

~PERSIA, PERSIANS (1396)

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• A land and a people regularly mentioned in association with the Medes, both in the Bible and in secular history. The Medes and Persians evidently were related peoples of the ancient Aryan, Indo-Iranian, tribes, and this would make the Persians descendants of **Japheth**, perhaps through **Madai**, the common ancestor of the Medes.

• The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and **Madai** and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. (**Genesis 10:2**)

• In an inscription, Darius the Great calls himself a **Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, of Aryan seed**. [History of the Persian Empire, by A. Olmstead, 1948, p. 231]

• Assyrian inscriptions relating to the time of Shalmaneser III, evidently a contemporary of Jehu of Israel, mention an invasion of Media and the receiving of tribute from kings of **Parsua**, a region apparently situated to the West of Lake Urmia and bordering on Assyria.

• Many scholars consider **Parsua** to be the name then applied to the land of the **Persians**, though others would associate it with the Parthians.

• At any rate, in later inscriptions the Persians are placed considerably more to the South, being settled in **Parsa** to the Southeast of Elam in what is now the province of Fars in modern Iran. Anshan, a district or city bordering Elam and possibly once within its domain, was also occupied by the **Persians**.

• Thus, in their earlier history the **Persians** seem to have held only the southwestern portion of the extensive Iranian plateau, their

boundaries being Elam and Media on the Northwest, Parthia on the North, Carmania on the East, and the Persian Gulf on the South and Southwest.

- With the exception of the hot, humid coastlands of the **Persian** Gulf, the land mainly consisted of the southern portion of the rugged Zagros Mountain range, broken by long and quite fertile valleys having well-wooded slopes.
- The climate in the valleys is temperate, but on the higher plateau regions the arid, windswept lands experience severe cold in the winter months.
- Like the Medes, the **Persians** appear to have done much stock raising, along with necessary agriculture, and Persian King Darius the Great proudly described his native land as **beautiful and rich in horses and men**. [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959, Vol. 17, p. 603]
- Originally leading a somewhat austere, often nomadic life, the **Persians** manifested a great love for luxury and luxurious surroundings during the period of the empire.
- In the third year of his reigning he held a banquet for all his princes and his servants, the military force of **Persia** and Media, the nobles and the princes of the jurisdictional districts before himself. (**Esther 1:3**)
- When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor and the beauty of his greatness for many days, a hundred and eighty days. (**Esther 1:4**)
- And when these days had come to the full, the king held a banquet for seven days for all the people that were found in Shushan the castle, for the great as well as the small, in the courtyard of the garden of the king's palace. (**Esther 1:5**)
- There were linen, fine cotton and blue held fast in ropes of fine fabric, and wool dyed reddish purple in silver rings and pillars of marble, couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of porphyry and marble and pearl and black marble. (**Esther 1:6**)
- And there was a passing of wine to drink in gold vessels, and the vessels were different from one another, and the royal wine was in great quantity, according to the means of the king. (**Esther**

1:7)

- Also regarding the clothing given to Mordecai, Sculptures at Persepolis represent the **Persians** as dressing with flowing, ankle-length robes, girded at the waist, and wearing low-laced shoes.
- By contrast, the Medes are depicted as wearing a tight, long-sleeved coat ending near the knee. Both **Persians** and Medes apparently made use of trousers, **Persian** soldiers are shown wearing trousers and sleeved tunics over iron-scaled armor. They were expert horsemen, and the cavalry played an important role in their war strategy.
- The **Persian** language is classed within the Indo-European family and gives evidence of being related to the Indian Sanskrit. At some time in their history the **Persians** began to make use of the cuneiform style of writing, with, however, a greatly reduced number of signs when compared with the hundreds of signs used in Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform writing.
- Whereas during the rule of the **Persian** Empire some inscriptions are found in **Old Persian** with translations in Akkadian and in a language generally denominated Elamite or Susian, official documents used in the administration of the imperial territories were recorded primarily in Aramaic as an international language.
- Also, in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his colleagues wrote to Artaxerxes the king of **Persia**, and the writing of the letter was written in Aramaic characters and translated into the Aramaic language. (**Ezra 4:7**)

.. Development Of The Medo-Persian Empire

- Like the Medes, the **Persians** seem to have been ruled by several noble families. One of these families produced the Achaemenian dynasty of kings, the royal line from which came the founder of the **Persian** Empire, Cyrus the Great.
- **Cyrus, who, according to Herodotus and Xenophon, was born of a Persian father and a Median mother, united the Persians under his leadership. [Herodotus, I, 107,108][Cyropaedia, I, ii, 1]**

- Till then the Medes had been dominant over the Persians, but Cyrus gained a swift victory over Median King Astyages and captured his capital city of Ecbatana, **550 B.C.E.**
- When I raised my eyes, then I saw, and, look! A ram standing before the watercourse, and it had two horns. And the two horns were tall, but the one was taller than the other, and the taller was the one that came up afterward. (**Daniel 8:3**)
- The ram that you saw possessing the two horns stands for the kings of Media and **Persia**. (**Daniel 8:20**)
- The Median Empire thus came under the control of the **Persians**.
- Although the Medes continued subservient to the **Persians** during the remainder of the Achaemenian dynasty, there can be no doubt as to the dual nature of the empire that resulted.
- Thus, the book **History of the Persian Empire (p. 37)** says: **The close relationship between Persians and Medes was never forgotten. Plundered Ecbatana remained a favorite royal residence.**
- Medes were honored equally with Persians, they were employed in high office and were chosen to lead Persian armies. Foreigners spoke regularly of the Medes and Persians, when they used a single term, it was the Mede.
- Under Cyrus, the **Medo-Persian** Empire expanded farther West, reaching to the Aegean Sea as a result of the **Persian** victory over King Croesus of Lydia and the subjugation of certain Greek coastal cities. His major conquest, however, came in **539 B.C.E.** when Cyrus, at the head of a combined force of Medes, **Persians**, and Elamites, took mighty Babylon, in fulfillment of the Biblical prophecies.
- There is a hard vision that has been told to me; The treacherous dealer is dealing treacherously, and the despoiler is despoiling. Go up, O Elam! Lay siege, O Media! All sighing due to her I have caused to cease. (**Isaiah 21:2**)
- And here, now, there is coming a war chariot of men, with a span of steeds! And he began to speak up and say; She has fallen! Babylon has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he has broken to the earth! (**Isaiah 21:9**)

