

Is Darius, the king of Ezra 6:14–15, the same king as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1?

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In the chronologies of Bishop Ussher and Floyd Jones there is an unsubstantiated gap or space of 80–82 years between the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity and the commencement of the 70 weeks of years of Daniel 9:24–25. The main reason for such a space is the unproved assumption that the Darius (Hystaspis) of Ezra 6:14–15 is a different king to the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1. This paper shows these two are the same king and that there is therefore no such gap in the Bible but instead a continuous chronology from creation to Christ.

According to Ussher (p. 118, No. 950) the restoration of the Jews after Babylon occurred in 537 BC, and Christ's baptism in AD 27 (p. 803, No. 6289). These dates cover a period of about 563 years. Yet the 69 weeks of years (Daniel 9:25–26) referring to the two events of the Restoration at the time of the going forth of the commandment and the Baptism covers only 483 years. Ussher's figures are approximately 80 years too long. The only explanation for the difference is the commencing of the 483 years about 80 years after the Restoration.

Floyd Jones' figures basically agree with Ussher's. In his *Chronology of the Old Testament*,² the heading reads: 'Finding The 20th Year of Artaxerxes—Neh. 2: The Beginning of the Commandment for the 69 Weeks of Daniel—Dan 9:25.'

On page 263 he further states:

- (i) 'Neh. 2:1, 3; 2:8—the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the year 454 BC.'
- (ii) '*Daniel had prophesied the beginning and end of a 483 year period of time at least 80 years before it started.*'

Evidence is given in this paper to prove that there is no 'gap' or space as implied by Bishop Ussher and Floyd Jones, and the Darius of Ezra 6:14 is the same king as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1.

Two kings, not three, found in Ezra 6:14

Daniel 10:1 says: 'In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel'.³ And according to Daniel 11:2, 'there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth king shall be far richer than they all'.

The vision of 10:1–12:13 came to Daniel in the 3rd year of Cyrus where, after Cyrus, there would be yet four kings who would 'stand up' (Dan. 11:1–3). These four kings are Cambyses, Pseudo Smerdis, Darius Hystaspis and a mighty king, Xerxes, whose kingdom was smashed by Greece and Alexander the Great. The identification of the first three kings (as below) is agreed to by Bishop Ussher, Floyd Jones, Martin Anstey and Philip Mauro.^{1–2,4–5}

Reading from Ezra 1:1–6:15, we find mentioned these three kings (plus Cyrus the Great, of course):

- a) Cambyses:⁶ Ezra 4:6 (Ahasuerus, not the one of Esther).
- b) Pseudo Smerdis:⁷ Ezra 4:7 (Artaxerxes, not the one of Ezra 7:1).
- c) Darius Hystaspis:⁸ Ezra 4:24.

Nothing commendable is stated and *no commandment to build and finish* was given by Cambyses (cf Ezra 6:14). He was 'violent, rash, headstrong, incapable of restraint, furious at opposition, not only cruel, but brutal.'⁹ Pseudo Smerdis (an impostor) made *no commandment to build and finish*, but rather caused the cessation of the building of the city (Ezra 4:21) and the temple (4:23) until the 2nd year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia. Nothing, either in secular or biblical history, was found to be at variance with the above facts.

Only two kings, therefore, up to the completion of the house of God (Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis), could and did receive the commendation of Ezra 6:14. They 'builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel'. Yet three kings are seemingly found in Ezra 6:14. This apparent discrepancy is quite simply explained by translating 'and Artaxerxes King of Persia' as 'even Artaxerxes King of Persia'.

Is it correct to translate 'and' as 'even'? Jones¹⁰ does not think so and states that Anstey 'altered' the verse. Moreover, he says that 'having pursued the matter further by consulting over twenty versions at Ezra 6:14, it is noted that not one translator or team of translators rendered the "waw" (vau) beginning the Hebrew word for Artaxerxes as "even".' The answer to this statement is that if it is impossible for three kings to receive 'commendation', then we must find a meaning of 'waw' that agrees with the biblical historical record. We must interpret according to context and the type of 'waw' involved and not to the number of translations.

