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A ministry of the
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church

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THE FOUR GENTILE WORLD EMPIRES



1. Babylon

Head of Gold

Lion with Eagles' wings
(606 BC- 537 BC)



2. Medo-Persia

Breast and Arms of Silver

Bear with three ribs in mouth
(537 BC- 334 BC)



3. Greece

Belly and Thighs of Brass

Leopard with four heads and four wings
(334 BC- 64 BC)



4. Rome

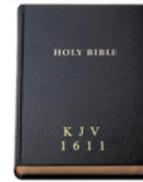
Legs of Iron

A dreadful and terrible beast
(64 BC- Second Coming of Christ)

The Final Form of Rome

Feet and Toes part Iron and part Clay
10 horns on the beast





The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 2:39

CYRUS THE PERSIAN

- An extensive biography on Cyrus has already been provided, so a timeline summary will suffice
- In 585 BC, Astyages succeeded his father Cyaxares I as king of the Medes and very soon thereafter, joined affinity (i.e.- “a union or special relationship between two kingdoms as a result of an arranged marriage”) with Cyrus I, the king of Anshan (Persia) of the line of Achaemenes
- Astyages gave his daughter Mandane in marriage to Cambyses I, the son of Cyrus I and crown prince of Anshan (Persia)
- In 584 BC, Cyrus was born to Cambyses I, the crown prince of Persia, and Mandane, the daughter of Astyages king of the Medes
- In 580 BC, Cyrus I died and Cambyses I became king of Anshan (Persia)
- Cyrus turned 25 years old in 559 BC and according to ancient Persian custom, he was to devote the next 25 years of his life to military training/service and to starting a family
- In 559 BC, Cyrus married Cassandane (also of the line of Achaemenes) and either became king of Persia following the death of his father Cambyses I or was crowned co-regent with him; consequently, some mark 559 BC as the beginning of the reign of Cyrus

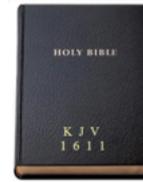
The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 2:39



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CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

- Also in 559 BC, Cyrus was appointed general over the Persian armies by his grandfather Astyages
- In 550 BC, Cyrus' grandfather Astyages died and was succeeded to the throne by his son Cyaxares II, Cyrus' uncle
- In 547 BC, Cyrus conquered Lydia
- In 537 BC, Cyrus conquered Babylon and ushered in the Medo-Persian empire, called the Achaemenid (*Ah-kee-muh-nid*) empire after Cyrus ascended to the throne, which lasted for over 200 years (537 BC- 334 BC)
- Also in 537 BC, someone (likely Daniel) showed Cyrus the prophecies concerning him from the book of Isaiah that eventually lead to his conversion to the Lord
- Shortly after the fall of Babylon and finalization of the transitional government, Cyrus' wife Cassandane died
- In late 537 BC or early 536 BC, once he determined things were stable enough for him to leave Babylon, Cyrus left for Media and Persia to bring spoils and "the key to the city" of Babylon to Cyaxares II, and to visit his family
- Also in late 537 BC or early 536 BC, Cyrus was crowned co-regent of the Medo-Persian empire when Cyaxares II gave him his daughter in marriage and the entire kingdom as her dowry



The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 2:39

CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

- In the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede (i.e.- 537 BC), Daniel understood from reading Jeremiah (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10) that the Babylonian captivity was prophesied to last 70 years and he also received the revelation of the 70 weeks (Dan 9:1-27)
- In late 537 BC or early 536 BC, Darius the Mede (Cyaxares II) came to Babylon and met Daniel
- He established a new form of government for the Medo-Persian empire consisting of 120 provinces over which there were 120 princes (i.e.- governors; satraps), and three presidents over them reporting directly to the king, of which Daniel was the first
- It appears the idea for this new form of government came from someone else (Dan 6:1), possibly Cyrus
- In late 537 BC or early 536 BC, Daniel was cast into the den of lions and delivered by the Lord, leading to the conversion of Darius the Mede
- In late 536 BC, Darius the Mede (i.e.- Cyaxares II) died at the age of 62-63 years old and the empire of the Medes and Persians passed to Cyrus, with Daniel remaining in a chief position (Dan 6:28)