- The One making the word of his servant come true, and the One that carries out completely the counsel of his own messengers, the One saying of Jerusalem; She will be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, They will be rebuilt, and her desolated places I shall raise up. (**Isaiah 44:26**)
- Forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating calamity, I, Yehowah, am doing all these things. (**Isaiah 45:7**)
- **Peres**, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the **Persians**. (**Daniel 5:28**)
- With Babylon's fall came the end of a long period of Semitic supremacy, now superseded by the first dominant world power of Aryan, or Japhetic descent.
- It also brought the land of Judah, as well as Syria and Phoenicia, within the Medo-Persian domain. By Cyrus decree, in **537 B.C.E.** the exiled Jews were allowed to return to their homeland, which had lain desolate for exactly 70 years.
- Furthermore, he carried off those remaining from the sword captive to Babylon, and they came to be servants to him and his sons until the royalty of **Persia** began to reign. (**2 Chronicles 36:20**)
- To fulfill Yehowah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had paid off its Sabbaths. All the days of lying desolated it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. (**2 Chronicles 36:21**)
- And in the first year of Cyrus the king of **Persia**, that Yehowah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Yehowah roused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia, so that he caused a cry to pass through all his kingdom, and also in writing, saying; (**2 Chronicles 36:22**)
- This is what Cyrus the king of **Persia** has said; All the kingdoms of the earth Yehowah the God of the heavens has given me, and he himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, Yehowah his God be with him. So let him go up. (**2 Chronicles 36:23**)

See Also CYRUS

· Persian Capitols

- In keeping with the dual nature of the empire, a Mede named Darius became the ruler of the defeated Chaldean kingdom, though likely not independent from Cyrus suzerainty.
- And Darius the Mede himself received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. ([Daniel 5:31](#))
- In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans. ([Daniel 9:1](#))
- Babylon continued as a royal city of the **Medo-Persian** Empire, as well as a religious and commercial center. However, the torrid summers there generally seem to have been more than the Persian emperors wanted to endure, so Babylon seldom served as more than a winter location for them.
- There is archaeological evidence that, following the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus soon returned to Ecbatana, or modern Hamadan, situated over 1,900 meters (6,200 feet) above sea level at the foot of Mount Alwand, where winters of heavy snow and bitter cold are balanced by delightful summers.
- It was at Ecbatana that Cyrus memorandum concerning the reconstruction of Jerusalem's temple was found several years after it had been issued.
- And at Ecbatana, in the fortified place that was in the jurisdictional district of Media, there was found a scroll, and the memorandum to this effect was written within it. ([Ezra 6:2](#))
- In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king put an order through concerning the house of God in Jerusalem. Let the house be rebuilt as the place where they are to offer sacrifices, and its foundations are to be fixed, its height being sixty cubits, its width sixty cubits. ([Ezra 6:3](#))
- With three layers of stones rolled into place and one layer of timbers, and let the expense be given from the king's house. ([Ezra 6:4](#))

- And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon be returned, that they may reach the temple that is in Jerusalem at its place and be deposited in the house of God. ([Ezra 6:5](#))
- The earlier **Persian** capital was at Pasargadae, about 650 kilometers (400 miles) to the Southeast of Ecbatana, but at about the same altitude. Near Pasargadae, **Persian** emperors Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes Longimanus later built the royal city of Persepolis, equipping it with a large network of underground tunnels, evidently to supply fresh water.
- Another capital was Susa, or Shushan, located near the Choaspes, or Karkheh River in ancient Elam, occupying a strategic central location between Babylon, Ecbatana, and Persepolis.
- Here Darius the Great built a magnificent palace that served generally as a winter residence, for, as at Babylon, the summer heat at Susa was extreme. However, as time progressed Susa became more and more the real administrative center of the empire.

See Also SHUSHAN
See Also DARIUS 1

•• Religion And Law

- The **Persian** rulers, while as capable of cruelty as the Semitic kings of Assyria and Babylonia, initially at least seem to have endeavored to manifest a degree of fairness and legality in their dealings with the conquered peoples.
- Their religion apparently contained some concept of ethics. Following their chief god Ahura Mazda, a principal deity was Mithra, who became known not only as a god of war but also as the god of contracts, the one whose eyes and ears were ever alert to spy out any violator of an agreement.
- Greek historian **Herodotus** [[I, 136,138](#)] wrote of the **Persians**; They educate their boys from five to twenty years old, and teach them three things only, riding and archery and truth-telling. They hold lying to be foulest of all.

- While the history of the **Persian** rulers shows them to be not above duplicity and intrigue, yet a basic adherence to some tribal creed of keeping ones word may be reflected in their insistence on the **inviolability of the Law of the Medes and the Persians**.
- Now, O king, may you establish the statute and sign the writing, in order for it not to be changed, according to the Law of the Medes and the **Persians**, which is not annulled. (**Daniel 6:8**)
- Finally these able-bodied men themselves entered as a throng to the king, and they were saying to the king; Take note, O king, that the Law belonging to the Medes and the **Persians** is that any interdict or statute that the king himself establishes is not to be changed. (**Daniel 6:15**)
- If to the king it does seem good, let a royal word go out from his person, and let it be written among the laws of Persia and Media, that it may not pass away, that Vashti may not come in before King Ahasuerus, and her royal dignity let the king give to a companion of hers, a woman better than she is. (**Esther 1:19**)
- And you yourselves write in behalf of the Jews according to what is good in your own eyes in the kings name and seal it with the kings signet ring, for a writing that is written in the king's name and sealed with the kings signet **ring it is not possible to undo**. (**Esther 8:8**)
- Thus, when Cyrus decree was found some 18 years after its date of issuance, King Darius recognized the legality of the Jews position as regards the building of the temple and gave orders that full cooperation be extended to them.
- It was then that Darius the king put an order through, and they made an investigation in the house of the records of the treasures deposited there in Babylon. (**Ezra 6:1**)
- And at Ecbatana, in the fortified place that was in the jurisdictional district of Media, there was found a scroll, and the memorandum to this effect was written within it: (**Ezra 6:2**)
- In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king put an order through concerning the house of God in Jerusalem. Let the house be rebuilt as the place where they are to offer sacrifices, and its foundations are to be fixed, its height being sixty cubits,

its width sixty cubits. ([Ezra 6:3](#))

