>1</sup> Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), pp. 80–81. Also see FNJ's page 15, fn. 3.

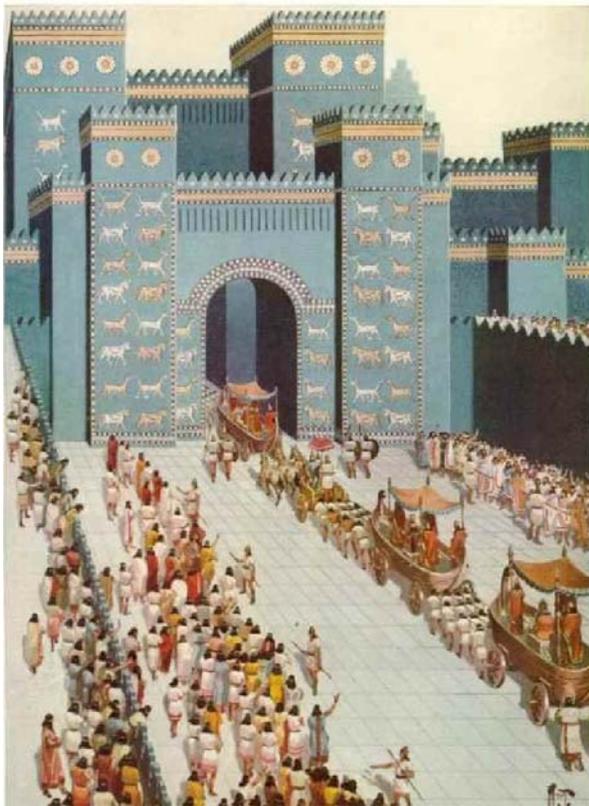
<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 372–373; also Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, p. 107; and my page 17.

### 3. NABONIDUS & THE THREAT OF CYRUS

The damaged, incomplete account on the “Nabonidus Chronicle” records that Nabonidus resided in Tema and was not in Babylon for the first of Nisan New Year festival in the 11<sup>th</sup> year<sup>1</sup> of his reign (545 BC). In the “Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus” the king tells us that he had not returned to the city of Babylon for ten years (of his self-imposed exile) but that in the month of Tishri (Akkadian = Tashritu = September/October) of his 11<sup>th</sup> year (545) he returned to Babylon<sup>2</sup> and worked on various shrines including that of the sun-god Shamash at Sippar.



The overcoming of Lydia cleared the way for Cyrus to deal with her Babylonian ally, and the heightening Persian threat on the eastern frontier eventually became critical. Early in 539 BC, the impending threat of invasion

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ninth year]. However, here *ABC* opposes *ANET* and translates the Akkadian word “*iduk*” as “defeated” rather than the more normal rendering of “killed” or “slew” (p. 107, #17).

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306 (ii).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562 (i).

caused Nabonidus to hasten home from Tema. He arrived in time to finally take part in the important first of Nisan New Years Festival in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (539 BC).<sup>3</sup> Then, until the end of Elul (August/September), he brought the idols of the principle cities (except for the gods of Borsippa, Cutha, and Sippar) into Babylon.

This undoubtedly was an attempt to rally his people by showing his respect for their gods in protecting them from the advancing enemies who were now aided by the defector, Gobryas the Governor of Gutium. However, all this was too late. Nabonidus’ years away from the capitol city and his neglect of the New Year festivals to honor Bel-Marduk and Nebo (Nabu) had offended the Chaldean priesthood as well as the general populace. The king’s popularity was surely at a low ebb. (picture is the Akitu procession at the Ishtar Gate)

### 4. BABYLON FALLS TO CYRUS II

According to the Chronicle, early in the month of Tammuz<sup>4</sup> (June/July) 539 BC the Persian and Babylonian armies met at Opis on the east bank of the Tigris River. Cyrus was victorious and marched his soldiers about 60 miles to Sippar which lay only about 35 miles north of Babylon. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Tammuz (October 10 Julian, 4 October Gregorian, a Saturday),<sup>5</sup> Sippar was taken without a battle.

According to both Herodotus and Berosus, Nabonidus sallied out and engaged Cyrus as he came near Babylon. Having been worsted, the main force of the Babylonian army retreated behind the great wall, but Nabonidus fled away

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306 (iii).

<sup>4</sup> When we consider Herodotus (Vol. 1, Bk. I, 190–191) as well as Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, VII, v, 1–13.), the month Tammuz (June–July) as given in R.F. Harper’s and Rassam’s translations as the month Cyrus attacked Opis is more logical than Tishri (September–October) as found in *ANET* and *ABC*.

Tishri does not allow time for Cyrus to be “so long delayed and gaining no advantage” over the city of Babylon (Herodotus, I, 190), and it gives no time for him to divide and place his army at opposite ends of Babylon where the Euphrates entered and exited the city while others dug the canal to divert the river into the old lake site. This confusion is strange; Akkadian for Tammuz is “duuzi” and does not look like “Tashritu” (Tishri).

<sup>5</sup> The month is determined by following the same logic as given in the preceding footnote.

with a few of his troops to Borsippa.<sup>1</sup> Herodotus writes that Cyrus was “long delayed” and for some time unable to gain any advantage” over Babylon (see fn. 4 on previous page).

Finally, after diverting the Euphrates into an enormous old lake bed (“Thus saith the Lord, ... to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; Who saith of Cyrus,<sup>2</sup> he is my shepherd” – Isa.44:27–28a; cp Jer.50:38, 51:36) and bringing the water level down to mid-thigh, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of Tishri<sup>3</sup> (October 12 Julian or October 6 Gregorian, a Monday) Gobryas and the troops of Cyrus made their way along the channel into Babylon.

They were now within the main walls, but there were still the walls along the river which could prevent their entering the city itself. However, during the celebration and drunken revelry, the massive double gates had been neglected and left unlocked. Again, exactly as predicted 170 years hence: “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus...I will...open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut:” (Isa.45:1).

Daniel 5 tells us that on that same night, King Belshazzar had called 1,000 of the empire's leaders to a great feast. Believing themselves secure behind their impenetrable wall and with provisions laid up which would last more than 20-years,<sup>4</sup> they blasphemously drank wine from the vessels taken from God's Temple in Jerusalem and praised their gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. Suddenly, a hand appeared and wrote a message on the wall of the king's palace. Immediately, “the king's

countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another” (Dan.5:6).



This too was recorded in God's promise regarding Cyrus: “Thus saith the Lord to... Cyrus...I will loose the loins of kings” (Isa.45:1). The wise men of Babylon were sent for, but they could not make known its interpretation.

At last, Daniel was summoned. He revealed it was a message of doom for the king and that his kingdom would be given over to the Medes and Persians. Indeed, they were already besieging the city and at that very moment gaining entrance to the city.

Chapter 5 continues: with: “In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans slain” (Dan.5:30) and, without naming the ruler, Xenophon concurs that the king was slain that night.<sup>5</sup>

“... and dealing blows right and left they came into the presence of the king; and they found him already risen with his dagger in his hand. And Gadatas and Gobryas and their followers overpowered him; and those about the king perished also. ... And when day dawned and those in possession of the citadels discovered that the city was taken and the king slain, they surrendered the citadels, too”.

Thus, the city was said to be taken without a battle.<sup>6</sup> The Greek historians give no indication

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, (Loeb), *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, Bk. I, 190; Berosus as cited in Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I.20.

<sup>2</sup> About 170 years before this took place, the Lord calls Cyrus by name and speaks of drying up the rivers of Babylon (i.e., the Euphrates and the canals and moat it supplied). Again, the Chaldean priesthood protects their nation's reputation. They write nothing of the embarrassing tactic of Cyrus' diverting the Euphrates & the ease in which he entered the city.

<sup>3</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pages. 109–110 and Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306 (iii). Here, Harper's and Pinches' translations in which Tammuz (June–July) is given as the month for the fall of Babylon are rejected as they do not allow enough time for Cyrus to follow his Tammuz attack at Opis and then dig the canal to divert the Euphrates etc. (page 31, fn. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VII, v, 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 & 33.

<sup>6</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306 (iii). Grayson, Rassam, and Harper all concur and the same is stated on the “Cylinder of Cyrus”. This is a barrel shaped baked clay cylinder about nine inches long bearing forty-five lines of text in Babylonian cuneiform recording the capture of

Babylon. It was found in Babylon by Hormuzd Rassam in 1879. The Cylinder states (*ANET*, pp. 315–316) that Nabonidus was seen as having done evil against the city of Babylon in his handling of the worship of Marduk, king of gods. Moreover Marduk, the chief deity of Babylon, is said to have “scanned and looked through all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him (Marduk) in the annual procession.

The Cylinder records that Marduk’s choice was Cyrus: that it was Marduk who ordered Cyrus to march against the city of Babylon and Marduk who helped Cyrus enter Babylon, supposedly with little opposition: “Without any battle, he (Marduk, FNJ) made him (Cyrus, FNJ) enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity. He delivered into his (i.e., Cyrus’) hands Nabonidus, the king who did not worship him (i.e., Marduk). All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country of Sumer and Akkad (southern and northern Babylon, FNJ), princes and governors (included)” – thus “sparing Babylon any great calamity”. When Marduk delivered Nabonidus, the king of Babylon, into Cyrus’ hands, the inhabitants of the city as well as the countryside were said to be jubilant, viewing Cyrus as a liberator and submitted willingly to him as their ruler.

Frankly, the Cylinder text seems to this author as an account laced with politically correct propaganda rather than a factual history. The same may be said of the last part of the “Verse Account of Nabonidus” (*ANET*, p. 314, v & vi) which has all the appearance of being a later “add on”. The scribes within the Chaldean priesthood who wrote these certainly would not have wished to offend their conqueror but would have been strongly motivated to ingratiate themselves to their new sovereign.

The historic gist may be there, but the real purpose was to cause the conquered people to despise Nabonidus and adore the new foreign ruler for his mercy and piety; hence the propaganda was undoubtedly read aloud publicly to the citizenry. In stating that Babylon basically fell overnight and totally capitulated during the early morning hours, the Persian record preserved by Xenophon (a Greek) certainly supports the Babylonian versions that the city was spared any “calamity” or devastation (*Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VII, v, 33), but their accounts still seem full of obsequious overstatements.

The author is familiar with the fact that prophetic Scripture often merges a local partial fulfillment and a remote complete future fulfillment. He is also aware that Babylon is to play a prominent role in the Great Tribulation (esp. Rev. 17 & 18). Hence, it is understood that the time frame for nearly all of Isaiah 13 is that of the “Day of the Lord” (vv. 6 & 9) which refers to the latter part of the Tribulation; however, Isaiah 13:17–18 unmistakably refer to the fall under Cyrus (note: Medes, vs. 17, cp. vs. 1). The same may be said for many passages in Jeremiah (e.g., Jer.50:9, 38 & 51:27-28, 36, 57). Whereas Herodotus asserts that Darius the Great destroyed the gates and walls of Babylon (Bk. III, 159) in which case Jer.50:15 and 51:58 were fulfilled c.519 BC, such may not be accurate. Dr. Yamauchi says Herodotus is wrong here and offers as his main proof that Darius continued to use the city (*Persia and the Bible*, p. 173). Moreover, Berosus stated that Cyrus ordered the outer walls of the city to be destroyed as it had been most troublesome for him (Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I.20).

that the siege itself was a bloody one. If the Cylinder of Cyrus is an accurate and truthful account of Babylon’s fall, nearly all the fighting within the great city took place in a single night amid much carnage. Nabonidus, who had fled to Borsippa, re-entered the city and heard that:

The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in *their* holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: ... One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at *one* end, And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. (Jer. 51:30–32)

Soon after, Nabonidus was taken prisoner. Cyrus is said to have treated him kindly and exiled him to Carmania where he died.<sup>1</sup>

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Still, were the taking of Babylon as *peaceful* as the Babylonian records insist, we can but wonder why Cyrus put off his official triumphal entry until 17 days after his army penetrated the walls. Moreover, in view of the known history of the Medo-Persian warriors of this general time period, to conclude that no women were ravished or innocents slain at this occasion is deemed most naïve. Furthermore, the account says “the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle” [*ANET*, p. 306 (iii)], and in truth they did “enter” the city without “battle” for they *entered* – not by storming the walls etc. – but by subterfuge. They waded under the archway of the wall along the bottom of the Euphrates – such is no battle. Indeed, the truth may, in part, be found in the meaning of the word “battle” itself.

It normally refers to an encounter between opposing forces in a state of open, *prolonged* fighting. Thus, much “fighting” in brief skirmishes and numerous vicious clashes could have taken place during the night before the day dawned. When morning came, the warriors in the citadels discovered much of the city was already taken and Belshazzar was slain. Upon learning this, they surrendered. Even if any brief sporadic resistance occurred over the next few days, neither it nor the night of carnage would merit the designation “battle”.

Still, something seems amiss in this matter for the first half of this year is known as the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus and the last half as the accession year of Cyrus, yet there was a period of confusion between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> months (Tishri to Kislev = October-December) when some scribes dated events from Cyrus but others continued to recognize and date from Nabonidus [see: Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 171]. As Boutflower maintained, this seems to indicate that part of the city held out for several months against the Medo-Persians (*In and Around the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, p. 132).

<sup>1</sup> Berosus as preserved in Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I.20.

Seventeen days after the troops under Gobryas had taken the palace and slain Belshazzar, Cyrus entered the city in a triumphal procession (3<sup>rd</sup> of Marheshvan), proclaimed and imposed a state of peace throughout Babylon and took the throne as the restorer of the ancient worship of Marduk. Gobryas was granted authority to appoint officers over the city of Babylon, and only a few days thereafter (11<sup>th</sup> of Marheshvan) he died.<sup>1</sup> By Cyrus' command, from Kislev (November–December) to Adar (February–March) all the idols that Nabonidus had brought into Babylon were returned to the temples in their respective cities.<sup>2</sup>

Soon thereafter, Cyrus gathered unto himself about 120,000 horsemen, some 600,000 foot-soldiers, as well as around 2,000 scythe-bearing chariots and set out on a two-year expedition to subjugate the remainder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire from Syria to the Indian Ocean<sup>3</sup> Before departing, he “made” (Dan.9:1) his 62 year-old Median uncle Cyaxares II his pro-rex.

In order to consolidate the loyalty of the Persian contingency of his Medo-Persian army behind his relative, Cyrus conferred the Persian royal title of “Darius” upon Cyaxares. Having thus established him as “Darius the Mede”, both factions of the military under Cyaxares' command were thereby placated and united during Cyrus' absence.<sup>4</sup> With the government of Babylon secure in trusted family hands, Cyrus set himself at the head of his expeditionary army and departed.

<sup>1</sup> Grayson, *ABC, op. cit.*, p. 110 and Pritchard, *ANET, op. cit.*, p. 306 (iii).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia, op. cit.*, VIII, vi, 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Keil and Delitzsch also concluded that Cyaxares II was Darius the Mede: *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, Reprint, trans. M.G. Easton, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1986), Vol. VII, p. 302 (Isaiah). Boutflower forcefully argues that Cyrus' son Cambyses II was Darius the Mede (*In and Around the Book of Daniel, op. cit.*, pp. 145–155.), but it is hardly tenable that Cambyses could have been 62 years old when Babylon was overthrown. That would require him to have been about 71 when he became sole heir to the throne in 530 BC and 76 when, in 525 BC, he conquered Egypt. This would mean he was 51 when Cyrus overthrew Astyages in 550 and place Cyrus' age around 69 at that event. The unlikelihood of such a scenario should be readily apparent. It would also place Cyrus at 89 at his death in 530 BC.

## F. LESSONS OF THE PAST IGNORED

Belshazzar had first-hand awareness of Nebuchadnezzar's madness as a divine judgment, yet this incidence had little if any influence upon the profligate Belshazzar and his pride.

O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: (Dan.5:18–23).

Scripture unmistakably reveals and requires that Belshazzar was slain by the Medes *and* Persians during the fall of Babylon in BC 539, hence no profane data was ever necessary to validate the historicity of this fact.

And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old (Daniel 5:25–31).

Consequently, having established that Belshazzar, the “son” of Nebuchadnezzar, was associated on the throne with Nabonidus his father, we can now understand why Daniel was only offered the position of “the third ruler” in the kingdom (Dan.5:16, 29).

As a “sub-king” to his father, Belshazzar was only the “second ruler” of the Chaldean Empire; hence the next position beneath him was the third.





## IV DARIUS THE MEDE

The contents of the Book of Daniel unmistakably reveal that it was written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC by Daniel himself. Further, they affirm that Daniel is giving us an eyewitness account and that he participated in many of its historical events. Christ Jesus, our Lord, personally attributed authorship of the book to Daniel (Mat.24:15), and the fact that the Jews accepted the book into the Canon of Scripture likewise bears witness to its authenticity.

However, because of the extremely accurate historical account recorded in Daniel chapter 11 and as most Bible critics refuse to believe in predictive prophecy, they insist that the entire Book of Daniel was authored by an unknown writer during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Indeed, they offer seven or eight other objections against a 6<sup>th</sup> century BC date for the book. Still, it is the person of “Darius the Mede” that the skeptics find most objectionable with Daniel.

Many entire books have been written concerning the identity of this “Darius” with widely varying conclusions. Therefore, this synopsis is not expected to forever settle the issue – especially for those whose minds are already set in stone regarding the matter. This brief work is mainly an overview for the generally uninformed, yet it includes several largely unexplored insights that are intended to challenge all to consider and some to even reassess.

Scripture is clear that immediately following the 6 October BC 539 (Gregorian, October 12 Julian – a Monday) death of “Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans”, Darius the Mede the son of Ahasuerus was “made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 5:31, 9:1) by Cyrus the Great (Dan.1:21, 6:28). As Darius was 62 years old at the 539 BC fall of Babylon, his birth year was 601 BC. Following the death of Belshazzar, Darius the Mede is referred to as the ruler of Babylon throughout the remainder of the Book of Daniel (Dan.5:31, 6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28, 9:1, 11:1).

Because the negative higher critics have not found a king by this designation in secular Medo-Persian history, the person of Darius the Mede has become the main target of critical

attacks upon the prophecy of Daniel. To these cynics, he is history’s invisible man – the man who never existed. Their attitude concerning Darius the Mede is well summed up by Harold Henry Rowley (1890–1969):<sup>1</sup>

The references to Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel have long been recognized as providing the most serious historical problem of the book. ... The claim of the Book of Daniel to be a work of history, written by a well-informed contemporary, is shattered beyond repair by this fiction of Darius the Mede. ... So far as Darius the Mede is concerned, we have seen that there is no way of reconciling the Book of Daniel with assured history, and all the efforts of the apologists, of whom the present century has seen a new and plentiful crop, definitely fail.

Yet, they somehow fail to see that Rowley’s two assertions work against one another. Were the Book of Daniel composed after the fact, why would the scribe responsible for the work have been so careless as to invent a person as invisible as “Darius the Mede” and thereby cast a shadow of doubt over his entire undertaking? This point should be all the more appreciated when the detailed nature of the book is taken into account. How could he be so meticulous throughout the entire work and so unthinking in this major detail?

That notwithstanding, as a typical representative of the position taken by today’s school of biblical higher criticism, Rowley’s assertions force us to carefully examine all the pertinent evidence relating to the historicity of Darius the Mede. Our investigation of the relevant biblical and extra-biblical information relating to the period will reveal “that Darius the Mede is not a fictitious character, spun out of the fertile but historically confused imagination of a second-century BC writer”,<sup>2</sup> as the modern critics of the Book of Daniel maintain. It will show that he is Cyaxares II, the son of King Astyages of Media, the beloved uncle of Cyrus the Great.

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<sup>1</sup> H.H. Rowley, *Darius The Mede and the Four World Empires of the Book Of Daniel*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1935), pp. 9, 59, 175.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Whitcomb, Jr., *Darius the Mede: A Study in Historical Identification*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), p. 3.

Being an ardent Bible believer himself, Dr. Whitcomb rightly disdains this God-dishonoring position.

### A. DARIUS – A THRONE-NAME

“Darius” is not a personal name but an appella-tive – a royal title. Moreover, it is a *Persian* royal title similar to the Arabic “Sultan”, the Egyptian “Pharaoh” or the Roman “Caesar” (from which came “Kaiser” or “Czar”). There-fore, “Darius the Mede” is not the given name of a royal personage but merely a reference to a Median sovereign who was contemporary with the sixth century prophet Daniel, a Mede upon whom was bestowed a Persian kingly title.

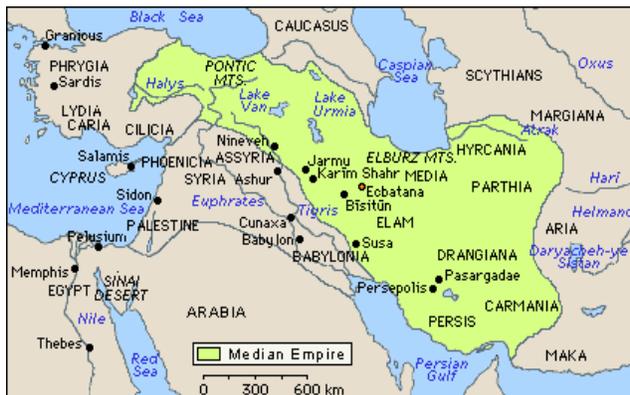
In the original Old Persian, “Darius” is spelled “Darayavaush”. In Hebrew it is “Daryawesh”, in Akkadian (northern Babylonia) “Dariawus”, “Dareios” in Greek, and “Darius” in Latin.<sup>1</sup>

Darius means “the Restrainer”, or it may possibly be connected to the Persian word “Dara” or “Zenddara”<sup>2</sup> meaning “king”.

Four Medo-Persian kings bore the title “Darius”:

1. Darius the Mede
2. Darius I Hystaspis (of Marathon, the son of Hystaspis; also known as “The Great King”, reigned 521–486 BC),
3. Darius II (given name was Nothus: he was “Darius the Persian”, reigned 423–405 BC; cp. Neh.12:22), and
4. Darius III (given name was Codomannus, reigned 335–332 BC).

The last three of these Persian rulers were from the “Achaemenid” lineage (see chart, page 150).



<sup>1</sup> *ISBE37*, James Orr, ed., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 788 (Darius).

<sup>2</sup> John D. Davis, *Davis Dictionary of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 171.

### B. THE HISTORY OF THE MEDES

Somewhere between 1500–1000 BC, Aryan peoples first emigrated from southern Russia into the highlands south of the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains as well as northeast of the Tigris River and the Zagros Mountains (old Armenia and Persia; a region known since 1935 as northwestern Iran). It originally extended about 600 miles in length and 250 miles in breadth. However, at the height of its power (600–560 BC), it stretched far beyond these confines reaching as far west as the Halys River in Asia Minor (see map on left column). The Median capital was at Ecbatana.

The two principal Aryan tribes were the Medes and the Persians, the former being the largest of these Indo-European speaking clans. They settled south and east of Lake Urmia whereas the Persians inhabited Parsua, a region to the west of that large Lake.

The origin and history of the Median Empire lies mainly in obscurity. As of this writing, no written records of the Median kings have been recovered. We know almost nothing of Median society, and no Median city has been excavated. Even the capital, Ecbatana, lies almost completely unexplored beneath the modern city Hamadan, and our knowledge of the Medes comes largely from Assyrian and Greek sources.

They are first mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions of King Shalmaneser II<sup>3</sup> (III, 903–

<sup>3</sup> The “Monolith Inscription” states that in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, Shalmaneser II (traditional Assyrian school designates him as III, 858–824 BC), son of Ashur-nasir-pal (II), fought against a twelve king alliance at the battle of Qarqar (Karkar) which included a certain “A-ha-ab-bu (Ahab?) Sir-i-la-a-a (the Israelite?)”. Most Assyriologist believe this to be Ahab, king of the southern kingdom. A fragment of an annalistic text from Shalmaneser’s 18<sup>th</sup> year declares that upon an incursion against Damascus (Di-mas-qi), he received tribute from “Ia-u-a (Jehu?) mar Hu-um-ri-I (son of Omri?)”.

Neither incident is mentioned in the Bible. Further, Jehu was not Omri’s son, his kin, or even of his dynasty. Thus, either or both identifications may be wrong. If, however, Shalmaneser II (III) did encounter Ahab or Jehu, then the Assyrian archaeological records are missing about 45 eponym names and thus are in error by 45 or more years. The traditional Assyrian date here would be 836 instead of 881 BC. Thus it is proposed that the missing names were probably deliberately removed from the list due to the great revival in Nineveh in the days of Jonah whereby many of the men for whom the years were named repented and received Jehovah as the true God (Jonah 3:6–10).

869 BC) who conducted a campaign against these people in the Zagros Mountain region. The mighty Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) claimed victories over the Medes and received as a tribute from them at least 1,615 of the fine horses for which the Medes were famous.<sup>1</sup> After overthrowing Hoshea and capturing Samaria in 721 BC, Sargon II (721–705 BC, Isa.20:1) deported the captive Israelites to “the cities of the Medes” (II Ki.17:5–6, 18:11) which were then under his control. Around BC 710, Sargon extended his control over the Medes, and he also forced them to give horses as part of their tribute.

Sennacherib (704–681 BC), Sargon’s successor, kept the Medes under heavy tribute, and during Esarhaddon’s reign (680–669 BC) a number of Median chieftains or “city rulers” were vassals to the kings of the Assyrian Empire. Hence, from the days of Sargon until the middle of 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Medes were subject to the Assyrian kings. (relief of Sargon II from Khorsabad)



Nevertheless, shortly after the passing of Sargon II, Herodotus tells us that the Medes, who had originally lived in scattered villages, were finally united by Deioces, the son of an unknown chieftain. Deioces founded the royal dynasty when he was made king over the six Median tribes (c.700 BC)<sup>2</sup> and built Ecbatana

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For a detailed explanation see: Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, 2009 edition, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books Pub.), pp. 152–157.

<sup>1</sup> Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> The year 700 is obtained by simply adding the number of regnal years for Deioces (53), Phraortes (22), Cyaxares I (40) and Astyages (35) given by Herodotus which sum to 150 years. If we now count backward from the year 550 BC, the year Astyages lost his throne to his grandson Cyrus, we obtain 700 BC as the year in which Deioces is said to have founded the Median royal line.

Confusion has arisen because some have measured back 150 years from 559 BC when Cyrus became king of Anshan rather than from 550 BC when he became sovereign over Media. It should be noted that the founding could be made to extend back another 28 years if the span of Scythian rule over the Medes were interjected as a break in their dynasty rather than

as the new capital of his kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Beginning with Deioces, the Medes gradually became more unified and increased in power. After ruling 53 years, Deioces died in 647 BC, and his son Phraortes succeeded him. Phraortes soon defeated and brought the Persians under subjection. Combining these armies, one by one he then subjugated many of the nations of western Asia.

In 625 BC, Phraortes marched against the weakened Assyrian kingdom and attacked Nineveh, but he and the greater part of his army perished.<sup>4</sup> He had reigned 22 years. (picture of two Medes, a relief from Persepolis)



Iranian Historical Photographs Gallery www.iranian.com

Phraortes was followed by his son, Cyaxares I (625–585). A far greater warrior than were his fathers, it was Cyaxares who first organized the Median army into three classes: archers, cavalry and spearmen. Until then, the warriors fought alongside one another in a confused mixture.<sup>5</sup>

Seeking to avenge his father’s defeat, Cyaxares marched against Nineveh, but while he was besieging the city a great army of Scythians under King Madyes invaded the region and overcame the Median forces. Thus, the Scythians became the masters of western Asia for 28 years.<sup>6</sup> After these years of vassalage, Cyaxares I eventually defeated them and won back his empire.

In 614 BC, Cyaxares I marched his troops down the Tigris. In a terrible massacre, he captured the great city of Asshur, the ancient capitol of Assyria, before his Babylonian ally, Nabopolassar, arrived with his army.<sup>7</sup> In 613 Cyaxares I formed a more permanent alliance with Nabopolassar, the king of Babylonia. The

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including it within the 40 year reign of Cyaxares I as did Herodotus (*Histories*, I, 106–107). Still, his proposal is deemed the better resolution.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 95 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 101–102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 103.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 103–107.

<sup>7</sup> Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626–556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, *op. cit.*, BM 21901, p. 57.

accord was sealed by a marriage between Amytis, the daughter of Cyaxares I, with the son and heir of Nabopolassar, young Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>1</sup>

The following year (612 BC) their combined armies, along with the Scythian hordes, took and sacked Nineveh. The great Assyrian Empire tottered and forever vanished when, after the 610 fall of Haran, their 609 BC counter attack failed. Cyaxares received as his part of the victor's spoil Assyria proper and territories toward the north and northwest.

However, the far western border soon became a problem between Alyattes of Lydia (father of the legendary fabulously wealthy Croesus) and Cyaxares I the Mede. Hostilities between the Lydians and Medes waged on for five years; each winning many victories over the other. When, in the sixth year of the conflict, the

combatants saw the day turned into night,<sup>2</sup> they ceased fighting and were ultimately reconciled by a marriage between Alyattes' daughter Aryenis to Astyages, son of Cyaxares I (see chart, page 150). At that time, the Halys River was set as the main boundary between Lydia and Media.

With the Assyrian Empire overthrown and their freedom restored, the Medes continued as an independent people only a short span. They continued to dominate Persia until the rise of Cyrus the Great (II) who founded the Persian Empire by overthrowing Astyages, his maternal grandfather, in 550 BC.

Betrayed by his general, Harpagus, Astyages was captured. Ecbatana was sacked, and Cyrus "the Persian, the Achaemenid" became master of the Median Empire. Ecbatana was rebuilt as the capital city of the new realm.

Now a part of the newly formed empire, Cyrus granted the Medes positions of honor, and their customs as well as their laws became fused with those of the Persians. Medo-Persia, in a sense a dual nation, was at once a mighty empire that lasted until the conquests of Alexander the Great (331 BC).

The last mention of the Medes in Scripture is on the Day of Pentecost after our Lord's resurrection (Acts 2:9). On that day, Jewish men were present in Jerusalem from all over that part of the world for the feast, and those who were living in old Media miraculously heard some of the 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) prophesying and praising God for His wonderful works in their native Median tongue.

### C. DARIUS THE MEDE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Scripture reveals that Darius the Mede was "the son of Ahasuerus", himself a Median king.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. (Dan.9:1)

After Belshazzar was slain, 62-year-old Darius the Mede was "made king" of the Chaldeans.

<sup>1</sup> This alliance is found in the works of both Abydenus and Eusebius. George Rawlinson gives the background to the alliance [*The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, Volume III, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Publishers, 1870), pp. 44–45.]:

"When the Medes first assumed an aggressive attitude towards Assyria, and threatened the capital with a siege, Babylonia apparently remained unshaken in her allegiance. ... In this strait the Assyrian king deemed it necessary to divide his forces and to send a portion against the enemy which was advancing from the south, [a force which can only have consisted of Susianians, of Babylonians, or of both combined], while with the remainder he himself awaited the coming of the Medes.

"The troops detached for the former service he placed under the command of a certain Nabopolassar (Nabu-pal-uzur), who was probably an Assyrian nobleman of high rank and known capacity. Nabopolassar had orders to proceed to Babylon, of which he was probably made viceroy, and to defend the southern capital against the rebels. We may conclude that he obeyed these orders so far as to enter Babylon and install himself in office; but shortly afterwards he seems to have made up his mind to break faith with his sovereign, and aim at obtaining for himself an independent kingdom out of the ruins of the Assyrian power.

Having formed this resolve, his first step was to send an embassy to Cyaxares I, and to propose terms of alliance, while at the same time he arranged a marriage between his own son, Nebuchadnezzar, and Amuhia or Amytis (for the name is written both ways), the daughter of the Median monarch. Cyaxares gladly accepted the terms offered; the young persons were betrothed; and Nabopolassar immediately led, or sent, a contingent of troops to join the Medes, who took an active part in the great siege which resulted in the capture and destruction of the Assyrian capital".

<sup>2</sup> This was the famous 585 BC solar eclipse that had been predicted by Thales of Miletus.

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. (Dan.5:31)

Darius the Mede is called “king” 29 times in Daniel 6 and periods of time were indicated by the years of his reign (i.e., “in the first year of Darius”, Dan.9:1, 11:1). Furthermore, he had the power to establish royal decrees which could not be changed “according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not” (Dan.6:7–9). Nevertheless, the fact that he was said to have been “made king” (Dan.9:1) clearly discloses that he was nevertheless subordinate to someone of higher authority. And who else could that have been other than King Cyrus the Great?

Moreover, in the above Dan.5:31 citation where we read that “Darius the Mede took the kingdom”, the Hebrew word translated “took” (קָבַל = q<sup>e</sup>bal) here equally translates “received” as it is so rendered in Dan.2:6 and 7:18. Hence, the context is that Darius the Mede “took” that which was conferred or offered to him. He “received” or “accepted” the kingdom that was bestowed upon him, and this confirms Dan.9:1 which states that he was “made king”.

Thus, though he bore the title “king”, he was only a pro-*rex* or sub-king under the monarch that made him “king” – Cyrus, from whom he received the title. Still, as Cyrus was absent from the capitol city of Babylon for an extended period of time consolidating the remainder of the Chaldean Empire under his dominion, enormous authority was of necessity granted to Darius the Mede. This infers that whoever he was, he was extremely well trusted by Cyrus and that he already had extensive experience in matters of government to be so entrusted.

The fact of this great authority and broad experience in matters of government may be seen in his re-organization of the Babylonian Empire. Darius the Mede appointed 120 subordinate rulers over the entire kingdom, and they were to serve under three presidents. One of these three was Daniel and his authority was soon to exceed that of the other two:

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the

princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. (Daniel 6:1–3)

Daniel 6:28 relates that “Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian”. This passage indicates that, at least as far as the Jews were concerned, Cyrus ruled after Darius the Mede. The double use of the word “reign” in the Daniel 6 passage clearly so implies.<sup>1</sup>

Because this Medo-Persian ruler is not mentioned by the appellation “Darius the Mede” outside of the Book of Daniel, and since the contemporary cuneiform inscriptions do not refer to a king of Babylon between Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus by that title, his historicity has been denied by the critics. They consider the biblical account of his reign to be no more than a confused combination of several traditions into one fabled story.

Yet even aside from the supernatural nature and the fact of the infallibility of the Word of God, the narrative in Daniel has all the appearance of a genuine historical document. As there are almost no historical records of this time period, other than the critics obvious bias against the Jewish people and the living God of the Bible, there is no valid reason why the Hebrew history relevant to Darius the Mede should not be accepted.

#### D. THE IDENTITY OF THE HISTORICAL DARIUS THE MEDE

Over the years, many attempts have been made to identify Darius the Mede with various persons mentioned in the Babylonian and Greek texts. The fact that no document, Biblical or secular, actually names a “Darius The Mede” in conjunction with Cyrus’ capture of Babylon has caused undue concern for some.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eugene Faulstich, *History Harmony & Daniel*, (Spencer, IO: Chronology Books, Inc., 1988), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene Faulstich, for example, complains that scholars have wrongly assumed Darius the Mede must be connected with the capture of Babylon by Cyrus and that they must look for a subordinate under Cyrus after 540 BC, when Babylon fell (date his, it should be October 6, 539, Gregorian). He further argues that as the Book of Daniel contains no reference that Darius the Mede was a

They point out that there is no mention of Cyrus the Great in Daniel 5 when Darius the Mede “took” (in the sense of “received”) the kingdom of Babylon. Likewise, Darius the Mede is not mentioned in narratives describing Cyrus’ capture of Babylon.

Thus, the radical critics of Daniel’s prophecies customarily proclaim that there is no evidence for Darius the Mede. But such is not unusual in secular history. The Egyptian records, for example, do not admit to the devastating 605 BC defeat which they suffered from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and his forces at Carchemish.

### 1. INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR DARIUS THE MEDE

First, the Scriptures declare that Darius the Mede preceded Cyrus the Persian (The Great, cp. Dan.6:28). Indeed, there *are* other internal biblical traces of this Darius as well as decisive Scriptural evidence that Cyrus was involved in the overthrow of Babylon in 539 BC. Beginning at Isaiah 41:2 and going through chapter 48, either by name or allusion, numerous verses connect Cyrus to God’s judgment on Babylon as well as his being the agent responsible for the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem along with its Temple (e.g., 41:25, 44:28, 45:1–4, 46:1 & 11, 48:14–15).

Jeremiah speaks of an assembly of nations under a kingdom from the north country and names the leader as being the Medes (50:3 & 9, 51:11 & 28 etc.). Similarly, Isaiah sometimes speaks of Cyrus as the “righteous *man* from the

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subordinate under Cyrus: “scholars have looked too late in history for the identification of Darius the Mede” (*History, Harmony & Daniel*, pp. 20–31).

However, my study concurs on this point with John C. Whitcomb Jr. who writes: “The career of Darius the Mede is silhouetted against the fiery backdrop of the fall of Babylon – an event of surpassing importance from the historical point of view. Raymond P. Dougherty points out that during a period of nearly four hundred years the great city of Babylon fell more than once into the hands of its enemies, but that its capitulation to Cyrus the Persian in 539 BC was so important in comparison to these other disasters, that it alone is called ‘The Fall of Babylon’ in history. The explanation for this lies in the fact that 539 BC marked the collapse of Semitic hegemony in the ancient Orient, and the introduction of Aryan leadership which continued for at least a thousand years. This conquest of Babylon by Cyrus laid the foundation for all the later developments under Greek and Roman rule in the Mediterranean and the Near East”. [Dougherty, p. 167 as cited by Whitcomb in *Darius the Mede*, (1959), *op. cit.*, fn. 5, page 2.]

east” (41:2) whereas other times as “*one* from the north” (41:25) and also as “a ravenous bird from the east (46:11).

The reason for the differing directions may be seen in that Cyrus was originally from Persia which is east of Babylon, but his Median led alliance came down from the north, first attacking Opis on the Tigris and proceeding directly south to the city of Babylon. Of course, the reason the coalition was said to be under the leadership of the Medes is that at that time the Medes still were the dominant faction in the Medo-Persian Empire.<sup>1</sup>

As to the internal biblical traces of Darius the Mede, we ask – and who are these kings (plural!) of the Medes that Jeremiah mentions in verses 51:11 and 51:28? Are not these allusions to Cyrus *and* Darius the Mede and does such not internally confirm Daniel 6? Indeed, to whom else could this refer? And why should we not expect Daniel and Jeremiah to display some mutual corroboration? After all, the same Holy Spirit guided and inspired both prophets, and Daniel himself told us he had been studying the Book of Jeremiah (Dan.9:2).<sup>2</sup>

### 2. WAS GOBRYAS (UGBARU) DARIUS THE MEDE?

After Dr. Theophilus G. Pinches’ 1882 AD translation of the Nabonidus Chronicle, many scholars (Franz Delitzsch, Pinches, Joseph D. Wilson, Robert Dick Wilson, William Foxwell

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<sup>1</sup> In Scripture, the Medes were originally the more dominant faction within the newly formed empire and are always placed before Persia (Dan.5:28, 6:8, 12 and 15) until Cyrus returned from leading his expeditionary campaign in 536 BC and assumed the throne from Darius the Mede. After that, the Persian faction became the more dominant and Persia is either mentioned first (i.e., Persians and Medes – Est.1:3, 18, & 19) or it stands alone, the Median name being left unmentioned (Ezra 1:1, 3:7 etc.).

The reason Esther 10:2 reads “Medes and Persians” is because the verse is referring to an old chronicle whose origin dated back prior to Cyrus’ return when the Medes were still foremost.

<sup>2</sup> If it be argued that “kings” is referring to the rulers of the nations united with and supporting Cyrus’ Median led attack on Babylon, we reply that Jer.51:28 militates against such a proposition: “Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion”. This verse calls the heads of the allied nations “*rulers*” making a marked distinction between themselves and the “kings” of the Medes.

Albright etc.) began to identify Darius the Mede with the “Gobryas” (or Ugbaru) of that text. They also concluded he was the same Gobryas found in Xenophon and Herodotus. Pinches translation of the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus (reverse side, column iii: see 3<sup>rd</sup> column of my chart on page 49) indicated that Ugbaru and Gobryas were one and the same man so that “Gobryas” (Ugbaru) the governor of Gutium (line 15 on page 49 or page 45) was also the “Gobryas” whom Cyrus’ authorized to appoint sub-governors in the city of Babylon immediately after its fall (line 20).

However, the identification of Darius the Mede with this Gobryas (Ugbaru) began to fall into disfavor after Sidney Smith’s 1924 publication<sup>1</sup> in which he, unlike Pinches, translated line 22 such that Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium in #15, died three weeks after the fall of Babylon. In the 1950 publication of *ANET*, A. Leo Oppenheim also translated line 22 as saying that Ugbaru (Gobryas) *died* on the eleventh day of Marhesvan (Hebrew for Arahshamnu, the Babylonian 8<sup>th</sup> month) which was the month after the fall of the city.

Obviously then, if Smith’s and Oppenheim’s translations are correct and Ugbaru (Gobryas) died so soon after the fall of Babylon,<sup>2</sup> he could hardly be Darius the Mede for Daniel 6 and 9:1 contextually demand a far longer span than that of but one month for this Median ruler.

Then in 1935, the liberal English Semitist and biblical scholar Professor Harold Henry Rowley (1890–1969) devoted an entire chapter in his greatly documented work *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* to prove that Darius the Mede was not Gobryas. This effort gained Rowley many supporters and largely diminished the Gobryas = Darius the Mede premise.

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts: Relating to the Downfall of Babylon* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1924), pp. 117–118.

<sup>2</sup> A.K. Grayson agreed in his 1975 edition of *ABC*. Both Grayson and Oppenheim say the city of Babylon fell on Tishri 16 (October 12 Julian) and that Ugbaru (Gobryas) died on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the following month (November 6 Julian); see *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–110 & cp. #12 with #15 – also *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 306 (iii, meaning column 3 on the tablet). R.P. Dougherty (on his page 72, fn. 561) and D.J. Wiseman also read “died” [cited by Whitcomb in *Darius the Mede*, (1959), *op. cit.*, p. 21].

Although Rowley offered several persuasive points in support of his thesis, it contained a fatal flaw that was largely overlooked for years. His “Gobryas” not only combined the “Gubaru” (see line 20, page 45) and the “Ugbaru” of the cuneiform texts, he also included the “Gobryas” of Xenophon and Herodotus, as well as the “Gaubaruva, son of Mardonius a Persian” from the Behistun Inscription.

Having merged several completely different persons into one “Gobryas”, Rowley was easily able to demonstrate that this composite “Gobryas” – who never existed in all history – was not Darius the Mede.<sup>3</sup> This mistake eventually undermined the apparent invincibility of Rowley’s views and opened the door for others to challenge his conclusion that the Book of Daniel could not be “a work of history, written by a well-informed contemporary” as that notion was “shattered beyond repair by this fiction of Darius the Mede. ... So far as Darius the Mede is concerned ... there is no way of reconciling the Book of Daniel with assured history” (see my page 37).

### 3. WAS GUBARU, NOT GOBRYAS (UGBARU), DARIUS THE MEDE?

Back in the 1950’s, a conservative Christian who has done much good in the cause of Christ (referred to hereafter as “DTM”) published a work on Darius the Mede. DTM decided that Dr. Theophilus G. Pinches’ 1882 AD translation of the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus which indicated that Ugbaru and Gobryas (Gubaru) were one and the same man was incorrect. DTM observed that the more recent 1924 Sidney Smith publication of the Nabonidus Chronicle used a different name for the governor in line 20 than he used in lines 15 and 22.

Whereas Dr. Pinches had translated #20 as Ugbaru (Greek = Gobryas), Smith rendered the word as “Gubaru”<sup>4</sup> (as did Grayson in 1975,<sup>5</sup> see his third #20 on page 45; the translation on the left is of the right side cuneiform drawing which is the tablet’s reverse or back side = column iii).

<sup>3</sup> Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, *op. cit.*, p. 118; also see the first column on my page 49.

<sup>5</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

### *a. DTM's Gubaru Theory:*

DTM seized on this distinction, and, with some modifications and additional evidence, revived the view that Darius the Mede was this Gubaru,<sup>1</sup> Cyrus' appointed governor who apparently instated other officers over the city of Babylon. Throughout his book he maintained: "there is one person in history, and only one who fits all the Biblical data concerning Darius the Mede. He is never mentioned by the Greek historians, but appears in various sixth century BC cuneiform texts under the name of Gubaru" (see Grayson's translation on the following page and *ABC, op. cit.*, p. 110).<sup>2</sup>

The central feature of this view is that Gubaru is to be distinguished from Ugbaru (Gobryas) in the following Nabonidus Chronicle extract.<sup>3</sup> As his proof, DTM noted that Ugbaru was said to be the governor of Gutium and that he died within weeks of his capture of Babylon (cp. the first #15 with #22), whereas Gubaru (the old Persian form of Gobryas) was the governor of Babylon (the third #20). DTM then concluded that Gubaru the governor of Babylon was Darius the Mede.<sup>4</sup>

To counter the supposition that Ugbaru and Gubaru were but variant spellings of the same name, DTM noted that the cuneiform symbols for "ug" and "gu", as in Ug-ba-ru and Gu-ba-ru, were written quite differently in Akkadian and thus could not have been confused by the Persian scribe who prepared the Nabonidus Chronicle (also known as "Chronicle 7" or "The Annalistic Tablet). He added that in a personal 1957 correspondence concerning this, Donald J. Wiseman of the British Museum stated: "The Nabonidus Chronicle certainly writes Ugbaru

in Column III, Line 22, and Gubaru in Column III, Line 20".<sup>5</sup>

To strengthen his thesis, DTM listed cuneiform texts covering the fourteen years following the 539 BC fall of Babylon (i.e., the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> year of Cyrus as well as in the accession year, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> years of Cambyses) to the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses, BC 525. These all mention a Gubaru as "governor (or prefect) of Babylon and the Land across the River" (meaning, if not the entire fertile crescent, all the portion southward of the Euphrates, i.e., Syria, Phoenicia, & Palestine).<sup>6</sup>

Further, these cuneiform contract tablets used the name "Gubaru" as a warning to instill fear and thus discourage criminals. Most of the tablets warned that to not fulfill the contract or order would be to commit a sin against Gubaru the governor of Babylon and the Region beyond the River.<sup>7</sup>

DTM and others see as highly significant the fact that neither Cyrus nor Cambyses are mentioned on any of the cuneiform texts as being the supreme authority against whom crimes would be committed and that only Gubaru was so mentioned over the vast populous area consisting of "Babylonia, Syrian, Phoenicia, and Palestine". Obviously, such a man held great legal authority.

<sup>1</sup> C.H.H. Wright, *Daniel & his Prophecies*, (London: Williams & Norgate, 1906), pp. 135–137; Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel A Discussion of the Historical Questions*, (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1917), pp. 128–220.

<sup>2</sup> DTM, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Gleason Archer, Jr. (d. 2004) states that it is possible Darius is another name for Gubaru: *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974) pp. 76–77 (*Daniel*).

<sup>4</sup> DTM, pp. 10–24. Indeed, this has been the most favored identification within conservative Christianity for the half-century since DTM published his findings (e.g., Dr. R.K. Harrison, Dr. Edward J. Young (DTM, fn. 1, p. 26.), Dr. Gleason Archer, Jr., Dr. Merrill F. Unger).

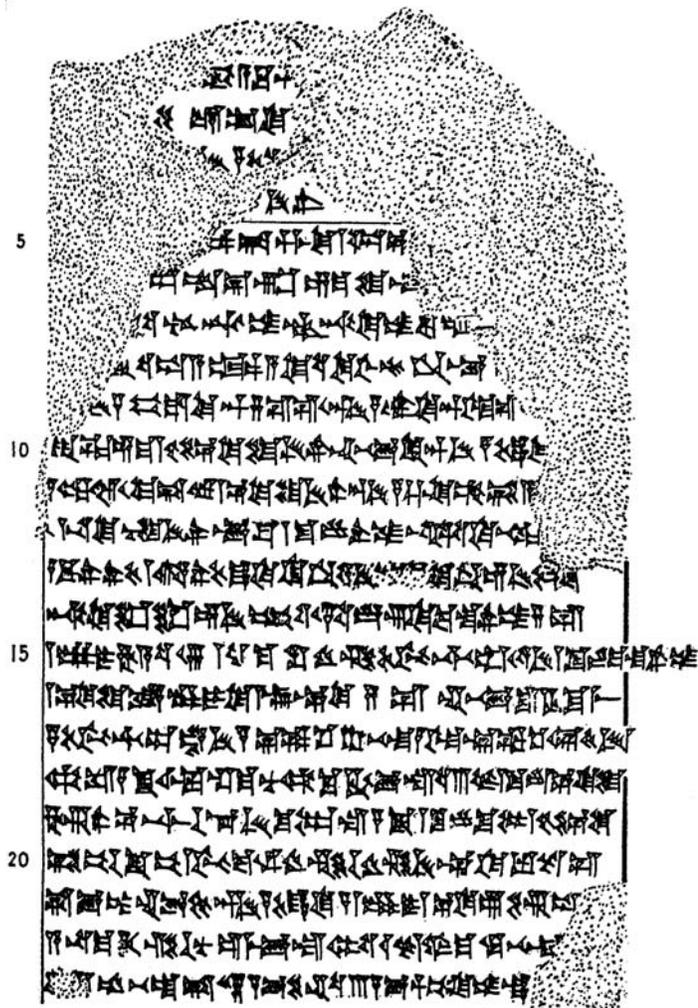
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid, op. cit.*, p. 20. Gleason Archer, Jr. also said that the cuneiform symbols for "ug" and "gu", as in Ug-ba-ru and Gu-ba-ru, are very different (*Daniel*, p. 76). Also see: Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (1917), *op. cit.*, pp. 128–129.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–16; most are listed in: Gleason Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Rev. Ed., (Chicago Ill.: Moody, 1974), p. 385.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Indeed, a contract dated in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses (526 BC) in which a man was to deliver fruit to the palace reads such that "if he does not bring it" he will commit sin against Gobryas the governor of Babylon. Published by Dr. T.G. Pinches, "Two Late Tablets of Historical Interest", *PSBA*, 38 (1916), pp. 27–34.

It reads in part as follows: "At the end of Marcheswan, year 4th of Cambyses, king of Babylon, king of lands, Ardia, son of Nabu-bani-shi, descendant of Remut-Ea, who is over the date-delivery of Ishtar of Erech, will take five talents of early fruit, and (deliver them) in the palace of the king, which above Eanna lies, to Nabu-aha-iddina, the king's captain, lord of the fund of Eanna will give. If he does not bring (it), the sin of Gubaru, governor of Babylon, he will commit".

- 12 ...In the month Tishri
- 13 when
- 12 Cyrus (II)
- 13 did
- 12 battle at Opis on the [bank of]
- 13 the Tigris against the army of Akkad, the people of Akkad
- 14 retreated. He carried off the plunder (and) slaughtered the people. On the 14th day Sippar was captured without a battle.
- 15 Nabonidus fled. On the sixteenth day Ugbaru, governor of the Gutu, and the army of Cyrus (II)
- 16 entered Babylon
- 15 without a battle
- 16 Afterwards, after Nabonidus retreated, he was captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shield-(bearing troops)
- 17 of the Gutu surrounded the gates of Esagil. (But)
- 18 there was no
- 17 interruption (of rites) in Esagil or the (other) temples
- 18 and no date (for a performance) was missed. On the third day of the month Marhesvan Cyrus (II) entered Babylon.
- 19 ...were filled before him. There was peace in the city while Cyrus (II)
- 20 spoke
- 19 (his) greeting to
- 20 all of
- 19 Babylon.
- 20 Gubaru, his district officer, appointed the district officers in Babylon.
- 21 From the month Kislev to the month Adar the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon
- 22 returned to their places. On the night of the eleventh of the month Marhesvan Ugbaru died. In the month [...]
- 23 the king's wife died. From the twenty-seventh of the month Adar to the third of the month Nisan [there was] (an official) mourning period in Akkad.



Concerning the significance of the supposed confusion between Ugbaru and Gubaru, DTM states, "...many were led to assume that Ugbaru and Gubaru were the same person and were to be identified also with the 'Gobryas' of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. This effort to identify Darius the Mede with a composite 'Gobryas' was clearly unsatisfactory, and opened the door for critics to deny any possibility of an historical identification for Darius the Mede".<sup>2</sup>

**b. Problems With the Gubaru Theory:**

However, DTM's well prepared argument loses much of its force when it is seen that his conclusions are based upon little more than his preference to the very liberal Sidney Smith's 1924 translation of the Nabonidus Chronicle over that of Dr. Theophilus G. Pinches', professor of Assyriology at University College London

DTM concluded that this Gubaru (Governor of Babylon and beyond the River) who is referred to on the above mentioned cuneiform documents is the same "Gubaru" in Sidney Smith's 1924 translation of the Nabonidus Chronicle (Column iii, line 20) who was Cyrus' governor that appointed other officials over Babylon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Marchesvan in 539 BC.<sup>1</sup> Further, that he is not the Ugbaru (Gobryas), governor of Gutium (see line 15 on my column 1, page 49) who apparently was slain (line 22) three weeks after the city fell.

<sup>1</sup> DTM, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

(appointed in 1904). This single judgment is the foundation from which DTM erects his entire proposal.

Repeatedly, DTM tells us that because Smith's is "the most up-to-date" it should be taken as the final authority while at the same time decrying that the renown cuneiform expert, Dr. Pinches, has mistranslated several key lines which has obscured the distinction between Ugbaru and Gubaru (his pp. 20–21, esp. fn. 6; also pp. 43–44, 65).

The weakness in this is immediately exposed when we compare the four translations on my page 49. Of course Pinches represents Gobryas as Ugbaru (column 3; DTM's original "problem"). But DTM presents this as though the question is a translation difference between only Pinches and Smith; yet in 1904 Robert F. Harper<sup>1</sup> translated similarly to Pinches at both places where DTM took issue with the Professor (see: column 4). Dr. Robert F. Harper rendered "Gobryas" – not "Gubaru" at line 20 and translated "Gobryas against...(and) he killed the son of the king" on lines 22 and 23.<sup>2</sup>

DTM gives part of Raymond Dougherty's 1929 transliteration (p. 17) in which the Yale University Professor of Assyriology writes Gu-ba-ru at line 20, but DTM does not tell us that when Dougherty, who was well aware of Smith's 1924 views concerning Ugbaru and Gubaru, actually *translated* line 20 he wrote "Gobryas".<sup>3</sup> Nor did

DTM mention the 1894 work of the extremely liberal Professor A.H. Sayce who translated: "peace...did *Gobryas* his governor proclaim. Governors in Babylon he appointed" (line 20).<sup>4</sup>

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Sippar did not enter [Babylon]. In the month Tishri, when Cyrus fought at Opis on the Tigris River against the troops of Akkad, the people of Akkad he destroyed by means of a conflagration; he put the people to death. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day Sippar was captured without fighting. Nabonidus fled. On the 16<sup>th</sup> day Ugbaru (Gobryas), the governor of Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus without fighting entered Babylon. Afterwards when Nabonidus returned he was taken captive in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shields of Gutium surrounded the gates of Esagila. No one's weapon was placed in Esagila or the sanctuaries, and no appointed time was disregarded. In the month Marchesvan, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, Cyrus entered Babylon. *Harine* were carried before him. Peace was established in the city; Cyrus decreed peace for all in Babylon. **Gobryas, his governor, placed governors in charge of Babylon.** From the month Kislev to the month Adar, the gods whom Nabonidus had brought up to Babylon ... they returned to their cities. In the month Marchesvan, on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup>, Ugbaru (Gobryas) died. In the month ... of the king died. From the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month Adar to the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month Nisan there was weeping in the land of Akkad ... All the people prostrated their heads". (pp. 169–173)

<sup>4</sup> Archibald Henry Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894), p. 502.

Sayce's translation reads: "In the month Tammuz (June) when Cyrus had delivered battle against the soldiers of Accad in the city of Rutu (?) on the banks of the river Nizallat, when the men of Accad also had delivered battle, the men of Accad raised a revolt: some persons were slain. On the fourteenth day of the month Sippara was taken without fighting; Nabonidos fled. On the sixteenth day Gobryas (Ugbaru), the governor of the country of Kurdistan (Gutium), and the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Afterwards Nabonidos was captured after being bound in Babylon. At the end of the month Tammuz the javelin-throwers of the country of Kurdistan guarded the gates of E-Saggil; no cessation of services took place in E-Saggil and the other temples, but no special festival was observed.

The third day of the month Marchesvan (October) Cyrus entered Babylon. Dissensions were allayed before him. Peace to the city did Cyrus establish, **peace** to all the province of Babylon **did Gobryas his governor proclaim. Governors in Babylon he appointed.** From the month Chisleu to the month Adar (November to February) the gods of the country of Accad, whom Nabonidos had transferred to Babylon, returned to their own cities. The eleventh day of the month Marchesvan, during the night, Gobryas was on the bank of the river ... The wife of the king died. From the 27<sup>th</sup> day of Adar to the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Nisan there was lamentation in the country of Accad; all the people smote their heads. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day Kambyses the son of Cyrus conducted the burial at the temple of the Sceptre of the world..."

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in: *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature, Selected Translations*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co. Pub., 1904). Dr. R.F. Harper's translation is also in the prestigious Loeb Classical Library: Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Volume VI, (Harvard University Press, 1989), Appendix II, pp. 458 & 460.

<sup>2</sup> The liberal S.R. Driver split the difference: "Gubaru made an assault (?) and slew the son of the king". *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Pub., 1898), pp. 468–469.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Philip Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1929), page 172 & fn. 556, page 170. The relevant portion of Dougherty's translation of the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus from the Nabonidus Chronicle reads:

"[In the 17<sup>th</sup> year] Nabu came from Borsippa to meet ... The king entered Eturkamma ... The abundance of wine was ample among the [troops] ... Bel went forth. They kept the New Year's festival as is right. In the month ... [the gods] of Maradda, Zababa (Ilbaba) and the gods of Kish, Ninlil, [and the gods of] Harsagkamma entered Babylon. Until the end of Elul the gods of Akkad ..., who were above the earth and below the earth, entered Babylon. The gods of Borsippa, Kutha ... and

Thus, as Pinches had earlier done, Sayce, Harper and Dougherty<sup>1</sup> rendered “Gobryas” (Ugbaru) for the name of the governor of Babylon at line 20, not Gubaru. Regardless, some will maintain that DTM’s point is still valid because Smith’s 1924 publication was more up-to-date than those of Pinches’, Sayce’s, and Harper’s. Hence, Smith should still be preferred because his translation is the latest.

To this we must object that A. Leo Oppenheim’s 1950 translation, which is certainly more current than Smith’s, reads “Gobryas” at the place in question (see my page 49, column 2)<sup>2</sup> as does Dougherty’s 1929 version. Further, in 1959 DTM was aware of both; he cites Oppenheim’s work four times.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, DTM implies that Dougherty and Oppenheim support *Gubaru*, yet on this critical issue they do not. After touting the most up-to-date data and urging that it should be used, DTM did not so do as the actual most up-to-date data did not agree with its theory.<sup>4</sup>

DTM completely misses the moment when he attests that Dr. Pinches’ “erroneous” translation was the cause of the entire problem. DTM has presented Sidney Smith as the final authority, but DTM neither indicated how tentative, debatable, and open-ended Smith’s translation really is nor has he told us that Smith believed Daniel was written c.180 BC and was basically unhistorical (Smith, pp. 35–36, 51, 107). Moreover, DTM does not supply us with sufficient information from Smith’s discourse so as to allow us to make an informed decision.

It must be added that Professor Pinches was a world renowned cuneiform expert who translated from the actual Chronicle. DTM was not a cuneiformist and did not have access to the original clay tablet.<sup>5</sup> Yet here our reader should

understand that the reason DTM is so vigourously being examined is because his conclusions are so widely accepted in conservative Christian circles but as they often fail us, it becomes necessary to address them in order that we may arrive at the historically correct answers.

Of course, if Gubaru and Ugbaru (Gobryas) were the same man and the men who translated that Ugbaru died only three weeks after Babylon fell are correct, then Gubaru cannot be Darius the Mede for Daniel 6 and 9:1 reflect that his reign was much more than one month (as noted on page 43).<sup>6</sup> Further, DTM correctly observed that if Ugbaru the governor of Gutium died shortly after the city of Babylon fell, he could not have been the Gubaru whose name appeared on the contract tablets during the 14 years following 539 BC.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, the question still remains: has DTM unequivocally proven Ugbaru (Gobryas) and Gubaru are two different men? After all, both are designated as “Gobryas” in many translations of the Nabonidus Chronicle. As we have seen, Pinches, Sayce, Oppenheim, Dougherty, Harper, along with many others not mentioned have judged that even though the cuneiform symbols for “ug” and “gu”, are quite different in Akkadian, they were only variant spellings of the same name and were the same person.

Ugbaru may even have been his name in his native dialect which translated into Gaubaruva or Gubaru in Old Persian – and that converted into Greek as Gobryas. Moreover, the scribe could simply have mistakenly inscribed the cuneiform symbol for “gu” rather than that for “ug”. Unless guided by the Holy Spirit, all writers do blunder. Do not the scholars often accuse the Hebrew prophets of such so-called “unfortunate scribal errors”.

With regard to Grayson’s *ABC* translation (page 45), the four columned display on page 49 as well as Sayce’s, and Dougherty’s (fn. 3 and 4, page 46) – we are not saying the comparison totally invalidates DTM’s findings. What we are saying is the apparent strength of DTM’s thesis lies greatly diminished, and it is not as

<sup>1</sup> Again, Dougherty has Gu-ba-ru in his transliteration of line 20, but he believed Gubaru to be Gobryas (*Nabonidus and Belshazzar, op. cit.*, p. 170 & fn. 556; p. 172).

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET, op. cit.*, p. 306

<sup>3</sup> DTM, pp. 10, 11, 17, 21.

<sup>4</sup> The 1975 *ABC* translation of Grayson’s, which we have given on page 45, agrees with Smith and thus DTM.

<sup>5</sup> Whereas the present author has also not had access to the original clay tablet and has suffered the extreme disadvantage of only having seen photographs and drawings of the Nabonidus Chronicle as well as not being

a “cuneiformist”, he is familiar enough with that discipline to perform elementary translation.

<sup>6</sup> A point that DTM acknowledged on his pp. 20–22.

<sup>7</sup> DTM, pp. 43–44, 65.

strong as it first appeared. Indeed, we find it unsatisfactory on other grounds as well.

Among these are that Gobryas or Gubaru is never called a king.<sup>1</sup> Also, there is no evidence that he bore the title “Darius”. Further, there is no indication that he was the son of “Ahasuerus”,<sup>2</sup> yet Daniel 9:1 declares Ahasuerus to be the father of Darius the Mede. Moreover, if Gubaru (Gobryas) the governor of Babylon (the third # 20 in *ABC*, see my page 45) is not Ugbaru the governor of Gutium (the first #15 in *ABC*), then there is no evidence that Gubaru (Gobryas) was a Mede.

However, Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium,<sup>3</sup> was almost certainly a Mede. Gutium was located north of the city of Babylon in the vicinity of the Diyala River which flows from Halabjah into the Tigris just below Baghdad. At the time of Cyrus, Gutium was in all probability part of (or it bordered) Media.<sup>4</sup>

DTM addressed these and other objections made by Rowley (pp. 26–42), but much of it did not apply to the issues under discussion and that which did was often unconvincing. Of course, if Gubaru and Ugbaru are the same man and as we have just seen that Ugbaru (Gobryas) the governor of Gutium was almost certainly a Mede, can’t this “composite” Gobryas (not Rowley’s) then be Darius the Mede? Not if Smith, Dougherty, *ABC*, *ANET*, and Wiseman have translated correctly, for they state that Ugbaru (Gobryas) *died* on the

11<sup>th</sup> day of Marhesvan (Hebrew = Arahshamnu, the Babylonian 8<sup>th</sup> month) which was the month after the fall of the city.<sup>5</sup> In such case, Ugbaru could hardly be Darius the Mede, as some have concluded, for – as already noted – Daniel 6 and 9:1 contextually demand a far longer span than that of less than one month for this Mede.

But what of the other evidence DTM et al. offer? For example, Scripture records that Darius the Mede was 62 years old at the fall of Babylon (Dan.5:31), and Xenophon states that the Gobryas who assisted Cyrus in subduing Babylon was “a man well advanced in years”.<sup>6</sup> If Gubaru and Ugbaru are different men, would not such agreement support DTM? Yes, but it is not support of a conclusive nature. Age could also be used to show agreement between Scripture, Babylonian Chronicle 7, and Xenophon if they were the same man. The most we can say regarding the age factor is that it does not rule out the possibility of their being different persons.

What of their point concerning that “Gubaru” (the third #20 in Grayson’s *ABC* translation on my page 45) is said to have appointed district officers. As Daniel 6:1 declares that Darius the Mede set 120 princes over the “whole kingdom”, does not that similarity conclusively prove he is Darius the Mede. No, it does not. Gubaru (Gobryas) is only said to be a district officer or governor – not a king.

Indeed, line 20 is dealing only with appointments within the city of Babylon, not those over the entire empire as did Darius the Mede in Daniel 6:1. Once again, Pinches,<sup>7</sup> Sayce, Dougherty (see my page 46, fn. 3 & 4), Harper,<sup>8</sup> and A. Leo Oppenheim (*ANET*, p. 306), expose the weakness of such an identification as they all make Gobryas, Ugbaru, and Gubaru one and the same person.

<sup>1</sup> First organized in 1935 by H.H. Rowley (*Darius The Mede, op. cit.*, pp. 12–43), these objections, have been well summarized by Donald J. Wiseman, “Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel”, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, D.J. Wiseman, Ed., (London: The Tyndale Press, 1965), pp. 10–11.

<sup>2</sup> Nor was the Ahasuerus in Dan.9:1 the King Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther. In my *Chronology of the Old Testament*, (pages 199–205), which is reproduced on pages 103 and 109 within the present work, we demonstrate that Ahasuerus was a throne name borne by more than one Persian monarch.

Further, we expose that he was not Xerxes as is commonly accepted but was Darius Hystaspis as Ussher long ago correctly concluded and that the etymological conclusion of Georg Friedrich Grotefend and those who have followed him is flawed. Ahasuerus is probably an ancient Achaemenid royal title.

<sup>3</sup> Ugbaru of Gutium is also called Gobryas by Pinches, Oppenheim in *ANET*, Harper etc.; see chart, page 49.

<sup>4</sup> *ISBE37*, Vol., 2, (Orr, Gen. Ed., 1937), p. 788 (Darius the Mede).

<sup>5</sup> The first 3 say the city of Babylon fell on Tishri 16 (October 12 Julian) and that Ugbaru (Gobryas) died on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the following month (November 6 Julian). See Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts, op. cit.*, pp. 117–118; *ABC, op. cit.*, pp. 109–110 & cp. #12 with #15 – also *ANET, op. cit.*, p. 306 (iii).

<sup>6</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia, op. cit.*, IV, vi, 1.

<sup>7</sup> See: Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel, op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>8</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia, op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 458.

