

Mt. Pleasant  
Bible Institute  
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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- Dan 11:2

### DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- Zerubbabel responded by reminding the king of his vow to God in case he should ever become king- that he would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and restore the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon (*Antiquities* 11.3.7)
- Darius was pleased with what Zerubbabel requested, arose and kissed him, and wrote the orders and letters to resume the work on the temple and restore the vessels (*Antiquities* 11.3.8)
- The circumstances precipitating resumption of the work on the second temple are much different in the Bible
- The Lord sent the prophet Haggai to preach to Zerubbabel the governor of Judah, to Joshua the high priest, and to the people that they should stop sitting around and get back to work building the house of God and they did (Hag 1:1-15)
- This is corroborated by Ezra (Ezr 5:1-2)
- Since the details regarding what caused the Jews to resume building the temple are provided in the OT books of Ezra and Haggai, it is strange that Josephus cites what appears to be contradictory circumstances
- It is interesting to note that Josephus' account of the three bodyguards and their three speeches is similar to the pseudepigraphal book of 3 Esdras 3-4 contained in the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible (1582/1609)

# The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2



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## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### **3 Esdras**

#### **CHAP. III.**

After a solemne supper made to al the court, and chief princes, king Darius sleeping: three esquires of the bodie keeping watch, proposed the question: Whether wine, or a King, or emen, or the truth doth excel? The first prayseth wine.

1 KING Darius made a great supper to al his domestical seruantes, and to al the magistrates of Media and Persia,

2 and to al that were purple, and to the praetors, and counsuls, and iuetenantes vnder him from India vnto AETHiopia, an hundred twentie seuen prouinces.

3 And when they had eaten and drunken, and returned ful, then Darius went vp into his chamber, and lept, and awaked.

4 Then those three youngmen keepers of his bodie, which garded the kings bodie, sayd one to an other;

5 Let euerie one of vs say a word that may excel: & whose word oeuere shall appeare wiser then the others, to him wil king Darius geue great giftes,

6 to be couered with purple, & to drinke in gold, and to sleepe vpon gold, & a chariote with a bridle of gold, & bonet of silke, and a cheyne about his necke:

7 and he shall sit in the second place next Darius for his wisdom. And he shall be called the cosin of Darius.

8 Then euerie one writing his word igned it, and they put it vnder the pillow of Darius the king,

9 and they sayd. When the king shall rise, we wil geue him our writings: and which soeuer of the three the king shall iudge, and the agistrates of Persia, that his word is the wiser, to him shall the victorie be geuen as is written.

10 One wrote: Wine is strong.

11 An other wrote, a King is stronger.

12 The third wrote, Wemen re more strong: but aboue al thinges truth ouercometh.

13 And when the king was risen, they tooke their writings, and gaue him, and he read.

14 And sending he called al the Magistrates of ersians, and the Medes, and them that weare purple, and the pretors, and the ouerseers;

15 and they sate in the councel: and the writings were read before them.

16 And he sayd: Cal the ounge men, and they shall declare their owne wordes. And they were called, and went in.

17 And he sayd to them: Declare vnto vs concerning these thinges which are written. And the first egan, he that had spoken of the strength of wine,

18 and sayd: O ye men, how doth wine preuaile ouer al men that drinke! it seduceth the minde.

19 And also the mind of king and orphane it aketh vaine. Also of the bondman and the free, of the rich man and the poore,

20 and euerie mind it turneth into securitie and pleasantnes, and it remembreth not any sorow and dewtie,

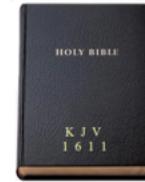
21 and I hartes it maketh honest, and it remembreth not king, nor magistrate, and it maketh a man speake al thinges by talentes.

22 And when they haue drunken, they remember not frendship, nor rotherhood: yea and not long after they take swordes.

23 And when they are recouered and risen from the wine, they remember not what they haue done.

24 O ye men, doth not wine excel? ho thinketh to doe so? And hauing sayd this, he held his peace.

# The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2



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## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### 3 Esdras

#### CHAP. III.

The second prayseth the excellencie of a king: The third (which is Zorobabel) commendeth wemen: but preferreth truth aboue al. Which is so approued, and he is rewarded.