How many translations can we find that has 'and' at the beginning of Gen. 1:2? Perhaps many. Yet the disjunctive use of 'waw' here, expressing choice and becoming descriptive of the previous noun, would be better translated 'now concerning'. Gen. 1:2 is not *consequential*, i.e. *waw* consecutive, where 'waw' is followed by a verb and can be translated 'then' (as though perhaps millions of years elapsed after Genesis 1:1 and then the earth 'became' (KJV = was) void. But it is *disjunctive*, formed by 'waw'

followed by a non-verb and, where a choice is made, giving us not a detailed description of the terrestrial bodies, e.g. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, etc., but, rather from Genesis 1:2 forward, an historical account of *earth's* creation with reference only to the heavenly bodies as they relate to this creation. The translation above ('now concerning') would then guard against the Gap Theory.¹¹

On the disjunctive use of 'waw', Sarfati says: "'Waw" is the name of the Hebrew letter which is used as a conjunction. It can mean "and", "but", "now", "then" and several other things depending on the context and type of waw involved'.¹¹

In *Bagster's Analytical Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon*¹² 'and' as a connective particle has eight principal uses. No. 8 says: '... exegetical (i.e. explanatory, interpretive) = even, where properly the relative may be expressed instead. See Gen. 49:25—from the God of Thy father, even He, or *who* will help Thee.' On the basis of the 'explanatory' use of No. 8, a correct translation of Ezra 6:14b would then be: Cyrus and Darius, *even* (or *who is*) Artaxerxes, King of Persia.

The commendation given regarding the *building and finishing* by the Artaxerxes of Ezra 6:14–15 was not anticipatory of the command to repair (Nehemiah 2:1–8). The context of Ezra 1:1–6:15 only allows for the work to have been completed.

Comparing Ezra 6:14 and Ezra 7:1

The question now is, if the above is correct does this necessarily prove that the Artaxerxes of 6:14 is the Artaxerxes of 7:1?

Ezra's minimum age, if he was born just before Seraiah was killed, would be approximately 72 at the time of the completion of the house of God in the 6th year of Darius the King (Ezra 6:15). Both Ezra and Jehozadak were born to Seraiah, the chief priest, before he was slain at the destruction of Jerusalem (II Kings 25:18–21). For the genealogy of Ezra refer to Ezra 7:1–2 and I Chron. 6:1–15. Regarding the latter reference, Roddy Braun states that 'The genealogy of 1 Chr 5:27–41 [6:1–15] is the most extensive of the priestly line found in the OT and is effectively the latest as well.'¹³ The '80 year gap theory' has the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1 as Longimanus,¹⁴ and therefore his 7th year would be about 49 years later than the Darius Hystaspis of Ezra 6:14–15:

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|--|----------|
| • Darius Hystaspis: Full reign 36 years ¹⁵
(less 6 years to Ezra 6:15) | 30 years |
| • Xerxes died in 12th year ¹⁶ | 12 years |
| • Artaxerxes Longimanus,
after Xerxes death to Ezra 7:1 | 7 years |
| | 49 years |