The 17th Year of Nabonidus in the NABONIDUS CHRONICLE – BM 35382			
Sidney Smith 1924	A. Leo Oppenheim, <i>ANET</i> 1950	T.G. Pinches in <i>Boutflower</i> 1882	R.F. Harper, <i>ABL</i> (Loeb) 1904
<p>(12) ... In Teshri Cyrus, when he did battle at Opis on (13) the Tigris against the troops of Akkad, burnt the people of Akkad</p> <p>(14) with fire, he killed the people. On the 14th, Sippar was taken without a battle.</p> <p>(15) Nabonidus fled. On the 16th, <b>Ugbaru</b> the governor of Gutium and the troops of Cyrus entered</p> <p>(16) Babylon without a battle. Afterwards Nabonidus, when he returned to Babylon, was taken prisoner. Until the end of the month the arms (17) of Gutium surrounded the gates of Esagila. No one's weapon was set up in (18) E.sag.ila or the temples, and no appointed ceremony was passed over.</p> <p>In Marcheswan on the 3rd Cyrus entered Babylon.</p> <p>(19) Branches of <i>harinie</i>(?) were spread before him. There was peace in the city. Cyrus proclaimed peace to Babylon. to everyone.</p> <p>(20) <b>Gubar</b>. his governor, appointed governors in Babylon;</p> <p>(21) and from Kislev to Adar they returned the gods of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had brought up to Babylon, (22) to their cities.</p> <p>In Marcheswan on the night of the 11th <b>Ugbaru</b> died.</p> <p>In the month(?) ... (23) (the <b>wife</b>) of the king died.</p> <p>From the 27th of Adar to the 3rd of Nisan a weeping (took place) in Akkad.</p> <p>(24) All the people struck their heads. On the 4th Cambyses son of Cyrus when he was going to (25) E.nig.pa.kalama.sum.mu...</p>	<p>In the month of Tashritu when Cyrus Attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris,</p> <p>the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he (Nabonidus) massacred the confused inhabitants.</p> <p>The 14th day Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The 16th day, <b>Gobryas</b> (Ugbaru), the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without a battle</p> <p>Afterwards, Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned (there). Till the end of the month, the shield(-carrying) Gutians were staying within Esagil (but) nobody carried arms in Esagila and its (pertinent) buildings, the correct time (for a ceremony) was not missed.</p> <p>In the month of Arahshamnu, the 3rd day, Cyrus entered Babylon, green twigs were spread in front of him – the state of “Peace” was imposed upon the city. Cyrus sent greeting to all Babylon.</p> <p><b>Gobryas</b>, his governor, installed (sub-)governors in Babylon. From the month of Kislmu to the month of Addaru, the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had made come down to Babylon ...returned to their sacred cities.</p> <p>In the month of Arahshamnu, on the night of the 11th day, <b>Gobryas</b> died. (ABC = “died”)</p> <p>In the month of [Arahshamnu, the ... th day, the <b>wi</b>fe of the king died.</p> <p>From the 27th day of Arahshamnu till the 3rd day of Nisanu a(n official) “weeping” was performed in Akkad, all the people (went around) with their hair disheveled. When, the 4th day, Cambyses, son of Cyrus, went to the temple e-nig-pa-kalam-ma-sum-ma</p>	<p>In the month Tammuz (Jun-Jul) Cyrus delivered battle at Opis on the river Zalzallat (Tigris) against the troops of Akkad. The men of Akkad raised a revolt.</p> <p>Some men were slain. On the 14th day of the month Sippar was taken without fighting: Nabonidus fled. On the 16th day <b>Ugbaru</b> (Gobryas), the governor of the country of Gutium and the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Thereupon Nabonidus was captured after he had been surrounded in Babylon. Till the end of the month Tammuz the shield-bearers of the country of Gutium surrounded the gates of E-sag-ila. No one's weapon entered E-sag-lia and the shrines, nor did a flag come in.</p> <p>On the 3rd day of Marchesvan (Oct-Nov) Cyrus entered Babylon. The roads before him were full of people. Peace was established for the city, peace to the whole of Babylon did Cyrus proclaim.</p> <p><b>Ugbaru</b> (Gobryas), his governor, appointed governors in Babylon, and from the month Chisleu (Nov-Dec) to the month of Adar (Feb-Mar) the gods of the country of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon, returned to their own cities.</p> <p>In the month of Marchesvan on the night of the 11th day <b>Ugbaru</b> (Gobryas) went against ... and the <b>son</b> [?] of the king died.</p> <p>From the 27th of the month Adar to the 3rd day of the month Nisan (Mar-Apr) there was weeping in Akkad, all the people smote their heads. On the 4th day Cambyses the son of Cyrus went to E-khad-kalamma-shumma.</p>	<p>In the month Tammuz when Cyrus gave battle in Opis on the river Salsallat to the troops of Akkad, the people of Akkad he subdued (?). Whenever the people collected themselves, he slew them.</p> <p>On the 14th day Sippar was taken without battle. Nabonidus fled. On the 16th day <b>Gobryas</b>, the governor of Gutium, and the troops of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Nabonidus because of his delay was taken prisoner in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shields of Gutium surrounded the gates of Esagila. No weapons were brought into Esaglia and the other temples, &amp; no standards were advanced.</p> <p>On the 3rd day of Marcheshvan Cyrus entered Babylon. The harine lay down before him. Peace was established for the city. Cyrus proclaimed peace to all Babylon. He appointed <b>Gobryas</b>, his governor, governor in Babylon ...</p> <p>On the the night of the 11th day of Marcheshvan, <b>Gobryas</b> against ... (and) he killed the <b>son</b> of the king.</p> <p>{end of translation, FNJ}.</p>

*c. But Could DTM's Gubaru Have Been Darius the Mede?*

By now it should be obvious that the Nabonidus Chronicle alone is not sufficient in allowing us to positively make this association. For so many different translators to disagree on this single critical spelling forces us to conclude that the Nabonidus Chronicle is more damaged than has previously been generally acknowledged. This Annalistic Tablet, which the critics acclaim to record “the truth which cannot be doubted”<sup>1</sup> has failed us in several major particulars. Our translators cannot assure us:

1. of the month in which Cyrus initiated his invasion into Babylonia [4 translators say Tishri (Sept.–Oct.): 4, Tammuz<sup>2</sup> (June–July)],
2. if line 20 reads Ugbaru (Gobryas) or Gubaru so that we may be certain whether they are the same or different men [4 say Ugbaru (Gobryas): if we include Driver (page 46, fn. 24), 4 translators say Gubaru],
3. that Ugbaru (Gobryas) died three weeks after the city fell to Cyrus [5 say yes, no = 4]
4. whether the king’s wife or his son died about that time [4 say wife, son = 4 when we include both Rassam (who said there was not room for the character for “wife” and the traces indicated “and the son of”)<sup>3</sup> and Driver who also translated “son”, page 46, fn. 2].<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, there are many other disparities the careful reader will find among the seven.<sup>5</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, *op. cit.*, p. 498. Sayce’s absolute faith in the testimony of such archaeological finds is typical of modern scholarship. Yet it is well known that the kings often pervert truth in these official records, and even today’s State-papers may falsify facts. Who is so naïve as not to know that such official Soviet Union documents during the time of Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev etc., as well as those of communist China under Mao-Tse-Tung and even those of the USA contain numerous untrue statements?

<sup>2</sup> Four, when we include O.E. Hagan (1894) whom Dougherty tells us translated “Tammuz” instead of “Tishri” (*Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, *op. cit.*, fn. 553, p. 169).

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 3, *Belshazzar and Nabonidus*, p. 24 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Dougherty says he can’t read it & of the three Germans, Hugo Winckler (1889, p. 154 ff.) and Eberhard Schrader (1890, III, 2, p. 134) read “wife” while O.E. Hagan (1894, II, p. 222) says “son” (*Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, p. 173).

<sup>5</sup> The seven full translations are: Pinches, Sayce, Harper, Smith, Dougherty, Oppenheim (in *ANET*), and Grayson (*ABC*).

such cases as this, the standing rule is that when experts disagree the individual who has not done their own research into the matter does not have the right to an opinion. They have the *ability* to give an opinion, but they are not qualified to so do – and if they so give, upon what do they bias this opinion (reputation? degrees? nationality? ethnicity? color of eyes? etc.).

The reader must understand that even though the Nabonidus Chronicle contains the longest cuneiform account of the events which preceded and accompanied the fall of the city of Babylon, the statements in this narrative are so brief that most details are left to the imagination. The chronicler simply did not attempt to record all that happened relating to Cyrus’ campaign against Babylonia.

The main incidents regarding the collapse of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty are only mentioned briefly. This is because the cuneiform scribe was handicapped by his effort to write the annals of Nabonidus’ reign and the story of the victorious Medo-Persian invasion upon a single clay tablet.<sup>6</sup>

All the preceding being clearly understood, it should be seen that even were DTM correct in proposing that Gubaru and Ugbaru (Gobryas) were different men, and despite all we have previously said it must be admitted that he may be, its well researched study fails to prove it. Nevertheless, granting for the moment that Gubaru the governor of Babylon was not the same man as Ugbaru (Gobryas) the governor of Gutium and that Ugbaru was slain shortly after the city fell – then we could agree with DTM that this Gubaru was most probably the same Gubaru (Gobryas) mentioned in the cuneiform documents over the fourteen years after the fall of the city who was therein called the “Governor of Babylon and the Region Beyond the River” (see page 44).

Further, if the scenario in the preceding paragraph were historically correct, we would agree with DTM that Gubaru the governor of Babylon on line 20 of the Nabonidus Chronicle could not be the same Gobryas (Gaubaruva) mentioned on the Behistun inscription by Darius I Hystaspis (the Great, Darius of Marathon (521–486 BC).

<sup>6</sup> Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

As to Rowley's "composite Gobryas", it was a mistaken "patchwork quilt" confusion (see my page 43). The Behistun Gobryas (Gaubaruva) was one of the six Persian nobles that helped Darius Hystaspis (Darius the Great) overthrow Gomates (Pseudo-Smerdis) the Magian.<sup>1</sup> This Gobryas cannot be Gubaru the governor of Babylon because Gaubaruva of the Behistun inscription comes too late.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the numerous revolts that occurred during the first two years of the reign of Darius Hystaspis, by 21 March 520 BC the Satrap Gobryas had disappeared, and there was a new Satrap. The Greeks called this Satrap Hystanes, but the natives knew him as Ushtani, governor of Babylon and Across the River.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Gobryas of the Behistun inscription was a Persian, the son of Mardonius – the Gobryas present at the fall of Babylon in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was an "Assyrian" (= a Babylonian). Furthermore, as neither was the son of Ahasuerus the Mede (Dan.9:1), neither can be Darius the Mede.

But if DTM were correct in stating that Gubaru the governor of Babylon was not the same as Ugbaru (Gobryas) the governor of Gutium and if this Gubaru was the same Gubaru mentioned in the cuneiform documents as the "Governor of Babylon and the Region Beyond the River" during the fourteen years after the fall of the city, are we not forced to acknowledge that DTM was right to associate him with Darius the Mede? No, we are not. And why, one may ask, are we not so forced?

The Gubaru (Gobryas) mentioned in the cuneiform documents, as well as in the Nabonidus Chronicle, was merely denoted as a prefect or governor of Babylon and "the Region Beyond the River" – never as king. There is a vast difference between the two titles, and this may be seen in Scripture.

Daniel 6 portrays Darius the Mede as a man with great authority. Although he is represented as having a subordinate position to Cyrus the Great (Dan.5:31, cp. Isa.45:1 etc.), he displays vast administrative powers over the Medo-Persian Empire. He could and did appoint 120 "princes" over the realm along with three "presidents" to oversee them, one of which was Daniel.

When addressed, it was said "King Darius, live forever". He had the authority to execute a royal decree that could not be changed whereby no one could ask a petition of any god or man for 30 days except of him. Darius the Mede had the power to have his leading government officials along with their wives and children cast into a den of lions. He had authority to set forth an edict bearing testimony to the "living God" of Israel and further, that "all people, nations, and languages...in every dominion of *my kingdom*" (not — of "my satrapy") should "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel". Moreover, even events were dated with regard to the first year of his reign (Dan.9:1, 11:1).

The limited powers of a Persian governor as revealed in Ezra 5 and 6 stand out in sharp contrast to those of Darius the Mede. There, Tatnai – "governor (פּוֹחַת = *pecha*) on this side of the river" (i.e., the Euphrates) – did not have the authority to stop Zerubbabel, governor (פּוֹחַת, Hag.1:1) of Judah, from rebuilding the Temple.

Even though his title was thrice said to be "governor on this side of the river", Tatnai had to take the matter before King Darius the Great. Whereas *pecha* is not the usual word for satrap (Hebrew = אַחַשְׁדַּרְפָּנִיא = a governor of a main province of Persia), Tatnai's title of "governor beyond the river" strongly implies that he was such.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 200; also Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, III, 70–79.

<sup>2</sup> DTM, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Olmstead, *The History of the Persian Empire*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 115–116.

<sup>4</sup> Whereas a satrap is not interchangeably called a *pecha*, in Ezra 5:3 & 6 and 6:6 *pecha* apparently is being used to designate a satrap. Moreover, the kingdom was too small for 120 satraps in the Persian sense; hence, the 120 princes in Daniel 6:1 are not satraps.

By the time of Darius Hystaspis (BC 521–486), the Persian Empire had grown to 127 provinces (Est.1:1) which, according to Herodotus, he divided up into 20 satrapies and assigned a governor over each (iii, 89). See: C.F. Keil, "Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel"; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, pp. 204–205.

Moreover, when we read DTM's cuneiform texts covering the fourteen years following the 539 BC fall of Babylon which mention a Gubaru as "governor (or prefect) of Babylon and the Land across the River", we find nothing that convinces us or at all suggests that this Gubaru possessed anything like the powers of Darius the Mede as previously enumerated. The warning that failure to fulfill the contract or order would be to "commit a sin against Gobryas" the governor (or prefect) of Babylon and the Region beyond the River which DTM, as well as others, saw as being highly significant pales when compared to Darius the Mede's authority.

Such threats have been made throughout history by various authorities, often by those with no more authority than that of sheriff, mayor, etc. The testimony of these cuneiform texts is that this Gubaru is a Babylonian satrap – and nothing more. Therefore, Gubaru cannot have been Darius the Mede.

Here, we must remind our reader that it is possible that Ugbaru, Gobryas, and the Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle are all the same man. Were this the actual case, and he did die three weeks after the fall of the city, then he was not the same as the Gubaru of the cuneiform texts. DTM sets such a possibility aside by quickly dismissing the probability of "two men of the same name, holding the same high office in the same province and under the same emperor (Cyrus) within four years of each other".<sup>1</sup>

His point is well taken, and we would agree were their names the English equivalent of Marmaduke, Archibald, or Sylvester. Yet, such would not be so unlikely were they equivalent to common names as John, Robert, or William. As Gobryas apparently was a fairly ordinary given name at this time and place in history, such would have been a viable possibility. In fact, as DTM acknowledged, Sidney Smith himself admitted:<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand it is possible that the chronicler intended one and the same person by Ugbaru and Gubaru, the Gobryas of Xenophon,

that he was appointed governor by Cyrus, but died on the night of the 10–11<sup>th</sup> Marcheswan, and was succeeded by another Gubaru ..."

Of course, due to the disagreement among the translators [that Ugbaru (Gobryas) died, 5 said yes: 4 said no], Ugbaru, Gobryas, and the Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle could have been the same man, but he didn't die three weeks after the city fell. In such a scenario, he could well have been the Gubaru of the cuneiform texts that covered the fourteen years following the 539 BC fall of Babylon.

In conclusion, whereas the preceding objections and observations would not render it absolutely impossible that Gubaru was Darius the Mede, their sum greatly undermines the credibility of this being the correct identification far beyond our ability to accept. Hence, we shall look elsewhere. But first, a clarification is deemed obligatory.

#### *d. Why the Significant Discrepancies in Translating the Nabonidus Chronicle?*

After carefully comparing the seven translations of the Nabonidus Chronicle regarding the fall of the city of Babylon included in this work, the reader is undoubtedly left wondering over the many significant disparities that exist between them. How does one account for these? Part of the explanation lies within the frame of reference and world view the translator brings to the task. It is a natural consequence that one's environment, paternal upbringing, formal education and life's experiences shape his world view, and there are really only two of these.

The first is man centered, the second God centered, and the line between these two extremes is clearly drawn. Each must choose which he will embrace. This choice colors all frames of reference regarding every area and field of human endeavor. These various frames of reference force all to approach situations, problems, and projects with presuppositions.

Thus, research regarding biblically related themes is almost never carried out with cold objective scientific methods. The researcher's presuppositions are brought to the task with him, and all too often the modern mind-set is: "if I cannot understand the meaning of this verse or that statement from the Holy Writ, then the Scripture must be wrong".

<sup>1</sup> DTM, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, *op. cit.*, fn. on line 20, p. 122; DTM, p. 20.

Such wicked men will not humble their intellect and education before Him “with whom we have to do” and admit to ignorance and the need for revelation from the Spirit of that same LORD. Not being biblicist, such imprudent men dare to place their intellects above the Word of the Living God and impiously sit in judgment over the biblical account.

By biblicist, we do not merely refer to a fundamentalist or a biblical scholar as many dictionaries so define – much more is intended. The word connotes one who believes in verbal, plenary inspiration as well as in the providential preservation of Scripture and, while taking both the immediate and the remote context into account, thus interprets the Bible literally.

This necessitates that the person so designated has chosen to believe God’s many promises that, despite all textual criticism objections to the contrary, He would forever preserve His inerrant, infallible Word. Unfortunately, few cuneiform translators over the past century have had such a world view, and their work reflects this.

The second part of the explanation as to why the seven translations read so dissimilarly is simply that cuneiform (from the Latin *cuneus*, meaning “wedge”) writing is hard to translate because the characters may represent one or more letters, a word, or syllable. One character may have several different meanings, which often depends on the other characters or signs with which it is grouped.

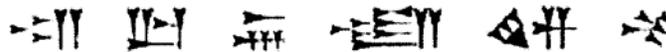
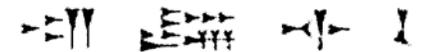
Cuneiform writing was so named because cuneiform strokes, made with a stylus, are broad at one end and pointed at the other, like a wedge. It was a system of writing used long before modern alphabets were developed. The Akkadian-Sumerian system had about 600 characters! That the small clay tablets are very old and damaged is a third reason.

Remember, our English alphabet has only 26 letters to learn. To read and/or translate Akkadian requires the mastery of 600 very small complex shaped wedges that may have different meanings. And this is not the only problem involved with cuneiform. As may be seen in the display following the next paragraph, over time the character of the wedges has changed, and they are not always exactly the same between the various kingdoms.

The technique may be seen in the interlinear display at the bottom of this page which involves Hezekiah, the king of Judah. The cuneiform on King Sennacherib’s Assyrian small sun-baked clay cylinder (or tablet) is first copied and then transliterated into English letters underneath the wedges, for example: Kha-za-ki-a-u. This is then translated into the corresponding English word as, in our illustration, “Hezekiah”.

MEANING	Outline Character about 3000 B.C.	Cuneiform about 2000 B.C.	Assyrian about 700 B.C.	Babylonian about 500 B.C.
The Sun				
God or Heaven				
Mountain				
Man				
Ox				
Fish				

British Museum # 22,500-22,504 (1908), p. 219, Sennacherib's baked clay cylinder


  
 Kha - za - ki - a - u                      la - u - da - ai  

  
 Ur - sa - li - im - mu                      ali - sharru - ti - shu

Translation: “Hezekiah of Judah – Jerusalem his royal city”

#### 4. WAS ASTYAGES DARIUS THE MEDE?

Another viable possibility that warrants our consideration is that Astyages could have been Darius the Mede. The Greek historian Herodotus records the kings of Media and the length of their reigns in his *Histories* as follows:

Monarch	Total Reign	BC Dating
Deioces	53 years	700 – 647 BC
Phraortes, son of Deioces	22 years	647 – 625 BC
Cyaxares, son of Phraortes	40 years	625 – 585 BC
Astyages, son of Cyaxares	35 years	585 – 550 BC

Although Herodotus gives the sum of the reigns of these monarchs as 128 years,<sup>1</sup> they actually total 150. It would appear that he forgot to include Phraortes, the second king. Although Diodorus Siculus did not itemize these kings in his *The Library of History*, he does accept the 150-year time frame. However, Diodorus dates each of the above Median kings as having reigned ten years farther back in time.

As shown on the above chart, the first king of Media was Deioces. He gained dominance over western Asia after the Assyrians had controlled it for either 520<sup>2</sup> or 500 years.<sup>3</sup> He founded a dynasty that lasted for four generations and ruled for 53 years.<sup>4</sup> Phraortes, the second king and son of Deioces, reigned for 22 years.<sup>5</sup>

Phraortes was followed by his son Cyaxares I who reigned for forty years.<sup>6</sup> Cyaxares I joined with Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar and founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, in the conquest of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh (612 BC).

It was during Cyaxares' reign that Alyattes (reigned 617–560 BC) – the true founder of the Lydian Empire and father of Croesus – and the Medes engaged in the five year boundary

dispute mentioned on pages 15 (fn. 5) and 40.<sup>7</sup> Again, the war ended as a result of a solar eclipse<sup>8</sup> (c.585 BC), and negotiations made the Halys River the main boundary between the two kingdoms.

According to Herodotus, Astyages, the son of Cyaxares I, was the last in the line of Median monarchs. His rule lasted until about 550 BC when his maternal grandson, Cyrus, overthrew him. Astyages was delivered by his own army over to Cyrus thus forging in one day the Empire of the Medes and Persians.<sup>9</sup>

Since Herodotus states that Astyages was the last Median king and that he had no son,<sup>10</sup> some scholars have identified Astyages as Darius the Mede.<sup>11</sup> They maintain that the relationship between Cyrus and Astyages as grandson and grandfather harmonizes with the Book of

<sup>7</sup> Alyattes' great-grandfather Gyges was a freed slave who became the trusted bodyguard and confidant to Candaules of the clan of the Heraclidae, then king of Sardis in Asia Minor. When Candaules indecently exposed his unclothed wife to the hidden Gyges in order to prove her unmatched beauty to him, she ordered Gyges to murder Candaules. As a result, Gyges married the wife of the slain king and became king of Lydia (716 BC), thereby moving its reigns to the clan of the Mermnadae. This clan ruled Lydia 170 years of which Gyges reigned 38 (see: Ussher, *Annals*, 2003 ed. § 637, p. 81; Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 6–26). The dynasty of the Mermnadae ended when Cyrus took Sardis & captured Croesus in 546 BC.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and while Ardys the son of Gyges was monarch of Sardis, the Cimmerians were driven from their homeland north and east of the Black Sea by the nomadic Scythians and came into Asia Minor, taking all of Sardis except the citadel (Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 15). Ardys reigned 49 years and was succeeded by his son Sadyattes. After a 12-year reign, he died and his son Alyattes came to the throne and ruled 57 years (Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 25).

In addition to his war with the Medes, Alyattes drove the Cimmerii from Asia Minor and forced two Ionian cities (Smyrna and Colophon) to pay tribute. It was he who took Lydia from being little more than a province and raised it to prosperity and power as an empire. His tomb still exists north of Sardis.

<sup>8</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 103. Herodotus records this solar eclipse as follows: "This [Cyaxares] was the king who fought against the Lydians when the day was turned to night in the battle, and who united under his dominion all Asia that is beyond the river Halys".

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 130.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 109.

<sup>11</sup> Among them is Eugene Faulstich. See: *History, Harmony & Daniel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–31. Several of his points follow.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 95.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. I, Bk. II, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 107.

Daniel as well as with the idea that Darius the Mede preceded Cyrus the Persian (Dan.6:28).<sup>1</sup>

Herodotus describes the story of Cyrus' birth, his upbringing, how he became king, and depicts Astyages as his maternal grandfather:<sup>2</sup>

“Astyages had a daughter, whom he called Mandane...[and] wedded her to a Persian called Cambyses, a man whom he knew to be well born and of a quiet temper: for Astyages held Cambyses to be much lower than a Mede of middle estate. ... But in the first year of Mandane's marriage to Cambyses ... [occurred] the birth of Cyrus ...”

Xenophon also gives the same relationship between Astyages and Cyrus:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ctesias denies that there was any family relationship between Cyrus and Astyages: *Persica*, Excerpt 2 as cited in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1867), p. 636 (Cyrus).

He relates that when Astyages had been defeated, Cyrus adopted him as a grandfather and afterwards married Astyages' daughter (whom Ctesias calls Amytis but may be merely another form of Mandane).

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 107–108.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, (Loeb) *op. cit.*, I, ii, 1. The best-known version of Cyrus' birth and early history before he became king is in Herodotus I, 107–130. Cyrus parents were Cambyses I, the Persian vassal of the Median king Astyages, and Astyages daughter Mandane. Astyages had two dreams concerning Mandane which his Magi interpreted as meaning that her son would grow up and replace him as king. So when Mandane was old enough to marry, she was not given to a Mede of suitable rank but to Cambyses the Persian (see quote in above text). At the child's birth, Astyages summoned his relative, Harpagus, to slay the babe. Unwilling to do so, Harpagus gave the infant to a cowherd named Mitradatae whose wife, Cyno, had just given birth to a still-born child. The shepherd was told to leave the babe in the mountains at the mercy of the wild beasts, but instead they showed their dead infant to Harpagus' servant, named the child Agradatae and raised him as their own.

One day at the age of ten, during a game with other children, Cyrus was chosen to play king. Assuming this role, he punished the son of a distinguished Mede who refused to take orders from him. The father of the badly beaten boy complained to King Astyages, who in turn sent for Cyrus intending to punish him. When asked why he had so behaved, Cyrus defended his action by explaining that, because he was playing the role of king, he had every right to punish someone who did not obey his command. Astyages knew immediately that these were not the words of a herdsman's son and recognized him because the boy looked so much like his Median grandfather “and his manner of answering was freer than customary and the time of exposure seemed to agree with Cyrus' age”.

The father of Cyrus is said to have been Cambyses, king of the Persians: this Cambyses belonged to the stock of the Persidae, and the Persidae derive their name from Perseus. His mother, it is generally agreed, was Mandane; and this Mandane was the daughter of Astyages, sometime king of the Medes. And even to this day the barbarians tell in story and in song that Cyrus was the most handsome in person, most generous of heart, most devoted to learning, and most ambitious, so that he endured all sorts of labor and faced all sorts of danger for the sake of praise.

Thus, both Herodotus<sup>4</sup> and Xenophon<sup>5</sup> declare Cyrus' paternal ancestry was Persian but that maternally, he was the grandson of King Astyages of Media. Herodotus further relates that Astyages reigned 35 years and that after

Astyages pressed the cowherd and learned the whole story, but Cyrus' life was again spared because, having been selected as king by his young playmates during their game, the Magians persuaded Astyages that the dream predictions concerning the royal state of Mandane's son had been fulfilled. In vengeance for the deception, Astyages had Harpagus' 13 year old son slain and a portion of his body surreptitiously fed to Harpagus at dinner. Toward the end of the meal, Astyages informed Harpagus who, though deeply moved, concealed his feelings and departed with the remains of his son's body. His conscience having bothered him over the matter for ten years, Astyages was glad to return young Cyrus to his natural parents. After learning the whole story, Cambyses and Mandane were overjoyed to regain their son whom they had long thought dead.

When Cyrus became a young man, Harpagus persuaded him to induce the Persians to revolt. Upon learning of the insurgency and forgetting what he had done to Harpagus, Astyages blindly appointed him commander of the Median army. Harpagus delivered the bulk of his forces over to Cyrus. These soldiers were easily persuaded to make Cyrus their leader as Astyages had dealt harshly with them. The result was a quick victory for the rebels, after which Astyages had the Magians impaled who had advised him to spare the life of his grandson. Raising another smaller army from among the youths and old men that remained in the city, Astyages personally led them out to battle but was defeated & captured. Herodotus ends the account with: “But now, in Astyages' time, Cyrus and the Persians rose in revolt against the Medes, and from this time ruled Asia. As for Astyages, Cyrus did him no further harm, and kept him in his own house till Astyages died”. (*Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 130.)

If Herodotus' account of Cyrus' boyhood is true, it is a great testimony of how the Lord safeguarded Cyrus' life and thus fulfill the word that He had spoken about 170 years earlier through Isaiah concerning this Persian (Isaiah 44:24–45:4).

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 108.

<sup>5</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, I, ii, 1.

Cyrus overthrew him, Cyrus allowed Astyages to live with him until his death:<sup>1</sup>

“Thus Astyages was deposed from his sovereignty after a reign of thirty-five years: and the Medians were made to bow down before the Persians by reason of Astyages’ cruelty ... Cyrus did him no further harm, and kept him in his own house till Astyages died”.

Although not offered as conclusive proof to the contrary, it must be noted that the last portion of the above quote certainly does not sound as though Cyrus ever entrusted Astyages with the kingship of Babylon. Accordingly, it casts doubt upon his being “Darius the Mede”.

Strangely, Faulstich offers the following citation from “Bel And The Dragon” (a spurious supplement to the Book of Daniel), as evidence in favor of identifying Astyages as Darius the Mede:

“And King Astyages was gathered to his fathers, and Cyrus of Persia received his kingdom”. (vs. 1 in The Apocrypha, Faulstich [p. 25] attributes it to Daniel 14:1 in the Jerusalem Bible)

Whereas Faulstich intended the above as evidence that a Mede ruled prior to Cyrus, it is flawed as proof that Astyages was Darius the Mede due to the contrived nature of the source and because it unmistakably implies that Cyrus could not reign as long as Astyages was alive. Moreover, it reads such that only as the result of his passing could Cyrus receive the throne. Such is preposterous. Cyrus had overthrown Astyages in 550 BC, at least 12 years earlier, and was his overlord.

Further, as already noted, Scripture reveals that Darius the Mede was “made king” and that he was the one who “received” the kingdom, obviously from someone of superior rank (Dan.6:31 & 9:1). Thus, the excerpt does not support Astyages as Darius the Mede as Faulstich imagined.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, I, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, Faulstich’s theory regarding Astyages as being Darius the Mede is outré and has gained little following. His premise is that there were two Belshazzar’s, one the son of Nabonidus and another who was the actual son of Nebuchadnezzar (*History, Harmony & Daniel, op. cit.*, pp. 13–17). He envisions the latter as merely reigning as co-reagent during the first 3 years of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness whereupon he is assassinated in 574 BC by the Medes, about 35 years before the city of Babylon fell.

A major problem in accepting Astyages as Darius the Mede revolves around his age. Daniel states that Darius was 62 years old when he received the realm of Babylon (Dan.5:31); hence, the age factor for Astyages’ having been Darius the Mede seems quite unlikely, although not impossible. His father, Cyaxares I, ruled over Media for forty years and ascended to the throne 625 BC. Astyages ascended to the throne of Media 585 BC and, if he is indeed Darius the Mede, he would have “received” the throne of Babylon in BC 539 at age 62. Therefore his birth would have occurred about the year 601 (539 + 62).

This means that Astyages was not yet born when Nebuchadnezzar became sole rex over Babylonia in BC 605. Having ruled 35 years over Media (585–550 BC), Astyages would have been deposed at the age of 51 (601 – 550 = 51) by Cyrus, his grandson.

Moreover, for Astyages to be Darius the Mede and to be only 62 years old at the 539 BC “fall of Babylon” – while at the same time being the grandfather of Cyrus – would require quite a series of events. As Cyrus became King of

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Faulstich then claims that the Median King Astyages, the brother of Nebuchadnezzar’s first wife Queen Amytis, was invited to reign over Babylon until Nebuchadnezzar’s sanity returned. That is, for Faulstich, Amytis’ brother Astyages was “Darius the Mede”, and he reigned the final four years of Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity. Thus, Faulstich curiously maintains & strives at great length to establish that Daniel chapter 5 is not describing the fall of the city of Babylon to the Medes and Persians under Cyrus.

Moreover, Daniel chapter 6 overthrows this theory. Darius the Mede is not merely “filling in” for Nebuchadnezzar during part of his 7 years of madness. Daniel 6:1–3 describes a *complete reorganization* and establishment of a kingdom and its form of government. Further, Darius’ law (vs. 8) would not have been referenced as that of the Medes and Persians were he only “assisting” Nebuchadnezzar and his sister, Amytis.

It would have been Babylonian law – and that law could have been altered thus eliminating Darius’ dilemma as to how to rescue Daniel from the lions. Besides, the populace and the military would hardly have tolerated a foreigner on the throne – especially a foreign relative of an “imported” queen.

Indeed, Daniel 9:1 and 11:1 would not have been referenced as the first year of Darius the Mede were Nebuchadnezzar still alive. Furthermore, Isaiah serves up the death knell to this theory. Isaiah 21:2, 4–5 clearly alludes to Belshazzar’s feast (Dan.5) and verse 9 attests to Babylon’s fall to the Persians (Elam) and Medes (vs.2) at that time!

Anshan<sup>1</sup> in BC 559 and since the birth of Darius the Mede (Astyages?) was BC 601, a scenario would be required in which Astyages was born, became a father and his child had given birth to a son who had attained to the throne – all in only 42 years (601 – 559 = 42)!

That is, in only 42 years from the time of Astyages birth, his grandson Cyrus was old enough to be seated as king. Furthermore, since Cyrus deposed Astyages in 550, the scenario would also demand that only nine years after his father installed Cyrus upon the throne, Cyrus was old enough – mature enough – to secure the loyalty of his own army and that of Astyages' commander-in-chief, Harpagus, as well as his Median army such that he could overthrow his grandfather. Thus we have a "possible" scenario in which:

- (a) Astyages ascends to the throne of Media and fathers Mandane by age 15 (BC 585);
- (b) Mandane marries Cambyses I by age 15 (BC 570);
- (c) she gives birth to Cyrus the following year (BC 569);
- (d) at the tender age of 10 Cyrus becomes King of Anshan (BC 559); and
- (e) Cyrus secures the loyalty of two armies & overthrows grandfather Astyages at the age of 19 (BC 550).

Whereas the above is in the realm of *possibility*, it strains upon credibility and believability. Thus, the age given by Scripture as to the age of Darius the Mede at the time of the fall of Babylon<sup>2</sup> militates against Astyages' being Darius and sends us looking for another Median monarch to "fill the bill".

### 5. WAS CAMBYSES II, SON OF CYRUS THE GREAT, DARIUS THE MEDE?

Boutflower forcefully argues that Cyrus' son Cambyses II was Darius the Mede,<sup>3</sup> but it is hardly tenable that Cambyses could have been 62 years old when Babylon was overthrown. That would require him to have been about 71 when he became sole heir to the throne in 530 and 76 when, in 525 BC, he conquered Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> A major portion of Persia with Susa as its capital.

<sup>2</sup> The end of Babylon did not take place when Cyrus took it in 539 BC. Darius the Great captured the rebellious city in 520 BC (concerning this & the city's walls, see fn. 6, pp. 32–33. Xerxes I reduced much of it to ruins c.482 BC.

<sup>3</sup> *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–155.

This would mean he was 51 when Cyrus overthrew Astyages in 550 and place Cyrus' age around 69 at that event. The unlikelihood of such a scenario should be readily apparent. It would also place Cyrus as 89 at his death in 530 BC. Again, we feel compelled to look elsewhere for the identity of Darius the Mede.

### 6. WAS CYRUS THE GREAT DARIUS THE MEDE?

The late Dr. Donald J. Wiseman (a Plymouth Brethren), formerly of the British Museum and later professor of Assyriology at the University of London, has proposed that Daniel 6:28 be translated: "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius *even* the reign of Cyrus the Persian" rather than, "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian".<sup>4</sup> By so recommending, Wiseman intended that Darius the Mede and Cyrus were one and the same man and that "Darius" was his throne name whereas Cyrus was his given name.<sup>5</sup>

Wiseman (the New American Standard Version et al.) justifies this use of the appositional or explicative Hebrew "wāw" (ו, pronounced "vav") by stating that it has "long been recognized in 1 Chronicles 5:26" that the verse should read "So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pileser king of Assyria". This reading is offered instead of the correct rendering as found in the King James Bible: "And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria".

Wiseman would have the "wāw" which did read "and" translated as "even". This change has very significant consequences. As portrayed in the King James, Pul and Tilgath-pilneser are two different Assyrian monarchs, but in Wiseman's and the New American Standard Version they are one and the same. Wiseman's view regarding Pul and Tilgath-pilneser in 1 Chronicles 5:26 has already been thoroughly refuted by the present author.<sup>6</sup> Wiseman adds that there are other such cases involving the "wāw" in Scripture.

<sup>4</sup> Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel", *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170–173.

Although Dr. Wiseman does not mention the Ezra 6:14–15 example, it is one of these and as far back as 1913 AD, Martin Anstey made a similar proposal with regard to the “wāw”. Anstey proposed that the “Artaxerxes” of Ezra 7 and the Book of Nehemiah was Darius I Hystaspis. This identification was primarily based upon the Ezra 6:14–15 passage where, as did Wiseman in Daniel 6:28, he retranslated the Hebrew ו (a “wāw”) in verse fourteen from “and” to “even”.<sup>1</sup>

In so doing, he altered the verse from: “... and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia” to read “... and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, even Artaxerxes king of Persia” thereby making “Artaxerxes” the same man as Darius.

In 1988, E.W. Faulstich joined Anstey in this assessment and contended that this identification was the key to the correct understanding and unification of the Book(s) of Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>2</sup> This notion has also been refuted by the present author with the result being that Ezra 6:14 in particular and the Book of Ezra in general were proven to read such that this biblical “Artaxerxes” was a Persian king that reigned after Darius Hystaspis of Marathon.<sup>3</sup>

In assessing the “and” to “even” novelty proposed by Wiseman et al. at Daniel 6:28, we are compelled to report that such a construction, although not the more conventional choice, is admittedly possible. However, after consulting the old 1560 AD *Geneva Bible* along with all the old English translations prior to AD 1611 such as Wycliffe’s, Coverdale’s, Matthew’s, *The Great Bible*, *The Bishop’s Bible*, etc., as well as the *New American Standard Version*, *New International Version*, *Amplified Version*, *New King James*, *Revised Version* etc. – over 20 translations at Ezra 6:14, not one translator or team of translators rendered the “waw” (ו) beginning the Hebrew word for Artaxerxes as “even” (וארתחששתא). All read “and”, not “even”.

<sup>1</sup> Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, (London: Marshall Bros., 1913), pp. 244, 269–270.

<sup>2</sup> Faulstich, *History, Harmony, The Exile & Return*, (Spencer, IA: Chronology Books Inc., 1988), pp. 142–164.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 267–268.

The same was true for the four Hebrew interlinear Old Testaments that were examined. as well as John Joseph Owens’ *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*.<sup>4</sup> All the above were found to be in agreement with the *Authorized King James Bible*. With so many independent translations all designating the Hebrew as “and”, can there be any real doubt as to the correct contextual rendering and can such handling of the Hebrew by D.J. Wiseman and the *New American Standard Version* be taken as any more than an expedient? Why not insist upon “even” Darius as the “waw” is also present with his name (דָרְיוֹשׁ) in the very same verse.

Although it is the vogue among today’s scholars, no solution to any Scriptural problem is legitimate or correct if it involves altering Scripture to fit the need – Selah. Daniel 6:28, therefore, must be seen as clearly distinguishing Darius from Cyrus. Daniel 5:31 distinctly referred to Darius as being a Median whereas 6:28 states that Cyrus was a Persian. The two are not the same.

Further, although Wiseman attempts to minimize its significance,<sup>5</sup> Whitcomb is correct when he points out that the phrase “seed of the Medes” in Daniel 9:1 is indicative of the paternal ancestry of Darius, and not the maternal.<sup>6</sup> As Cyrus’ father was Persian and his mother Median, to apply “seed of the Medes” to him must be seen as completely incongruous. Descent would normally, if not always, be given through the Achaemenid lineage of the Persians.

Finally, the association of Cyrus with Darius the Mede is also unconvincing because of the problem of their differing father’s names and nationalities (Cambyses I the Persian versus Ahasuerus the Mede) as well as the chronological notices in the following Daniel passages.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Owens, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, (1996), Vol. 4, p. 729. Professor Owens taught Hebrew more than 35 years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and served a term as president of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

<sup>5</sup> Wiseman, “Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel”, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, (1959) *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even* I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. (Dan.11:1)

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; (Dan.9:1)

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. (Dan.10:1)

The transition from the regnal reckoning of Darius the Mede in the preceding Daniel passages to the “third year of Cyrus” clearly indicates they are not the same person and that Darius has passed from the scene. Thus, we must reject Wiseman’s proposal and continue our search for Darius the Mede.

## 7. CYAXARES (II), SON OF ASTYAGES, IS DARIUS THE MEDE

Realizing that Darius the Mede must precede Cyrus the Great, several modern scholars, including the present author, have identified Darius the Mede with Xenophon’s “Cyaxares”, the son of Astyages and the last king of Media. Many of the earlier investigators also reached this conclusion. Thus, the identification of Cyaxares II, son of Astyages, as Darius the Mede is neither new nor novel.

Archbishop James Ussher, the prince of all chronologers, so determined.<sup>1</sup> Putting forth very able supporting arguments, many after him also reached that conclusion, (Dr. Bertholdt,<sup>2</sup> Von Lengerke, Hävernick, E.W. Hengstenberg, Auberlen etc.). Distinguished reference works by men such as McClintock and Strong,<sup>3</sup> Albert Barnes,<sup>4</sup> as well as Keil and

Delitzsch<sup>5</sup> have also decided in favor of Cyaxares II as being Darius the Mede, and yet modern academia has almost exclusively rejected the association. What are the reasons for this response, and why has it persisted?

### *a. Objections Against Cyaxares II, Son of Astyages, as being Darius the Mede*

Walter Miller, the modern translator of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, cites examples in the introduction (pages ix–x) where, in his view, Xenophon’s historical data is unacceptable:

“Actual violence to historical facts is sometimes committed. For example, Media was subdued by force (and treachery) in the lifetime of Astyages (550 BC), not voluntarily ceded to Cyrus by Cyaxares as the dowry of his daughter; Cyaxares himself, the son of Astyages, is unknown, save through Xenophon’s story; it seems most probable that he is wholly unhistorical. The conquest of Egypt, ascribed to Cyrus, was in reality accomplished by his son and successor, Cambyses. The beautiful account of the peaceful passing of Cyrus is wholly out of accord with the well-established record of his violent death in the battle against the Massagetae (529 BC).

Miller adds that the above exhausts the serious divergences with regard to historical accuracy and that although he does not consider *Cyropaedia* a history, he concedes that it is “historical” (p. viii).

Beyond any doubt, his statement that the sole basis for a historical Cyaxares II is Xenophon’s<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Ussher, *Annals of the World*, revised by Larry & Marion Pierce, (Green Forest, AK: Master Books, 2003), p. 111 §902 and p. 117 §940.

<sup>2</sup> A free translation of Professor Leonhard Bertholdt’s views from his *Commentar zu Daniel* may be found in: Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Heritage Edition, Daniel, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), pp. 6–10 (1851).

<sup>3</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1867), p. 677 (Darius the Mede).

<sup>4</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Heritage Edition, Daniel, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), pp. 6–10 (1851).

<sup>5</sup> Keil, “Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel”, Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, pp. 194–199 (Daniel); and Vol. VII, page 302 (Isaiah).

<sup>6</sup> Xenophon (c.430 – c.355 BC) was a Greek soldier and historian. Born in Athens of a noble family, he studied under Socrates, and they became friends. Although a wealthy “gentleman” of his day, he joined a large band of some 13,000 Greek adventurers who were led by the Persian prince, Cyrus the Younger (not Cyrus the Great).

Wishing to seize the throne of Persia, Cyrus had rebelled against his brother Artaxerxes II Mnemon. Cyrus was killed in the 401 BC battle of Cunaxa, and all the Greek commanders were slain soon thereafter leaving the 10,000 remaining Greeks stranded in a foreign country without officers. They chose Xenophon as their leader and began their 1,500-mile retreat homeward. After months of hardships, the adventurers reached the city of Trapezus on the southeastern border of the Black Sea. Xenophon described this march in a history of the expedition called the *Anabasis* (“March Up-Country”).

*Cyropaedia*, which he calls a “historical romance” (p. viii), is the main reason offered by those who disallow the existence of Cyaxares II. Other reasons that have been included are:

- (1) Herodotus said Astyages had no son (I, 109),
- (2) Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote that the Median kingdom lasted only through four kings, and
- (3) Ptolemy gives Cyrus a nine-year reign beginning immediately after King Nabonidus with no mention of a Darius the Mede in his Canon.

Without analytically examining the actual substance of these criticisms, the witness of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* has largely been dismissed. None of these objections, however, are insuperable.

#### ***b. Assessing the Objections Against Cyaxares II being Darius the Mede***

Regarding this identification, at the onset it must be understood that with regard to ancient history no two authors agree in their statements throughout. In truth, ancient history is simply an ideal deduction arrived at from a variety of conflicting traditions. As Napoleon put it: “What is history but a fable agreed upon”.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, every competent scholar knows that Herodotus and Ctesias – indeed, all of the ancient historians works – contain historical inaccuracies, yet their writings are not totally cast aside as is the usual case with regard to *Cyropaedia*. Why then is this work singled out for special disdain?

In light of what has been said in the preceding, it must be seen that is not merely for the previously listed objections. Although they are loathe to admit this, the real reason for academia’s rejection is clearly and undeniably that Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* strongly supports the biblical narrative with regard to the fall of the city of Babylon as recorded in the Book of Daniel.

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Eventually, they joined a Spartan army against the Persians. In the last campaign, Xenophon captured a wealthy Persian and forced him to pay an enormous ransom which made Xenophon financially independent for the rest of his life. He also wrote *Hellenica*, a history of Greece and *Memorabilia of Socrates*.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte, *Instant Quotation Dictionary*, D.O. Bolander, (Mundelein, IL: Career Institute Inc., 1969), p. 138.

Without mentioning them by their biblical names, Xenophon supports the slaying of Belshazzar as well as the person of Darius the Mede (Dan.5:30–31). Xenophon also relates that soon after taking Babylon, the conquered lands were divided into provinces and had governors placed over them (VIII, vi, 7 ff.). This division is also indicated in the Book of Daniel (6:1). It is this support of Scripture that modern so-called scholarship will not tolerate, and it is the real underlying reason it rejects Xenophon’s witness.

This being said, we must now address the question: what does Walter Miller mean when, with regard to *Cyropaedia*, he writes: “actual violence to historical facts is sometimes committed”? He means that Xenophon and Herodotus do not agree as to: (a) Media and Astyages being subdued by force and treachery,<sup>2</sup> (b) the existence of Cyaxares II (c) Cyrus’ conquest of Egypt instead of by his son Cambyses, or (d) the account of Cyrus’ passing. As he accepts Herodotus’ accounts as factual, Miller concluded that Xenophon must be wrong on all these points.

Thus, the supposed “historical error” whereby Herodotus (and Ctesias) stated Cyrus died in battle (d) whereas Xenophon wrote he died peacefully in his old age (VIII, vii, 1 ff.), is merely Miller’s or any other researcher’s personal subjective conviction. Regardless of how convinced they may be that their decision is well founded, how do they (or the present author) really know the truth concerning each of these particulars.

Xenophon (BC c.430–354), Ctesias (fl. BC 401–384), and Herodotus (BC 484–430), all of whom often differ with one another regarding historical matters and facts, are not in accord concerning the existence of a son of Astyages. Herodotus and Ctesias, who differ widely in

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<sup>2</sup> For this author, this is the only important point that seems historically incorrect. Herodotus and Ctesias write that the Median Empire was brought under Cyrus’ control by a civil war and Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* omits this; yet in his *Anabasis* he admits it (iii, 4, 7, 11, 12). How this is to be reconciled we do not know. Perhaps Xenophon’s sources related both accounts, and he used the one he deemed most probable in *Anabasis* and the other in *Cyropaedia*. Keil give a vigorous, although not completely clear, defense of the account in *Cyropaedia*: Keil, “Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel”, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–198.

other respects, agree in making Astyages the last king of the Median dynasty and that he had no male heir.<sup>1</sup> They also agree that Astyages was deposed by Cyrus and that Cyrus was the first king of the Medo-Persian dynasty. What then are we to do with regard to Xenophon? Although these specifics have led most modern scholars to disregard *Cyropaedia*, Professor Keil insightfully answers:<sup>2</sup>

“Shall we now ... decide ... in favor of Herodotus and against Xenophon, and erase Cyaxares II from the list not only of the Median kings, but wholly from the page of history, because Herodotus and Ctesias have not made mention of him? Has then Herodotus or Ctesias alone recorded historical facts, and that fully, and Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* fabricated only a pedagogic romance destitute of historical veracity? All thorough investigators have testified to the very contrary, and Herodotus himself openly confesses (i, 95) that he gives only the sayings regarding Cyrus which appeared to him to be credible;”

On the same page, Keil adds: Herodotus merely gave “a series of popular traditions circulating among the Medes” whereas Xenophon gathered the historic material for his *Cyropaedia* from the dominant ruling royal Persian tradition and that it was thus “more fully transmitted than among the Medes, whose national recollections, after the extinction of their dynasty, were not fostered”. Keil is saying that Xenophon was relating data he gathered on site around 400 BC from the Persian’s themselves relative to their history, whereas Herodotus merely gleaned various accounts about the Persians largely from non-Persians. Indeed, insofar as Medo-Persia, most of Herodotus’ information concerning them came from an untrustworthy source with regard to that empire – the Egyptian priesthood.

Like Herodotus and all the other ancient historians before Thucydides, Xenophon’s sources undoubtedly did err or exaggerate in some particulars – but certainly not in the main. There simply is no valid reason for Xenophon to have misrepresented these facts.

<sup>1</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia*, Volume II, *op. cit.*, p. 676 (Darius the Mede).

<sup>2</sup> Keil, “Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel”, Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

Xenophon’s testimony has been rejected far too lightly on the excuse that his *Cyropaedia* is but a historical romance. Let our reader reflect well on this — truth and fact are not governed by one’s writing style. A historical novel, yes – still, his “Cyaxares” must surely have been a reflection of some historical personage.

Anyone that has read Xenophon’s other works will immediately perceive he was a gifted individual possessing a keen mind. As such, and as noted earlier, he would have never invented Cyaxares II – not even in a historical novel. To so do would mar his credibility as well as that of his writing. Indeed, Miller admits that Xenophon “knew his Herodotus and Ctesias...and probably other earlier historians whom we cannot identify; and he drew from all these sources such facts as he needed...”.

The same would be true of Daniel. To have become second in the kingdom and yet be a foreigner, a Jew, proves him to have been a man of exceptional genius and great learning (Ezk.28:3). What possible motive could he have had for attempting to foster so great a deception on the world as “Darius the Mede” were this Darius not genuine. He would have simply assigned the events in Daniel 5 and 6 to some other *known* king and thus not expose himself and his book to criticism and ridicule.

Further, to deny the existence of Cyaxares II on the grounds that Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. 30–8 BC) said the Median kingdom lasted only through four kings so that if we list Deioces, Phraortes, Cyaxares I, and Astyages there is no place left for a second Cyaxares is not a certain matter. Dionysius may have simply meant that the Median kingdom as an *independent* entity lasted only through four rulers.

Furthermore, Herodotus’ statement that Astyages had no son could be no more than the confused result of his hearing that the last Median king had no son and thinking the last was Astyages, he applied the remark to him rather than to Cyaxares II. Such is not at all farfetched as Xenophon reports that Cyaxares II had no legitimate son to succeed him on the throne.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Herodotus could have only meant that Astyages had no *legitimate* son.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VIII, v, 19.

In the minds of most critics, the most serious “historical error” in *Cyropaedia* is one not listed by Miller. Namely, that Ptolemy’s Royal Canon gave Cyrus a nine-year reign beginning immediately after Nabonidus with no mention of a “Darius the Mede”. However, the reason Ptolemy gave Cyrus credit for a nine-year reign (538 – 530 = 9 inclusive) was because Ptolemy’s Royal Canon makes each king’s year of accession the last year of his predecessor.

For example, Cyrus died and Cambyses began to reign in BC 530, but the Canon gives the whole year to Cyrus and reckons it as his *last* year. Ptolemy does not address Cambyses’ year of accession but would place 529 as his first year.

Further, Ptolemy made no allowance or notice for reigns of less than a year. Those kings were completely omitted and their months were included in the last year of the preceding or the first year of the monarch that followed. Significantly, Ptolemy made no indication or allowance for any co-regencies.<sup>1</sup>



Consequently, although Darius the Mede bore the title of “King” and executed great power over the realm, his authority was not equal to that of Cyrus who “made” him, as the context of history indicates, only a “sub-king” or pro-*rex* (Dan. 9:1). Cyrus retained overlordship above Darius – exactly as Nabonidus held lordship over Belshazzar – and thus Ptolemy passed over Darius the Mede in his Canon and awarded his years to Cyrus. This also explains why Belshazzar is not listed in the Royal Canon. As only a pro-*rex*, his years are not given but were awarded to Nabonidus.

Finally, with respect to Miller’s objection that Xenophon attributed the conquest of Egypt to Cyrus rather than to Cambyses II (c. page 60), archeology seems to stand in support of Xenophon.

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

The inscription on the famous bas-relief (see pictures) residing in Sydney, Australia reads: “I am Cyrus, the Achemenian”. It shows a man with two horns upon his head, one pointing forward and the other backwards. Between these horns are carved three objects which scholars have identified as Egyptian crowns.



What else could such a depiction mean other than Cyrus had become overlord of the already devastated Egypt (page 10)? This suggests, in the very strongest of terms, that Cyrus did indeed conquer Egypt as Xenophon stated.<sup>2</sup>

It would naturally follow that upon learning of the great Medo-Persian king’s death, this southern kingdom successfully revolted necessitating an invasion by his son and successor to re-subjugate the land of the Pharaoh’s to Persian rule. Thus, it seems that *both* Cyrus and Cambyses II subdued Egypt, and this objection of Miller’s stands exposed as baseless.<sup>3</sup>

### c. Ancient Testimony that Cyaxares II was Darius the Mede

As we examine the matter further, we find that Darius the Mede is not as invisible among the ancient writers as the critics have led us to believe, and the balance of probabilities is in favor of his being Xenophon’s Cyaxares II. As already stated, the historian Xenophon says (c.400 BC) that a Mede named Cyaxares succeeded to the throne of Babylon:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, I, i, 4; VIII, vi, 20. Sir Isaac Newton & Ussher accepted Xenophon’s account: *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, Revised Edition, Larry and Marion Pierce, Eds. (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009), p. 90 (Original, London: 1728, p. 259) and *Annals*, *op. cit.*, (2003), p. 119, §958.

<sup>3</sup> Prediction: although the bas-relief *says* “I am Cyrus”, as the significance of the above becomes more fully known to academia, it will change the identification to Darius I (or even Cambyses II: see reference, page 102, fn. 5).

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, I, v, 2. Here we remind our reader that Xenophon’s account has often been criticized due to its “romantic” style and the fact that the name “Cyaxares” cannot be reconciled with the few other ancient sources whose works have survived.

“In the course of time Astyages died in Media, and Cyaxares, the son of Astyages and brother of Cyrus’ mother, succeeded to the Median throne”.

There are other traces of Darius the Mede in secular history which indicate that he preceded Cyrus over Babylon. In his BC 472 play *Persae* (*The Persians*) concerning the 480 BC Persian defeat at Salamis, the Greek dramatist Aeschylus who fought against the Persians at the battle of Salamis confirms Xenophon in part by mentioning a Mede as the first ruler after the fall of Babylon, followed by Cyrus. This testimony is most important for Aeschylus lived *before* Xenophon during the time of Darius Hystaspis and thus represents both an older as well as an independent witness.

Aeschylus mentions a Mede as ruling before Cyrus the Great. The drama depicts the ghost of Darius Hystaspis, the father of Xerxes, rising from his tomb and reviewing the history of the Medo-Persian Empire:<sup>1</sup>

“Therefore a calamity most evil and past all forgetting has been wrought by him to its accomplishment; a calamity such as never yet befell this city of Susa to its desolation since our Lord Zeus first ordained this high estate that one ruler should bear sway over all Asia with its flocks and wield the scepter of its government. For Medus was first to be the leader of its host; and another, his son, completed his work since his soul obeyed the direction of wise thoughts. Third, after him, Cyrus, blest in his fortune, came to the throne and established peace for all his people. The Lydians and Phrygians he won to his rule, and the whole of Ionia he subdued by force; for the gods hated him not, since he was right-minded. Fourth in succession, the son of Cyrus ruled the host. Fifth in the list, Mardus came to power, a disgrace to his native land and to the ancient throne; but he was slain in his palace by the guile of gallant Artaphrenes, with the help of friends whose part this was. [Sixth came Maraphis, and seventh Artaphrenes.] And I in turn attained the lot I craved, and many a campaign I made with a goodly host: but disaster so dire as this I brought not upon the State. But Xerxes my son, youth that he is, has the mind of youth and remembers not my injunctions. Be very sure of this, ye compeers of my age: all of us who have held this sovereign power cannot be shown to have wrought ruin so great as this”.

<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus, *The Persians*, E.H. Warmington, ed., Loeb, Vol. I, Trans. by H. W. Smyth, (1973), pp. 175–177.

Aeschylus’ Medo-Persian King List from the previous quote is summarized below.

1. Medus	6. Maraphis
2. Son of Medus	7. Artaphrenes
3. Cyrus, the Great	8. Darius I (Hystaspis)
4. Cyrus’ son, (Cambyses)	9. Xerxes, son of Darius
5. Mardus	

In the preceding quote, the identity of “Medus” seems to best fit Astyages. If this identification is correct, then the son of Medus must be Darius the Mede. Accordingly, it is maintained that this is at least an apparent trace of ancient historical evidence that Darius the Mede preceded Cyrus the Great.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> An infrequently cited secular witness for Darius the Mede is Aristophanes (see: Faulstich, *History, Harmony & Daniel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23). The greatest ancient Greek writer of comedies, Aristophanes (circa 445–385 BC) mentions a gold coin called the “Doric” in his BC 393 work: *The Ecclesiazusae*, E.H. Warmington, ed., Loeb, Vol. III, Trans. by B.B. Rogers, (1972), p. 301 (lines 601–602). These lines read: “With regard to the land, I can quite understand, But how, if a man have his money in hand, Not farms, which you see, and he cannot withhold, But talents of silver and Darics of gold?”

With regard to Aristophanes’ “Darics of gold”, C.F. Keil comments: “Finally, the Darics also give evidence for Darius the Mede, since of all explanations of the name of this gold coin (the Doric) its derivation from a king Darius is the most probable; and so also do the statements of the rhetorician, Harpocration, the scholiast to Aristophanis Ecclesiaz. 589, and of Suidas, that the [Darics] did not derive their name, as most suppose, from Darius the father of Xerxes, but from another and an older king (Darius), according to the declaration of Herodotus iv. 166, that Darius first struck this coin, which is not outweighed by his scanty knowledge of the more ancient history of the Medes and Persians”. [Keil, “Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel”, Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, footnote, p. 200.]

The following is Keil’s reference from Herodotus from which he derived his above conclusion. “This Aryandes had been appointed by Cambyses viceroy of Egypt; at a later day he was put to death for making himself equal to Darius. For learning and seeing that Darius desired to leave such a memorial himself as no king had ever wrought, Aryandes imitated him, till he got his reward; for Darius had coined money out of gold refined to an extreme purity, and Aryandes, then ruling Egypt, made a silver coinage; and now there is not silver money so pure as is the Aryandic. But when Darius heard the Aryandes was so doing, he put him to death, not on this plea, but as a rebel”. (Herodotus, *The Histories*, *op. cit.*, IV, 166.).

As the above quote is sometimes offered as evidence of Darius the Mede, it has been included here. Although Keil is often most incisive, after considering the above citation from Herodotus we are forced to conclude that

With regard to Aeschylus' Medo-Persian King List, C.F. Keil makes the following assessment:<sup>1</sup>

“Also, the often-quoted lines of Aeschylus, Pers. 762–765, ... are in the simplest manner explained historically if by the work which the first Mede began and the second completed, and which yet brought all the glory to the third, viz. Cyrus, is understood the taking of Babylon; according to which Astyages is the 1st, Cyaxares II the 2nd and Cyrus the 3rd, and Aeschylus agrees with Xenophon”.

The legend of Megasthenes (312–280 BC) attributes to Nebuchadnezzar the oracular declaration:<sup>2</sup>

“O Babylonians, behold I, Nebuchadnezzar announce to you beforehand the coming calamity. ... A Persian mule will come, having your own gods as his allies. He will impose servitude upon you and will have for his helper the son of a Median woman, the boast of the Assyrians (i.e., Babylonians)”.

Whereas Aeschylus and Megasthenes are but faint ancient traces of Darius the Mede, there are others. Both Josephus and Jerome understood Darius the Mede to be Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages. Thus, these two ancient

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the chronology & context involved with Cambyses in the quote nevertheless seems to best fit Darius the Great.

<sup>1</sup> Keil, “Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel”, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 9, *op. cit.*, pp. 199–200, footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Boutflower is citing from Abydenus' (fl. c.AD 200) *On the Assyrians* as preserved by Eusebius in *Præparatio Evangelica* 41. Abydenus gives as his source Megasthenes. As to the meaning of the “Persian mule” in the above quote, when King Croesus of Lydia made his third inquiry of the oracle at Delphi as to the length of his sovereignty, the Pythian priestess replied: “Lydian, beware of the day when a mule is lord of the Medians” (Herodotus, *The Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 55).

Believing a mule would never be king over Media, Croesus confidently marched against Cyrus. Later, the priestess explained to Croesus that the god Loxias (“the obscure”, an epithet of Apollo specifically used of him as a god of prophecy) had revealed through her that the mule was Cyrus as he was “the son of two persons not of the same nation, of whom the mother was the nobler and the father of lesser estate; for she was a Median, daughter of Astyages king of the Medians; but he was a Persian and under the rule of the Medians”.

She further added that had Croesus made additional inquiry of the god he would have so learned and spared himself the defeat at the hands of Cyrus (Herodotus, *The Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 91). Here we add that instead of “the son of a Median woman” being Darius the Mede, some would have him Nabonidus, others Gobryas.

witnesses either accepted Xenophon's testimony or it may have been common knowledge in their day from other sources. Josephus writes:<sup>3</sup>

“But when Babylon was taken by Darius, and when he, with his kinsmen Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty two years old. He was the son of Astyages, and had another name among the Greeks”.

Surely, the other “name among the Greeks” was Cyaxares. Jerome identified Darius the Mede with Cyaxares by quoting the above passage from Josephus. He then stressed that Darius the Mede preceded Cyrus the Great:

“Hence we see that when Babylon was overthrown, Darius returned to his own kingdom in Media, and brought Daniel along with him in the same honorable capacity to which he had been promoted by Belshazzar. There is no doubt but what Darius had heard of the sign and portent which had come to Belshazzar, and also of the interpretation which Daniel had set forth, and how he had foretold the rule of the Medes and the Persians. And so no one should be troubled by the fact that Daniel is said in one place to have lived in Darius' reign, and in another place in the reign of Cyrus. The Septuagint rendered Darius by the name Artaxerxes”.<sup>4</sup>

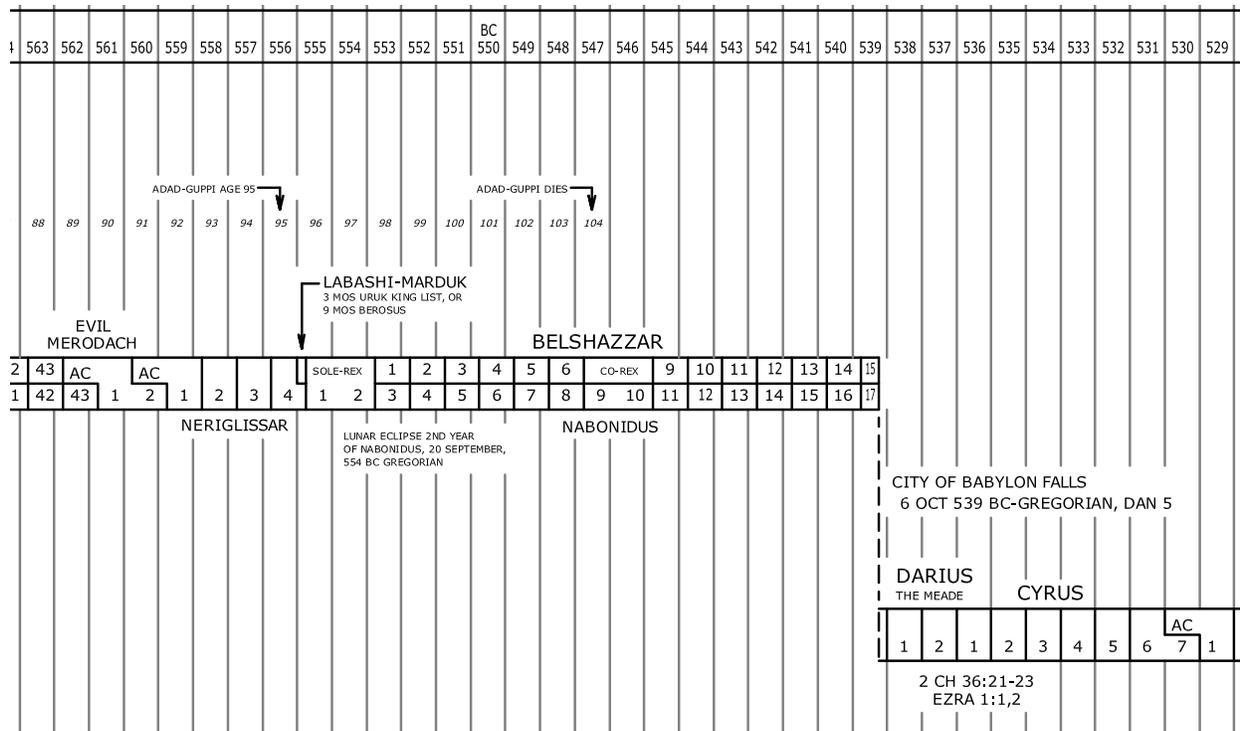
As can be indisputably seen, both Josephus and Jerome proposed that Darius the Mede was Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages. The eminent Jewish sage, Aben Ezra, agreed. Recognized by many as the greatest biblical scholar of the middle ages, Aben Ezra reported from “a book of the kings of Persia” that Darius the Mede was Cyrus' father-in-law<sup>5</sup> – and with this we agree (see chart on page 150: note that we conclude Cyrus married Cassandane, the daughter of his uncle Cyaxares II). Again, earlier scholars considered Darius the Mede to precede Cyrus the Great in history, and most identified him as Cyaxares II.

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<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, X.xi.4.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome, *Commentary On Daniel*, Trans. by Gleason L. Archer, Jr., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977) p. 63. Jerome apparently had a copy of Origen's Hexapla (the 5<sup>th</sup> column is the LXX) which read “Artaxerxes” rather than Darius the Mede. However, this is no problem as “Artaxerxes” is a royal title rather than a personal name and could thus apply to any Persian king.

<sup>5</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 676 (Darius the Mede).



With regard to Daniel 9:1:

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

this Ahasuerus (Assuerus) is historically the Median monarch Astyages (see chart, page 150). Thus, “Ahasuerus” in the above verse must be seen as a title rather than the proper name of this king.

Finally, we remind our reader that the Persian Law “which alters not” (Dan.6:12, 15) forbade a king to march with his army until he had named his successor.<sup>1</sup> Again, this is one of the reasons why Cyrus “made” (Dan.9:1) his Median uncle Cyaxares II his pro-rex before he departed on his expedition to subjugate the remainder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.<sup>2</sup>

As stated earlier, in order to consolidate the loyalty of the Persian contingency of his Medo-Persian army behind his relative, Cyrus conferred the Persian royal title “Darius” upon Cyaxares the Mede in order to firmly unite both factions of the military under his command

during Cyrus’ absence. This established Cyaxares II as “Darius the Mede”.

Upon his installation as pro-rex, Darius the Mede would have become the Suzerain of the Jews and moreover that Medo-Persian sovereign with whom they would have dealt. From the Hebrew standpoint, it would have been natural for them to reference their years with respect to his date of overlordship rather than that of the absent Cyrus.<sup>3</sup>

**E. THE HISTORICITY OF DARIUS THE MEDE IN SUMMARY**

Because it was Cyrus who took the city of Babylon and subsequently put an end to the Chaldean kingdom and because the reign of Darius the Mede was of such short duration as well as not of a truly independent nature, it was quite natural that Herodotus, Ctesias, the later Greek historians, and Berosus passed over him. This brief span of Median rule was insignificant when compared to that of Cyrus the conqueror. The fact that these historians did not record Darius’ short-lived rule as sub-king under Cyrus does not justify academia’s rejecting

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, op. cit., VII, 1; also see: Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, op. cit., p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, op. cit., VIII, vi, 19–20.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, op. cit., p. 271.

