

# Ezra & Haggai

## The Medo-Persian Empire - The Silver Chest & Arms (Dan 2), Lopsided Bear with 3 Ribs in mouth (Dan 7)

1. **Cyrus II / Cyrus the Great** | 537 - 529 | Ezra 1
2. **Cambyses II, Son of Cyrus II**<sup>1</sup> | 529 - 522
3. **Magus / Pseudo-Smerdus**<sup>2</sup>, A Pretender to the Throne, also Called Artaxerxes | 522 | Ezra 4
4. **A Council of Seven Called the "Seven Magi"**<sup>3</sup> | 522
5. **Darius the Great (or Darius,**<sup>4</sup> **Ahasuerus,**<sup>5</sup> **Artaxerxes**<sup>6</sup> **in Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah)** 522-486
6. **Xerxes I** | 486 - 473

### Titles Used:

**Darius** - Statholder | **Ahasuerus** - Emperor | **Artaxerxes** - Universal Emperor

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<sup>1</sup> Many people think this is the Ahasuerus in Esther. This cannot be the case for three reasons.

Esther 1 Says Ahasuerus has (1) 127 provinces (2) stretching from Ethiopia to India. Esther 10 says (3) he imposed tribute "on the land and the islands of the sea."

Cambyses II did not have 127 provinces, or an empire stretching from Ethiopia to India. Darius the Great is the only known emperor to meet these qualifications.

Cambyses II is only mentioned in the Bible in Ezra 4 where he is called "Ahasuerus", but this is not the Ahasuerus in Esther.

<sup>2</sup> Pseudo-Smerdis is mentioned in the Bible only in Ezra 4:7-24 where he is called "Artaxerxes", but this is clearly not the same Artaxerxes as later in Ezra 7-10 or in Nehemiah.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudo-Smerdis became Emperor by impersonating Cambyses II's brother Smerdis. He was eventually found out by the Seven Magi who overthrew him and ruled themselves over the Medo-Persian Empire for a short time until they elected from among themselves Darius the Great, Son of Hystaspis (distinct from Darius the Persian in Daniel) to become Emperor.

<sup>4</sup> Darius is a Title that relates to Kingship over Persia proper. It means "Stadholder" or "Scepter Bearer"; it should be understood to communicate "he who holds the power of governance".

<sup>5</sup> Ahasuerus is a title meaning "Emperor" it has to do with uniting the Provinces under a single throne/crown.

<sup>6</sup> Artaxerxes is a claim of kingship or hegemony over the greeks - it means "mighty warrior".

## Ezra - Chapter 4:1-6; 17-24 - Resistance to Reformation & Rebuilding the Temple

4:1 Now when the adversaries [enemies] of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, **"Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."** 3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, **"You may do nothing with us to build a house [Temple] for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."** 4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, 5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia [Darius the Great - 522-486 BC].

6 In the reign of Ahasuerus [528 | Cyrus the Great Dies and is Replaced by Cambyses II - Ezra 4:6 (Implied)], in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

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17 The king sent an answer:

To Rehum the commander, to Shimshai the scribe, to the rest of their companions who dwell in Samaria, and to the remainder beyond the River:

Peace, and [Lit. and now] so forth.

18 The letter which you sent to us has been clearly read before me. 19 And I gave the command [Lit. by me a decree has been put forth], and **a search has been made, and it was found that** this city in former times has revolted against kings, and rebellion and sedition have been fostered in it. 20 There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all the region beyond the River; and tax, tribute, and custom were paid to them. 21 Now give the command [put forth a decree] to **make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me.**

22 Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings?

**23 Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes'** [522 | Magus / Pseudo-Smerdus<sup>7</sup>, A Pretender to the Throne, also Called Artaxerxes | Ezra 4] **letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease.** **24 Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia** [A Council of Seven Called the "Seven Magi"<sup>8</sup> | 522 - Darius the Great (or Darius,<sup>9</sup> Ahasuerus,<sup>10</sup> Artaxerxes<sup>11</sup> in Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah) 522-486].

### **Ezra - Chapter 5 - Reformation Resumed in the Presence of Enemies**

**1 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. 2 So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak [Jehozadak, 1 Chr. 6:14] rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.**

**3 At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River [The Euphrates] and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them:**

**"Who has commanded you to build this temple [Lit. house] and finish this wall?"**

**4 Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. 5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius** [Darius the Great - 522-486

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<sup>8</sup> Pseudo-Smerdis became Emperor by impersonating Cambyses II's brother Smerdis. He was eventually found out by the Seven Magi who overthrew him and ruled themselves over the Medo-Perisan Empire for a short time until they elected from among themselves Darius the Great, Son of Hystaspis (distinct from Darius the Persian in Daniel) to become Emperor.