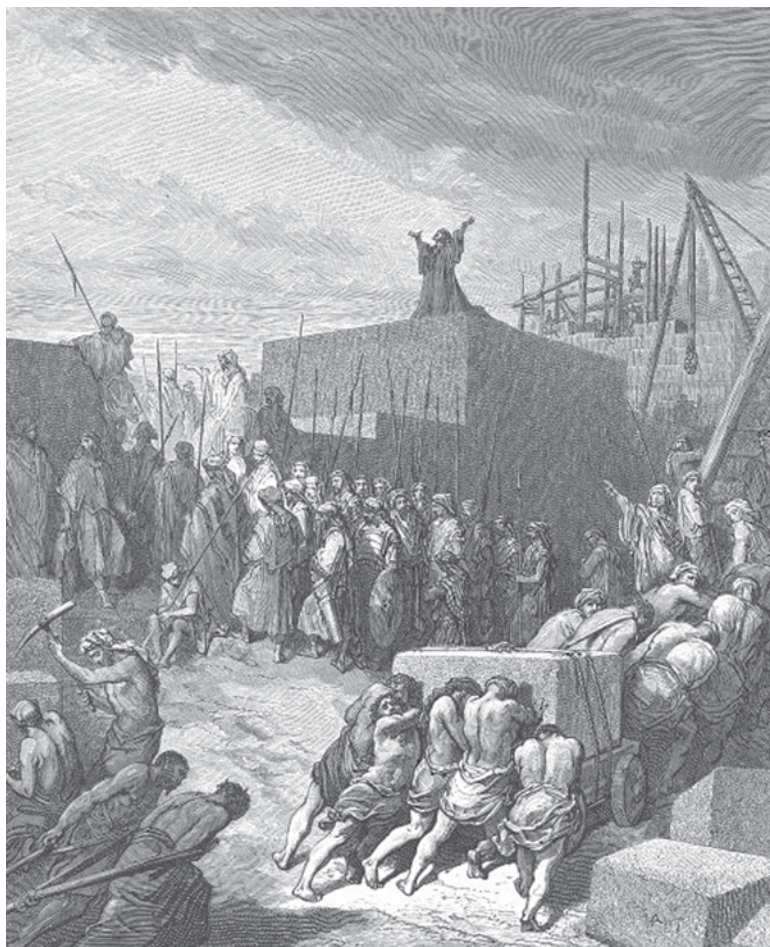


Image by Gustave Dore. <www.creationism.org/images>

'The rebuilding of the temple' by Gustave Dore. 'And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. ... because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid [emphasis added]' (Ezra 3:11).

This then would make Ezra's age approx 121 years when he made his trip from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7) and 134(!) when still alive in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 8:1), and there is no indication that Ezra died in that year. We have the same problem of long ages for priests, covenant sealers, Nehemiah, Mordecai, the wall builders and certain Levites. These long ages would be against Psalm 90:10. Concerning the problem of the long ages of Nehemiah and Ezra, Floyd Jones says: 'This is a problem for most as Biblical life spans between these dates had shortened, coming in line with those of today.'¹⁷

No amount of redactional intrusion of 'God breathed' words (revision, editing, rearrangement) will 'fix' the long age problem. In any case, it would be against the teaching of the perspicuity of the Scriptures to depend on rearranging historical events the way we find in some of the commentaries or other literature.

Check Sir Isaac Newton's redaction of some of Ezra and Nehemiah found in Floyd Jones' OT Chronology.¹⁸ If we had to read Scripture in this way how much would we understand? God intends 'ordinary' Christians with

the aid of the Holy Spirit, of course, to read the Bible and understand without needing interpretation by such rearrangement.

Concerning Ezra's readiness and willingness to go up to the house of God, we would have this ridiculous scenario:

1. The temple completed on the 3rd day of the last month (Adar) of King Darius' 6th year.
2. The Passover kept on the 14th day of the 1st month of the 7th year.
3. Then Ezra, full of concern and zeal for the house of the Lord (who 'had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments'—Ezra 7:10) *holding back this concern for 49 years!* Because of the character and zeal revealed in Scripture of this man, it cannot be imagined that this urgent matter would result in action only when he was a very old man of about 121 years.

If Darius Hystaspis of Ezra 6:14–15 and the Artaxerxes of 7:1 are the same king then we find Ezra, approximately 27 days later, after the temple was completed, preparing for his trip (7:9). Four months go by and he is off to Jerusalem (7:9). On this 'common sense' basis alone (i.e. Ezra not waiting 49 years but only 27 days before making preparations for his trip to Jerusalem), we would expect these kings to be one and the same.

If these kings are the same then, naturally, we would also expect to find Darius Hystaspis referred to as Artaxerxes in the Apocryphal Books. And this is exactly what we find. These books are not 'God breathed' but they do provide valuable historical information.