Xenophon's historical witness to the person of Cyaxares II, much less that of Daniel's testimony regarding Darius the Mede.

Darius the Mede is the only monarch in the Book of Daniel whose nationality, age, and parentage are recorded. The Book of Daniel relates that he was sixty-two years old when he took Babylon (Dan.6:1) and that he was "the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes" (Dan.9:1). Unfortunately, profane history does not know of this Darius among the records of Babylonia or Media, therefore the critics deny the existence of such a king. Nevertheless, we have seen that there is historical evidence that Darius the Mede preceded Cyrus the Great as ruler over Babylon. This evidence is present in both secular and Biblical data.

Regarding Darius' being the son of "Ahasuerus" – this latter word is derived from the "old" Persian designation "Khshayarsha". When "Khshayarsha" is transposed into Hebrew, the word becomes almost letter for letter "Akhashverosh", which is rendered "Ahasuerus" in English. "Ahasuerus" literally means the "mighty man".

However, here the etymological break down in practical terms becomes "Aha" (the mighty) and "Suerus" meaning "shah" (king).<sup>1</sup> The Greek equivalent, "Assuerus", appears in the spurious apocryphal Book of Tobit. However, as may be seen below, it is a Median king title and not a personal name. Consequently, it cannot positively disclose the identity of this monarch. The title "Ahasuerus" (Assuerus) is found in the last verse of Tobit:<sup>2</sup>

But Tobias departed with his wife and children to Ecbatane...where he became old with honor...And he died at Ecbatane of Media, being a hundred and seven and twenty years old. But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve (Tobit 14:12–15).

Moreover, Darius the Mede (Cyaxares II) was the brother of Cyrus' mother, Mandane, hence Cyrus' maternal uncle. Apparently, he was also

the father of Cyrus' wife, Cassandane. As such, Darius the Mede was both uncle and father-in-law to Cyrus (see family ties chart, page 150).

The traditional translation of Daniel 6:28 reads:

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian".

This indicates that Darius the Mede was succeeded on the throne by Cyrus. Daniel speaks of a Median ruler "receiving" the helm of Babylon after the overthrow of the native dynasty ("made king", Dan. 9:1) and then later mentions the historical Cyrus. Therefore, it logically follows that the biblical writer intended us to understand that Cyrus succeeded Darius of Media. The reader will recall that when Cambyses I died in 559, Cyrus inherited the Persian throne of Anshan which was vassal to the Medes, and he became king over all Medo-Persia in 550. Scripture makes no reference to these earlier accounts as they had no bearing upon Israel.

Thus, when all the data is taken into account, it is seen that Cyrus took the city of Babylon in 539, and it was he who "made" Darius the Mede his pro-rex to govern over Babylonia while the great Persian king continued at the head of the army consolidating the remainder of the Empire. Having accomplished this, in 536 BC Cyrus returned as sole rex over the expanded empire and as suzerain over the Jews.

Accordingly, the date intended by Scripture (II Chr.36:22; Ezra 1:1) as "the first year of Cyrus" is BC 536, the first year of his sole reign over his newly enlarged empire. Scripture is neither referring to the first year in which Cyrus became a sovereign nor the year he took the city of Babylon. The year 536 was his "first year" in the sense that: (a) Cyrus' kingdom more than doubled in extent so that his power and prestige soared proportionately, and (b) it was Cyrus' first year as suzerain over the Jews.<sup>3</sup>

Xenophon indicates this reign over Babylon was seven years by recording that Cyrus went from Babylon to Susa every spring and that he made this trip seven times.<sup>4</sup> As stated heretofore,

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *The Apocrypha*, (London, England: Oxford University Press, n.d.), page 79. Interestingly, the *Jerusalem Bible* interprets Ahasuerus to be Cyaxares.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> *Cyropaedia*, op. cit., VIII, vi, 22 & VIII, vii, 1.

Ptolemy's king list gives him nine years because it includes the approximately two years of Darius' reign as pro-rex from the 6 October BC 539 fall of the capitol city (Gregorian).

In conclusion, Darius the Mede was undeniably an actual historical figure who received the throne of Babylon at age 62 in the days of Daniel. Of this we are positive. Our authority for such a categorical statement is the word of the Creator Himself. Selah.

It is also concluded that the evidence best points to this Darius as having been Xenophon's Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages, king of the Medes. However, it must be admitted that this association is not as firm as our determination in the previous paragraph. The former, we know. Of this latter, we stand convinced.



## V. CYRUS THE GREAT

In 536 BC, Cyrus the Great (reigned 559 – 529 BC) followed Darius the Mede as the ruling monarch over what had been the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Of course, this included Jerusalem and the former kingdom of Judah. Isaiah spoke of Cyrus by name about 170 years<sup>1</sup> before he issued his famous decree (Ezra 1:1–4; 6:3–5). Isaiah’s prophecy foretold both his edict of religious liberty, which permitted the Jews to restore the Jerusalem Temple, and his capture of Babylon.



The prophecy (Isaiah 44:24–45:4) not only names this special sovereign as “Cyrus” but also considered him a “Messiah” as well as a “Shepherd” over Israel. Moreover, Cyrus would carry out all of the Lord’s pleasure. In the light of biblical history, he accomplished that. Cyrus became the head of the great Medo-Persian Empire of which Daniel the prophet had also foretold (Daniel 2:39; 7:5; 11:1–2).

Various historians of antiquity mentioned this Cyrus. Herodotus says the Persians regarded him highly; Ammianus calls him “the amiable prince” of the Oriental world; Xenophon lauds the wisdom by which he governed, and Plutarch declared that in wisdom and virtue he surpassed all kings. Cyrus is mentioned by name in the Bible 23 times. It was this Cyrus’ army that overthrew the city of Babylon on the night the mysterious “handwriting on the wall” appeared.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa.1:1). The combined time that these men reigned is 113 years (2 Chr.26–29). The kings that followed reigned a total of 111 years (2 Chr.32–36). Then came the Babylonian servitude which lasted 70 years (2 Chr.36:20–21). As we do not know exactly when during Isaiah’s ministry that he prophesied about Cyrus, we cannot give an exact number of years. Nevertheless, basing our conclusions on what we do know from the scriptures, we are safe in saying that the prophecy was given approximately 130 years before Cyrus was born and approximately 170 years or more before Babylon was overthrown.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel chapter 5.

The history of Cyrus outside of the Biblical text was recorded by the two Greek historians, Herodotus and Xenophon. Herodotus records Cyrus’ life in his “*Histories*”.<sup>3</sup> Xenophon has placed the story of Cyrus’ life in his work entitled “*Cyropaedia*” (meaning, the education of Cyrus).<sup>4</sup> Where variations occur in the two Greek accounts, most authorities consider Herodotus to be the more accurate on the grounds that Xenophon is often judged to have presented a more “idealistic” or “romantic” history concerning Cyrus. With regard to the life of Cyrus, Herodotus states that he only wrote down that which in his opinion seemed credible:<sup>5</sup>

“But it is next the business of my history to inquire who this Cyrus was who brought down the power of Croesus, and how the Persians came to be rulers of Asia. I mean then to be guided in what I write by some of the Persians who desire not to make a fine tale of the story of Cyrus but to tell the truth, though there are no less than three other accounts of Cyrus which I could give”.

Herodotus applies the above to the various accounts of Cyrus’ death – “Many stories are related of Cyrus’ death; this, that I have told, is the worthiest of credence”.<sup>6</sup>

### A. CYRUS’ LINEAGE AND CHILDHOOD (675–559 BC)

The first Persian king to distinguish himself was Teispes I, son of Achaemenes, who during his rule (675–640 BC) not only annexed the Elamite territory of Anshan, but pushed farther to the southwest, conquering the territory of Parsumash. Upon his death, the kingdom was divided between his two sons. The older, Cyrus I (640–600 BC) inherited Parsumash whereas Ariaramnes, the younger, received Persia proper (see kings chart, p. 150).

As soon as Cyaxares I, king of Media and father of Astyages, greatly strengthened the power of the Medes by defeating the Scythians, the horizon darkened over the sons of Teispes I.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 107–214.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Loeb, Volume V, (1968), *op. cit.*, I, i, 1 – VIII, viii, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 214.

Whether Cyaxares I annexed the realm of Ariaramnes to Media is uncertain. However, what is clear is that the sons of Ariaramnes no longer bore the title of king. However, Cyaxares I left Cyrus the First as king of Parsumash but only as his vassal.<sup>1</sup>

Cambyses I (600 BC–559 BC), the second son of Cyrus I, succeeded his father on the throne with the title “King of Anshan”, a region of eastern Elam. His brother Arukku had been carried off to Nineveh as a hostage by Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria.

Cambyses I fathered Cyrus II (the Great). Cyrus II the Great’s mother was Mandane,<sup>2</sup> a daughter of Astyages the king of Media. Herodotus<sup>3</sup> and Xenophon,<sup>4</sup> earliest of the Greek historians, both agree on this particular. Thus, Cyrus the Great was the paternal grandson of Cyrus I of Persia and the maternal grandson of Astyages of Media.

The name “Cyrus” in Hebrew/Aramaic is “*koresh*”; in Akkadian, it is “*kurash*” and in Elam/Old Persian, it occurs as “*kurush*” which, according to Ctesias, means the sun.<sup>5</sup> Its Greek

equivalent is “*Kurios*” which is rendered “Lord” in English.<sup>6</sup>

The historian, Herodotus, relates the account of Cyrus’ birth and early childhood (see page 55, fn. 3). Herodotus states that Astyages had no sons, no male heir to his throne. In his old age and because of a terrifying dream, Astyages feared any son born to his daughter Mandane.<sup>7</sup> After another dream, King Astyages plotted to do away with any son she bore, and this he did when his grandson, Cyrus, was born.<sup>8</sup>

Two traditions exist for Cyrus before he reached the age of 10.<sup>9</sup> Astyages was introduced to the young boy at that time. Before that age, Cyrus grew up in obscurity and was known by the name Agradates.<sup>10</sup>

Now the Book of Jeremiah had foretold that the Babylonian servitude would last 70 years and then the Hebrews would be allowed to return to their homeland.<sup>11</sup> Other details about this deliverance were given in the Book of Isaiah. The Isaiah prophecy is especially significant in this connection, for it revealed the name of the man that would set the captives free and cause Jerusalem to be built again. His name would be Cyrus.

1 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 I will

<sup>1</sup> Faulstich, *History, Harmony, The Exile & Return*, op. cit., pp. 98–99.

<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding, a volume published by the British Museum in 1907 entitled *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia* establishes with the “Cyrus Cylinders” translation that “Ahasuerus” and Esther were the parents of the Cyrus of Isaiah 44:28; 45:1; J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. II, p. 547. Dake concurs on p. 490 (lower right column) of his *Annotated Reference Bible* and names Astyages as being the “Ahasuerus” in question.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding Cyrus’ parents, Herodotus states: “Astyages had a daughter, whom he called Mandane...[and he] wedded her to a Persian called Cambyses, a man whom he knew to be well born and of a quiet temper: for Astyages held Cambyses to be much lower than a Mede of middle estate. But in the first year of Mandane’s marriage to Cambyses...the birth of Cyrus [occurred]...” Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., I, pp. 107–108.

<sup>4</sup> With regard to Cyrus’ parentage, Xenophon states: “The father of Cyrus is said to have been Cambyses, king of the Persians: this Cambyses belonged to the stock of Persidae, and the Persidae derive their name from Perseus. His mother, it is generally agreed, was Mandane; and this Mandane was the daughter of Astyages, sometime king of the Medes”. *Cyropaedia*, op. cit., I, ii, 1–3.

<sup>5</sup> Ussher, *Annals of the World* (2003), op. cit., para. 803, p. 99 (1658 ed., p. 86).

<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, “Cyrus” is a play on words concerning the Messiah and thus must be seen as prophetic. Consequently, all of the Biblical passages citing Cyrus are also cryptic allusions to the Lord Jesus. This is especially borne out in Isaiah 45:1 where Cyrus is called the “Lord’s Messiah” (“Anointed One”).

<sup>7</sup> Astyages’ terrible dream, recorded by Herodotus, recounted: “Mandane: concerning whom he had a dream, that enough water flowed from her to fill his city and overflow all Asia”. The priest interpreted this to Astyages as obviously having to do with a son that would be born to Mandane. Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., I, 107.

<sup>8</sup> From Astyages’ second dream, Herodotus records: “He dreamt that there grew from his daughter a vine, which covered the whole of Asia”. This confirmed his interpretation of the first dream. Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., I, 108. Again, see page 55, fn. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, op. cit., I, iii, 1, and Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., I, 114.

<sup>10</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, Loeb, op. cit., Vol. VII, Bk. xv, 729.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10–14.

go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel (Isaiah 45:1–3).

Thus saith the LORD...of CYRUS, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the LORD to...Cyrus...I, the LORD, which call thee *by thy name*, am the God of Israel...I have even called thee *by thy name*: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me (Isaiah 44:24, 28–44:1–4).

Thus, a Persian king named Cyrus was to issue the edict to return and rebuild Jerusalem, especially the Temple (Isa.44:28). Isaiah calls him “my shepherd” (i.e., Jehovah’s) and Herodotus tells us that Cyrus was raised as a shepherd until he was ten.<sup>1</sup>

From reading the following text, Cyrus learned that by diverting the Euphrates River he could overthrow the city of Babylon and that he was to issue the edict for Jerusalem to be re-built.<sup>2</sup>

... that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid (Isa.44:26b–28)...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 (Isa.45:13)

Cyrus the Great had a daughter named “Atossa”. She eventually became the wife of Darius I (the Great).<sup>3</sup> (Again, see the chart on p. 150.)

## B. CYRUS’ RISE TO POWER (559–550 BC)

Cyrus’ rise to the Persian throne and his political policy are to be found in *The Babylonian Chronicles*, Herodotus, and the Hebrew Old Testament.

When Cambyses I, Cyrus’ father, died in BC 559, Cyrus inherited the throne of Anshan. Next, he worked toward unifying the Persian people – a feat he soon accomplished.

After this, Cyrus sought to gain control over the Median kingdom of his maternal grandfather Astyages. The tyranny of Astyages had already alienated a large faction of the Medes. To attain his goal, Cyrus entered in an alliance with Nabonidus, King of Babylon.<sup>4</sup> Herodotus relates that the Median general Harpagus, whom Astyages had previously wronged, deserted the aged king and brought his army to the side of Cyrus. Astyages was soon captured near Pasargadae,<sup>5</sup> and in BC 550 the Persians took the capital city of Ecbatana almost without a battle.

Babylonian Chronicle 7, also known as the Nabonidus Chronicle, tells how Astyages was overcome by Cyrus through the revolt of the Median army:<sup>6</sup>

- 1 (Astyages) mustered (his army) and marched against Cyrus (II), king of Anshan, for conquest [...]
- 2 The army rebelled against Astyages and he was taken prisoner. Th[ey handed him over] to Cyrus. ([...])
- 3 Cyrus (II) <marched> to Ecbatana, the royal city. The silver, gold, goods, property, [...]
- 4 which he carried off as booty (from) Ecbatana he took to Anshan. The goods (and) property of the army of [...]

According to the Babylonian Chronicles, the Persian rebellion against Astyages appears to have occurred during the sixth year of Nabonidus, 550 BC.<sup>7</sup> Learning that Cyrus

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI.i.1.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, III, 133.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 5, (Cyrus) p. 1184.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, Loeb, *op. cit.*, xv, 730.

<sup>6</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Chronicle 7, ii, 1–4.

<sup>7</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 106. It seems reasonable to put the fall of Astyages’ government in 550 BC, the sixth year of Nabonidus, on the basis of the Babylonian Chronicles. Chronicle 7 reports the activities of the third year of Nabonidus: there then follows a large lacuna (a gap) in which the fourth and fifth years are entirely missing. When the account is once again preserved, it appears that the author is describing events in the sixth year.

This is also the opinion of A.K. Grayson who writes: “When the text is again preserved, the author is describing events of the sixth year. The battle between

intended to revolt, Astyages<sup>1</sup> marched against his grandson. However, the Median army rebelled against their King and Cyrus was able to proceed to Ecbatana, the capital of his former master, in triumph. The sovereignty of the Persians was thus established.

During Darius the Mede's short reign<sup>2</sup> (BC 538–537) the Medes were consistently mentioned in Scripture *before* the Persians (Dan.5:28–Dan.6). During Cyrus' "first year",<sup>3</sup> the Persians gained political ascendancy over the Median constituency and are thereafter always mentioned *ahead* of the Medes (Esther 1:3, 14, 18, & 19). Thus, Parsa became the first ranking satrap in the land, Media the second, and Elam the third.

Herodotus describes Cyrus' sympathetic policy toward his grandfather after the Persian revolt:<sup>4</sup>

"But now, in Astyages' time, Cyrus and the Persians rose in revolt against the Medes, and from this time ruled Asia. As for Astyages, Cyrus did him no further harm, and kept him in his own house till Astyages died".

Cyrus' lenient policy toward his grandfather was the first recorded of his political policies which showed concern, care, and kindness toward others, including the people of Israel.

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Astyages and Cyrus (II = the Great), which resulted in the latter's victory, is recorded. The looting of Ecbatana, the capital of Astyages, is mentioned at the end of the segment".

<sup>1</sup> *Histories, op. cit.*, I, 127. Herodotus records that Astyages ruled 35 years (i.e., BC 585 – 550); *The Histories*, I, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Belshazzar, son and pro-rex of Nabonidus King of the Babylonian empire, was on the throne in the capitol city, Babylon, during the prolonged absence of his father. A great pagan feast was being held in the besieged city celebrating the impregnability of its famed walls.

As the prophet Daniel predicted when he interpreted the cryptic message scrolled miraculously upon the wall by a bodiless hand, the confederate armies of Media and Persian under the leadership of Cyrus entered Babylon that selfsame night, October 6, 539 BC (Gregorian), and Belshazzar was slain.

<sup>3</sup> That is, the first year of his sole reign over his newly enlarged empire (536 BC). When Cambyses I died in 559 BC, Cyrus inherited the throne of Anshan, a Persian kingdom but vassal of the Medes. Cyrus became king over all of Medo-Persia in 550. As they had no bearing upon Israel, Scripture makes no reference to these earlier accounts.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, I, 130.

While his Median general Harpagus was engaged in bringing Asia Minor under subjugation, Cyrus turned his army against the Babylonians. He took the city of Babylon in early October of 539, placed his uncle Darius (Cyaxares II),<sup>5</sup> the son of his grandfather Astyages and brother of his mother, on the throne while he continued at the head of the army, subduing the rest of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

In 536, Cyrus returned to resume control of the government. Thus 536 is his "first year" insofar as the Scriptures are concerned. It is the year in which Cyrus' kingdom more than doubled in extent, resulting in his becoming suzerain over the Jews. His power and prestige soared proportionately during that notable year.

### C. TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION FRUSTRATED FROM CYRUS TO DARIUS

The author of the Book of Ezra relates that the Jews enemies actively worked at hindering the re-construction of their temple.

Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia (Ezra 4:4–5).

As Cyrus was often away on extensive military campaigns, even during his reign Temple construction was thwarted (Ezra 4:4–5) for direct appeal to him was not possible. The 12th and 13th verses of the fourth chapter of Ezra indicate that despite the fact that Cyrus' Decree only specifically granted the authority to rebuild the Temple,<sup>6</sup> the returning captives

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<sup>5</sup> Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews and Neighboring Nations*, Vol 1, (1842), p. 137; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia, op. cit.*, I, ii, 1.

<sup>6</sup> 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. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2–4).

were also engaged in the construction of the city and its walls. Their opponents used this against them, bringing it to the attention of the Persian ruler, “Artaxerxes” (Pseudo-Smerdis, see fn. 2, page 93)), who in turn ordered the work on the Temple to be suspended “by force and power” (Ezra 4:23–24).

Thus, from the days of Cyrus’ rule when the rebuilding process began (BC 536) until the second year of Darius I (520 BC), the work on the Temple at Jerusalem was under constant harassment. According to the Behistun Inscription, a revolt of the city of Babylon was overturned, and it fell to Darius I (Hystaspis, of Marathon) in the autumn of 521 BC. Therefore, it was in the spring of 520 BC that Darius issued the edict to resume the Temple program.

Cambyses II had helped his father to govern Babylon and became an experienced ruler. During his short reign, Cambyses was able to subdue Egypt. By 525 BC, Memphis, the capital of Egypt, was in his hands.

Cambyses is especially remembered in Jewish history because of his kindness to the Jewish

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In addition to the Book of Ezra where the decree is recorded in Ezra 1:2–4 and Ezra 6:3–5, it is also given in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23. Ezra 6:3–5 seems to be the same edict, but written in Aramaic, the official international language at that time. Cyrus even returned those valuable articles which had been taken out of Solomon’s Temple by Nebuchadnezzar at the 597 BC “captivity” (2 Ki.24:8–14) and at the 586 BC “desolation” when the Temple was razed (2 Ki.25:8–18). Ezra, the scribe, reports this return of the holy vessels by Cyrus for use in the rebuilt Temple:

“Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7–11)”.

W.O.E. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson had questioned the edicts of Cyrus as given in the Bible: *A History of Israel*, (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 75, 81. However, no one would question the Biblical data today because of the Nabonidus Chronicle (a part of the Babylonian Chronicles), the famous Cyrus Cylinder, and “The Verse Account of Nabonidus Inscription”.

settlement located on an island at the first cataract of the Nile River, called Elephantine. Elephantine was a fortress manned by Jews to protect the southern borders of the land. The origin of this settlement is unknown to Scholars, but it is known that they had a temple erected for the worship of the God of Israel.

The *Aramaic Papyri of Elephantine*, implies that Cambyses spared the temple of the Jews while he destroyed the local temples of the Egyptians. A letter containing the petition for the authorization to rebuild the temple of “Yaho” (YHWH = Jehovah) dated in “the month of Tammuz in the fourteenth year of King Darius” refers to Cambyses’ favorable action toward the Jews:<sup>1</sup>

“Now, our forefathers built this temple in the fortress of Elephantine back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt, and when Cambyses came to Egypt he found it built. They knocked down all the temples of the gods of Egypt, but no one did any damage to this temple”.

When all of Egypt had fallen before the Persian army, Cambyses set out on the return journey to Babylon. Reaching Mount Carmel in Palestine, he learned that a usurper had risen up in the City of Susa claiming to be Smerdis, Cambyses’ brother whom he had murdered by the hand of an assassin, and now sat upon the throne of the Empire. Cambyses died soon thereafter at that very location.

#### D. CYRUS EXPANDS HIS EMPIRE

Having deposed Astyages, all of the Median Empire fell to Cyrus. The great king quickly succeeded in welding the Medes and Persians into a unified nation. Moving swiftly to the west, the great conqueror continued annexing land into his empire by seizing Armenia, Cappadocia, and Cilicia. This extended his dominion as far as the River Halys of Asia Minor. Eastward, his conquests included all of Persia.

The defeat of Astyages brought Cyrus into conflict with the kingdom of Lydia which hoped to profit from the fall of Media. From 560 BC, Lydia had been ruled by the legendary Croesus, the fabulously wealthy king of Lydia who was

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<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

famed for his gold. Upon his inquiry to the oracle at Delphi: “Shall Croesus send an army against the Persians” the Lydian king received the ambiguous response from the oracle: “if he should send an army against the Persians he would destroy a great empire”.<sup>1</sup> This did happen, but the destroyed empire was Lydia!

In reply to Croesus third inquiry as to whether his rule would be of a long duration, the Pythian priestess answered: “Lydian, beware of the day when a mule is lord of the Medians”.<sup>2</sup> Upon hearing this, Croesus reasoned that a mule would never replace a man as king over Media, and concluded that he and his posterity would forever rule over his empire.

Now the mule is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. Of course, the mule was a reference to Cyrus whose father and mother were from two different nations, Persia and Media. Moreover, as in the case of the mule, his mother was of nobler estate than his father. She was a princess, the daughter of Astyages king of the Medes, but Cyaxares I was king of a far lesser rank for he lay under the dominion of the Medians.<sup>3</sup>

Taking these prophecies to mean that he would defeat Cyrus, Croesus crossed the Halys, which had formerly become the agreed upon boundary between Media and Lydia,<sup>4</sup> and enslaved the city of Pteria in Cappadocia as well as its surroundings. Upon learning of this move by the Lydians, Cyrus, who had just crossed the Tigris River near Arbela with the city of Babylon apparently his intended target, immediately turned his army northwest.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 55; also see *Persian Problem*, page 64, fn. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 91.

<sup>4</sup> As related previously, this agreement between the two empires had been made to bring peace between Alyattes of Lydia [Croesus’ father] and Cyaxares I the Mede at the time of the famous 585 BC solar eclipse which had been predicted by Thales of Miletus.

The war between the Lydians and Medes had raged for five years with each winning many victories over the other. When in the sixth year of the conflict the combatants saw the day turned into night, they ceased fighting. The Halys River then became their agreed upon boundary.

The Babylonian Chronicles record Croesus’ defeat as transpiring during the ninth year of Nabonidus, 547 BC:<sup>5</sup>

- 15 In the month Nisan Cyrus (II), king of Parsu, mustered his army and
- 16 crossed the Tigris below Arbail. In the month Iyyar [he marched] to Ly[dia.]
- 17 He defeated its king, took its possessions, (and) stationed his own garrison (there) [...]
- 18 Afterwards the king and his garrison was in it ([...])

Cyrus first engaged Croesus at Pteria in Cappadocia, and on the first day of battle many fell from both sides. As Cyrus did not resume the attack on the day following, Croesus retired to Sardis, his capitol. From within the safety of the city walls, he disbanded all the soldiers who were not of his nation and dispatched envoys to his powerful allies – Sparta, Egypt, and the Babylonians. These were to join Croesus after the winter ended and march with him against the Persians at the beginning of spring.<sup>6</sup>

But Croesus had underestimated the cunning of Cyrus who had only pretended to withdraw. Cyrus instead pursued after the Lydians and defeated them in the month Iyyar<sup>7</sup> (April/ May) of 546 BC on the plain of Sardis when their horses became unsettled by the presence and odor of the camels that Cyrus placed at the forefront of the Persian charge.<sup>8</sup> The Lydian Empire was thus absorbed into Medo-Persia. Summing all this, Herodotus penned:<sup>9</sup>

“he (Cyrus) subdued Croesus ... and after this victory he became sovereign of all Asia”.

Cyrus’ defeat of Croesus brought the rest of Asia Minor from the Halys River westward, which included the Ionian Greek city states, under his dominion and gained Cyrus the title “king of Asia”.

Having conquered most of the then known world, there were still two powerful rivals left: Babylonia and Egypt. Before a march against Egypt could be undertaken, the nearer Babylonian kingdom had to first be secured. This

<sup>5</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, Chronicle 7, ii, 10, 15–17, p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, Chronicle 7, ii, 15–17, p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 77.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 130.

would also facilitate the launching of his invasion on the Land of the Nile.

During the preceding ten years, Nabonidus the king of Babylonia had not so much as visited the capital city. In his third year (553 BC), Nabonidus took a major portion of the army and departed to Tema (map page 35). At that time, he placed his profligate son Belshazzar over the city of Babylon as his pro-rex and entrusted the administration of that metropolis along with a large part of the army to him.

As stated previously, A.T. Clay has translated a small Babylonian Tablet on which Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, is referred to as the “crown prince”:<sup>1</sup>

“In the month of Tebitu, the 15th day, of the 7th year of (the rule of) Nabonidus, king of Babylon, Shumukin reported (text: present tense) as follows: ‘In a dream I saw the Great Star, Venus (i.e., Dilbat), Sirius, the moon and the sun and I shall (now) study this constellation) with regard to a favorable interpretation for my lord Nabonidus, king of Babylon, as well as to a favorable interpretation for my lord Belshazzar, the crown-prince!’ The 17th of the month Tebitu of the 7th year of (the reign of) Nabonidus, king of Babylon, Shumukin reported (text: present tense) as follows: ‘I have observed the Great Star and I shall study (this) with regard to a favorable interpretation for my lord Nabonidus, king of Babylon, as well as to my lord Belshazzar, the crown-prince!’”

#### E. NABONIDUS’ ABSENCE FROM BABYLON

“The Verse Account of Nabonidus Inscription” tells of Nabonidus’ absence from Babylon during his third year and the kingship being placed into the hand of his oldest son. Although the son is not named in the text, A.T. Clay’s tablet has just been cited on which he is called “Belshazzar”.<sup>2</sup>

-- when the third year was about to begin --  
He entrusted the ‘Camp’ to his oldest (son), the first-born,  
The troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his (command).  
He let (everything) go, entrusted the kingship to him

And, himself, he started out for a long journey,  
The (military) forces of Akkad marching with him;  
He turned toward Tema (deep) in the west.

He started out the expedition on a path (leading) to a distant (region). When he arrived there,  
He killed in battle the prince of Tema  
Slaughtered the flocks of those who dwell in the city (as well as) in the countryside,  
And he, himself, took his residence in [Te]ma, the forces of Akkad [were also stationed] there.

He made the town beautiful, built (there) [his palace]  
Like the palace in Su.an.na (Babylon), he (also) built [walls]  
(For) the fortifications of the town and [...].  
He surrounded the town with sentinels [...].

It would seem that Nabonidus ignored Cyrus the Great’s moves toward world conquest. The “Verse Account of Nabonidus” records:<sup>3</sup>

(While) Cyrus (is) the king of the world whose tri[umph(s) are true] And [whose yoke] the kings of all the countries are pulli[ng,]  
He (Nabonidus) has written upon his stone tablets:  
‘[I have made ... bow] to my feet  
I personally have conquered his countries, his possessions I took to my residence.’

#### F. NABONIDUS’ WORSHIP OF “SIN” THE MOON DEITY OF HARAN

Nabonidus weakened the Babylonian Empire not only by his absence from the capital city, but also by giving his support and loyalty to the moon god “Sin” whose worship was centered at Haran. This was done at the expense of the Babylonian deities, especially their “king of the gods”, Marduk, and it incurred the displeasure of the Chaldean priesthood in Babylon.

Two stele have been found in Haran upon which are carved the tombstone inscription of Adad-guppi, the mother of Nabonidus. On the slabs, she states that the moon god “Sin” had raised Nabonidus to the kingship over Babylon. They relate that Adad-guppi was a committed devotee of the Haran deity known as “Sin” or “the Divine Crescent”. She saw to it that Nabonidus was brought up in this cult, and he became an initiate into the forgotten rites of the mystery religion:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clay, Yale Oriental Series: *Babylonian Texts*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, pp. 313–314.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 561.

“Sin, the king of all the gods, looked with favor upon me and called Nabonidus, my only son, whom I bore, to kingship and entrusted him with the kingship of Sumer and Akkad, (also of) all the countries from the border of Egypt, on the Upper Sea, to the Lower Sea”.

Adad-guppi further relates:<sup>1</sup>

“Nabonidus, the only son, whom I bore, performed indeed all the forgotten rites of Sin, Ningal, Nusku and Sadarnunna, he completed the rebuilding of the temple Ehulhul, led Sin, Ningal, Nusku and Sadarnunna in procession from Babylon (Shuanna), his royal city, installed (them again) in gladness and happiness into Harran, the seat which pleases them”.

Two stele known as “the Haran Inscriptions of Nabonidus”, which had been re-used for paving stones, have been recovered from the ruins of Haran’s Great Mosque. It also speaks of Sin’s call of Nabonidus to the kingship over Babylon. Because the citizens of Babylon and its surrounding area rejected “Sin’s” being given prominence over Marduk, the deity supposedly directed the king to leave the city of Babylon:<sup>2</sup>

“For me, Nabonidus, the lonely one who has nobody, in whose (text: my) heart was no thought of kingship, the gods and goddesses prayed (to Sin) and Sin called me to kingship. At midnight he (Sin) made me have a dream and said (in the dream) as follows: ‘Rebuild speedily Ehulhul, the temple of Sin in Harran, and I will hand over to you all the countries’”.

“But the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk (and) Larsa, the administrators (and) the inhabitants of the urban centers of Babylonia acted evil, careless and even sinned against his great divine power, having not (yet) experienced the awfulness of the wrath of **the Divine Crescent**,<sup>3</sup> the king of all gods; they disregarded his (text: their) rites and there was much irreligious and disloyal talk.

“They devoured one another like dogs, caused disease and hunger to appear among them. He (Sin) decimated the inhabitants of the country, but he made me leave my city Babylon on the road to Tema, Dadanu, Padakku, Hibra, Jadihu even as far as Jatribu. For ten years I was moving around among these (cities) and did not enter my own city Babylon”. (boldface by FNJ)

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562.

<sup>3</sup> This is the real reason almost all the flags of Muslim countries bear the crescent of the moon.

Thus, Nabonidus neglected the worship of Marduk, the city of Babylon’s chief deity. Upon eventually learning of this, Cyrus the Great later took advantage of this neglect in his effort to conquer Babylon.

During the years Nabonidus was absent from the capitol, the Babylonian Chronicles<sup>4</sup> record repeatedly that the “Akitu” (new years) Festival did not take place because of the king’s absence.<sup>5</sup> During this celebration, the statue of Bel-Marduk was taken from its temple and paraded along the main street. Before the drunken revelry could begin, the king had to take the hand of the idol symbolizing that the monarch had received the god’s blessing to rule for the coming year. The Chaldean priesthood would not accept this being performed by a mere pro-rex. Only the king himself could so do, and the celebratory orgies that normally followed this act could not otherwise take place.

After the 11th year, the damage to the Annals is such that no positive statement can be made regarding years 12 through 16; however, these ceremonies probably did not take place during them as well. It appears that Nabonidus was away from Babylon for a minimum of ten years – from his third year (553 BC) to his 13<sup>th</sup> year (543 BC) at which time he was present. In the ninth year of his reign, Adad-guppi died on the fifth day of Nisan (547 BC).

Although Nabonidus was not present in the city to preside over the earlier Akitu Festival, he almost certainly left Tema to attend his mother’s funeral,<sup>6</sup> which apparently was conducted in Haran. The Chronicle recounts Nabonidus’ absence from Babylon and his neglect of the Babylonian religious festivals:<sup>7</sup>

5 ... The king (was) in Tema (while) the prince, his officers, (and) his army (were) in Akkad. [The king]

6 did not come to Babylon

5 [in the month Nisan]

6 Nabu did not come to Babylon. Bel did not come out. The [Akitu festiv]al [did not take place].

<sup>4</sup> Chronicle 7, ii, 5–7.

<sup>5</sup> Chronicle 7, ii, 5–24 specifically mentions that in the 7th, 9th, 10th, and 11th years of Nabonidus’ rule the king did not come to Babylon and Bel-Marduk was not brought of his temple; thus, the Akitu Festival did not take place.

<sup>6</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

- 7 The offerings  
8 were presented  
7 (to) the gods of Babylon and Borsippa a[s in  
normal times] in Esagil and Ezida.

Although the extant Babylonian documents lead us to conclude that Nabonidus' neglect of the "Akitu" (new years) Festival and Babylon's deities occurred over a period of at least ten years, the commercial tablets show that he kept in touch with his capitol city.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it is likely he only returned to the city of Babylon itself in Tishri of his 13<sup>th</sup> year<sup>2</sup> (543 BC) and in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (his final year, 539 BC), a few months before the city fell to the Medo-Persian coalition.

When Nabonidus finally realized the importance of his neglect, it was too late for the situation to be corrected. He was present during his seventeenth regnal year, probably because of the threat of Cyrus the Great to the city of Babylon. The Chronicle<sup>3</sup> records Nabonidus' presence in the capitol city during the king's 17th and final regal year (539 BC):<sup>4</sup>

- 5 [The seventeenth year. ...N]abu [came] from  
Borsippa for the procession of [Bel. Bel came out].  
6 [...In the month] Tebet the king entered  
Eturkamma. In the *temple* [...]  
7 [...] ... He made a libation of wine... [...]  
8 [... B]el came out. They performed the Akitu  
festival *as in normal times*. In the month [...]  
9 [... the gods] of Marad, Zababa and the gods of  
Kish, Ninlil [*and the gods of*]  
10 Harsagkamma entered Babylon. Until the end  
of the month Elul the gods of Akkad [...]  
11 which are above the ... and below the ... were  
entering Babylon. The gods of Borsippa, Cuthah,  
12 and Sippar did not enter (Babylon).

Realizing that the Medo-Persian threat was near, King Nabonidus came to Babylon for the "Akitu" Festival on Nisan 1, the Babylonian New Year, in 539 BC. To appease the gods, the populace and the priesthood, he brought the images of the Babylonian divinities into the city from the surrounding areas, but it was all to no avail.

<sup>1</sup> *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 351 (Nabonidus).

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET, op. cit.*, pp. 562–563 (i–iii)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109 (Chronicle 7, iii, 5–12).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

## G. HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF BABYLON'S FALL TO CYRUS

Toward the end of September of 539 BC, the Medo-Persian army of Cyrus under the command of Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, attacked Opis on the Tigris, and defeated the Babylonians. In early October (Gregorian calendar), Sippar was taken without a battle and Nabonidus fled. Two days later, Ugbaru's troops were able to enter Babylon. On the Hebrew calendar, these two dates are Tishri 14 and 16 in the year of Babylon's fall.

### 1. THE BABYLONIAN CHRONICLES ACCOUNT OF BABYLON'S FALL

The Babylonian Chronicles<sup>5</sup> records the fall of the city of Babylon to Cyrus in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus:<sup>6</sup>

- 12 ... In the month Tishri  
13 when  
12 Cyrus (II)  
13 did  
12 battle at Opis on the [bank of]  
13 the Tigris against the army of Akkad, the people  
of Akkad  
14 retreated. He carried off the plunder (and)  
slaughtered the people. On the fourteenth day  
Sippar was captured without a battle.  
15 Nabonidus fled. On the sixteenth day Ugbaru,  
governor of the Guti, and the army of Cyrus (II)  
16 entered Babylon  
15 without a battle  
16 Afterwards, after Nabonidus retreated, he was  
captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month  
the shield-(bearing troops)  
17 of the Guti surrounded the gates of Esagil. (But)  
18 there was no  
17 interruption (of rites) in Esagil or the (other)  
temples  
18 and no date (for a performance) was missed.

Thus, Babylon is said to have fallen to the army of Cyrus II without a battle,<sup>7</sup> and Nabonidus

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110; also Chronicle 7, iii, 12–18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110.

<sup>7</sup> Rather than being a factual history, the Cyrus Cylinder text reads as a piece of politically correct propaganda. The same may be said of the last portion of the "Verse Account of Nabonidus" (*ANET*, p. 314, v & vi) which has all the appearance of being a later inscribed "add on". The scribes within the Chaldean priesthood who wrote these certainly would not have wished to offend their conqueror but would have been strongly motivated to ingratiate themselves to their new sovereign.

The historic gist may be there, but the real purpose was to cause the conquered people to despise Nabonidus and

was captured in Babylon. Neither the Babylonian Chronicles nor the writings of Herodotus mentions the death of a Babylonian monarch as given in the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel.

## 2. HERODOTUS' ACCOUNT OF THE FALL

"Cyrus, then, marched against Nitocris' son, who inherited the name of his father Labynetus and the sovereignty of Assyria".<sup>1</sup>

Sometime after his marriage to Amytis, the daughter of the Median king Cyaxares I, Nebuchadnezzar apparently wed a certain "Nitocris". Hence, the citation from Herodotus concerning

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adore the new foreign ruler for his mercy and piety; hence the propaganda was undoubtedly read aloud publicly to the citizenry. In stating that Babylon basically fell overnight and totally capitulated during the early morning hours, the Persian record preserved by Xenophon (a Greek) certainly supports the Babylonian versions that the city was spared any "calamity" or devastation (*Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VII, v, 33), but these accounts still seem full of obsequious overstatements.

Were the taking of Babylon as *peaceful* as the Babylonian records insist, we can but wonder why Cyrus put off his official triumphal entry until 17 days after his army penetrated the walls. Moreover, in view of the known history of the Medo-Persian warriors of this general time period, to conclude that no women were ravished or innocents slain at this occasion is deemed most naïve. As to the statement that "the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle" [*ANET*, p. 306 (iii)], in a real sense this may be said for they did "enter" the city without "battle" for they *entered* – not by storming the walls etc. – but by subterfuge. They waddled under the archway of the wall along the bottom of the Euphrates. Such is no "battle".

"Battle" normally refers to an encounter between opposing forces in a state of open, *prolonged* fighting. Thus, much "fighting" in brief skirmishes and numerous vicious clashes could have taken place during the night before the day dawned. When morning came, the warriors in the citadels discovered much of the city was already taken and Belshazzar was slain. Upon learning this, they surrendered. Even if any brief sporadic resistance occurred over the next few days, neither it nor the night of carnage would merit the designation "battle".

Still, something seems amiss in this matter for the first half of this year is known as the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus and the last half as the accession year of Cyrus, yet there was a period of confusion between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> months (Tishri to Kislev = October–December) when some scribes dated events from Cyrus but others continued to recognize and date from Nabonidus [see: Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, *op. cit.*, p. 171. As Boutflower maintained, this seems to indicate that part of the city held out for several months against the Medo-Persians (*In and Around the Book of Daniel*, *op. cit.*, p. 132).

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 188; also see I, 77.

"Nitocris' son" could be referring to their son and, if so, he could be the biblical Belshazzar of Daniel 5. However, when we compare Jer. 27:6–7:

And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, **and his son's son**, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. (boldface FNJ's)

with Daniel 5:2, 11, 13, and 18, it becomes obvious that Belshazzar has to be Nebuchadnezzar's *grandson*. Thus, Belshazzar's father Nabonidus had to have wed a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar's. It is therefore likely that the Babylonian king named a daughter from this latter marriage "Nitocris" after this other wife. Further, Nitocris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, wed Nabonidus and bore him the biblical Belshazzar (see chart, page 150).

Remember, the above Herodotus citation said that Nitocris' son was named after his father Labynetus and we have just shown that this son was Belshazzar. However, the Labynetus of Herodotus I, 74 was Nabonidus and the already cited Haran tomb inscription (page 75) names his mother as Adad-guppi.<sup>2</sup>

Herodotus tells us that the Euphrates River was the Achilles' heel of the renowned impregnable walls of Babylon and that it was the key to the capture of the great city.<sup>3</sup>

... the city is divided into two parts; for it is cut in half by a river named Euphrates, a wide, deep, and swift river, flowing from Armenia and issuing into the Red Sea. The ends of the wall, then, on either side are built quite down to the river; here they turn, and hence a fence of baked bricks runs along each bank of the stream.

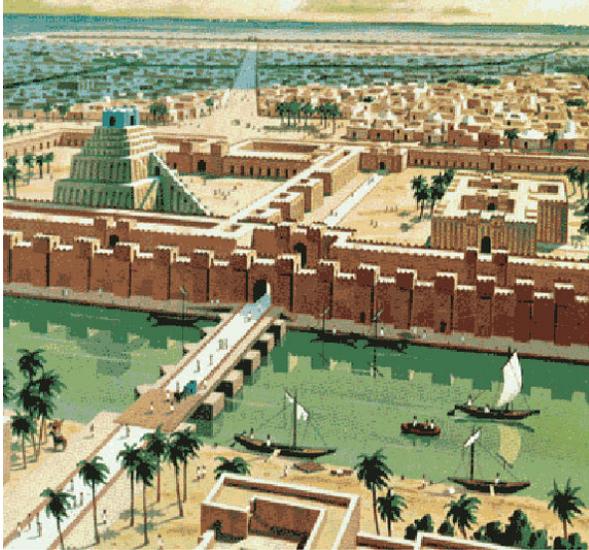
Herodotus relates how Cyrus used the river to enter the city:

Then...Cyrus...marched at last against Babylon. The Babylonians sallied out and awaited him; and when in his march he came near to their city, they joined battle, but they were worsted and driven within the city.

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<sup>2</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 560. The entire inscription is found on pp. 560–562. She died a natural death at the age of 104 in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Nabonidus, king of Babylon. Compare a similar inscription in *ANET*, pp. 311–312.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 180.



There, because they knew already that Cyrus was no man of peace, and saw that he attacked all nations alike, they had stored provisions enough for very many years; so now they cared nothing for the siege; and Cyrus knew not what to do, being so long delayed and gaining no advantage.

Whether, then, someone advised him in his difficulty, or he perceived for himself what to do, I know not, but this he did: he posted his army at the place where the river enters the city, and another part of it where the stream issues from the city, and bade his men enter the city by the channel of the Euphrates when they should see it to be fordable. Having so arrayed them and given this command, he himself marched away with those of his army who could not fight; and when he came to the lake, Cyrus dealt with it and with the river just as had the Babylonian queen: drawing off the river by a canal into the lake, which was till now a marsh, he made the stream to sink till its former channel could be forded. When this happened, the Persians who were posted with this intent made their way into Babylon by the channel of the Euphrates, which had now sunk about to the height of the middle of a man's thigh.

Now if the Babylonians had known beforehand or learnt what Cyrus was planning, they would have suffered the Persians to enter the city and brought them to a miserable end; for then they would have shut all the gates that opened on the river and themselves mounted up on to the walls that ran along the river banks, and so caught their enemies as in a trap. But as it was, the Persians were upon them unawares, and by reason of the great size of the city – so say those who dwell there – those in the outer

parts of it were overcome, yet the dwellers in the middle part knew nothing of it; all this time they were dancing and making merry at a festival which chanced to be toward, till they learnt the truth but too well.

Thus was walled Babylon then, for the first time, taken.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. XENOPHON'S ACCOUNT OF THE FALL

Xenophon's "*Cyropaedia*" is the only historic confirmation to the fifth chapter of the Book of Daniel in the matter of the death of a Babylonian king during Babylon's fall to the Persian army. For some, this poses a problem since neither the Babylonian Chronicles nor Herodotus mentions the death of a Babylonian monarch concurrent with the fall of the city.

However, the infallible Words of the Living God do not require historic confirmation. Secondly, we note that even though Herodotus is the only historic version that mentions the diverting of the Euphrates, his account is still deemed true by nearly all scholarship. Therefore, at least insofar as this particular is concerned, Xenophon's account of Babylon's fall must also be taken as factual.<sup>2</sup>

"When these words were spoken they advanced. And of those they met on the way, some fell by their swords, some fled back into their houses, some shouted to them; and Gobryas and his men shouted back to them, as if they were fellow-revellers. They advanced as fast as they could and were soon at the palace. And Gobryas and Gadatas and their troops found the gates leading to the palace locked, and those who had been appointed to attack the guard fell upon them as they were drinking by a blazing fire, and without waiting they dealt with them as with foes. But, as the noise and tumult ensued, those within heard the uproar, and at the king's command to see what the matter was, some of them ran out.

And when Gadatas and his men saw the gates open they dashed in pursuit of the others as they fled back into the palace, and dealing blows right and left they came into the presence of the king; and they found him already risen with his dagger in his hand. And Gadatas and Gobryas and their followers overpowered him; and those about the king perished also, one where he sought some shelter, another while running

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 190–192.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VII, v, 26–33.

away, another while actually trying to defend himself with whatever he could.

Cyrus then sent the companies of cavalry around through the streets and gave them orders to cut down all whom they found out of doors, while he directed those who understood Assyrian to proclaim to those in their houses that they should stay there, for if any one should be caught outside, he would be put to death.

While they were thus occupied, Gadatas and Gobryas came up; and first of all they did homage to the gods, seeing that they had avenged themselves upon the wicked king, and then they kissed Cyrus's hands and his feet with many tears of joy.

And when day dawned and those in possession of the citadels discovered that the city was taken and the king slain, they surrendered the citadels, too".

Whereas Xenophon does not name the Babylonian king that was slain as being Belshazzar (or Nabonidus), his narrative does require the death of a monarch.

This becomes certain when Gobryas, an Assyrian well advanced in years, first meets Cyrus the Great. The old man related to Cyrus how his only son had been killed by the present ruler of Babylon.<sup>1</sup> Gobryas promises to help Cyrus in the overthrow of Babylon if in return Cyrus would promise to avenge the murder for the death of his son. This Cyrus does promise.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, IV, vi, 1–5. Gobryas is presented as an old wealthy warrior who governs a sizeable domain. Upon coming to Cyrus, he relates that "the old king" (*Nabonidus*) had promised his daughter to his only son in marriage. But when the old King's son and the son of Gobryas went hunting together, the latter twice outshone the king's son who had since come to the throne while his father still lived. Gobryas then told Cyrus how, enraged over having been outdone, the new king of Babylon slew his son: "Then that villain no longer restrained his jealous wrath but, snatching a spear from one of the attendants, smote him in the breast – my son, my only, well-loved son – and took away his life. And I, unhappy I, received back a corpse instead of a bridegroom, and, old man that I am, I buried with the first down upon his cheeks my best, my well-beloved son.

But the murderer (*Belshazzar*), as if he had slain an enemy, has never shown any repentance, nor has he, to make amends for his wicked deed, ever deigned to show any honor to him beneath the earth. His father, however, expressed his sorrow for me and showed that he sympathized with me in my affliction". (*italics FNJ's*)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, vi, 1–8.

When the archaeological discovery of Babylonian texts referring to a Belshazzar as being associated on the throne with Nabonidus is taken together with the account preserved for us by Xenophon, they substantiate and connect this ruler with the slain monarch of Daniel 5.<sup>3</sup>

Further, Xenophon's account relates that although there was bloodshed in the capture of the city, nothing that could be termed a real "battle" transpired. As his report well agrees with the Babylonian Chronicles, Herodotus, and Daniel 5 – such must be seen as bestowing credibility to Xenophon's version.

#### 4. BEROSUS' ACCOUNT OF THE FALL

A Babylonian priest and historian, Berosus is cited by Josephus. He describes Babylon's fall and Cyrus' kind treatment of king Nabonidus:<sup>4</sup>

"... when he was come to the seventeenth year of his reign, Cyrus came out of Persia with a great army; and having already conquered all the rest of Asia, he came hastily to Babylonia. When Nabonnedus perceived he was coming to attack him, he met him with his forces, and joining battle with him, was beaten; and fled away with a few of his troops with him, and was shut up within the city Borsippus.

Hereupon Cyrus took Babylon, and gave order that the outer walls of the city should be demolished, because the city had proved very troublesome to him, and cost him a great deal of pains to take it.

He then marched away to Borsippus to besiege Nabonnedus; but as Nabonnedus did not sustain the siege, but delivered himself into his hands, he was at first kindly used by Cyrus, who gave him Carmania, as a place for him to inhabit in but sent him out of Babylonia. Accordingly Nabonnedus spent the rest of his time in that country, and there died".

Thus, Cyrus is reported as having a sympathetic policy toward Nabonidus just as he had for his grandfather, Astyages.

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<sup>3</sup> No document of Babylonian origin states that Belshazzar was actually present at the fall of Babylon. On the other hand, there is no positive secular evidence against his participation in the events of 539 BC.

Moreover, the absence of Belshazzar's name in their records is of no force as the Holy Writ is unmistakably clear that he did so partake.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I.20.



## H. CYRUS ENTERED BABYLON AS A HERO

The Babylonian Chronicles state that on Marchesvan 3 (BC 539) Cyrus entered Babylon to a hero's welcome. The text affirms that there was peace in the city while Cyrus spoke his greeting to all of Babylon.

It records the death of Ugbaru, one of Cyrus' governors, in the evening of Marchesvan 11. In addition to his death, supposedly the king's wife died,<sup>1</sup> but seemingly there is no reference to the

<sup>1</sup> The reader will note the broken bracket around the word "wife" in the following citation. This denotes damage but also that one or more characters of the word have been preserved (see Grayson, *ABC, op. cit.*, p. 111, the transliterated left column). A 4 by 3½ inch tablet of sun-dried clay with two columns of text on the front (obverse) and two on the back (reverse), the entire text of the

Nabonidus Chronicle (also called the Annalistic Tablet) is badly damaged and contains many lacunas.

Hormuzd Rassam, the eminent Assyriologist who discovered it states: "Where the tablet is damaged there is not room enough for the character for 'wife' (*assat*) and the verb to all appearance is not in the feminine...the traces (i.e., of the text – FNJ) point to *u mar*, 'and the son of'". Based on this, Charles Boufflower argues that the Nabonidus Chronicle may well confirm the accounts of Xenophon and Daniel 5 with regard to the slaying of a king on the night the city of Babylon was captured: *In and Around the Book of Daniel, op. cit.*, pp. 129–132.

While this may be possible, Boufflower is mistaken when he states that Gobryas entered Babylon on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz (June–July, pp. 127,130–132) and thus there was a span of 3 to 4 months after this that Cyrus entered the city. Instead of "Tammuz", he should have translated "Tishri" (September–October, *ABC, op. cit.*, p. 109 and read "*tasriti*", not *duuzi* = Tammuz). This reduces the time from Gobryas' entry to Cyrus' to 17 days (October 5 to 22 Gregorian). Further, the chronology of Boufflower's scenario does not well fit with the narratives recorded by Herodotus or Xenophon.

death of a king or his son – possibly because he had been slain previous to Cyrus’ entry. A public mourning for the king’s departed family member was observed for a week. This was followed by religious services conducted by Cambyses II, son of Cyrus. The Nabonidus Chronicle<sup>1</sup> (BM 35387) concludes the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- 18 ... On the third day of the month Marchesvan  
Cyrus (II) entered Babylon  
19 ... were filled before him. There was peace in the  
city while Cyrus (II)  
20 spoke  
19 (his) greeting to  
20 all of  
19 Babylon.  
20 Gubaru, his district officer, appointed the district  
officers in Babylon.  
21 From the month Kislev to the month Adar the  
gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought  
down to Babylon  
22 returned to their places. On the night of the  
eleventh of the month Marchesvan Ugbaru died.  
In the month [...]  
23 the king’s ‘wife’ died. From the twenty-seventh  
of the month Adar to the third of the month Nisan  
[there was] (an official) mourning period in  
Akkad.  
24 All of the people bared their heads. On the fourth  
day when Cambyses (II), son of C[yrus (II)],  
25 went to Egidrikalmmasummu the ... official of  
Nabu who ... [...]  
26 When he came, because of the Elamite ... the  
hand of Nabu [...] ... [...]  
27 [sp]ears and quivers from [...] ... *crown* prince to  
the *wo[rk...]*  
28 [...] Nabu to Esagil ... before Bel and the son of  
B[el...].

Regarding Cyrus’ entering the city of Babylon, the Cylinder of Cyrus reads:<sup>3</sup>

Without any battle, he (Marduk, FNJ) made him (Cyrus, FNJ) enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity. He delivered into his (i.e., Cyrus’) hands Nabonidus, the king who did not worship him (i.e., Marduk). All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country of Sumer and Akkad (southern and northern Babylon, FNJ), princes and governors (included), bowed to him (Cyrus) and kissed his feet, jubilant that he (had received) the kingship, their faces shone.

<sup>1</sup> Chronicle 7, iii, 18–28.

<sup>2</sup> Grayson, *ABC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–111.

<sup>3</sup> *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 316. The final words “and with shining faces” have been smoothed to “their faces shone”.

The main reason that Cyrus was welcomed as a hero by the citizens of the city of Babylon is that they knew of his sympathetic religious policies which he had extended toward the nations he had conquered. The citizens of Babylon were angered that their king had so long remained away from Babylon and was more interested in the gods of Haran than in the gods of Babylon.<sup>4</sup>

Nabonidus’ had dedicated his own daughter to the great temple of the moon god “Sin” at Ur. This along with the king’s devotion to the moon god and his neglect of Bel-Marduk, the chief god of Neo-Babylonia, evidently aroused the priests against his religious “reforms”.

This situation aided Cyrus in his capture of Babylon and accounts for the reason there was so little resistance. Thus, Cyrus was able to present himself to the priests and people as a gracious liberator and benefactor.

According to the previous Babylonian text, Cyrus himself entered Babylon on Marchesvan 3. His governor, Ugbaru, proclaimed peace to the province, governors were appointed, and an order issued for the restoration of many captive foreign idols to their several native sanctuaries.

In anticipation of the growing threat of Persian invasion, Nabonidus returned to Babylon in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (BC 539) and, in a desperate measure, collected all the various gods from the neighboring cities and conveyed them to Babylon for safekeeping. These idols were subsequently restored to their native shrines by the conqueror. After years of neglect, in the spring of 539 Nabonidus once again celebrated the New Year’s rite in the capital city, but it was too late to win back the favor of the people and the priests.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In 1956, D.S. Rice discovered in the ruins of the Great Mosque in Haran, two stele of Nabonidus. They were used there, secondarily, as paving stones. Both are in typical stele form ending in a semicircle which contains in bas-relief the king in adoration before the symbols of the Sun, Ishtar, and the Moon. This inscription concerning “Nabonidus and His God” speaks of religious conflict because of his absence from Babylon and because of his exaltation of the god “Sin” over the gods of Babylon.

This text explains why the citizens of Babylon did not resist Cyrus in his capture; they trusted that, based on his previous policies, he would bring religious reform to them. Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p 562.

<sup>5</sup> Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

## I. CYRUS' RELIGIOUS POLICIES

Cyrus' general policy included benevolence toward the conquered, support and sympathy for their gods, and a correction of the injustices done to them by their previous ruler.

In conformity with this policy, he restored the Babylonian idols to their temples, reconstructed temples that his predecessor had neglected, and returned exiles to their homes.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we see that his religious policies for Babylon in BC 539 were similar to the Biblical edict which he allowed to the Jews in 536 (Ezra 1:1–4, 7–11).

Archaeology has brought to light several Babylonian documents dealing with the religious freedom which Cyrus brought to his new subjects in Babylon. Cyrus retained his gentle religious policies toward those whom he vanquished throughout his entire career. Dramatically more lenient than the dealings of Nineveh and Babylon, this course served him well in his design for world conquest.

The Nabonidus Chronicle, the Cyrus Cylinder, and "The Verse Account of Nabonidus Inscription" give us great insight in understanding the state of affairs at the time of Cyrus the Great.

### 1. RELIGIOUS POLICIES ACCORDING TO THE NABONIDUS CHRONICLE

This document gives evidence that Cyrus the Great had a policy of returning foreign gods, temple vessels, and cultic worship objects to their homelands:<sup>2</sup>

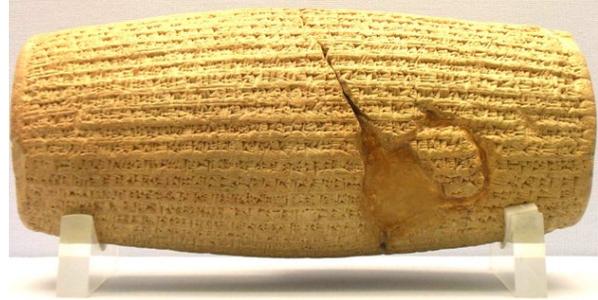
- 18 ... On the third day of the month Marchesvan  
Cyrus (II) entered Babylon  
19 ... were filled before him. There was peace in the  
city while Cyrus (II)  
20 spoke  
19 (his) greeting to  
20 all of  
19 Babylon.  
20 Gubaru, his district officer, appointed the district  
officers in Babylon.  
21 From the month Kislev to the month Adar the  
gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought  
down to Babylon  
22 returned to their places.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 5, "Cyrus", p. 1185.

<sup>2</sup> Grayson, *ABC, op. cit.*, p. 110.

## 2. RELIGIOUS POLICIES ACCORDING TO THE CYRUS CYLINDER

A baked clay cylinder about nine inches long bearing forty-five lines of text was found in Babylon that dates from the early part of Cyrus' reign over the Babylonians. Known as the Cylinder of Cyrus (pictured below), it records Cyrus' capture of Babylon, his return of prisoners to their own countries, and his restoration of treasures to the native temples.



Discovered in 1879 by Hormuzd Rassam, this famous cylinder is also in full agreement with the royal edict as recorded in the Bible and shows that Cyrus reversed the inhuman policy of deporting entire populations practiced by Assyrian and Babylonian conquerors:<sup>3</sup>

"All the kings of the entire world from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those were seated in throne rooms, (those who) live in other [types of buildings as well as] all the kings of the West land living in tents, brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon (Su.an.na). (As to the region) from ... as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to (these) sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries.

I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon (Su.an.na) to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in their (former) chapels, the places which make them happy.

From the above reading of the Cyrus Cylinder, it is clear that Nabonidus was seen as having done evil against the city of Babylon in his handling of the worship of Marduk, "king of

<sup>3</sup> *ANET, op. cit.*, p. 316.

gods”. This is why Marduk, the chief deity of Babylon, is said to have “scanned and looked through all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him (i.e., Marduk) in the annual Akitu procession”.<sup>1</sup>

From the Babylonians and Cyrus’ perspective, Marduk’s choice was Cyrus, king of Anshan, who was soon to become ruler of all their world. To them, it was Marduk who ordered Cyrus to march against the city of Babylon and Marduk who helped Cyrus enter Babylon with very little opposition – thus sparing the city any great calamity.

When Marduk supposedly delivered Nabonidus, the king of Babylon, into Cyrus’ hands, the inhabitants of the city as well as the countryside became jubilant. They viewed Cyrus as a liberator and submitted willingly to him as their ruler. Of course about 170 years prior to their fulfillment, Jehovah had predicted by name in the Hebrew Scriptures that, under His direction, Cyrus would perform these very feats e.g., Isaiah 44:28, 45:1–4, 13).

Now, as the legitimate King of Babylon, Cyrus brought peace and harmony to the city. He also restored the worship of Marduk therein. Cyrus permitted all the captives in the city of Babylon from the various conquered nations to return home from their Babylonian servitude. He also re-established new permanent sanctuaries for the various national deities which the Chaldeans had destroyed and returned the idols to their proper temples.

However, the Jews returned no images to their homeland. Although forbidden by the Decalogue, foreign idols had often been a snare unto their souls. The Babylonian servitude had the positive effect to – at long last – disengage the Jews from their penchant for the images of these foreign abominations.

The Cyrus Cylinder not only states that Cyrus was a righteous ruler but also that he had an upright heart. This makes one suspect that the author of the Cyrus Cylinder was aware of Isaiah’s oracle.

<sup>1</sup> Notice that in Isaiah’s oracle, the Lord views Cyrus the Persian as a righteous individual: Isaiah 45:12–13.

### 3. RELIGIOUS POLICIES ACCORDING TO NABONIDUS’ “VERSE ACCOUNT”

From the preceding accounts, it was clear that Cyrus was the legitimate king of the region and that he was viewed as having the approval of “the gods”. These documents, along with “The Verse Account of Nabonidus”, which depict Cyrus as granting religious privileges to the nations whom he subjugated are consistent with the Biblical account.<sup>2</sup> Here, the “Verse Account of Nabonidus reads:

[... for] the inhabitants of Babylon he (i.e. Cyrus) declared a state of ‘peace,’  
 [...] ... (the troops) he kept away from Ekur.  
 [Big cattle he slaughtered with the a]xe, he slaughtered many *aslu* - sheep  
 [Incense he put] on the censer, the regular offerings for the Lord of Lords he ordered increased,  
 [He constantly prayed to] the gods, prostrated on his face,  
 [To be/do ...] is dear to his heart.  
 [To build up/repair the town of Babylon] he conceived the idea  
 [And he himself took up hoe, spade and] earth basket and began to complete the wall of Babylon!  
 [The original plan of] Nebuchadnezzar they (the inhabitants) executed with a willing heart.  
 [...] ... he built fortifications on the Imgur-Enlil-wall  
 [The images of Babyl]on(ia), male and female, he returned to their cellas,  
 [The ... who] had abandoned their [cha]pels he returned to their mansions,  
 [Their wrath] he appeased, their mind he put at rest,  
 [... those whose power was] at a low be brought back to life  
 [Because] their food is served (to them) [regular]ly.  
 [...] (these) deeds he effaced,  
 [... which] he has constructed, all the sanctuaries [...] of his [royal rule] ... he has eradicated,  
 [...] of his [...] the wind carried away.  
 [...] his picture/symbol he effaced,  
 [...] in all] the sanctuaries the inscriptions of his name are erased,  
 [... whatever he (Nabonidus) had cre]ated, he (Cyrus) let fire burn up  
 [... what he (Nabonidus) had cre]ated, he (Cyrus) fed to the flames!  
 [To the inhabitants of] Babylon a (joyful) heart is given now  
 [They are like prisoners when] the prisons are opened  
 [Liberty is restored to] those who were surrounded by oppression  
 [All rejoice] to look upon him as king! (broken)

<sup>2</sup> ANET, *op. cit.*, pp. 314–315.

J.A. Thompson concludes that Cyrus' edict on behalf of the Jews is historically verified:<sup>1</sup>

“There can be no doubt that Cyrus showed a great deal of tolerance towards the various religious sections in the community. It is against the background of these facts that we must read the decrees of Cyrus found in the Bible. Quite clearly there is every reason to regard the Biblical accounts as authentic”.

That Cyrus did in fact restore temples is borne out by some of the inscriptions found at various archaeological excavations. Archaeology has demonstrated that Cyrus' concession to the Jewish exiles was not an isolated act, but the general policy of a remarkably humane leader.

As we have seen, after Cyrus had taken Babylon, one of his first acts was to restore all the “gods” to their native cities. Among these was the moon god of Ur. At that site, a gate of the sacred enclosure was found to have been repaired by bricks bearing Cyrus' name and on a broken inscription the great conqueror says:<sup>2</sup>

“Sin (the moon-god, also called the ‘Divine Crescent’), the illuminator of heaven and earth, with his favorable sign delivered into my hands the four quarters of the world, and I returned the gods to their shrines”.

On the bricks of the rebuilt gateway he records:<sup>3</sup>

“The great gods have delivered all the lands into my hand; the land I have caused to dwell in a peaceful habitation”.

Remember, many of Cyrus' accomplishments were predicted by the Hebrew prophet Isaiah about 170 years in advance of their fulfillment. Moreover, the Babylonian documents are written in such a way as to indicate that its authors were aware of Isaiah's prophecy; but where the name of Jehovah (Hebrew = יהוה, English = YHWH) occurred, the names of pagan deities were substituted.

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth

forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. 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; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. (Isaiah 44:24–45:4)

In AD 1701, Bishop Lloyd dated this prophecy as being uttered c.712 BC, 126 years before the 586 BC destruction of the Temple and about 173 years before the actual 539 BC fulfillment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Josephus states that Cyrus read about himself in Isaiah's prophecies which the Hebrew prophet foretold 140 years before the Temple's destruction, which is 179 years before Cyrus' fulfillment (*Antiquities, op. cit.*, XI.1. 2). Josephus relates how the prophecy seized and stirred Cyrus' heart to earnestly accomplish the divine design:

“This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: ‘My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple.’ This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished.

Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and, besides that, beasts for their sacrifices”.

<sup>1</sup> J.A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, Pub., 1940), p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Isaiah gave seven predictions which were historically fulfilled during Cyrus' lifetime:

1. the holy city, Jerusalem, as well as the cities of Judah were to be rebuilt and re-inhabited,
2. the Euphrates River and its canals were to be dried up,
3. Cyrus would decree Jerusalem to be re-built & the foundations of the Temple to be re-laid,
4. the Lord would help Cyrus subdue nations,
5. the Lord would loose the loins of kings, (see Dan.5:6 – Belshazzar)
6. the Lord would cause the gates of Babylon to be opened before Cyrus, and
7. the Lord would give to Cyrus the treasures of darkness, i.e., the pagan idols, jewels, and valuables stored within the pagan temples.