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezz 1:1-4

CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

- In late 536 BC, in the first year of his reign, Cyrus issued the decree authorizing the Jews to be regathered to Judea to restore Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, at the expense of the Medo-Persian empire (2 Chr 36:22-23; Ezz 1:1-4) in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa 44:28; 45:13)

Ezz 1:1-4

1 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,

2 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.

3 **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.

4 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.

Isa 44:28

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.**



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 1:7-8; 5:13-15

CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

Isa 45:13

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.

- Cyrus also had all the vessels of the temple that were taken by Nebuchadnezzar brought to Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah whom he appointed governor, to be returned to the temple (Ezr 1:7-8; 5:13-15)

Ezr 1:7-8

7 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;

8 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.**

Ezr 5:13-15

13 But **in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.**

14 And **the vessels** also of gold and silver of the house of God, **which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple** that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those **did Cyrus** the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were **delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;**

15 And said unto him, **Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple** that is in Jerusalem, **and let the house of God be builded** in his place.

The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 3:8-13; 5:16



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CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

- In 535 BC, following the end of the first year of the reign of Cyrus, Daniel retired from his government position (Dan 1:21)
- In the second year of the Jews' return to Jerusalem, which would have been the second year of Cyrus (i.e.- 535 BC), the Jews started to lay the foundation of the temple under the oversight of Sheshbazzar, the governor who received the vessels from Cyrus (Ezr 3:8-13; 5:16) cf. (Ezr 1:7-11)

Ezr 3:8,10-11

8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

Ezr 5:16

Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.

The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 4:1-5



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CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

- Immediately or very shortly after the foundation was started, the enemies of the Jews attempted to hinder the work; first, by trying to deceive the Jews into allowing them to participate in the work and when that failed, they resorted to hiring counsellors (i.e.- lawyers) to file lawsuits
- As a result of the legal complaints, no further progress was made on the temple during the reign of Cyrus (Ezr 4:1-5), even though he was a saved man and Daniel was in a chief position until at least the third year of his reign

Ezr 4:1-5

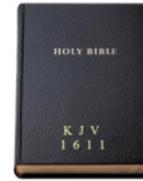
1 Now when **the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin** heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

2 Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, **Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do;** and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, **Ye have nothing to do with us** to build an house unto our God; but **we ourselves together will build** unto the LORD God of Israel, **as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.**

4 Then **the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,**

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.**



The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 10:1

CYRUS THE PERSIAN (cont'd)

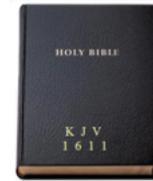
- In the third year of the reign of Cyrus (i.e.- 534 BC), Daniel mourned and fasted for three full weeks and received a revelation regarding things to come (Dan 10:1-12:13) as he was by the Hiddekel (Tigris) river
- Since Daniel continued in a government position unto the first year of Cyrus (Dan 1:21), he was retired at the time
- If Daniel was 19 years old when taken into captivity in 606 BC (Num 14:29-33; Dan 1:4,6,17; 2:1,25 notes), then he was 91-92 years old in 534 BC and did not live much longer; in fact, he may have died that same year because the book of Daniel closes mentioning Daniel's death (Dan 12:13)

Dan 12:13

But go thou thy way till the end be: for **thou shalt rest**, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

- Cyrus reigned as king of the Medo-Persian empire for about seven years (i.e.- 536 BC- 530 BC) and as king of Persia for about 20 years (i.e.- 559 BC- 530 BC)
- Cyrus the Great died in 530 BC at the age of about 54 years old and bequeathed the throne to his oldest son Cambyses II
- Many of the same commentators of the past who correctly identified Darius the Mede as Cyaxares II, also agree on various details regarding Cyrus