In these books, the Ahasuerus of Esther and the Darius Hystaspis of Ezra 6:14–15 are both identified as the same king, Artaxerxes (cf. Esdras 3:1–2; 6:5, Esther 1:1–3, Ezra 6:15, and agreed to by Ussher, Jones, Anstey and Mauro). In the Rest of Esther (Apocrypha), and in the LXX throughout, Ahasuerus is everywhere called Artaxerxes. It was Artaxerxes who Bighthana and Teresh (Esther 6:2), translated as Gabatha and Tharra (Rest of Esther 12:1), sought to lay hands on. It was the great King Artaxerxes who wrote 'to the princes and governors that are under him from India unto Ethiopia, in 127 provinces' (Rest of Esther 13:1).

There is nothing in these Apocryphal Books that militates against the proposition that Darius Hystaspis, Ahasuerus of Esther and Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1 are the same one king. Rather, these books support this.

Why is Darius Hystaspis now referred to so often from Ezra 6:14 through to the end of Nehemiah as Artaxerxes? By the third year of his reign he had increased the rule over 120 provinces to 127 (cf. Dan. 6:1, Esther 1:1–4). By about the 5th year of his reign Darius is believed to have executed most, if not all, of the Behistun Inscription. Here he records, during the first 5 or 6 years of his reign, the reconquering of all the revolted provinces of the Persian Empire. Now he 'reigned from India to Ethiopia'. He prepared a feast that lasted 180 days to show 'the riches of his glorious kingdom'. By the time the temple was completed in his 6th year he is recognized, not just as King of Persia (Ezra

6:14), nor King of Assyria (Ezra 6:22), but, as 'Artaxerxes, king of kings' (Ezra 7:12).

If Darius and Artaxerxes are one and the same king (as above), then we can expect a similarity in phraseology, family life etc. This we also find:

Darius Hystaspis of Ezra 6:14–15	Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1ff.
v. 6: 'beyond the river'	v. 21: 'beyond the river'
v. 12: 'let it be done with speed'	v. 12: 'it be done speedily'
v. 10: 'The God of Heaven'	v. 10: 'The God of Heaven'
v. 12: 'I Darius have made a decree'	v. 21: 'I Artaxerxes, the king do make a decree'

Both King Darius of Ezra 6 and Artaxerxes of Ezra 7 were concerned for their own life and the life of their sons:

1. Ezra 6:10—'Pray for the life of the King and of his sons.'
2. Ezra 7:23—'Why should there be wrath against the King and his sons?'

According to the Medes and Persians, 'there is one law of his [the king] to put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre' (Esther 4:11), any that comes into the inner court without the king's authority. That sceptre was given to Esther, at least twice (Esther 5:2; 8:4) by Darius Hystaspis (Ahasuerus of Esther, Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1, etc.). So it is no surprise to see the Queen 'also sitting by' Artaxerxes (i.e. Darius Hystaspis) in his 20th year (Neh. 2:6), when Nehemiah came to see him about the need to *repair* the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down.

It was Darius Hystaspis (Ahasuerus) who controlled the extraction of tribute 'upon the land and ... the Isles of the Sea' (Esther 10:1), and who also made exceptions, e.g. Ethiopia who brought gifts. So if Darius and Artaxerxes are the same king, we can understand why this king would instruct Ezra: 'it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them' (Ezra 7:24).

The complete answer to Daniel's prayer—no procrastination

'O Lord, hear; O Lord forgive; O Lord hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake' (Daniel 9:19).