Herodotus, Xenophon, and the Babylonian Chronicles all verify the historical accuracy of Isaiah's prophesy as it pertained to Cyrus.

Again, we note below that Cyrus is designated as "my shepherd" by the Lord (Isaiah 44:28). Unquestionably, Cyrus was to round up the scattered sheep of Israel and Judah, and permit them to return home.

I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. 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 (Isa. 45:12–13).

The Persians worshipped a bird-like deity, called Ahura-Mazda. Cyrus is also presented in the Scriptures under the figure of a bird. Many of those who afterward read the prophesy would undoubtedly make the connection and discover that Jehovah is the true Lord:

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 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 46:10–11).

These prophecies concerning Cyrus set forth Jehovah's unique ability to predict future events.<sup>1</sup> They climax at Isaiah 44:28–45:7

<sup>1</sup> See Isaiah 41:4, 21–26; 44:25–26; 45:11, 21; 48:14.

where Cyrus is actually called by name and his special mission is given. Jehovah's calling of Josiah by name over 300 years in advance, recorded in 1 Kings 13:2 and fulfilled in 2 Kings 23:15–18, is a similar case depicting God's foreknowledge and control over the events of history.

## J. JEREMIAH'S SEVENTY YEARS PROPHECY

In issuing an edict for the Jews and then conquering Babylonia, Cyrus entered into the arena of Biblical history.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew exiles, who wept "by the rivers of Babylon", when they remembered Zion, kept their eyes toward the east, looking for the rise of Messiah-Cyrus (Psalm 137:1; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, 4). This ruler would say to Jerusalem – be rebuilt and to the foundations of the Temple – be re-laid (Isaiah 44:28). The Jewish exiles knew that the prophet Jeremiah had predicted that the length of the Babylonian servitude was to last for seventy years.

Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his

<sup>2</sup> Cyrus is mentioned in the following verses of Scripture: Isaiah 44:24–45:4, 12–13; 46:10–11; 2 Chr. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4, 7–8; 3:7; 4:3, 5; 5:13–17; Daniel 1:21, 6:28 and 10:1.

kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 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 (2 Chronicles 36:17–23).

According to Jeremiah's prophecy, Judah's enemy was to be the king of the north (Jeremiah 25:11). The Jews understood that to mean the King of Babylon.

Cyrus' overthrow of Babylon fulfilled all the conditions of the 70 years forecast. Jeremiah's prophecy required the conquest of the city and implied the death of the king as well:

And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations (Jer. 25:12–13)

As only Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* records the death of the king of Babylon at the time of its fall, with regard to this matter he is thereby shown to be more accurate than the Babylonian Chronicles, the history of Herodotus, and the quote from Berosus preserved in Josephus' *Contra Apionem*. Daniel 5:30 is explicit in declaring that Belshazzar was slain during the overthrow by the Medes and Persians on the very night of the feast.

Moreover, only Berosus' account of Babylonian history as quoted by Josephus, speaks of any destruction to the city of Babylon:<sup>1</sup>

"Hereupon Cyrus took Babylon, and gave order that the outer walls of the city should be demolished, because the city had proved very troublesome to him, and cost him a great deal of pains to take it",

Jeremiah is very clear concerning the destruction of the city of Babylon. A careful reading of 50:1–51:64 will reveal that Cyrus fulfilled this prophecy in all its detail along with the specifics recorded and quoted heretofore from

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, op. cit., I.20.

Isaiah. This becomes quite clear when the destruction of the great walls are considered in 50:15 and 51:44, 58.

The drying up of Babylon's waters is foretold in Jeremiah 50:38 and 51:36 over fifty years prior to Cyrus' diverting the Euphrates into the marshland – just as Isaiah had earlier foretold (Isa.44:27). Jeremiah does not merely say the "king" of the Medes would rise up against the city, but he speaks of "kings" (plural, 51:11, 28). In so doing, he connects the Isaiah prophecy, which speaks of Cyrus, with Daniel 5 – where Darius the Mede is named in association with Babylon's fall.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, although the general population of the city accepted Cyrus' person after the swift overthrow of its defenders, Cyrus had to leave his kinsman Darius the Mede on the throne setting up and running the government for approximately two years while, at the head of his armies, he personally conducted the subjugation of the rest of the Babylonian Empire. This arduous campaign is alluded to by Jeremiah 50:32 and 51:43. As documented earlier, Cyrus was mentioned by name years before by Isaiah and is clearly the "thee" of Jeremiah 50:21 and the "thou" of 51:20.

Lastly, the Jeremiah description also has a future fulfillment at which time the "thee" of 50:21 and the "thou" of 51:20 will apply to and be fulfilled by the Messiah, King Jesus. Thus, some of the details await the time of the Great Tribulation for their complete consummation (Rev.17 & 18; cp. Jer.51:6–9).

Further, when Jeremiah records that God will make the land of Babylon a perpetual desolation never to be inhabited (Jer.25:13; 50:39–40; 51:26, 29, 37, 43, 62), He does not require that this be accomplished in the ultimate sense at the time of Cyrus. After all, Alexander used Babylon nearly two hundred year thereafter. Nevertheless, these verses and others already cited depict that Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and the nation as a whole was a devastation.

<sup>2</sup> If Darius the Great destroyed Babylon's walls when he put down a c.519 BC revolt there as Herodotus' account states (III, 159), the plural "kings" in Jer. 51:11 & 28 could also apply to this as being a second fulfillment. However, this destruction of the wall is doubtful: see, Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, op. cit., p. 173.

### K. THE SEVENTY YEARS OF EXILE WHICH JEREMIAH HAD PREDICTED

One last point with regard to the seventy year period needs to be made for clarification. Observe the following:

JER 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

JER 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

JER 29:10 For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

These statements cover at least two different seventy-year spans. The first may be designated as “the servitude”. This seventy-year period began with Judah’s subjugation by then crown prince Nebuchadnezzar in BC 606. At that time, Daniel and other of the intellectually gifted young members of the royal family and princes were carried to Babylon and placed in the school of the Chaldeans. The time of “servitude” at Babylon terminated in 536 with the issuing of Cyrus’ decree allowing the Jews to return and begin the rebuilding of their Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1).

Another seventy-year interval bears the designation “the desolations”. This period is so named because it represents the seventy years in which there was no temple at Jerusalem – hence the appellation “desolations”. This span began with the BC 586 destruction of the Temple which Solomon had built and ended with the completion of its reconstruction under the direction of Zerubbabel on the third day of Adar<sup>1</sup> (the Jewish 12th month = February 14, Gregorian Calendar) in the sixth year of the reign of Darius Hystaspis (516 BC).

<sup>1</sup> This and other Bible dates are derived using a calendar conversion program designed by the Harvard Center for Astrophysics which employs the ephemeris in Jean Meeus’ *Astronomical Formulae for Calculators*. This is the standard formula used by astronomers today. These dates have been validated with a 2007 computer calendar program developed by my friend and colleague, Dr. Peter W. Moore of Houston, Texas.

Thus Cyrus’ capture of Babylon and his soon to follow edict must be viewed as the fulfillment of the seventy years of servitude but not the end of the seventy years of desolations which only concerned the Temple.

### L. CYRUS’ FINAL YEARS OF REIGN

Cyrus the Great reached his goal of building a Persian Empire greater than Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar II. Cyrus built a great palace at Pasargadae in the land of Persia near the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf. All throughout the palace, the repeated inscription was found: “I, Cyrus, the king, the Achaemenid.”<sup>2</sup>

Throughout Cyrus’ extensive campaigns, and in contrast with other ancient oriental conquerors, Cyrus was humane. The lives of Astyages, Croesus, and Nabonidus were spared and each was allotted a royal staff. Babylon’s people were won over by the sympathetic policies of the Persian king. The Jews, as well as all other deported peoples, were re-established in their homeland and granted religious freedom.

With the conquest of Babylon past, Cyrus made campaigns into central Asia during which he appears to have attempted to extend his authority to the Indus.<sup>3</sup> After receiving the submission of the Bactrians, Ctesias relates that Cyrus made war on the Sacians, a Scythian (Slavonic) people who seemed to have dwelt or roved along the Oxus River.<sup>4</sup> After alternate successes in battle, Cyrus attached King Amorges and the whole nation to himself in a faithful allegiance.<sup>5</sup>

Although most scholars insist that in 525 BC Cambyses became the first Persian king to conquer Egypt,<sup>6</sup> Xenophon clearly attributes

<sup>2</sup> Jack Finegan, *Light From The Ancient Past*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Ctesias, *Persica*, c.5 ff as cited in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 635 (Cyrus).

<sup>4</sup> A 1,560 mile long waterway that for some distance forms the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia and eventually empties into the Aral Sea which is located just east of the Caspian Sea.

<sup>5</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pages 636–637 (Cyrus).

<sup>6</sup> Disliked by his people, Pharaoh Amasis ruled Egypt with the aid of hired Greek soldiers. He died while Cambyses

the initial conquest of Egypt to Cyrus.<sup>1</sup> Further, archeology supports him in this.



The famous bas-relief of Cyrus the Great residing in Sydney, Australia (at left) shows him with two horns upon his head, one going forward and the other pointing backwards. Both curve sharply and between these horns are carved three objects which scholars have identified as Egyptian crowns.

This is his only inscription extant, and on it is written: “I am Cyrus, the Achaemenian”. What else could such a depiction mean other than Cyrus had become overlord of the already devastated Egypt (p. 10)? This suggests, in the very strongest of terms, that Cyrus did indeed conquer Egypt as Xenophon stated.<sup>2</sup>

It would naturally follow that upon learning of the great Medo-Persian king’s death, this southern kingdom successfully revolted necessitating an invasion by his son and successor to re-subdue the land of the Pharaoh’s to Persian rule. Thus, it would seem that *both* Cyrus and Cambyses II subdued Egypt.

### M. THE PASSING OF CYRUS

The Greek historians, Herodotus and Xenophon, give different accounts of the great Persian’s death. This should come as no surprise as these ancient “historians” give differing accounts of the fall of Babylon etc. Moreover, Ctesias of Cnidus (flourished 401–384 BC) was a Greek physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon who resided at court for 17 years in Susa. He wrote a history of Assyria and Persia based upon the Persian Royal Archives.

Like all ancient authorities, he often exaggerates and is not always reliable. It is, however,

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was en route to invade Egypt. Amasis’ son, Psamtik III, surrendered to the Persians at Memphis in 525.

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, I, i, 4 and VIII, vi, 20. Ussher & Newton accepted Xenophon: my page 62, fn. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Egypt had escaped foreign rule until this time. Of course, the question is why has academia not long ago recognized the significance of Cyrus’ bas-relief? The obvious answer is – because it validates *Cyropaedia*, which in turn supports Scripture (see my p. 62, right column).

noteworthy that Ctesias states that his reason for writing his history was to correct the many lies recorded by Herodotus with regard to the Persians. Thus we are somewhat left on the horns of a dilemma with three ancient contemporary Greek writers who rarely corroborate and often contradict one another.

As mentioned heretofore, when disparity does occur the fashion among most modern scholars is to accept Herodotus as correct. Having read his entire “*Histories*” the present author can but wonder why as, like nearly all ancient “histories”, it reads more like a travelogue in many places and a narrative in others.

These ancient works are punctuated with many supposed word for word direct quotes concerning events and happenings, but the writer was not even present. Moreover – most of the time he is not quoting second hand or even nearly so. With this well in mind, we continue.

### 1. XENOPHON’S ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF CYRUS

Xenophon presents Cyrus dying as an old man:<sup>3</sup>

“When his life was far spent amid such achievements and Cyrus was now a very old man, he came back for the seventh time in his reign to Persia. His father and his mother were in the course of nature long since dead so Cyrus performed the customary sacrifice and led the Persians in their national dance and distributed presents among them all, as had been his custom.

As he slept in the palace, he saw a vision: a figure of more than human majesty appeared to him in a dream and said: ‘Make ready, Cyrus; for thou shalt soon depart to the gods.’ ... he summoned his sons; for they had accompanied him, as it chanced, and were still in Persia. He summoned also his friends and the Persian magistrates; when they were all come, he began to speak as follows:

‘My sons, and all you my friends about me, the end of my life is now at hand; I am quite sure of this for many reasons; and when I am dead, you must always speak and act in regard to me as of one blessed of fortune. For when I was a boy, I think I plucked all the fruits that among boys count for the best; when I became a youth, I enjoyed what is accounted best among young men; and when I became a mature man, I had

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<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VIII, vii, 1–2, 6, 11, 28.

the best that men can have. And as time went on, it seemed to me that I recognized that my own strength was always increasing with my years, so that I never found my old age growing any more feeble than my youth had been; and, so far as I know, there is nothing that I ever attempted or desired and yet failed to secure. ...

So you, Cambyses, shall have the throne, the gift of the gods and of myself, in so far as it is mine to give.' ...'Remember also this last word of mine,' he said: 'if you do good to your friends, you will also be able to punish your enemies. And now farewell, my children, and say farewell to your mother as from me. And to all my friends, both present and absent, I bid farewell.' After these words, he shook hands with them all, covered himself over, and so died".

An appendix to Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was later added to the work. It speaks of the disintegration of the empire after Cyrus' death and appears to be somewhat accurate:<sup>1</sup>

"That Cyrus' empire was the greatest and most glorious of all the kingdoms in Asia – of that it may be its own witness. For it was bounded on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the north by the Black Sea, on the west by Cyprus and Egypt, and on the south by Ethiopia. And although it was of such magnitude, it was governed by the single will of Cyrus; and he honored his subjects and cared for them as if they were his own children; and they, on their part, revered Cyrus as a father. Still, as soon as Cyrus was dead, his children at once fell into dissension, states and nations began to revolt, and everything began to deteriorate".

## 2. HERODOTUS' ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF CYRUS

In contrast to Xenophon's account of Cyrus having experienced a peaceful death, Herodotus tells us that Cyrus was killed in battle in the land of the Massagetae.<sup>2</sup>

"... Tomyris, when Cyrus would not listen to her, collected all her power and joined battle with him. This fight I judge to have been the stubbornest of all fights that were ever fought by men that were not Greek; and indeed I have learnt that this was so. For first (it is said) they shot at each other from a distance with arrows; presently, their arrows being all shot away, they rushed upon each other and fought at grips with

their spears and their daggers; and for a long time they battled foot to foot and neither would give ground; but at last the Massagetae had the mastery. There perished the greater part of the Persian army, and there fell Cyrus himself, having reigned thirty years in all save one.

Thus, according to Herodotus, Cyrus was slain in battle by the Massagetans. These were a people that lived along the north side of the river Iaxartes near the Caspian Sea.

## 3. CTESIAS' ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF CYRUS:

Ctesias also writes that Cyrus was killed in battle, but he names the opponent as being the Derbices who seem to have lived on the south side of the Iaxartes. Both may have combined forces in the war. Here, Ctesias' account seems far more credible.<sup>3</sup>

He relates that battles were fought on successive days with Cyrus being mortally wounded and carried from the field during the first encounter. The following day, king Amorges (see page 88) came to Cyrus' aid. He led the Sacian cavalry into battle and completely routed the enemy. The following day Cyrus died and his body was taken to Pasargadae where he was buried in the renowned monument (see rear-view picture on the next page).

Cicero, citing from the Persian writer Dionysius, adds that Cyrus was 70 when he was slain:<sup>4</sup>

"The sun appeared to Cyrus in his sleep, standing at his feet. When Cyrus endeavored to take the sun in his hands three times, the sun turned aside and went away. The Magi, who are counted as wise and learned men among the Persians, said that his three attempts to take hold of the sun meant that he should reign thirty years. This came to pass accordingly, for he started to reign at the age of forty and lived to the age of seventy".

<sup>3</sup> For example, Herodotus writes that Queen Tomyris found and decapitated Cyrus' body, then filled a skin with human blood and put his head in the skin while verbally insulting Cyrus because her son Spargapises had killed himself while he was Cyrus' prisoner.

This capture and mutilation of Cyrus' body does not agree with the account given by the writers of the life of Alexander the Great. They record that Alexander found Cyrus' sepulcher at Pasargadae near Persepolis.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero, *De Divinatione*, (Loeb, vol. XX) 1. 1. c.23.

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VIII, viii, 1–2.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 201, 205, 206, 209, 210, 214.

### N. CYRUS THE GREAT'S TOMB

Contrary to Herodotus' account, Cyrus' body apparently rests in a tomb consisting of only a single small room on a foundation of six steps at Pasargadae. The tomb itself is a quadrangular structure. Its base measures about 45 by 38 feet, and the tomb chamber itself about 17 by 17 feet and 19 feet high. As seen below, it has six steps and a gabled roof that rises about 35 feet above the ground. The tomb has a low door that opens into a small chamber whose inner dimensions are 10½ by 7½ feet. It contained a golden sarcophagus in which lay the body of Cyrus.



According to the Greek historian Plutarch (c.AD 45–120), this tomb was discovered while Alexander the Great was engaged in his conquest of the then known world. Alexander is said to have paused to read the following inscription:

“Oh man, whosoever thou art and whencesoever thou comest, for I know that thou wilt come, I am Cyrus, and I won for the Persians their empire. Do not, therefore, begrudge me this little earth which covers my body”.<sup>1</sup>

After reading the inscription upon this tomb, Alexander ordered it to be repeated below in Greek letters. Then Plutarch adds: “these words, then, deeply affected Alexander, who was reminded of the uncertainty and mutability of life”.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives: "Alexander"*, Loeb, 11 Volumes, Vol. 7, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus the mission of Cyrus – the LORD'S anointed – came to an end. The compassionate king had accomplished the LORD'S pleasure. His 536 BC decree following close after the 539 October conquest of the city of Babylon liberated the Jewish exiles, granting them permission to return to Jerusalem with the sacred vessels to rebuild their Temple – all in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Under Cyrus, the Persian Empire was the greatest the world had seen up to that time.

### O. CAMBYSES ASCENDS THE THRONE

Cambyses II, Cyrus' firstborn son, had been selected by the great king as his successor prior to his passing. In 526 Cambyses completed his preparations for invading and retaking Egypt. Before leaving, he attempted to secure the throne by placing a Magian named Patizithes over the government during his absence.

Now Bardiya, the Smerdis of Herodotus, was the proper name of the younger son of Cyrus and full brother to Cambyses. Ctesias calls him Tanuoxarkes and says that Cyrus placed him over the empires eastern satrapies. Most Persian names can be assigned meanings, and this latter seems to indicate “a strong body.”<sup>3</sup> This is borne out for Smerdis is said to have been the only Persian who could, lacking only two fingerbreadths, draw the Ethiopian bow.<sup>4</sup>

While the expedition was en route to the Land of the Nile, the once resourceful old Pharaoh Amasis II died in 526 and his son Psamtik III (Psammetichus III) became Egypt's new king.<sup>5</sup> Psamtik was defeated in a hard-fought battle at Pelusium and fled to Memphis where he was captured.<sup>6</sup> The deposed pharaoh was carried off to Susa in chains.

Psamtik was given his liberty and probably would have been given the governorship of Egypt for, after defeating a king, the Persians often honored their sons by granting them such power. However, Psamtik later meddled in political intrigue and plotted a revolt. He was

<sup>3</sup> J.M. Cook, *The Persians*, 6<sup>th</sup> printing, (London: The Orion Publishing Group Ltd, 2002), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 11, 13.

executed for his involvement in this conspiracy by being forced to drink bull's blood, thereby causing his death.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, by midsummer of the fifth year of his reign (525 BC), Cambyses had become king of Upper and Lower Egypt. The conquest of Egypt gave the Persians the island of Cypress, which had been under Egyptian control for nearly all the previous half-century.<sup>2</sup> He then invaded Ethiopia but the swamps, deserts, etc. frustrated his attempt to completely dominate that land.

During this Ethiopian campaign, Patizithes learned that Cambyses had arranged the assassination of Smerdis, and he usurped control of the empire in BC 522 by placing his brother Gomates (or Gaumata) on the throne.<sup>3</sup> Darius' brief account of this is recorded on the Behistun Inscription. There, Darius states that after becoming king, Cambyses gave orders to his aides to kill Smerdis and that this was kept secret. Then when Cambyses went down to Egypt, a Magus named Gaumata rose up claiming to be Bardiya; he took the throne, and all the people supported him and rebelled against Cambyses.<sup>4</sup>

These brothers were Magians, a priestly cultic caste similar to the Druids and often referred to as the "magi". It was proclaimed to the populace that Gomates (identified by the Behistun Inscription and Ctesias) was actually Smerdis; hence his name commonly appears in literature as "Pseudo-Smerdis".<sup>5</sup>

According to Herodotus, whose account is somewhat different from that of Darius the Great's, Smerdis (Bardiya) had accompanied Cambyses down to Egypt. But because Smerdis alone could nearly draw the Ethiopian bow, he was sent back to Persia out of jealousy. Then, as the result of a dream in which a messenger

came from Persia and told the king that Smerdis was seated on his throne, Cambyses sent his most trusted counselor Prexaspes to secretly kill his brother. Finding him at Susa, Prexaspes so did.

When Patizithes, the Median<sup>6</sup> Magian who had been left in charge of the palace, learned that Smerdis (Bardiya) had been assassinated he conspired with his brother to seize the throne. The populace had no idea that Smerdis was dead. As Gomates bore a very close physical resemblance to Smerdis<sup>7</sup> and as Smerdis, being a recluse, made few public appearances, the deception was for a short time successful. These magi ruled seven months.

While on his way back to the city of Babylon and encamped in Syria, Cambyses learned of the betrayal and that Gomates had been widely accepted in the eastern provinces. History here gives differing accounts.<sup>8</sup> Some authorities say Cambyses was murdered on the way back to Babylon; others insist that he committed suicide, fearing that the assassin had not carried out the deed or that Smerdis had somehow come back to life. Herodotus tells us that upon hearing of the coup d'état, he leapt upon his horse with intent to march forth against the Magians. As he mounted, the cap on the tip of his scabbard fell off, and he accidentally stabbed himself in the thigh.<sup>9</sup> Gangrene set in, and Cambyses died from the infection.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless, He died in 522 BC. As Cambyses had neither son nor daughter, Darius, his 28 year old commander and distant cousin, quickly moved to claim the kingship.<sup>11</sup> This was greatly

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 15. Supposedly, the blood would coagulate and choked the drinker.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, *The Persians, op. cit.*, p. 70. Also, see FNJ's "Agenda", pp. 12–13.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 65.

<sup>4</sup> One problem with Darius' account is that we are, in effect, being led to believe that Bardiya had been dead for three or four years without anyone becoming aware of it.

<sup>5</sup> Pseudo-Smerdis is the Artaxerxes of Ezr.4:7–23 as the implication of the word "kings" in Ezr.4:13, & 22 implies a plural reign (see fn. 2, page 93).

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 73.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Carlton J. Hayes & J.H. Hanscom, *Ancient Civilizations*, (New York: McMillian Co., 1968), p. 175.

<sup>9</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 64.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Darius' first wife was a daughter of the satrap Gobryas and had three sons by her before 522 when he became king. Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, VII, 2. Thus, Darius was already moving in the highest circles before he attained the throne, and it would thus seem that Herodotus was either misinformed or misunderstood when he wrote that Darius was merely "one of Cambyses' guard and as yet a man of no great account" (III, 139). It seems more likely that he may have held the high post of the king's spear-bearer.

facilitated by the fact that Darius was related to Cyrus through a parallel royal line (see chart on page 150).

Being an officer in the renowned “Ten Thousand Immortals”,<sup>1</sup> he took charge over the army and marched northward to Babylon. Darius entered the city, slew the Magian brothers and rapidly consolidated the empire.

Because of Cambyses’ Egyptian invasion, the revolt of Gomates, and the continual accusations by the Jews enemies before various Persian monarchs as recorded in Ezra 4, the Temple reconstruction in Jerusalem did not resume until the second year of Darius I the Great (520 BC).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hayes & Hanscom, *Ancient Civilizations, op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Another “Persian Problem” involves the identity of the Ahasuerus of Ezra 4:6 and the Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:7–23. The key to resolving this problem is found in Ezra 4:5: “And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, **even until** the reign of Darius king of Persia”.

Some have caused confusion here by altering the correct translation of the Hebrew **וְעַד** from “even until” to some other possibility such as “and.” The verse would then read, “all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, **and** the reign of Darius king of Persia”. This would allow them to choose someone other than Artaxerxes I Longimanus as the Artaxerxes who rebuilt Jerusalem and its wall in his 20<sup>th</sup> year (such as Artaxerxes II Mnemon, 405–359 BC).

In this scenario the Darius in Ezra 4 becomes Darius II Nothus, 423–405 BC – but here they violate two of the three guidelines given on page one. The correct Artaxerxes is: (1) the first “Artaxerxes” who reigned *after* Darius I (Ezra 6:14), and number (3) the one whose accession to the throne was 483 years from Christ’s first advent – specifically, from His crucifixion (Dan. 9:24–27).

However, any such change overlooks the fact that Darius is again named at the end of the discourse (vs. 24) and there we find the Hebrew **וְעַד**, which is the same as in 4:5 except without the **ל** (a “*waw*”, pronounced “vav”, which is the “even” in “even until”). Why not insist on the “and” there (of course, here such a reading would not make sense). Instead, in verse 24 we find this **וְעַד** is properly rendered as “unto,” which carries the same basic meaning as “until” at the 5<sup>th</sup> verse. Thus, we see that verse 24 supports the KJB translation of 4:5.

Now to resolve the problem, let us consider the true *context* of “all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, **even until** the reign of Darius”. The clear, straightforward reading of Ezra 4:5 discloses that the two monarchs given in verses 4:6–23 are those who ruled *between* Cyrus and Darius (Cyrus...even until...Darius). Moreover, Darius being named again at verse 24 underscores that God has recorded for us the rulers that frustrated the building project between Cyrus (vs. 5) *until* Darius: the discourse begins with Cyrus and ends with Darius.

Indeed, the natural reading is that all these kings are given in chronological order. That order is: [1] Cyrus, [2] his son Cambyses, [3] the Magi usurper Gomates (called Pseudo-Smerdis) – his brother Patizithes placed him on the throne claiming he was Smerdis (another of Cyrus’ sons) during Cambyses’ campaign into Egypt, and then [4] Darius I (Hystaspis, of Marathon, the Great).

Thus, Cambyses is the logical identity of the Ahasuerus in vs. 6 and the Artaxerxes of vv. 7–23 is Pseudo-Smerdis (Patizithes his Magi brother was the power behind the throne). The word “kings” in Ezra 4:13 & 4:22 seems to imply a *plural* reign (i.e., Pseudo-Smerdis on the throne at Babylon and King Cambyses in Egypt). This further indicates that the Artaxerxes here is Pseudo-Smerdis.

After all, as already noted, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes are not personal names but appellatives or titles such as “pharaoh”, “sultan” or “caesar” (see page 38). Ahasuerus signifies “the mighty king” (or “high father”) and the prefix “arta” denotes “the great” or “king of”. As Xerxes connotes “shah” (i.e., king), Artaxerxes could mean either “the great king” or “king of kings” (cp. Ezra 7:12). As such, the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes in 4:6–7 are merely titles that may apply to any Persian king.

Moreover, it simply must be seen that the Artaxerxes in 4:7–23 falls within the period of Cyrus *until* Darius – not after. Again, the “even until” is the key and God given protection to keep us from going astray here. Furthermore, as the Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 ruled *before* Darius I he cannot be the same as that in Ezra 7 because the Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 reigned *after* Darius (Ezra 6:14). Ezra 7:1 confirms this for it reads “after these things”, meaning an Artaxerxes *after* the Darius in chapters 4–6. Thus, the Artaxerxes that stopped the building in Ezra 4 is not and cannot be the same as the Artaxerxes that rebuilt the city and its wall in his 20<sup>th</sup> year. Moreover, it is the association of Ezra and the Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 along with that of Ezra with Nehemiah throughout their books that enable us to confidently identify the Persian king in Ezra 7 with the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah (e.g., Ezra 2:2 with Neh. 12:1, 8:9, 12:26, 36 with vs. 38).

Finally, the totally unworthy practice of resolving Bible problems by altering the Word of God is made manifest by first noting that this author’s private collection of 15 English translations *all agree* with the preceding King James rendering. Indeed, scripture warns against private interpretations (2 Pet. 1:20–21).

Furthermore, the *Hebrew* translation “Tanakh,” as well as one from the Jewish Publication Society, also read as the KJB. J.P. Green’s interlinear Hebrew-English bible translates it “even until”. Even the Septuagint reads “even until”. Moreover, the 1560 Geneva translation reads likewise as does the *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* (Vol. 3, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI: 1991, p. 13) by John Joseph Owens (the very best available). Many more could be cited, but surely this is enough to make the point. Whereas “and” is possible, none of the many translators agrees with that interpretation at Ezra 4:5. Thus, this “problem text” is not a so-called “unfortunate King James translation problem.”

Actually, as we have shown, the “even until” wording is an excellent example of the Holy Spirits providential guiding of the King James Bible translators, as well as all the others who also so interpreted the Hebrew. They correctly considered the *context*, not merely the word.



## VI. DARIUS I HYSTASPIS

On his deathbed (530 BC), Cyrus the Great named his firstborn son Cambyses II to succeed him on the throne and appointed his younger son Smerdis<sup>1</sup> governor of Media, Armenia and Cadusia.<sup>2</sup> Darius the son of Hystaspis had previously served under Cambyses as the king's spear-bearer<sup>3</sup> and an officer in the famous Ten Thousand Immortals, an elite branch of the Persian army.

In 525 BC, King Cambyses embarked on a campaign into Egypt and left the Magian priest Patizeithes in charge of the palace. According to Darius' famous Behistun Inscription, Cambyses feared that Smerdis might attempt a rebellion during his absence. Consequently, even before setting out for Egypt he secretly conspired for his brother to be murdered.<sup>4</sup>

Later in 525 (the fifth year of his sole reign), Cambyses succeeded in conquering Egypt. Next, he invaded Ethiopia but the swamps, deserts, etc. frustrated his attempts for its complete annexation.

### A. THE MAGIAN REVOLT

As previously stated, during the Ethiopian engagement, in 522 BC Patizeithes usurped total control placing his Median brother Gomates<sup>5</sup> on the throne.<sup>6</sup> Being aware of Smerdis' assassination, Patizeithes masterminded the revolt by taking advantage of the fact that his brother bore a close resemblance to Smerdis. As the populace was unaware of Smerdis' death, the takeover was carried off smoothly and without incident.

Both brothers were Magians, a priestly cultic caste similar to the Druids and often referred to as the "magi". The general population was led to believe that Gomates was actually Smerdis; hence his name is commonly given as "Pseudo-Smerdis".<sup>7</sup> These magi ruled during the last seven months of Cambyses' eighth year.<sup>8</sup> However in the eighth month, it became known who was actually sitting on the Persian throne.

Otanes,<sup>9</sup> son of Pharnaspes – one of the wealthiest members of Persian nobility, was the first to suspect the Magian was not Cyrus' son, Smerdis. His suspicions were aroused by the fact that the Magian never left the citadel nor summoned any notable Persian into his presence.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of the usurpation, the Magian took unto himself all of Cambyses' wives. Among them was one of Otanes' daughters, Phaedyne. Otanes' suspicions were further aroused when Phaedyne informed him that she did not know for certain who her husband was as she had never seen Cyrus' son, Smerdis. Neither could she inquire of Atossa, Cambyses' sister, for ever since coming to the throne Gomates made the women of his harem live apart, each in her appointed quarter, so that communication was impossible.

It was known that during his reign, for some grave reason Cyrus the Great had cut off the ears of this Magian. Therefore, Otanes instructed his daughter that when it was her turn to visit the "King's" bedchamber (Persian wives share the bed in rotation), she was to feel for his ears while he was sound asleep. Phaedyne so did and found that the man had

<sup>1</sup> Cambyses' brother is called Smerdis by Herodotus. The Old Persian name for him is Bardiya.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon calls Smerdis "Tanaoxares", *Cyropaedia*, 8.7. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus gives a different account saying that Smerdis had accompanied his brother Cambyses on the Egyptian campaign but, due to jealousy, had been sent back to Persia. After a dream in which he was told Smerdis was on the royal throne, Cambyses dispatched the most trusted of his Persians, Prexaspes, to return and slay him. This he did – at Susa (*Histories*, III, 30).

<sup>5</sup> Darius Hystaspis calls the usurper Gaumata on the Behistun Inscription. Ctesias also mentions him.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, III, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Pseudo-Smerdis is the Artaxerxes of Ezr.4:7–23 as the implication of the word "kings" in Ezr.4:13, 22 implies a plural reign (see fn.2, page 93).

<sup>8</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, III, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Otanes had a powerful claim to the Persian throne because he was descended from the Achaemenid line and his sister, Cassandane, was wife to Cyrus the Great. Otanes married Darius' sister (or daughter) and he was the father of Phaedyne, the queen of Cambyses, the false Smerdis and also Darius I (Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 141; Herodotus, III, 68 & 88).

Amestris, another daughter of Otanes', was wed to Xerxes I and his son Smerdomenes served as a general in Xerxes' army (Rawlinson's *Herodotus: The Persian Wars*, VII, 61 & 82).

<sup>10</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, III, 68

no ears. The following morning, she reported her discovery to her father.<sup>1</sup>

Otanes then took into his confidence two Persians of the highest rank whom he thought worthiest of trust, Aspathines and Gobryas, and told them the whole story. These friends had already suspected as much, and this confirmed their worst fears. They resolved that each should now take into their confidence the Persian whom he most trusted. Otanes brought in Intaphrenes, Gobryas brought Megabyzus and Aspathines took in Hydarnes; thus they numbered six<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, Cambyses had learned of the betrayal and he intended to return and retake his throne. Here, Historians give differing accounts.<sup>3</sup> Some authorities say he was murdered on the way back to Babylon. Others relate that while en route, Cambyses jumped onto his horse and accidentally stabbed himself in the thigh. Gangrene soon set in, and he died some three weeks later.<sup>4</sup> Still others insist that he committed suicide, fearing that Prexaspes, the assassin, had not carried out the deed or that Smerdis had somehow come back to life.

As Cambyses had no son, his 28-year-old<sup>5</sup> commander Darius swiftly moved to claim the kingship. Darius was not a member of Cyrus' family, but he did belong to a collateral

Achaemenid line and thus was a distant cousin to Cyrus. Moreover, Darius' father, Hystaspis, the satrap (governor) of the Persian province Parthia, as well as Arsames his grandfather were still alive<sup>6</sup> when, with the army at his side, Darius marched toward Babylon.

Upon nearing the seditious city, the six young Persians of nobility met Darius and pledged their support. They revealed to him that the Persians were ruled by a Mede, a Magian, and an earless one at that.<sup>7</sup> Darius disclosed to them that he already knew that the man on the throne was a Magian and that Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, was dead. Joining them, the seven set forth and upon entering the palace, they slew the Magians.

Meanwhile, the Magians had commissioned Prexaspes, the slayer of Smerdis son of Cyrus, to assert that it was indeed the real Smerdis who sat on the Persian throne. Prexaspes, who was greatly esteemed by the Persians, spoke from the palace tower tracing the lineage of Cyrus from Achaemenes to the present unto the Persians whom the Magi had summoned.

When he came to Cyrus, he recounted all the good which the king had done for Persia. Then, according to Herodotus, Prexaspes stated, "I ... was compelled by Cambyses to kill Smerdis son of Cyrus; it is the Magians who now rule you".<sup>8</sup> Invoking a terrible curse on the Persians if they failed to win back the throne and take vengeance on the Magians, he threw himself headlong from the tower – thus honorably ending his life.

The seven Persians, purposing to attack the Magians, knew nothing of Prexaspes' speech. However, learning of that which had just transpired on the way to the palace, the six finally submitted to Darius' urging and again advanced toward the palace.

Being permitted by the guard to go into the palace, they quickly entered the chamber where the two Magians were consulting together on the outcome of Prexaspes' action. In the struggle that followed and before the first

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 70. After he had crushed the revolts throughout his empire, Darius had the Behistun Inscription carved on the smoothed surface of a mountain face more than 300 feet above ground level. It is barely accessible even for a skilled mountaineer. The six names that Darius had carved on the Behistun Inscription are: Vidarna, Vindapana, Gaubaruwa, Bagabukhsa, Utana, and Ardumanis. All except Ardumanis corresponds to Herodotus' list.

<sup>3</sup> Hayes & Hanscom, *Ancient Civilizations, op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, III, 64–66.

<sup>5</sup> *Collier's Encyclopaedia*, 1981, p. 718 (Ctesias). Ctesias of Cnidus (flourished 401–384 BC) was a Greek physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon residing at court for 17 years in Susa. He wrote a history of Assyria & Persia based upon the Persian Royal Archives. Like all ancient authorities, Ctesias often exaggerates and is not always reliable. He gives Darius' life span as 73 years. This would give him 44 years of sole reign (73–28). See: *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, H.S. Gehman, ed., page 210 under "Darius" #2.

<sup>6</sup> Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire, op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 73.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 75.

Magian could be cut down, Aspathines was badly wounded in the thigh, and Intaphrenes was wounded resulting in the loss of his eye. Meanwhile, Gobryas grappled with the other, and Darius rescued him by running the Magian through with his dagger. After killing the Magians, they cut off their heads.

Upon hearing from the seven what had been done and how the Magians had deceived them, the Persian populace resolved to slay all the Magians. This ended the Magi revolt. That day became the greatest holy day in all of Persia. It was celebrated annually with a great festival called “the Massacre of the Magians”.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, these seven families linked one to another by inter-marriages. The six became established as counselors to the king with special privileges. They even bore the right to rule their estates as semi-independent princes for the duration of the Persian Empire.

## B. DARIUS GAINS THE THRONE – BC 521

With the October 522 BC overthrow of the Magians, Darius immediately gained the crown; however, his first official year began in 521. But this sudden change was the signal for all parts of the Empire to rebel and attempt to regain their independence. For two years<sup>2</sup> Darius had to put down opposition in Babylon, Asia Minor, Egypt, and his eastern provinces which included Media, Elam, Parsa, and Iran.



Pretending to be of the old royal race, usurpers arose and gathered large armies around themselves. In Persia itself, Vahyazdata imitated the example of Gaumata and was acknowledged by the majority of the people as the true Bardiya. Darius with only a small army of Persians and Medes as well as some trustworthy generals overcame all the

difficulties, and in 522 and 521 all the rebellions were put down (Babylon rebelled twice, Susiana

three times), and the authority of Darius the Great was established throughout the empire.

A.T. Olmstead writes: “after two years of hard fighting, Darius was finally recognized as king over most of western Asia”.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter, Darius laid claim to be the legitimate heir to the throne.<sup>4</sup> Concerning Darius and his power, Herodotus writes:<sup>5</sup>

So Darius son of Hystaspis was made king, and the whole of Asia, which Cyrus first and Cambyses after him had subdued, was made subject to him, except the Arabians; these did not yield the obedience of slaves to the Persians, but were united to them by friendship, as having given Cambyses passage into Egypt, which the Persians could not enter without the consent of the Arabians.

Darius took wives from the noblest houses of Persia, marrying Cyrus’ daughters Atossa and Artystone; Atossa had been wife of her brother Cambyses and afterwards of the Magian, Artystone was a virgin. He married also Parmys, daughter of Cyrus’ son Smerdis, and that daughter of Otanes who had discovered the truth about the Magian; and the whole land was full of his power.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, tells how the Babylonians revolted against Darius and how he evidently captured the city of Babylon:<sup>6</sup>

When the fleet had gone to Samos, the Babylonians revolted; for which they had made very good preparation; for during the reign of the Magian, and the rebellion of the seven, they had taken advantage of the time and disorders

<sup>3</sup> Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire, op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Darius I Hystaspis claimed to be the legitimate successor of Cambyses. In the eyes of many of his contemporaries he was a usurper. However, on the Behistun Inscription Darius attempted to prove that he was the scion of the house of Achaemenes by carving the following pedigree: “Says Darius the king – My father (was) Hystaspis; the father of Hystaspis (was) Arsames; the father of Arsames (was) Ariaramnes; the father of Ariaramnes was Teispes; the father (of Teispes) was Achaemenes...on that account we have been called Achaemenians; from antiquity we have descended; from antiquity our family have been kings...(There are) eight of my race who have been kings before (me); I (am) the ninth”. The Behistun Inscription, col. 1, lines 2–4 in Frances R. B. Godolphin, ed., *The Greek Historians*, Vol. 2, (New York: The Random House, 1942), pp. 623–632.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 88.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 150–159.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, III, 76–79.

<sup>2</sup> Compare: 1 Esdras 5:73.

to prepare themselves against the siege; and (I cannot tell how) this was unknown. ...

When Darius heard of this he mustered all his power and led it against Babylon, and he marched to the town and laid siege to it; but the townsmen cared nothing for what he did. They came up on to the bastions of the wall, and mocked Darius and his army with gesture and word. ...

A year and seven months passed and Darius and all his army were vexed by ever failing to take Babylon. Yet Darius had used every trick and every device against it. He essayed the stratagem whereby Cyrus took the city, and every other stratagem and device, yet with no success; for the Babylonians kept a marvelous strict watch and he could not take them.

However, through a conspiracy and trickery, Darius was eventually successful in taking the city. The timing of this episode is in question. According to Herodotus, this revolt seems to have taken place long after Darius' accession. However, the Behistun Inscription places it during the first years of his reign.

### C. DARIUS THE GREAT – THE KING

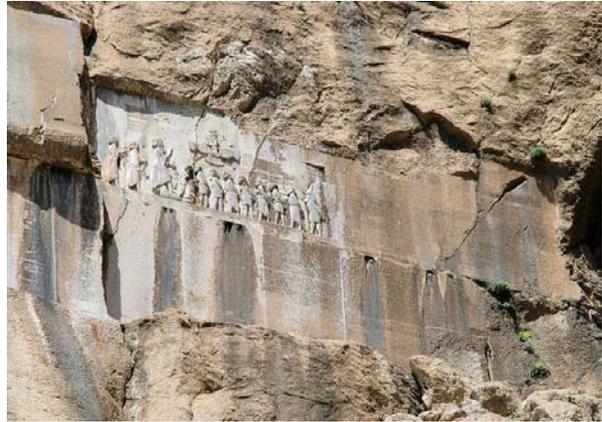


An ardent Zoroastrian and zealous worshiper of Ahura-Mazda (as were Xerxes and Artaxerxes), Ezra 6:10 shows that Darius I Hystaspis was nonetheless sufficiently polytheistic as to enlist the aid of other gods. This Darius was entitled “the Great” because he saved the Achaemenid Empire.<sup>1</sup> The dynasty would likely have ended with Cambyses II had

Darius not secured the loyalty of the Persian army. During the same year he slew Gomates (= Pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata), Darius records on the famous Behistun Inscription (see picture, on right column) that he defeated nine kings in nineteen battles in order to secure the throne.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> About 518 BC, Darius had a biographic record of his rise to power carved on a sheer cliff 225 feet above the plain.



### 1. THE IONIAN REVOLT

The Ionian Revolt was the beginning of the major Persian problems with the Greeks. Around 1,600 BC,<sup>3</sup> the Aeolians, who were the first of three groups of invaders who came from the north, swept into the so-called Mycenaean or Helladic civilization of Greece. Next came the Ionians.<sup>4</sup> Then around 1150 BC, the warlike Hellenic Dorian tribe began their invasion of Greece.

When the Dorians pushed down into the Peloponnesus,<sup>5</sup> many of the Ionians sailed across the Aegean Sea and founded a confederacy of 12 independent towns (Ephesus, Miletus, etc.) along the western coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Eventually, this 90-mile-long 25-mile-wide mountainous region became known as Ionia. The people of this tribe were the ancestors of the Athenians of historical times.

Although the Lydian king Alyattes took control over two of the Ionian towns, it was not until the reign of his son Croesus (560–546 BC) that all the cities of Ionia successively fell under Lydian rule.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, these Greek cities

<sup>3</sup> The Greek dates older than 776 BC may be 200 to 300 years too ancient as Sir Isaac Newton has shown: *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, Revised Edition, Ed. Larry and Marion Pierce, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009) (Original, London: 1728).

<sup>4</sup> Named for Ion, the son of Xuthus, the son of Hellen and Orsius. Hellen's 3 sons, Dorus, Xuthus, (with his sons Ion & Achaeus) and Aeolus, are the supposed progenitors of the ancient tribes that formed the Hellenic nation.

<sup>5</sup> Most conspicuous among the Dorians as related by Herodotus were the people later known as Lacedaemonians, or Spartans,

<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1960, Volume 12, page 574; Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, I, 6.

then became subject to the Persians shortly after Cyrus' 546 BC defeat of Croesus.

Having provoked the Lacedaemonians to the point of war, Athenian envoys traveled to Sardis in 507 to see the Persian satrap Artaphernes for the purpose of obtaining a treaty with Darius in order to secure themselves against their bitter rivals.<sup>1</sup> However, during the interval public sentiment had changed and when the diplomats returned they were greatly blamed by their fellow Athenians.

The Ionians revolted from 52 year-old Darius I in 499 BC, and Athens agreed to send 20 ships in support of their kinsmen.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, these ships were the beginning of great trouble for Greece. In 498, these 20 ships sailed to Ephesus in support of the rebels. Together, the great host moved inland and attacked Sardis. Along with its temple of Cybele, the torch was put to all except the citadel, which Artaphernes himself defended with great vigor while the allies held the lower city.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually the Persian leaders determined that the rebel stronghold of Miletus could finally be taken by land. Greeks not in the city gathered on the island of Lade which lay in the gulf before the city. The Persians also requisitioned a great fleet of 600 ships for the encounter. The Ionians and their allies mustered 353 triremes and waited for the enemy at the mouth of the Milesian Gulf. As the 494 BC "Battle of Lade" was joined, dissension within the allied ranks arose and they turned out to sea leaving the Ionians all alone to face the mighty armada. The rebels were decisively defeated,<sup>4</sup> and effective sea resistance was at an end. The six year rebellion came to a close in 493.

In light of the aforementioned 507 treaty, Darius may well have regarded the Athenian participation in the Ionian revolt as an act of betrayal.<sup>5</sup> Enraged by the Athenian role in the attack and razing of Sardis, Darius called for his bow and shot an arrow skyward while

praying as he so did: "O Zeus, grant me vengeance on the Athenians". He then charged one of his servants to remind him three times at each dinner: "Master, remember the Athenians".<sup>6</sup>

## 2. EVENTS LEADING UP TO MARATHON

To punish the Greeks, in 492 BC 59 year-old Darius sent an expedition against them under Mardonius, the youthful son of Gobryas who was newly married to the king's daughter Artozostre. However, as the grand fleet rounded Athos a violent gale from the north struck and some 300 triremes along with over 20,000 men perished.

Simultaneously, while camped in Macedonia Mardonius' land army suffered a serious defeat. They were ambushed at night by the Brygi; Mardonius was wounded and many of his soldiers were slain. Although the Brygi were ultimately subdued, the ill-fated expedition then ingloriously returned to Asia.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

In 490, a second expedition led by a Mede named Datis and Artaphernes the younger, Darius' nephew, was sent across the Aegean Sea.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt to gain a foothold near Athens, the Persians landed at Eretria which lay on the backside of the isle of Euboea. After a week-long siege and savage fighting, the city was betrayed and fell to the invaders.<sup>9</sup>

A few days later, the Persians determined to land at Marathon for it was close to Eretria and also its plain was the best part of Attica for their horsemen.<sup>10</sup> When the Athenians learned of the Persian invasion and the fall of Eretria, they immediately dispatched Phillippides (Phidippides) their greatest distance runner to Sparta – some 150 miles away. He reached his destination "on the day after he left Athens".<sup>11</sup> The Spartans resolved to assist the Athenians but replied that they could not march till the

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, V, 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> Cook, *The Persians*, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–141 (orig. 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, V, 105.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 43-45.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 94.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 101.

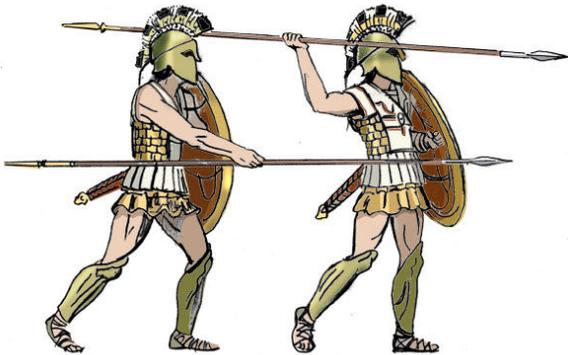
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 102.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 105 & 106.

moon was full. Only the Plataeans came to the immediate aid of Athens.

The Athenians were under the leadership of ten generals of whom Miltiades was the acknowledged leader. At first, the ten were evenly divided as to whether to remain behind to defend Athens or go on the offensive and march to Marathon.<sup>1</sup> Miltiades finally had his way and with the Persians making anchor in the Bay of Marathon, the Greeks marched out to meet them. Both armies took their positions, but several days transpired before they actually engaged.

The Athenian force consisted of about 9,000 hoplites<sup>2</sup> These bore shields in their left hand and spears in their right.



About 1,000 men from Plataea brought the Greek total to around 10,000, none of which were horsemen or archers. The Persian force was two or three times that number, but they relied mainly on their archers and were not as heavily armored.

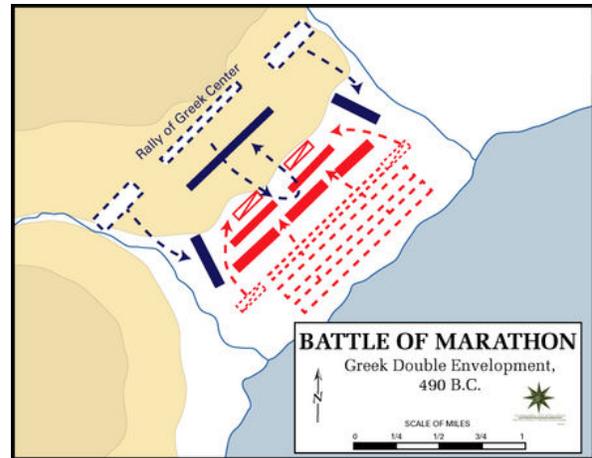
Miltiades deliberately aligned his men such that the middle of the Greek line was only a few ranks deep and placed the greater part of his foot soldiers on both wings.<sup>3</sup> Knowing the archers maximum range (c.500 feet), Miltiades brilliantly had the phalanx charge at a run.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, VI, 109.

<sup>2</sup> Hoplites were heavily armed infantrymen who fought in a phalanx formation, usually eight men deep: Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible, op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories, op. cit.*, VI, 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 112–113. Herodotus states: “They were the first Greeks, within my knowledge, who charged their enemies at a run, and the first who endured the sight of Median garments and the men clad therein; (the Median



By quickly closing the gap, the Persian archers lost their advantage and the Greeks reached the enemy with only minimal losses.<sup>5</sup>



During the long struggle, the Persians took the bait and broke through the thin Greek center. The Athenians and Plataeans on each wing were victorious and having put their enemies to flight now closed the trap by drawing their wings together, thus catching the Persians that had broken the middle of their line in a pincer maneuver. The Persians broke rank and fled to their ships, but the Greeks overtook them and slaughtered vast numbers.

garb was unmistakable – Xenophon tells us they wore purple tunics: *Cyropaedia*, I, iii, 2; VII, I, 2) till then, the Greeks were affrighted by the very name of the Medes.”

<sup>5</sup> Some have taken Herodotus to say that the hoplites ran with their armor the full distance between the opposing forces which he gives as eight furlongs or about one mile, but a careful reading does not demand this.



MAP CONTRASTING THE GREAT PERSIAN EMPIRE (ORANGE) AND GREECE (GREEN)

The victors took seven of the Persian ships, but the rest set sail for Athens hoping to take the city before the Athenian troops could return. Seeing the fleet sail away, Miltiades was afraid that the ships would attack Athens by sea. Fearing the city might surrender without knowing of the victory at Marathon, he sent Phillippides to carry the news back to the city.

Although Phillippides had just taken dispatches to Sparta and back (300 miles!), he nevertheless raced the 25 miles to Athens. Stumbling and exhausted, he reached the city and gasped out: “Rejoice, we conquer”, and fell dead.<sup>1</sup>

The Athenian army hastened back with all speed to defend their city before the Persian navy could navigate around Cape Sunium and attack. It was all over; they sailed back to Asia. The Persians had lost 6,400 warriors<sup>2</sup> – the Greeks only 192.<sup>3</sup> Two days later, a force of

2,000 Spartans arrived, having covered the 150 miles in just three days (50 miles a day!).

#### 4. DARIUS THE GREAT'S ACHIEVEMENTS

In addition to saving the empire and the other accomplishments already mentioned, Darius the Great reorganized the empire into 20 satrapies and many provinces. He also established a highly efficient postal system similar to the nineteenth century American pony express, built a fabulous new capital at Persepolis, took northwest India, re-dug an ancient canal from the Nile to the Red Sea (circa 513 BC),<sup>4</sup> and conquered Libya, Thrace, and Macedonia (c.514 BC).

The great 490 BC Greek victory only initiated further hostilities between the two antagonists. Darius died in 486 while preparing for yet another attack on Greece. Ten years later, Darius' son Xerxes would seek to avenge his father's humiliating defeat at the hands of the Hellenes and again invade the Greek homeland. He met with the same result as his father.

<sup>1</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12 (M), 1960, p. 150 (Marathon). The foot race in today's Olympic Games was named “the Marathon” in honor of Phillippides' run.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, VI, 117. Such lopsided casualties were typical of ancient battles with the greatest losses being inflicted when one side was routed and trying to flee from the field of battle.

<sup>3</sup> The 192 Greek dead is certain because their names were inscribed on a stele, their bodies were cremated, and their remains buried in the 30 foot high, 490 foot diameter Soros (monument) mound that still stands on

the Plain of Marathon: Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–169. No Persian source makes any reference to the battle.

<sup>4</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Tenney Gen. Ed., (1978), *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 27 (Darius I Hystaspis). Also see: Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, VIII, 98 and cp. Esther 8:10.

#### D. DARIUS AND THE REBUILDING OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

The Temple Solomon built (1 Kings 6) was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.<sup>1</sup> The exiles who returned with Zerubbabel under the edict and protection of Cyrus the Great in 536 BC (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–8) laid the foundation for the second Temple in 535 (Ezra 3:8–13). However, during that same year their efforts to continue rebuilding were thwarted by the Samaritans and other adversaries (Ezra 4) who accused the Jews of intrigue and sedition against the Persian government.

Although Cyrus had permitted the Jews to return for the sole purpose of rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 1:2–5, 5:13–17, 6:3, 7–8), he did not take it upon himself to personally deal with these false allegations (Ezra 4:5). This leaves us to conclude that he was apparently occupied with other matters that demanded more of his attention. Moreover, the great king probably was not present to receive any petitions from the returning Hebrews.



History knows very little of Cyrus' final years, especially the years 535–532. It is known that after the subjugation of Babylon, he made campaigns into central Asia and at that

time appears to have attempted to extend his authority to the Indus River area (green area on the map).<sup>2</sup>

As previously stated,<sup>3</sup> although academia insists that in 525 BC Cambyses became the first Persian king to conquer Egypt, Xenophon clearly attributes the initial conquest of Egypt to Cyrus.<sup>4</sup> Further, the well-known bas-relief of Cyrus (right column) shows him wearing Egyp-

tian crowns and bearing the inscription: "I am Cyrus, the Achaemenian".<sup>5</sup> This can only mean that Cyrus had become overlord of Egypt as stated by Xenophon. With Cyrus at the head of his army pursuing such ventures, the Jews simply would have had no personal access to him during the years after their return. Indeed, Cyrus' son and successor, Cambyses, had little sympathy for his struggling subjects.



Thus, although under governor Zerubbabel's leadership the altar had been rebuilt in the Jewish seventh month of 536 BC (Tishri) on the old temple mount in Jerusalem (see Ezra 3:1–6) and the Temple foundation had been laid the following year, the work was continually harassed over a 16 year span (inclusively numbered) due to the unrelenting opposition by their enemies.

From 522 to 520 BC (the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius I) the work was completely stopped (Ezra 4:5–24). However, the accession of Darius<sup>6</sup> brought new hope for the Jewish leadership.

In 520, the Lord raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir the people to action (Ezra 5:1). Beginning on the first day of the sixth month (Elul) of the second year of Darius (22 August 520 BC, Gregorian – Haggai 1:1) and continuing until the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month (Chisleu, also called Kislev) of Darius' second year (12 December 520, Gregorian – Haggai 2:1–9, 18 and 20), Haggai delivered a series of three messages to provoke the people into recommencing work on the Temple.

Two months after Haggai's first message, Zechariah joined him (Zechariah 1:1, the eighth month of Darius' second year or about 20 October 520 BC). Under their inspiration,

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–24, 123–124, 309.

<sup>2</sup> Ctesias, *Persica*, c.5 ff as cited in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 635 (Cyrus).

<sup>3</sup> See: Floyd Nolen Jones, *Persian Problem*, Chapter 4 (Darius the Mede), pages 62 and 89.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, I, i, 4; VIII, vi, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Drawing from: McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological & Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 635 (Cyrus).

<sup>6</sup> Darius Hystaspis the Great is not to be confused with "Darius the Persian" of Nehemiah 12:22. The latter is undoubtedly Darius II Nothus; see Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 198–199, 244–246.

Zerubbabel of the lineage of David and Jeshua the high priest set forward the renewed work on the house of God (Ezra 5:1–2).

This soon came to the attention of Tatnai, the satrap of Syria. When he challenged the leadership as to by whose authority they were building, they replied that Cyrus had issued a decree granting them this right. Tatnai hurried a written dispatch to Darius requesting that a search be made to confirm the existence of such an edict by the great king (Ezra 5:3–17). All during the time the search was being carried out, the Jews providentially continued their work – indicating that the Persian governor did not consider their activities to be rebellious.

Darius issued the order that a search be made; and although it was not discovered in the city of Babylon, Cyrus' 536 BC decree was found some 300 miles away at the mountain summer palace in Ebatana (Achmetha, see Ezra 6:1–5). Thus, the Jews contention that their proceedings were not only lawful but were actually carried on under royal authority was confirmed.

As the law of the Persians and Medes could not be changed or reversed (Esther 1:19, 8:8; Dan. 6:8, 12 & 15), Darius had no choice but to issue a new decree insisting that no obstacle be placed in the way of the people of Jerusalem, that the Temple should be rebuilt, that interference with the work would be a capital offense, that contributions were to be given in both money as well as supplies toward the expenses of the restoration, and that this was to be done expeditiously (Ezra 6:6–12).

Accordingly, the satrap (governor) and his officers carried out the orders of Darius with diligence (Ezra 6:13), and this is the main reason Darius the Great is recorded in Scripture and why he truly deserved the title “the Great”.

The result was that the Temple was finished on the third day of Adar (the Jewish 12<sup>th</sup> month) in the sixth year of Darius (14 February 516 BC, Gregorian) and then dedicated by the shedding of blood for sin (Ezra 6:14–18).

### E. THE IDENTITY OF AHASUERUS IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The identification of the Persian Monarch portrayed in the Book of Esther under the title “Ahasuerus” has caused much debate over the

centuries.<sup>1</sup> The Book of Esther begins with a great feast “in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Ahasuerus” (Esther 1:3). Although at one time or another nearly every single monarch from Cyaxares I (625–585 BC) to Artaxerxes III Ochus (358–338 BC) has been declared as the Medo-Persian ruler in question, in nearly all theological circles today it is conceded almost beyond question that the man is Xerxes I of Thermopylae (486–465 BC).

This identification was initially offered by Scaliger, the first modern chronologer. The proofs offered are: (1) a supposed congruity of the character of Ahasuerus with that of Xerxes as portrayed by Herodotus and other classic writers and (2) a philological conjecture.

These will be examined in that which follows, comparing secular data with Scripture. The secular will not be taken as judge but merely as a witness. Where the secular fits – if it does – it will be incorporated, but the framework will be based upon the Scriptures which, in context, are the only and final authority on the matter, not the reverse.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that although the duration of the Persian Empire is probably accurately established, it is not based upon eye witness accounts. Secondly, the exact listing of kings and the lengths of their reigns are not verifiable with absolute certainty and thirdly, the same Persian monarch may have possessed two or more different titles or “throne” names.

#### 1. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

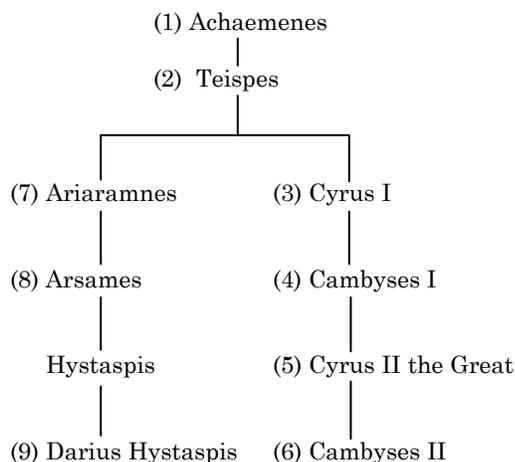


Profane literature will now speak and testify as to the identity of this Ahasuerus. It shall be shown that this material declares him to be Darius Hystaspis (of Marathon, Darius I or the Great) and not Xerxes, as is commonly believed.

Darius I, a kinsman of Cyrus II (The Great, the Cyrus of the Bible), recorded on the famed Rock

<sup>1</sup> The text in section E has been taken almost entirely from: Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, 2009 ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 199–205.

of Behistun (right column & p. 98): “Eight of my family have been kings before me. I am the ninth. In two branches have we been kings”.<sup>1</sup>



As one can see, both are related to Teispes (Kishpish). Once again, Darius was an officer in the famous “Ten Thousand Immortals”, the special elite portion of the Persian army, as well as spear-bearer and personal bodyguard to Cyrus the Great’s son, Cambyses II.

## 2. SECULAR DATA IDENTIFYING AHASUERUS

Firstly, Esther 1:14 refers to “The seven princes of Persia and Media”. As the Book of Esther mentions Persia *before* Media (1:3,18,19), this Ahasuerus *cannot precede* Cyrus’ first year as sole king over the expanded empire (536 BC) for during Darius the Mede’s short reign<sup>2</sup> (539–537

BC) the Medes were named *before* the Persians (Dan. 6:8, 12, 15; see king list on next page).



During Cyrus’ “first year”,<sup>3</sup> the Persians gained political ascendancy over the Median constituency and were thereafter consistently mentioned *ahead* of the Medes.

Secondly, Darius the Mede had set 120 princes over the kingdom (Dan. 6:1). At the time of Esther, King Ahasuerus’ Medo-Persian Empire, extending from India to Ethiopia, had increased into 127 provinces or “satrapies” (Esther 1:1). These satrapies constitute a major key as to the correct identity of Esther’s “Ahasuerus”.

Although today’s standard chronologies would have Esther the wife of Xerxes (485–464 BC), by the *beginning* of his reign the Persian Empire

<sup>1</sup> *Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun, in Persia*, (London: British Museum, 1907). This quote, taken with the Cylinder Inscription of Cyrus (*ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 316), yields the genealogy of Darius as given on page 104. See Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Remember, Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus, was the uncle of Cyrus (II) the Great (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, I, ii, 1. He was Cyaxares II, son of Astyages (*Jos.*, *Antiq.* X. 11.4 = the Ahasuerus of Dan.9:1). Belshazzar, son and pro-rex of Nabonidus, king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, was on the throne in the capitol city, Babylon, during the prolonged absence of his father.

A great pagan feast was being held in the besieged city celebrating the impregnability of its famed walls. As the prophet Daniel predicted when he interpreted the cryptic message scrolled miraculously upon the wall by a bodiless hand, the confederate armies under the Median and Persian leadership of Cyrus entered Babylon that selfsame night, 16 Tishri, 539 BC (6 October, 539, Gregorian). Belshazzar was slain and Cyrus placed his

62-year-old relative, Darius the Mede, on the throne to rule over Babylon while he personally continued his military conquest at the head of his armies, annexing the remainder of the empire (Dan.5:30–31. Again, Darius was “made king”, Dan.9:1).

<sup>3</sup> Henry Browne, *Ordo Saeclorum*, (London: John Parker Pub., 1844), p. 173. That is, the first year of his sole reign over his newly enlarged empire (536 BC), not the first year in which Cyrus became a sovereign. As stated previously, when Cambyses I died in 559, Cyrus inherited the throne of Anshan, a Persian kingdom but vassal of the Medes. Cyrus became king of all Medo-Persia in 550. As they had no bearing upon Israel, Scripture does not reference any of these earlier events. Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539, placed his uncle on the throne, led the army and subdued the empire, then returned in 536 to resume control of the government. Thus 536 is his “first year” in the connotation that: (a) Cyrus’ kingdom more than doubled in extent, his power and prestige soared proportionately & (b) it was Cyrus’ first year as suzerain over the Jews. Xenophon indicates this reign over Babylon was 7 years by recording that Cyrus went from Babylon to Susa every spring & that he made this trip 7 times (*Cyropaedia*, *op. cit.*, VIII, vi, 22 & VIII, vii, 1).

had begun to *lose* satrapies.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the name “Ahasuerus” must refer to a monarch *after* Darius the Mede, but *before* the reign of Xerxes (refer to the following diagram). Conventional chronological schemes have completely ignored this problem choosing instead to give preference to and place reliance upon a tenuous etymological identification, the merit of which will be presently examined.

THE PERSIAN KING LIST FOR THE  
PERIOD UNDER DISCUSSION

2 yrs	7 yrs	8 yrs	36 yrs	21 yrs	41 yrs
Darius the Mede	Cyrus the Great	Cambyses II	Darius the Great	Xerxes I	Artaxerxes Longimanus

Indeed, it is completely illogical that after spending four years with Darius planning to again invade Greece to avenge his father’s humiliating 490 BC defeat at Marathon, Xerxes would spend half of his 3<sup>rd</sup> year as king in a drunken orgy prior to *departing* for Greece in his 5<sup>th</sup> year (481 BC). However, it makes perfect sense that after putting down 19 revolts in a single year (the last weeks of 522 into December of 521, his 1<sup>st</sup> official year), Darius would have spent his second year (520) organizing his newly acquired vast empire with men whom he could trust, etc. Having so secured his kingdom, it is altogether logical that he would set aside a large portion of his 3<sup>rd</sup> year celebrating – exactly as we find Ahasuerus doing in the first verses of Esther.

If this king is Xerxes, why does the Book of Esther say nothing of his 480 BC defeat at the hands of the Greeks in his 6<sup>th</sup> year? The simple answer is – because he is not Ahasuerus. But if Ahasuerus is Darius and as the first 9 chapters only involve the first 13 years of its king, Greece would not be mentioned for Darius had no military involvement with the Greeks until the 499 BC Ionian Revolt in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of his reign. Thus, we find that Esther fits the historical facts regarding Darius, not Xerxes.

Furthermore, Esther 1:1 declares: “This is (that) Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto

Ethiopia over 127 provinces”.<sup>2</sup> During the fifth year of his reign, all Egypt had submitted to Cambyses (525 BC) and he also subdued the Ethiopians, at least in part.<sup>3</sup> Having already inherited Cambyses’ conquests in Egypt and Ethiopia, Darius I Hystaspis invaded and conquered India (506 BC).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the Ahasuerus of Esther cannot be a Persian *before* Darius Hystaspis (Darius of Marathon) because it was not until Darius that the Empire extended from “India unto Ethiopia”. These hard facts are decisive, yet there is more:

And King Ahasuerus laid a *tribute* upon the land and upon the Isles of the Sea (Est. 10:1).

