

If non-jews would stop listening to the jewish-controlled propaganda concerning Christianity, and actually take the time investigating Christianity that they take glued in front of their nightly sitcom, they would know that Christianity is true, and that there are many infallible proofs supporting its veracity. It was not by mistake that so many generations of our European forefathers were Christians, and dropped many of their pagan attitudes for Christian knowledge and morals even though they would not depart from certain holiday customs. Today most Europeans spit in the faces of their fathers. They do so, because their primary source of education has been the jewish-controlled media.

These notes concern the 70-weeks Kingdom at Jerusalem (which was not technically a kingdom for most of its history, although it was an entity of its own), and the time from the original grant by Cyrus of a return to Jerusalem of those in captivity to the time of Christ and His passion. They employ mostly Biblical sources, and one must understand that these sources are seemingly quite imperfect, even to the point where the historian Josephus was also confused. These notes on this topic are considered to be an ongoing project, and must be revisited whenever new information becomes available which may be compared.

Persian Kings of the period:

- Cyrus 550-529 B.C.
- Cambyses 529-522 B.C.
- Pseudo Smerdis (the magi) 522-521 B.C.
- Darius (Hystaspis) 521-486 B.C.
- Xerxes 486-465 B.C.
- Artaxerxes 465-445 B.C.

To show that this period is well-recorded in history, all of these Persian kings up to Xerxes were discussed at length by Herodotus. Shortly after Artaxerxes, the Peloponnesian wars among the Greeks began (431-404 B.C.). Darius Nothos (the bastard) ruled Persia from 426, and Artaxerxes II from 407 B.C. The brother of Artaxerxes II, Cyrus the Younger, led a rebellion against him and lost his life in its failure. The Greek general Xenophon was a part of that expedition. This was a subject of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, a famous book about those events.

Because the Septuagint Greek was translated from the Hebrew at a time very close in antiquity to the actual events discussed here, especially compared to the A.V. English (and because the LXX is, I am persuaded, more reliable than the Masoretic Text in many cases, but not in all) I have chosen to adhere to the Septuagint version for this study, although at times I may refer to or quote the A.V.

Daniel 9:1 mention an Assuerus (Ahasuerus), this, it shall be shown, was merely a title applied to the emperor himself or to any other governor or appointed ruler. At one point it was even used of Nehemiah, which shall be discussed below. The scrolls of Daniel are out-of-order, as can be established by noticing that the Chaldaeans rule Babylon in chapter 1, but the Persians in chapter 6, and Chaldaeans again in chapter 7, and then Persians in chapter 9. At this time Cyrus seems to have been the Emperor, and since he lived until 529 BC, it is improbable that Daniel outlived him. The word Darius is also just a title, from a Persian word which seems to mean *possessor* or *supporter*, and the Greeks later used it as a name for their own identification of certain Persian kings. But we cannot assume that Daniel used these words in the manner which the Greeks later used them. Cyrus is the emperor mentioned in Daniel 10:1, and in the Septuagint, also in Daniel 11:1.

Ezra (often referred to as II Esdras) 4:6 mentions an Assuerus (Ahasuerus), which seems to be a reference to Cambyses, who is the king that had received complaints from the Samaritans regarding the

building of Jerusalem, and ordered it halted as a result, which we shall see below.

Ezra 4:7, 4:8, 4:11, 4:23 and 6:14 all mention an Ἀρθασασθᾶ, a word which is only transliterated by Brenton, where the corresponding A.V. passages have written Artaxerxes. I Esdras (the apocryphal book) at 2:16, 2:17 and 2:30, corresponds with these passages, and reads Ἀρταξέρξης, Artaxerxes.

This king called Ἀρθασασθᾶ, or Ἀρταξέρξης, here in Ezra can not be the Artaxerxes who is so well known to us through the Greek histories (and whose given name, according to Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:6:1 [11:184], was actually Cyrus also). Rather, he can only be the earlier Cambyses. Josephus, at *Antiquities* 11:2:2, verifies this.