Firstly, Daniel, in reading the books (Dan. 9:2), understood that when 70 years were accomplished God would punish the King of Babylon with desolations. He would visit Israel and cause them to return to their land: '... the city shall be builded upon her own heap [ruins, tell], and the palace [elevated fortified citadel] shall remain after the manner thereof' (Jer. 30:18). The places that were laid waste, decayed or destroyed would be raised up, including the wall. The temple would be built and the foundation laid; all this by the 'saying', i.e. the proclamation of the 'word' of *Cyrus*. By his decree he would proclaim an effective 'blue-print plan' (Isaiah 44:26–28; 45:13). Daniel would clearly understand that Cyrus would perform *all* God's

pleasure, (Isaiah 44:28) and that there was no need for another 3 decrees to be given by other kings.¹⁹

E.J. Young, in his commentary on Daniel, says:

‘It is not justifiable to distinguish too sharply between the building of the city and the building of the temple. Certainly, if the people had received permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, there was also implied in this permission to build for themselves homes in which to dwell ... The edict of Cyrus mentions the temple specifically, because that was the religious centre of the city, that which distinguished it as the holy city of the Jews.’²⁰

So in reading and understanding the above, Daniel would know that two decrees were not necessary, i.e. one for the building of the temple and one for the city. Daniel would also discern that no further *authority* was required other than that given by Cyrus. That is why Haggai and Zechariah could prophesy as they did without further decreed permission, and cause the work to go fast and prosper (Ezra 5:1–8). Yet Jones, who appeals to the ‘necessity’ of four decrees to get the work done,¹⁹ says that ‘only the decree issued in the 20th Year of Artaxerxes I *granted permission* for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, along with its plaza street and walls [emphasis mine].’²¹ Again, he says: ‘... the reconstruction of the Temple was stopped because the Jews were building the city *without authorisation* [emphasis mine]’ (Ezra 4:1–4).²¹

Confirmation of Cyrus’ decreed authority, (as understood by Daniel in his reading of the books—Isaiah 44:28, etc.) and being the Law of the Medes and Persians which ‘altereth not’ (Dan. 6:12), is found in secular history (Josephus) and evidenced in the letter sent to the governors in Syria. The contents of the letter are as follows:

‘King Cyrus to Sisinnus and Sathrabuzanes sends greeting. I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before.’²²

According to an editorial comment on this letter, ‘This leave to build Jerusalem, sect. 3, and this epistle of Cyrus ... are most unfortunately omitted in all our copies but this best and most complete copy of Josephus’. Why then does Floyd Jones clearly imply that the decree of Cyrus only related to the building of the temple?¹⁹

Secondly, what did Daniel pray for in Daniel 9:3–21?

- a) Daniel 9:16—‘O Lord ... let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from *Thy city Jerusalem* [emphasis mine].’



Nehemiah coming before the king, ‘the queen also sitting beside him’ (Neh. 2:6), greatly saddened by the news that ‘the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down and the gates thereof are burned with fire’ (Neh. 1:3). Nehemiah requests to return back to Jerusalem to repair the breach. This repair took only 52 days (Neh. 6:15). According to Josephus, ‘And this trouble he underwent for two years and four months; for in so long was the wall built’.⁴¹ This period could have reference to the original reconstruction, i.e. the building of the wall mentioned in the earlier chapters of Ezra.

- b) Daniel 9:17—‘Cause thy face to shine upon Thy *sanctuary* [emphasis mine].’
c) Daniel 9:18—‘Behold our *desolations* [emphasis mine]’ (i.e. the things that were destroyed, made waste. This would include the wall.)

These 3 requests cover prayer for the restoration of the temple, the city, the houses and the wall.

- d) But, *very importantly*, Daniel prayed that God would not *delay* His answer. So in Daniel 9:19 we read: ‘O Lord ... *defer not* [emphasis mine].’
e) Daniel prayed with the purist of motives. He ends in the plea, ‘for thy city and thy people *are called by thy name* [emphasis mine].’ It would be dishonouring to the glory of the living God if the promise of no delay made to the children of Israel was ‘not kept’.²³

In other words, Daniel prayed for the things he had read about and for those matters God had promised. Again, I repeat: *and that God would not defer* (*The Hebrew for DEFER = achato loiter, to procrastinate. Strong = Heb. # 309*).