- With three layers of stones rolled into place and one layer of timbers, and let the expense be given from the king's house. ([Ezra 6:4](#))
- And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon be returned, that they may reach the temple that is in Jerusalem at its place and be deposited in the house of God. ([Ezra 6:5](#))
- Now Tattenai the governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues, the lesser governor's that are beyond the River, keep your distance from there. ([Ezra 6:6](#))
- Let the work on that house of God alone. The governor of the Jews and the older men of the Jews will rebuild that house of God upon its place. ([Ezra 6:7](#))
- And by me an order has been put through as to what you will do with these older men of the Jews, for rebuilding that house of God, and from the royal treasury of the tax beyond the River the expense will promptly be given to these able-bodied men without cessation. ([Ezra 6:8](#))
- And what is needed, young bulls as well as rams and lambs for the burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine and oil, just as the priests that are in Jerusalem say; Let there be given them continually day by day without fail. ([Ezra 6:9](#))
- That they may continually be presenting soothing offerings to the God of the heavens and praying for the life of the king and his sons. ([Ezra 6:10](#))
- And by me an order has been put through that, as for anybody that violates this decree, a timber will be pulled out of his house and he will be impaled upon it, and his house will be turned into a public privy on this account. ([Ezra 6:11](#))
- And may the God who has caused his name to reside there overthrow any king and people that thrusts his hand out to commit a violation and destroy that house of God, which is in Jerusalem. I, Darius, do put through an order. Let it be done

promptly. ([Ezra 6:12](#))

See Also GODS AND GODDESSES

- **Considerable administrative ability is evidenced in the [Persian](#) imperial organization. In addition to the king's own privy council, or advisory board, composed of seven princes of [Persia](#) and Media.**
- **And those closest to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, seven princes of [Persia](#) and Media, having access to the king, and who were sitting first in the kingdom. ([Esther 1:14](#))**
- **Inasmuch as from before the king and his seven counselors an order was sent to investigate concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the Law of your God that is in your hand. ([Ezra 7:14](#))**
- **There were satraps appointed over major regions or countries, such as Media, Elam, Parthia, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, Ionia, and, as the empire expanded, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya.**
- **These satraps were granted a measure of autonomy in the government of the satrapy, including the administration of judicial and financial affairs within their territory.**
- **Within the satrapy there appear to have been subordinate governor's of jurisdictional districts, numbering 127 in King Ahasuerus' day, and within the jurisdictional districts there were princes of the particular peoples composing the districts' population.**
- **Then we gave the laws of the king to the satraps of the king and the governor's beyond the River, and they assisted the people and the house of the true God. ([Ezra 8:36](#))**
- **The king's secretaries were then called in the first month on the thirteenth day of it, and writing went on according to all that Haman commanded the king's satraps and the governor's who were over the different jurisdictional districts, and the princes of the different peoples, of each jurisdictional district, in its own style of writing, and each people in its own tongue, in the name of King Ahasuerus it was written and it was sealed with the king's signet ring. ([Esther 3:12](#))**

- Accordingly the secretaries of the king were called at that time in the third month, that is, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day of it, and writing went on according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews and to the satraps and the governor's and the princes of the jurisdictional districts that were from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts, to each jurisdictional district in its own style of writing and to each people in its own tongue, and to the Jews in their own style of writing and in their own tongue. ([Esther 8:9](#))
- Likely to overcome the disadvantage of the imperial capitals being somewhat in a corner of the far-flung domain, a speedy system of communication was developed by means of a royal mail service employing couriers riding post-horses, thereby connecting the throne with all the jurisdictional districts.
- And he proceeded to write in the name of King Ahasuerus and do the sealing with the king's signet ring and send written documents by the hand of the couriers on horses, riding post horses used in the royal service, sons of speedy mares. ([Esther 8:10](#))
- The couriers themselves, riding post horses used in the royal service, went forth, being urged forward and being moved with speed by the king's word, and the Law itself was given out in Shushan the castle. ([Esther 8:14](#))
- Royal highways were maintained, one ran from Shushan all the way to Sardis in Asia Minor.

See Also SATRAP

· From Cyrus Death To Darius Death

- The reign of Cyrus the Great ended in **530 B.C.E.** when he died while on a warring campaign. His son Cambyses succeeded him to the throne and was successful in conquering Egypt.
- Though not referred to by the name Cambyses in the Bible, he is evidently the Ahasuerus to whom the opposers of the temple work sent false accusations against the Jews, as stated at;
- And in the reign of Ahasuerus, at the start of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and

Jerusalem. (**Ezra 4:6**)

- The circumstances involving the end of Cambyses rule are confused. One account, set forth by Darius the Great in his Behistun Inscription, and recounted by **Herodotus** and others with certain variations, is that Cambyses had his brother Bardiya, called Smerdis by **Herodotus**, secretly put to death.
- Then, during Cambyses absence in Egypt, a Magian named Gaumata, also called Smerdis by **Herodotus**, posing as Bardiya, or Smerdis, usurped the throne and was able to gain recognition as king.
- While returning from Egypt, Cambyses died, and thus the usurper became secure on the throne. [**Herodotus, III, 61-67**]. The other version, favored by some historians, is that Bardiya had not been killed and that he, not some impostor, usurped the throne during Cambyses absence.
- Whatever the case, the reign of Cambyses ended in **522 B.C.E.**, and the rule that followed lasted seven months, ending also in **522 B.C.E.** with the assassination of the usurper, either Bardiya or Gaumata the pseudo Smerdis.
- Yet during this brief rule apparently a second charge against the Jews was directed to the Persian throne, the king then being designated in the Bible as Artaxerxes, perhaps a throne name or title, and this time the accusations were successful in producing a royal ban against further construction on the temple.
- Also, in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his colleagues wrote to Artaxerxes the king of **Persia**, and the writing of the letter was written in Aramaic characters and translated into the Aramaic language. (**Ezra 4:7**)
- Rehum the chief government official and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king, as follows. (**Ezra 4:8**)
- Then Rehum the chief government official and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their colleagues, the judges and the lesser governor's across the River, the secretaries, the people of Erech, the Babylonians, the inhabitants of Susa, that is, the Elamites. (**Ezra 4:9**)
- And the rest of the nations whom the great and honorable

