

II. [Media Empire](#) [Persian Empire](#)

1700 B.C.-330 B.C. (Bear) [Daniel 5-24-28](#) [Daniel Chapter 7:5](#)

"Thy Kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians".
So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian".

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it rose up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."

(A) [Cyrus](#) [Book of Ezra](#).

"In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: 'Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt and let its foundations be retained, its height being 60 cubits and its width 60 cubits; with three layers of huge stones and one layer of timbers. And let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. 'Also let the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put them in the house of God.' ([Ezra 6:3-5](#)) [Cyrus](#), inspired by God, permits the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem and returns to them the golden vessels which had been carried off by [Nebuchadnezzar](#). The number of the captives that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem and Judah with [Zerubbabel](#) is stated as 42,360, besides 7,337 men servants and women servants and 200 singing men and women. [Joshua the High Priest](#) and Zerubbabel build the altar and celebrate the [Feast of Tabernacles](#). In the second year the foundations of the Temple are laid, and the dedication takes place with great rejoicing. The adversaries of the Jews, especially the [Samaritans](#), make efforts to hinder the Jews from building the Temple. A letter is written by the Samaritans to [Cambyses II](#) (called "Ahasuerus" in 4:6) to procure a prohibition of the construction of the Temple, and the work is interrupted till the second year of Darius. Through the exhortations of the prophets [Haggai](#) and [Zechariah](#), Zerubbabel and Joshua recommence the building of the Temple. [Tatnai](#), the governor "on this side the river," sends to the king a report of their action. Darius finds the decree of Cyrus in the archives of [Achmetha](#) (modern [Hamedan](#)), and directs Tatnai not to disturb the Jews in their work. He also exempts them from tribute and supplies everything necessary for the offerings. The Temple is finished in the month of Adar, in the sixth year of Darius, and is dedicated with great solemnity.

(B) [Darius](#)

The [Book of Ezra](#) (chapter 6, verse 1) describes the adoption and precise instructions to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. It was completed and inaugurated in the sixth year of Darius (March 515 BC), as also related in the Book of Ezra (chapter 6, verse 15), so the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled. Between Cyrus and Darius, an exchange of letters with King Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes is described (Chapter 4, Verse 7), the grandson of Darius I, in whose reign Ezra and Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. The generous funding of the temple gave Darius and his successors the support of the Jewish priesthood. The mention of Darius in the [Book of Daniel](#) (chapter 5, verse 31) states that Darius began ruling when he was 59 years old, and that he had appointed 120 [satraps](#) to govern over their provinces or districts.

(C) [Xerxes of Persia](#)

Artaxerxes (Hebrew: pronounced [\[artax\[asta\]](#)) commissioned [Ezra](#), a Jewish priest-scribe, by means of a letter of decree, to take charge of the ecclesiastical and civil affairs of the Jewish nation. A copy of this decree may be found in [Ezra 7:13-28](#). [Ezra](#) thereby left Babylon in the first month of the seventh year (~

457 BC) of Artaxerxes' reign, at the head of a company of Jews that included priests and Levites. They arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month of the seventh year (Hebrew Calendar).

The rebuilding of the Jewish community in Jerusalem had begun under Cyrus the Great, who had permitted Jews held captive in Babylon, to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of Solomon. A number of Jews had consequently returned back to Jerusalem in 537 B.C.

In Artaxerxes' 20th year, Nehemiah was his cupbearer. They apparently had a friendship as the king noted Nehemiah's sadness. After inquiring after it, Nehemiah shared of the plight of his Jewish people and the ruins of Jerusalem. The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem with letters of safe passage to the governors in Trans-Euphrates, and to Asaph, keeper of the royal forests, to make beams for the citadel by the temple, for the city walls, and for his own home.^[4] Artaxerxes I gives Ezra a commission to bring with him to Jerusalem all the captives that remain in Babylon. Ezra institutes a fast while on his way to Jerusalem. The princes of Israel inform Ezra that many have not disowned their foreign wives. Those who have taken foreign wives are compelled to send them away and to bring each a sin offering.