Part of the reason for confusion is that Ἀρθασασθᾶ (and Artaxerxes) is a **title** and not a name. Strong verifies this, for which one may refer to his Hebrew lexicon entries at #'s 325, 783 and 8660. That “Arthasastha” is a title is evident in the LXX text at Ezra 2:63, Nehemiah 7:65 (in a statement referring to Zorobabel, for which see the corrupted “Attharias” at I Esdras 5:40) and at Nehemiah 5:14 and 10:1 where the label is applied to Nehemiah. (The word also appears at Nehemiah 2:1 and 13:6). Many mainstream pastors and commentators automatically assume that Arthasastha refers to the Persian king whom the Greeks called Ἀρταξέρξης, and here it is fully evident that is wrong. The word Darius was also originally a title, used in that same manner, and the way that the Hebrew writers understood these terms was much closer to how the Persians had actually used them.

The confusion caused by the English understanding of the Hebrew use of these Persian terms is not unlike that of the Greek, which is often commented upon. Herodotus at 6:98 states: ... Darius may be rendered worker, Xerxes warrior, and Artaxerxes Great Warrior. His definitions were not necessarily correct. Yet we use the Greek names for these kings in our own language, but that is not how Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah used the terms.

A walk through Ezra and Nehemiah with the proper chronology:

I Esdras 1:57-58 mentions the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem, found at Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 36:10 (or 29:10 in the A.V.). See Ezra 1:1.

I Esdras 2:1 (Ezra 1:1) mentions the decree given in the first year of Cyrus, which was actually 550 B.C. (See Isaiah 44:28, 45:1 ff.), but Ezra must have intended 539 B.C., the first year in which Cyrus ruled over Babylon, and not the first year of his rule over Persia. Note that Cyrus was the king when Daniel uttered his prophecy at Daniel 11:2.

I Esdras 2:16 (Ezra 4:7): The Samaritans wrote to Cambyses complaining of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The text here helps to establish that the original decree issued by Cyrus included the rebuilding of the city also, and not only the temple. Herodotus portrays Cambyses as being exceptionally cruel, having even had his own brother, who the Greeks called Smerdis, slain for fear he would usurp the throne. According to Rawlinson, the inscriptions support this fact. (Rawlinson's footnote at Herodotus 3:30). Cambyses is the first king of Daniel 11:2 (his successor, Pseudo-Smerdis, a magi and an impostor, was the second.).

I Esdras 2:30 (Ezra 4:23): Cambyses ordered the rebuilding of Jerusalem to stop. The rebuilding of the temple was prevented until the second year of Darius the Persian, which year began in 520 B.C.

I Esdras 4:43 ff., 5:4 ff.: Here the apocryphal I Esdras differs significantly from Ezra. Where Ezra has the return of the group of 42,000-plus with Zorobabel upon the initial proclamation of Cyrus, I Esdras records that same group (with some minor variations in the list) as returning much later, upon the proclamation of Darius. I Esdras 2:8-15 does indicate a return of captives from Babylon to Judaea upon the proclamation of Cyrus, but gives no details, stating only ... the chief of the families of Judah and of

the tribe of Benjamin ... and the Levites ..., which implies a separate and much earlier return of captives, of unknown number, preceding Zorobabel's listed group. Nehemiah 12:22 seems to support I Esdras and the return of 42,000-plus in the reign of Darius, and not the earlier Cyrus. Josephus' Antiquities seems to support both accounts, although Josephus certainly seems confused, compare 11:1:3 (11:18) with 11:3:10 (11:69). I Esdras 5:70-73 and 6:2 indicate that Zorobabel was present at the first return of captives (in the first year of Cyrus) and (30 years) later in the second year of Darius, as he began to finally build the temple (See Zechariah 4:1-10).