Asenappar took into exile and settled in the cities of Samaria, and the rest beyond the River, and now. (Ezra 4:10)

- **This is a copy of the letter that they sent concerning it. To Artaxerxes the king your servants, the men beyond the River. And now. (Ezra 4:11)**
- **Let it become known to the king that the Jews who came up here from you to us have come to Jerusalem. They are building the rebellious and bad city, and they proceed to finish the walls and to repair the foundations. (Ezra 4:12)**
- **Now let it become known to the king that, if this city should be rebuilt and its walls be finished, neither tax nor tribute nor toll will they give, and it will cause loss to the treasuries of the kings. (Ezra 4:13)**
- **Now inasmuch as we do eat the salt of the palace, and it is not proper for us to see the denuding of the king, on this account we have sent and made it known to the king. (Ezra 4:14)**
- **That there may be an investigation of the book of records of your ancestors. Then you will find in the book of records and learn that that city is a city rebellious and causing loss to kings and jurisdictional districts, and within it there were movers of revolt from the days of old. For this reason that city has been laid waste. (Ezra 4:15)**
- **We are making known to the king that, if that city should be rebuilt and its walls be finished, you also will certainly have no share beyond the River. (Ezra 4:16)**
- **The king sent word to Rehum the chief government official and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their colleagues who were dwelling in Samaria and the rest beyond the River. Greetings! And now (Ezra 4:17)**
- **The official document that you have sent us has been distinctly read before me. (Ezra 4:18)**
- **So an order has been put through by me, and they have investigated and found that that city has from the days of old been one rising up against kings and one in which rebellion and revolt have been carried on. (Ezra 4:19)**

- **And there proved to be strong kings over Jerusalem and governing all beyond the River, and tax, tribute and toll were being given to them. (Ezra 4:20)**
- **Now put an order through for these able-bodied men to stop, that that city may not be rebuilt until the order is put through by me. (Ezra 4:21)**
- **So be careful that there be no negligence about acting in this regard, that the harm may not increase to the injury of kings. (Ezra 4:22)**
- **Now after the copy of the official document of Artaxerxes the king had been read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their colleagues, they went in a hurry to Jerusalem to the Jews and stopped them by force of arms. (Ezra 4:23)**
- **The temple work then lay idle until the second year of the reign of Darius the king of Persia.**
- **It was then that the work on the house of God, which was in Jerusalem, stopped, and it continued stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius the king of Persia. (Ezra 4:24)**
- **Darius I, called Darius Hystaspis or Darius the Great, evidently engineered or instigated the slaying of the one occupying the Persian throne and gained the throne for himself. During his rule the temple work at Jerusalem was renewed with royal approval, and the temple was completed during his sixth year of rule early in 515 B.C.E.**
- **It was then that Darius the king put an order through, and they made an investigation in the house of the records of the treasures deposited there in Babylon. (Ezra 6:1)**
- **And at Ecbatana, in the fortified place that was in the jurisdictional district of Media, there was found a scroll, and the memorandum to this effect was written within it. (Ezra 6:2)**
- **In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king put an order through concerning the house of God in Jerusalem. Let the house be rebuilt as the place where they are to offer sacrifices, and its foundations are to be fixed, its height being sixty cubits, its width sixty cubits. (Ezra 6:3)**

- **With three layers of stones rolled into place and one layer of timbers, and let the expense be given from the king's house. (Ezra 6:4)**
- **And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon be returned, that they may reach the temple that is in Jerusalem at its place and be deposited in the house of God. (Ezra 6:5)**
- **Now Tattenai the governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues, the lesser governor's that are beyond the River, keep your distance from there. (Ezra 6:6)**
- **Let the work on that house of God alone. The governor of the Jews and the older men of the Jews will rebuild that house of God upon its place. (Ezra 6:7)**
- **And by me an order has been put through as to what you will do with these older men of the Jews, for rebuilding that house of God, and from the royal treasury of the tax beyond the River the expense will promptly be given to these able-bodied men without cessation. (Ezra 6:8)**
- **And what is needed, young bulls as well as rams and lambs for the burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine and oil, just as the priests that are in Jerusalem say; Let there be given them continually day by day without fail. (Ezra 6:9)**
- **That they may continually be presenting soothing offerings to the God of the heavens and praying for the life of the king and his sons. (Ezra 6:10)**
- **And by me an order has been put through that, as for anybody that violates this decree, a timber will be pulled out of his house and he will be impaled upon it, and his house will be turned into a public privy on this account. (Ezra 6:11)**
- **And may the God who has caused his name to reside there overthrow any king and people that thrusts his hand out to commit a violation and destroy that house of God, which is in Jerusalem. I, Darius, do put through an order. Let it be done promptly. (Ezra 6:12)**

- Then Tattenai the governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues, just as Darius the king had sent word, so they did promptly. (**Ezra 6:13**)
- And the older men of the Jews were building and making progress under the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the grandson of Iddo, and they built and finished it due to the order of the God of Israel and due to the order of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes the king of Persia. (**Ezra 6:14**)
- And they completed this house by the third day of the lunar month Adar, that is, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. (**Ezra 6:15**)
- **Darius reign was one of imperial expansion. He extended Persian dominion as far East as India and as far West as Thrace and Macedonia.**
- **At least by this time the Persian rulers had fulfilled the prophetic symbolisms of;**
- **And, see there! Another beast, a second one, it being like a bear. And on one side it was raised up, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth, and this is what they were saying to it, Get up, eat much flesh. (**Daniel 7:5**)**
- **And, see there! Another beast, a second one, it being like a bear. And on one side it was raised up, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth, and this is what they were saying to it, Get up, eat much flesh. (**Daniel 7:5**)**
- **Where, under the symbols of a bear and also a ram, the Medo-Persian Empire is represented as seizing territories in three principal directions, to the North, the West, and the South. In a campaign against Greece, however, Darius forces suffered defeat at Marathon in 490 B.C.E. Darius died in 486 B.C.E.**