The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 10:1



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NOTES ON CYRUS FROM COMMENTATORS OF THE PAST

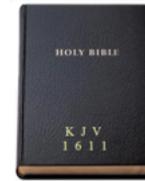
1) R.A. Torrey- *Treasury Of Scripture Knowledge*, Ezra 1:1 note

Cyrus: Cyrus is said to have been the son of Cambyses, king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of Media. He was born about 600 years before Christ, and died at the age of 70, after a reign of 30 years. He was mentioned by name, and his conquests foretold, by the prophet Isaiah, about a century before his birth. Josephus states the partiality he evinced towards the Jews, arose from the circumstance of these prophecies being shown him, probably by Daniel.

2) Albert Barnes- *Barnes Notes On The Whole Bible*, Isaiah 41:2 note

Cyrus was the son of Cambyses, the Persian, and of Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. Astyages is in Scripture called Ahasuerus. Cambyses was, according to Xenophon (Cyr. i.), king of Persia, or, according to Herodotus (i. 107), he was a nobleman. If he was the king of Persia, of course Cyrus was the heir of the throne. Cyrus was born in his father's court, A.M. 3405, or 595 b.c., and was educated with great care. At the age of twelve years, his grandfather, Astyages, sent for him and his mother Mandane to court, and he was treated, of course, with great attention. Astyages, or Ahasuerus, had a son by the name of Cyaxares, who was born about a year before Cyrus, and who was heir to the throne of Media. Some time after this, the son of the king of Assyria having invaded Media, Astyages, with his son Cyaxares, and his grandson Cyrus, marched against him. Cyrus defeated the Assyrians, but, was soon after retailed by his father Cambyses to Persia, that he might be near him.

The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 10:1



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NOTES ON CYRUS FROM COMMENTATORS OF THE PAST (cont'd)

At the age of sixteen, indeed, and when at the court of his grandfather, Cyrus signalized himself for his valor in a war with the king of Babylon. Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had invaded the territories of Media, but was repelled with great loss, and Cyrus pursued him with great slaughter to his own borders. This invasion of Evil-Merodach laid the foundation of the hostility between Babylon and Media, which was not terminated until Babylon was taken and destroyed by the united armies of Media and Persia. When Astyages died, after a reign of thirty-five years, he was succeeded by his son Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus. He was still involved in a war with the Babylonians. Cyrus was made general of the Persian troops, and at the head of an army of 30,000 men was sent to assist Cyaxares, whom the Babylonians were preparing to attack. The Babylonian monarch at this time was Neriglissar, who had murdered Evil-Merodach, and who had usurped the crown of Babylon. Cyaxares and Cyrus carried on the war against Babylon during the reigns of Neriglissar and his son Laborosoarchod, and of Nabonadius. The Babylonians were defeated, and Cyrus carried his arms into the countries to the west beyond the river Halys - a river running north into the Euxine Sea - and subdued Cappadocia, and conquered Croesus, the rich king of Lydia, and subdued almost all Asia Minor. Having conquered this country, he returned again, re-crossed the Euphrates, turned his arms against the Assyrians, and then laid siege to Babylon, and took it (see the notes at Isa. 13; 14), and subdued that mighty kingdom.

During the life of Cyaxares his uncle, he acted in conjunction with him. On the death of this king of Media, Cyrus married his daughter, and thus united the crowns of Media and Persia. After this marriage, he subdued all the nations between Syria and the Red Sea, and died at the age of seventy, after a reign of thirty years. Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, is in the Scripture called Darius the Mede Dan 5:31, and it is said there, that it was by him that Babylon was taken. But Babylon was taken by the valor of Cyrus, though acting in connection with, and under Cyaxares; and it is said to have been taken by Cyaxares, or Darius, though it was done by the personal valor of Cyrus.