I Esdras 5:73 makes a statement which is certainly errant, and which is not repeated in the corresponding verse at Ezra 4:24. It states here that the Samaritans ... hindered the finishing of the building all the time that king Cyrus lived: so they were hindered from building for the space of two years, until the reign of Darius. Darius here must be the Persian king (see vv. 3:1, 4:47, 5:2, 6:7 and 6:23) and no other, and since Cyrus followed by Cambyses and Pseudo-Smerdis all ruled for a total of 30 years before Darius, here I would expect to see that figure, or one close to it. In support of this event's having transpired over such a long duration of time is the described search of records necessary to find the original proclamation of Cyrus concerning Jerusalem, which is related at I Esdras 6:21 ff. and Ezra 6:1 ff.

The error here is represented by three Greek words, where I Esdras reads: ἔτη δύο ἕως (Brenton's "...for the space of two years, until...") the Greek version of Ezra has: ἕως δευτέρου ἔτους ("until the second year"). No other change being necessary, the three words in I Esdras 5:73 must be an error, and a reading of Ezra 4:24 corrects it. Note also I Esdras 2:30 which describes the same thing says that the building was delayed until the second year of Darius.

I Esdras 6:21 ff. (Ezra 6:1 ff.): The second year of Darius, which would begin in 520 B.C., saw the resumption of the building of the temple (I Esdras 6:1-2). Darius is the third king of Daniel 11:2.

I Esdras 7:5 (Ezra 6:15): The building of the temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius, which would begin in 516 B.C. If as many calculate, the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians occurred in 586 B.C. then this would mark off the end of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of desolation. (It must be noted that Josephus in Antiquities 11:4:7 (11:107) states that the temple was completed in the ninth year of Darius.)

By this time, however, the city itself had not been rebuilt, although a command to do so surely existed, and work was at one time begun but had stopped (see I Esdras 2:16-18, 2:28, 4:43, 4:47, 4:53, Ezra 4:12 and Ezra 5:3-4).

I Esdras (and Ezra) are silent from the sixth year of Darius to the seventh year of Artaxerxes. It will be demonstrated that the Artaxerxes of I Esdras 8 (Ezra 7) is the historical king that we know as Artaxerxes I from the Greek histories. This silence represents a space of roughly 58 years. As will also be demonstrated, it is here that events related in the Book of Nehemiah actually occurred. The entire Book of Nehemiah may be inserted between I Esdras 7 (Ezra 6) and I Esdras 8 (Ezra 7), and only then will these books be in chronological order, and much better understood.

The latter years of the reign of Darius were consumed with wars, wars against the Scythians in Europe, the Massagetae, the Scythians (Sakae) in India, and finally in Greece, where one of his generals was defeated at Marathon in 490 B.C. All of this is recorded by Herodotus. Darius was also engaged for some time in a siege of Babylon, having to retake the city after it revolted, which is also recorded by Herodotus. The Battle of Marathon in Greece set the stage for his successor Xerxes, whose fate was to rise up against all the kingdoms of the Greeks (Daniel 11:2).

This famous Darius must be the king of Persia, the Ἀρθασασθᾶ, mentioned by Nehemiah. Note that of these later Persian kings, Cambyses reigned but 8 years, Xerxes for 21 and Artaxerxes 20, but Darius

reigned for 35 years. At Nehemiah 5:14, Nehemiah states that he was appointed as governor of Judaea “from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Arthasastha (Artaxerxes), for a period of twelve years” but he also says that during this time “I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor” meaning that he and his family had not yet the opportunity to actually leave Babylon and go to Judaea to fulfill the appointment. At Nehemiah 13:6 the “thirty-second year of Arthasastha king of Babylon” is mentioned, where Nehemiah finally “obtained leave of the King”, where Nehemiah was finally permitted to actually go to Jerusalem and see after the affairs which were necessary for him to perform there. Evidently, the business of war was more pressing than the business in Jerusalem, Nehemiah's presence in Babylon during this entire period, even though he was the appointed governor of Judaea, is recorded here in these verses.