During 496 BC, the fleet of Darius conquered Samos, Chios, Lesbos and the rest of the islands of the Aegean Sea.<sup>5</sup> Herodotus says that Egypt, India, the Island of Cyprus and the Islands of the Erythraean Sea paid tribute to this Darius Hystaspis.<sup>6</sup> He also says that “The Ethiopians bordering upon Egypt, who were reduced by Cambyses” paid no fixed tribute but like others, brought gifts regularly to Darius Hystaspis:<sup>7</sup>

The Ethiopians paid no settled tribute, but brought gifts to the King. Every 3<sup>rd</sup> year the inhabitants of Egypt and Nubia brought 2 quarts of virgin gold; 200 logs of ebony, 5 Ethiopian boys and 20 elephant tusks.

<sup>2</sup> This statement proves that Ahasuerus was a throne name and that more than one Persian monarch bore that title. At this point it must be acknowledged that although this author had already discovered and put in writing much of that which follows in identifying Ahasuerus, upon finding Anstey’s excellent summation in which he had uncovered and organized even more references than had previously been found, his discoveries were checked and added to my original research. Therefore, much of the credit for this disclosure rightly belongs to that indefatigable scholar as well as to Ussher whom I later discovered to be Anstey’s source for the data in the last paragraph on this page and ends on p. 106.

Whereas Anstey’s association of Darius I Hystaspis as being the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1–21 and Neh.2:1, 5:14, 13:6 (with which Faulstich agrees) is deemed by this study to be totally faulty, his carefully documented research with regard to the Artaxerxes in Esther is that of a chronologer par excellence. See: Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, op. cit., pp. 240–243 and Ussher, *Annals*, op. cit., page 134 (1658 ed. = p. 119).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., III.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III and IV.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 89–97.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 97.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, op. cit., VII, 4. After the Persian defeat by the Greeks at Marathon, not only were the Ionian states in revolt, Egypt also revolted. When Xerxes ascended the throne, the empire was beginning to crumble; the number of provinces began to diminish.

When compared to the previously cited Esther 10:1 passage, this secular data testifies and declares that Ahasuerus is Darius Hystaspis. Moreover, upon being chosen as his royal residence, Susa (or Shushan) was embellished and extended by Darius Hystaspis (521 BC).<sup>1</sup> There he built his palace and kept all his treasures within.<sup>2</sup> These data militate against Cambyses, or anyone before him, as being the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther for the palace therein *was* at Shushan (Esther 1:2).

This excluding determination is especially legitimate when coupled with Esther 1:14 concerning the “seven princes of Persia”. It was Darius I who established the Persian tradition of having a council of seven wise and powerful men at court to serve and assist the king. This custom was a continuation of the policy resulting from the Persian noblemen’s aiding Darius in procuring the throne from the Magians. Obviously then, no monarch prior to Darius Hystaspis could be the “Ahasuerus” in question (see diagram on page 108a).

Moreover, Thucydides (571–396 BC) tells us that Darius Hystaspis used his Phoenician fleet to subdue all the islands in the Aegean Sea,<sup>3</sup> and Diodorus Siculus relates that they were all lost again by his son Xerxes immediately after his 479 BC defeat by the Greeks – *before* the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign.<sup>4</sup> Yet it was *after* the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Ahasuerus of Esther that he imposed a tribute upon the Isles (Esther 3:7,12, 13; 9:1,21; 10:1) or at least during the very last days of that 12<sup>th</sup> year.

Further, as Ussher pointed out, the terms of the 387 BC “Peace of Antalcidas” recorded by Xenophon shows that, except for Clazomene and Cyprus, Xerxes’ successors held none of these islands.<sup>5</sup>

All of this external secular data tells us that the Ahasuerus of Esther is *not* Xerxes, and it harmonizes with the internal evidence contained in Scripture. Cyrus and Cambyses never imposed tribute, although they did receive presents. Polyaeus writes that Darius was the first of the Persians to impose a tribute on the people.<sup>6</sup> This act led Herodotus to pen that the Persians called Cyrus a father, Cambyses a master, but Darius a huckster, “for Darius looked to make a gain in everything”.<sup>7</sup>

This description of Darius is consistent with Haman’s behavior in the account. Being aware of this aspect of his king’s character and in order to secure approval to massacre all the Jews within the empire, Haman offered to pay the monarch 10,000 talents of silver to offset the expenses that would be incurred in his proposed plan (Esther 3:9). Esther also seems aware of this trait as she mentions in her petition that the king would lose revenue if the exterminations were carried out (Esther 7:4).

Although the Old Testament Apocrypha is not the inspired Word of God, hence is neither authoritative nor trustworthy, it does reveal how the writers of that time interpreted the story of Ezra. The first Book of Esdras (c.140 BC) recites verbatim Esther 1:1–3, the only change being that of replacing the name “Ahasuerus” with “Darius” (1 Esdras 3:1–2). This Darius is later firmly identified as Darius Hystaspis by relating that it was in the sixth year of this king’s reign that the Temple was completed (1 Esdras 6:5, cp. Ezra 6:15).

In the Apocrypha account of “The Rest of Esther” as well as in the LXX, Ahasuerus is everywhere called “Artaxerxes”; however these are not necessarily attempts to identify him as the Persian king of Ezra chapter 7 and/or the Book of Nehemiah. Though there have been able, conservative Christian chronologers who have made this connection, two things must be remembered. First, “Artaxerxes” may here only be intended as an appellation meaning “king” (as “pharaoh” or “Caesar”).

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, vol. XX, Loeb Classical Library, VI, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, V, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), Bk. I, Ch. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. IV, Bk. XI, 36–37 and Bk. XII, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, p. 134 (1658 = 119). Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Loeb, Vol. II, Book V. i. 31–36.

<sup>6</sup> Polyaeus, *Stratagematum*, (Chicago, IL: Ares Pub., 1974), Bk. 7, Ch. 11, 3. (also called *Stratagems in War*)

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, III, 89.

Secondly, none of these books are inspired. They do not contain God-breathed words, thus they are not authoritative and are only useful as incidental witnesses. Nevertheless, Sir Isaac Newton took the Book of Esdras to be the “best interpreter of the Book of Ezra” and thus, although he never refers to the Book of Esther anywhere in his discussion of the Persians, his chronology accepted Esdras to be correct in identifying the Ahasuerus of Esther as Darius Hystaspis.<sup>1</sup> Ussher and Bishop Lloyd made the same identification.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. THE TESTIMONY OF MORDECAI’S AGE

The last and most pertinent data necessary in correctly identifying Ahasuerus is the direct *internal evidence* within the biblical story itself concerning the age of Mordecai. The erroneous identification of Ahasuerus with Xerxes, compounded by other poor judgments, has caused most modern scholars to reject that Mordecai was taken away from Jerusalem with Jeconiah in “the captivity” of 597 BC despite the clear declaration of Esther 2:5–6 which so proclaims.

This biblical assertion is rejected because, having already erroneously presumed that Ahasuerus is Xerxes, the acceptance of the verse as it stands would force Mordecai to be at least 114 years old (597 – 483 BC [the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Xerxes; Esther 1:1–3]) at the beginning of the story (if he were a newborn when carried away). Moreover, Mordecai would have been a minimum of 123 at the close of the book when he became “prime minister” in the king’s 12th year (Esther 10:3, cp. 3:7). Though this would

be possible, it is somewhat unlikely as only one man’s age has been reported in Scripture as being that great since the days of “the judges” (a span of over 700 years!). Besides, as Esther is Mordecai’s first cousin (Esther 2:7), she would tend to be too old to fit the context of the story.

The solution to the dilemma, accepted by nearly all, has been to impose an unnatural rendering of the Esther 2:5–6 passage compelling the verse to read as though it were Kish, Mordecai’s great-grandfather, who was carried away in 597 BC with Jeconiah rather than Mordecai himself. Notwithstanding, this interpretation is neither true nor an accurate rendering of the Hebrew construction which affirms that it *was* Mordecai who was carried away with Jeconiah. Only by a tortured, forced grammatical construction could this sentence ever be applied to his great-grandfather Kish.

The entire matter is resolved by simply letting the Bible speak for itself. This excessive age problem is plainly due to a failure to accept the obvious which is that the Ahasuerus of Esther is actually Darius Hystaspis and not Xerxes. When this is seen, the age of Mordecai will be significantly reduced to a more reasonable and believable value (as will Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s, see footnote 1, page 108). Moreover, it is the persistent insistence by academia that “Ahasuerus” is Xerxes that has caused the problem.<sup>3</sup>

With the Ahasuerus of Esther as Darius I Hystaspis (of Marathon, the Great), his third year would fall in 519 BC. Thus, Mordecai could have been as young as 78 in the first chapter of Esther and ten years older (88) rather than 123 years old when promoted to prime minister during the 12th year (510 BC) of that Persian monarch (597 BC – 519 = 78 years;

<sup>1</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 368–370. When Newton calls Ahasuerus “Xerxes”, he means the Ahasuerus in Ezra 4:6 and not the Ahasuerus of Esther. Newton so did because Xerxes succeeded Darius on the throne and the Ahasuerus in Ezra 4:6 follows Darius in Ezra 4:5. By the same reasoning, he identifies the “Artaxerxes” that followed in Ezra 4:7–23 as being Artaxerxes Longimanus.

<sup>2</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–129 (1658 edition, pages 112–114). Josephus also calls the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther “Artaxerxes”, but he does not mean the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7 and Nehemiah. Josephus identified him as “Cyrus the son of Xerxes whom the Greeks called ‘Artaxerxes’”. In other words, Josephus makes Ahasuerus to be Artaxerxes I Longimanus. The point is, he does not corroborate the testimonies of “The Rest of Esther” and the LXX even though he refers to Ahasuerus as “Artaxerxes” because he does not intend the same “Artaxerxes” that they propose. Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, II.6.1.

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, after his defeat at Salamis in 480 BC (end of September in his 6<sup>th</sup> year), Xerxes fled some 400 miles in 45 days to the Hellespont (arrived in mid-November), which was still some 1,300 miles from Shushan. Now Esther was brought into the house of the women in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Ahasuerus and into the king’s house in his 7<sup>th</sup> (Est. 2:16; cp. vv. 8 and 12). Thus, the search for the “fair young virgins” would have begun in either 480 (his 6<sup>th</sup> year) or 481 – but these are the very years Xerxes was at war in Greece!

Moreover, Ahasuerus was at the palace in Shushan at the *beginning* of the search for the virgins! (Est. 2:4-5) Again, the events in Esther do not well fit the historical facts regarding Xerxes.

Esther 1:3, cp. 2:5–7, 3:7, hence 12 – 3 = 10 years inclusive).

Indeed, the Mordecai of Ezra 2:2 and Nehemiah 7:7 should, in all likelihood, be identified as the Mordecai of the Book of Esther such that we have only one Mordecai, not two as is being taught today.<sup>1</sup> This is much more in line with other Bible ages for this period and unifies the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther into one continuous story with only one principal person named Mordecai (and as we shall soon see, probably only one Nehemiah and one Ezra, not two).

The sum of all the foregoing particulars is conclusive evidence offered both for the proper identification of the Ahasuerus of Esther as Darius Hystaspis and against his being Xerxes I or any Persian ruler after Xerxes I. Evidence has also been presented as to why Ahasuerus cannot be an occupant of the throne preceding Darius I Hystaspis the Great.

#### 4. AMBIGUOUS CONTRARY EVIDENCE

What then is the overwhelming evidence to the contrary upon which all modern scholarship has succumbed? As mentioned in the second

paragraph at the onset of section E (page 103), the first consideration is that of the descriptions passed down to our day by Herodotus (484–425 BC). Although Herodotus is reasonably authoritative for the period of the great Persian War with Greece (490–479 BC), his accounts of older periods are not always reliable. Vivid pictures are given in his writings concerning the first four Persian kings, i.e.,<sup>2</sup>

1. Cyrus, the simple hardy, vigorous mountain chief, endowed with vast ambition, and with great military genius, changing as his Empire changed, into the kind and friendly paternal monarch, clement, witty, polite familiar with his people;
2. Cambyses, the first form of the Eastern tyrant, inheriting his father's vigour and much of his talent, but violent, rash, headstrong, incapable of self-restraint, furious at opposition, not only cruel, but brutal;
3. Darius Hystaspis, the model Oriental prince, brave, sagacious, astute, great in the arts of both war and peace, the organizer and consolidator as well as the extender of the Empire; and
4. Xerxes, the second and inferior form of tyrant, weak and puerile as well as cruel and selfish, fickle, timid, licentious and luxurious.

The first argument put forth by those who favor Xerxes as the Ahasuerus of Esther is that the character of Ahasuerus fits that of Xerxes as given by Herodotus and other classic writers. But this is highly subjective and hardly tenable or admissible in light of all that we have offered to the contrary. Indeed, were we to ask twenty or so historians, news commentators, etc. to describe the character of a certain world leader, what would we actually hear in reply? Widely varied opinions would issue forth. Much would depend upon the writer's ethical views, political affiliations, prejudices, etc.

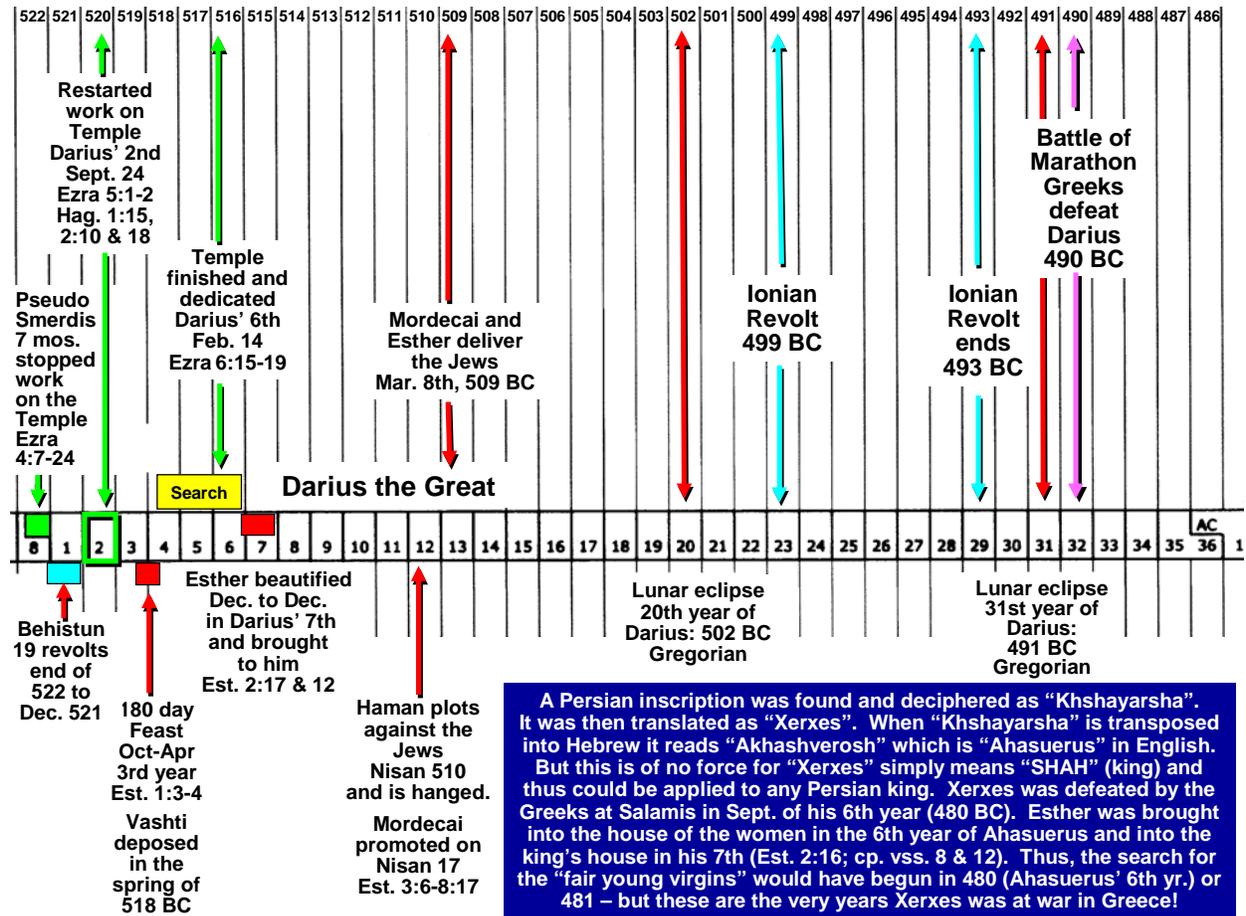
When human beings judge others, there is no such thing as being purely objective. Moreover, Herodotus' descriptions are neither first nor secondhand information. They are hearsay portrayals gleaned from various sources over the course of his many travels.

<sup>1</sup> A check of almost any recent Bible dictionary will identify the Ezra of Neh.12:1,7 as a chief priest and leader who returned with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus as different from the one in the Book of Ezra who is also a priest (Ezra 7:1–12) and leader. Yet “both” men are clearly alive during the reign of the same Persian monarch, Artaxerxes (cp. Ezra 7:1, 12, 21 with Neh.2:1; 5:14; 8:1–4, 9; 12:1). “Both” are contemporaries of Zerubbabel and associated with a Nehemiah who is a leader (Neh.8:1–4, & 9) and a Nehemiah who is associated with Zerubbabel (Neh.7:7).

It is equally dismaying to “learn” that the Nehemiah who returned from Babylon as a leader with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2; Neh.7:7) is not supposed to be the same Nehemiah of the Book of Nehemiah who succeeded Zerubbabel as governor under Artaxerxes. A further check will almost certainly “uncover” that the Mordecai of the Book of Esther will not be seen as the leader who returned with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2.2; Neh.7:7).

Apparently Nehemiah, Mordecai and possibly Ezra, as key Jewish leaders, were recalled to serve various Persian kings who followed Cyrus. The biblical narrative reveals the circumstances as to what became of them, how Nehemiah and Ezra, undoubtedly young among the leaders in the days of Cyrus and Zerubbabel, were subsequently allowed to return in the wisdom of their gray heads and be used by the LORD in Jerusalem while God's purpose for Mordecai was for the good of His people back in Persia who had chosen not to return from the captivity.

<sup>2</sup> George Rawlinson (ed.), *History of Herodotus*, 4 vols., (London: n.p., 1858), Introduction.



A Persian inscription was found and deciphered as "Khshayarsha". It was then translated as "Xerxes". When "Khshayarsha" is transposed into Hebrew it reads "Akhshverosh" which is "Ahasuerus" in English. But this is of no force for "Xerxes" simply means "SHAH" (king) and thus could be applied to any Persian king. Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks at Salamis in Sept. of his 6th year (480 BC). Esther was brought into the house of the women in the 6th year of Ahasuerus and into the king's house in his 7th (Est. 2:16; cp. vss. 8 & 12). Thus, the search for the "fair young virgins" would have begun in 480 (Ahasuerus' 6th yr.) or 481 – but these are the very years Xerxes was at war in Greece!

Besides, from our knowledge of the classic literature there is nothing in the character of Ahasuerus which could not equally apply as well to Darius I Hystaspis. In fact, the money matters mentioned as well as his friendly attitude toward the Hebrews agree exactly with what one would expect from Darius the “huckster”, the money-maker and organizer of the empire.

The second and supposedly conclusive argument that Ahasuerus is Xerxes is derived from the similarity between a name found on an inscription in a ruin with the name “Xerxes”. A young student at the University of Gottingen, Georg Friedrich Grotefend, deciphered the inscriptions of Persian characters found among the ruins of the ancient Persian city, Persepolis. The name of the son of Darius Hystaspis was deciphered as “KSHAYARSHA” which is the “old” Persian.

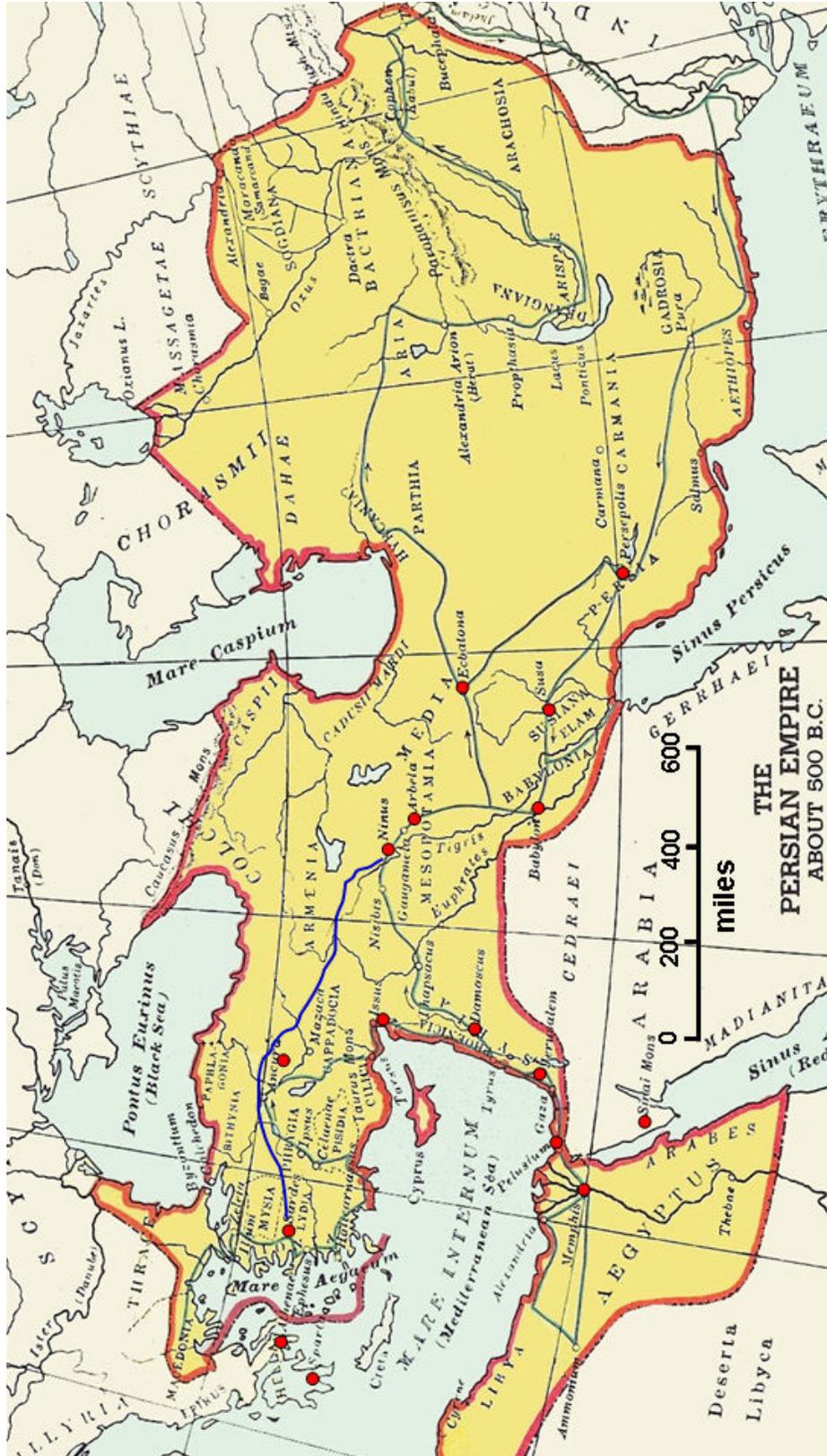
Grotefend translated this into Greek as “Xerxes”. When “KSHAYARSHA” is transposed into Hebrew, it becomes almost letter for letter “AKHASHVEROSH”, which is rendered “Ahasuerus” in English. Thus the “Ahasuerus” of the Book of Esther was established to be Xerxes.

At first glance this seems decisive. However, this is actually of no force when we recall that the word “Xerxes” in any form, regardless of spelling, simply means “SHAH” (king) and as such could be applied to *anyone* sitting upon the throne of Persia. Moreover, sound exegesis dictates that no etymology may ever take precedence over a clear context.

The opposite is quite popular today among both those who overemphasize lexical word studies and Greek dilettantes; however, it is the path to error. Etymology may *confirm* a context or even assist in clarification, but it is not an exact science and thus should be used as sole judge with extreme caution – and then only when there is nothing else available to consult. It must *never* be used to overturn clear context!

Finally, there is something amiss with the above etymological reasoning inasmuch as “Ahasuerus” means “the mighty” (Aha) and “king” (Suerus). How then in translating does this suddenly reduce to “Xerxes” which means only “shah” or “king”?

Actually it would seem that “Artaxerxes” would have been a more faithful rendering. The translators of the Septuagint certainly so concurred (Esther 1:1, etc., LXX). What, we ask, happened to “The Mighty” portion during the translation? Selah.



THE GREAT PERSIAN EMPIRE at its ZENITH - circa 500 BC

## VII. THE PERSIAN PROBLEM RESOLVED

### A. REVIEW OF THE BASICS

Having now examined that which is known from “history” concerning the Persian kings named or alluded to within the Word of God<sup>1</sup> and having addressed the significant difficulties regarding each of these kings, we must now resolve “the Persian Problem” itself. As stated on the second page of this study, we must now:

1. correctly identify the Persian monarch that is most prominent in Ezra, and Nehemiah named “Artaxerxes”.
2. identify the other Persian monarchs that occur in Ezra, Nehemiah, as well as Esther, and.
3. resolve the age problems that concern Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Mordecai in a manner that best honors all the Scriptures.

Of course, the age problems dealing with Esther and Mordecai mentioned in “3” above was dealt with at the end of the preceding chapter (pp. 107–109). Those concerning Nehemiah and Ezra are at the very core of the “Persian Problem” and will be dealt with presently.

As has already been said, there are almost no Persian sources extant so that we may learn first hand of their kings and thus be enabled to synchronize their history with the Persian monarchs which we find in the Holy Writ. Once again, there are at least three straightforward Bible parameters to assist us in correctly identifying this “Artaxerxes”. They are:

- (1) the first “Artaxerxes” who reigned *after* Darius Hystaspis (Ezra 6:14: ...And they builded, and finished it {the Temple} according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia).
- (2) one whose dominion extended for at least thirty-two years (Neh. 5:14: “Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.”) and
- (3) one who came to the throne 483 years before the crucifixion of Christ (Dan. 9:24–27).

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<sup>1</sup> Except “Darius the Persian” (Neh. 12:22), and he will be dealt with presently on page 140 ff.

As stated at the onset, many fine works have already been published that show why Cyrus the Great, Darius I Hystaspis, and Artaxerxes Mnemon are not the “Artaxerxes” found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; hence, we will simply quickly show why they biblically fail to so be and then move on.

For example, if we apply these criteria to Cyrus the Great, he is immediately seen to not meet the first condition. All competent historians agree that he ruled *before* Darius of Marathon.

Furthermore, all competent chronologers and historians also are in agreement that Christ Jesus’ crucifixion transpired between 29 and 33 AD. If we therefore, simply measure back 483 years from any of these dates we find that we fall well short of 536–530 BC which was the time span for Cyrus’ reign over Israel<sup>2</sup> (i.e., the Scriptural context). As Cyrus also does not satisfy our third requirement, we need no longer consider him.

According to the Royal Canon of Ptolemy, Artaxerxes II Mnemon reigned over the empire 46 years. He ascended the throne in 405 BC and died in 359, consequently he meets our second parameter as well as the first in that he became sovereign of Persia after Darius I Hystaspis the Great (of Marathon).

Nevertheless, when we measure back 483 years from the years AD 29 through AD 33, the possible years in which our Lord went to

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<sup>2</sup> In 1913, Martin Anstey published *The Romance of Bible Chronology op. cit.*. In it, he concluded that Scriptures in Isaiah demanded the city of Jerusalem would be re-built by Cyrus and wrongly advocated that the decree of Cyrus was the fulfillment of the Daniel 9:24–27 prophecy (pp. 277–293). When the dates for Cyrus were not 483 years from the Cross, he then concluded that the dates derived from Ptolemy’s Canon for the kings of Babylonia and Persia were 82 years too ancient. Thus, for Anstey and those who follow him, all historic BC dates are off by that amount since they rely on Ptolemy. This led Anstey et al. to incorrectly determine that Darius I Hystaspis (521–486) was the “Artaxerxes” of Ezra 6–7 as well as that of the Book of Nehemiah. The merits of the Royal Canon will be accessed presently.

However, Anstey and all those who accept(ed) his conclusions have overlooked that the Decree of Cyrus (2 Chr. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4, 6:1–5) only granted the returning Jews to rebuild their Temple, not the city. In contrast, the decree alluded to in Daniel 9 has to do with rebuilding the city of Jerusalem as well as its walls “in troublous times”. This latter decree fits that given by the Artaxerxes in Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1–6:15).

Golgotha, we this time find ourselves going well past 521–486 BC, the years of Artaxerxes II Mnemon’s reign. Thus, he does not meet the third biblical requirement to be the “Artaxerxes” of Ezra 6:14, Ezra 7, and the Book of Nehemiah, so he is removed from consideration.

Darius I Hystaspis of Marathon did rule over the Persian Empire for 36 years; hence, he meets the second biblical requirement. nevertheless, according to Ezra 6:14, he fails to satisfy our first parameter.

Moreover, if we again measure back 483 years from the years AD 29 through AD 33, we once more fall well short of 521–486 BC, the years of Darius the Great’s reign. Thus, Darius I also does not meet the third biblical requirement to be the “Artaxerxes in question so we no longer consider him.”<sup>1</sup>

However, Artaxerxes I Longimanus does meet all three conditions. His sole reign lasted 41 years (465–424 BC), and it was *after* that of Darius I Hystaspis. Further, when we measure back 483 years from the years AD 29 through AD 33 we do fall within the time-span of his dominion. Indeed, he is the only Persian monarch that does, and this is the main reason

<sup>1</sup> Like Anstey, Philip Mauro et al., Eugene Faulstich has more recently also identified the “Artaxerxes” at Ezra 6:14–15 as Darius I Hystaspis, but he based this solely upon following Anstey in another error. Both retranslated the Hebrew װ (waw) in verse 14 of Ezra 6:14–15 from “and” to “even”. Faulstich then contended that this identification was the key to the correct understanding and unification of the Book(s) of Ezra-Nehemiah (*History, Harmony, The Exile and Return*, 1988, pp. 142–145: but see Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*: (2007 edition), pages 17 and 268 for my rebuttal).

Far worse, Faulstich incredibly rejects that Christ Jesus is the subject of the Daniel 9:24–27 prophecy. Instead, he makes Nehemiah the “anointed one”, the prince who comes to Jerusalem with permission to rebuild the walls after 49 years (seven sevens, Dan. 9:25a) bringing the 20<sup>th</sup> year of “Artaxerxes” (Faulstich’s Darius I) to 502 BC (551, the year Faulstich gives for Cyrus’ victory over Astyages and thus became king over the Medo-Persian Empire – Faulstich considers it to be the biblical “first year of Cyrus” – see his page 102, minus 49 = 502).

For Faulstich, when in 61 BC Julius Caesar took control of the Jews (551 – 490 = 61), he became the prince of Dan. 9:26, and “the people” of that prince who are to destroy Jerusalem are the Romans under Titus in AD 70 (Faulstich, *History, Harmony and Daniel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–110; see my *Chronology*, p. 225.).

why Longimanus has been almost universally acknowledged as the correct choice.

Unfortunately, the correct identification of the “Artaxerxes” in Ezra 6–7 and the Book of Nehemiah is only the first step in solving the Persian Problem. Another concern now looms before us. Hence, we now remind our reader of a most important fact that was alluded to on the second page of this discourse. Namely, that all historians and chronologist agree that 486 BC is the year Xerxes I (of Thermopylae) ascended the throne of Persia.<sup>2</sup> Further, they grant that his son, Artaxerxes Longimanus, died in 424 BC.

However, the real issue revolves around the *first year* Artaxerxes Longimanus was associated on the Persian throne from the *biblical* standpoint. It is this date that has not been correctly known! (see diagram page 115a)

Not correctly arriving at this date undermines the precision of nearly all earlier works. As indicated previously, this is because the Daniel 9:24–27 prophecy teaches that the Messiah will be slain 483 years after the issuing of a decree for the Jews to restore and build Jerusalem as well as its walls during “troubulous times”, and Nehemiah 2:1–6:15 shows that this edict was given “in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes”.

Thus, it is not enough to determine which “Artaxerxes” of Persia is meant – we must also fix his biblically intended “first year” in order to establish the date of his 20<sup>th</sup>. Moreover, our reader will be surprised to discover in that which follows that the 465 BC accession year of Longimanus sole reign is not the “first year of Artaxerxes” intended in Scripture!

The determining of this date is of utmost importance with regard to biblical chronology, for only by moving forward 483 years from this point can we establish the Crucifixion year of Messiah Jesus. And this we shall do, but in an orderly manner.

<sup>2</sup> Nearly all assign Persia the accession method for determining regnal years; hence, Xerxes first *official* year would have been 485 BC.

## B. DANIEL'S 483 (490) YEAR PROPHECY

The ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel contains the well known “seventy weeks” prophecy which has become the subject of many varied interpretations and disagreements without end.<sup>1</sup> The setting for the prophecy is that of the period of the servitude of Israel to Babylonia (606–536 BC). Specifically, it was the year the Medes and Persians had conquered the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus (c. 539 BC, Dan. 5:25–31; 9:1; cp. 2 Chronicles 36:21–23; Ezra 1; 6:3–5).

Daniel was studying the writings of Jeremiah, his contemporary, and was given to realize that along with the fall of Babylon and the empire, the seventy-year servitude and especially the seventy-year span of the desolations of the city of Jerusalem and its Temple were all soon to end (Daniel 9:2, 16–19).<sup>2</sup> While Daniel was praying and confessing his sins and those of his people at the time of the evening sacrifice (about mid-afternoon or c. 3:00 P.M., Dan. 9:21), the angel Gabriel came to him.

Gabriel had appeared to Daniel nearly 13 years earlier to explain a former vision concerning the future conquest of the Median-Persian Empire (the ram with two uneven horns) by Alexander the Great (the he-goat with one large horn, Dan. 8), etc. The purpose of this second visitation was to explain a new vision to the prophet. The prophecy, given to Daniel and interpreted for him by the angel Gabriel, was:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

<sup>1</sup> Although the arrangement may differ, the material from this point on has been taken almost verbatim from my *Chronology of the Old Testament*: (2009 edition).

<sup>2</sup> See the various seventy-year prophecies depicted on Charts 5 and 5c at the back of my *Chronology of the Old Testament*: (2007 edition) and how one may order 8½ by 11 inch full-sized copies on p. 325.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Daniel 9:24–27).

It is not our purpose here to examine the eschatological aspects of this prophecy, but those which are of a chronological nature.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, that which is before the reader will begin with the acceptance of the position that the terminology of the “seventy weeks” or, more properly in the Hebrew, the “seventy sevens” prophecy is speaking of “seventy sevens” of *years* or a total span of 490 years ( $70 \times 7 = 490$ ). Further, that there is a natural break in the prophecy (actually several breaks exist) after the completion of “sixty-nine sevens” or at the end of a 483-year period ( $69 \times 7 = 483$ ) which relates to the First Advent of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ (see diagram page 115a).

As a definitive *terminus a quo* is given with reference to a specific decree locatable within the Holy Writ and since its *terminus ad quem* is in the time of Christ Jesus, this prediction becomes a most invaluable chronological tool in spanning from the period of the Persian rule over the Hebrew people to the era of New Testament times.

### 1. WHICH DECREE?

Four decrees regarding the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity are mentioned in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Each has been offered by able advocates as

<sup>3</sup> For those needing a background in the study of the prophecy, the classic work cited by all who investigated the “seventy weeks” of Daniel during the past century is *The Coming Prince* by Sir Robert Anderson, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1882). Others include those by Walvoord, D. Pentecost, Lindsey and Hoehner as well as the Scofield notes, McClain, Willmington and Jeffrey. Indeed, this subject was thoroughly addressed much earlier by Sir Isaac Newton, Ussher, many of the Reformers, and in the second century AD by Julius Africanus.

being the *terminus a quo* for the Daniel 9:25 prophecy. They are:

1. The decree issued to rebuild the Temple in the first year of Cyrus, 536 BC (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–6; Ezra 5:13–17);
2. The decree issued to complete the Temple in the second year of Darius (I) Hystaspis, 520 BC (Ezra 4:24; 6:1–12);
3. The decree issued to beautify the Temple in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7–28); and
4. The decree issued to build the city of Jerusalem and its wall in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1–8, 13, & 17).

One of these must be identified as being the specific decree which included “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem...the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times”. As may be seen, the first three have only to do with the Temple proper; nothing was said concerning the rebuilding of the city, the street in the plaza area and its walls. Indeed, the reconstruction of the Temple was stopped because the Jews began rebuilding the city without authorization (Ezra 4:1–4). Thus, the conditions of Daniel 9:25 were not met in any of the first three decrees.

Despite the fact that the first three decrees do not fit the conditions of the Daniel prophecy, several of them have had strong proponents over the years. For example, we have already noted Martin Anstey’s 1913<sup>1</sup> work in which he, as well as others who have followed him, strongly advocated the decree of Cyrus on the grounds that other Scripture in Isaiah demands it was under this Persian monarch that the city would be built.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: Jones, *Chronology, op. cit.*, p. 206, fn. 2 and Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology, op. cit.*, pp. 277–293.

<sup>2</sup> The notes in Doctor C.I. Scofield’s Study Bible originally favored the decree in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I as being that 20<sup>th</sup> fulfilled the Daniel 9:25 prophecy. However, after reading Anstey’s book, Scofield became convinced that it was the decree of Cyrus which was the proper starting point for the “seventy weeks”.

In AD 1918, he published a book in which he stated this decision and added: “whatever confusion has existed at this point has been due to following the Ptolemaic instead of the biblical chronology, as Martin Anstey in his ‘Romance of Bible Chronology.’” Interestingly, those dates have never been changed in any of the Scofield Bible notes. Scofield, *What Do the Prophets Say?*, (Phil., PA: The Sunday School Times Co., 1918), p. 142.

The decree issued in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7–28) has also had a strong following, not because it matched the conditions of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy but more by virtue of the fact that of all the four possibilities it seemed to best “fit” the prescribed time frame. The seventh year of Artaxerxes I Longimanus’ sole reign fell about 458 BC (or 457) and 483 years (or as some reckon, 483 + 3½, etc. = c.487) after that date would fall around AD 24–28.

This brings the chronology to about the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (AD 26–28 at which time Christ Jesus, being about 30 years of age, was baptized by John, Luke 3:1–3, 21–23). Among those championing this position was the redoubtable Sir Isaac Newton.<sup>3</sup> He was later followed by Dr. Humphrey Prideaux<sup>4</sup> and, more recently, by Frank Klassen.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. DANIEL FULFILLED: THE ARTAXERXES’ DECREE

However at least as far back as the days of Julius Africanus (c. AD 200–245), it has been widely accepted by historians, chronologers and biblical commentators (i.e., Africanus, Petavius, Ussher, Lloyd, Marshall, Anderson, McClain, Walvoord, D. Pentecost, Hoehner, Unger, and most present day students of Daniel’s prophecy) that only the decree issued in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes I granted permission for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, along with its plaza street and walls, and thus fulfilled the conditions of the prophecy. With regard to this, Africanus wrote:<sup>6</sup>

And the beginning of the numbers, that is, of the seventy weeks which make 490 years, the angel instructs us to take from the going forth of the commandment to answer and to build Jerusalem. And this happened in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations on Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, (London: 1733). pp. 130–143.

<sup>4</sup> Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews, op. cit.* See: Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology, op. cit.*, pp. 279–280.

<sup>5</sup> Frank R. Klassen, *The Chronology of the Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Regal Pub., 1975), pp. 46–54.

<sup>6</sup> Julius Africanus, *Chronographies, Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VI, Roberts and Donaldson, eds., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1885), chapter xvi., para. 3.

The present author's study has led him to the same conclusion (see Appendix F, pages 157 ff.), thus establishing the date of the 20th year of Artaxerxes becomes paramount.

### C. THE YEAR OF THE CRUCIFIXION

In a former treatise, we established that the date of our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection took place in the spring of AD 30.<sup>1</sup> Since the first chapter of John's gospel records that Christ Jesus was baptized a few months before the first of the four Passovers in that same gospel (2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 13:1)<sup>2</sup> and as it seems best to conclude that His ministry ended at the 4<sup>th</sup>, the duration of our Lord's ministry must have been about three and a half years.

Therefore He was crucified and died near 3:00 P.M. Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Heb. = Abib = an ear of ripe grain) – Passover day – in the year AD 30 by Jewish reckoning (April 4<sup>th</sup> Gregorian: a Friday crucifixion would violate four Scriptures: Mat. 12:40, 27:63; Mark 8:31 and Luke 24:21).

Christ Jesus was triumphantly resurrected from the grave three days and three nights later<sup>3</sup> (Mat. 12:40) near, but before, sunrise (Mat. 28:1–4, cp. John 20:1) Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Jewish reckoning = April 7<sup>th</sup> Gregorian).

### D. THE CRUCIFIXION YEAR AND DANIEL'S 483-YEAR PROPHECY

The above has important bearing on the matter of biblical chronology. Scripture declares that Jesus must be "about 30 years of age" in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1, 23). Secular history shows this to have been about AD 26, and it indicates the death of Herod as being in the spring of 4 BC<sup>4</sup> (some give 3 BC). Obviously if Jesus were two years old when the *Magi* came, then He would have been born in 6 BC

and would be *above* 30 years of age in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius. Therefore, Jesus' birth occurred *circa* 4 BC.

These conclusions well fit the prophecy given in Daniel 9:25–26, which foretold that the Messiah would come 483 years after the decree was given allowing the Jews, having returned from their deportation, to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its *wall* "in troublous times".

The return and rebuilding of the Temple began in 536 BC, the first year in which Cyrus, king of Persia, became *sole* ruler over the people of Israel (Cyrus having placed his uncle, Darius the Mede, on the throne to run the affairs of government from Babylon, 539 BC, while he continued at the head of his army conquering and adding to his kingdom until 536 BC). The story of this decree of Cyrus is recorded in the Book of Ezra.

However, the decree concerning the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem (although some homes had been rebuilt at the 536 BC return under the leadership of Zerubbabel – cp. Isa. 44:28, 45:13; Neh. 7:4: see Appendix F, page 165 ff.) and its walls was issued after Cyrus' decree in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia (Nehemiah 2:1 & 9 — c. 454 BC, not c. 445 as most suppose). This rebuilding undertaking is recorded in the Book of Nehemiah.

As the correct determination of Artaxerxes' 20<sup>th</sup> year allows an independent method for establishing as well as verifying the crucifixion year of the Lord Jesus, its importance with regard to Bible chronology can hardly be overstated. This derivation will be given beginning at the following heading "E". For now, it will suffice to merely give our conclusion which is that in the year 473 BC, Xerxes installed Artaxerxes I Longimanus as his *pro-regent* (pro-rex years are never included in a king's total official years, but Scripture does include co-rex years).

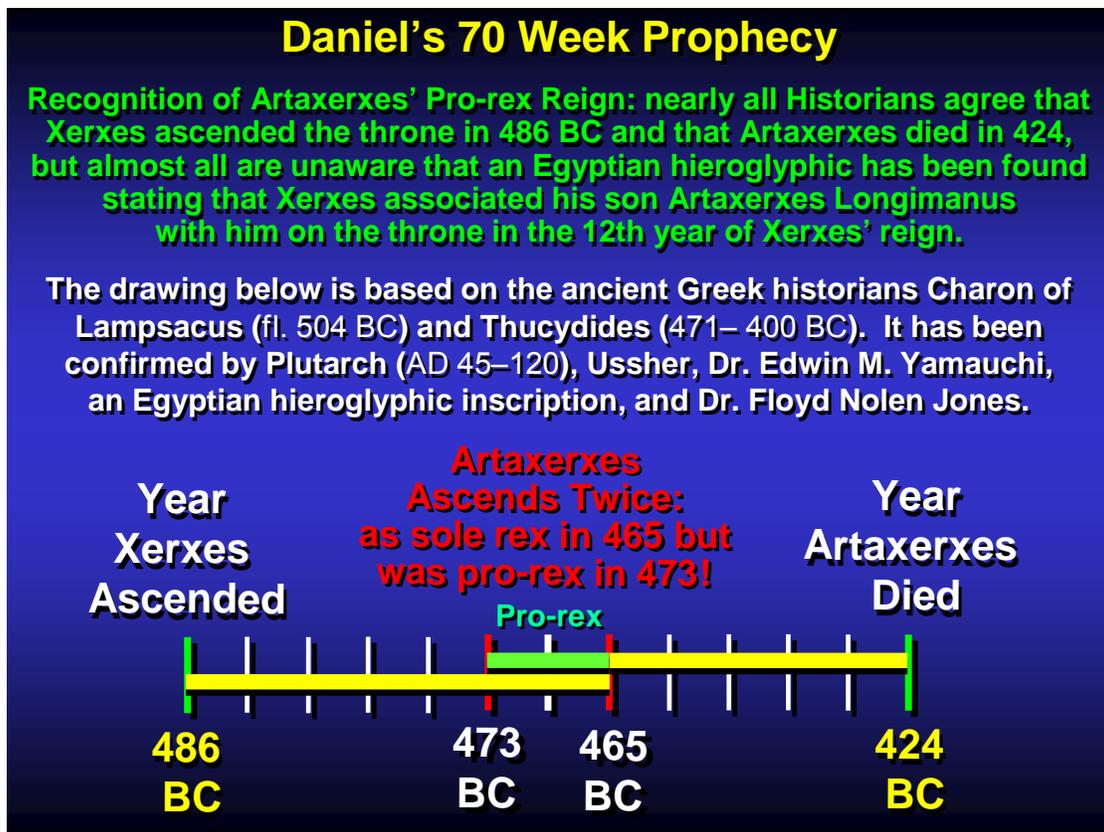
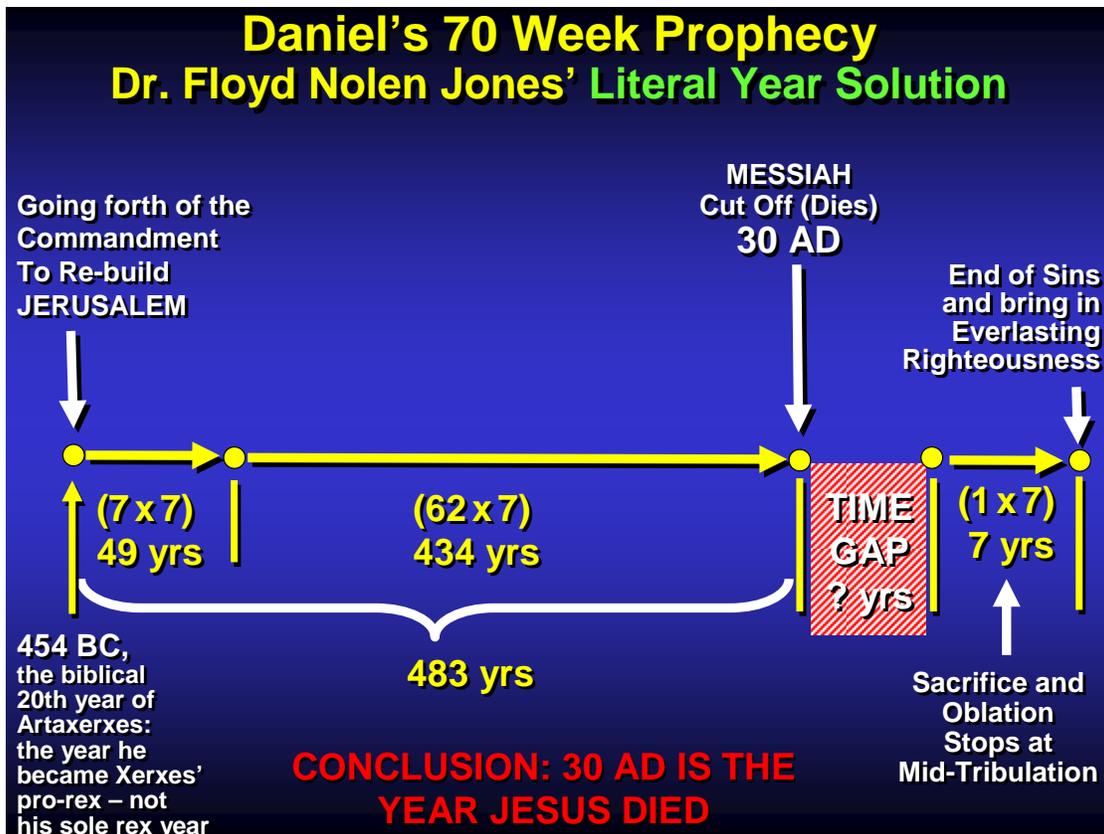
As 473 would have been the first year the Jews began to have dealings with him as their sovereign, they would quite naturally begin to reference the dates associated with him from that year. Starting at that date would place his 20<sup>th</sup> year over the Jews as 454 BC (or AM 3550 inclusive) and the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy would bring us to AD 30 for its

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*: (2007 edition), *op. cit.*, pp. 207–220.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, see p. 220 for a fuller discussion on the number of Passovers during our Lord's ministry.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Jonah 1:17; Gen. 7:12; 1 Sam. 30:12. In Esther 3:12, 4:16, & 5:1 the 3 nights & 3 days are 3 full nights, 2 full days, & part of the 3rd day – not 72 hours. Thus, biblically the term includes all or at least part of each of the 3 days as well as all or part of each of the 3 nights.

<sup>4</sup> Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, (2007 edition), *op. cit.*, pp. 208–209, 218–219.



fulfillment<sup>1</sup> at the time of our Lord's crucifixion (454 BC + AD 30 = 484 less 1 for going from BC to AD = 483).

As will be shown in that which follows, Jesus the Christ, Immanuel – GOD from everlasting (Mic. 5:2), was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the lineage of David. He was crucified and resurrected from the dead precisely 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes and thereby fulfilled the Scriptures.

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius and Ussher (*Annals, op. cit.*, p. 822 (1658 ed., p. 847) arrived at AD 33 largely due to Phlegon of Tralles', a 2<sup>nd</sup> century pagan, mention of a great solar eclipse and earthquake in Bithynia in Oly. 202, year 4 which they took as a reference to the darkness and quake at the Passion. Yet, Philoponus (end of 6<sup>th</sup> cent.) quotes Phlegon as Oly. 102, year 2 (*de Mundi Creatione*, ii, 21), Maximus (7<sup>th</sup> cent.) quotes it as "at the 203<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad", and others after Ussher have concluded Phlegon was, at best, referring to an eclipse in year 1 of Oly. 202 (AD 30).

As the Jews regulated the beginning of their months by the new moon, the time of our Lord's crucifixion was virtually mid-month – at the full moon phase – when a solar eclipse is impossible. Further, 7 minutes 40 seconds is the maximum duration of a solar eclipse. Yet the Scriptures say that, beginning at noon, the sky was black for 3 hours (Mat. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44–45).

Being clearly of a supernatural origin, the phenomena associated with the crucifixion were dramatically different from those of an ordinary solar eclipse, and Phlegon should have noted these extraordinary differences. His failure to comment on any of these miraculous particulars greatly damages his credibility. He does not mention Judea. Reference to the month and day of the event, essential details one would expect to accompany the statement, are also conspicuously absent. This is a most serious circumstance and further diminishes our estimation of his testimony. In addition, Browne says there was only one significant eclipse visible in western Asia in Oly. 202: 29 Nov. AD 29 (*Ordo Saeculorum, op. cit.*, p. 76).

Eusebius and Ussher also cited Thallus. Supposedly about the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Thallus argued that the abnormal darkness alleged to have accompanied the death of Christ was a purely natural phenomenon [Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, Caesar and Christ*, vol. 3, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), p. 555.]. Thallus speaks "of a darkness over all the world, and an earthquake which threw down many houses in Judea and in other parts of the earth".

The above failings plus other grounds which apply to Phlegon and generally to Thallus may be found in: McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia, op. cit.* p. 146, and Dr. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, vol. V, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1830), p. 276 (Mat. 27:45 comments). Africanus (c.200–245 AD) also dismissed Phlegon and Thallus (Georgius Syncellus, *Historia Chronographia*, (Paris, France: c. AD 800), p. 391) and, after all the above as well as reasons to follow, so does this author.

## E. THE IDENTIFICATION AND DATE OF ARTAXERXES

Of course several suppositions have been made which could alter the apparent precision in all of this. Perhaps the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius in reality should be taken as AD 14 as many well argue. Although the preceding reasoning for four Passovers has been logical and valid, it still may be wrong.

Indeed, perhaps all the Passovers over the course of the Lord's ministry were never intended to be mentioned, hence selecting them as a criteria in judging the length of his ministry may be wholly without merit. Regardless, the real point is that although 483 years (or 483 + 3 ½ years or 483 + 7 as some insist) from 445 BC takes us to AD 39, the general period of Christ Jesus' life; yet every detail of secular history cannot be worked out to fit that date. It is too far from Christ's birth.

Again, because it fully agreed with the time frame of the Daniel 9:25–27 prophecy, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Prideaux, and Frank Klassen were led to settle on the 458 BC decree issued in the seventh year of Artaxerxes as being the correct edict. Despite this, the *context* still best fits that of the decree given in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, and this led Sir Robert Anderson to re-examine the entire matter in the late 1800's.

### 1. SIR ROBERT ANDERSON'S SOLUTION

The fact that the decree given in Artaxerxes' 20<sup>th</sup> year so tantalizingly nearly fit the time of Jesus (Anderson rejected AD 39 as being too late) became an annoyance to the Presbyterian scholar and former Head of the Criminal Investigation Division of Scotland Yard. Himself a biblicist, Anderson was confident that Daniel 9:25–27 had to have been precisely fulfilled else such failure would have given the Hebrews of Jesus' day just cause to reject His claim as Messiah, the rightful heir to David's throne. Indeed, never would He have been able to attract so many followers if His antagonists, themselves expert in the Law, could have so easily dismissed Christ by pointing out such a lack of fulfillment.

Anderson began his research with another preconception. Namely, that he would "accept without reserve not only the language of Scripture but the standard dates of history" as

established by the best chronologists of his day.<sup>1</sup> The subtle danger in this latter commitment is that it elevates the secular data, which is subject to refinement and change, to the level of that which is God-breathed. It carries with it the potential of mixing the sweet with that which may be bitter and thus, so believes this author, Anderson unwittingly laid a snare for himself.

From Scripture (Gen. 7:11, 24; 8:3–4; Rev. 12:6, 13–14; 13:4–7), Anderson deduced that the Daniel 9:25 prophecy should be based upon “prophetic” years of 360 days rather than the solar year. Thus, Dan. 9:25’s 483 years x 360 = 173,880 days. This reduced the 483 to about 476 “normal” years (173,880 ÷ 365 = 476.3836). He then engaged the services of the Royal Astronomer and concluded that the 14 Nisan full moon at the Passover of our Lord’s crucifixion occurred in AD 32.<sup>2</sup> His famous calculation is:<sup>3</sup>

Nisan 1 in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes Longimanus was March 14, 445 BC.

Nisan 10 whereupon Christ entered Jerusalem on the donkey was Sunday April 6, AD 32.

The intervening period was 476 years (plus the 24 days from 14 March to 6<sup>th</sup> April), thus:

476 x 365 = .....	173,740 days
Add 14 March to 6th April, inclusive.....	24 days
Add for leap years.....	116 days
	173,880 days

As this total represents the entire number of days from the issuing forth of the decree in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (assumes Neh. 2:1 is 1 Nisan) unto the crucifixion, all that now need be done was to divide 173,880 by 360 and obtain precisely 483 “prophetic” years with no remainder. Daniel 9:25–27 was apparently fulfilled to the very day.

For Anderson, and nearly all conservatives since the 1882 publishing of his findings, this

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1882), preface to the tenth edition, p. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson used the Julian calendar (*Coming Prince*, *op. cit.*, pages 127, 128 fn.): 476 may also be obtained by subtracting AD 32 from 445 BC (the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes) = 477 – 1 as the Julian calendar has no year zero. One BC to AD 1 is one year.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–128.

resolved the matter. Today, over a century above the release of his celebrated computation, others such as Dr. Harold Hoehner, using slightly different dates for Artaxerxes’ 20<sup>th</sup> year, have applied his logic and principles to their own private interpretations.<sup>4</sup> By so doing, they have “refined” Anderson’s values while obtaining similar results.<sup>5</sup>

The great weakness in this reasoning is that the material in Daniel must be compared to that of Genesis and Revelation in order to so calculate. The Hebrews were given this prophecy in order that they could know the time of Messiah’s visitation, but as the Book of Revelation was not written until AD 90–98 it would not have been at their disposal. Thus, it is not probable that the Jews would have understood to use a 360-day year in order to make a calculation like

<sup>4</sup> An exception to this entire assessment is Eugene W. Faulstich’s interpretation. Taking 551 BC as being Cyrus’ first year (rather than 536 BC, 2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4) and the *terminus a quo* for the Daniel 9:24–27 prophecy, Faulstich incredibly rejects that Christ Jesus is the object of these verses. Instead, he makes Nehemiah the “anointed one”, the prince who comes to Jerusalem with permission to rebuild the walls after 49 years (seven sevens, Dan. 9:25a) bringing the 20<sup>th</sup> year of “Artaxerxes” (Faulstich’s Darius I) to 502 BC (551 – 49 = 502).

Fulfilling the 434-year (62 sevens) part of the Daniel prophecy in 68 BC is Faulstich’s second “anointed” individual, Hyrcanus the high priest who also functioned as a king (502 – 434 = 68). For Faulstich, when Hyrcanus’ brother, Aristobulus, replaced him by mutual consent in that position in order to stop the civil war between them, Hyrcanus fulfilled Daniel 9:26a (i.e., “cut off” but not of his own doing). Then when 3½ years later (64 BC) Aristobulus stopped Pompey, the Roman general from sacrificing, he fulfilled Daniel 9:27b (causing the sacrifice to cease in the “midst of the week”).

Faulstich concludes that the *terminus ad quem* of the 490 years (70 sevens, vs. 25) is 61 BC with Julius Caesar’s taking control of the Jews (551 – 490 = 61). For Faulstich, Julius is the prince of verse 26, and “the people” of that prince who are to destroy Jerusalem are the Romans under Titus in AD 70. Thus, Faulstich presents the 490 years of Daniel 9:25 as the span from the time Cyrus issued the edict and restored the Jewish government in 551 BC until the Romans took their government in 61 BC (Faulstich, *History, Harmony and Daniel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–110).

<sup>5</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1977), pp.134–139. Dr. Hoehner (Ph.D. Cambridge) of Dallas Theological Seminary is one of the better known who might be cited. He favors 444 BC as Artaxerxes’ 20<sup>th</sup> and AD 33 as the crucifixion year.

Anderson's.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as they had never experienced such a year they never would have so done, for from long before Abraham they had only known solar years of c. 365.2422 days.

This is true because the data in Genesis does indicate that the original creation years were 360 days long (Gen. 7:11, 24; 8:3–4). Furthermore, the Book of Revelation indicates that the 360-day year will be restored during Christ Jesus' 1,000-year millennial reign on the earth (Rev.12:6, 13–14; 13:4–7). However, at the time of the Flood, the earth's spin rate was altered and has been fixed near 365.2422 days per year until our day.<sup>2</sup> The 360-day "prophetic year" always was, and still is, an artificial contrivance. The 360-day years were *never* "prophetic". They were, and shall again be, real years.

Moreover, the precision achieved by Anderson and more recently by Dr. Harold Hoehner, which has won them many supporters, is not as exact as they purported. Each particular calendar is defined by its own set of rules. Both Anderson and Hoehner unwittingly violated the internal Julian calendar mathematics.

Anderson did this when he calculated that 119 leap years would occur in his 476-year prophetic period ( $476 \div 4 = 119$ ) but then removed three and obtained 116 leap year days (his p. 128, see my page 117). He subtracted these because the last three of the 4 century-years (400, 300, 200, and 100 BC) between 445 BC and AD 32 were not divisible by 400 and thus not leap years. Removing these three century-years yielded 116 (see diagrams on pages 120a and 120b).

<sup>1</sup> The feast in Esther 1:1–5 which lasted 180 days – exactly six months of a 360-day-year – was Persian and thus has no bearing.

<sup>2</sup> My contention is that the earth's rotation sped up at the time of the Flood and has remained very near the new rate. Vast volumes of water burst forth from the subterranean "fountains of the deep" (Gen. 7:11, this implies accompanying worldwide volcanic activity). As this entrapped water rose up through fissures, the creation rocks above it would have sunk into the void it left. At that time, the invisible water vapor canopy above our atmosphere indicated by Genesis 1:7 condensed and fell to earth for 40-days & 40-nights (Gen. 7:12).

These two events slightly lowered the earth's center of gravity. In order to conserve its angular momentum (mass x velocity x distance from the center of the mass), the earth's rotation rate had to increase – as when ice skaters pull their arms in, the distance from the center decreases and they spin faster.

But "years ending in '00' that cannot be divided by 400 are not leap years" is a Gregorian calendar rule (my page 155) and can not be used in a Julian-to-Julian reckoning where one simply divides by four. The two systems cannot be mixed; 119 was the correct value all along.

Anderson compounded this three-day error when he said 10 Nisan AD 32 was Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> (Julian<sup>3</sup>). It was *Wednesday* April 9. This would result in Christ dying on *Sunday*, yet Scripture teaches that was the day He arose from the dead. This means that Anderson's *year* is wrong – indeed, it is impossible!

Dr. Hoehner also used Julian years and caught this latter Anderson mistake (his page 137). However, instead of using the Julian defined year of 365.25 days, Hoehner multiplied the 476 years by the 365.242199-day solar year (his page 138, cp. page 134). This yields a violation of 4 days, 6 hours, 43 minutes, and the 6 hours, 43 minutes places his error into day five.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Hoehner also gave 1 Nisan of 444 BC as March 4 (or 5, his p. 138), but this is Julian. In order to stay in synchronization with the biblical agricultural feasts, this must be converted to Gregorian. Now Nisan 1 becomes 26 February – and the barley would not yet be Abib ripe! He should have used the next new moon to begin Nisan. This year, Adar – the Jewish 12<sup>th</sup> month – lasted 59 days. The following new moon was visible in Jerusalem on Friday March 28 (Gregorian) and by then the barley would have been Abib ripe. If one now uses the 360-day "prophetic year" motif and measures 173,880 days from the actual Nisan 444 BC month, he goes into Iyyar of AD 33 – one month past Nisan – but Christ died on 14 Nisan! Thus, the "prophetic year" proposal is shown as impossible for 444 BC.

Finally, it must be seen as somewhat incongruous that from Creation to the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes only "normal" 365¼ (approx.) day years were utilized by Anderson and all others, yet suddenly at this point one is supposed to resort to 360-day "prophetic" years in order to complete the Old Testament chronology. Furthermore, Anderson and those who subscribe to

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, *Coming Prince*, op. cit., p. 127

<sup>4</sup> We are indebted to Dr. Peter W. Moore of Houston, TX for bringing these violations to my attention.

his system do not then continue using such years throughout New Testament chronology. Hence, the entire line of reasoning seems to be little more than an expedient.

Anderson's acceptance that Longimanus was the biblical "Artaxerxes" followed by his presupposition to accept without reservation secular history's standard dates for that monarch must be seen as the critical factors in his searching for and deriving this expedience. In point of fact, other relevant historic data was known to Anderson, but his total commitment to Ptolemy's Canon brought him to reject its testimony. It is this almost forgotten data that must now be addressed.

## 2. DATING ARTAXERXES LONGIMANUS WITH ANCIENT HISTORICAL DATA

As twentieth century scholars have uniformly accepted Ptolemy's Canon, it may come as a surprise for many to learn that there is significant ancient historic data that opposes (or modifies) it with regard to the dates of the Persian monarch Artaxerxes I Longimanus. This is possibly even more true of most biblical intellectuals who are familiar with the "Ussher" dates appearing in the Bibles published during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for the years assigned to the "Artaxerxes" in question in those texts are the same as Ptolemy's (i.e., *circa* 465–424 BC), leaving them with the impression that the matter is certain and without question or doubt. However, such is not the actual situation.

In 1701 Bishop William Lloyd of Worcester was entrusted by the Anglican Church with the task of editing the Bible. His main task was to correct misspelled words and other typesetting errors. While so doing, Lloyd decided to add dates in the margins. He adopted most of Ussher's dates, but in his 1701 *Holy Bible with Chronological Dates and Index* Lloyd slightly revised some and interjected many of his own in places where Ussher had offered none. This edition of the Authorized Bible (King James) came to be popularly known as "Lloyd's Bible". It was the first of any kind to have dates in the margins

The foremost of these changes were the dates concerning Jacob's marriages, the birth of his children, and the departure from Laban by about seven years as well as changes to the

Book of Nehemiah. The alterations were explained by Lloyd in his Tables at the end of the 1701 edition and in his *Chronological Tables* (printed but never published and now resides in the British Museum). In addition, several private papers of Lloyd's were published in 1913 by his chaplain, Benjamin Marshall, in Marshall's own *Chronological Tables* (see his appendix to Table 3 and the whole of Table 4).

Ussher had set aside Ptolemy's 465 BC date for the commencement of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus in favor of 473 BC (AM 3531). This latter year was based on much older historic data which Ussher considered more reliable than that of the Canon. It places the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes at 454 BC and brings the 483 years to a promising AD 30 fulfillment. However in 1701, 51 years after Ussher had published, Lloyd set aside Ussher's chronology and inserted Ptolemy's date in its place. Let us now examine this ancient historical data and its effect on the 483 years of the Daniel 9 prophecy.

### a. Ussher and the Ancient Records

At the onset, it must be noted that a truly serious period of time is not in question in the issue before us. Of all the many works which this author has examined, not one differs more than ten years from the other. Once again, to our knowledge all chronologists agree that Xerxes ascended to the throne of Persia c. 486 BC and that his son, Artaxerxes Longimanus, died c. 424 BC (diagram page 115a). Thus it cannot be overstressed that the only matter in dispute before us here concerns the year that Artaxerxes Longimanus ascended the throne.<sup>1</sup>

Ussher's objections to the "received" chronology (the Canon) largely depended on the testimony of Thucydides. He states that Longimanus had just come to the throne when Themistocles (having fled from the false charge of being in league with Pausanias' treason with Persia against Sparta and the punishment of ostracism [a ten-year public banishment] by his fellow Athenians) arrived at the Persian Court.<sup>2</sup>

Thucydides places the flight and coming of Themistocles to Artaxerxes' court between two

<sup>1</sup> We again remind our reader that all this material has been taken almost verbatim from my *Chronology of the Old Testament*: (2009 edition).

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, Ch. 137.

notable historic events, the siege of Naxos<sup>1</sup> (c. 474/473 BC) and the famous victory over the Persians by the Athenian general, Cimon, at the mouth of the river Eurymedon. This river is located in Pamphylia of Asia Minor, some 125 miles from Cyprus.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Thucydides relates that during his passage from Athens to Asia Minor, Themistocles was driven by a storm into the midst of the Athenian fleet which was blockading Naxos. This is most significant for although he does not date the event, Thucydides places this siege of Naxos *before* the great victory of Cimon on the Eurymedon which Diodorus Siculus (a Greek historian, c. 80–20 BC) places in 470 BC.<sup>3</sup>

Further, Plutarch (AD 45–120) decidedly connected the death of Themistocles with the expedition of Cimon.<sup>4</sup> He adds that, like Thucydides, Charon of Lampsacus (one of three cities the Persian king gave to Themistocles), a contemporary of Themistocles (flourished back in Olympiad 69 or 504 BC, according to Suidas), related that Xerxes was dead and that his son Artaxerxes was the king who received the fleeing Athenian.<sup>5</sup>

In the sentences following, Plutarch states that Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heracleides, and others maintained Xerxes was alive at the time Themistocles came to the Persian court and that it was he with whom the interview was conducted rather than Artaxerxes. Notwithstanding, Plutarch continued in saying that though not securely established, the chronological data seemed to him to favor Thucydides over the opinions of these latter writers.

