

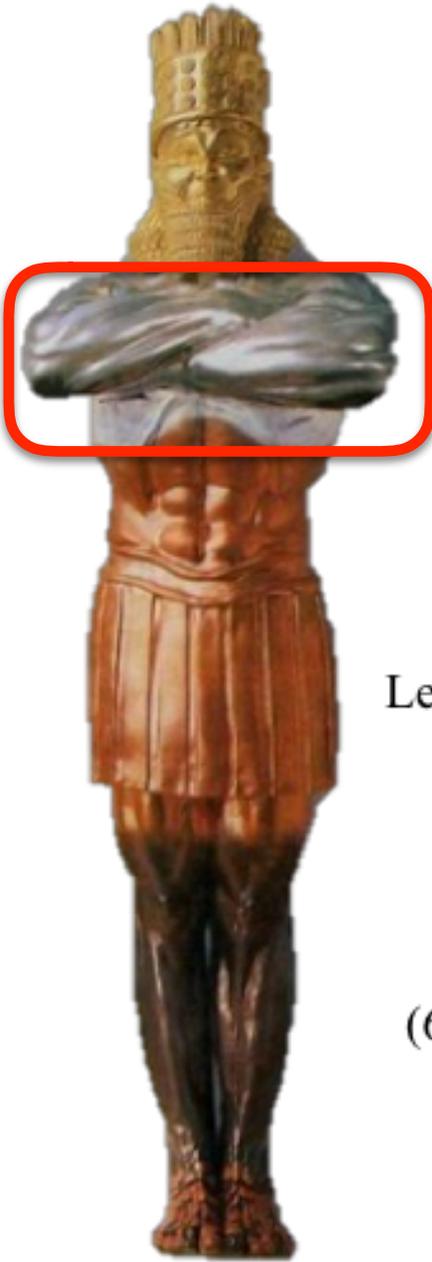
Mt. Pleasant
Bible Institute
www.kjbstudy.com

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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)



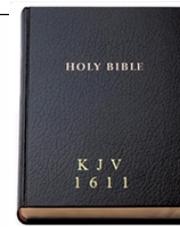
3. Greece
Belly and Thighs of Brass
Leopard with four heads and four wings
(334 BC- 64 BC)



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- Est 2:8



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XERXES I

- Themistocles then sent a trusted messenger privately to Attica with a message for Xerxes informing him that he convinced the other Greeks not to pursue him in his retreat, so he could return home at his leisure undisturbed
- Xerxes and his armies withdrew into Boeotia in early October 480 BC, a few days after the Battle of Salamis, under Mardonius' escort
- Mardonius made the decision to winter in Thessaly and wait until the spring to attack the Peloponnese
- It was at Thessaly that he chose the 300,000 soldiers who would remain with him, the vast majority of which were Persians, followed by Medes and Sacans
- He also chose all of the Immortals except Hydranes, who would not leave the side of the king
- While Xerxes and his army were still at Thessaly, the Spartans received a message from the oracle of Delphi that they should seek satisfaction for the killing of Leonidas, so they sent a messenger to Xerxes making the request
- Xerxes laughed and, pointing to Mardonius, told the messenger that Mardonius would give them the satisfaction they deserved
- Xerxes left Mardonius and 300,000 troops in Thessaly and marched toward the Hellespont with the rest (*The Histories*, 8.110,113-115)

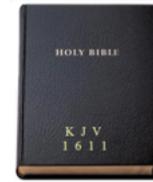


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XERXES I

- Many Persian troops died along the way from plague and dysentery; those who survived did so by plundering the villages and stripping the land bare of all its resources, including eating bark, weeds, and leaves
- Xerxes and his army arrived at the Hellespont 45 days after leaving Thessaly with a fraction of the men he started with (i.e.- some sources cite about 60,000)
- When they arrived, the pontoon bridges had been destroyed by a storm so it was impossible to cross the Hellespont on foot
- But the Persian ships had arrived, so they boarded and sailed across the Hellespont to Abydos, and then went to Sardis (*The Histories*, 8.115,117)
- After Xerxes arrived at Sardis he fell in lust after the wife of his brother Masistes, the satrap of Bactria and one of the chief marshals of his armies
- He sent her messages but she repeatedly refused his advances, and boldly so, because she knew he would not force her out of respect for his brother
- In an effort to get closer to her and win her over, Xerxes betrothed his oldest son Darius to her daughter Artaynta
- When Xerxes returned to the royal palace at Susa (Herodotus does not indicate how long Xerxes remained in Sardis) and received Artaynta there as his son's bride, he lost interest in Masistes' wife and fell a lusting after Artaynta and started an affair with her (*The Histories*, 9.107-108) cf. (Est 2:15-18)

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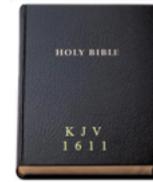