See Also DARIUS 2

.. The Reigns Of Xerxes And Of Artaxerxes

- **Xerxes, Darius son, is evidently the king called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. His actions also fit the description of the fourth Persian king, who would rouse up everything against the kingdom of Greece.**

- And now what is truth I shall tell to you. Look! There will yet be three kings standing up for **Persia**, and the fourth one will amass greater riches than all others. And as soon as he has become strong in his riches, he will rouse up everything against the kingdom of Greece. (**Daniel 11:2**)
- Endeavoring to retaliate for the **Persian** defeat at Marathon, Xerxes launched massive forces against the Greek mainland in **480 B.C.E.**
- Following a costly victory at Thermopylae and the destruction of Athens, his forces met defeat at Salamis and later at Plataea, causing Xerxes to return to Persia.
- Xerxes reign was marked by certain administrative reforms and the completion of much of the construction work his father had initiated at Persepolis.
- And King Ahasuerus proceeded to lay forced labor upon the land and the isles of the sea. (**Esther 10:1**)
- As for all his energetic work and his mightiness and the exact statement of Mordecai's greatness with which the king magnified him, are they not written in the Book of the affairs of the times of the kings of Media and **Persia**? (**Esther 10:2**)
- The Greek stories of the end of Xerxes reign revolve around marital difficulties, disorders in the harem, and a supposed dominance of Xerxes by certain of his courtiers.
- These accounts may reflect, though in a very confused and twisted way, some of the basic facts of the book of Esther, including the deposing of Queen Vashti and her replacement by Esther, as well as the ascension of Mordecai to a position of great authority in the realm.
- And the king came to love Esther more than all the other women, so that she gained more favor and loving-kindness before him than all the other virgins. And he proceeded to put the royal headdress upon her head and make her queen instead of Vashti. (**Esther 2:17**)
- For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus and was great among the Jews and approved by the multitude of his

brothers, working for the good of his people and speaking peace to all their offspring. ([Esther 10:3](#))

- According to secular accounts, Xerxes was assassinated by one of his courtiers.
- Artaxerxes Longimanus, Xerxes successor, is notable for his authorization of Ezra's return to Jerusalem with a large contribution for the support of the temple there. This occurred in Artaxerxes seventh year [468 B.C.E.](#)
- And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of [Persia](#), Ezra the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah. ([Ezra 7:1](#))
- The son of Shallum the son of Zadok the son of Ahitub. ([Ezra 7:2](#))
- The son of Amariah the son of Azariah the son of Meraioth. ([Ezra 7:3](#))
- The son of Zerahiah the son of Uzzi the son of Bukki. ([Ezra 7:4](#))
- The son of Abishua the son of Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the chief priest. ([Ezra 7:5](#))
- The said Ezra himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. ([Ezra 7:6](#))
- Consequently some of the sons of Israel and of the priests and the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers and the Nethinim went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. ([Ezra 7:7](#))
- At length he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, that is, in the seventh year of the king. ([Ezra 7:8](#))
- For on the first day of the first month he himself appointed the going up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. ([Ezra 7:9](#))
- For Ezra himself had prepared his heart to consult the Law of

Yehowah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice. (Ezra 7:10)

- **And this is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest the copyist, a copyist of the words of the commandments of Yehowah and of his regulations toward Israel. (Ezra 7:11)**
- **Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the copyist of the Law of the God of the heavens. Peace be perfected. And now (Ezra 7:12)**
- **By me an order has been put through that everyone in my realm of the people of Israel and their priests and Levites that is willing to go to Jerusalem with you should go. (Ezra 7:13)**
- **Inasmuch as from before the king and his seven counselors an order was sent to investigate concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the Law of your God that is in your hand. (Ezra 7:14)**
- **And to bring the silver and the gold that the king and his counselors have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, whose residence is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:15)**
- **With all the silver and the gold that you find in all the jurisdictional district of Babylon along with the gift of the people and the priests who are voluntarily giving to the house of their God, which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:16)**
- **Accordingly you will promptly buy with this money bulls, rams, lambs and their grain offerings and their drink offerings and you will present them upon the altar of the house of your God, which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:17)**
- **And whatever it seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, according to the will of your God, you men will do. (Ezra 7:18)**
- **And the vessels that are being given to you for the service of the house of your God deliver in full before God at Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:19)**
- **And the rest of the necessities of the house of your God that it devolves upon you to give, you will give out of the king's house of treasures. (Ezra 7:20)**

- **And by me myself, Artaxerxes the king, an order has been put through to all the treasurers that are beyond the River, that everything that Ezra the priest, the copyist of the Law of the God of the heavens, requests of you men it will be done promptly. (Ezra 7:21)**
- **Even to a hundred talents of silver and a hundred cor measures of wheat and a hundred bath measures of wine and a hundred bath measures of oil, and salt without limit. (Ezra 7:22)**
- **Let all that is by the order of the God of the heavens be done with zeal for the house of the God of the heavens, that there may occur no wrath against the kings realm and his sons. (Ezra 7:23)**
- **And to you men it is being made known that, as respects any of the priests and the Levites, the musicians, the doorkeepers, the Nethinim, and the workers of this house of God, no tax, tribute or toll is allowed to be imposed upon them. (Ezra 7:24)**
- **And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand appoint magistrates and judges that they may continually judge all the people that are beyond the River, even all those knowing the laws of your God, and anyone that has not known them you men will instruct. (Ezra 7:25)**
- **And as for everyone that does not become a doer of the Law of your God and the Law of the king, let judgment be promptly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment, or for money fine or for imprisonment. (Ezra 7:26)**
- **I now separated from the chiefs of the priests twelve, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten of their brothers. (Ezra 8:24)**
- **And I proceeded to weigh out to them the silver and the gold and the utensils, the contribution to the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his princes and all the Israelites who were to be found had contributed. (Ezra 8:25)**
- **Thus I weighed out into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver and a hundred silver utensils worth two talents, and gold a hundred talents. (Ezra 8:26)**