The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 10:1



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NOTES ON CYRUS FROM COMMENTATORS OF THE PAST (cont'd)

Josephus (Ant. xii. 13) says, that Darius with his ally, Cyrus, destroyed the kingdom of Babylon. Jerome assigns three reasons why Babylon is said in the Scriptures to have been taken by Darius or Cyaxares; first, because he was the older of the two; secondly, because the Medes were at that time more famous than the Persians; and thirdly, because the uncle ought to be preferred to the nephew. The Greek writers say that Babylon was taken by Cyrus, without mentioning Cyaxares or Darius, doubtless because it was done solely by his valor. For a full account of the reign of Cyrus, see Xen. Cyr., Herodotus.

3) Adam Clarke- *Clarke's Commentary*, Ezra 1:1 note

Cyrus - This prince, so eminent in antiquity, is said to have been the son of Cambyses king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages king of the Medes; and was born about six hundred years before Christ. Josephus accounts for his partiality to the Jews from this circumstance; that he was shown the places in Isaiah the prophet where he is mentioned by name, and his exploits and conquests foretold: see Isa 44:28; Isa 45:1, etc. Finding himself thus distinguished by the God of the Jews, he was anxious to give him proofs of his gratitude in return; and so made the decree in favor of the Jews, restored their sacred vessels, gave them liberty to return to their own land, and encouraged them to rebuild the temple of Jehovah, etc. It is very probable that when Cyrus took Babylon he found Daniel there, who had been long famed as one of the wisest ministers of state in all the East; and it is most likely that it was this person who pointed out to him the prophecy of Isaiah, and gave him those farther intimations relative to the Divine will which were revealed to himself.

The Medo-Persian Empire- Daniel 10:1



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NOTES ON CYRUS FROM COMMENTATORS OF THE PAST (cont'd)

4) Robert Jamieson, Andrew Fausset, and David Brown- *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*, Isaiah 41:2 note

the righteous man — Cyrus; as Isa 44:28; Isa 45:1-4, Isa 45:13; Isa 46:11, “from the East,” prove. Called “righteous,” not so much on account of his own equity [Herodotus, 3.89], as because he fulfilled God’s righteous will in restoring the Jews from their unjust captivity.

Cyrus is said to come from the East, because Persia is east of Babylon; but in Isa 41:25, from the north, in reference to Media. At the same time the full sense of righteousness, or righteous, and of the whole passage, is realized only in Messiah, Cyrus’ antitype (Cyrus knew not God, Isa 45:4). He goes forth as the Universal Conqueror of the “nations,” in righteousness making war (Psa 2:8, Psa 2:9; Rev 19:11-15; Rev 6:2; Rev 2:26, Rev 2:27). “The idols He shall utterly abolish” (compare Isa 7:23, with Isa 2:18).

5) John Gill- *Gill’s Commentary*, Ezra 1:1 note

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,.... Not in the first of his reign over Persia, for he had been many years king over that, and now had all the kingdoms of the earth given him, Ezz 1:2, but over Babylon, and the dominions belonging to it, which commenced with Darius upon the taking of Babylon; he reigned in all thirty years, as Cicero from a Persian writer relates; or twenty nine, according to Herodotus; but in what year this was is not certain; Africanus, has proved, from various historians, that it was the first year of the fifty fifth Olympiad, perhaps about the twentieth of Cyrus's Persian government; See Gill on Dan 10:1,

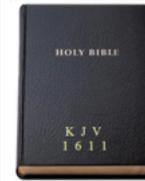


The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

Dan 11:2

And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

- The prophecy of Daniel 11:2 is a continuation of the conversation between the angel of the Lord and Daniel that began in Daniel 10 in the third year of Cyrus (Dan 10:1)
- According to the prophecy, there would be three Persian kings after Cyrus and the fourth would be the richest of all of them and the one that would rally the empire against the Greeks
- This aligns with the secular history record as follows



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