Although he believes Xerxes to still be king, Diodorus Siculus dates the arrival of Themistocles at the Persian court as being the year after the 77<sup>th</sup> Olympiad when Praxiergus

was archon in Athens.<sup>6</sup> As the 77<sup>th</sup> Olympiad took place in 472 BC, Diodorus sets 471 as the year in which Themistocles sought refuge in Persia from his fellow Athenians. Cicero gives the year of the flight as 472<sup>7</sup> and Eusebius records the flight in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 76<sup>th</sup> Olympiad or 473 BC.<sup>8</sup>

It must not be overlooked that with regard to the varying ancient testimonies of the flight of Themistocles to Artaxerxes Longimanus rather than Xerxes, the resolution unquestionably favors the authority of Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus. Unlike all other voices, they were writing as contemporaries to the facts.

The “prince” of Greek historians, Thucydides was contemporary with Artaxerxes I Longimanus and was born around the time of Themistocles’ flight. Moreover, he relates that the reason for his digressing to give a brief summary of the events between the Persian and Peloponnesian War was that all his predecessors had omitted this period in their works except Hellanicus who had only treated it “briefly, and with inaccuracy as regards his chronology”.<sup>9</sup> From this statement, it should be evident that the accounts of the period as found in the later authors cannot be certain because they can have no credible contemporary source from which to glean as such would surely have been known by Thucydides.

Indeed, Charon’s witness must be given the highest regard for he was a writer of history and living in Lampsacus of Asia Minor near the Hellespont (modern = Dardanelles) at the very time of the arrival of Themistocles. Remember, this was the same Lampsacus which was given to Themistocles – an event Charon could hardly have not noticed. On the other hand, the oldest witnesses for the opposite position lived more than a century after the event. Ephorus outlived the passing of Alexander the Great (323 BC); Clitarchus accompanied Alexander, and Dinon was his father.

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, Ch. 98, ep. 137. Naxos is a Greek island in the southern Aegean Sea. It is also the name of the most important town on the island.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. 98–100.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. IV, (1970), *op. cit.*, Bk. XI, 60–61. Diodorus flourished circa AD 8.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Plutarch’s Lives: “Themistocles”*, vol. II, Loeb (1967), Book II, 31.

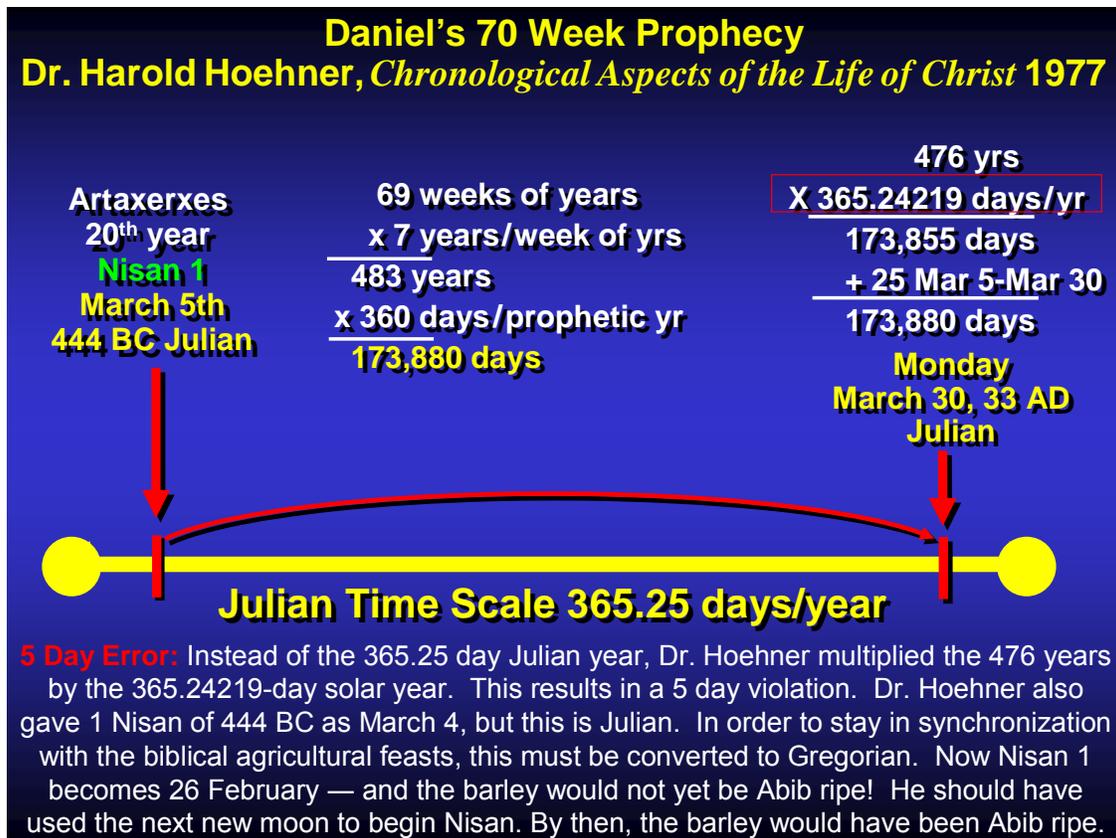
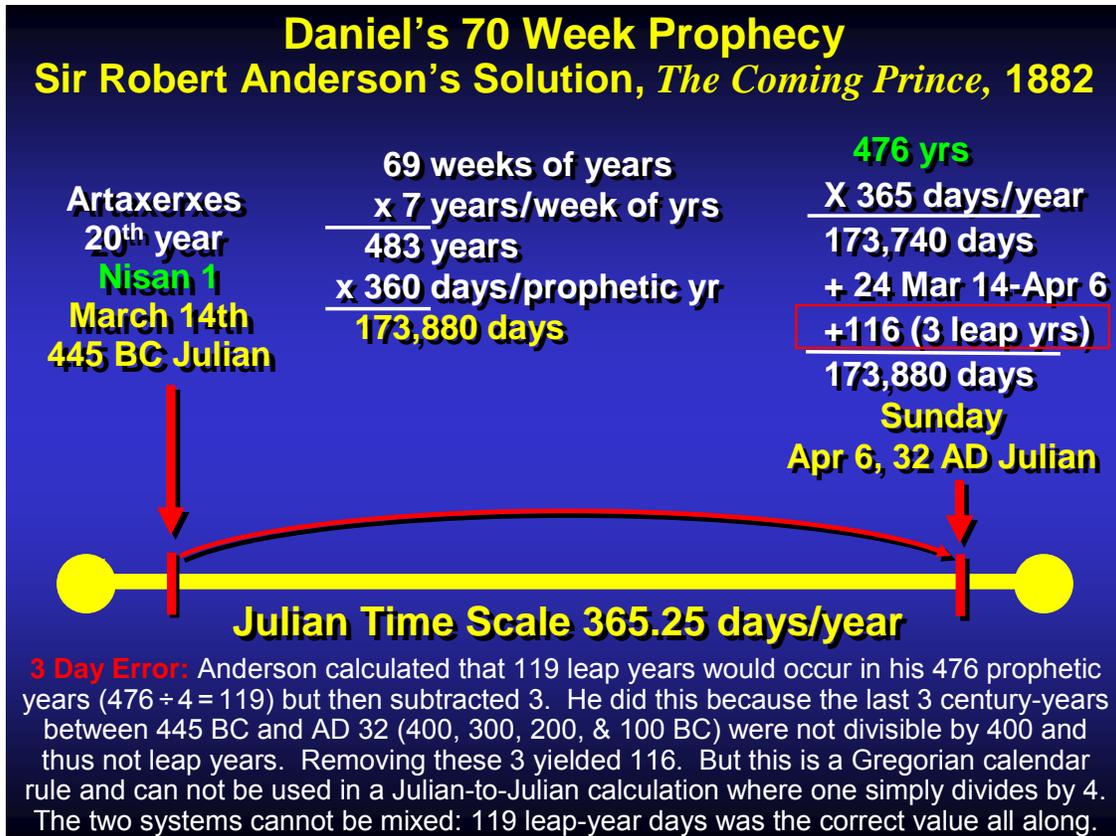
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Book II, 27.

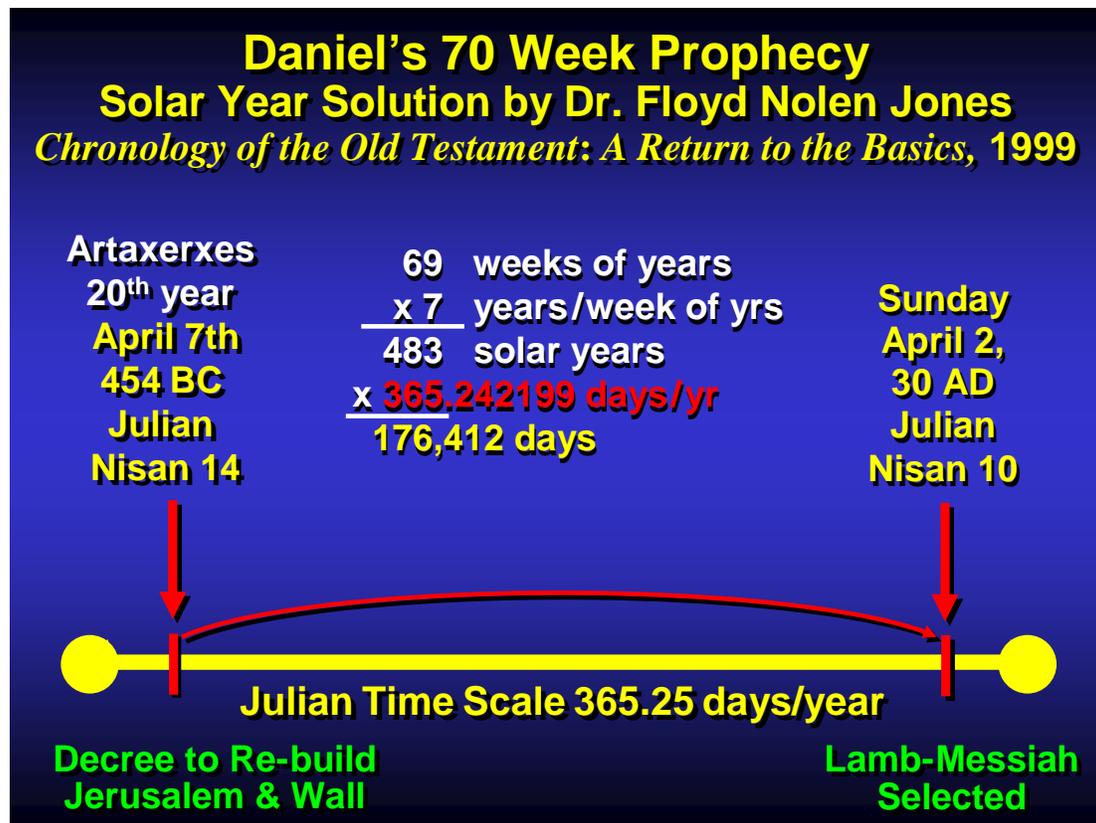
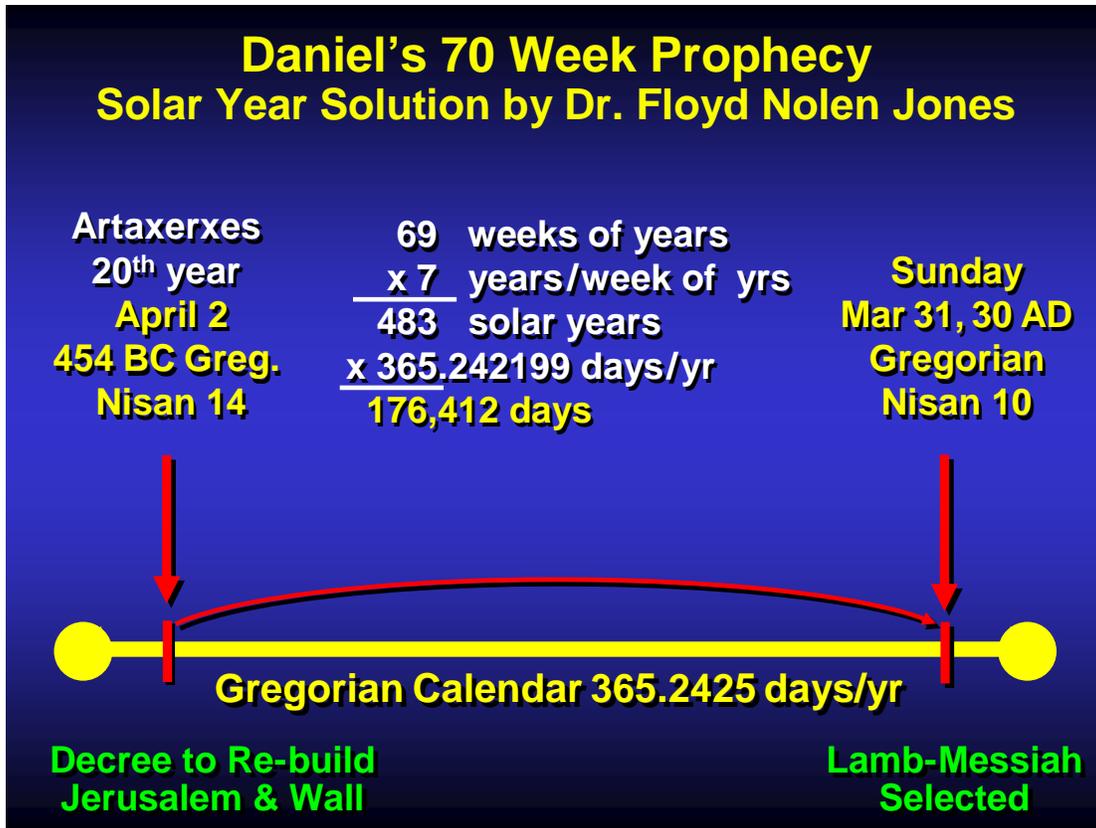
<sup>6</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. IV, *op. cit.*, Bk. XI, 53–57.

<sup>7</sup> Cicero, *Laelius de Amicitia*, Loeb, vol. XX, (1923), Ch. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Eusebius, *Chronicon*, Schone, ed., (Berlin: n.p., 1866). See Ussher, *Annals, op. cit.*, p. 147 (1658 ed., p. 132).

<sup>9</sup> Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, Book I, Ch. 97.





Thus, with the testimony of these and other witnesses, Ussher first raised a doubt on the matter while lecturing on “Daniel’s Seventies” at Trinity College, Dublin in 1613.<sup>1</sup> He eventually wrote the argument in his *Annals of the World*, placing the date of Artaxerxes’ first year as 473 BC.<sup>2</sup> This date was later adopted by Petavius (AD 1627) and Campegius Vitranga (1698). Nearly a century later Kruger, working independently, obtained the same result with many of the same arguments.<sup>3</sup>

In 1830, Kruger released a Latin translation of Henry Fynes Clinton’s “Tables BC 560–278” which included pages 2 to 207 of the second volume of Clinton’s *Fasti Hellenici*. Within the work, Kruger inserted some comments and observations in which he stated his views with regard to the first year of Artaxerxes as differing with the received Ptolemaic dates and agreeing with Ussher’s previous findings. Still for over a century, it has been Ernest Wilhelm Hengstenberg who has been recognized as the champion of this position, and his treatise sets forth the view as thoroughly as has yet been done.<sup>4</sup>

Before continuing to give an evaluation and decision on this matter, it seems proper to first review the Canon of Ptolemy. In the following, we shall come to find just what it is, what it is not, and how it came to be.

### ***b. An Examination of Ptolemy and his Royal Canon***

Claudius Ptolemaeus, or more commonly “Ptolemy”, was born at Pelusium in Egypt about AD 70 and flourished during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, surviving the latter who died in AD 161. Ptolemy was an astronomer, astrologer and geographer. He recorded astronomical observations at Alexandria from AD 127 to 151, compiling the results into a system in which he placed the earth at

rest at the center of the universe. He envisioned the planets and other heavenly bodies as encircling the earth in fixed orbits on a daily rotation about a celestial axis.

In AD 827, the 13 books bearing the title *Mathematike Syntaxis* (Mathematical System) which reflected all Ptolemy’s astronomical observations, calculations, and solar system theory were translated by the Arabians into their language, coming to eventually be known among them as the *Al Magest* (The Great Work). From them, its contents were made known to Europe as the *Great System* (Ptolemaic System, The Great Construction or in Greek as *Megala Suntaxis* and in Latin as *Magna Constructio*).

Although believed erroneous by modern science, his system represented the phenomena of the heavens as they actually appear to a spectator on the earth. This enabled observers to have a practical workable procedure with regard to the motions of the sun and moon, as well as the ability to calculate and thus predict eclipses.

Ptolemy welded the phenomena of the heavens into a system so comprehensive that it maintained its hold on European thought for 14 centuries. It was not superseded until well after the AD 1543 publication of Nicolas Copernicus’ (1473–1543) epoch-making *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (Concerning the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) which contained the essence of the modern heliocentric system.

This accomplishment is all the more amazing when one considers that Copernican astronomy, which places the sun at the center of the solar system, was taught in its essentials by Pythagoras (582–circa 500 BC) in his *Harmony of the Spheres*. In it, Pythagoras explained the motions of the heavenly bodies some six centuries before Ptolemy saw the light of day (the basis of Pythagoras’ decision was that the sun should be the center because it was the most magnificent of the gods).

As one can see on the following page, the Royal or Ptolemy’s Canon is merely a list of kings with the number of years of their reigns. It is not accompanied by any explanatory text.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Ussher, *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, C.R. Elrington and James Henthorn Todd, eds., (Dublin Ireland: Hodges & Smith Pub., 1864), vol. XV, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–149 (1658 ed., 131–134).

<sup>3</sup> Ernest W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, trans. by T.K. Arnold, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1835), pp. 459–460.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 459–470.

<sup>5</sup> Ptolemy, “The Almagest”, *Great Books of The Western World*, *op. cit.*, Appendix A, p. 466.

## THE CANON OF PTOLEMY\*

Monarch	Years of rule	Anno Nabonassar
BABYLONIAN KINGS		
Nabonassar	14	14
Nadius	2	16
Chinzer and Poros	5	21
Iloulanius	5	26
Mardokempad	12	38
Arkean	5	43
First Interregnum	2	45
Bilib	3	48
Aparanad	6	54
Rhegebel	1	55
Mesesimordak	4	59
Second Interregnum	8	67
Asaridin	13	80
Saosdouchin	20	100
Kinelanadan	22	122
Nabopolassar	21	143
Nabokolassar	43	186
Iloaroudam	2	188
Nerigasolassar	3	192
Nabonadius	17	209
PERSIAN KINGS		
Cyrus the Great	9	218
Cambyses II	8	226
Darius I	36	262
Xerxes I	21	283
Artaxerxes I	41	324
Darius II	19	342
Artaxerxes II	46	389
Ochus	21	410
Arogus	2	412
Darius III	4	416
Alexander of Macedo	8	424
*partial listing		

Each king's year of accession is given as the last year of his predecessor. For example, Cyrus died and Cambyses began to reign in 530 BC, but the Canon gives the whole year to Cyrus and reckons it as his *last* year. Ptolemy does not address Cambyses' year of accession but would place 529 as his first year. Further, as already noted on page 62, Ptolemy made no allowance or notice for reigns of less than a year. Those kings were completely omitted and

their months were included in the last year of the preceding or the first year of the following monarch.

As stated heretofore, Ptolemy also made no indication or allowance for any co-regencies. The Canon terminates with the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius. Ptolemy's beginning point was the new moon on the first day of the first month (Thoth, 26 February) of the first year of the Era of Nabonassar (that Era being founded in Egyptian years of 365 days) or 747 BC.<sup>1</sup> As Anno Nabonassar 1 is 747 BC, the "running" Anno Nabonassar years seen on the preceding abridged Canon may be converted to BC dates by subtracting them from 747.

Since the year after Nabonassar (the first name appearing on the Canon) is "14" (his total length of reign) all the Anno Nabonassarian years (the second column of numbers on the preceding chart) must be seen to represent the first year of the succeeding king. Hence, subtracting the 218 after Cyrus' name from 747 yields 529 BC, the first *official* year in which Cambyses came to the throne.

Although this "received" chronology is universally accepted, during the past century its reliability has been occasionally challenged. These challengers have underscored weaknesses in this work and several of them are, to some extent, valid. After all, Ptolemy was neither an eyewitness nor a contemporary historian.

Yet despite the fact that he is merely a late second century compiler writing nearly a hundred years after Christ Jesus, he is our only authority for no other system bridges the gulf from 747 BC to AD 137. His Canon, or list of reigns, is the only thread connecting the reign of the biblical Darius I Hystaspis with Daniel's "notable" horned "he-goat" king of Greece who was to defeat the Medo-Persian empire (Dan. 8:5–8, 21–22; 11:2–4).

In producing the Canon, Ptolemy had access to the information written by the Chaldean priest Berosus (356–323 BC), the calculations of the astronomer Eratosthenes (276 BC, called the "Father of Chronology") and Apollodorus (2<sup>nd</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 80–81.

century BC), the writings of Diodorus Siculus<sup>1</sup> (c. 50 BC), and all the literature of ancient Greece and Rome at the Alexandrian library. However, it is the lunar eclipse data gleaned from the Chaldean records that accompanied portions of his king list that has given the Canon its high position of esteem in the realm of academia. As a result of these recorded lunar observations and calculations, it has always been regarded unsafe to depart from Ptolemy.

### c. Challenges Against Ptolemy

Nevertheless, as Anstey, Ussher and others have pointed out, there are other voices more ancient than Ptolemy's which do not corroborate him. Early in this century, part of the Canon was questioned in the *Companion Bible* notes reflecting the work of Bullinger. Later Anstey, having been greatly influenced by Bullinger, enlarged upon his ideas compiling these ancient witnesses into a unified challenge against Ptolemy.<sup>2</sup>

The main point of contention is that from the 491 BC lunar eclipse in the 31st year of the reign of Darius, no other recorded eclipse data was available for Ptolemy to verify his king list over most of the later Persian period. It was this very portion of Ptolemy's chronology which Anstey (and Bullinger) felt contradicted the Hebrew Text as well as the other more ancient records whose testimony he amassed. As Anstey offers relevant material not discussed within the present work, it is recommended reading.

Much of the challenge against the Canon has been based upon statements by Sir Isaac Newton. Anstey especially based much of his thesis on Newton's observations and conclusions. Newton pointed out that all the nations of the distant past (particularly the Greeks, Egyptians, Latins and Assyrians), in order to assign credibility and status to themselves,

greatly exaggerated the antiquity of their origins.

Over and over, Anstey emphasized Newton's statements regarding the Greek Antiquities, notably those relating to the deficiencies of Eratosthenes, and brought them to apply against Ptolemy.<sup>3</sup> As Ptolemy drew upon Eratosthenes, Anstey (and Bullinger) coupled that with other limitations with which Ptolemy was encumbered, and felt justified in concluding that the Canon was 82 years too long in the later Persian period between the lunar eclipse in the 31st year of Darius I and Alexander the Great.<sup>4</sup>

Newton truly did maintain that all nations had, before they began to keep exact records of time, been prone to exaggerate their antiquities, saying:<sup>5</sup>

Some of the Greeks called the times before the reign of Ogyges, Unknown, because they had no history of them; those between his flood and the beginning of the Olympiads, Fabulous, because their history was much mixed with Poetical fables: and those after the beginning of the Olympiads, Historical, because their history was free from such fables.

As Anstey reported, Newton (in demonstrating that mankind was not older than that represented in Scripture) did say the "Greek Antiquities" were full of poetic fictions before the time of Cyrus. Newton related that they did not reckon events or kings' reigns by numbers of years or dateable events such as the Olympiads, but rather set reigns equivalent to a generation with about three generations to a hundred or a hundred and twenty years. From this, Newton argued that this resulted in the antiquities of Greece as being three to four hundred years older than the truth.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Writing c. 200 years before Ptolemy and drawing heavily on Ctesias of Cnidus' *Persica* (*Library*, Bk. I, p. xxvi), Diodorus of Sicily described the Persian Empire from Xerxes to Alexander. His king list and dates are virtually those in the Canon.

<sup>2</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 288–293. Although Anstey repeats many of Bullinger's arguments and various proofs against Ptolemy's Canon throughout his work, this portion is his final summation and a fair concise representation of his thesis.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36, 58, 103–106, etc. Eratosthenes (born 276 BC) wrote about 100 years after Alexander the Great. His method of conjecture rather than testimony led him to greatly exaggerate the antiquity of the events of Greek history.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 286, 292–293, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–45. Here Newton is quoting, at least in part, from Varro and Censorinus; see Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, p. 75 (1658 ed., p. 56).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–4.

He proceeded to point out that even the famous Arundelian Marble, composed 60 years after the death of Alexander the Great, made no mention of the Olympiads. Sir Isaac added that it was not until the following 129<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (260 BC) that Timaeus Siculus (*circa* 352 – *circa* 256 BC) published a history which utilized Olympiads to date historical people and events.

With regard to the late Persian period, Anstey noted that the only kings of Persia mentioned on the Arundelian Marble<sup>1</sup> after Xerxes were the brother of Cyrus the younger (Artaxerxes Mnemon) and his son Artaxerxes III Ochus. Anstey further added that Newton proclaimed Eratosthenes, writing about a hundred years after Alexander, had produced a completely artificial chronology. Newton maintained that Apollodorus had followed Eratosthenes and that they had been followed by the chronologers who succeeded them.

Newton demonstrated the uncertainty of their chronology by showing that Plutarch quoted Aristotle who used the Olympic Disc which bore the name of Lycurgus making him contemporary with the first Olympiad in 776 BC, yet Eratosthenes and Apollodorus made him 100 years older. Newton added that Plutarch related the historic interview of Solon with Croesus (ruled Lydia 560–546 BC) whereas Eratosthenes and Apollodorus had placed Solon's death many years before the date of his visit to that Lydian monarch.<sup>2</sup>

Anstey forcibly maintained that when compared to the history of this latter Persian period as recorded in Josephus as well as the Jewish and Persian chronological traditions, all these weaknesses and the witness of the Marble testified that the chronology from Xerxes to Alexander had been exaggerated by Ptolemy.

<sup>1</sup> Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 289–290. Found on the island of Paros, Anstey relates that this Parian (Arundelian) marble became the property of Thomas, Earl of Arundel in AD 1624. Being 5 inches thick and 3 feet 7 inches by 2 feet 7 inches, the marble slab displays the principal events of Greek history from its legendary beginnings down to Anno 4 of the 128<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (264 BC), the year in which it was engraved.

Among other events, it dates the reign of Cyrus, Darius I of Marathon, and Xerxes of Thermopylae.

<sup>2</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4, 96.

Anstey reasoned from these witnesses that the six Persian kings listed on the Canon as filling this span were probably in reality only two or three who had been “multiplied” into more in order to fill the gap which he felt had been made by the artificial enlargement of the chronology by at least 82 years.

Writing in the eighteen hundreds concerning the Canon of Ptolemy, Philip Mauro said: “Ptolemy does not even pretend to have had any facts as to the length of the Persian period (that is to say, from Darius and Cyrus down to Alexander the Great)”; his dates are based on “calculations or guesses made by Eratosthenes, and on certain vague floating traditions”.<sup>3</sup> Mauro complains that despite this, Ptolemy's dates are often quoted as though they had special authority.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Philip Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, (Boston, MA: Scripture Truth Depot, 1923), pp. 22, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, biblicists such as Anstey, Bullinger, and Mauro are not the only challengers against Ptolemy. In 1977 a well-published astronomer, Dr. Robert R. Newton, issued forth a work entitled *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy*. In it Newton charged that Ptolemy was guilty of a betrayal against his fellow scientists. Robert Newton declared that Ptolemy had deliberately fabricated astronomical observations and that he may have also invented part of his king list, although he acknowledged that the latter part of the list concerning Cambyses and Darius I was verifiably correct.

Newton concluded that Babylonian chronology needed to be completely reviewed in order to remove any dependence upon Ptolemy's king list, stating that astronomically speaking, it was unlikely any serious error was present after “~ 603, but errors before that year could have any size”. Robert R. Newton, *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy*, (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Uni. Press, 1977), pp. xiii, 371–379. On page 379, Professor Newton continued: “no statement made by Ptolemy can be accepted unless it is confirmed by writers who are totally independent of Ptolemy on the matters in question. All research in either history or astronomy that has been based upon the Syntaxis must now be done again...He [Ptolemy] is the most successful fraud in the history of science”. (bracket FNJ). Dr. Robert Newton died in 1991.

In March 1979, *The Scientific American* (pp. 91–92) published a repudiation of a previous article by Newton entitled “Claudius Ptolemy Fraud” (Oct. 1977, pp. 79–81) in which the above mentioned charges were detailed. The 1979 article, “The Acquittal of Ptolemy”, listed several noted astronomers who, having reviewed Newton's charges of fraud, concluded they were groundless stating that such was “based on faulty statistical analysis and a disregard of the methods of early astronomy”.

Indeed, Ussher, Anstey, and Hengstenberg must be seen as correct when they insist that where the Canon has no astronomical observations, especially lunar eclipses, upon which to depend, Ptolemy had to rely on the same materials as other chronologists. In such places, his Canon stands on the same ground as all other historical sources such that when other substantial authorities oppose its testimony, it is not of itself sufficient to outweigh them. As Anstey himself remarked, this is not said to fault Ptolemy the man. It is only intended to call attention to his limited materials.

Nevertheless, after using Sir Isaac Newton at length in making the point that:

- (1) much of Eratosthenes' chronology was based upon conjecture and certain vague floating traditions;
- (2) the Greek chronology was much too long; and
- (3) Ptolemy consulted this data for his king list,

Anstey continues arguing that the period which Ptolemy assigned to the Persian empire was 82 years too long in such a way as to give the impression that Isaac Newton concurred (Bullinger makes it 110, *Companion*, Appen. 86, p. 124). Whether intentional or not, Anstey and Bullinger are guilty of referencing a man of great stature to add credibility to their position; yet that man would never have agreed with their final conclusion. The *Companion Bible* best states their view:<sup>1</sup>

If Newton was right, then it follows that the Canon of Ptolemy, upon which the faith of modern chronologers is so implicitly – almost pathetically – pinned, must have been built upon unreliable foundations. Grecian chronology is the basis of “Ptolemy’s Canon”; and, if his foundations are “suspect”, and this is

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Newton’s article in *The Scientific American* was but three pages, hence it hardly gave him full opportunity to document his case as he was able to do in his book. The present author admits that he has neither the time, disposition, nor skill to fully resolve this dispute. For the purpose at hand, it is sufficient to merely observe that the matter concerning the Canon of Ptolemy continues to produce much smoke and is an ongoing one, not having been completely resolved 350 years after Ussher. This underscores that, although we may attain a very useable “standard” chronology, it is highly improbable anyone will ever produce an “absolute” chronology.

<sup>1</sup> E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1990), p. 122; Anstey acknowledged following *The Companion Bible* (pp. 54, 139, 169).

certainly the case, then the elaborate superstructure reared upon them must necessarily be regarded with suspicion likewise.

Sir Isaac Newton did accuse the aforementioned chronologers of exaggerating the antiquity of Greek history, antedating its earlier events by 300–400 years. Furthermore, Sir Isaac did say:<sup>2</sup>

The Europeans had no chronology before the times of the Persian Empire: and whatsoever chronology they now have of *ancienter* times, hath been framed since, by reasoning and conjecture. (author’s emphasis)

Yet whereas it is true that Sir Isaac Newton took issue with the length of Greek chronology as passed along by Eratosthenes, he fully *endorsed* the Canon for the period that Anstey questioned. This may be established beyond any doubt for Newton used its dates and lengths of reigns of the Persian kings in his “Short Chronicle”.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, as the italicized “ancienter” in the foregoing quote makes evident, it was the older dates beyond the 776 BC Olympiad, not the younger, that Newton rejected. This may also be seen in that whereas he normally references events and reigns by Anno Nabonassarian years, he also occasionally referenced by the Canon (*Chron. Amended*, pp. 302–303, esp. 358) as well as the Olympiads (*Chron. Amended*, pp. 353–355).

Moreover, Anstey pressed the fact that Newton noted the Arundelian Marble (also called the “Parian” Marble) made no mention of the Olympiads, and that it was not until the 129<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (260 BC) that Timaeus Siculus first dated historical people and events utilizing them. From these two facts, Anstey declared that the 776 BC date for the Olympiad of Coraebus, long held as the first date in Grecian history which could be firmly established upon accurate authoritative evidence,<sup>4</sup> must be taken

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<sup>2</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–42, 358. Indeed, Newton clearly endorses the value of the Canon of Ptolemy, especially with reference to the Persian Empire and its application to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Fynes Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, 3 volumes, (Oxford, England: 1834), vol. I, p. 123.

as untrustworthy.<sup>1</sup> Hence according to Anstey and the *Companion Bible*,<sup>2</sup> all events whose dates are referenced to the Olympiads before 260 BC are suspect or wrong.

Yet, as has been shown, these were *not* Newton's conclusions. Thus these men, who otherwise contributed much good work, have themselves erected chronologies based upon Newton's statements but, by the witness of Newton's own work, they have taken him out of context. Unfortunately, Newton's works have not been easy to obtain in order to check his views against Anstey, etc.<sup>3</sup> Thus, many who have read their work were not able to so discern and have followed them, not realizing that Newton did not agree with the final opinions concerning the reliability of the later Greek chronology as expressed by these men.

For that matter, neither did Clinton whom they also often cite sometimes favorably, other times negatively. While acknowledging that Eratosthenes date for the fall of Troy had been founded upon conjecture, Clinton stated that the 776 Olympiad of Coraebus was "the first date in Grecian chronology which can be fixed upon authentic evidence".<sup>4</sup>

As shall be shown, the real problem here is not at all that of the Greek records from the 776 Olympiads to the time of Christ or even with the Canon. Being a true biblicist and firmly believing these to be the problem, Anstey was drawn to conclude: "We have to choose between the Heathen Astrologer and the Hebrew Prophet...Here I stand...The received Chronology is false. The chronology of the Old Testament is true".<sup>5</sup> Whereas this author entirely agrees with the intent and commitment inher-

ent in such an affirmation, the actual case of the matter is not at all as Anstey perceived.

The real problem bringing about this apparent impasse between the secular data and the biblical record has nothing to do with a difficulty or mistake in the Canon. In wrongly deciding upon the decree of Cyrus as being the fulfillment of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy,<sup>6</sup> Anstey himself actually created the problem between Ptolemy and the Scriptures (as did *Companion Bible* in a similar vein). However when the decree in the 20th year of Artaxerxes is seen to be the only one of the four edicts which meets the requirements of the prophecy, the drastic and radical removal of 82 years (or 110, *Companion Bible*) of history is not at all necessary (again, see Appendix F, pp. 157-165).

Thus, the difficulty arose from well-intending biblicists having made faulty judgments with regard to Scripture and then forcing that error on the Canon, the very opposite of the practice of the Assyrian Academy.<sup>7</sup> Both sides, the secular and the biblicist, therefore must be seen as being guilty of such practices from time to time and strong responsibilities toward one another's data must be better faced if the ultimate goal of reconstructing the truth is ever to be obtained.

Nevertheless, with the exception of this mistaken final conclusion, the present writer holds Anstey and the main of his work in the

<sup>1</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pages 31-32, 291, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> However, this will soon be corrected. This author has recently proofed a new edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronology* that will be released by Master Books in 2009. Its editor is my colleague Larry Pierce of Winterbourne, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>4</sup> Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 284.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 275-284.

<sup>7</sup> As a result of many years of research into the matter, the current author has discovered that most of the conflict reported to exist between the Hebrew Text and that of the Assyrian Annals, etc. is the result of misunderstanding, misreporting, misrepresenting, misapplication and/or the taking of unjustified liberties in the emendations and restorations by the translators of the Assyrian records. Some of the work of these scholars and their associates, which is referred to collectively under the title of the "Assyrian Academy" within my *Chronology* as well as this study, is thereby called into question.

Moreover, Dr. Edwin R. Thiele (1895-1986), long recognized as their leading proponent in the field of biblical chronology, while claiming to have defended the reliability of the Hebrew Text, actually again and again applied these often mishandled Assyrian data in violation of the clear Hebrew history. In so doing, he created problems with and greatly undermined the integrity of the Hebrew Text. Dr. Thiele has been thoroughly exposed and refuted in my *Chronology of the Old Testament* (pp. 114-177).

highest esteem. He has been selected, not for ridicule, but because of his deep commitment and the fact that he so well serves to illustrate how easy it is for even the most honest well-intended researcher to miss the mark and having done so, take the created mistake and use it to “correct” the efforts of others.

Having hopefully learned from such and trusting that this author is not guilty of the same error, let us return from this necessary digression to where we left off with a similar problem, yet of a much smaller magnitude. Namely, that the c. 445 BC date for the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, although coming into very close proximity, probably does not precisely bring the 483-year Daniel 9:25 prophecy into the lifetime of Christ Jesus. It is now time to see if a discrepancy, regardless of how small it may be, is demanded between the Canon and the Hebrew Text.

### 3. THE RESOLUTION OF PTOLEMY AND THE ANCIENT HISTORIANS

Being contemporaries of Artaxerxes I Longimanus and Themistocles, the testimonies of Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus concerning the date in which that Persian monarch came to the throne must not continue being ignored by nearly all scholarship. Indeed, we have seen that Ussher and Anstey had an impressive array of ancient data, most of which was far older than that of Ptolemy, upon which to formulate conclusions which differed a few years from the Canon.

Having related that Eratosthenes, the astronomer/chronologer from whom Ptolemy not infrequently referred, and Apollodorus framed a chronology within which they made all the known facts of past history to fit as best they could, many credible former researchers have been called to testify that much of this was founded on conjecture, guesses, and “certain vague floating traditions”. Besides, Eratosthenes flourished (c. 275–194 BC) and wrote many years after the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus and was thus not an eyewitness nor even in the immediate proximity to the event under examination. He, Apollodorus, and Ptolemy are all late compilers of this history.

Another allegation often repeated by Anstey and others is that Ptolemy is not corroborated in this period of Persian history, that his

witness stands alone against many who contradict it.<sup>1</sup> To this Anderson has argued that Julius Africanus, writing around AD 240, independently confirmed Ptolemy’s dates for Artaxerxes Longimanus in his *Chronographies*.<sup>2</sup> In it, Africanus does define that king’s 20<sup>th</sup> year as the 115<sup>th</sup> year of the Persian Empire (reckoned from Cyrus at 559 BC) and the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad (445 BC).<sup>3</sup> Of course it may equally be contended that as Ptolemy preceded Africanus by about a century, the latter’s statement is not truly independent but rather derived from consulting the Canon.

Regardless, Ptolemy cannot rightly be as easily dismissed as Bullinger, Anstey, Mauro, etc. maintain, especially with respect to the extent of error which they have ascribed to him.



After all, no less of an authority than Sir Isaac Newton, himself a most capable astronomer, defended Ptolemy with regard to the years of Cambyses and Darius the Great. This was done

when he stated that their years were “determined by three eclipses of the moon recorded by Ptolemy, so that they cannot be disputed” (picture of Isaac Newton).<sup>4</sup>

As to Xerxes’ dates, Sir Isaac Newton continued (*Chron. Amended*, pp. 353–354) saying that his expedition against the Greeks took place at the time of the 75<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games (480 BC), adding the critical comment that all chronologers agreed on that date. Diodorus Siculus (c. 80–20 BC), writing nearly a century before Ptolemy, gives these same facts with regard to Xerxes<sup>5</sup> and is undoubtedly Newton’s primary source for that information.

<sup>1</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–20, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Africanus, *Chronographies, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. IV, *op. cit.*, Bk. XI, 53–57.

Newton added that the Battle of Salamis was fought in the autumn and that an eclipse<sup>1</sup> took place a short time later on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Herodotus mentions this same solar eclipse<sup>2</sup> and Ussher, citing him, also dates the famous naval conflict at Salamis as 480 BC.<sup>3</sup> The point is that having mentioned the October 2<sup>nd</sup> eclipse, Newton uses it to set the first year of Xerxes' reign as 485 BC (Anno Nabonassar 263) adding that he reigned "almost twenty one years by the consent of all writers". The importance of this or any support certifying Ptolemy can hardly be overstressed.<sup>4</sup>

From the foregoing testimony by Ussher, Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, and Sir Isaac Newton, it cannot be fairly said that Ptolemy is not on firm ground at this place in the Canon. The length of Artaxerxes Longimanus' reign and the date of Alexander the Great are also settled within very narrow bounds by ample ancient voices, all of which confirm Ptolemy. What then is to be done with the impasse between Ussher and his sources (Thucydides, Charon of Lampsacus, etc.) and Ptolemy? Amid so much conflicting evidence and doubt, can the truth be found?

<sup>1</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 354. Although Sir Isaac Newton calls it a lunar eclipse, it was solar as the current text indicates. Undoubtedly this was a lapse by the great genius, almost certainly having been written during his final illness at the advanced age of 85.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, Bk. 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 141 (1658 = 121, 126).

<sup>4</sup> This is all the more true since Robert Newton has recently shown the extreme limitations of Ptolemy's king list. Robert Newton convincingly illustrated that any modern historian or chronologist using Ptolemy's lunar eclipse records, even if many or all of the aspects of these eclipses were fabricated as Newton charged, would seem to verify his king list. Moreover, he showed quite remarkably that any king list, regardless of its accuracy, would seem to be eclipse validated such that, taken alone, Ptolemy's king list is of little value. Newton, R., *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 372–376.

However, Robert Newton goes on to show that the later part of Ptolemy's king list has independent verification such that there is strong confirmation for its correctness for Nebuchadnezzar as well as reasonable affirmation for Cambyses. From this, Newton concluded that any error in Ptolemy's list could be no more than a few years for dates after –603 JP (604 BC Gregorian), but as there was no astronomical confirmation available for earlier dates, errors before that year could be of any size (pp. 375–376).

Although from all that has now been said on the matter, we may not be unconditionally certain; still, it is believed that a heretofore unattained responsible resolution has been reached. It is offered that, in general terms, all of the formerly cited witnesses (page 117 ff.) have told the truth and are basically correct!

The solution proposed by this author is that, as many writers have heretofore stated, following Xerxes' humiliations at the hands of the Greeks in battles such as Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea etc., his spirit was crushed resulting in the giving of himself over to a life of indolent ease, drink, the sensual enjoyment of the harem as well as dallying with the most beautiful women of the court and the wives of some of his chief officials.<sup>5</sup> Further, that after some time of this debauched living, his desire and/or abilities to govern were diminished or impaired to the extent that he placed Artaxerxes Longimanus on the throne as his pro-regent some years before his death in his 21<sup>st</sup> year of rule, leaving the affairs of state in his son's hands.

Thus when Themistocles' flight ended, he arrived with Artaxerxes I Longimanus' having just come to the throne as Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus reported. Most scholars have assumed from their histories that with Artaxerxes in power, his father was dead. Yet in point of fact, at no place in his narrative does Thucydides make mention of Xerxes' actually being dead at this time!<sup>6</sup> This allows the possibility that Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heracleides, Diodorus Siculus and others were also correct in part in maintaining that Xerxes was alive at the time the fleeing Athenian arrived at the Persian court and was the monarch with whom the interview was conducted rather than Artaxerxes. Xerxes was alive, but it was Artaxerxes Longimanus with whom Themistocles spoke.

This solution differs from Ussher, Vitringa, Kruger, and Hengstenberg who interpreted Thucydides, etc. as meaning that Themistocles arrived at the onset of the *sole* reign of

<sup>5</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997), p. 499.

<sup>6</sup> Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, Book I, Ch. 137–138.

Artaxerxes I; hence they rejected Ptolemy's 21 years for Xerxes' kingship, conceding him only 11 or 12 years. The above resolution completely maintains the integrity of the Canon.



Although, as previously stated, there is some discrepancy as to the exact date for this event. Diodorus Siculus set the year as 471 BC, Cicero placed it as 472, and Eusebius along with Ussher (pictured) opted for 473 BC. Therefore,

it seems certain to this author that it should be placed somewhere between 473–470. Nor should it be thought that he is alone in this determination.

As recently as AD 1990, Doctor Edwin M. Yamauchi, internationally noted professor of history at Miami University of Ohio, has decided in favor of Thucydides and that it was Artaxerxes I Longimanus before whom Themistocles appeared, giving 471/470 BC as the date for the ostracism of Themistocles.<sup>1</sup> This is all the more significant when we take into account that the foreword to Dr. Yamauchi's *Persia* was written by Donald J. Wiseman, world renowned Professor Emeritus of Assyriology at the University of London. While not meaning to imply that Professor Wiseman agrees with all of Dr. Yamauchi's determinations, we read:<sup>2</sup>

The author's writings on archaeology and the Bible always give a balanced presentation of the evidence, and he brings out clearly and fairly those controversial points where scholars differ in interpretation. For this Yamauchi has rightly earned a good international reputation.

Thus if, for example, we take 473 BC as the year in which Xerxes installed Artaxerxes I Longimanus as his pro-regent (see section from my Chart 5<sup>3</sup> on page 130), the Jews would quite naturally begin to reference the dates associated with him from that year as that would have been the point from which they began to have dealings with him as their sovereign.

<sup>1</sup> Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–226.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*

Numbering from that date would place his 20<sup>th</sup> year over the Jews as 454 BC (or AM 3550 inclusive, exactly as Ussher)<sup>4</sup> and the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy brings us to AD 30 for its fulfillment (454 BC + AD 30 = 484 less one for going from BC to AD = 483). This date agrees with our previous determination.

Going to the other extreme and taking 470 BC as the commencement year of Artaxerxes' pro-regency would result in 451 BC as being his twentieth and AD 33 would be the 483<sup>rd</sup> year from that point. However, Tertullian says that Tiberius received word from Pilate about the events associated with Christ's death, His resurrection, as well as the miracles done by Him publicly prior to this along with those being done by His disciples in His name, and this disallows AD 33.

Why is this so? Because upon hearing that many believed Christ to be a god, Tiberius proposed to the senate of Rome that Jesus be included among their gods. The proposal was rejected<sup>5</sup> — and Orosius adds that it was due mainly to the adamant opposition of Sejanus, Tiberius' anti-Semitic prefect.<sup>6</sup> Tacitus fixes Sejanus' death at 18 Oct., AD 31.<sup>7</sup> This being two years *before* 33, the crucifixion could not possibly have taken place in 32 or 33! How could Sejanus die in AD 31 and yet address the Roman Senate after a 32 or 33 crucifixion?

Writing in AD 417, Orosius adds that Augustus died in AUC 767 (AD 14) and that Christ died in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius' sole reign<sup>8</sup> which was AD 30! (see my page 149 in the present work)

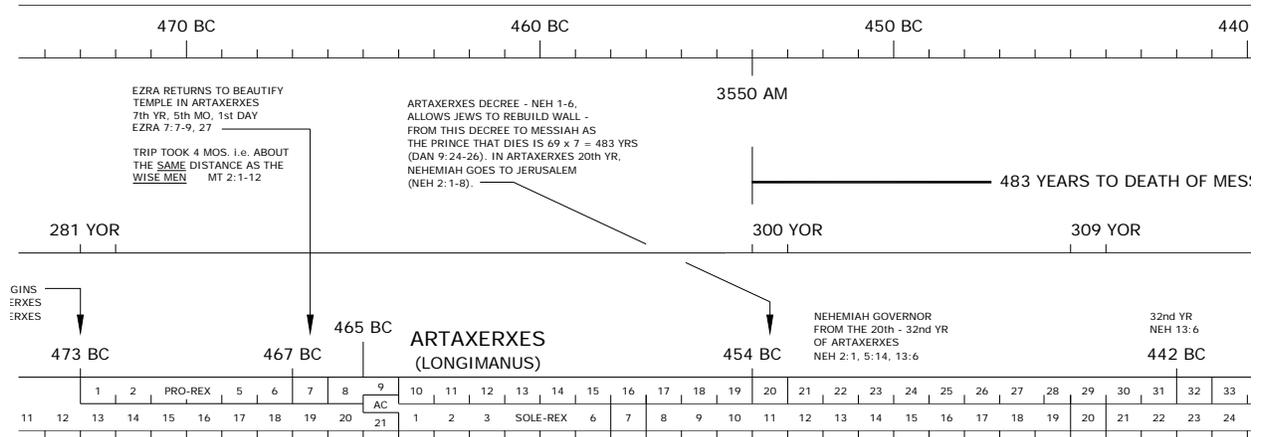
<sup>4</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, page 152 (1658 ed., page 137). Based on Thucydides and Charon, Dionysius Petavius (a French Jesuit historian and theologian) also dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of Artaxerxes as 454 BC (rather than 445 BC) in his *Opus de Doctrina Temporum* (2 Vols., 1627; see Anstey, *Romance*, *op. cit.*, p. 280).

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, 5 & 21 (written c.207 AD).

<sup>6</sup> Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, (New York: Columbia UP., 1936), pp. 325–326. Neither refers to the well-known Catholic forgeries.

<sup>7</sup> Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals*, The Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1931), vi., 25 & 15 (written c.117 AD).

<sup>8</sup> Orosius, *Seven Books of History*, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.



The above chart illustrates the author-modified Ussher-Thucydides solution to the Daniel 9:25 “483-year” prophecy. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, Artaxerxes Longimanus became associated on the throne as pro-rex with Xerxes I around 473 BC (see chart, page 151).

Not only does AD 30 fall during the accepted life time of our Lord, the solution must be seen as superior to Anderson’s expediency for the reasons given above as well as the fact that the chronology does not suddenly have to resort to inserting 360-day years instead of the solar year (which were used in the present work from the Flood forward, see page 118). Moreover, the fact that not one historic event is known of Xerxes after his 11<sup>th</sup> year<sup>1</sup> should be viewed as a most significant circumstance in support of this resolution. To the possible objection that Artaxerxes would have been too young at this time to assume the responsibilities of the government, it is replied that the Hebrew Text unmistakably places him of sufficient age in the seventh year of his dominion to have already fathered more than one son (Ezra 7:23).

We now remind our reader that beginning at page 115 and continuing to this point we have established AD 30 as best fitting the examined

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Anderson has taken exception with this by offering that the Book of Esther speaks of the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahasuerus and that the narrative carries into his 13<sup>th</sup> (*The Coming Prince, op. cit.*, pp. 256–257). This is true (Est.3:7, 12; 8:9; 9:1, 13–17); however, Anderson accepts that Ahasuerus is Xerxes and thus erroneously considers that these two years apply to Xerxes’ reign. Of course, it has already been shown that this identification is false. Besides, the scenario offered herein allows for Xerxes to still be alive over a full 21-year reign as Ptolemy listed.

data in establishing the crucifixion year. Before closing this section, the following material is also presented toward forever fixing the correctness of this determination. Taken alone, these proofs are not of themselves deemed to be as significant as those already delineated but as a group, they must be seen as most substantial.

1. Whereas this author is absolutely not into numerology, it is nevertheless well-known that because of the frequency of the occurrence of the number “forty” and the uniformity of its association with a period of probation or testing, this number has long been recognized as significant within Scripture. Examples of “forties” abound: Israel in the wilderness, Israel under Philistine dominion (Judg. 13:1), Moses in Egypt, Moses in Midian, Moses on Mt. Sinai, Jonah’s preaching of judgment on Nineveh, the span the 12 spies searched out Canaan, Elijah’s fasting while fleeing from Jezebel, the span Goliath challenged Israel for a champion, the period of our Lord’s being tempted by Satan, the length of days He showed himself to the disciples after the resurrection, etc.

Thus, it is deemed reasonable that God gave Israel a 40-year period from the crucifixion to reconsider, repent, and receive the Lord Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah before bringing the judgment under Titus down upon them. Moreover, is it not logical to conclude that our Lord would forever end the efficaciousness of the animal sacrifice system by the willing sacrifice of himself 40 years prior to this historic event?

2. As Titus’ destruction of the Temple is firmly fixed at AD 70, Eusebius places our Lord’s death in AD 30 by writing: “For forty whole years it (i.e., God’s Providence) suspended their (the

Jews) destruction, after their crime against the Christ”.<sup>1</sup> (parentheses FNJ’s)

3. Even the Jewish sages, who certainly have no reason to assist us in this determination, imply an AD 30 crucifixion. The Jerusalem (Yoma 43c) and Babylonian (Yoma 39b) Talmuds tell us that every night for 40 years before the destruction of the Temple the middle or chief light on the golden candlestick would simply go out and that the great brass Temple-gates which were closed each evening were seen to swing open every night of their own accord. Josephus tells us these doors were so massive that it took 20 men to close them (*Wars*, vi, 5, 3.).
4. The 40 years of Judah’s iniquity and its association to a siege of Jerusalem in Ezek. 4:4–7 is herewith offered as a double reference prophecy with its second fulfillment being the span from the crucifixion to the ending of the sacrifice system by Titus’ AD 70 destruction of the Temple and its altar.<sup>2</sup> (diagrams, pp. 132a & b)
5. Moreover, Titus began the siege of Jerusalem on 14 Nisan AD 70.<sup>3</sup> Are we to actually believe it is a mere coincidence that this was 40 years to the very day from a 14 Nisan AD 30 crucifixion?

When these considerations are added to the detailed thesis already presented, the year AD 30 should be seen as the actual date of our Lord’s crucifixion and thereby settle this issue.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2 Volumes, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. by Kirsopp Lake, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), vol. 1, III, vii, 9.

<sup>2</sup> The first fulfillment of the Ezekiel 4:4–7 40-year prophecy began in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah (628 BC) when Jeremiah began to prophesy and called on the kingdom of Judah to repent. It ended when the final siege began on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah (cp. Jer. 25:3, 39:1). The clock on Ezekiel’s 390-year prophecy began ticking in 975 BC when the Jews rejected God’s “one king” provision, and it ended exactly in the 390<sup>th</sup> year during the 586 BC final siege and fall of Jerusalem.

Similarly, the second fulfillment of Ezekiel’s 40-year prophecy began ticking in AD 30 when the Jews rejected God’s “one King” provision and slew Messiah Jesus on 14 Nisan. It ended exactly 40 years later when the final siege of Jerusalem began on the very same day – Nisan 14 of AD 70 (Josephus, *Wars*, V.13.7). All involved in this proposal should come as no surprise. After all, the OT is about Christ (Luke 24:27, 44–45).

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, op. cit., V.13.7. Orosius confirms 14 Nisan as the crucifixion day (not the 15<sup>th</sup> as some declare), *Seven Books of History*, op. cit., p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> It is urged that the combined force of these 5 points and the facts about Tiberius & Sejanus (page 129) far outweigh the uncertain statements of Phlegon & Thallus on which Ussher relied to establish AD 33 (fn. 1, p. 116).

As to the validity of Ptolemy and the Royal Canon, we must also mention that there is a document recorded on two stelae found in Haran which is the tomb inscription of Adad-guppi, mother of Nabonidus — the last king of Babylon. One stele was found in AD 1906 and the other in 1956. On these two “gravestones”, Adad-guppi relates that she was born in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Ashur-banipal, king of Assyria (650 BC) and that from her birth into the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Neriglissar, the Babylonian monarch, was a span of 95 years. She also relates that the city of Haran fell in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Nabopolassar. A postscript adds that she died a natural death in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of her son, Nabonidus (at age 104).

This valuable information was taken from J.B. Pritchard’s classic anthology of the ancient near East.<sup>5</sup> This text is of immense value in bridging the complex and often puzzling section from Josiah across the life span of Nebuchadnezzar. This data fixes the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Neriglissar as 556 BC, 95 years after Ashur-banipal’s 20<sup>th</sup> year (650 BC – 556 = 95 years, inclusive numbering).

The significance of this can hardly be overstated for it allows one to close with certainty the span around 560 BC where the Hebrew record is suddenly becoming almost devoid of data, and brings the chronology into very close proximity to the lunar eclipses of 523, 502 and 491 BC<sup>6</sup> (Gregorian) thereby establishing the bridge. The Adad-guppi stelae also confirm the accuracy of the 621 BC lunar eclipse in the fifth year of Nabopolassar with regard to this later trio of eclipses. It also serves to authenticate the synchronization of the Assyrian monarchs with the Babylonian and hence with the kings of Judah over this time period.

All of this valid profane data places exceedingly rigorous mathematical restraints and demands upon the complex time of Nebuchadnezzar and the fall of Jerusalem. When this precise secular material is interwoven with the approximately 100 Scriptures relating to this time span, two of the three “Bible to secular” bridges<sup>7</sup> that are

<sup>5</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, op. cit., pp. 560–562.

<sup>6</sup> Ptolemy, “The Almagest”, *Great Books of The Western World*, op. cit., Bk. 4, pp. 136–137; Bk. 5, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> There are only three places where firmly dated secular historical events overlap the Scriptures, thus forming a connecting bridge between the two. One is fall of the

located along this sector are found to interlock perfectly. Thus the zone becomes fully “date attested”.

Furthermore, the Adad-guppi inscription gives all the reigns of the Neo-Babylonian kings from Nabopolassar to the ninth year of Nabonidus and these lengths of reign are in complete accordance with Ptolemy.<sup>1</sup> This is most significant as she was a contemporary and intimately associated with all these kings.

In addition to Adad-guppi’s confirmation of these kings and their regnal spans, Nebuchadnezzar’s 37<sup>th</sup> year has been absolutely fixed at 568/567 BC by an astronomical diary in the Berlin Museum designated as VAT 4956 which gives about 30 verified observations of the moon and the five then-known planets. Such a combination of astral positions is not duplicated again for several thousand years before or after this date. The tablet twice states that the observations were made in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>2</sup>

Further, the Nabonidus No. 18 cylinder inscription gives a lunar eclipse which has been dated and confirmed as having occurred on September

20, 554 BC (Gregorian) during the second year of Nabonidus.<sup>3</sup> This, along with the data given by Adad-guppi and the VAT 4956 observations, gives strong, added validation to Ptolemy.

Finally, Nabonidus relates that the god Marduk instructed him to rebuild Ehulhul, the temple of the moon god Sin (Ezk. 30:15–16?), in Haran which had been lying in ruin for 54 years due to its devastation by the Medes.<sup>4</sup> Adad-guppi dates this devastation as occurring in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Nabopolassar<sup>5</sup> or 610 BC. Now the Nabonidus No. 18 cylinder eclipse just cited fixed the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Nabonidus as 554 BC. Thus, his first year was 555, and Nabonidus is obviously reckoning the 54 years *from* the 16<sup>th</sup> of Nabopolassar to the beginning of his own reign. That is, it is 54 years *from* 610 to 555 (numbering exclusively).

Ptolemy gives Nabopolassar a reign of 21 years, hence 5 remained from his 16<sup>th</sup> to his final year. If we take these five and add them to the 43 for Nebuchadnezzar, two for Evil Merodach, and four years for Neriglissar before Nabonidus ascended the throne we obtain 54 – which is the very number Nabonidus gives on his stele.

The sum of the evidence offered by this as well as the four preceding paragraphs is absolutely decisive. These, along with the cluster of lunar eclipse years recorded on page 131, absolutely fix the years and reigns of the Neo-Babylonian kings listed by Ptolemy. True, a single eclipse calculation taken alone may prove faulty. In fact, many will never be seen as they transpire during the daylight hours, but the validity of such an array of astral observations presented here cannot be denied.

To the objection that too much emphasis has been placed on such astronomical observations, we remind our reader that God states in Genesis that one of the main purposes for His creating the sun, moon, and stars was that man could use them for telling time (i.e., seasons, days, and years — Genesis 1:14–19). Further, these astral observations have been confirmed by this author through the use of many scriptures relevant to the time-span in question.

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Kingdom of Judah with the subsequent burning of the Temple, destruction of the city of Jerusalem along with its walls and the accompanying deportation (the third) of most of its citizens to Babylon. Scripture dates this as occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar (cp. Jer. 52:12–14; 32:1).

The others are the fourth year of Jehoiakim with Nebuchadnezzar’s first which was also the year of the great battle of Carchemish (Jer. 25:1; 46:2), and the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar with the 30<sup>th</sup> year of our Lord Jesus, the Christ (Luke 3:1,23). Moreover, it is only at these infrequent bridges that Bible chronology may be assigned and fixed as to a “BC” designation (this study uses Gregorian, not astral or Julian dates, see page 155). All other biblical dates are so assigned by numbering backward and forward from these three anchor points.

Actually, a fourth does exist. It is the 1<sup>st</sup> official year of Evil Merodach with the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Jeconiah’s captivity. A “reported” 4 July 568 BC lunar eclipse (Julian, Gregorian = 28 June – Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Revised (*Grand Rapids, MI*: Zondervan, 1983), p. 69) and c.30 astral observations in Nebuchadnezzar’s 37<sup>th</sup> year helps solidify this bridge, but it is more difficult to establish their synchronization.

<sup>1</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, page 561. She lists: Nabopolassar 21, Nebuchadnezzar 43, Evil Merodach 2, and Neriglissar 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158, 186.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–110.

<sup>4</sup> Pritchard, *ANET*, *op. cit.*, p. 311, (X).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 560.

### The 390 Year Prophecy of Ezekiel 4:4-8 Solar Year Solution by Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones

Solomon Died in his 40<sup>th</sup> year  
**975 BC**

**390 inclusive years**

Zedekiah's 11<sup>th</sup> year  
**586 BC**

**One King Provision Rejected**

**Jerusalem Under Siege and Falls**

**But what about the 40 year part of Ezekiel's prophecy ?**

### The 40 Year Prophecy of Ezekiel 4:4-8 Solar Year Solution by Drs. Jones & Moore

Christ Jesus' Crucifixion day  
Nisan 14, 30 AD

**40 years to the very same day**

Titus began the final Siege of Jerusalem  
Nisan 14, 70 AD

**" - - that all gracious Providence (of God) that had deferred their (the Jews) destruction for forty years after their crimes against Christ." Eusebius – 325 AD  
Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1, Bk. III, Ch vii (my parenthesis)**

Siege Reference: Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 5. 13. 7.

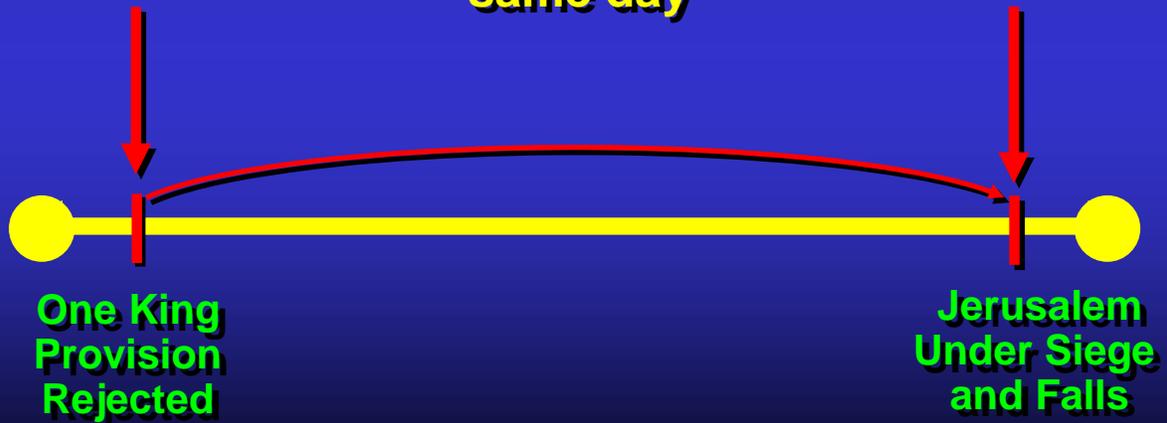
# The 40 Year Prophecy of Ezekiel 4:4-8

## Solar Year Solution by Drs. Jones & Moore

Christ Jesus' Crucifixion Day  
Nisan 14, 30 AD

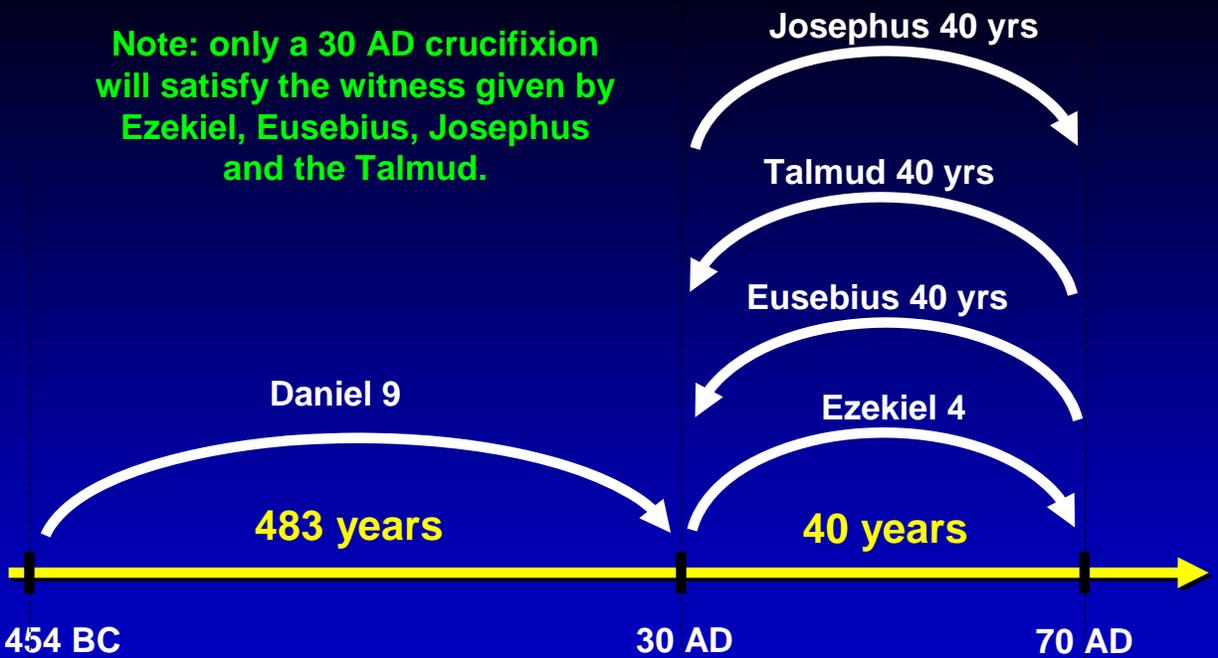
40 years  
to the very  
same day

Titus began  
the final Siege  
of Jerusalem  
Nisan 14, 70 AD



Siege Reference: Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 5. 13. 7.

Note: only a 30 AD crucifixion will satisfy the witness given by Ezekiel, Eusebius, Josephus and the Talmud.



In light of all the preceding, it should be clear that regardless of any challenges one may lay against the inherent weaknesses in the Persian chronology listed by Ptolemy, the Babylonian astronomical data absolutely fixes the number of years from the reigns of the Neo-Babylonian monarchs to the time of Christ. Thus, it is not possible that any years could have been added to history. Future discoveries could bring about some adjustments but in view of all that supports the Royal Canon, any such changes would be extremely minimal. Hence, the 82-year discrepancy insisted upon by Anstey or the 110 years by the *Companion Bible* must be seen as totally unfounded and indefensible.

Accordingly, Ptolemy's dates and king list are acceptable as they stand within their heretofore stated known limitations such as his omissions of kings who reigned for less than a year. Examples of this practice are Artabanus who had a seven-month reign in 465 BC, and Xerxes II and Sogdianus who reigned 45 days and six months and 15 days respectively during 424 BC.<sup>1</sup> All this author's explanation does is merely add the pro-regency aspect to the relationship between Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I Longimanus which does no violation to Ptolemy for, as has been formerly stated, he makes no mention of such affinities (again, see chart on page 151).