John Calvin on Dan. 9:19 says: ‘Already God had cast away His people for 70 years, and had suffered them to be so oppressed by their enemies, as to cause the faithful the utmost mental despondency ... He requests God not to delay or put off.’²⁴

Can we imagine Daniel going into his house, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem,

kneeling upon his knees (three times a day—Dan. 6:10), earnestly praying for his people to be delivered, receiving an answer that God would not defer, and then having to wait 82 years before God takes away the desolations that had occurred to the city and the wall? There is no other similar example of such kind in the whole of Scripture!

A gap or procrastination of about 80 years (see above) is the last thing Daniel would expect after the Lord's answer to his prayer clearly implies all supplications would be met and without postponement. All the indications are that the Lord wished to deal with the matter faithfully and urgently.

According to Daniel 9:21, Gabriel was 'caused to fly swiftly', while verse 23 shows that at the beginning of Daniel's prayer 'the commandment came forth'. Daniel's 'pain' is to be urgently alleviated. Calvin agrees and states that 'We have shown how the angel was sent by God to the holy Prophet, to alleviate his sorrow and to remove the pressure of his anxiety.'²⁵

The seven 'weeks' (49 years) of Daniel 9:25

John Calvin makes it quite clear that God did *not defer* the commencement of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24–25 for about 82 years until the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1). Rather the 69 weeks commenced from the proclamation of Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1).

Concerning Daniel 9:25 ('from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem'), Calvin says: 'I stated that we must begin with the monarchy of Cyrus; this is clearly to be gathered from the words of the angel, and especially from the division of the weeks.'²⁶ In reference to Daniel 9:24–25, Calvin further states that '*The seven weeks have reference to the repair of the city and temple.*'²⁶

In Daniel 9:24–25 there is no mention of 80 or 82 years but only of 7 and 62 weeks of years. Why is that so? God does not waste words! There must be a reason why the 7 weeks of years is distinguished from the 62, as Calvin believed. And these two periods do not overlap but are consequent events with something important occurring in each period.

When it says in verse 25, 'the street shall be built again and the wall', Daniel is not telling us that it will take 483 years (62 + 7 weeks of years) for these to be completed, but these things shall happen in 'troublesome times', i.e. in the first 49 years as Calvin believed. Can we visualise a temple being built with no streets to walk down, no houses to live in, and no wall 'set up' for protection in such a vexatious period? Would God leave them without authority on some of these matters?²⁷ In those 49 years:

1. The Jews were 'building the rebellious and the bad city'. Ezra 2:70–3:1 tells us the cities were sufficiently built by the 7th month after their return ('all Israel in their cities'). Nehemiah 7:5–73 is a record of events, etc.,

'KING CYRUS TO SISINNES AND SATHRABUZANES SENDS GREETING. I HAVE GIVEN LEAVE TO AS MANY OF THE JEWS THAT DWELL IN MY COUNTRY AS PLEASE TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AND TO REBUILD THEIR CITY, AND TO BUILD THE TEMPLE OF GOD AT JERUSALEM ON THE SAME PLACE WHERE IT WAS BEFORE.'

most of these being at least a copy (including v. 73) of what was found in the genealogical register of Neh. 7:5. (Compare Ezra 2:70–3:1 with Neh. 7:73). Nehemiah, in reading the register, found there was not enough people and houses in the city, so lots were cast by the people 'to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem' (Nehemiah 11:1).

2. The walls were 'set up' ('finished' in the KJV margin), i.e. laid into the foundations 'which, in Mesopotamian architecture, were double the