1 The king moreouer at his request restoreth the holie vessels of the temple, and granteth meanes to build the cite of Ierusalem, and the temple. AND the next began to speake, he that spake of the strength of a king.

2 O ye men excel not the men excel, which obteyne land and sea, and al thinges that are in them?

3 But a king xcelleth aboue al thinges, and hath dominion ouer them: and euerie thing whatsoever he shal say to them, they doe.

4 And if he send them to warryers, they goe, and throw downe mountaines, nd the walles, and towers.

5 They kil, and are killed: and the kinges word they transgresse not. For if they shal ouercome, they bring to the king al thinges whatsoever they haue taken for a raye.

6 In like maner also al others, for so many as are not souldiars, nor fight, but til the ground: when they shal reape, againe they bring tributes to the king.

7 And he being one onlie if he ay: Kil ye, they kil: say he: forgeue, the forgeue.

8 say he: strike: they strike: say he, destroy, they destroy: say he build, they build.

9 say he, cut downe, they cut downe, say he plant, they lant:

10 and al the people, & potestates here him, and beside this he sitteth downe, and drinketh, and sleepeth.

11 And others gard him round about, and can not goe euerie one, and doe their wne workes, but at a word are obedient to him.

12 O ye men, how doth not a king excel that is so renommed? And he held his peace.

13 The third that spake of wemen and truth, this is orobabel, began to speake.

14 O ye men, not the great king, & many men, neither is it wine that dothe excel. Who is it then that hath the dominion of them?

15 Haue not wemen brought forth he king, and al the people, that ruleth ouer land & sea:

16 and were they not borne of them, and did not they bring vp them which planted the vineyardes, whereof wine is made?

17 And they ake the garmentes of al men, & they doe honor to al men, and men can not be separed from wemen.

18 If they haue gathered gold and siluer, and euerie beutiful thing, & see a woman comelie nd fayre,

19 leauing al these thinges they fixe their looke vpon her, & with open mouth beholde her, and allure her more then gold and siluer, and euerie precious thing.

20 Man forsaketh his ather that brought him vp, and his countrie, and ioyneth himself to a woman.

21 And with a woman he refresheth his soul: and neither doth he remember father, nor mother, nor countrie.

22 nd hereby you must know that wemen rule ouer you. Are you not sorie?

23 And a man taketh his sword, & goeth into the way to commit theftes and murders, & to sayle seas & riuers,

24 and eeth a lyon, and goeth in darkenes: and when he hath committed theft, and fraude, and spoyles, he bringeth it to his beloued.

25 And againe, man loueth his wife more then father or mother.

26 And many haue become madde for their wiues: and haue been made bondmen for them:

27 and many haue perished and bene slayne, and haue sinned for wemen.

28 And now beleue me, hat the king is great in his powre: because al countries are afrayd to touch him.

29 Neuertheles I saw Apemes the daughter of Bezaces the concubine of a meruelous king, sitting by the king at is right hand,

30 and taking of the crowne from his head, and putting it vpon her self, and with the palme of her left hand she stroke the king.

31 And beside these thinges he with open mouth eheld her: and if she smiled he laugheth, and if she be angrie with him, he flattereth, til he be reconciled to her fauour.

32 O ye men, why are not wemen stronger? Great is the earth, and high is he heauen: who doeth these thinges?

# The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2



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## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### **3 Esdras**

#### CHAP. III. (cont'd)

33 And then the king and they that weare purple looked one vpon an other. And he began to speake of truth.

34 O ye men, are not wemen strong? The earth is great and heauen is high: & the swift course of the sunne turneth the heauen round into his place in one day.

35 Is not he magnifical that doth these thinges, and the truth great, and tronger aboue al thinges?

36 Al the earth calleth vpon the truth, heauen also blesseth it, and al workes are moued, and tremble at it, and there is not any thing with it vniust.

37 Wine is vniust, he king is vniust, wemen are vniust, al the sonnes of men are vniust, and al their workes are vniust, and in them is not truth, and they shal perish in their iniquitie:

38 and truth abyde, and roweth strong for euer, and liueth, and preuayleth for euer and euer.

