

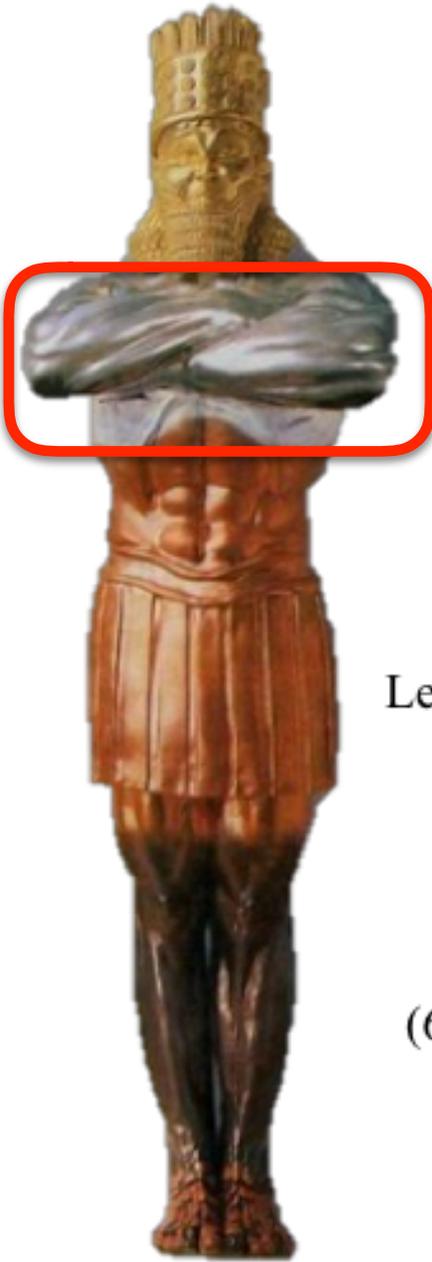
Mt. Pleasant
Bible Institute
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A ministry of the
Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church

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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)



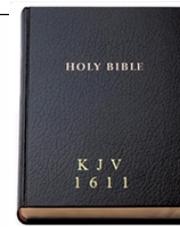
4. Rome

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

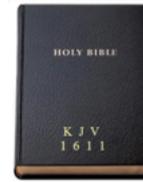




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The Four Gentile World Empires

The Medo-Persian Empire



The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

DARIUS I HYSTASPES

- In 491 BC, Darius sent ambassadors to all parts of Greece demanding their submission
- Almost all of the Greek city-states submitted except the two largest, Athens and Sparta, both of whom executed the Persian ambassadors
- In 490 BC, following the execution of his ambassadors, Darius ordered a second campaign to invade Greece
- The second campaign led by Datis and Artaphernes met with initial success but they were routed by the vastly smaller Athenian army at the Battle of Marathon
- The Athenians sent a messenger to Sparta requesting their support but they declined due to being engaged in a religious festival at the time
- The Athenian army, led by their general Miltiades, outflanked the vast Persian forces and slaughtered them, forcing them to retreat in shame back to Asia
- The Battle of Marathon marked the end of the first Persian invasion of Greece and is considered a turning point in the Greco-Persian Wars because it proved to the Greeks that they could defeat the massive Persian forces and that they could do it without the support of Sparta
- For the next three years (i.e.- 489 BC- 487 BC), Darius prepared for a much larger invasion of Greece to fully and firmly subjugate it, and to punish Athens and Sparta



The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

DARIUS I HYSTASPES

- But before he could make final preparations, a revolt broke out in Egypt due to heavy taxes and the deportation of craftsmen to build the royal palaces at Susa and Persepolis
- Darius intended on leading the armies to put down the revolt so he was required by Persian law to name his royal successor before going to battle
- Two of his sons laid claim as heir to the throne- Artabazenes, his actual firstborn son with the daughter of Gobryas (one of the seven nobles who conspired in the assassination of Smerdis) and Xerxes, his firstborn son with Atossa, his favored wife and eldest daughter of Cyrus
- Artabazenes argued that he should be heir because it was the established custom throughout the world that the eldest son of the king should be heir
- Xerxes argued that he should be heir because he was the eldest son of Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, and it was Cyrus who the Persians owed everything to
- Before Darius made his selection, a man named Demaratus, who had been banished from Sparta, came to Susa and advised Xerxes on the law of Sparta
- Under the law of Sparta, if a king had sons both before he became king and after he became king, the firstborn son after he became king was appointed heir



The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

DARIUS I HYSTASPES

- Xerxes followed Demaratus' council and pleaded his case to Darius
- Darius chose Xerxes as his heir over Artabazenes, being convinced by Xerxes' argument that king's heir should be his firstborn son after he became KING rather than his firstborn son when he was a SERVANT
- After Darius appointed Xerxes as his heir, he attempted to deal with the revolt in Egypt but his failing health worsened, rendering him unable to lead the armies
- His health also prevented him from being able to execute his plans for the large scale invasion of Greece
- A year later, in 486 BC, Darius I Hystaspes died at the age of 64 after a reign of 36 years (i.e.- 522 BC- 486 BC) and the kingdom passed to his son Xerxes I (*The Histories*, 7.2-4)



The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

XERXES I

Dan 11:2

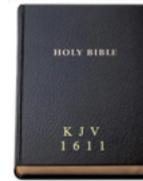
And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

- Daniel 11:2 was a prophecy given “in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia” (Dan 10:1), so the four Persian kings mentioned are the four who immediately succeeded Cyrus