Nehemiah, Ezra and Zorobabel were all contemporaries. In all of the lists which record the return of the 42,000-plus from captivity, Zorobabel and Nehemiah are mentioned together: Ezra 2:2, Nehemiah 7:7 and I Esdras 5:8. Where Ezra appears not in his own lists, he does appear at Nehemiah 7:7. Nehemiah and Ezra are mentioned together throughout Nehemiah 8 and at 12:26, among other places where Zorobabel was said to be the Arthasastha, or governor, of Judaea (I Esdras 6:27-29) and the object of that title where it is used at Ezra 2:63 (compare Nehemiah 7:65 and I Esdras 5:40 where the text for Arthasastha is corrupted to Aththarias, or Tirshatha in the King James, as there are also other corruptions of the title). At I Esdras 5:40 Zorobabel and Nehemiah are mentioned together. That Nehemiah followed Zorobabel in the office of governor is inferred at Nehemiah 12:47. In Nehemiah 5:14 and 10:1, Nehemiah is clearly the Arthasastha, or governor, at that time.

Nehemiah recalls some of the events which were also later recorded in chapters 1 through 8 of I Esdras (1 through 7 of Ezra), but Nehemiah mentions none of the events of chapter 9 of I Esdras (8 through 10 of Ezra), which had not yet transpired. Nehemiah was concerned with the rebuilding of the city and walls of Jerusalem, a good part of which was certainly accomplished during the 12 years of his governorship, however the building of the city was by no means complete. The 20th year of Darius, 14 years after Zorobabel completed the temple, began in 502 B.C., and the 32nd year, after which Nehemiah left the governorship of Jerusalem, began in 490 B.C. The apocryphal Ecclesiasticus (Σοφία Σειραχ) 49:13 credits Nehemiah with building the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:27), but the buildings expected to inhabit the city were not necessarily complete (Nehemiah 7:4, 11:1-2). Nehemiah 7:4 says “Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not built.”

Nehemiah 7: Nehemiah recalls the list of Israelites who returned to Jerusalem in, as has been discussed above, the second year of Darius, 520 BC..

Nehemiah 8: Nehemiah and Ezra are contemporaries, mentioned together throughout this chapter. Ezra here is called the scribe, the priest, or even by both titles (8:9).

Nehemiah 11: Nehemiah lists the families dwelling in Jerusalem, and specifically the priests and Levites (11:12 ff.), who were the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian which is a firm witness of the chronology for the service of Nehemiah purported here. When Ezra returned to Jerusalem for the second time, after the time of Nehemiah (as will be discussed below) he brought with him many other priests and Levites from those among the captivity (I Esdras 8:28 ff., Ezra 8:1 ff.) and after their arrival, he found that many of those priests and Levites which had long been in Jerusalem (those of Nehemiah chapter 11) had taken strange wives, and he listed these (I Esdras 9:18 ff., Ezra 10:18 ff.).

As stated, Nehemiah's mission ended by 489 B.C. Xerxes ascended to the Persian throne in 486 B.C. The entire first half of Xerxes' reign was consumed by the war against Greece, which he personally attended to. All of the resources of the empire were busy about this war, which many of the children of Israel and Judah actually took part in on both sides. Not only the Danaans and Dorians and other