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XERXES I

- Amestris suspected the affair and plotted a trap to confirm the affair
- She weaved a mantle, a coat of many colors, and gave it to Xerxes as a gift, knowing he would show it to Artaynta, which he did
- Shortly thereafter, Xerxes asked Artaynta what he could give her in return for her “favors” and swore that whatsoever she asked, he would give it to her cf. (Est 5:6-8)
- When she responded that she wanted the mantle, he tried every means of persuasion to convince her to choose something else, out of fear of Amestris
- He offered her cities and gold of any quantity and even an army that only she could command, and she still insisted he give her the mantle
- Amestris learned that Artaynta had the mantle, which confirmed the affair, but she did not blame Artaynta but her mother, the wife of Masistes
- Amestris vowed to destroy her for it cf. (Est 3:5-6) but waited until Xerxes’ birthday when the royal feast known as *Tykta* (“perfection”) was held in the king’s honor
- The customs of the feast called for the king to wash his head with soap and receive gift requests from his Persian subjects (i.e.- the common people) that he was compelled to grant (*The Histories*, 9.109-110)

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XERXES I

- According to the custom of the feast, Amestris came to Xerxes as a subject and requested that he give her the wife of Masistes to do what she pleased with her
- That Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, participated in this tradition as if she were a “common” Persian, aligns with the Biblical narrative of the deposed and demoted (not divorced) wife of Ahasuerus, Vashti
- Xerxes knew why Amestris was making the request (i.e.- to get revenge for the affair) but did not understand why she was asking for his brother’s wife because she was not the one guilty of having the affair with him
- Amestris insisted and Xerxes consented, being compelled by the rule of the feast
- Xerxes called for his brother Masistes and tried to convince him to divorce his wife, and even offered his own daughter in place of her
- Masistes responded in disbelief that Xerxes asked him to divorce a wife with whom he had grown children, even a daughter who was given as a wife for the king’s son (i.e.- Artaynta); and although he was flattered to be judged worthy of the king’s daughter, he told him he could not comply with the request and begged him not to force him cf. (Est 7:2-3; 8:3)
- Xerxes was angered by the refusal and rescinded his offer to give Masistes his daughter to wife and still ordered him to divorce his wife (*The Histories*, 9.111)

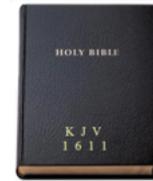


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XERXES I

- Meanwhile, Xerxes' spearmen brought the wife of Masistes to Amestris, who proceeded to kill her and mutilate her body by cutting off her breasts, nose, ears, lips and tongue before sending the body back to her home (*The Histories*, 9.112)
- When Masistes came home and found his wife mutilated, he consulted with his sons and they decided they would return to Bactria and instigate a revolt against Xerxes
- Nearly two years later in 478 BC, as they attempted to reach Bactria, Xerxes was informed of their intentions and sent an army after them that overtook them on the way and killed them all (*The Histories*, 9.113)
- The similarities of the story of Xerxes, Amestris, and Artaynta with that of Herod, Herodias, and the daughter of Herodias (Salome) and the request for John the Baptist's head at a feast on Herod's birthday are obvious although 530 years apart (Mark 6:17-29) and raise suspicion regarding the veracity of the former
- While the story of Amestris and Artaynta could have taken place right before Esther became queen (Est 2:16-17), with coincidental similarities to the events of Mark 6:17-29, it is also possible that the whole story is a perversion of the true history of Vashti and Esther

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XERXES I

- In addition, there is a discrepancy between Herodotus and the book of Esther regarding the timing of when Xerxes returned to Susa
- If Xerxes and his army left Thessaly ON FOOT at the end of September or the beginning of October following the Battle of Salamis and arrived at the Hellespont 45 days later, as Herodotus indicates, then they arrived at the Hellespont no sooner than early-mid November 480 BC
- If they traveled from the Hellespont to Sardis ON FOOT as Herodotus claims, then it would have taken at least an additional two weeks, placing Xerxes in Sardis at the end of November 480 BC
- While Herodotus does not indicate how long Xerxes remained at Sardis, it had to be long enough for him to make repeated efforts to entice Masistes' wife into an affair and to arrange the marriage between his son Darius and Artaynta, so two weeks is not unreasonable

Note: Other historical sources state that Xerxes may have wintered at Sardis.

- If so, this would place Xerxes' departure from Sardis as no sooner than mid December 480 BC
- If Xerxes departed from Sardis to Susa ON FOOT as Herodotus implies, then the journey would have taken an additional 90 days

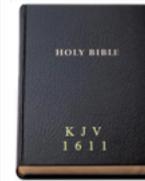
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XERXES I

- This means the earliest Xerxes could have arrived in Susa was mid March 479 BC, about 60-90 days longer than is required by the book of Esther because Esther was taken UNTO THE KING into the royal house at Susa in the 10th Jewish month of Tebeth, which corresponds to mid December 480 BC to mid January 479 BC
- So Xerxes had to be IN Susa by mid December 480 BC- mid January 479 BC, which means at least some, but possibly many or all, of the details regarding Xerxes' departure from Greece to Susa given in Herodotus are incorrect- the Bible is right and secular history is wrong
- While we may not know the exact details of Xerxes' return to Susa, here is a possible scenario that gets him from Salamis to Susa in about three months, from the end of September 480 BC to the end December 480 BC, which is half the time alluded to by Herodotus
- Given the gravity and urgency of getting safely home, it is possible that Xerxes did not accompany the army when they withdrew to Boeotia and later to Thessaly (*The Histories*, 8.113) but went to Phalerum where the Persian fleet was stationed and prepared to depart for the Hellespont
- Rather than taking the 45-day journey ON FOOT from Thessaly to the Hellespont, Xerxes and his royal armed guard could have taken a transport ship and SAILED (along with escort ships) from Phalerum to Smyrna in a much shorter period of time



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