- **And twenty small gold bowls worth a thousand darics and two utensils of good copper, gleaming red, as desirable as gold. (Ezra 8:27)**
- **Then I said to them; You are something holy to Yehowah, and the utensils are something holy, and the silver and the gold are a voluntary offering to Yehowah the God of your forefathers. (Ezra 8:28)**
- **Keep awake and be on guard until you weigh them out before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites and the princes of the fathers of Israel in Jerusalem, in the dining halls of the house of Yehowah. (Ezra 8:29)**
- **And the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold and the utensils, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God. (Ezra 8:30)**
- **Finally we pulled away from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem, and the very hand of our God proved to be over us, so that he delivered us out of the palm of the enemy and the ambush by the way. (Ezra 8:31)**
- **So we came to Jerusalem and dwelt there three days. (Ezra 8:32)**
- **And on the fourth day we proceeded to weigh out the silver and the gold and the utensils in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Urijah the priest and with him Eleazar the son of Phinehas and with them Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui the Levites. (Ezra 8:33)**
- **By number and by weight for everything, after which all the weight was written down at that time. (Ezra 8:34)**
- **Those coming out of the captivity, the former exiles, themselves presented burnt sacrifices to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs, twelve he-goats as a sin offering, everything as a burnt offering to Yehowah. (Ezra 8:35)**
- **Then we gave the laws of the king to the satraps of the king and the governor's beyond the River, and they assisted the people and the house of the true God. (Ezra 8:36)**

- During the 20th year of Artaxerxes, **455 B.C.E**, Nehemiah was granted permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.
- Accordingly they said to me; Those left over, who have been left over from the captivity, there in the jurisdictional district, are in a very bad plight and in reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its very gates have been burned with fire. (**Nehemiah 1:3**)
- And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him, and I as usual took up the wine and gave it to the king. But never had I happened to be gloomy before him. (**Nehemiah 2:1**)
- After that I said to the king; If to the king it does seem good, and if your servant seems good before you, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of the burial places of my forefathers, that I may rebuild it. (**Nehemiah 2:5**)
- At this the king said to me, as his queenly consort was sitting beside him; How long will your journey come to be and when will you return? So it seemed good before the king that he should send me, when I gave him the appointed time. (**Nehemiah 2:6**)
- And I went on to say to the king; If to the king it does seem good, let letters be given me to the governor's beyond the River, that they may let me pass until I come to Judah. (**Nehemiah 2:7**)
- Also a letter to Asaph the keeper of the park that belongs to the king, that he may give me trees to build with timber the gates of the Castle that belongs to the house, and for the wall of the city and for the house into which I am to enter. So the king gave them to me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. (**Nehemiah 2:8**)
- Nehemiah later returned for a time to the court of Artaxerxes in that king's 32nd year, **443 B.C.E**.
- And during all this time I did not happen to be in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king of Babylon I came to the king, and sometime later I asked leave of absence from the king. (**Nehemiah 13:6**)

- There is some disagreement in historical writings with regard to the reigns of Xerxes and of Artaxerxes. Reference works place Artaxerxes accession year in **465 B.C.E.**
- Certain documents give to his father, Xerxes, a reign that continued into the 21st year. Xerxes rule is customarily counted from **486 B.C.E.**, when Darius, his father, died.
- His own first regnal year is viewed as having started in **485 B.C.E.**, and his 21st year and the accession year of Artaxerxes are often said to have been **465 B.C.E.**
- As for Artaxerxes, scholars usually say that his last year of rule began in **424 B.C.E.** Some documents present that as year 41 of Artaxerxes reign. If that were correct, it would mean that his accession year was in **465 B.C.E.** and that his first regnal year began in **464 B.C.E.**
- However, there is strong evidence for calculating the last year of Xerxes and the accession year of Artaxerxes as being **475 B.C.E.** This evidence is threefold, from Greek sources, from Persian sources, and from Babylonian sources.

• Evidence From Greek Sources

- An event in Greek history can help us determine when Artaxerxes began ruling. Greek statesman and military hero Themistocles fell into disfavor with his countrymen and fled for safety to **Persia**.
- According to Greek historian **Thucydides I, CXXXVII, 3**, who has gained fame for his accuracy, at that time Themistocles sent on a letter to King Artaxerxes son of Xerxes, who had lately come to the throne.
- **Plutarch's Lives (Themistocles, XXVII, 1)** gives the information that **Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus relate that Xerxes was dead, and that it was his son Artaxerxes with whom Themistocles had his interview.**
- Charon was a **Persian** subject who lived through the change of rulership from Xerxes to Artaxerxes. From the testimonies of Thucydides and of Charon of Lampsacus, we can see that when Themistocles arrived in **Persia**, Artaxerxes had recently begun ruling.

- We can establish the time when Artaxerxes began ruling by calculating back from when Themistocles died. Not all reference books give the same date for his death.
- However, historian Diodorus Siculus [Diodorus of Sicily, XI, 54,1][XI, 58,3] relates his death in an account of things that happened when Praxiergus was archon in Athens.
- Praxiergus was archon in Athens in 471/470 B.C.E. [Greek and Roman Chronology, by Alan E. Samuel, Munich, 1972, p. 206]
- According to Thucydides, Themistocles arrival in Persia was followed by a year of language study in preparation for an audience with Artaxerxes. Thereafter the king granted him settlement in Persia with many honors.
- If Themistocles died in 471/470 B.C.E, his settlement in Persia must have been not later than 472 B.C.E. and his arrival a year earlier, in 473 B.C.E. At that time Artaxerxes had lately come to the throne.
- Concerning the time when Xerxes died and Artaxerxes ascended the throne, M. D. Koutorga wrote; We have seen that, according to the chronology of Thucydides, Xerxes died towards the end of the year 475 B.C.E, and that, according to the same historian, Themistocles arrived in Asia Minor shortly after the coming to the throne of Artaxerxes Longimanus. [Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Deuteronomy l'Institut Impérial Deuteronomy France, first series, Vol. VI, second part, Paris, 1864, p. 147]
- As further support of this, East. Levesque noted the following: Therefore it is necessary, according to the Alexandrian Chronicle, to place Xerxes death in 475 B.C.E, after eleven years of reign.
- The historian Justin, III, 1, confirms this chronicle and the assertions of Thucydides. According to him, at the time of Xerxes murder, Artaxerxes, his son, was but a child, puer, a boy, which is true if Xerxes died in 475 B.C.E.
- Artaxerxes was then 16 years old, whereas in 465 B.C.E. he would have been twenty-six years old, which would not justify anymore Justin's expression.
- According to this chronology, since Artaxerxes began to reign in 475 B.C.E, the 20th year of his reign proves to be in 455 B.C.E. and not

in **445 B.C.E.** as it is said quite commonly. [Revue apologétique, Paris, Vol. 68,1939, p. 94]