thickness of the actual walls that were laid into them'²⁸—all this before the 2nd year of Darius. The walls were not built up again from the previous destruction (II Kings 25:10) in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1). The reference in Nehemiah 2 is to a 'repair job'. 'Build' in Neh. 2:5 means to build, make, repair (Strong #1129). Note that in Neh. 3 the word 'repaired' is used over 20 times. If the walls were not built until 82 years after the Restoration, then the last time the walls were broken down would be at the destruction of Jerusalem, which, if this 'gap' of 82 years be correct, would be about 132 years ago (I Kings 25:10). So why is Nehemiah suddenly sad about an event that happened so long ago? (Neh. 2:1). Edwin Yamauchi states: 'Despite abortive attempts to rebuild them (Ezra 4:6–23), the walls of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 [BC], had remained in ruins for almost a century and a half when Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem.'²⁹ This cannot be correct because in about the 7th year of Artaxerxes, not the 20th, Ezra came to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:8) and praised God for His extended mercy in giving the people, not a symbolic, but a literal temple, a literal repair of the desolations and a literal wall for protection in Jerusalem and Judah (Ezra 9:9).

3. The Jews were dwelling in ceiled or decorated houses (NIV = panelled),³⁰ in Haggai and Zechariah's time, while the temple remained incomplete—check the sarcasm of Haggai in 2:3. When we read in Neh. 7:4 that 'the houses were not builded', i.e. in Jerusalem, about the 20th year of Artaxerxes, H.G. Williamson³¹ comments that 'It is clear from the previous verse, to go no further, that there were some houses! There is no doubt, however, that when the context so demands, "ayin, Strong, #369" may have the meaning of "there is/was not enough"'. See for instance, Neh. 2:14 when it says, 'There was no place for the beast to pass.' It simply means there was not enough room for the beast to get through.
4. The building of the temple was 'finished on the third day of the month, Adar, which was in the 6th year of Darius the King' (Ezra 6:15).

49 years is sufficient time for these events to occur:

- (a) From Cyrus the Great's 1st sole year to his death³² 9 years (Secular history gives at least 6 different accounts of how and when he died).
- (b) Cambyses' reign (also not known exactly how or when he died). 8 years
- (c) Pseudo Smerdis (Impostor reign—could have been included in Cambyses' 8-year reign). 'Smerdis' reign lasted only about 7 months.³³
- (d) Darius Hystaspis: His reign until Nehemiah returned from Jerusalem to the King of Babylon (Neh. 13:6). During his reign the walls were repaired (20th year?). Nehemiah then spent 12 years as governor, reforming, building more houses, further populating Jerusalem, etc. 32 years

Total of above (approx.) = 49 years

So if the temple, city, streets, moat, houses and walls were built in these 49 years there can be no 'gap' of 82 years, and Darius Hystaspis must be the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1.

Claudius Ptolemy—still producing much 'secular history smoke'

A number of chronological theories 'hang' their convictions on the 'peg' of secular history and floating traditions, especially the king list of Claudius Ptolemy's Canon. This king list has been taken as one piece of evidence for a 'gap' of approximately 80 years between the return from captivity and the commencement of the 483 years of Dan. 9:24–25. This Canon is merely a list of supposed kings with the number of years of their reigns. There is no indication or allowances for any co-regencies, no explanatory text, and no reference to any contemporary historical records for authority. Notwithstanding all this we find,

'Yet despite the fact that he [Ptolemy] is merely a late second century compiler writing nearly a hundred years after Christ Jesus, he is our *only authority*, for no other system bridges the gulf from 747 BC to AD 137 [emphasis added].'³⁴

We are uncertain as to whether there is a mistaken identity of Persian Kings, where one king is the same person as another but with a different title. The same problem exists with Egyptology. Mauro and Anstey believe it is possible that the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1, forward to the end of Nehemiah, is both the Longimanus (a later king than the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1 and referred to as Longimanus in secular history) and the Darius of Ezra 6:14. Bishop Ussher, referring to Darius Hystaspis (Ahasuerus) as the one who imposed tribute upon the land and isles of the sea, quotes Strabo who said: 'The first that ever brought up paying of tribute was Darius the *long-armed*' (emphasis mine).³⁵ Ussher then goes on to say: 'Strabo mistook the surname of Artaxerxes, the grandchild, and gave it to the grandfather', but without giving reason or reference for

the how or the why. Darius Hystaspis, Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1, Ahasuerus of Esther, and Longimanus could be the one and same person.