THE FOUR PERSIAN KINGS (Dan 11:2)

- 1) Cambyses II- 530 BC- 522 BC
- 2) Smerdis (Bardiya; Gaumata)- 522 BC
- 3) Darius I Hystaspes- 522 BC- 486 BC
- 4) **Xerxes I- 486 BC- 465 BC**

- The fourth is said to be FAR RICHER than all the other kings and will use his riches and strength to STIR UP ALL the Medo-Persian empire to fight against Greece
- The fourth king clearly corresponds to the XERXES I of secular history



The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2

XERXES I

- XERXES= the ancient Greek equivalent of AHASUERUS, which is a Hebrew transliteration of the Old Persian word *Khshayarsha* meaning “the mighty”
- Xerxes I, or Xerxes the Great, was born in 519 BC to Darius I Hystaspes and Atossa, the eldest daughter of Cyrus
- Darius I Hystaspes appointed Xerxes heir to the throne over his older brother Artabazenes because he was the first son born AFTER he became king and the firstborn son of Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus (he was not only of the bloodline of Achaemenes, but also of Cyrus)
- Xerxes ascended to the throne in 486 BC following the death of Darius I and married his cousin Amestris, whose father was Otanes (one of the seven conspirators against Smerdis) and whose mother was a sister of Darius
- AMESTRIS= Old Persian for “strong woman”, and could be the VASHTI of the book of Esther
- In 486 BC, Xerxes’ first order of business as king was to put down the revolt in Egypt that started at the end of Darius’ reign
- He was successful and appointed his brother Achaemenes as satrap in order to ensure a harder yoke was enforced upon Egypt
- In 485 BC, an insurrection occurred at Babylon and Xerxes sent forces to re-subjugate the city

The Medo-Persian Empire- Dan 11:2



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XERXES I

- In 484 BC, he outraged the Babylonians by violently confiscating and melting down the golden statue of Bel (i.e.- Marduk, Merodach), the hands of which the rightful king of Babylon had to clasp each New Year's Day
- This sacrilege led the Babylonians to rebel again in 484 BC and 482 BC before Xerxes laid siege to the city and crushed the rebellion
- From that time, Xerxes refused to bear the title of “King of Babylon”, choosing rather to be named “King of Persia and Media”, “Great King”, “King of Kings” (i.e.- *Shahanshah*) and “King of Nations” cf. (Gen 14:1,9)
- Xerxes seemed to ignore many of the relationships established with former allies, treating them all as subjects to his rule
- One notable exception was that he retained the positive and favorable relations with the Jews established by his father Darius
- With order restored in the empire, Xerxes turned his attention back to a full-scale invasion of Greece by amassing supplies, weaponry, and forces
- In 483 BC, in the third year of his reign, he called for an assembly of the nobles and princes of the provinces (i.e.- governors; satraps) at the royal palace in Susa to share his plans and get their opinions (*The Histories*, 7.8)



The Medo-Persian Empire- Est 1:1-2

XERXES I

Est 1:1-2

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

2 That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

- AHASUERUS= the Hebrew transliteration of the Old Persian word *Khshayarsha* meaning “the mighty”, from which the modern Persian word *Shah* is derived
- The ancient Greek equivalent of AHASUERUS is XERXES
- AHASUERUS was a throne name (e.g.- Pharaoh; Caesar) the Persians attributed to their kings of the Achaemenid dynasty and their Median predecessors who ruled over Persia following the affinity between the two kingdoms instigated by Astyages in 580 BC cf. (Dan 9:1)
- AHASUERUS appears 31x and refers to three different kings: (1) Astyages (Dan 9:1); (2) Cambyses II (Ezr 4:6); and (3) Xerxes I (Est 1:1-2,9-10,15-17,19; 2:1,12,16,21; 3:1,6-8,12; 6:2; 7:5; 8:1,7,10,12; 9:2,20,30; 10:1,3)
- The Ahasuerus of the book of Esther ruled the Medo-Persian empire during its territorial peak (Est 1:1); so he could only be Darius I Hystaspes or Xerxes I

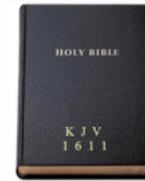
The Medo-Persian Empire- Est 1:1



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EVIDENCE SUPPORTING XERXES IS AHASUERUS OF ESTHER

- 1) Xerxes ruled over India in the third year of his reign (Est 1:3) but Darius did not rule over India until the seventh year of his reign when he conquered lands surrounding the Indus river in 515 BC
- 2) Xerxes could have taken up residence at the royal palace at Susa for half the year and hosted a 180-day long feast there for the nobles and princes in the third year of his reign (Est 1:3-4), but Darius could not because he may not even have begun construction on the royal palace at Susa by the third year of his reign
- 3) Xerxes did not place a restriction on his queen regarding her bloodline, race or nation and Ahasuerus married Esther, a Jew (Est 2:17,20); but Darius vowed that if he became king he would only marry women from within the houses of the seven nobles who conspired with him in the assassination of Smerdis
- 4) Xerxes' reign between 486 BC- 465 BC supports the approximate age of Esther, the age difference between her and Mordecai, the age of Mordecai when he is promoted, and the possibility that Mordecai's great grandfather was taken captive to Babylon with Jehoiachin in 598 BC (Est 2:5-7,17; 10:3); but Darius' reign between 522 BC- 486 BC creates serious issues, including Mordecai being a minimum of 89-99 years old during the time of the book



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