- If Darius died in **486 B.C.E.** and Xerxes died in **475 B.C.E.**, how could it be explained that some ancient documents allot to Xerxes a reign of 21 years?
- It is well known that a king and his son might rule together in a double kingship, or coregency. If this was the case with Darius and Xerxes, historians could count the years of Xerxes reign either from the start of a coregency with his father or from his fathers death.
- If Xerxes ruled 10 years with his father and 11 years by himself, some sources could attribute to him 21 years of rulership, while others might give him 11 years.
- There is solid evidence for a coregency of Xerxes with his father Darius. The Greek historian **Herodotus [VII, 3]** says: **Darius judged his Xerxes plea for kingship to be just and declared him king. But to my thinking Xerxes would have been made king even without this advice.** This indicates that Xerxes was made king during the reign of his father Darius.

.. Evidence From Persian Sources

- A coregency of Xerxes with Darius can be seen especially from **Persian** bas-reliefs that have come to light. In Persepolis several bas-reliefs have been found that represent Xerxes standing behind his fathers throne, dressed in clothing identical to his fathers and with his head on the same level.
- This is unusual, since ordinarily the kings head would be higher than all others.
- In **A New Inscription of Xerxes From Persepolis [by Ernst E. Herzfeld, 1932]** it is noted that both inscriptions and buildings found in **Persepolis** imply a coregency of Xerxes with his father Darius.
- On page 8 of his work Herzfeld wrote: **The peculiar tenor of Xerxes inscriptions at Persepolis, most of which do not distinguish between his own activity and that of his father, and the relation, just as peculiar, of their buildings, which it is impossible to allocate to either Darius or Xerxes individually, have always implied a kind of coregency of Xerxes.**

- Moreover, two sculptures at Persepolis illustrate that relation. With reference to one of these sculptures, Herzfeld pointed out, Darius is represented, wearing all the royal attributes, enthroned on a high couch-platform supported by representatives of the various nations of his empire.
- Behind him in the relief, that is, in reality at his right, stands Xerxes with the same royal attributes, his left hand resting on the high back of the throne. That is a gesture that speaks clearly of more than mere successorship, it means coregency.
- As to a date for reliefs depicting Darius and Xerxes in that way, in *Achaemenid Sculpture* [Istanbul, 1974, p. 53], Ann Farkas states that the reliefs might have been installed in the Treasury sometime during the building of the first addition, 494/493–492/491 B.C, this certainly would have been the most convenient time to move such unwieldy pieces of stone.
- But whatever their date of removal to the Treasury, the sculptures were perhaps carved in the 490s.

• Evidence From Babylonian Sources

- Evidence for Xerxes beginning a coregency with his father during the 490s B.C.E. has been found at Babylon. Excavations there have unearthed a palace for Xerxes completed in 496 B.C.E.
- In this regard, A. T. Olmstead wrote in *History of the Persian Empire* (p. 215): By October 23, 498 B.C.E, we learn that the house of the king's son that is, of Darius son, Xerxes was in process of erection at Babylon, no doubt this is the Darius palace in the central section that we have already described.
- Two years later in 496 B.C.E, in a business document from near-by Borsippa, we have reference to the new palace as already completed.
- Two unusual clay tablets may bear additional testimony to the coregency of Xerxes with Darius. One is a business text about hire of a building in the accession year of Xerxes.
- The tablet is dated in the first month of the year, Nisan. [A Catalogue of the Late Babylonian Tablets in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, by R. Campbell Thompson, London, 1927, p. 13, tablet designated A. 124]

- Another tablet bears the date **month of Ab(?)**, **accession year of Xerxes**. Remarkably, this latter tablet does not attribute to Xerxes the title **king of Babylon, king of lands**, which was usual at that time. [Neubabylonische Rechts-und Verwaltungsurkunden übersetzt und erläutert, by M. San Nicolò and A. Ungnad, Leipzig, 1934, Vol. I, part 4, p. 544, tablet No. 634, designated VAT 4397]
- These two tablets are puzzling. Ordinarily a king's accession year begins after the death of his predecessor.
- However, there is evidence that Xerxes' predecessor Darius lived until the seventh month of his final year, whereas these two documents from the accession year of Xerxes bear dates prior to the seventh month, one has the first month, the other the fifth.
- Therefore these documents do not relate to an accession period of Xerxes following the death of his father but indicate an accession year during his coregency with Darius.
- If that accession year was in **496 B.C.E**, when the palace at Babylon for Xerxes had been completed, his first year as coregent would begin the following Nisan, in **495 B.C.E**, and his 21st and final year would start in **475 B.C.E**. In that case, Xerxes' reign included 10 years of rule with Darius, from **496 to 486 B.C.E** and 11 years of kingship by himself from **486 to 475 B.C.E**.
- On the other hand, historians are unanimous that the first regnal year of Darius II began in spring of **423 B.C.E**. One Babylonian tablet indicates that in his accession year Darius II was already on the throne by the 4th day of the 11th month, that is, **February 13, 423 B.C.E**. [Babylonian Chronology, 626 B.C.–A.D. 75, by R. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, 1971, p. 18]
- However, two tablets show that Artaxerxes continued to rule after the 11th month, the 4th day, of his 41st year. One is dated to the 11th month, the 17th day, of his 41st year. [p. 18]
- The other one is dated to the 12th month of his 41st year. [Old Testament and Semitic Studies, edited by Harper, Brown, and Moore, 1908, Vol. 1, p. 304, tablet No. 12, designated CBM, 5505]
- Therefore Artaxerxes was not succeeded in his 41st regnal year but ruled through its entirety. This indicates that Artaxerxes must have ruled more than 41 years and that his first regnal year therefore should not be counted as beginning in **464 B.C.E**.