39 Neither is there with it acception of persons, nor differences: but the thinges that are iust it doth to al men, to the vniust and malignant, and al men are wel pleased in the workes thereof.

40 And there is no vniust thing in the iudgement therof, but strength, and reigne, and power, and maiestie of worldes. Blessed e the God of truth.

41 And he left speaking. And al the people cryed, and sayd: Great is truth and it preuailleth.

42 Then the king sayd to him: Aske, if thou wilt any more, then the thinges hat are writen, and I wil geue it thee, according as thou art found wiser then thy neighbours, & thou shalt sitte next to me, and shalt be called my cosin.

43 Then sayd he to the king: Be midful f thy vow, which thou hast vowed, to build Ierusalem in the day that thou didst receiue the kingdom:

44 and to send backe al the vessels that were taken out of Ierusalem, which Cyrus eparated, when he sacked Babylon, and would haue sent them backe thither.

45 And thou hast vowed to build the temple, which the Idumeians burnt, when Iurie was destroyed of the haldees.

46 And now this is that which I aske Lord, & which I desire, this is the maiestie which I desire of thee, that thou performe the vowe which thou hast vowed to the king of heauen by hy mouth.

47 Then Darius the king rising vp, kissed him: and wrote letters to al the officers, and ouerseers, and them that weare purple, that they should conduct him, and them that were with im, al going vp to build Ierusalem.

48 And to al the ouerseers that were in Syria, and Phoenice, and Libanus he wrote letters, that they should draw Ceder trees from Libanus into Ierusalem, to uild the citie with them.

49 And he wrote to al the Iewes which went vp from the kingdome into Iurie for libertie, euerie mightie man, & magistrate, & ouerseer not to come vpon them to their ates,

50 and al the countrie which they had obtayned to be free vnto them, & that the Idumeians leaue the castels which they possesse of the Iewes,

51 and to the building of the temple to geue uerie yeare twentie talentes vntil it were thoroughly built:

52 & vpon the altars to burne holocausts dayly, as they haue commandment: to offer other ten talentes euery yeare,

53 & to al that go orth from Babylon to build the citie, that there should be libertie as wel to them as to their children, and to al the priestes that goe before.

54 And he wrote a quantitie also, and commanded the aced stole to be geuen, wherein they should serue;

55 and to the Leuites he wrote to geue preceptes, vntil the day wherein the house shal be finished, and Ierusalem builded.

56 And to al that epe the citie, he wrote portions and wages to be geuen to them.

57 And he sent away al the vessels whatsoever Cyrus had separated from Babylon, and al thinges whatsoever Cyrus sayd, he lso commanded to be donne, and to be sent to Ierusalem.

58 And when that yong man was gone forth, lyfting vp his face toward Ierusalem, he blessed the king of heauen,

59 & sayd: Of thee s victorie, and of thee is wisdom, and glorie. And I am thy seruant.

60 Blessed art thou which hast geuen me wisdom, and I wil confesse to thee Lord God of our fathers.

61 And he toke the etters, and went into Babylon. And he came, and told al his brethren that were in Babylon:

62 and they blessed the God of their fathers, because he gaue them remission and refreshing,

63 that they should goe vp and build Ierusalem, and the temple wherein his name was renowned, and they reioyced with musike and ioy seuen dayes.



## The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 4:24

### DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- Josephus is the most credible historian but he is not infallible- his history regarding the circumstances precipitating resumption on the work of the temple is incorrect
- The Bible is the only infallible source of history and contains all that we need to know about the circumstances precipitating resumption on the work of the temple and the character and reign of Darius I Hystaspes
- DARIUS appears 25x and refers to: (1) Darius the Mede 8x (Dan 5:31; 6:1,6,9,25,28; 9:1; 11:1); and (2) Darius I Hystaspes 17x (Ezr 4:5,24; 5:5-7; 6:1,12-15; Neh 12:22; Hag 1:1,15; 2:10; Zec 1:1,7; 7:1)
- The letter issued by Ahasuerus/Artaxerxes (i.e.- Cambyses II) in response to the the official suit filed by Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and “the rest of their companions” ordered the work on the second temple to cease (Ezr 4:6-7,17-22)
- This cease and desist order was still in effect when Darius became king in 522 BC
- We may not know exactly what took place during the first year of the reign of Darius, but the Bible tells what took place thereafter, beginning with the second year of the reign of Darius



# The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 1:1

## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### Hag 1:1

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

- It all started in the second year of Darius, in the sixth month of his reign, on the first day of the month

**Note:** “The sixth month” does not refer to the sixth month on the Jewish calendar (i.e.- Elul) (Neh 6:15), which corresponds to August-September on the Gregorian calendar, but to the sixth month of the second year of the reign of Darius. Otherwise, the events of Haggai 2 took place before those of Haggai 1 (Hag 2:1,10 notes).