Israelite tribes on the side of the Greeks, but Scythians, Sakae, Phoenicians of Tyre and the Palestinian Syrians (among others listed by Herodotus) on the Persian side. The name “Palestinian Syrians” is what Herodotus called the Judaeans, and that can be proven in his text, where he mentions them at least three times. Xerxes led the Persian army to destroy Athens, and Salamis, the famed naval battle in which the Greeks destroyed the entire Persian fleet, was witnessed by Xerxes from Grecian shores in 480 B.C. This was all prophesied by Daniel in the opening verses of his eleventh chapter. After Salamis, Xerxes retreated, but left a good part of his army behind with a general to fight the Greeks on land. The Greeks defeated this army at Plataea and at Mycalê both in 479 B.C., effectively ending any hopes of the Persians to conquer the west. It is likely that Xerxes' long journey back to Susa kept him occupied until 478 or maybe even 477 B.C. It is absolutely unlikely that Xerxes is the Artaxerxes of I Esdras 8, the Arthasastha of Ezra 7, since he began the seventh year of his reign, which started 480 B.C., sitting on the shores of Attica watching his greatest pride, which was his relatively new and rather large navy, sink to the bottom of the sea. Surely the good king of I Esdras 8 (Ezra 7) is Artaxerxes, who ascended the Persian throne in 465 B.C.

Before proceeding, it must be noted that Josephus made the fatal error of accepting the Esther story as a historical fact. He dated the Esther affair to the reign of Artaxerxes, Xerxes' successor. See *Antiquities* 11:6 (11:184-296). The reasons for rejecting Esther as a fable are many, but it is outside of the purpose here to list them. Josephus' acceptance of Esther caused him to artificially extend the length of the Xerxes' reign far beyond what it actually was, attributing to Xerxes many events which are rightfully attributed to Artaxerxes his successor, or even to Darius his predecessor. Here are three examples of Josephus' confusion:

Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:5:2 (11:135): Here Josephus states that Nehemiah was cupbearer to king Xerxes, where it has been demonstrated that Nehemiah was in the employ of Darius.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:5:7 (11:168): Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twenty and fifth year of the reign of Xerxes.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:5:8 (11:179): “... And this trouble, he underwent for two years and four months; for in so long a time was the wall built in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Xerxes, in the ninth month.”

It is difficult to say how Josephus arrived at these conclusions, or from where he obtained his data, for these statements can not be corroborated by or reconciled with our Scriptures or our histories. One aspect of these statements does stand out, for the twenty-eighth year of Xerxes, who reigned but 21 years, would actually be the seventh year of Artaxerxes, the year which Ezra began to prepare for his second return to Jerusalem.

I Esdras 8:1 (Ezra 7:1): Ezra received a commission from Artaxerxes, in his seventh year, to return to Jerusalem with a large contingent of priests, Levites and others of the captivity. Ezra is given much authority, “that they may look unto the affairs of Judaea and Jerusalem” (I Esdras 8:12) “and thou, Esdras, according to the wisdom of God ordain judges and justices, that they may judge in all Syria and Phenice...” I Esdras 8:23). If Ezra was not actually appointed governor (there is a vague statement at I Esdras 9:49), as Zorobabel and Nehemiah were before him, he certainly was given an authority which exceeded even theirs, which is evident from the text at Ezra 7:25-28. This return took Ezra over seven months to prepare for and to complete, surely extending into (or at least approaching) the eighth year of Artaxerxes, which began in 457 B.C.

Daniel 9:25: “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...”

From 457 B.C., 69 weeks, or 483 years later, was 26 A.D. [The year that Yahshua Christ stood in the river Jordan to be baptized by John was, by the certainly accurate account in Luke, 28 A.D.], thus beginning His three and one-half year ministry in the flesh, the first half of Daniels 70th week (9:27).

Here the phrase which the King James renders “going forth” must be examined:

Hebrew: Strong’s #4161: “4161 מוֹצֵאׁ mōwtsâ’, mo-tsaw’; or מוֹצֵאׁ mōtsâ’, mo-tsaw’; from 3318; a going forth, i.e. (the act) an egress, or (the place) an exit; hence a source or product; specifically dawn, the rising of the sun (the East), exportation, utterance, a gate, a fountain, a mine, a meadow (as producing grass):– brought out, bud, that which came out, east, going forth, going out, that which (thing that) is gone out, outgoing, proceeded out, spring, vein, [water-] course [springs].”

For our purposes this word mōwtsâ is the **final result** of the commandment, as it is defined as “ ... a going forth, i.e. (the act) an egress, or (the place) an exit; hence a source or product ...”