Eclipse data has been held in high esteem within the realm of academia and upon which much of Ptolemy's chronology work depended. Yet, as Floyd Jones points out, 'The main point of contention is that from the 491 BC lunar eclipse in the 31st year of the reign of Darius, no other recorded eclipse data was available for Ptolemy to verify his king list over most of the later Persian period.'³⁴

Ptolemy's 'received' chronology has been occasionally challenged, and 'These challengers have underscored weaknesses in this work and many of them are, to some extent, valid.'³⁰ Although most criticisms seem to be astronomical and not chronological, we are left in considerable doubt as to whether Ptolemy's King List can be trusted. For example, an article concerning the book by a well published astronomer, Professor Robert Newton, *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy*, and the ensuing debate, summarizes that 'there seems to be at least some evidence in support of the claims that Claudius Ptolemy was "fraudulent" in the way he handled his observations, either by "trimming" the values or by selecting those who best fitted his theory.'³⁶ Jones also informs us that Robert R. Newton, 'declared that Ptolemy had deliberately fabricated astronomical observations and that he may have also *invented part of his king list*, although he acknowledged that the latter part of the list concerning Cambyses and Darius I was verifiably correct [emphasis added].'³⁷ Note that it is the period *after* Darius I (Hystaspis) where problems arise and which needs to be confirmed.

The Persian period not well documented

On the matter of exaggeration, Sir Isaac Newton, one of our greatest of scientists, 'pointed out that all the nations of antiquity (particularly the Greeks, Egyptians, Latins and Assyrians), in order to assign credibility and status to themselves, greatly exaggerated the length of the beginning of their origins.'³⁰

Mauro³⁸ says that the Persian Kingdom Period, according to received chronology, is more than 80 years too long. He finds no 'gap' and that Darius Hystaspis and the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1 are the same king. He continues:

'The length of this Persian Period is contradicted (1) by the national traditions of Persia, (2) by the national traditions of the Jews, (3) by the testimony of Josephus, and (4) by the conflicting evidence of well-authenticated events.'

Larry Pierce, in reference to 'the time from the fall of Jerusalem to the birth of Christ' states: 'This period of history is very well documented by many historians.'³⁹ Ruth Beechick replied that 'many people also said of Egypt's history that it was "very well documented by many historians", yet now a good many scholars are saying that there is an error of up to several centuries in that history.'⁴⁰

If we are to depend upon conflicting secular historical evidence and Ptolemy's Canon, then the Persian Period cannot be called 'well documented' even though there might be *much contrary information* from historians, king lists, etc.

If the Persian Period only lasted approximately 123 years (205 years from the received chronology, less the 'gap' of 82 years), this then would agree with the 483 years of Daniel 9:24–25 starting from the Restoration (no 'gap' or space), and ending with Christ's Anointing at His Baptism. See approx. periods below:

• Persian Period	123 years
• Greek and Roman Period to Christ's Birth	330 years
• Christ's Birth to His Baptism (Luke 3:23)	30 years
Total = 483 years	

Conclusion

The cumulative argument given above should be sufficient evidence that the Darius Hystaspis of Ezra 6:14–15 is the same king as the Artaxerxes of 7:1. We must remember that the Bible is the only *contemporary* historical writing we can find on this period, and the only one that even purports to give definite and precise chronological information. From the days of Ezra and Nehemiah to the birth of Christ, confusion and uncertainty exist in secular historical records as a consequence of the acceptance of the unreliable chronology of Ptolemy.

Concerning the length of the Persian Period and whether the Darius of Ezra 6:14 is the same king as Artaxerxes of 7:1, these problems will only be solved if, with the Reformers, we accept the biblical doctrine of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone). It is of critical importance that in choosing between the Heathen Astronomer (and Astrologist—see Acts 19:13–20 where the books of 'curious arts' were burned before all men!) and the Hebrew Prophets, we ultimately depend only on the Word of God, which 'is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path' (Psalms 119:105).

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