- Since Darius began to reign in September of 522 BC, the first day of the sixth month of the second year of his reign would correspond to February 520 BC
- It was at this time that the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai and he preached it to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Joshua the son of Josedech, leaders of the Jews’ restoration to Jerusalem (Ezr 3:8)
- Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and Joshua was the high priest
- The message Haggai preached was that the Jews were experiencing difficulties and drought because they left the house of the Lord waste





# The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 1:2-11

## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### Hag 1:2-11

2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, **This people say, The time is not come**, the time **that the LORD'S house should be built**.

3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 **Is it time for** you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and **this house lie waste?**

5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

6 **Ye have sown much, and bring in little**; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

8 **Go up** to the mountain, and bring wood, **and build the house**; and **I will take pleasure in it**, and **I will be glorified**, saith the LORD.

9 **Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little**; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. **Why?** saith the LORD of hosts. **Because of mine house that is waste**, and ye run every man unto his own house.

10 **Therefore** the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

11 And **I called for a drought upon the land**, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

- They did not think it was time to rebuild the temple (probably because Cambyses' cease and desist order was still in effect), but the Lord told them to "build the house"



# The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:1

## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- The timing of Haggai 1:1-11 corresponds with Ezra 5:1, which occurs in the second year of the reign of Darius (Ezr 4:24)

### **Ezr 5:1**

**Then the prophets, Haggai** the prophet, **and Zechariah** the son of Iddo, **prophesied unto the Jews** that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

- The prophesying of Zechariah could refer to Zechariah preaching the same message as Haggai at the time but it wasn't recorded in the book of Zechariah, or it could refer to the prophecies in the book of Zechariah which began two months later (Zec 1:1)

### **Hag 1:12-15**

**12 Then Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **and Joshua** the son of Josedech, **the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD** their God, **and the words of Haggai the prophet,** as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.

**13 Then spake Haggai** the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, **saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.**

**14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and **the spirit of Joshua** the son of Josedech, the high priest, **and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD** of hosts, their God,

**15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius** the king.



## The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 1:12-15

### DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- As a result of Haggai's preaching, the Lord stirred up the spirits of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the people so that 23 days after the preaching started, they all rose up and resumed the work on the temple (Hag 1:12-15)
- The Jews resumed the work on the 24th day of the sixth month of the second year of the reign of Darius, which would correspond to late February or early March 520 BC
- The Lord also inspired Haggai to give them words of encouragement and promise that the Lord was with them (Hag 1:13), knowing they would meet resistance for choosing to obey the word of God rather than the laws of men
- The timing of Haggai 1:12-15 and resumption of the work on the temple corresponds with Ezra 5:2

### **Ezr 5:2**

**Then rose up Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **and Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, **and began to build the house of God** which is at Jerusalem: and with them were **the prophets of God helping them.**

- The prophets of God that were helping them were Haggai and Zechariah (Ezr 5:1)

# The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:2



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## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- When the Jews resumed work on the temple, the sights and sounds of the rebuilding effort did not go unnoticed by their enemies that opposed the work from the beginning
- While the Bible records details of the Jews' enemies opposing the work on the temple when it was originally started in the second year of Cyrus (Ezr 4:1-6), it does not record any details of the Jews' enemies confronting them regarding their direct violation of Cambyses' cease and desist order that was still in effect at this time
- Josephus mentions the opposition and resistance in *Antiquities* 11.4.3-4:

**3** But when the Samaritans, who were still enemies to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, heard the sound of the trumpets, they came running together, and desired to know what was the occasion of this tumult; and when they perceived that it was from the Jews, who had been carried captive to Babylon, and were rebuilding their temple, they came to Zorobabel and to Jeshua, and to the heads of the families, and desired that they would give them leave to build the temple with them, and to be partners with them in building it; for they said, "We worship their God, and especially pray to him, and are desirous of their religious settlement, and this ever since Shalmanezar, the king of Assyria, transplanted us out of Cuthah and Media to this place." When they said thus, Zorobabel and Jeshua the high priest, and the heads of the families of the Israelites, replied to them, that it was impossible for them to permit them to be their partners, whilst they [only] had been appointed to build that temple at first by Cyrus, and now by Darius, although it was indeed lawful for them to come and worship there if they pleased, and that they could allow them nothing but that in common with them, which was common to them with all other men, to come to their temple and worship God there.

# The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:3



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## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

4 When the Cetheans heard this, for **the Samaritans** have that appellation, they had indignation at it, and **persuaded the nations** of Syria **to desire of the governors, in the same manner as they had done formerly in the days of Cyrus, and again in the days of Cambyses afterwards, to put a stop to the building of the temple,** and to endeavor to delay and protract the Jews in their zeal about it. **Now at this time Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes, with certain others, came up to Jerusalem, and asked the rulers of the Jews,** by whose grant it was that they built the temple in this manner, since it was more like to a citadel than a temple? and for what reason it was that they built cloisters and walls, and those strong ones too, about the city?

- If Josephus is correct, then the resistance posed by the Jews' enemies at this time was very similar to their resistance in the beginning (Ezr 4:1-6), only this time they sent their complaint to the governors rather than to the king
- It was then that Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes, with certain others came to Jerusalem and asked the rulers of the Jews by what authority they were building the temple and for what reason
- The Bible picks up the historical record at this point in Ezra 5:3
- The Bible calls the "Sisinnes", "Sathrabuzanes", and "certain others" of *Antiquities* 11.4.4 as "Tatnai", "Shethar-boznai", and "their companions"
- THEIR COMPANIONS appears 6x and always refers to the Jews' enemies that resisted the rebuilding of the temple (Ezr 4:7,9,17,23; 5:3; 6:13) cf. (Ezr 4:9-10)



# The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:3-5

## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

### Ezr 5:3-5

3 At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?

5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

- Tatnai was a governor just like Zerubbabel and came with Shethar-boznai and their companions to Jerusalem to investigate the complaint they received about the work resuming on the temple
- They confronted the elders of the Jews and asked them who gave them the authority to resume the work (in light of Cambyses' cease and desist order still being in effect), and also asked for all their names (Ezr 5:10)
- The Lord was the one who commanded them to resume the work (Hag 1:8), but the Lord knew that the Jews could not invoke him as their authority, so he gave the elders the wisdom to invoke the original decree of Cyrus (Ezr 5:13-14), since Cyrus was revered by the Persians
- Tatanai, Shethar-boznai and their companions could not say or do anything to this response other than to send an inquiry letter to king Darius to confirm the decree



## The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:6-17

### DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- The contents of this letter are provided in Ezra 5:6-17

#### **Ezr 5:6-17**

**6** The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

**7** They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace.

**8** Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.

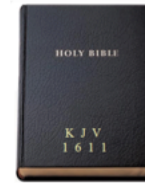
**9** Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?

**10** We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.

**11** And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

**12** But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

**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.



## The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 5:6-17

### DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

**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;

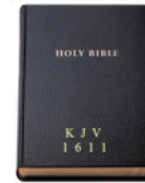
**15** And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.

**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.

**17** Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

- The letter documented the facts correctly and appeared to be a sincere request to confirm whether or not Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild the temple and restore the vessels
- It is not clear why the Persians did not recall Cyrus' decree since it took place only 15-20 years before these events (i.e.- 536 BC vs 520 BC) and was such a significant event in history
- It is possible that they remembered it but, given the controversy associated with it, they demanded WRITTEN proof of its existence





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

## DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- The truth was, the Lord made sure that Cyrus put the decree in writing when he made it, as testified by at least two scripture witnesses

### **2 Chr 36:22-23**

22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

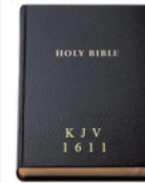
### **Ezr 1:1-4**

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.



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