- Evidence that Artaxerxes Longimanus ruled beyond his 41st year is found in a business document from Borsippa that is dated to the 50th year of Artaxerxes.
- [Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Vol. VII: Tablets From Sippar 2, by E. Leichty and A. K. Grayson, 1987, p. 153][tablet designated B. M. 65494]
- One of the tablets connecting the end of Artaxerxes reign and the beginning of the reign of Darius II has the following date: 51st year, accession year, 12th month, day 20, Darius, king of lands. [The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts, Vol. VIII, Part I, by Albert T. Clay, 1908, pp. 34,83, and Plate 57, Tablet No. 127, designated CBM 12803]
- Since the first regnal year of Darius II was in 423 B.C.E, it means that the 51st year of Artaxerxes was in 424 B.C.E. and his first regnal year was in 474 B.C.E.
- Therefore, testimonies from Greek, Persian, and Babylonian sources agree that Artaxerxes accession year was 475 B.C.E. and his first regnal year was 474 B.C.E. That places the 20th year of Artaxerxes, when the 70 weeks of
- There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, in order to terminate the transgression, and to finish off sin, and to make atonement for error, and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite, and to imprint a seal upon vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies. (Daniel 9:24)
- Begin to count, in 455 B.C.E. If on the basis of;
- And you should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square and moat, but in the straits of the times. (Daniel 9:25)
- We reckon 69 weeks of years (483 years) from 455 B.C.E, we come to a significant year for the arrival of Messiah the Leader.
- Counting from 455 B.C.E. to 1 C.E. is a full 455 years. Adding the remaining 28 years, to make up 483 years, brings us to 29 C.E, the

exact year when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized in water, anointed with Holy Spirit, and began his public ministry as Messiah, or Christ.

- **In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was district ruler of Galilee, but Philip his brother was district ruler of the country of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was district ruler of Abilene. (Luke 3:1)**
- **In the days of chief priest Annas and of Caiaphas, God's declaration came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. (Luke 3:2)**
- **Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized and, as he was praying, the heaven was opened up. (Luke 3:21)**
- **And the Holy Spirit in bodily shape like a dove came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven; You are my Son, the beloved. I have approved you. (Luke 3:22)**

.. Down To The Fall And Division Of The Empire

- **Regarding the successors of Artaxerxes Longimanus on the throne of Persia, Diodorus Siculus gives the following information: In Asia King Xerxes died after a reign of one year, or, as some record, two months, and his brother Sogdianus succeeded to the throne and ruled for seven months. He was slain by Darius, who reigned nineteen years. [Diodorus of Sicily, XII, 71,1]**
- **The original name of this Darius, known as Darius II, was Ochus, but he adopted the name Darius upon becoming king. He appears to be the Darius referred to at;**
- **The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada and Johanan and Jaddua were recorded as heads of paternal houses, also the priests, down till the kingship of Darius the Persian. (Nehemiah 12:22)**
- **Following Darius II came Artaxerxes II, called Mnemon, during whose reign Egypt revolted and relations with Greece deteriorated. His reign dated as from 404 to 359 B.C.E, was followed by that of his son Artaxerxes III, also called Ochus, who is credited with some 21 years of rule 358-338 B.C.E. and is said to have been the most bloodthirsty of all the Persian rulers.**

- His major feat was the reconquest of Egypt. Secular history then gives a two-year rule for Arses and a five-year rule for Darius III, Codomannus, during whose reign Philip of Macedonia was murdered **336 B.C.E.** and was succeeded by his son Alexander.
- In **334 B.C.E.** Alexander began his attack on the **Persian** Empire, defeating the **Persian** forces first at Granicus in the Northwest corner of Asia Minor and again at Issus at the opposite corner of Asia Minor **333 B.C.E.** Finally, after the Greeks had conquered Phoenicia and Egypt, the **Persians** last stand, at Gaugamela in **331 B.C.E.**, was crushed, and the **Persian Empire** came to its end.
- Following Alexander's death and the subsequent division of the empire, Seleucus Nicator obtained control of the major portion of the Asiatic territories with **Persia** as its central part.
- The Seleucid dynasty of kings, thus begun, continued until **64 B.C.E.** Seleucus Nicator seems to be the one with whom the prophetic figure of the king of the north of Daniel's prophecy first begins to manifest itself, opposing the Ptolemaic line of kings in Egypt, who initially appear to fill the role of the symbolic king of the south.
- And when he will have stood up, his kingdom will be broken and be divided toward the four winds of the heavens, but not to his posterity and not according to his dominion with which he had ruled, because his kingdom will be uprooted, even for others than these. (**Daniel 11:4**)
- And the king of the south will become strong, even one of his princes, and he will prevail against him and will certainly rule with extensive dominion greater than that ones ruling power. (**Daniel 11:5**)
- And at the end of some years they will ally themselves with each other, and the very daughter of the king of the south will come to the king of the north in order to make an equitable arrangement. But she will not retain the power of her arm, and he will not stand, neither his arm, and she will be given up, she herself, and those bringing her in, and he who caused her birth, and the one making her strong in those times. (**Daniel 11:6**)
- The Seleucid kings were restricted to the western part of their domain by the incursions of the Parthians, who conquered the territory of **Persia** proper during the third and **Second Centuries B.C.E.** They

were defeated by the Sassanians in the **Third Century C.E.**, and the Sassanian rule continued until the Arab conquest in the seventh century.

- The prophecy of;
- Persians and Ludim and men of Put, they happened to be in your military force, your men of war. Shield and helmet they hung up in you. They were the ones that caused your splendor. (**Ezekiel 27:10**)
- Includes Persians among the men of war who served in the military force of wealthy Tyre, and who contributed to its splendor. Persia is also listed among those nations forming part of the hordes directed by the symbolic Gog of the land of Magog against Yehowah's covenant people.
- Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the head chieftain of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (**Ezekiel 38:2**)
- And I shall certainly turn you around and put hooks in your jaws and bring you forth with all your military force, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in perfect taste, a numerous congregation, with large shield and buckler, all of them handling swords. (**Ezekiel 38:4**)
- **Persia**, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with buckler and helmet. (**Ezekiel 38:5**)
- After many days you will be given attention. In the final part of the years you will come to the land of people brought back from the sword, collected together out of many peoples, onto the mountains of Israel, that have proved to be a constantly devastated place, even a land that has been brought forth from the peoples, where they have dwelt in security, all of them. (**Ezekiel 38:8**)
- And you will be bound to come up. Like a storm you will come in. Like clouds to cover the land you will become, you and all your bands and many peoples with you. (**Ezekiel 38:9**)