Indeed, the fabric of the entire thesis concerning the biblical "Artaxerxes" as presented thusfar has been remarkably corroborated by an essay published in the 1863 *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*. The article reports an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription as having been found which stated that Artaxerxes Longimanus was associated with his father on the throne in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Xerxes' reign.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 378 and Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Revised (*Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan*, 1983), p. 228 (see: Internet—Sogdianus, Wikipedia encyclopedia).

<sup>2</sup> Bouchier Wrey Savile, "Revelation and Science", *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Series 4, (London: Williams and Norgate Pub., April, 1863), p. 156. One cannot help wondering why in my many years of research, especially with regard to the Daniel 9:25 prophecy as related to the 483 years to the Messiah, this incredible find has never been detected in any written

reference or in verbal discussions with contemporaries who are also knowledgeable concerning these matters. I am most grateful our Lord guided me to it.

It is satisfactory to know that the idea entertained by Archbishop Ussher of dating the commencement of Artaxerxes' reign nine years earlier than the canon of Ptolemy allows, grounded upon what Thucydides says of Themistocles' flight to Persia, has been confirmed by hieroglyphic inscriptions in Egypt, showing that Artaxerxes was associated with his father in the twelfth year of Xerxes' reign, so that there ought to be no longer any doubt respecting that famous prophecy of Daniel, so far at least as regards the crucifixion.

Admittedly, this citation stunned the present author as it apparently confirms the preceding deduction given in this paper – yet the report is over a century old! This excerpt, taken from so prestigious a publication, is offered as being seemingly conclusive external evidence. Added to all the foregoing evidence given in this treatise, it is submitted that the "Artaxerxes" problem is forever solved – his 20<sup>th</sup> year having been established as being 454 BC.

Remember, Anderson's solution did not provide a *direct* resolution. As formerly stated (page 117), it required the expediency of having to convert to the 360-day so-called "prophetic year" in which the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy are actually reduced to but 476.<sup>3</sup>

The solution given within this current study must be seen as being far superior to such an artificial contrivance, especially as there is no stated scriptural basis for so computing. Conversely, the secular testimonies of Thucydides, Charon of Lampsacus, and this "new" hieroglyphic evidence combine forming a powerful, threefold witness (Eccl. 4:12b) as to the correct historical date for Artaxerxes which agrees straightforwardly with the biblical data and confirms the AD 30 crucifixion year of our Lord.

One may continue clinging to the Anderson type scenario but only by setting these independent witnesses, along with Tertullian and Orosius regarding the Pilate-Tiberius-Sejanus account, all at naught – yet with what justification? It has been clearly shown that both 32 and 33 AD

reference or in verbal discussions with contemporaries who are also knowledgeable concerning these matters. I am most grateful our Lord guided me to it.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Anderson's idea was not completely original. Bishop Lloyd had already (1701) adopted such a ploy by proposing that the 483 years were Chaldean years, rather than Anderson's "prophetic" years, of 360 days each; thereby obtaining the same results as did Sir Robert in 1882.

are impossible for the year of our Lord's death (pages 118 ff. & 129) and that the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes should be 454 BC, not 444 or 445. Accordingly, it is submitted that the actual history has been reconstructed in the body of this work.

In view of all the foregoing regarding the Daniel 9 prophecy, the people of Jesus' day should have been aware its fulfillment was at hand and known "the time" of their Messiah's "visitation" (Luke 1:68, 78, and 19:44).

#### 4. THE EZRA-NEHEMIAH PREDICAMENT AND ARTAXERXES' IDENTIFICATION

Nevertheless, a persisting problem remains, and this lies at the very heart of our "Persian Problem". The unresolved matter is a serious one which places all previous solutions squarely on the horns of a dilemma.

It has long been recognized that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit a built-in yet distasteful quandary. The Book of Ezra begins in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Cyrus, about 536 BC (Ezra 1:1), and the Book of Nehemiah ends around the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of a Persian king designated as "Artaxerxes" (Neh. 2:1; 13:6). As nearly all scholars identify this monarch as being Artaxerxes Longimanus, the Book of Nehemiah is seen to close near 434 BC (his 32<sup>nd</sup> year).

Thereby these two books apparently span nearly 102 years ( $536 - 434 = 102$ ). Within them, the names "Ezra" (Neh. 12:1, cp. Ezra 1:1-2:2) and "Nehemiah" (Ezra 2:2) are found throughout beginning from the first year of Cyrus, at which time the men bearing these names are listed among the leaders returning from the Babylonian servitude with Zerubbabel, unto the end (or very nearly so, Neh. 12:36.).

The "unpleasantness" produced by this is that although the context of the narrative seems to depict them as being the same two men, their ages become uncomfortably large. Being portrayed as leaders demands a minimal age of 30 in the first year of Cyrus (536), and when the 102-year span is added to this, Nehemiah would have been at least 132 and Ezra, who is last mentioned in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of "Artaxerxes" (c. 445?), a minimal of 121 years ( $536 - 445 = 91 + 30$ ) by the story's end.

This is a problem for most as biblical life spans between these dates had shortened, coming in line with those of today (Psa. 90:10). The fact

that the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally only one volume makes this all the more troublesome.

Modern scholarship has resolved this perceived dilemma by deciding that there must surely be two Ezras and also two Nehemiahs, one pair at the first year of Cyrus who subsequently died and a second pair during the latter part of the narrative. This seems a simple and tidy solution; however the problem has not been resolved at all for there is much more to the enigma which few scholars seem to have noticed. This unresolved, "unnoticed" data is that which is at the heart of the matter.

The predicament arises from a comparison of the list of 31 priests and Levites returning with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus as sole rex of Persia and Babylonia (536 BC, Neh. 12:1-9) with the list of priests and Levites who sealed a covenant with Nehemiah (Neh. 10:1-10). The consensus of nearly all scholarship is that this latter event of sealing the covenant took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of "Artaxerxes" (445 BC?). The correlation reveals that at least 16 and possibly as many as 20 of the 31 who returned with Zerubbabel in leadership positions over Israel (hence 30 years and older) were still alive in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, if indeed most scholars are correct in assigning the Nehemiah covenant to that date (see next page).

If this "Artaxerxes" were Longimanus, as is currently taught (and indeed is), then this generation of leaders would still have been alive 91 years ( $536 - 445 = 91$ ) after they returned to Jerusalem!<sup>1</sup> The youngest would then have been 121 ( $91 + 30 = 121$ ) and others much older.

<sup>1</sup> The association of the biblical "Artaxerxes" with Artaxerxes I Longimanus resulted quite naturally as chronologers were understandably looking for the first "Artaxerxes" who reigned after Darius Hystaspis whose dominion extended for at least 32 years (Neh.5:14). The last parameter that had to be met was that his accession to the throne had to be at least 483 years from the time of Christ Jesus' first advent. Thus Longimanus was readily acknowledged as the correct choice.

However this determination *potentially* does much violence to Scripture, lengthening beyond reason the ages of the returning generation under Zerubbabel as seen by comparing the Nehemiah 10 and 12 rolls of returnees. The attempt by scholars to "fix" this gave rise to the "two Mordecais", "two Ezras", two Nehemiahs", etc. theory. The resulting disfigured chronology has thus far gone unchecked.

Priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua in the 1<sup>st</sup> yr of Cyrus, 536 BC, Neh. 12:1–9.

Priests and Levites who sealed a covenant with Nehemiah in the 20<sup>th</sup> yr of Artaxerxes. Traditional date is c. 445 BC, Neh. 10:1–13

I. PRIESTS

1. Seraiah . . . . .	Seraiah
2. Jeremiah . . . . .	Jeremiah
3. Ezra . . . . .	(Azariah) ?
4. Amariah . . . . .	Amariah
5. Malluch (Melicu) . . . . .	(Malchijah) ?
6. Hattush . . . . .	Hattush
7. Schechaniah (Shebaniah) . . . . .	Shebaniah
8. Rehum (Harim) . . . . .	Harim
9. Meremoth . . . . .	Meremoth
10. Iddo . . . . .	--
11. Ginnethon . . . . .	Ginnethon
12. Abijah . . . . .	Abijah
13. Miamin . . . . .	Mijamin
14. Maadiah . . . . .	(Maaziah) ?
15. Bilgai . . . . .	Bilgai
16. Shemaiah . . . . .	Shemaiah
17. Joiarib . . . . .	--
18. Jedaiah . . . . .	--
19. Sallu (Sallai) . . . . .	--
20. Amok . . . . .	--
21. Hilkiyah . . . . .	--
22. Jedaiah . . . . .	--

Neh. 12:7 “These were chief of the the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua”.  
(cp. spelling of these men and their sons in Neh. 12:10–21)

Neh. 10:8 “These” (with Zidkijah, Pashur, Malluch, Obadiah, Daniel, Baruch and Meshullam) “were the priests” who sealed with Nehemiah.

II. LEVITES

1. Jeshua . . . . .	Jeshua, the son of Azaniah
2. Binnui (Bani, 8:7; 9:5?) . . . . .	Binnui of the sons of Henadad
3. Kadmiel . . . . .	Kadmiel
4. Sherebiah . . . . .	Sherebiah
5. Judah . . . . .	(Hodijah, cp.Ezra 2:40;3:9)
6. Mattaniah (over the choirs) . . . . .	--
7. Bakbukiah . . . . .	--
8. Hashabiah (12:24, cp.vv 8 and 9, 25, 11:17 and 19). . . . .	Hashabiah
9. Unni . . . . .	-- (and 11 others)

Yet the Scriptures reveal that life spans were foreshortened such that for over 700 years only one man is recorded as having lived past age 100 (Jehoiada, 2 Chron. 24:15). It is thereby inconceivable that an entire generation suddenly lived so long.

Therefore unless there is some resolution to this dilemma it would seem that the “Artaxerxes” of Nehemiah was another king of Persia *prior* to Longimanus, thereby reducing these men’s ages. Thus the “creation” of a second Ezra and a second Nehemiah does nothing to resolve the problem. Not having noticed the problem inherent in comparing these two registers in relation to the dates they have assigned to them, nearly all scholars have failed to fathom the true extent and depth of the perplexity.

Probably because they failed to compare the two lists, few chronologers other than Anstey<sup>1</sup> and Faulstich<sup>2</sup> have addressed this awkward issue. Unless a solution is found, the time disparity between the Nehemiah 10 and 12 lists invalidates not only Sir Robert Anderson’s solution and that formerly detailed and offered by this author in which Artaxerxes I is seen to function as his dissipated father’s pro-regent beginning around 473–470 BC but all other accepted scenarios in use today as well. As a result of not having resolved this problem, *all* modern works dealing with the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah have chronologically misplaced all the material from Nehemiah 7:73b to 12:1–9.

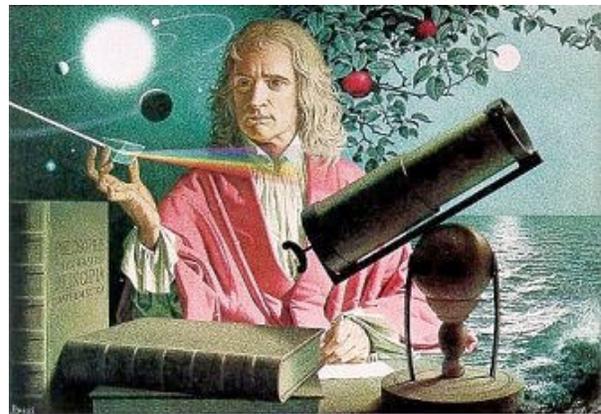
Finally, the astronomical observations cited herein absolutely fix the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Nabopolassar (621 BC) to the 37<sup>th</sup> year (568/567) of his son Nebuchadnezzar. The 21-year reign of Nabopolassar recorded by Ptolemy has been confirmed by the Babylonian records and the Adad-guppi inscription. As the latter also confirms the 43 years Ptolemy assigned to the length of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, these dates are forever established.

Furthermore, Jehoiakim’s 4<sup>th</sup> regnal year is biblically fixed to Nebuchadnezzar’s 1<sup>st</sup> and Zedekiah’s 11<sup>th</sup> to his 19<sup>th</sup>. Thus, these dates are set at 605/604 and 586 respectively. More-

over, the eclipses in the reign of Darius fix his 6<sup>th</sup> year at 516 BC. As Scripture indicates this date is 70 years from the 586 destruction of Jerusalem, the secular and biblical data have been completely harmonized.

#### a. *Sir Isaac Newton’s Solution*

At least as far back as AD 1728 Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientific and mathematical genius as well as a remarkable Bible scholar, recognized that the Nehemiah 10 list of priests and Levites who sealed the covenant with Nehemiah were the same who had returned with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus (Neh. 12; again, see diagram on the previous page).



Newton (above) noted that the Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, and Hodaviah (or Judah, Ezra 3:9 or Hodevah, Neh. 7:43) were among the chief fathers returning with Zerubbabel in 536 BC (Ezra 2:40) and that they assisted:

- (1) in laying the Temple foundation (Ezra 3:9),
- (2) in the reading of the law (Neh. 8:7, along with Sherebiah, cp. Neh. 12:8 and possibly Binnui, Neh. 10:9; 12:8, cp. 8:7; 9:5), and
- (3) in making and sealing the covenant (Neh. 9:5; 10:9–12).

Taking into account these overlaps between the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Sir Isaac Newton set forth the following chronology.

Beginning this segment of Jewish history at the return from their servitude in the first year of Cyrus (536 BC), Newton correctly depicted “Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah” (Zerubbabel) leading nearly 50,000 returnees along with the holy vessels and a commission to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1). The people came to Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, page 271.

<sup>2</sup> Faulstich, *History, Harmony, The Exile and Return*, *op. cit.*, pp. 155–156.

and Judah, every one to his city, and dwelt in their ancestral cities until the seventh month (Tishri) at which time they gathered in Jerusalem.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the high priest, the altar was rebuilt, and on the first day of the seventh month they began offering the daily morning and evening burnt offerings (Ezra 2:1, 70, cp. Neh. 7:5–73; Ezra 3:1–3, 5–6). According to Newton, on that same day Ezra the priest read from the Book of the Law and then he, Nehemiah the Tirshatha, and the Levites taught the people (Neh. 7:73b–8:12).

Beginning on the 15th day of the 7th month, the people observed the Feast of Tabernacles (Ezra 3:4, cp. Neh. 8:13–18; Lev. 23:34). Then on the 24th day of the same month the children of Israel assembled for a solemn fast, read the Scriptures, confessed, worshiped the Lord, and sealed a covenant under Nehemiah the Tirshatha (Neh. 9:1–10:38). Thereafter, the rulers dwelt at Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten persons to Jerusalem in order to more fully repopulate it, leaving the remaining to dwell in the cities of Judah (Neh. 11).

After listing the priests and Levites returning with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus and their genealogies, etc. (Neh. 12:1–26), Newton then resumes the chronology at Ezra 3:8 during the second month of the second year of their return at which time the work began on the house of the Lord. After completing the foundation of the Temple (Ezra 3:9–13), the adversaries of Judah troubled their building efforts and hired counselors against them all the days of Cyrus (*circa* 6 more years) until the reign of Darius I Hystaspis (Ezra 4:1–5). From there, Newton continues sequentially through Ezra chapter six with Darius' decree unto the completion of the Temple in the month of Adar (12th) of the sixth year of that Persian monarch ending with its dedication, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Again, taking into account the aforementioned overlaps between the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Sir Isaac Newton concluded that the Nehemiah 10 covenant was drawn up and sealed in the first year of Cyrus (536 BC). Although he does not say it as clearly as one would like, a careful reading of page 361 in his

*Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* will reveal his resolution to the problem.

Like all others, he recognized that Nehemiah 7:4 leaves off in the 20th year of Artaxerxes with the insertion of data previously recorded in the second chapter of the Book of Ezra which applies to the return of Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus. However, whereas nearly all scholars regard the repeated insertion to end where “all Israel in their cities” of Ezra 2:70 corresponds to “all Israel, dwelt in their cities” in Nehemiah 7:73, Newton continued connecting the “seventh month” portion of Nehemiah 7:73 to the “seventh month” of the next verse – Nehemiah 8:2 (as does the Jewish chronology).<sup>1</sup>

Finding no contextual break in the narrative, he placed everything from Nehemiah 7:5 to 12:9 together as occurring in the first year of Cyrus. By inference, Newton then had Nehemiah 7:4 resume with the wall of Jerusalem having just been completed (Neh. 6:15) to Nehemiah 12:27, at which point the wall was being dedicated.

In general, Newton's chronology is:

1. Ezra 1:1–11 followed by
2. Ezra 2:1–6 being overlapped by Nehemiah 7:5–73a with
3. Nehemiah 7:73b–12:9 following as an inserted unit after which comes
4. the remainder of the Book of Ezra (i.e., 3:8–10:44), then
5. Nehemiah 1:1 to 7:4 with the story of the completed walls of Jerusalem picking up again at
6. their dedication at Nehemiah 12:27 and thence in normal sequence to 13:31.

Thus Newton's solution is that just as the Nehemiah 12 register represents men who returned in the first year of Cyrus (536 BC), the making and sealing of the covenant with Nehemiah (the Tirshatha) also transpired in that same year and not in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. Consequently, according to Isaac Newton's chronology, no 91-year gap existed between the two chapters, thereby resolving the predicament (see diagram on following page).

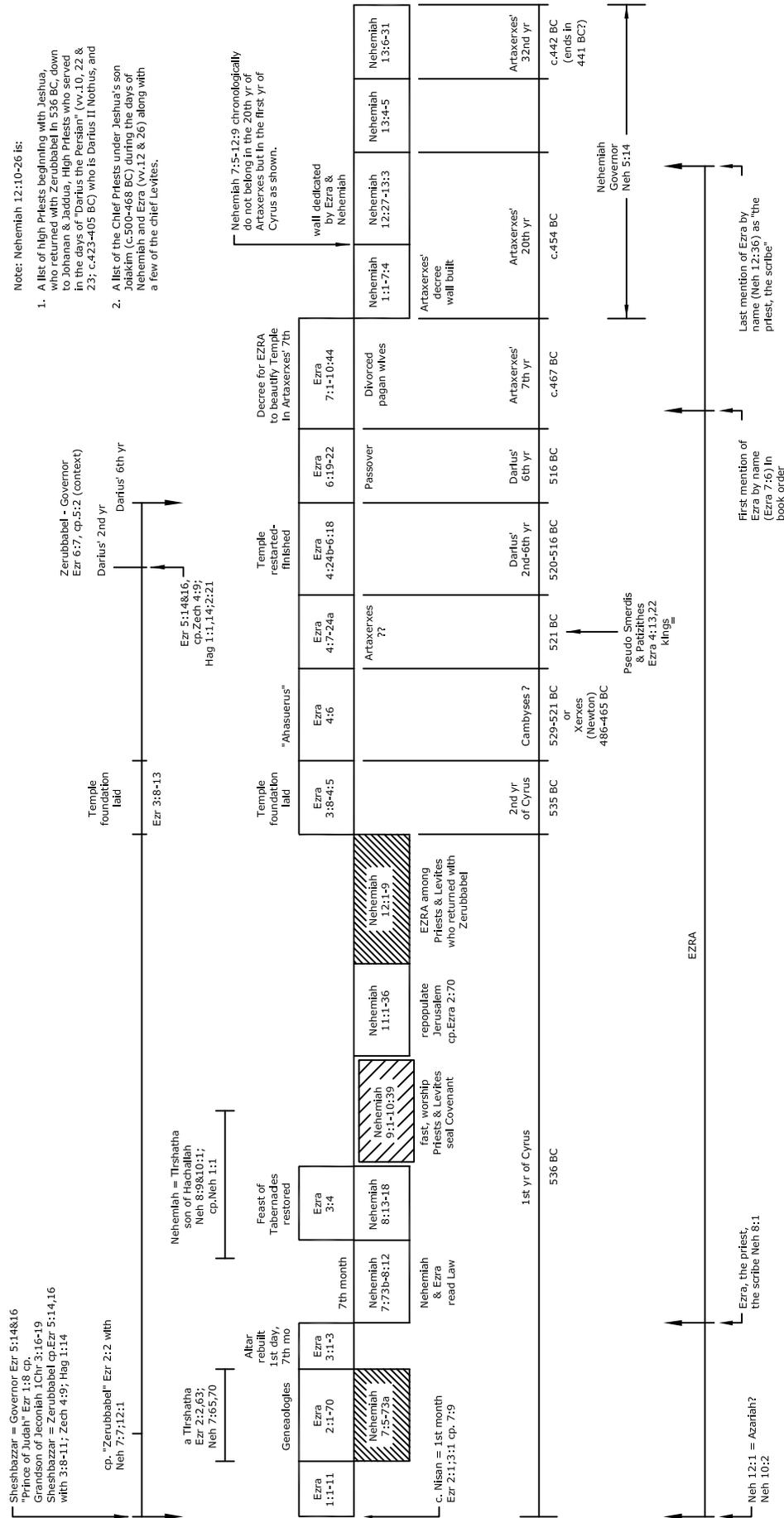
<sup>1</sup> *Seder Olam*, Dr. Heinrich Guggenheimer ed., (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2005), p. 257.

# Chronology of EZRA-NEHEMIAH

A Scripture summary of Newton's chronology for Ezra and Nehemiah is Ezr.1:1-3:7 (Ezr.2:1,70, cp. Neh.7:5-73); Neh.7:73b-8:12; Neh.8:13-18 (cp. Ezr.3:4); Neh.9:1-12:26 (believing that Darius the Persian was Darius II Nothus [B.C. 423-404, as did Newton, see p. 363 in his Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended], this author acknowledges that the genealogy from 12:10-26 could have been prophetic or a later inserted addition.); Ezr.3:8-Neh.7:4; Neh.12:27-13:31. Again, Newton places everything from Nehemiah 7:5 to 12:9 together as occurring in the first year of Cyrus (Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended, p. 358).

Newton also considered the naming of Cyrus, \*, Darius, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 as their being given in order of succession such that these names represent Cyrus, \*, Darius Hystaspis, Xerxes I (of Marathon), and Artaxerxes I Longimanus (Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended, p. 368-370).

Newton makes no mention of the Book of Esther and its "Ahasuerus" but states on page 370 that he takes "the book of Esdras to be the best interpreter of the book of Ezra" and I Esdras 3:1-2 makes the Ahasuerus of Esther Darius I Hystaspis.



Sir Isaac Newton<sup>1</sup> correctly envisioned Zerubbabel as the governor and Nehemiah as his Tirshatha or second in command; thus for Newton every Scripture using that title signifies Nehemiah (Ezra 2:2, 63; Neh. 7:65, 70; 8:9; 10:1).<sup>2</sup> In this scenario, it was not until after Zerubbabel's death that Nehemiah was promoted and referred to by the higher appellation of governor, a position which he held for twelve years (Neh. 5:14).

<sup>1</sup> A precise Scripture summary of Newton's chronology for Ezra and Nehemiah is: Ezra 1:1–3:7 (Ezra 2:1,70, cp. Neh.7:5–73); Neh.7:73b–8:12; Neh.8:13–18 (cp. Ezra 3:4); Neh.9:1–12:26 (Believing that Darius the Persian was Darius II Nothus [423–405 BC, as did Newton, see p. 363 in his *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*], this author acknowledges that the genealogy from 12:10–26 could have been prophetic or a later inserted addition.); Ezra 3:8–Neh.7:4; Neh. 12:27–13:31.

Again, Newton places everything from Nehemiah 7:5 to 12:9 together as occurring in the first year of Cyrus (*Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 358). (See diagram on the preceding page.)

Newton also considered the naming of Cyrus, \*, Darius, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 as their being given in order of succession such that these names represent Cyrus, \*, Darius Hystaspis, Xerxes I (of Thermopylae), and Artaxerxes I Longimanus (*Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 368–370).

The asterisk must surely represent Cambyses whom Newton acknowledges as having reigned (pp. 347 & 353) but believes he is passed over by the Scriptures. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* makes the same identifications in the Ezra 4 footnotes and center reference, pp. 536–537. At first glance this perhaps somehow seems flawed in that opposition is portrayed as having taken place after the Temple project was completed for the Temple was completed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month (Adar) in the sixth year of Darius I Hystaspis (Ezra 4:23–24, cp. 6:15), years before the reign of Xerxes I.

Yet the above apparently envisions Ezra 4:6–23 as applying to the opposition related to the building of the wall and city of Jerusalem which transpired after the Temple was finished. It may well be argued that the context bears this out, for never within these verses is the Temple actually mentioned by direct reference, but the wall and city are (vv. Ezra 4:12–13, 16, 21).

This interpretation considers Ezra 4:6–23 as a parenthetical insertion with verse 24 again picking up the narrative which had left off at 4:5. It bears due consideration.

Newton makes no mention of the Book of Esther and its "Ahasuerus" but on page 370 he states that he takes "the Book of Esdras to be the best interpreter of the Book of Ezra", and 1 Esdras 3:1–2 makes the Ahasuerus of Esther Darius I Hystaspis.

<sup>2</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

Before appraising all of the foregoing, it should be remembered that the Hebrew manuscripts containing Scripture and the early printed editions of the Hebrew Text always treated Ezra and Nehemiah as *one* book. Moreover, the notes which the Masoretes placed at the end of each book appear at the end of Nehemiah; *none* are given at the end of Ezra.

Ezra primarily confined his narrative to events connected with the Temple whereas Nehemiah mainly addressed events connected with the wall and city of Jerusalem. As the Temple is morally and spiritually more important than the wall, the Book of Ezra logically comes first in the canonical order.

An assessment of Sir Isaac's treatise reveals both positive and, unfortunately, negative consequences inherent in his answer. In the first place, most modern scholars insist that Nehemiah 7:73b is a connecting statement logically belonging with chapter 8.<sup>3</sup>

Thus to these scholars, the "seventh month" statements are connected to each other as Newton believed, but they are separated in context and time from Nehemiah 7:5–73a. Of course as this is interpretative and not conclusive, it cannot set aside Newton's proposition without strong additional support.

Moreover, this determination is not based upon the contextual flow of the scriptural narrative but upon the fragile deduction that the events in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah must transpire in approximately the 20th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. This author stands with Newton here – as does Jewish chronology.<sup>4</sup>

Further, on the positive side, Newton's removal of the 91-year gap between chapters 10 and 12 of Nehemiah solved the ridiculous anomaly whereby an entire generation was suddenly presumed to have lived to and far beyond 120 years. After all, not since the time of Moses, almost 1,100 years hence, had an entire generation reached such an advanced age. However, in placing Nehemiah 10 in the first year of Cyrus (536 BC), Sir Isaac knowingly

<sup>3</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. I, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981), p. 646. In this opinion, Unger is representative of the majority of modern scholarship.

<sup>4</sup> *Seder Olam*, (2005 ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 257.

forced a great age on Nehemiah and subsequently Ezra.<sup>1</sup> For many, this presents too great a problem, but the only other choice is far worse.

As the Nehemiah in 10:1 and Nehemiah in 1:1 of the book that bears his name both identify a Nehemiah “the son of Hachaliah” they must be one and the same man. Since Nehemiah 1:1 is in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (cp. Neh. 2:1) and as Newton correctly takes this Persian monarch to be Longimanus, Nehemiah’s life is seen to reach from 536 BC, at which time he must be at least 30 years of age, to at least the year 434 BC (Artaxerxes’ 32<sup>nd</sup> year of *sole* reign; Chart 5, 5c and Ptolemy, cp. Neh. 13:6). Using the Canon’s dates for Artaxerxes, the “wall builder” would have been at least 132 years old in the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of “Artaxerxes” ( $536 - 434 = 102 + 30$ ).

Having identified “Darius the Persian” as being Darius II Nothus, Newton actually considered that Nehemiah wrote the entire narrative and that 12:10–26 was not a later addition. Thereby Nehemiah would have had to have lived unto at least 423 BC, the first year of Nothus’ reign. This would make the wall builder no less than 143 years old at the time of his death ( $536 - 423 = 113 + 30$ ). As Newton’s chronology also places Ezra in the first year of Cyrus (Neh. 8:1–2, cp. 12:26, 36 [the priest, the scribe]), he would have attained at least 121 years using the traditional date for Artaxerxes’ 20<sup>th</sup> year ( $536 - 445 = 91 + 30$ ).

However, these ages may be somewhat reduced by using the adjusted dates based on the progency arrangement for Artaxerxes Longimanus and Xerxes I as required by the testimonies of Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus. The reader will recall from page 121 that their witness was subsequently accepted and followed by Ussher, Vitringa, Kruger, Hengstenberg and in 1627, Petavius (also my refinement as formerly explained).

If, for example, one takes 473 BC as the “first year” of Artaxerxes Longimanus’ joint reign, Nehemiah’s age would have been as little as 124 years in the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of that king’s reign ( $536 - 442 = 94 + 30$ ). Having last been mentioned at the wall dedication during that same Persian monarch’s 20<sup>th</sup> year, Ezra’s life span could have

been no more than 112 years ( $536 - 454 = 82 + 30$ ). Although these are great ages, they are not excessive to the extreme as even today a few live to so advanced an age.

The conventional way around these two extended ages is to assume that there are two Ezras and two Nehemiahs who followed in successive generations, all in positions of leadership and bearing the same general positions of authority (an unlikely circumstance). However Newton’s arrangement simply does not allow for this, especially not for Nehemiah.

From the context, Newton was convinced that the Ezra and Nehemiah found in the Book of Ezra were the same men by those names who were mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah. Besides, the fact that they originally had been only one book argues strongly on behalf of this thesis.

This author is persuaded that were it not for the extended ages of these two men, Sir Isaac’s system would have long ago been accepted by conservative scholars. Yet strangely, they have instead adopted a chronology in which an entire generation lived to anomalous life spans. This latter is the great unresolved flaw inherent not only in Anderson’s solution, but with all others who have not resolved the registers of priests and Levites in Nehemiah 10 and 12. Accordingly, Newton must be seen as a significant improvement.

That learned chronologer envisioned the Lord as granting long life to these two men in order that they might fulfill His desires with regard to the Temple, the wall, and city of Jerusalem similarly to that which He had done in imparting the unusual span of 130 years to Jehoiada the priest nearly four centuries earlier (2 Chron. 24:15). It is urged that aged men with such vigor would have been seen as unique agents of God by their far younger contemporaries; thus their advanced ages would have greatly added to their stature. Significantly, Josephus states that Ezra “died an old man”<sup>2</sup> and says Nehemiah died at a “great age”.<sup>3</sup>

If, therefore, “Artaxerxes” were Longimanus as this author and nearly all other researchers

<sup>1</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 368, 373.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, XI.5.5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.5.8.

hold, Sir Isaac Newton was correct for the chronology must then place both the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> chapters of Nehemiah in the first year of Cyrus (as will be demonstrated in that which follows). By the context, no other way is seen at this time to keep the two registers from being separated by about 91 years. Consequently, Isaac Newton's system, used in concert with the pro-regency dates for Artaxerxes Longimanus as required by Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus (Ussher et al.), is taken as the correct refinement and is believed by this author to reflect the actual history.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now apply this and consider the logic involved in establishing the correct chronology for the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as depicted on page 138. The problem revolves around the proper chronological placement of the gray rectangles containing the Nehemiah passages 7:5–12:9 (left side and numbered 1–6). Observe that chapters of Ezra are placed above those of Nehemiah on the diagram in yellow and that the block containing Ezra 2:1–70 has been placed directly above the gray rectangle Nehemiah 7:5–73a (number 1). Both fall in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1). Further, the yellow block with Ezra 3:1–3 is also displayed in that same year. To this all scholars agree, as the context unmistakably demands it. The same may be said for the Nehemiah 12:1–9 block (number 6). That is, all agree that the biblical context also places Nehemiah blocks numbers one and six in the first year of Cyrus.

The problem is that modern scholars have uniformly placed Nehemiah 7:73b–11:36 (blocks 2–5) on the far right between the Neh. 1:1–7:4 and Neh. 12:27–13:3 blocks (the down arrow location) in accordance with their natural sequence in the Book of Nehemiah. However, such is not the correct *chronological* position.

Our study has established that many of the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubabel in the first year of Cyrus as listed in Neh. 12:1–9 (rectangle #6) are the same as many of those listed within the contextually consistent Nehemiah 9:1–10:39 block (#4, see pp. 138–

139). Therefore, the #4 Neh. 9:1–10:39 block must be kept somewhere between our gray rectangles numbered one and six. This fixes the Nehemiah 9:1–10:39 passages of Scripture as also being in the first year of Cyrus (536 BC) and thus establishes the true chronological date and positioning of gray blocks one, four, and six.

With these in place, we note that the Nehemiah 11:1–36 narrative (#5) sequentially as well as contextually fits as placed between the Neh. 9:1–10:39 (#4) and Neh. 12:1–9 (#6) blocks. Next, we find that Ezra 3:4 and Neh. 8:13–18 (gray block #3) both speak of a Feast of Tabernacles (also, Nehemiah 7:73b–8:12 – gray rectangle #2 – speaks of a seventh month). The positioning of the various blocks thus far makes the conclusion that these are one and the same most compelling.

Now it may be clearly seen that the verses are not speaking of two different seventh months which transpire in different years, as nearly all modern scholarship would have us believe. They are the same Feast in the same year. This deduction is confirmed by Neh. 8:17: “And all the congregation of them who were come again out of the captivity made booths ...” Such would be meaningless if 91 years had elapsed since Ezra 3:4, as nearly all of the returnees would surely have died during the interim. Seeing this avoids the unlikely placing of Nehemiah 7:73a around 91 years before 7:73b, which was always a most awkward handling of the 73<sup>rd</sup> verse.

Finally, the Neh. 7:73b–8:12 block (#2) contextually fits between the #1 Neh. 7:5–73a and the #3 Neh. 8:13–18 blocks. Now we find that the entire Nehemiah 7:5–12:9 section, not merely the first and sixth blocks, chronologically moves as a unit within the first year of Cyrus. Hence, blocks #2–5 are not located many years later in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (445 BC by Anderson's reckoning or c. 454 by this study) as all modern scholarship holds. The reason for this is clear. Had all the data been given in chronological order, the historical narrative in the Book of Ezra would have been obscured.

As positioned, the story is allowed to freely flow and is not lost amid all the lengthy lists, etc. contained in these six Nehemiah blocks – which have been placed out of sequence for the sake of

<sup>1</sup> Of course, the extended ages for Ezra and Nehemiah necessitated by Newton's (and now Jones's) explanation does remain bothersome for some as it places us back where the problem began which tempts most to again ignore context and return to the “two Ezras, two Nehemiahs” scenario.

continuity. Nehemiah chapter 7 repeats Ezra 2:1–70 to enable us to chronologically place Nehemiah 7:5–12:9. Decisively, we notice that Nehemiah 6:15–7:4 ends the first far right block of the Nehemiah data (1:1–7:4) at the completion of the city wall and the chronology of the Nehemiah 12:27–13:3 block follows with the account of the dedication of that very wall!

### ***b. Summation of the Ezra-Nehemiah Predicament***

The chronology of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah in use today by nearly all scholars, Christian or secular, is not tenable. The presence of an Ezra and a Nehemiah at the beginning and end of these books has long created a problem as the history spans from the first year of Cyrus (536 BC) to at least the 32nd year of a Persian monarch designated as “Artaxerxes”. Although his identification was long held in debate, for the past several centuries he has commonly been identified as Artaxerxes I Longimanus, placing the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his rule at c. 445 BC and his 32<sup>nd</sup> as 433.

As Ezra and Nehemiah are listed among the leaders who returned from the Babylonian servitude in 536 BC with Zerubbabel, their minimal ages would have exceeded 120 by even Artaxerxes’ 20<sup>th</sup> year (536 – 445 = 91 + 30). Yet the biblical record reveals that by this time men’s normal life spans were that of today (Psa. 90:10). While Walter Williams, the last Confederate survivor of the American Civil War,<sup>1</sup> died in 1959 at 117, Carey White in 1991 at 115, a Japanese woman in 1986 at 120,<sup>2</sup> and nearly 5,000 individuals in the Caucasus Mountain region of Russia were documented as attaining 100 years with some becoming 110 to 141 years along with equal and even greater claims for

Indians in the mountains of Ecuador,<sup>3</sup> most scholars have not been able to accept such extended life spans for Ezra and Nehemiah.

The result is that, in the main, the predicament has been managed by assuming that there must be two different Ezras and Nehemiahs, despite the fact that the context seems to indicate that they are one and the same. Inasmuch as it has been undeniably demonstrated that there are not merely two men involved in the problem, these scholars have wrongly assumed that two Ezras and Nehemiahs solves the dilemma.

Comparing the lists of the leaders of the priests and Levites in Nehemiah 10 and 12 which are supposedly separated by 91 years leaves the modern solution, dealing as it does with only Ezra and Nehemiah, totally inadequate. Unless one chooses to believe the preposterous alternative that in two successive generations the leaders of a nation just happen to have the same names and titles, they must now deal with the fact that although they have removed the great age problem by “creating” two Ezras and Nehemiahs, they have not at all noticed or dealt with the excessive age question concerning this entire generation of leaders (and the population in general). The difficulty is much larger than just that of Nehemiah and Ezra, and modern biblical scholarship has not recognized this fact.

As Sir Robert Anderson did not take this matter into account, those who utilize his solution for the 483 (490) year Daniel 9:25 prophecy simply fail to unravel the issue (see page 118 ff.) and secure the proper chronology. Although Sir Isaac Newton recognized the full extent of the conundrum and formulated a solution with regard to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah which reduced the ages of the priests and Levites on the Nehemiah 10 and 12 registers to conform to the normal range thereby constructing an improvement over the traditional scheme, he knowingly left Ezra and Nehemiah as having attained ages 120 and older.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Gipe, *Last Time When*, (New York: World Almanac Pub., 1981), p. 272.

Walter Williams’ age was disputed by William Marvel in the February 1991 *Blue & Gray* magazine. Albert Woolson, a Union drummer boy, died 2 August, 1956 at 109. Jones Morgan, probably the last survivor of the Spanish American War (1898), died August 29, 1993 at age 110. He joined the army just before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and was given the duties of cook as well as tending the Roughriders’ horses.

<sup>2</sup> *The 1992 Guinness Book of Records*, Donald McFarlan, et al. eds., (NY: Bantam Books.). The Japanese woman, Shigechiyo Izumi, is given as 120 years and 237 days old.

<sup>3</sup> Leaf, Alex. M.D., “Every Day is a Gift When You Are Over 100”, *National Geographic*, vol. 143, no.1, Jan. 1973, pp. 93–119.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, were the biblical “Artaxerxes” a Persian king reigning before Longimanus all these excessive age problems would be resolved regardless of whose system was used with relation to the 483-year prophecy. Moreover, the fifth chart and Appendix A in Jones’ *Chronology* (2009 ed.) displays both possibilities for comparison.

Because of this, the vast majority of today's scholars are either unaware of the problem or find Newton's solution unsatisfactory. That notwithstanding, this author deems it as not only an acceptable answer<sup>1</sup> but a most meritorious piece of insight and revelation. Indeed, it appears that Azariah (IV), son of Hilkiyah and Grandfather of Ezra, lived to the age of around 114, possibly older.<sup>2</sup>

#### F. HIGH PRIESTS — DARIUS THE PERSIAN

A final related issue to the "Persian Problem" is the identity of the king that Scripture refers to as "Darius the Persian" (Neh. 12:22, see the Chronology of Ezra & Nehemiah chart on page 138). This name is found associated with the names of the heads of the Levitical houses and the high priests beginning with Jeshua, who returned from the "servitude" with Zerubbabel, down to Jaddua's administration. Consequently, in order to identify this Darius we must examine their genealogies which are recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Nehemiah.

The Scriptures tell us that Seraiah, Ezra's father (Ezra 7:1) was the high priest in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar's army captured Jerusalem and burned the Temple (2 Kings 25:18–21, cp. 1 Chron. 6:14). Seraiah was then taken to Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah of the land of Hamath and slain. At that time, Jehozadak succeeded his father, Seraiah, as high priest

and was carried away with Judah and all Jerusalem to Babylon. He apparently died there as his son Jeshua (Joshua) was high priest at the time of the return (1 Chron. 6:15, cp. Ezra 2:2; 3:2).

The Book of Nehemiah (12:10–11) lists the six high priests who followed Jehozadak as being:

1. Jeshua (Joshua, returned at the end of the "servitude" with Zerubbabel, held office from at least 536 BC to c. 520 – the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius I, Ezra 2:2, 3:2; Neh. 12:10; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:7; 3:1; 6:11.),
2. Joiakim (contemporary with Nehemiah, Ezra, and Xerxes I; Nehemiah 12:10,12,36; Josephus, *Antiq.* XI, 5, 1),
3. Eliashib (allied to Tobiah – a younger contemporary of Nehemiah in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes; Neh. 3:1, 20, 21; 6:18; 12:10; 13:4–7),
4. Joiada,
5. Jonathan (Johanan, Grk. = John; 2 Maccabees 1:23 speaks of him as contemporary with Nehemiah; the Elephantine papyri possibly places him [Yedoniah?, texts 30 and 31, Cowley edition] in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> years of Darius II Nothus [c. 410–407 BC]; Jos. *Antiq.* XI, 7, 1), and
6. Jaddua (Neh. 12:1–11, 22, cp. Ezra 3:2).

Nehemiah goes on to say that the names of the heads of the Levitical houses and the chief priests were recorded down to Jaddua's administration which extended to the reign of "Darius the Persian" (Neh. 12:22). The phrase "until the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib" (Neh. 12:23) indicates that Johanan also officiated during part of this Persian king's reign.

Josephus identified this Darius the Persian as Darius III (Codomannus), the ruler whose empire fell to Alexander the Great in 331 BC. Thus, beginning at Eliashib, Josephus lists the same high priests as Neh. 12:10–11 (albeit with spelling differences) and relates in great detail that Jaddua was serving as high priest when Alexander came to Jerusalem shortly after decisively defeating Darius III.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A recent challenge was issued to Newton's resolution. Comparing the 38 wall-builders named in Nehemiah 3:1–32 with the 84 covenant-signers in Nehemiah 10:1–27, the scholar taking issue concluded that "some 16 of the wall-builders were also covenant-signers". As Newton placed Nehemiah 10 in 536 BC and Nehemiah 3 in 445 (454 by my study), a "fatal blow" to the Newton-Jones solution was perceived as the matching groups would again be separated by 91 years (continued page 145).

<sup>2</sup> Azariah's high priesthood must have begun c. 610 BC and terminated not long before the 586 BC exile or c. 594 BC for Seraiah, his son and Ezra's father, was the chief priest whom Nebuchadnezzar slew at Riblah when he took Jerusalem (1 Chron. 6:13–14; 2 Kings 25:18–22; Jer. 52:24–27; Ezra 7:1–6). Yet Azariah is recorded as still alive 74 years later and "ruler of the house of God" (cp. 2 Kings 25:18, "2<sup>nd</sup> priest") at the return in 536 BC when Jeshua his great grandson is the high priest (Ezra 3:2, cp. Hag. 1:1). Were he 30 years old in 610, he would be c.104 at the return (610–536 = 74 + 30) and c.114 had he been 40 upon attaining his high priesthood – 124 if when 50. Remember, Josephus described Ezra as dying "an old man" (*Antiq.* XI.5.5) and Nehemiah as having lived to a "great age" (*Antiq.* XI.5.8).

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, XI.7 and 8. Josephus also says Jaddua and Alexander died about the same time; *Antiq.* XI.8.7. Josephus adds that Jaddua's son, Onias, succeeded him as high priest (*Antiq.* XI.8.7) and that Eleazar, Onias' son who was also called "Simon the Just", replaced his father (*Antiq.* XII.2.5).

However, as Sir Isaac Newton pointed out over 250 years ago, this creates a difficulty for it leaves only seven high priests to serve from 586 to 331, a span of 255 years. Thus, the average term of service for each would be a little more than 36 years. As one had to be at least 30 years old before he could serve as high priest (Num. 4:3), and since the tenure ended only at death, an age question arises.

Further, over the 390-year period from the beginning of the schism until Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586, 17 high priests served yielding an average term of only c.23 years. This problem has caused some scholars to wrongly conclude that Nehemiah's roster was merely an appendix, even though the line of succession is basically confirmed by Josephus.

Contrary to Josephus, the Talmud states that the high priest who came out to meet Alexander when he marched on Jerusalem in 331 BC was Simon, son of Onias, not Jaddua.<sup>1</sup> Hence Jaddua did not live to the end of the Persian Empire as Josephus stated. Thus, taking 23 years for an average as derived above and applying it from both Jehozadak in 586 and Jeshua in 540 to Jaddua, averaging the two results  $(425 [7 \times 23] + 402 [6 \times 23]) \div 2 = 414$ , then searching for a Persian monarch called "Darius" near 414 BC, one would conclude that "Darius the Persian" was likely Darius II Nothus (see charts at the end of this work).

The Talmud relates that Simon had been preceded by Onias who is said to have served 19 years, Onias by Jaddua for 20 years and Jaddua by Johanan for 32. If these numbers are correct, they may be summed and added to 331 BC, obtaining the year 402 which represents the latest possible date for the accession of Johanan to the high priesthood. Adding to 402 the number of years Simon had held that post prior to Alexander's arrival will push that date farther back in time and again place Jaddua as well as Johanan near Darius II Nothus.

This conclusion was also made by Archbishop Ussher<sup>2</sup> and set forth with great logic and care

<sup>1</sup> Beecher, *The Dated Events of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, page 172; *Talmud*, Soma fol. 69, I. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* sides with the Talmud against Josephus, vol. 9, p. 1246.

<sup>2</sup> Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, p. 160 (1658 ed., p. 146).

long ago by Sir Isaac Newton.<sup>3</sup> While Beecher did not reach the identical conclusion, his excellent study produced similar deductions.<sup>4</sup> Note that the average lengths of officiating for Onias, Jaddua, and Johanan also comes to nearly 23  $(19 + 20 + 32 = 71 \text{ and } 71 \div 3 = 23.67)$ .<sup>5</sup>

Although it is concluded that Darius II Nothus is "Darius the Persian", as long as Eliashib is seen as a younger contemporary of Nehemiah in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes the biblical chronology will not fall or rise on this assessment. Whether one places his confidence in Josephus or the Talmud is not the real issue for the chronology may be determined without taking into account the conflicting information contained in these non-biblical sources.

### G. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In closing, when the calculations of Sir Robert Anderson and Dr. Hoehner are corrected to the solar year by simply multiplying the 483 solar years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy by 365.242199 (the days in a solar year), we obtain a 176,412-day span rather than their 173,880 duration. If we take the 9:25 fulfillment as being when our Lord entered Jerusalem on 10 Nisan (March 31, AD 30 Gregorian, see calendar on page 152) riding on the donkey's colt,<sup>6</sup> as did both Anderson and Hoehner, and number back 176,412 days we come to 14 Nisan (Passover day) 454 BC – the day Artaxerxes issued the famous decree.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, a graphic summation outlining the Daniel 9:25 prophecy of 483 years from the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes Longimanus unto Messiah, the Prince, is submitted on pages 146–148. The

<sup>3</sup> Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, pp. 363–373.

<sup>4</sup> Beecher, *The Dated Events of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–165, 170–175.

<sup>5</sup> A workable scenario that also honors Scripture is: Jehozadak 586–c.540 BC, Jeshua 540–c.500, Joiakim 500–c.468, Eliashib 468–c.442, Joiada 442–c.438, Jonathan 438–c.406, Jaddua 406–c.386, Onias 386–c.367, and Simon the Just 367–c.327.

<sup>6</sup> This was Christ's final official offer of himself as King & Messiah in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9 (cp. Luk. 19:35–38).

<sup>7</sup> Nehemiah 2:1 reads simply "in the month Nisan" which has been assumed by all as 1 Nisan. The uncertainty of this date has now been solved. Thus, the edict was given on 14 Nisan 454 BC, fulfilled 483 solar years later on 10 Nisan AD 30 and Christ died 14 Nisan AD 30.

illustration on page 150 depicts the complex family relationships between the Persians, Medes, Babylonians, and Assyrians.

\*\*\*\*\*

**(A recent challenge to Newton-Jones solution, continued from page 143)** Were these indeed the same men, the challenger would be correct in his assessment. However, as these distinguished men bear Hebrew names that were especially common for the period in question, repetitions should be expected.

Moreover, as Neh. 10:1–27 and Neh. 12:1–26 show (see comparison, page 135), the Scriptures are peculiarly consistent in ascribing the titles of “priest” and “Levite” to the men found therein. Thus, the norm is that these titles accompany the name in each different narrative, at least at the initial identification. If the designation is not given, it is almost always because it is not appropriate. As Neh. 3 precedes Neh. 10, the general absence of titles in chapter 3 strongly implies that such do not pertain to these men – hence they are not the titled men in Neh. 10. Applying these observations to the chart below, we note:

(1) Out of 22 possible correlations, eight are impossible (i.e., 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, and either 9 or 10 as well as 21 or 22 for both cannot be the Hashub and Hananiah of Neh. 10:23), and #’s 11 and 12 are nearly so [The Hanuns in #’s 11 and 12 are not the same as any of the Hanans in Neh. 10:10, 22, 26. The spelling is also different in the

Hebrew **חנני** vs. **חנן**), and the Hanans are either Chiefs or a Levite] [#16, Bavai is not Bebai the Chief; their names are also spelled differently in the Hebrew]. Furthermore, 1, 3, 7, 8, 17, and 18 are doubtful or uncertain matches – thus 16 do not conclusively equate.

(2) Five others could be the same men but cannot be confirmed to equate; thereby they cannot be said to resolve the matter with certainty [i.e., 4, 5, 19, and (again) either 9 or 10 and 21 or 22 but not both. Binnui (#19), the son of Henadad (and brother of Bavai, 3:18), is not conclusively Binnui the Levite “of the sons of Henadad”. Indeed, “The son of Henadad” and “of the sons of Henadad” are not equivalent terms.].

(3) Meremoth (number 2 on the chart) the wall builder in Artaxerxes’ 20th year and son of Urijah, the son of Koz (priest family without genealogy; Ezra 2:61, Neh. 7:63) is almost certainly Meremoth, son of Uriah (Hebrew spelling the same as Urijah) the priest who came to Jerusalem with Ezra in Artaxerxes’ 7th year (Ezra 8:33). He also could be Meremoth the priest of Neh. 10:5.

However likely this may appear, such cannot be said to be an undeniable identification. Moreover, as none of the other comparisons can be substantiated with certainty, the likelihood of their being the same man must be seen as greatly diminished. Hence, there is no compelling reason to conclude that they are not different men separated in time by a generation or more. Accordingly, the fabric of the Newton-Jones solution remains intact.

Wall Builders in Artaxerxes 20 <sup>th</sup> Year Neh. 3:1–32					Covenant-Signers Neh. 10:1–27		
1	Zaccur	3:2	Son of Imri		Zaccur	10:12	Levite
2	Meremoth	3:4,21	Son of Urijah, of Koz-Ezr8:33	Priest	Meremoth	10:5	Priest
3	Meshullam	3:4, 3:30	Son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabeel, cp. Neh. 10:21 - Chief Meshezabeel		Meshullam	10:7	Priest
4	Meshullam	3:6	Son of Besodeiah – old gate		Meshullam	10:20	Chiefs
5	Zadok	3:4	Son of Baana		Zadok	10:21	Chiefs
6	Zadok	3:29	Son of Immer	Priest			
7	Hattush	3:10	Son of Hashabniah		Hattush	10:4	Priest
8	Malchijah	3:11	Son of Harim		Malchijah	10:3	Priest
9	Hashub	3:11	Son of Pahathmoab		Hashub	10:23	Chiefs
10	Hashub	3:23					
11	Hanun	3:13	repaired Valley Gate		Hanan (8:7)	10:10	Levite
12	Hanun	3:30	6th Son of Zalaph		Hanan	10:22	Chiefs
13					Hanan	10:26	Chiefs
14	Rehum	3:17	Son of Bani	Levite	Rehum	10:25	Chiefs
15	Hashabiah	3:17	Ruler of half of Keilah		Hashabiah	10:11	Levite
16	Bavai	3:18	Son of Henadad, “ “ “		Bebai	10:15	Chiefs
17	Baruch	3:20	Son of Zabbai		Baruch	10:6	Priest
18	Azariah	3:23	Son of Maaseiah, cp Neh 8:7	Levite?	Azariah	10:2	Priest
19	Binnui	3:24	Son of Henadad, brother of Bavai (#16)		Binnui	10:9	Levite, of the sons of Henadad
20	Shemaiah	3:29	Son of Shechaniah, keeper of the east gate	Levite	Shemaiah	10:8	Priest
21	Hananiah	3:8	Son of one of the apothecaries		Hananiah	10:23	Chiefs
22	Hananiah	3:30	Son of Shelemiah				

**Finding The 20<sup>th</sup> Year of Artaxerxes – Neh. 2:1  
The Beginning of the Commandment for the  
69 Weeks of Daniel – Dan 9:25**

BC

- 486 (AC) Xerxes became king of Persia, his year of accession  
 485 (1)  
 484 (2)  
 483 (3)  
 482 (4)  
 481 (5)  
 480 (6)  
 479 (7)  
 478 (8)  
 477 (9)  
 476 (10)  
 475 (11)  
 474 (12) Xerxes 12<sup>th</sup> year – Artaxerxes made pro-rex – (his accession year)  
 473 (1) Artaxerxes first official year over the Jews\* (*begin* 20-year count here)  
 472 (2)  
 471 (3)  
 470 (4)  
 469 (5)  
 468 (6)  
 467 (7)  
 466 (8)  
 465 (9) Xerxes dies in the 21<sup>st</sup> official year of his reign  
 464 (10) First official year of Artaxerxes sole reign (see Chart 5c)  
 463 (11)  
 462 (12)  
 461 (13)  
 460 (14)  
 459 (15)  
 458 (16)  
 457 (17)  
 456 (18)  
 455 (19)

454 (20) In 20 <sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes – decree to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. Neh 2:1, 2:3, 2:8
---

- 453  
 452  
 451  
 450  
 449  
 448  
 447  
 446  
 445 \*445 BC is commonly taken as the 20<sup>th</sup> year by wrongly starting  
 the count at 464. For Daniel’s 69 weeks, it is imperative to know  
 that 454 BC was the true 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes reign over the Jews.

## Daniel 9:25 – 69 Weeks

Neh 2:1, 2:3, 2:8 – The commandment to rebuild Jerusalem  
 was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the year 454 BC.  
 (See Chart 5 proving 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes)

Note – The Jews had:  
 Weeks of days = 7 days  
 Weeks of weeks = 7 weeks  
 Weeks of years = 7 years

\*Daniel 9:25 refers to weeks of years\*  
 Three score and two weeks = 62 weeks  
 7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks (weeks of years)  
 69 weeks of years means 69 “7’s” or 483 years

Daniel 9:25 says –  
 It would be 483 years from the commandment to rebuild  
 the city of Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince.

Counting 483 years from 454 BC puts us in 30 AD

454 BC			
453 BC	(1)		
452 BC	(2)		
451 BC	(3)		
↓	↓		
1 BC	(453)		
1 AD	(454)	16 AD	(469)
2 AD	(455)	17 AD	(470)
3 AD	(456)	18 AD	(471)
4 AD	(457)	19 AD	(472)
5 AD	(458)	20 AD	(473)
6 AD	(459)	21 AD	(474)
7 AD	(460)	22 AD	(475)
8 AD	(461)	23 AD	(476)
9 AD	(462)	24 AD	(477)
10 AD	(463)	25 AD	(478)
11 AD	(464)	26 AD	(479)
12 AD	(465)	27 AD	(480)
13 AD	(466)	28 AD	(481)
14 AD	(467)	29 AD	(482)
15 AD	(468)		
		30 AD	(483)

[Simple check: 454 BC + AD 30 – 1 (no year zero) = 483 years]

Jesus came into the city to be declared Prince (or King) on the 10<sup>th</sup>  
 day of Nisan in the year AD 30. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan He was  
 crucified. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan He resurrected.

Daniel had prophesied the beginning and the end of a 483-year  
 period of time at least 80 years before it started!!

**Finding The 15<sup>th</sup> Year of Tiberius –  
The Year Jesus Began His Ministry – Luke 3:1, 23. (inclusive numbering)**

AD

- 12 (1) Tiberius became co-regent of Rome with Augustus = Emperor
- 13 (2)
- 14 (3) Tiberius' sole regency – wrong year 1 of Tiberius' reign\*
- 15 (4)
- 16 (5)
- 17 (6)
- 18 (7)
- 19 (8)
- 20 (9)
- 22 (10)
- 22 (11)
- 23 (12)
- 24 (13)
- 25 (14)

26 (15) Jesus Baptized and tempted in preparation – “about” age 30, Luke 3:23

27 (16) In 27 AD Jesus' *public* ministry began – age 30, Luke 3:23

28 \*By incorrectly starting the 15-year count at 14 AD, 28 is often taken as Tiberius' 15th year, but this puts Jesus' ministry beginning in 30 with an AD 33 crucifixion. Yet such ignores the AD 27 Jubilee near the onset of our Lord's ministry! (Luke 4:18-19) Thus, it lies exposed as fatally flawed.

**Finding Birth Year of Jesus Based On  
Year of Public Ministry Beginning In 27 AD**

AGE	YEAR	AGE	YEAR	AGE	YEAR	AGE	YEAR
30	27 AD	22	19 AD	14	11 AD	6	3 AD
29	26 AD	21	18 AD	13	10 AD	5	2 AD
28	25 AD	20	17 AD	12	9 AD	4	1 AD
27	24 AD	19	16 AD	11	8 AD	3	1 BC
26	23 AD	18	15 AD	10	7 AD	2	2 BC
25	22 AD	17	14 AD	9	6 AD	1	3 BC
24	21 AD	16	13 AD	8	5 AD		
23	20 AD	15	12 AD	7	4 AD	BIRTH	4 BC

**Finding Death/Resurrection Year of Jesus Based  
on 3½ Year Ministry Beginning in 26/27 AD**

- 26 AD (¼)
- 27 AD (1)
- 28 AD (2)
- 29 AD (3)

30 AD (¼) Death/Resurrection

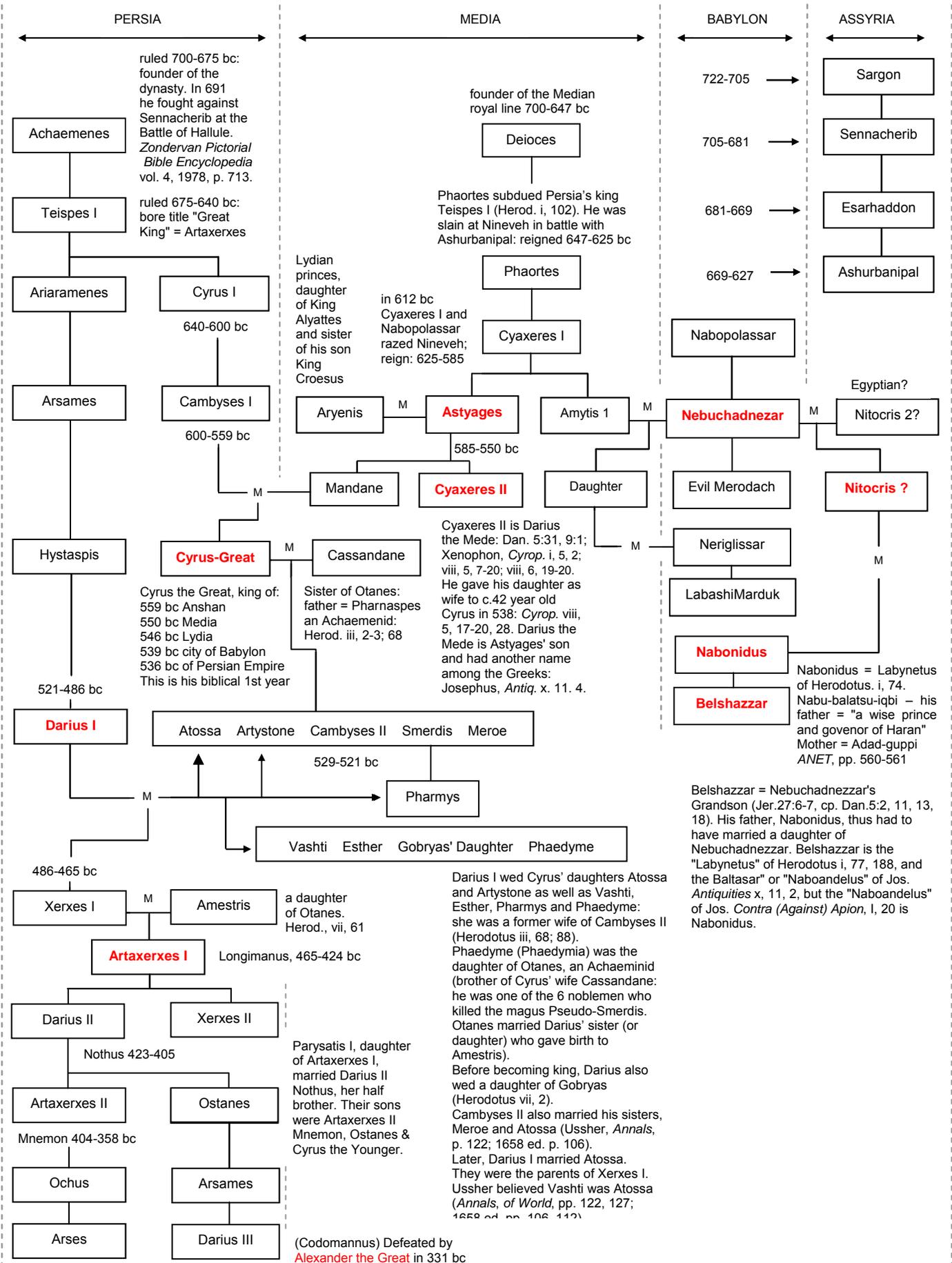
## COMPARATIVE DATINGS FOR THE TIMES OF CHRIST JESUS

AM	BC-AD	YEARS OF CHRIST	AUC (YOR)	YEARS OF AUGUSTUS	YEARS OF TIBERIUS
3960	44 BC		710	1	← Julius Caesar
1	43		11	2	slain March 15.
2	42		12	3	Augustus (Octavian)
3	41		13	4	succeeds him for 57
4	40		714	5	years & c. 6 mos. =
5	39		15	6	in year 58
6	38		16	7	(Jos. War, ii, ix, 1;
7	37		17	8	Finegan, Handbook
8	36		18	9	pp. 217, 226).
9	35		19	10	
3970	34		720	11	
1	33		21	12	
2	32		22	13	
3	31	Battle of Actium	723	14	
4	30		24	15	← Augustus reigns
5	29		25	16	in Egypt upon death
6	28		26	17	of Antony/Cleopatra.
7	27		27	18	← 27 BC, the
8	26		28	19	Senate of Rome
9	25		29	20	voted Octavius the
3980	24		730	21	title "Augustus"
1	23		31	22	
2	22		32	23	
3	21		33	24	
4	20		34	25	
5	19		35	26	
6	18		36	27	
7	17		37	28	
8	16		38	29	
9	15		39	30	
3990	14		740	31	
1	13		41	32	
2	12		42	33	
3	11		43	34	
4	10		44	35	
5	9		45	36	
6	8		46	37	
7	7		47	38	
8	6		48	39	
9	5		49	40	
4000	4	The age 0 of our Lord	750	← Herod dies just	← Birth of Jesus,
1	3		51	after a lunar eclipse	Irenaeus, Against
2	2		52	and before Passover	Heresies, iii, xxi, 3
3	1		53	(Jos., Ant. xvii, 9, 3;	(c. AD 180).
4004	AD - no year zero		54	6, 4).	
5	2		55		← AD reckoning
6	3		56		begins 4 years too
7	4		57		late due to error by
8	5		58		Dionysius Exiguus
9	6		59		when he invented
4010	7		760		the Christian Era
1	8		61		Calendar in AD 525.
2	9	The boy Jesus	62		
3	10	12 in the Temple	63		
4	11		64		
5	12		765		
6	13		66		
7	14		67		
8	15		68		
9	16		69		
4020	17		770		
1	18		71		
2	19		72		
3	20		73		
4	21		74		
5	22		75		
6	23		76		
7	24		77		
8	25		78		
9	26	John baptizes Jesus	79		
4030	27	& Satan tempts Him	79	His public ministry at	the end of the 15th year
1	28	the Lord Jesus being	80	(see Lk. 3:1 & 23) at	the beginning of the year
2	29	30 years of age in yr.	81		15 of Tiberius
3	30		82		16 of Tiberius
4033	30	the Lord Jesus being	783	by Roman reckoning	19 of Tiberius
		33 years of age in yr.		in Tiberius' 19th year	19 but 17th of sole rex

AM = *Anno Mundi* = in the year of the world; AUC = *Anno Urbis Conditae* = from the year in which the city of Rome was founded.

Above chart adapted and corrected from E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1990), Appendix 179.

Remember, the Hebrew year begins around 1 April and thus differs from our calendar by about 3 months (1/4 year).



Events & results of Artaxerxes' becoming a pro-rex before the death of Xerxes	BC year	Xerxes' regnal years	Artaxerxes Longimanus' pro-rex years plus years as sole rex	Artaxerxes' official years as sole rex
<b>Darius I died in October</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>Acc</b>		
	485	1		
	484	2		
	483	3		
	482	4		
	481	5		
	480	6		
	479	7		
	478	8		
	477	9		
	476	10		
	475	11		
	474	12		
<b>Became suzerain over Israel</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>pro-rex 1</b>	
	472	14	pro-rex 2	
	471	15	pro-rex 3	
	470	16	pro-rex 4	
	469	17	pro-rex 5	
	468	18	pro-rex 6	
	467	19	pro-rex 7	
	466	20	pro-rex 8	
<b>Xerxes I died in August</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>pro-rex 9</b>	<b>Acc</b>
	464		10	1
	463		11	2
	462		12	3
	461		13	4
	460		14	5
	459		15	6
	458		16	7
	457		17	8
	456		18	9
	455		19	10
<b>483 years to the Cross</b>	<b>454</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>
	453		21	12
	452		22	13
	451		23	14
	450		24	15
	449		25	16
	448		26	17
	447		27	18
	446		28	19
<b>Anderson's 20th year</b>	<b>445</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Hoehner's 20th year</b>	<b>444</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>
	443		31	22
	442		32	23
	441		33	24
	440		34	25
	439		35	26
	438		36	27
	437		37	28
	436		38	29
	435		39	30
	434		40	31
	433		41	32
	432		42	33
	431		43	34
	430		44	35
	429		45	36
	428		46	37
	427		47	38
	426		48	39
	425		49	40
<b>Artaxerxes died in December</b>	<b>424</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>

**NISAN 1, AD 30**  
 = Julian Period: March 24, AD 30, Julian Day = 1732097.75  
 = Gregorian: March 22, AD 30 – **Friday**  
 = Olympiad: 202, year 1

When new moon crescent is first visible and new month is declared at sunset in Jerusalem.