<sup>9</sup> Darius is a Title that relates to Kingship over Persia proper. It means "Stadholder" or "Scepter Bearer"; it should be understood to communicate "he who holds the power of governance".

<sup>10</sup> Ahasuerus is a title meaning "Emperor" it has to do with uniting the Provinces under a single throne/crown.

<sup>11</sup> Artaxerxes is a claim of kingship or hegemony over the greeks - it means "mighty warrior".

BC]. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter. 6 This is a copy of **the letter that Tattenai sent:**

[From] The governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who were in the region beyond the River,

**to Darius the king** [Darius the Great - 522-486 BC].

7 (They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus.)

To Darius the king:

All peace.

8 Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the temple [Lit. house] of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones [Lit. stones of rolling, stones too heavy to be carried], and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

9 Then we asked those **elders**, and spoke thus to them: “Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?” 10 We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who were chief among them.

11 And thus they returned us an answer, saying:

“We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple [Lit. house] that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. 12 But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. 13 However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King **Cyrus issued a decree** to build this house [Temple] of God. 14 Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that was in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King **Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon**, and they were **given to one named Sheshbazzar** [Zerubbabel], whom he had made governor. 15 And **he said to him**, ‘Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.’ 16 Then the same Sheshbazzar [Zerubbabel] **came and laid the foundation** of the house of God

which is in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished.”

17 Now therefore, if it seems good to the king, let a search be made in the king’s treasure house, which is there in Babylon, whether it is so that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter.

## Haggai - Chapter 1:1-15 - The Need for Continued Reformation & Rebuilding of the Temple

The Command to Build God’s House

1:1 **In the second year of King Darius** [Darius the Great - 522-486 BC], in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

2 “Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying:

‘This people says, “**The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.**” ’ ’ ”

3 Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple [Lit. house] to lie in ruins?”

5 Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts:

“Consider your ways!

6 “You have sown much, and bring in little;

You eat, but do not have enough;

You drink, but you are not filled with drink;

You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;

And he who earns wages,

Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”

**7 Thus says the Lord of hosts:**

**“Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple [Lit. house], that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. 9 “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?”**

**says the Lord of hosts.**

**“Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. 10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11 For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”**

The People’s Response

**12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the Lord.**

God’s Reply

**13 Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, spoke the Lord’s message to the people, saying, “I am with you, says the Lord.”**

**14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius [Darius the Great - 522-486 BC].**

- 1) The projects continued 23 days after the message came

## Haggai - Chapter 2:1-9 - The Need to Look Forward to the Lord's Return

The Coming Glory of God's House

**2:1 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the Lord came by [Lit. by the hand of] Haggai the prophet, saying:**

**2 “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying:**

**3 ‘Who is left among you who saw this temple [Lit. house] in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? 4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the Lord; ‘and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,’ says the Lord, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ says the Lord of hosts.**

**5 ‘According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!’**

- 2) **Joshua 1:1-9** - 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. **5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.** 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance [give as a possession] the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 **Only be strong and very courageous,** that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper [have success or act wisely] wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in [you shall be constantly in] it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

**6 “For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple [Lit. house] with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts. 8 ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts. 9 ‘The glory of this latter temple [Lit. house] shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord of hosts.”**

- 3) The Temple as the Ezekiel 40-48 Temple (the Herodian Temple destroyed in 70 AD)
  - a) Ezekiel 10:4-18 - glory comes and leaves - the glory leaving for the Captivity
  - b) Ezekiel 43:3 - The Glory returns to new Temple
- 4) The Temple as Jesus - God with us
- 5) The Temple as the Church - God with us

## **Haggai - Chapter 2:10-19 - The Need to Pursue Holiness**

The People Are Defiled

**10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius [Darius the Great - 522-486 BC], the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,**

- 6) 3 months and 23 days since the first date & 3 months since the second date

**11 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, 12 “If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?” ’ ”**

**Then the priests answered and said, “No.”**

**13 And Haggai said, “If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?”**

**So the priests answered and said, “It shall be unclean.”**

**14 Then Haggai answered and said, “ ‘So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,’ says the Lord, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.**



Promised Blessing

**15 ‘And now, carefully consider from this day forward:**

**from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord— 16 since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty.**

**17 I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,’ says the Lord. 18 ‘Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid—consider it: 19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.’ ”**

### **Haggai - Chapter 2:20-23 - The Reward for Faithful Obedience**

Zerubbabel Chosen as a Signet

**20 And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 21 “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:**

- 7) 3 months and 23 days since the first date & 3 months since the second date & the same days as above

**‘I will shake heaven and earth.**

**22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms;**

**I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.**

**I will overthrow the chariots**

**And those who ride in them;**

**The horses and their riders shall come down,**

**Every one by the sword of his brother.**

**23 ‘In that day,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,’ says the Lord, ‘and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,’ says the Lord of hosts.”**