

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- Ezr 6:1

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- When Darius received and read the letter, he made a decree that search be made among the rolls in the king's treasure house at Babylon to determine if Cyrus issued such a decree in writing

Ezr 6:1

Then **Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls**, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.

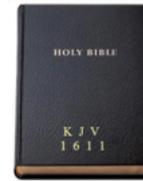
- The ramifications were great because if the decree was not in writing, the cease and desist order issued by Cambyses would be enforced; but if the decree was in writing then the cease and desist order would be of no effect because according to the laws of the Persians and the Medes, any decree signed in writing by the king could not be changed or altered

Est 1:19

If it please **the king**, let there go **a royal commandment from him**, and **let it be written** among **the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered**, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Dan 6:8

Now, **O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.**



The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 2:1-9

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- The Bible does not specify how long it took for the search to be made but the Jews were not restrained from continuing work on the temple during this time
- It is possible that the search took three months (Hag 1:15; 2:18), and if so, then some of the prophecies given to Haggai and Zechariah fit into this time period

Hag 2:1-9

1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

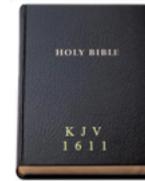
9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.



The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 2:1-9

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- The Lord gave the prophecy of Haggai 2:1-9 to Haggai on the 21st day of the seventh month of the second year of the reign of Darius (Hag 2:1), which was 27 days after the Jews resumed work on the temple (Hag 1:15) and corresponds to March or April 520 BC
- In Haggai 2:3-5, the Lord encouraged Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the people to be strong and fear not because the LORD of hosts was with them
- The “LORD of hosts” is a military term and denotes that Lord is the “commander-in-chief” and general of all the armies of heaven
- He promised that just as sure as he brought their fathers out of Egypt so he would bring them through this current crisis
- How could the Jews fear the outcome when the Lord promised that he and all the host of heaven at his command would defend his people?
- In Haggai 2:6-9, the Lord promised that one day, there would be a temple that exceeded the glory of the first temple- a prophetic reference to the Millennial temple



The Medo-Persian Empire- Zec 1:1-6

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- About one month after the prophecy of Haggai 2:1-9, the Lord gave the prophecy of Zechariah 1:1-6 to Zechariah in the eighth month of the second year of the reign of Darius corresponds to April or May 520 BC

Zec 1:1-6

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.**

4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Turn ye now from your evil ways,** and from your evil doings: **but they did not hear,** nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

5 Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

- The Lord told the people not to be like their fathers who did not repent at the preaching of the former prophets, but to turn to the Lord from their evil ways so he could bless them



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 6:2-5

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- About one month after the prophecy of Zechariah 1:1-6 and three months from the time the Jews resumed work on the temple, the written decree of Cyrus was found in the royal palace at Achmetha (i.e.- Ecbatana)

Ezr 6:2-5

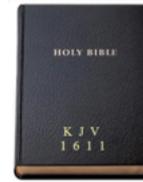
2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written:

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house:

5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.

- The contents confirmed that Cyrus decreed that the temple of God be rebuilt by the Jews at the king's expense and that the vessels that were taken by Nebuchadnezzar be restored



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 6:6-12

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

Ezr 6:6-12

6 Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which *are* beyond the river, be ye far from thence:

7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail:

10 That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this.

12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

- Upon this confirmation, Darius ordered Tatnai, Shethar-boznai, and their companions to back down and that the work on the temple was to resume unhindered



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 6:6-12

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

- He then issued a decree that the work be additionally subsidized from the tribute beyond the river (Ezr 6:8), which came the provinces under Tatnai's governorship (Ezr 6:6) and included people who wanted the work of the temple to cease
- It is just like the Lord to work things out so that the enemies of God finance the work of God through their taxes
- Also included in Darius' decree was that ANYTHING the Jews needed for the burnt offerings was to be provided for them daily without fail (Ezr 6:9), and that ANYONE who tried to alter his decree at ANY TIME was to be hanged on a gallows made by timber torn from his own house cf. (Est 7:9), and his house demolished and made a dunghill (Ezr 6:11)
- Darius was not a king to be trifled with- this was his response to discovering that Cambyses' cease and desist order (Ezr 4:17-22) was an attempt to alter Cyrus' decree (Ezr 1:1-4)
- Darius then invoked the Lord in his decree, and asked that he would destroy all kings and people who would ever seek to alter and destroy the temple (Ezr 6:12)
- He lastly ordered that the decree be immediately carried out



The Medo-Persian Empire- Ezr 6:13

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

Ezr 6:13

Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.

- Tatnai, Shethar-boznai, and their companions immediately complied and backed off
- While the exact time of Darius' decree is not clear, it is possible that it was issued exactly three months from the date the Jews resumed work on the temple
- The Jews resumed work on the temple on the 24th day of the SIXTH month of the second year of the reign of Darius (Hag 1:15), and three months later on the 24th day of the NINTH month of the second year of the reign of Darius, the foundation of the temple was laid (Hag 2:18)
- The laying of the foundation may have been the first act in response to Darius' decree, since part of the Cyrus' decree was to "let the FOUNDATIONS thereof be strongly laid" (Ezr 6:3)
- If Darius' decree was issued on the 24th day of the ninth month of the second year of Darius then it was issued over one month after the prophecy of Zechariah 1:1-6 in May or June 520 BC
- It was also the same day that the Lord gave the prophecies of Haggai 2:10-23 to Haggai

The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 2:10-23



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DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

Hag 2:10-19

10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean.

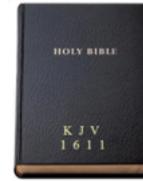
15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.

19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.



The Medo-Persian Empire- Hag 2:10-23

DARIUS I (HYSTASPES) (cont'd)

Hag 2:20-23

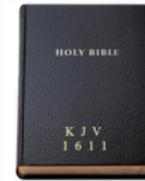
20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,

21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

- The prophecies of Haggai 2:10-19 speak of SEPARATION while the prophecies of Haggai 2:20-23 speak of the SECOND COMING



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