Month	Hebrew day of week	Sabbaths	Gregorian Astral calculation of the Sun-Moon Conjunction date and time for New Moons					Julian Day Number
			Weekday	Month	Day	Year	Time	
01 - Nisan	Fri	02 - 09 - 16 - 23 - 30	Wed	Mar	20	AD 30	20:06	1732096
02 - Iyar	Sun	07 - 14 - 21 - 28	Fri	Apr	19	AD 30	11:56	1732126
03 - Sivan	Tues	05 - 12 - 19 - 26	Sun	May	19	AD 30	03:32	1732156
04 - Tammuz	Wed	04 - 11 - 18 - 25	Mon	Jun	17	AD 30	18:05	1732185
05 - Ab	Fri	02 - 09 - 16 - 23	Wed	Jul	17	AD 30	07:08	1732215
06 - Elul	Sat	01 - 08 - 15 - 22 - 29	Thur	Aug	15	AD 30	18:46	1732244
07 - Tishri	Mon	06 - 13 - 20 - 27	Sat	Sep	14	AD 30	05:33	1732274
08 - Heshvan	Tue	05 - 12 - 19 - 26	Sun	Oct	13	AD 30	16:10	1732303
09 - Kislev	Thurs	03 - 10 - 17 - 24	Tue	Nov	12	AD 30	03:01	1732333
10 - Tebeth	Fri	02 - 09 - 16 - 23	Wed	Dec	11	AD 30	14:04	1732362
11 - Shebat	Sun	07 - 14 - 21 - 28	Fri	Jan	10	AD 31	01:12	1732392
12 - Adar	Mon	06 - 13 - 20 - 27	Sat	Feb	08	AD 31	12:31	1732421

**CALENDAR OF THE CRUCIFIXION MONTH**

Based on the above data which was taken from a calendar conversion computer program designed by the Harvard Center for Astrophysics. The ephemeris generator for this software was developed from Jean Meeus' *Astronomical Formulae for Calculators*. It is the standard formula used by astronomers today. The entire "Time" column of the top chart has been changed by making use of NASA's data for new moons at Greenwich and then adjusted to Jerusalem time (+ 2hr, 20min). Also, Heshvan 1 has been corrected to read October 13 instead of October 1 in the "day" column.

NISAN (ABIB) 30 AD						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Note: 14 Nisan converts to Thursday, April 4th Gregorian calendar (6 April, Julian); further, the actual first sighting of the new moon may be c. 17 to c. 24 hours (i.e. the lunar translation period) after the astral conjunction calculation date and thus be as much as two days later. A Friday crucifixion would violate four Scriptures: Matthew 12:40, 27:63; Mark 8:31 and Luke 24:21.

THE CRUCIFIXION WEEK																	
Western Time		Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday			Friday		Saturday		Sunday
Jewish Time	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	†   †	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night
	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	9 3	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm
Day of 1st Month	Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday			Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	10		11		12		13		14			15		16		17	
	The Day after the anointing by Mary of Bethany during supper at Simon the Leper's home John 12:1,12 — The Triumphal Entry: Jesus laments Jerusalem — Passover lamb chosen – tested for 4 days 10th–14th Exo. 12:3		Our Lord Curses the fig tree — He Cleanses the Temple for the second time		Fig tree dead — Jesus' Authority challenged — Lamb of God examined and found spotless Mat. 22:15–46 — Scribes, elders, and chief priest plot to kill Jesus. — Satan enters Judas		The "silent" day Disciples make Passover preparations Mark 14:12–16 Luke 22:7–13		After sunset as the 14th begins Mk 14:1, 12–18 Luke 22:7–13 Eats Passover and Last Supper, Judas' betrayal cp. Num 9:6–13 — The "preparation" Mat. 27:62 Mark 15:42 Luke 23:54 John 13:1–2, 18:28, 19:14, 31 — Jesus arrested, 6 illegal trials, found innocent — <b>Crucified</b> ----- Lamb without blemish slain Lev. 23:5 Exo. 12			<b>High Sabbath</b> A holy convocation John 19:31 — 1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread Lev. 23:6–8		The Regular weekly Sabbath see Mat. 28:1 where "Sabbath" is plural in the Greek, i.e., "Sabbaths"  This implies that there were two Sabbaths in succession		<b>Jesus: the firstfruits of the Resurrection</b> I Cor.15:20–23 — Day of Firstfruits Lev. 23:9–14 — <b>17th of Nisan</b> Noah (Gen. 8:4, cp. Exo. 12:2, 13:4) and Israel (Num. 33:3–8) emerged out of the waters of death (Rom.6:3–4): Also the day Mordecai was raised up over his enemy and dressed in royal attire Est. 3:12, 4:16, 5:1, 4, 8, 6:1 8, 7:1, and 8:1-2	

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly;  
so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(Matthew 12:40; cp. Jonah 1:17, Esther 4:16, 1 Sam. 30:12)

THE PASSOVER, CRUCIFIXION & RESURRECTION										
Western										
Time	Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday			
	Night	Daylite	Night	† †	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	
Jewish	6pm	6am	6pm	9 3	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	
Time	Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday			
Day of 1st Month	14		15		16		17			
	Eat Passover Last supper, Judas' betrayal		<b>High Sabbath</b> A Holy Convocation Joh.19:31 — 1st day of the feast of unleaven bread Lev.23:6-8		Regular weekly Sabbath  cp. Mat.28:1 where "sabbath" is plural in the Greek		<b>Jesus the first fruit of the Resurrection</b> I Cor.15:20-23 — Day of first fruits Lev. 23:9-14			
<p>For as Jonas was <b>three days and three nights</b> in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Mat. 12:40</p> <p>Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, <b>After</b> three days I will rise again. Mat. 27:63</p> <p>And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and <b>after</b> three days rise again. Mark 8:31</p> <p>we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, <b>today</b> is the third day <b>since</b> these things were done. Luk. 24:21</p>										
<p><b>From the yellow above, we can see that a Friday crucifixion yields only part of that daylight period plus a full one on Saturday and just two nights. This violates all four Scriptures on the left.</b></p>										

THE PASSOVER, CRUCIFIXION & RESURRECTION										
Western										
Time	Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday			
	Night	† † †	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	Daylite	Night	
Jewish	6pm	9 3	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	6am	6pm	
Time	Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday			
Day of 1st Month	14		15		16		17			
<p><b>A Thursday crucifixion yields part of that daylight period plus a full one on both Friday &amp; Saturday (the yellow) as well as those same 3 nights.</b></p> <p><b>This honors the four Scriptures Mat. 12:40, Mat 27:63 Mark 8:31 Luke 24:21</b></p>	Eat Passover Last supper, Judas' betrayal cp. Num.9:6-13 — the "Preparation" Mat. 27:62 Mar. 15:42 Luk. 23:54 Joh.13:1-2, 18:28, 19:14, 31 — Jesus arrested, 6 illegal trials, found innocent — <b>Crucified</b>		<b>High Sabbath</b> A Holy Convocation Joh.19:31 — 1st day of the feast of unleaven bread Lev.23:6-8		Regular weekly Sabbath  cp. Mat.28:1 where "sabbath" is plural in the Greek		<b>Jesus the first fruit of the Resurrection</b> I Cor.15:20-23 — Day of first fruits Lev. 23:9-14 — 17th of Nisan Noah (Gen 8:4, cp. Exo.12:2, 13:4) and Israel (Num.33:3-8) emerged from the waters of			
<p><b>For as Jonas was 3 days and 3 nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40, cp. Jonah 1:17 Esther 4:16; 1 Samuel 30:12)</b></p>										

<b>NISAN 30 AD – Note: the 14<sup>th</sup> is a Thursday</b>						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					01  Mar 24 J Mar 22 G	02  Mar 25 J Mar 23 G
03  Mar 26 J Mar 24 G	04  Mar 27 J Mar 25 G	05  Mar 28 J Mar 26 G	06  Mar 29 J Mar 27 G	07  Mar 30 J Mar 28 G	08  Mar 31 J Mar 29 G	09  Apr 1 J Mar 30 G
10  Apr 2 J Mar 31 G	11  Apr 3 J Apr 1 G	12  Apr 4 J Apr 2 G	13  Apr 5 J Apr 3 G	14  Apr 6 J Apr 4 G	15  Apr 7 J Apr 5 G	16  Apr 8 J Apr 6 G
17  Apr 9 J Apr 7 G	18  Apr 10 J Apr 8 G	19  Apr 11 J Apr 9 G	20  Apr 12 J Apr 10 G	21  Apr 13 J Apr 11 G	22  Apr 14 J Apr 12 G	23  Apr 15 J Apr 13 G
24  Apr 16 J Apr 14 G	25  Apr 17 J Apr 15 G	26  Apr 18 J Apr 16 G	27  Apr 19 J Apr 17 G	28  Apr 20 J Apr 18 G	29  Apr 21 J Apr 19 G	30  Apr 22 J Apr 20 G

## HEBREW MONTHS

	Month and Bible Reference	Approximate Modern Equivalent (mid to mid mo.)	Main Crops	Climate	Special Days	
1.	Abib - Exo. 23:15 (Nisan) - Neh 2:1	March-April	Barley harvest, lentils	Latter Rains	14 = Passover 15–21 = Unleavened Bread 17 = Firstfruits Sheaf	
2.	Zif - I Ki 6:1 (Iyyar)	April-May	General harvest			
3.	Sivan - Est 8:9	May-June	Wheat harvest	D R Y  S E A S O N	7 = Pentecost	
4.	Tammuz	June-July	Vine tending			
5.	Ab	July-August	First grapes, figs, olives			
6.	Elul - Neh 6:15	August-September	Grapes, dates			
7.	Tishri - I Ki 8:2 (Ethanim)	September-October	Vintage, plowing			1 = Feast of Trumpets 10 = Day of Atonement 15–21 = Tabernacles Feast
8.	Bul - I Ki 6:38 (Marchesvan)	October-November	Wheat, barley, seed sowing		Early Rains	
9.	Chisleu - Zec 7:1 (Kislev)	November-December	Cool and rainy		R A I N  S E A S O N	25 = Feast of Dedication John 10:22
10.	Tebeth - Est 2:16	December-January	Cold and rainy			
11.	Shebat - Zec 1:7	January-February	Winter figs, citrus harvest			
12.	Adar - Est 3:7 Ezra 6:15	February-March	Almonds bloom, flax harvest			14–15 = Purim Est 9:20–28

## LUNAR ECLIPSES – PTOLEMY

ASTRONOMICAL OR JULIAN PERIOD YEARS				GREGORIAN YEARS		
Year	Month/Day	King	Regnal Yr.	Year	Month/Day	Day of Week
- 620	22 April	Nabopolassar	5	621 BC	15 April	Saturday
- 522	16 July	Cambyzes II	7	523 BC	10 July	Wednesday
- 501	19 Nov.	Darius I	20	502 BC	13 Nov.	Monday
- 490	25 April	Darius I	31	491 BC	20 April	Wednesday

Ptolemy records the following lunar eclipse data for Nabopolassar:

For in the year 5 of Nabopolassar (which is the year 127 of Nabonassar, Egyptianwise Athyr 27–28 at the end of the eleventh hour) the moon began to be eclipsed in Babylon; ...

As Anno Nabonassar 1 is 747 BC, Nabonassarian years may be converted to astronomical years (Julian Period) by subtracting them from 747. Thus,  $747 - 127 = -620$  JP (see above). The month Athyr on the Egyptian sliding calendar falls in our March and April.

{Claudius Ptolemy, “The Almagest”, *Great Books of The Western World*, R. M. Hutchins, ed., trans. by R. C. Taliaferro, (Chicago, IL: William Benton Publishers, 1952), Bk. 5, p. 172.}

## CALENDARS

**JULIAN CALENDAR:** Julius Caesar abolished the use of the lunar year as well as the intercalary month and regulated the year using only the sun. He decreed that from 45 BC (709 YOR) there should be three years of 365 days each and then one year of 366 days in perpetual cycle. This became known as the Julian calendar. It is exactly 365.25 days per solar year ( $365 \times 3 + 366 \div 4$ ). It began the custom we still observe today of adding one day to February every fourth year (i.e., years divisible by 4 = leap years). Whereas the year had begun March 1, it now became January 1. To realign the calendar with the seasons, 46 BC was made 445 days long (called “the year of confusion” by the Romans).

Even though the Julian calendar was an enormous improvement over all previous systems, it still was not completely accurate. Since there are approximately 365¼ days in a solar year, the Julian calendar was reasonably satisfactory for many years – but there are not exactly 365¼ (365.25) days in a year. The mean solar year (often called the “tropical year”) consists of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.975 seconds (365.24219879 days). The difference is eleven minutes fourteen seconds, which results in a one day error every 128 years. Although small, this becomes appreciable over the course of centuries; hence, the Julian calendar needed adjusting.

**GREGORIAN CALENDAR:** In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII made another calendar correction. The Gregorian calendar is the one we use today. The mean Gregorian year has 365.2425 days. To make up for all the days that had accumulated since the beginning of the Julian calendar, Gregory XIII decreed the elimination of 10 days from the year 1582. The result was that in many countries the day after October 4, 1582 became October 15, 1582.<sup>1</sup>

Pope Gregory XIII kept the Leap Year rule whereby, normally, every year evenly divisible by four with no remainder would be a leap year. However, the Gregorian Leap Year rule adds the exception that every year ending in “00” whose number cannot be divided by 400 will not be a leap year. Thus, the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years and had only 28 days in February. Being divisible by 400, February 2000 had 29 days. This system will serve us for more than a thousand years hence. The Gregorian year is 26 seconds longer than the

solar-tropical year; this is less than one day every 3000 years. Thus, although the Gregorian calendar is a great improvement over the Julian calendar, it still is not 100% accurate.

**ADOPTION OF THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR:** Although the initial adoption of the Gregorian calendar was in 1582, its use was by no means universal. The first countries to adopt the new calendar were primarily Roman Catholic nations. Most Protestant countries did not make the change until later. The American Colonies made the switch in 1752, the year in which the whole British Empire changed over. September 2, 1752 was followed by September 14, 1752.

Note that an eleven-day adjustment was now needed, the Julian calendar having added another day between 1582 and 1752. Dates preceding the change are sometimes designated OS for Old Style. Thus, George Washington’s birthday was originally February 11, 1732 (OS), and only after the change to the Gregorian calendar was his birthday established as February 22, 1732. Most dates in American history have been converted to New Style (NS) or Gregorian. Other countries have been even slower in adopting the new calendar: Japan, 1873, China, 1912, Greece, 1924, Turkey, 1927.

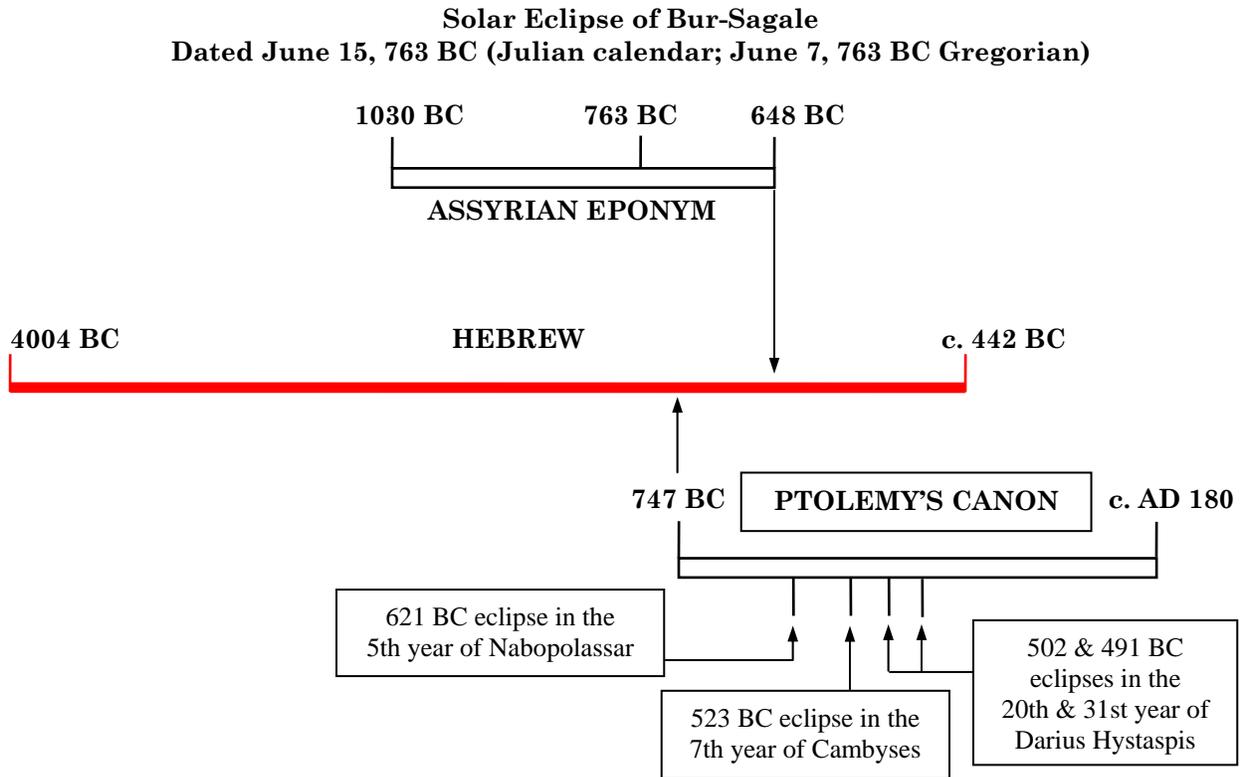
**CONVERSION:** To make the conversion from Julian dates to Gregorian dates, add 10 days to the Julian date from October 5, 1582 through February 28, 1700. Then, add 11 days to Julian dates from March 1, 1700 through February 28, 1800; add 12 days to Julian dates from March 1, 1800 through February 28, 1900; add 13 days to Julian dates from March 1, 1900 through February 28, 2000; etc.

**ASTRONOMICAL OR JULIAN PERIOD DATING:** Today, the world as a whole uses the Gregorian calendar. As this calendar has no year “zero”, when counting years from BC to AD we must subtract one year from the total. The same is true of the Julian calendar. Thus, the next year after 1 BC is AD 1, not zero; 1 BC to AD 1 is only one year.

This is not so with astronomical years. Astronomical or Julian Period years (not the same as the Julian calendar above) are the same as Gregorian years after AD 1; but as this calendar does have a year “zero”, all BC dates will be one year less. Because astronomical years are frequently given a BC designation, they are often confused as being Gregorian. To avoid this, it is more prudent to display them as –620 and not 620 BC.

Astronomers normally give ancient dates and events such as eclipses Julian Period (JP) dates; but as most are not aware of this and since nearly all dates in American history have been converted to Gregorian, my work uses Gregorian dates.

<sup>1</sup> The days of the week, the weekly cycle, were not changed – nor have they ever. Dr. J.B. Dimbleby, astronomer and premier chronologist to the British Chronological and Astronomical Association, asserts: “If men refused to observe weeks and the line of time was forgotten, the day of the week could be recovered by observing when the transits of the planets or eclipses of the sun and moon occurred. These great sentinels of the sky keep seven days with scientific accuracy, thundering out the seven days inscribed on the inspired page” (*All Past Time*, 1886, p. 10).



As the Assyrian Eponym List confirms the Assyrian part of the Canon of Ptolemy, most scholars hold that the validity of the rest of the Canon should be accepted with complete confidence. This may be true, but wherever the Assyrian list confirms the Assyrian part of the Canon, it also confirms the biblical record! Strangely, the world of scholarship seems unable to perceive this fact. Since the Canon of Ptolemy agrees with the Assyrian Eponym List in those places where the biblical record also agrees with it, why is this not seen as confirming proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures instead of assessing the situation as being that of having authenticated the Canon?

The Canon of Ptolemy's agreement with the Eponym List at the occasion where the Assyrian data is contiguous to the biblical record serves as positive external attestation to that account as being a verifiable and actual historical chronicle of the Hebrew people. Therefore, all religious overtones aside, due to its uninterrupted continuous record as compared to the mutilated records of all their neighbors, the Hebrew record deserves at least equal, if not preferred, esteem in establishing the chronology of the ancient world. Yet today's scholars proceed to "correct" the biblical record with the

Canon from 648 BC to the time of Christ during which there is no Assyrian record and by the Assyrian Eponym List prior to 747 BC where there is no record in the Canon of Ptolemy.

The biblical chronology is clear, uninterrupted, unambiguous, and precise. To displace it in favor of the Assyrian data demonstrates one's lacking not only scientific bearing with respect to approach and concept, but logic as well. Most have allowed their world view, bias and presuppositions against the Hebrew record as well as against all the Holy Writ to blind them, thereby rendering objective scientific investigation impossible. Yet these very scholars boldly assert that their methods and arguments represent the truly scientific approach void of "biblical" prejudices. Conversely, they contend biblicists are guilty of creating systems of Assyrian chronology that display preconceived biblical views and that all such work should be "disdained by the careful historian".

Obviously, if agreement with the Assyrian records authenticates Ptolemy's Canon, it must of necessity "authenticate" the biblical record as well. Furthermore, it should be noted that wherever these three witnesses overlap, they are in accord.

## The Decree of Cyrus

Inasmuch as Anstey and others insist that the Decree of Cyrus (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4) was the fulfillment of the Daniel 9:24–27 prophecy rather than the decree issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus,<sup>1</sup> we will now briefly examine the former decree. After all, these men are brothers in Christ and many are diligent, capable students of Scripture. As such, their views deserve our careful consideration.

The ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel opens with Daniel and his people captives in Babylon. Their beloved city of Jerusalem and its Temple had been destroyed by the army of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. 36:15–21). From the study of certain “books” which included Jeremiah’s prophecy, Daniel came to understand that both the servitude and desolation would last 70 years. After that, deliverance would come (Dan. 9:2 and 9:17).

As Daniel pondered these things and sought the Lord, the angel Gabriel came to him and spoke of another time period – seven times as long. This span would be 70 “weeks” of years or 70 sevens of years. Gabriel explained that the 70 weeks of years (69 of which would measure unto Messiah!), were to be counted from the going forth of “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Dan. 9:25).<sup>2</sup>

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place (Jer. 29:10).

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall **serve** the king of Babylon seventy years (Jer. 25:11, emphasis FNJ’s).

The Book of Jeremiah explained that this servitude would last 70 years, and then they would be allowed to return to their homeland. Other details about this deliverance were given in the Book of Isaiah, which may have been among the “books” Daniel had been reading. The Isaiah prophecy is especially significant,

<sup>1</sup> Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 277–293; also see my pages 113–115.

<sup>2</sup> Some erroneously interpret this to mean that the commandment which would end the 70 years servitude would also mark the beginning of the 70 weeks.

for it revealed the name of the man that would set the captives free and cause Jerusalem to be built again. His name would be *Cyrus*.

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; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel (Isaiah 45:1–3).

Various historians of antiquity have referred to Cyrus the Great. Herodotus says the Persians regarded him highly. Ammianus calls Cyrus “the amiable prince” of the Oriental world; Xenophon extolled the wisdom by which he governed; Plutarch declared that in wisdom and virtue he surpassed all kings.

Mentioned by name 23 times in the Bible, Cyrus was the monarch whose armies overthrew the Babylonian empire on the night the mysterious “handwriting on the wall” appeared during Belshazzar’s great feast (Dan. 5). Concerning Cyrus, Isaiah 44:24, 28 and 45:1–4 adds:

Thus saith the LORD ... of CYRUS, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the LORD to ... Cyrus ... I, the LORD, which call thee *by thy name*, am the God of Israel ... I have even called thee *by thy name*: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Called by name nearly 125 years prior to his birth,<sup>3</sup> Cyrus was thence commissioned by God to allow the captives to return and rebuild the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa. 1:1). The combined time that these men reigned is 113 years (2 Chron. 26–29). The kings that followed reigned a total of over 110 years (2 Chron. 32–36). Then came the Babylonian servitude which lasted 70 years (2 Chron. 36:20, 21). As we do not know exactly when during Isaiah’s ministry that he prophesied about Cyrus, we cannot give an exact number of years. Nevertheless, basing our conclusions on what we do know from the Scriptures, we are safe in saying that the prophecy was given approximately 125 years before Cyrus was born and approximately 170 years or more before Babylon was overthrown.

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

... 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 (Isaiah 44:28; 45:13)

However before Cyrus could ever be in a position of authority in order to be able to fulfill this prophecy, Babylon – which held the Jews captive – would have to be *overthrown*. During the days of Cyrus, this seemed an almost impossible feat.

Ancient historians<sup>1</sup> tell us that the walls of Babylon were double; the outer was a square 56 miles in circumference and thus 14 miles along each face. Surrounded by a wide moat, this wall was c. 300 feet high, 87 feet thick with its top broad enough that four-horse chariots could pass each other and even turn around. There were 25 solid brass gates on each side protected by a total of 250 towers, each being 420 feet high. Also square but not as thick, the inner wall's perimeter was 42 miles. Gardens and crops were grown in the area between these walls, and the Babylonians boasted that their provisions could withstand a 20-year siege.

Flowing through the middle of the city from north to south, the Euphrates River had walls along both sides dividing the city into an eastern and western sector. On the bank of each side, between these walls and the river, was an 87' wide quay. A large bridge tied the two sections of the city together. Consequently, when Cyrus began to lay siege to Babylon, its citizens felt his efforts were useless. However, this overconfident attitude of security was the very source of their danger!

Learning that the Babylonians would be observing a great pagan festival, Cyrus planned a surprise attack. On the night of the festival – when the inhabitants and king would be spending their time in revelry and drunkenness – he would divert the waters of the Euphrates (which ran beneath the city walls) into a vast

35 foot deep basin having a circumference of 48.3 miles. This “holding lake” had formerly been dug by the Babylonians to channel the river into so they could build the quay, the bridge, a tunnel at each end of the bridge that connected the two palaces on the banks of the river, and brick the banks to prevent erosion.

With the lowering of the water, the armies of Cyrus marched through the riverbed and beneath the two walls. With this in mind, we read the prophecy concerning Cyrus:

Thus saith the LORD ... to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (Isaiah 44:24, 27)

However, after penetrating the main walls, the walls along the river front still prevented the army of Cyrus entrance into the city. Set in these walls, where streets crossed the river, were huge gates of brass which normally would have been closed and locked. However, caught up in the spell of the celebrations, the guards had neglected to secure these gates!

Now we can understand the true significance of the words:

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; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: ... (Isaiah 45:1, 2).

The way would be opened up for Cyrus. The problem posed by the two leaved gates and their iron bars would be completely removed as though “broken and cut in sunder”!

Daniel 5 records that which was happening at the same time inside the city. King Belshazzar had called 1,000 of the leaders of his kingdom unto a great feast at the palace. That night, they drank wine and praised their gods. Suddenly, the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote a mysterious message on the plaster of the palace wall! When this happened:

Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another (Dan. 5:6).

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, Bk. II, 7–9; Herodotus, *Histories*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Book 1, 178–186; McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Lit.*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 596–598 (Babylon).

Such was exactly what God had revealed the king would do when He prepared the way for Cyrus:

Thus saith the LORD to...Cyrus...I will loose the loins of kings, (Isaiah 45:1).

Although they could read the words, the wise men of Babylon could not interpret the meaning of the handwriting on the wall. Finally, Daniel was summoned. He explained that it was a message of doom for the king; moreover, his kingdom would be given over to the Medes and Persians. At that very moment, the armies of Cyrus were gaining entrance to the city to fulfill Daniel's words.

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old (Dan. 5:30, 31).

Xenophon tells us that this Darius the Mede was the uncle of Cyrus and Prideaux adds: "Cyrus allowed him the title of all his conquests as long as he lived".<sup>1</sup> After consolidating the empire under his rule, Cyrus returned with his army and became sole ruler of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

In the prophecy to Cyrus, God said that he would "subdue nations before him" (Isa. 45:1). The list of 14 nations whom he conquered includes: the Cilicians, Syrians, Paphlagonians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians,

Phoenicians, Arabians, Assyrians, Bactrians, Sacae, Maryandines, and the Babylonians.

Prophecy also revealed that God would cause Cyrus to receive the "treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places" (Isaiah 45:3). It was the custom of the time for a conquering king to hide away the spoils taken in battle, and such were not used unless it became an absolute necessity. These were placed in the "treasure house" (cp. Dan. 1:2). This treasure house contained many valuables that had been taken from Egypt, Assyria, Judea, and other countries Babylon had conquered. Such hidden treasures of the kingdom – even as the prophecy had said – became the property of the conquering Cyrus! According to Pliny, Cyrus took in \$353,427,200 dollars in silver and gold (by 1979 exchange rates) – along with various other jewels, vessels, and precious things.

These great victories of Cyrus' were an exact fulfillment of prophecy. In 536 BC, Cyrus came to be sole ruler in the kingdom. But for a worldly-minded sovereign – a battle-hardened warrior – to suddenly release thousands of his slaves "not for price nor reward" seemed unthinkable. Slaves meant wealth, fame, and prestige to any king. When Cyrus proclaimed that these slaves could return to their land, he had it put *in writing*.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 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 (note: this was in the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28). Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1–3; also 2 Chron. 36:22, 23).

It is very likely that Cyrus had been shown the Isaiah prophecies. If so, he must have been amazed when he saw that which had been written of him so many years beforehand. Such would have provoked him to reflect and come to realize that the God of Israel must be the true God. Regardless, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to decree that the people of this God

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, I, ii, 1. Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus (Dan.9:1), was Cyaxares II, son of Astyages (Jos. *Antiq.* X.11.4, note: Darius was "made king", Dan. 9:1). See: Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> In 559 BC Cyrus the Great became King of Anshan, a portion of Persia with Susa as its Capital. About 550, his maternal grandfather Astyages, King of Media, marched against Cyrus. Astyages was delivered by his own army over to Cyrus thus forging in one day the Empire of the Medes and Persians. About 546 he conquered Lydia, making a prisoner of Croesus, its king of fabled wealth.

At the end of the year 539 BC, he conquered Babylon, capital of the Babylonian Empire. Belshazzar, pro-regent for his father Nabonidus, was slain and Cyrus' uncle, Darius the Mede (same as Cyaxares II, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, I, 5, 2, the Son of Ahasuerus = Astyages) was "made king" over Babylon (Dan.9:1) by Cyrus who continued at the head of the army, annexing the remainder of the Empire.

In 536, Cyrus returned as sole rex over the expanded empire and as suzerain over the Jews. 536 BC is thus the date intended by Scripture as "the first year of Cyrus".

should be allowed to return to rebuild their Temple.

The 70 “weeks”, however, were to begin with “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” – that is – the city along with its walls as Daniel foretold:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city. . . . Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and **to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the **wall**, even **in troublous times**. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself (Dan. 9:24–26, author’s emphasis).

The decree granting these privileges was issued when letters were given to Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem in the 20th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus (Neh. 2:1–9). This event, not the 536 BC decree of Cyrus, is the starting point of the 70 weeks prophecy.<sup>1</sup> The proclamation of Cyrus had only to do with the rebuilding of the “house of God” (Ezra 1, 5, and 6), whereas the 70 weeks were to begin with the commandment to build the city as well as its walls. Consequently, it is a mistake to reckon these 70-year weeks from the time Cyrus gave permission for the people to return and to build the Temple as they were to begin with permission to restore and build the city itself.

The portion of the decree of Cyrus that is recorded in the first chapter of Ezra mentions only the rebuilding of the Temple and does not specifically mention the rebuilding of the city (houses, streets, wall, etc.). The Temple, which was eventually decorated with gold and silver as well as rare vessels, would be under the protection of the Empire itself prior to the rebuilding of the city walls.

The decree in Nehemiah in which the commandment was given to rebuild the city was issued about 82 years after the decree of Cyrus (536 – 454 = 82).<sup>2</sup> The Jews returned from Babylon and rebuilt the Temple, but because the Persians feared a revolt (Ezra 4:12–16) it was not until 82 years later that the decree was

given for the city and its walls to be built! During the interim, the people lived among the ruins in the few restored homes as Nehemiah 1:3 and 2:3 depict.

Still, according to Bible prophecy, Cyrus was to be the one that would speak the word which would cause the *city* of Jerusalem to be built, as well as the Temple.

... He (Cyrus) is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid (Isa. 44:28).

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 (Isa. 45:13).

As a result of Cyrus’ 536 BC decree, Darius I Hystaspis (Darius of Marathon) allowed the work to restart in 520 BC after the Persian monarchs who had reigned in the period between Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis had caused the cessation of the reconstruction (Ezra 4; cp. chs. 5 and 6).

Again, the actual commandment to build the city did not go forth until 82 years after the return from Babylon in the days of Nehemiah. This was 76 years after the 530 BC passing of Cyrus.

This forces us to address the question – was the prophecy of Isaiah wrong or was Anstey et al. right all along? Should we measure the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy from the 536 BC decree of Cyrus after all? Where does the truth lie for here we have Scripture saying that it would be Cyrus who would speak the command to restore and build Jerusalem: “even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built”. How can this be if the rebuilding of the city is said to actually have been carried out by Nehemiah acting under the authority of the decree given by Artaxerxes Longimanus in the 20th year of his reign (454 BC)? Moreover, according to Josephus, Cyrus wrote:<sup>3</sup>

God almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth ... indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in the country of Judea.

<sup>1</sup> Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, *op. cit.*, p. 124, among many others.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Persian Problem*, pages 119–121, 127–134.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, *op. cit.*, XI.1.

After Cyrus had supposedly read the remarkable prophecy in Isaiah, Josephus added<sup>1</sup>:

He called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to *rebuild their city Jerusalem*, and the temple of God.

A letter written by Cyrus to the governors in Syria <sup>2</sup> is reported to have read:

King Cyrus to Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes, sendeth greeting. I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to *rebuild their city*, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before.

Thus, Josephus declares that Cyrus was instrumental in building not just the Temple, but the CITY as well. This, along with the Isaiah passages already presented, represents the strongest, most convincing evidence in favor of the Cyrus Decree.

Admittedly, it seems substantial. Can it be answered or has our former decision in favor of the Artaxerxes Decree been incorrect, and how does one begin?

As biblicalists, we simply begin in faith. Knowing that all the relevant scriptures are true, there must be a way to reconstruct the history while honoring each passage. If the secular data, such as Josephus, can be made to accord, it is taken as accurate and utilized. If not, it is viewed as incorrect and ignored. Armed with this frame of reference and world view, we proceed.

First, the Book of Nehemiah unmistakably says that the wall and city were in *ruins* (Neh. 1:3; 2:3; 7:4). Hence, although permission was given by Cyrus, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its wall was not *written* into his formal decree. This is why the people had not nearly completed the task. Chapter by chapter, Ezra gives us the account of the sequence of events that transpired upon the Jews return.

**EZRA CHAPTER ONE:** records the proclamation that was made by Cyrus in which he allowed the captives to return. This decree

clearly only authorizes the rebuilding of the Temple (vv. 2–5). The vessels from Solomon’s Temple, which had been removed by Nebuchadnezzar and placed in the temple of his pagan gods, were placed in the care of “Sheshbazzar” (Zerubbabel).<sup>3</sup>

**EZRA CHAPTER TWO:** gives a list of the 12 leaders (undoubtedly one from each of the tribes) that returned to rebuild the Temple under Zerubbabel’s leadership (cp. Neh. 7:7) and the names of those that returned with them.

**EZRA CHAPTER THREE:** states that the “people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem” during the seventh month (vs. 1). They built an altar, and made offerings and entreated God to protect them from their enemies whom they feared. “But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid” (vs. 6). However, they began making arrangements for its building “according to the grant that they had of Cyrus” (vs. 7). Then, in the second month of the second year after their return, “all the people shouted with a great shout ... because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid” (vv. 8–11).

During the months before they laid the Temple foundation, the people lived in the ruins (Neh. 1:3; 2:3). The few inhabitants undoubtedly repaired or rebuilt homes in which to live from among the rubble, but these verses reveal that the city itself was far from being restored.

**EZRA CHAPTER FOUR:** tells of a letter in which their adversaries wrote: “...the Jews... are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad CITY, and have set up the WALLS thereof, and joined the foundations” (vv. 11–16). The mention of the walls in verse 12 had to do with the walls of the Temple, not the city (context, cp. vs. 24 whereas vv. 13 and 16 are the city wall). Moreover, vv. 13 and 16 show by the qualifying word “if” that the walls and city were not complete at that time. As the decree issued by Cyrus had not included the restoration of these, this unauthorized attempt on the part of the people was that which their

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, op. cit., XI.2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.3.

<sup>3</sup> Sheshbazzar was the Chaldee name for the Persian title “Governor”. It was an appellative referring to Zerubbabel by title rather than by name.

enemies used against them. The attempt caused the work to halt.

It cannot be overemphasized that the complaint lodged against the Jews said nothing about the Temple (see vv. 12–13). This is because their enemies knew that its construction had been approved by Cyrus' decree. Obviously they also knew that the rebuilding of the city and its walls were not part of that edict; hence, they knew their complaint to the king would stand a good chance to bring about the results which they desired. Indeed, as Cyrus was often away on military campaigns, even during his reign Temple construction was thwarted (4:4–5) for direct appeal to him was not possible.

The enemies' letter accomplished its purpose. Fearing a rebellion and the loss of tribute, the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:6–24 sent back a commandment that the building of "this city" should cease (vs. 21). With this, discouragement and unbelief set in for we now read: "then ceased the work of the house of God ... unto the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia" (vs. 24). By beginning construction on the city and its walls, the Jews went beyond that which was granted by Cyrus' official decree and this action brought about the problem.

Yet even with the Ezra 4:21 commandment, had the people acted in faith this mandate should have been no deterrent to continuing the work on the Temple. Indeed, this order applied only to the building of the city, not the House of God. Furthermore, if their enemies attempted to apply this latter order to cause work on the Temple to stop, appeal could have been made at such time to the Decree of Cyrus. As Persian decrees could not be altered (Esther 1:19; Dan. 6:8), the Decree of Cyrus could not have been repealed by that of another. Nevertheless, when the second year of Darius came (520 BC), the people were stirred to action by God's two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah.

**EZRA CHAPTER FIVE:** "Then the prophets, Haggai ... and Zechariah ... prophesied unto the Jews" and the people again began working "to build the house of God" (vv. 1, 2). The Book of Haggai picks up the narrative at this point and fills in more details. "In the second year of Darius the king ... came the word of the Lord by Haggai ... saying, This people say, The time is

not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built".

The returnees had occupied the few houses rebuilt for their shelter (cp. Hag. 1:3 and 9) but had put off further work on the house of God. Again, the reconstruction of individual homes here and there within the boundary of old Jerusalem is not the same as the restoration of a city and its walls. Moreover the Book of Nehemiah says that in the 20th year of Artaxerxes the walls were down and the gates still in disrepair from having been burned (Neh. 1:3). During those days, Zechariah was instructed by the Lord to take certain men and "go into the house of Josiah" (Zech. 6:9–10). This again documents that some houses had been rebuilt.

Concerning this time frame, the Book of Zechariah adds: "In the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah" (Zech. 1:1). Zechariah encouraged the people to believe that God would enable them to complete the task which He had given them: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hand shall also finish it" (4:9).

Reference is made to the "wall" in the third verse, but a comparison of verses 2, 8, and 9 reveals that the context is that of the Temple walls. As already shown, the 12th verse of the fourth chapter confirms this (context, cp. vs. 4:24); hence, these are not allusions to the wall of the city. The city walls were not completed until the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Elul in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (September 7, 454 BC, Neh. 6:15), whereas the events in the fifth chapter of Ezra transpired 66 years earlier during the second year of Darius (520 BC).

**EZRA CHAPTER SIX:** When their right to rebuild was contested (Ezra 5:6–17), King Darius ordered a search of the "house of rolls {scrolls}" in the city of Babylon. Cyrus' edict was found 300 miles away at Achmetha (Ecbatana), his Median capital. Thus we see the providential hand of God at work in His leading Cyrus to have put the edict in writing!

As we read the Decree of Cyrus recorded in this chapter (vv. 3–5) and the following confirming decree of Darius Hystaspis (vv. 6–12), it is most significant to observe that there is not found a single word concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem or its walls! Over and over, it is the

building of the “house of God” and that alone that is before us (e.g., vv. 3, 5, 7, 8, 12). This substantiates our conclusion on chapter 5 that the walls referred to in verses 3, 8, and 9 were those of the Temple and not those of the city.

Thus, it must be seen that although Cyrus may have given permission for the rebuilding of Jerusalem (possibly in private to some of the Jewish leadership, but see “Conclusion”, page 165) as some surmise from Isa. 44:28 and 45:13, at no place in Scripture is it recorded that he so did in his official written decree. In point of fact, citations from this decree are given three times and no mention whatsoever is made in any of them concerning the building of the city or its walls.<sup>1</sup> Thus, his pleasure regarding the Holy City was, at best then, verbal only. It was not placed in writing.

On the basis of Cyrus’ former writ, Darius issued a decree in which he confirmed the words of his illustrious predecessor.

And the elders of the Jews builded ... and this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 6:14–15).

The Temple was completed on the 3rd of Adar, the last month of the sixth year of the reign of Darius (14 February 516 BC). Thus, the people had been back in the land for nearly 21 years (536–516 BC) before concluding a task which required but 4 years, 5 months and 10 days (Hag. 1:16; cp. Ezra 6:15). The Temple was then dedicated *before* the Passover which was held on the 14th day of the following month (Nisan, 6:16–22 and thus still in 516 BC).

**EZRA CHAPTER SEVEN:** “Now after these things, in the ... seventh year of Artaxerxes the king” (vv. 1, 7), Ezra was given a letter authorizing him to go to Jerusalem “and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counselors freely offered unto the God of Israel” (vs. 15). Ezra rejoiced because God had put it in the king’s heart “to beautify the house of the Lord” (vs. 27). This decree was not to build the house of the Lord, but merely to beautify it, the Temple itself having already been rebuilt in the sixth year of Darius. It said nothing of the city or its walls.

<sup>1</sup> Again, they are at Ezra 1:14, 6:3–5 and 2 Chronicles 36:22–23.

**EZRA CHAPTER EIGHT:** gives a list of those that went from Babylon with Ezra to Jerusalem, their prayer for God’s protection on the journey, and their subsequent safe arrival.

**EZRA CHAPTER NINE:** Ezra learns of many mixed marriages between the people of Israel, priests and Levites included, and the heathen Gentiles. Ezra takes the matter before the LORD in prayer, confessing these acts as sin and justifies God in His having disciplined the people. In the prayer, Ezra mentioned that the Lord had given them “a reviving” and had allowed them “to set up the house of our God” and had given them “a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem” (vs. 9).

Some attempt to use this reference to a “wall” as proof that the city and its surrounding wall had already been completed prior to Artaxerxes as a direct result of Cyrus’ decree. However such is of no force, for the *context* of the 9<sup>th</sup> verse is that God has given them a “wall of protection” by His providential oversight and the granting of favor to Israel with the reigning Persian overlord (“desolations” in vs. 9 refers to the 70 years of having no temple, 586–516, Dan. 9:17–18, cp. Dan. 9:1–2 and Jer. 25:9 and 11).

**EZRA CHAPTER TEN:** Finally, we are told that the people were called to Jerusalem from throughout Judea “and all the people sat in the street of the house of God” (vs. 9). Again, some insist that the mention of this street indicates that the 70 weeks prophecy which said “the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Daniel 9:25) must have formerly been fulfilled in the days of Cyrus. But by now it should be clear that the repair of this street had to do with the rebuilding of the Temple area. Thus this street is one that would have given access to that structure.

Moreover, the above citation from Daniel does not fit the given facts previously enumerated in the Book of Ezra as does the narrative given in the Book of Nehemiah. The building of the wall “in troublous times” was unmistakably fulfilled under the hand of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:17–6:15). These cited verses carefully record in great detail the struggle involved throughout this entire undertaking.

Thus according to Isaiah’s prophecy, Cyrus was to be the one that would speak the word which

would cause Jerusalem to be rebuilt – both the city and Temple. However, the scriptural history we have given reveals that the returning captives under Zerubbabel built only the Temple and merely homes enough to meet their immediate needs. Yet even though they did not fully restore the city, that which they did must be seen as sufficient to fulfill Isaiah as he made no mention of the walls. Moreover, it *was* on the basis of Cyrus’ decree that the later decrees were mandated; thus, it may rightly be held that Cyrus built “my city” and said to Jerusalem “Thou shalt be built”.

Now let us notice the order of events. The Temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6). It was after this – in the seventh year of Artaxerxes – that Ezra came to Jerusalem to beautify the house of God. Still later – in “the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king” (Neh. 2:1) – Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. He found only the Temple to have been rebuilt (Neh. 2:8, “the house”), and the commandment to rebuild the city given to *Nehemiah* by Artaxerxes was then put into effect (Neh. 2:5, 8, 13, and 17).

As the decree given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes is the only one which has to do with rebuilding the *city* and *walls* (“in troublous times”), it must be the same decree referred to by Gabriel as having to do with the *beginning* of the 70 weeks prophecy. Let us now examine the first three chapters of Nehemiah as we have done with the Book of Ezra.

**NEHEMIAH CHAPTER ONE:** Nehemiah’s brother (cp. Neh. 7:2) and certain men came from Judah to Shushan to see Nehemiah who was then serving as the king’s cupbearer. Nehemiah asked them about the remnant of the Jews that had been taken to Babylon and the city of Jerusalem. Their report was that the Jews were in “great affliction and reproach” and that “the wall of Jerusalem” was broken down and “the gates” burned with fire.

When Nehemiah heard these things, he “wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed” (vv. 1–4). This news was disheartening to Nehemiah because, although 82 years had passed (536 – 454 = 82), the rebuilding initiated by Cyrus had not been completed. Having returned with Zerubbabel and taken part in the project at its inception (Ezra 2:2, see discussion

pages 134–143 and the display on page 138), Nehemiah had hoped the enormous project was surely finished and that the returnees were dwelling in safety and dignity – prospering in the land. Such was not the case.

**NEHEMIAH CHAPTER TWO:** Nehemiah was so overcome by the report of the sorry state in which Jerusalem still lay; he could not hide his sorrow – not even when coming before the king. “Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This was sorrow of heart”. Nehemiah explained and asked permission to go unto Judah, to “the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I may build it” (vs. 5).

This is *not* referring to a second repairing of the walls and gates to repair damage due to a recent attack as some suppose. Were such the case, surely such an important event would have been clearly denoted. Moreover, would it not be strange indeed that no mention of this attack upon the Holy City was recorded and expounded elsewhere within the Holy Writ, Josephus, Philo, etc.?

The wording is unmistakable and clear. Due probably to lack of funds and despair (cp. 4:10), the city itself was – after nearly 82 years – still largely in a state of disrepair. This decree is no mere passport giving Nehemiah permission to simply go to Judah as some affirm. Permission was asked to build the city (vs. 5), gates, wall, and to rebuild the home that he would occupy (vs. 8). In verse 8, Nehemiah also requested:

... a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the GATES of the palace ... and for the **wall** of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. (emphasis FNJ’s)

**NEHEMIAH CHAPTER THREE:** gives a list of those who rebuilt and repaired the various portions of the wall. Several incidental references show that some of the houses of the city had already been built before Nehemiah came to work on the walls. For example, we read of “the house of Eliashib, the high priest”. Further, Benjamin and Hashup repaired the wall “over against their house” and Azariah “by his house”. There is mention of “the king’s high house”. The priests repaired “every one over against his house”. Zadok repaired “over against

his house”. Other verses in Nehemiah also show that the people had houses (4:14; 5:11, 13; 8:16). Some had even mortgaged their houses (Neh. 5:3–4).

However, it should not astonish us that the few returnees had built homes for themselves. Indeed, after 82 years we naturally expect this and should have been greatly surprised to learn otherwise. However, we must again emphasize that sporadically spaced houses here and there does not constitute a restored city.

**NEHEMIAH, THE REMAINDER:** Due to their enemies numerous threats, with the wall completed Nehemiah next made regulations concerning the opening and shutting of its gates and appointed: “watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house” (Neh. 7:3). The unprotected condition that had so long prevailed had left the city greatly under populated. This contributed extensively to the cities’ lying in a general state of ruin these many years. Nehemiah 7:4 affirms this: “Now the city was large and great; but **the people were few, and the houses were not built**”.

Numerous references have been cited as to the presence of houses in Jerusalem. Consequently, the fourth verse must mean that the people living in Jerusalem were few in comparison to the number that had formerly occupied the city and the number of homes still in disrepair was great in comparison to those that had been rebuilt due to lack of returnees, funds, and general discouragement. True, Haggai 1:4 and 9 indicates that some were even prospering and living in paneled homes, but this does not alter the overall condition. They had houses, some of which were splendid. Yet large undeveloped spaces existed in between where houses had not yet been rebuilt. So at these places, scattered within the city where there were houses, various men were appointed “everyone in his watch” and each one at “his house”.

Moreover, in a desperate attempt to sufficiently repopulate the city of Jerusalem, lots were cast among those of Judah and Benjamin whereupon a tenth were removed from the provinces to the capital (Neh. 11:1–2). Those who did so voluntarily were blessed by the people. A list of those new inhabitants followed.

**CONCLUSION:** Isaiah 44:24–28 is a protracted sentence consisting of a series of participial clauses that recite mighty acts of God from Creation down to Cyrus. Verse 26 clearly states that God himself will rebuild Jerusalem. Thus, the subject of “even saying to Jerusalem” in verse 28, which many attribute to Cyrus, may well refer instead to God.<sup>1</sup> The LXX and the Latin Vulgate both read this as meaning God, not Cyrus. Further, Cyrus did not directly build the city and its walls – Nehemiah did. If one still insists it is Cyrus who said to rebuild Jerusalem, we reply that it is not so stated in his decree as recorded at Ezra 6:3–5. Accordingly, Isaiah 45:13 refers to Messiah far better than to Cyrus. All this casts serious doubt and greatly diminishes the case for these verses favoring Cyrus’ decree over that of Artaxerxes.

Indeed, it must be seen that however long it may have taken the people to rebuild the city, this has *nothing* to do with the beginning of the 70 weeks prophecy. This prophecy was *not* to begin with the *completion* of the city but from the *going forth* of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem along with its wall! Nehemiah’s work was primarily with the wall and rebuilding the city. The entire work of repairing the walls (in spite of threats, hardships, and summer’s heat) was completed in 52 days (Neh. 6:15)! The Temple, the streets nearby, the homes of the indwelling remnant, etc., had already been built years before.

Once again, we see that the 70 weeks are to be counted from the 20th year of Artaxerxes when Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to repair the walls and the restore the city! The 69 “weeks” (69 sevens) or 483 years from this point do measure unto the “cutting off” of Messiah. The original 536 BC decree of Cyrus simply does not fit the context nor extend to the days of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> That is, “I say to Jerusalem”, Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes*, Heritage Edition, Isaiah vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), p. 142 (1851).

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65 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220

311	810	809	808	807	806	805	804	803	802	801	800	799	798	797	796	795	794	793	792	791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784	783	782	781	780	779	778	777	776	775	774	773	772	771	770	769	768	767	766	765	764	763	762	761	760	759	758	757	756	755	754	753
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SOLAR ECLIPSE IN EPONYM OF BUR-SAGALE,  
JUNE 15, 763 JULIAN CALENDAR  
= 623 GREGORIAN  
= ANOS 883

RAMMAN-NIRARI III (ADAD-NIRARI III)  
(TRADITIONAL SECULAR POSITIONING)

SHALMANESER III (IV) ASHUR-DAN III (III) AC

SEVEN ASSYRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS ARE MISSING c.45 EPONYM YRS HERE (NOTE JONAH 3:6-10)

27

15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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JEROBOAM II

ZACHARIAH?  
and/or  
Interregnum?

MENAHHEM

PEKAHIAH

2 KG 15:13  
SHALLUM  
(1 mo)

(6 mo)

2 KG 14:29  
2 KG 15:8-17

2 KG 15:27

38th YR 2 KG 15:8-18  
39th YR 2 KG 15:2,17  
50th YR 2 KG 15:23  
52nd YR 2 KG 15:27

2nd YR 2 KG 15:32  
17th

UZZIAH (AZARIAH)

PRO-REX  
? ? ? ?

AC	29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6
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4:17,15:1,2  
:25,26:1-4,23

2 CH 26:23  
2 KG 15:5

2 KG 15:32,33  
2 CH 26:21-23

15

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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2 KG 15

311	810	809	808	807	806	805	804	803	802	801	800	799	798	797	796	795	794	793	792	791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784	783	782	781	780	779	778	777	776	775	774	773	772	771	770	769	768	767	766	765	764	763	762	761	760	759	758	757	756	755	754	753
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BC





340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390

540 639 638 637 636 635 634 633 632 621 620 619 618 617 616 615 614 613 612 611 610 609 608 607 606 605 604 603 602 601 600 599 598 597 596 595 594 593 592 591 590 589 588 587 586 585 584 583 582

85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69

FALL OF NINEVAH 612 BC  
 FALL OF HARAN 610 BC  
 ASSYRIAN COUNTER ATTACK FAILS 609 BC  
 FALL OF CHARCHEMISH 605 BC

ASHUR-etli-ilani  
 SIN-SHUR-ISHKUN  
 ASHUR-UBALLIT

NABOPOLASSAR  
 NABUCHADNEZZAR

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

LUNAR ECLIPSE EN VR. OF NABOPOLASSAR'S REIGN 15 APRIL 621 BC-GREGORIAN

BABYLONIAN RECKONING (BOTTOM LINE)

JER 32:1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

EZK 1:1-2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

JER 25:1-3

"THE SERVITUDE"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

2 KG 22:1  
 2 CH 34:1

JOSTAH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

2 KG 23:29-34  
 JEHOAHAZ  
 3 mos

JEHOTAKIM

2 KG 23:36  
 2 CH 36:5

JEHOIACHIN (JECONIAH)  
 3 mos 10 days

2 CH 36:9,10  
 EZK 40:1

JEHOIACHIN (JECONIAH)  
 3 mos 10 days

2 KG 24:17-19  
 2 CH 36:11  
 JER 39:1,2

ZEDEKIAH

2 KG 25:1-4,8-10  
 JER 52:12

DAN 1:1

AC 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

2 KG 24:8  
 2 CH 36:9

2 KG 24:12  
 "THE YEAR OF THE CAPTIVITY"

SABBATICAL YEAR  
 JER 34:8-22

JERUSALEM BURNED

"THE YEARS OF 'THE CAPTIVITY'"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

540 639 638 637 636 635 634 633 632 621 620 619 618 617 616 615 614 613 612 611 610 609 608 607 606 605 604 603 602 601 600 599 598 597 596 595 594 593 592 591 590 589 588 587 586 585 584 583 582

83 582 581 580 579 578 577 576 575 574 573 572 571 570 569 568 567 566 565 564 563 562 561 560 559 558 557 556 555 554 553 552 551 550 549 548 547 546 545 544 543 542 541 540 539 538 537 536 535 534 533 532 531 530 529 528 527 526 525

BC

ADAD-GUPPI AGE 85 → 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104

ADAD-GUPPI DIES →

LABASHI-MARDUK  
3 MOS URUK KING LIST, OR  
9 MOS BEROSUS

**EVIL MERODACH**

**BELSHAZZAR**

23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	AC	AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	PRO-REX	9	10	11	12	13	14	15				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

NEBUCHADREZZAR'S 37TH YEAR FIRED AT 568/567 BC BY ASTRONOMICAL DIARY VAT 4956 (BERLIN MUSEUM) WHICH GIVES C.30 VERIFIED OBSERVATIONS OF THE MOON AND THE 5 THEN KNOWN PLANETS. SUCH A COMBINATION OF PLANETS IS ONLY REPORTED IN THE DIARY FOR SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE OR AFTER THIS DATE. THE TABLE TWICE STATES THAT THE OBSERVATIONS WERE MADE IN THE 37TH YEAR OF NEBUCHADREZZAR. A LUNAR ECLIPSE HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED.

LUNAR ECLIPSE 2ND YEAR OF WARDONIDUS, 20 SEPTEMBER, 554 BC GREGORIAN

**NERIGLISSAR**

**NABONIDUS**

CITY OF BABYLON FALLS  
6 OCT 539 BC-GREGORIAN, DAN 5

**DARIUS THE MEDE**

**CYRUS**

**CAMBYSES**

1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5
AC													

2 CH 36:21-23  
EZRA 1:1,2

24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
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DAN 1:1

"THE DESOLATIONS"

JER 25:9-11,29;10; DAN 9:1,2,17

70 YEARS OF NO TEMPLE

"THE INDIGNATION" - Epoch of the Boiling Caldron

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70			

BC

83 582 581 580 579 578 577 576 575 574 573 572 571 570 569 568 567 566 565 564 563 562 561 560 559 558 557 556 555 554 553 552 551 550 549 548 547 546 545 544 543 542 541 540 539 538 537 536 535 534 533 532 531 530 529 528 527 526 525

326 525 524 523 522 521 520 519 518 517 516 515 514 513 512 511 510 509 508 507 506 505 504 503 502 501 500 499 498 497 496 495 494 493 492 491 490 489 488 487 486 485 484 483 482 481 480 479 478 477 476 475 474 473 472 471 470 469 468

BC

BC

**BYSES**  
S7 EZRA 4:6

4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

7 MOS

LUNAR ECLIPSE 7th YR OF CAMBYSES' REIGN 323 BC-CAROLIAN

PSEUDO-SNERDIS (GAUMATA) 7 MOS ARTAXERXES' EZRA 4:7

**DARIUS I (HYSTASPIS)**

EZRA 6:7,14,15

LUNAR ECLIPSE 20th YR OF DARIUS' REIGN 302 BC-CAROLIAN

LUNAR ECLIPSE 31st YR OF DARIUS' REIGN 491 BC-CAROLIAN

**XERXES I**

AC

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

PRO-REX

ALTHOUGH THE GREEKS AND MUSLEMS DESTROYED NEARLY ALL PERSIAN RECORDS, THAT THE PERSIAN YEAR BEGAN ON OCTOBER 1, NEHERIAH WAS AT THE PERSIAN PALACE IN THE MONTH OF CHISLEV (KISLEV) - THE HEBREW 9TH MONTH, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER. HE IS REFERENCED IN THE PERSIAN MONARCHY AS BEING THE 21ST YEAR OF HIS REIGN. THEREFORE, HE IS REFERENCED BY FALL RECKONING BY NISAN FOLLOWING CHILEU OF THE 20TH YEAR WOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE 21ST YEAR OF HIS REIGN. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY THE PERSIAN MONARCHY RECORDS (NPH.1.1: CR. 23). THIS IS CONFIRMED BY SH. HORN AND L.W. WOOD, "THE FIFTH-CENTURY JEWISH CALENDAR AT ELEPHANTINE NEAR EASTERN STUDIES, 13 (JAN., 1954), PP. 4, 20. ELEPHANTINE IS AN ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE NILE OPPOSITE ASWAN). ON THE PAPYRI, THE REIGNS OF THE PERSIAN MONARCHS ARE REFERENCED BY FALL RECKONING. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY THE CHRONOLOGY OF SCRIPTURE, AND (2) NEARLY ALL HISTORY BOOKS AND REFERENCES THEM IN THIS MANNER.

DESOLATIONS END WITH COMPLETION OF 2ND TEMPLE IN THE 6TH YEAR OF DARIUS, EZRA 6:15; ZECH 7:5 (CP, VS 1)

THE EPOCH OF THE BOILING CALDRON (EZE 3:1-14) BEGINS THE 70 YRS OF GODS "INDIGNATION". THIS BEGAN WHEN ZEDEKIAH REBELLED. THE FINAL SIEGE BEGAN 1 YR TO THE DAY FROM THIS PROPHECY AND LASTED 418 MOS I.e.: FROM 10-10-9th YR OF ZEDEKIAH IER 52:4, 39:1 AND 2 KG 25:1

THE EPOCH ENDED ON THE 24th DAY 9th MO 7th YR DARIUS. HAG 2:10, 15; 18-20; 24th DAY 11th MO 2nd YR DARIUS; ZECH 1:12,12 "INDIGNATION" IS OVER.

61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70

54 65 66 67 68 69 70

326 525 524 523 522 521 520 519 518 517 516 515 514 513 512 511 510 509 508 507 506 505 504 503 502 501 500 499 498 497 496 495 494 493 492 491 490 489 488 487 486 485 484 483 482 481 480 479 478 477 476 475 474 473 472 471 470 469 468

169 468 467 466 465 464 463 462 461 460 459 458 457 456 455 454 453 452 451 450 449 448 447 446 445 444 443 442 441 440 439 438 437 436 435 434 433 432 431 430 429 428 427 426 425 424 423 422 421 420 419 418 417 416 415 414 413 412 411

BC

483 YEARS TO  
DEATH OF MESSIAH  
DAN 9:24-27

ARTAXERXES  
(LONGIMANUS)

XERXES II (45 DAYS)  
(SOGDIANUS, 6 MOS 15 DAYS)

DARIUS II (NOTHUS)

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

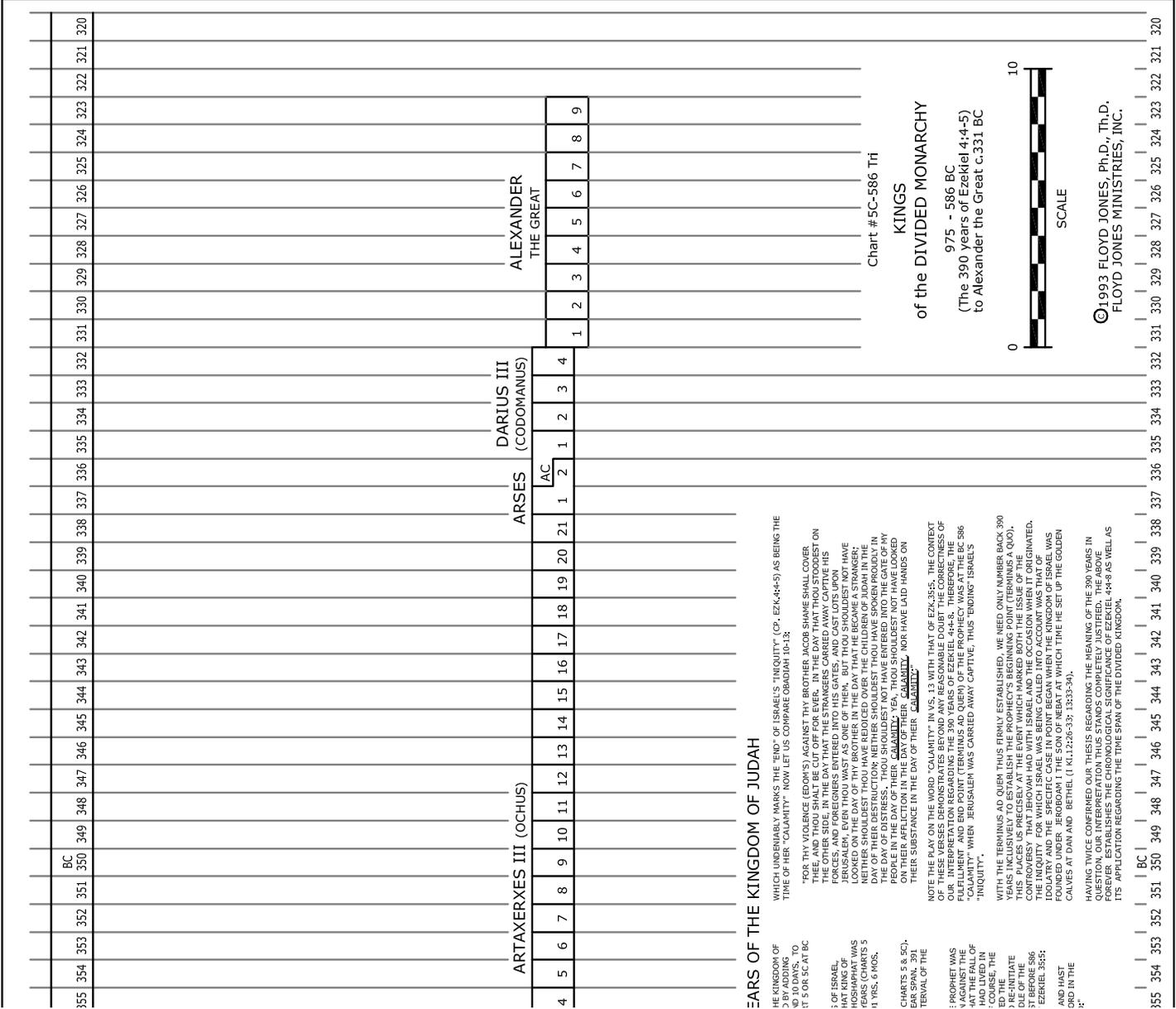
SOLE-REX

IN RECORDS, IT MAY BE PROVEN  
PERSIAN PALACE (GRUSHAN) =  
THE SAME YEAR OF THE  
TILL IN THE SAME 20TH YEAR OF  
ECONOMY BECAUSE THE MONTH OF  
THE 21ST YEAR IF THE PERSIANS  
GAVE THE SAME YEAR AS NEBUCHADREZAR  
G THE SAME CENTURY AS NEBUCHADREZAR  
AT ELEPHANTINE, JOURNAL OF  
IN ISLAND AT THE FIRST CATARACT  
THE PERSIANS WERE CALLED AS  
LED TO DISPLAIN THESE DATES AS  
5 DOES NOT AFFECT THE  
D REFERENCE MATERIALS REFER TO

169 468 467 466 465 464 463 462 461 460 459 458 457 456 455 454 453 452 451 450 449 448 447 446 445 444 443 442 441 440 439 438 437 436 435 434 433 432 431 430 429 428 427 426 425 424 423 422 421 420 419 418 417 416 415 414 413 412 411

BC





WHICH UNUSUALLY MARKS THE "END" OF ISRAEL'S "INQUITY" (CP, EZK:44-49) AS BEING THE TIME OF HER "CALAMITY" (NOW LET US COMPARE OBADIAH 10-13):

"FOR THY VIOLENCE (EDOM'S) AGAINST THY BROTHER, JACOB, SHAME SHALL COVER THEE: AND THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM, BUT THOU SHOULDST NOT HAVE BEEN AS SUCH. IN THE DAY THAT THE STRANGERS CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE HIS FORCES, AND FOREIGNERS ENTERED INTO HIS GATES, AND CAST LOTS UPON JERUSALEM, EVEN THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM, BUT THOU SHOULDST NOT HAVE BEEN AS SUCH. NEITHER SHOULDST THOU HAVE REJOICED OVER THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH IN THE DAY OF THEIR DESTRUCTION; NEITHER SHOULDST THOU HAVE SPOKEN PROUDLY IN THE DAY OF DISTRESS... THOU SHOULDST NOT HAVE ENTERED INTO THE GATE OF MY FORTRESS, NOR SHOULDST THOU HAVE SAID: 'I WILL BE A FORTRESS, AND I WILL NOT BE AFFLICTED IN THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY.' NOR HAVE LAID HANDS ON THE SUBSTANCE IN THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY."

NOTE THE PLAY ON THE WORD "CALAMITY" IN VS. 13 WITH THAT OF EZK:35:5. THE CONTEXT OF THESE VERSES DEMONSTRATES BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT THE CORRECTNESS OF OUR INTERPRETATION REGARDING THE 390 YEARS OF EZEKIEL 4:4-5. THEREFORE, THE "CALAMITY" WHEN JERUSALEM WAS CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE, THIS "ENDING" ISRAEL'S "INQUITY."

WITH THE TERMINUS AD QUER, THIS IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. WE NEED ONLY NUMBER BACK 390 YEARS INCLUSIVELY TO ESTABLISH THE PROPHECY'S BEGINNING POINT (TERMINUS A QUO). THIS PLACES US PRECISELY AT THE EVENT WHICH MARKED BOTH THE ISSUE OF THE CONTROVERSY THAT JERUSALEM HAD WITH ISRAEL AND THE OCCASION WHEN IT ORIGINATED. IDOLATRY AND THE SPECIFIC CASE IN POINT BEGAN WHEN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WAS FOUNDED UNDER JEROBOAM I, THE SON OF NEBAT AT WHICH TIME HE SET UP THE GOLDEN CALVES AT DAN AND BETHEL (I KI:12:26-33; 13:33-34).

HAVING TWICE CONFIRMED OUR THESIS REGARDING THE MEANING OF THE 390 YEARS IN QUESTION, OUR INTERPRETATION THIS STANDS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED. THE ABOVE FURTHER ESTABLISHES THE CHRONOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EZEKIEL 4:4-5 AS WELL AS ITS APPLICATION REGARDING THE TIME SPAN OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM.

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