Septuagint Greek: ἔξοδος (Strong’s #1841); Liddell & Scott: “a going out ... 2. a marching out, military expedition ... 3. a solemn procession ... II. a way out, outlet ... III. an end, close ... the end or issue of an argument ...” So the meaning of ἔξοδος does not conflict with this interpretation of the Hebrew.

With Ezra's return circa 457 B.C., the end, close or better, the product of the command to build and restore the city of Jerusalem may be perceived as having been completed. Yet with all planning aside, if the time to actually get the building underway should also be counted, we can fairly and easily estimate that and arrive at 455 B.C., 483 years prior to the baptism of Yahshua Christ in 28 A.D. With the chronology presented here, not only is the history of Jerusalem properly aligned with the utterance of the prophets, but Scripture is also fully reconciled with the secular history of Persia which has come down to us. No longer do we have the difficulty which the many errant mainstream commentators leave themselves with when attempting to explain these books. No generally accepted dates from secular history must be distorted to meet the chronological requirements of the books discussed here, and no accusations are leveled at Scripture, for all of the problems discussed have been easily resolved. Surely there are some minor items left unmentioned in these few short pages, but all of the important statements in the books discussed, as pertaining to the chronology presented here, have been addressed, and I must conclude that the Word is surer than the understanding of men.

Resulting Chronology:

550 B.C. Cyrus king of Persia, first return of captives to Judaea happened some time after 539, when he conquered Babylon.

529 B.C. Cambyses became king, some time before 522 he ordered the reconstruction of Jerusalem to stop.

522 B.C. Pseudo-Smerdis, the magi, usurped the Persian throne.

521 B.C. Darius Hystaspis became king.

520 B.C. Rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem commenced.

516 B.C. The temple completed in the sixth year of Darius. Jeremiahs 70 years of desolation ended during this year.

502 B.C. Nehemiah commissioned by Darius. The rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem began during this period.

490 B.C. Nehemiah's mission in Jerusalem ended. The city's walls are complete and dedicated. Building construction within the city was under way but by no means complete. The Persians were defeated by Greeks at Marathon.

486 B.C. Xerxes became king, and began preparations for the invasion of Greece.

480 B.C. Persian fleet lost at Salamis, Xerxes began his retreat home.

479 B.C. Partial Persian armies were defeated simultaneously by Greek armies at Plataea and Mycenê

465 B.C. Artaxerxes became king.

458 B.C. Ezra commissioned for his final return to Jerusalem.

455 B.C. Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy began around this time. For the purpose of illustration, a 455 B.C. completion of the final building of the city by Ezra is required for a 32 A.D. crucifixion, and the building by Ezra certainly may not have finished until then.] According to Luke 3:1 and his dating of the beginning of the mission of Christ, the crucifixion had to occur in 32 AD, His ministry beginning at age thirty in the fall of 28 AD. All of these things are therefore synchronized.

Again, Daniel 9:25-27: “25 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. 26 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. 27 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.”

The jews constantly claim that Daniel was written at a much later period than what Daniel himself asserts, in an attempt to diminish the importance and the wonder of his prophecies. However the prophet Daniel is vindicated in many ways. For instance, all of the Greek legends and histories tell us only that Semiramis, in myths based on the life of an 8th-century BC Assyrian queen, had built the city of Babylon. However - and this is something that the Greeks after the beginning of the Persian period certainly did not know – archaeologists have uncovered many inscriptions, and even the bricks of the walls themselves, which attest that Nebuchadnezzar had rebuilt the city of Babylon. Daniel 4:30 affirms that the prophet had this knowledge which has been discovered to us only through archaeology, where he wrote that “The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” Therefore Daniel must have written when Daniel tells us that he had written, in the very days of the Chaldaean kings of Babylon.

William Finck, 3rd November, 2002 (Updated December 10th, 2009, and again December 2nd, 2011).