

----- Cyrus and the Jews -----



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3405d AM, 4115 JP, 599 BC

799. For in this very year, Cyrus, the Media-Persian, was born, whose father was a Persian and his mother a Mede, as I have shown before. Nebuchadnezzar himself, at the hour of his death, as Abydenus had it, uttered this prophecy:

“There shall come a Persian Mule, who shall make use of your devils, as his fellow-soldiers, to bring you into bondage.”

800. This was also foretold by that oracle given to Croesus:

“When a mule king shall be born to the Medes...”

801. The Pythian Priests interpreted this to refer to Cyrus, who was to be born of a father and a mother of two different

nations, a Persian and a Mede. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 55,91. 1:63,119} However, Isaiah foretold, most plainly and truly, {#Isa 13:1,2} that the Babylonians also should have a time in which they were to endure their own hell of slavery. Their children would one day be dashed against the stones before their eyes, {#Isa 13:16} while these miserable, captive Jews would one day be restored to their liberty. Many years before the time of these events, Isaiah called their deliverer by his proper name of Cyrus. {#Isa 44:28 45:1} God gave him the reason for this unusual revelation:

“For my servant Jacob and for Israel my chosen’s sake, have I called thee by thy name and given thee a surname, though thou hast not known me.” {#Isa 45:4}

802. As for the age of this Cyrus, Cicero cited it from Dionysius, a Persian writer, as follows: {*Cicero, De Divinatione, l. 1. c. 23. 20:275} [L125]

“The sun appeared to Cyrus in his sleep, standing at his feet. When Cyrus endeavoured to take the sun in his hands three times, the sun turned aside and went away. The Magi, who are counted as wise and learned men among the Persians, said that his three attempts to take hold of the sun meant that he should reign thirty years. This came to pass

accordingly, for he started to reign at the age of forty and lived to the age of seventy.”

803. From which dream perhaps, expounded in this way by the magicians, Cyrus took his name, for, as Ctesias correctly said:

“Cyrus, in the Persian language, means the sun.”

804. Plutarch said the same thing. {*Plutarch, Artaxerxes, l. 1. c. 1. (1012) 11:129} Likewise, Chur and Churshid, in the Persian poets, agreed. When the work of Cicero is compared with Daniel, it appears that Darius, the Mede, or Cyaxares, the son of Astyages, who was Cyrus’ uncle, was born before Cyrus. Therefore, Xenophon mentioned Darius saying: {#Da 5:31} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 1. s. 6. 6:123}

“seeing I am here present and am older than Cyrus, it is fitting that I speak first.”

805. The same author stated that when Cyrus wrote to Cyaxares he used the following words: {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 4. c. 5. s. 27. 5:377}

“I advise you, though I be the younger of the two.”

809. In the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah prophesied the captivity and restoration of the Elamites. {#Jer 49:34,39} For Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Astyages the whole province of Elam, including the city of Susa on the Ulai River, and annexed it to his kingdom. {#Jer 25:25 Da 8:1,2} Later, these Elamites combined with the Medes against the Babylonians. {#Isa 21:2} When Belshazzar was overthrown, they recovered their state again under Cyrus, who appointed their chief city of Susa to be the capital of the Persian kingdom. {*Strabo, l. 15. c. 3. s. 2. 7:157} [L126]

3418 AM, 4128 JP, 586 BC

865. When Cyrus had lived twelve years or more with his father in Persia, his grandfather Astyages sent for him. He and his mother Mandane went to him in Media. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 3. s. 1. 5:27}

3421 AM, 4131 JP, 583 BC

868. Cyrus was now almost sixteen years of age. Evilmerodach, the king of Assyria's son, was about to marry a wife called Nicotris. He went with a large army of cavalry and foot soldiers to the borders of Media. There he did as he pleased while hunting in the country. Astyages, with his

grandson Cyrus and with Cyaxares, marched out and engaged him in a battle with the cavalry. Cyrus was just old enough to bear arms. They defeated the Assyrians and drove them from their borders of Media. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 4. s. 18-23. 5:61-69}

869. After this, Cyrus was called home by his father Cambyses. He had one year left of schooling. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 4. s. 25. 5:69} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. s. 1. 5:75} It is also mentioned in Athenaeus, based on Dinon's account, that Cyrus, who served Astyages as the holder of his battle-axe and later as one of his armour bearers, returned into Persia. It was at this time, while Astyages feasted his friends, that Angares, who was a musician, sang a song in which he said: {*Athenaeus, l. 14. (633e) 6:419}

“A fierce wild beast, more fierce than any boar, was let go, and sent into a sunny country and he should reign over all these provinces and should, with a handful of men, maintain war against large armies...”

870. Astyages tried to call Cyrus back again, but could not get him.

3422 AM, 4132 JP, 582 BC

871. Cyrus spent seventeen years among boys, and then he spent ten more years among the youths. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. s. 4. 5:79}

3432c AM, 4142 JP, 572 BC

879. When Cyrus was twenty-seven years old, he was taken from the rank of striplings and was numbered among the men, according to the discipline and custom of the Persians. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. s. 4. 5:79}

3442b AM, 4152 JP, 562 BC

891. Nebuchadnezzar died after he had foretold that Cyrus would capture Babylon. So stated Abydenus (cited by Eusebius {*Eusebius, Gospel, l. 9. c. 39. (457a) 1:485}), based on the account from the Chaldeans. [E95] He died after he had reigned about twenty months as viceroy in the kingdom with his father, and forty-three years by himself.

892. After Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evilmerodach, or Illaoroudamos, reigned. In the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, about the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month (Tuesday, April 15th),

**Evilmerodach ordered Jeconiah to be promoted. {#Jer 52:31}
Two days later he took him from prison, changed his prison
clothes and seated him ahead of all the princes in his court.
He counted him among the king's friends and for the rest of
his life, Jeconiah ate at the king's table. {#2Ki 25:27-29}**

3444c AM, 4154 JP, 560 BC

**900. Evilmerodach, the king of Babylon, was a wicked man.
He had many attempts made on his life and was eventually
murdered by Neriglissoros, his sister's husband, when he had
reigned little more than two years. {Berosus, Chaldean
History, l. 3.} {*Josephus, Apion, l. 1. c. 20. (147) 1:223}
Because we read that Jeconiah, king of Judah, had a daily
food allowance given to him until he died, {#Jer 52:34 2Ki
25:30} it is therefore most probable that Jeconiah himself
died about the same time that Evilmerodach died.**

3444d AM, 4154 JP, 560 BC

**901. After Neriglassaros murdered Evilmerodach, he reigned
for four years. {Berosus, Chaldean History, l. 3.} {*Josephus,
Apion, l. 1. c. 20. (147) 1:223}**

**902. In the kingdom of Media, when Astyages or Assuerus
died, {#/ Apc Tob 14:15} he was succeeded by his son**

Cyaxares, Cyrus' mother's brother. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. s. 2. 5:77} This was in the beginning of the first year of the 55th Olympiad, thirty-one years before the death of Cyrus. Daniel called Cyaxares Darius the Mede, the son of Assuerus.

3445 AM, 4155 JP, 559 BC

903. The king of Babylon conscripted troops from his own subjects and sought the help of Croesus, the king of Lydia, together with the kings of Cappadocia, Phrygia, Caria, Paphlagonia and Cilicia, to the west. On the east he approached the Indians also, to join with him in battle against the Medes and Persians. He told them that they were two great nations who were now allied together. If they were not checked, they would eventually overrun and bring into subjection all countries near and far. Cyrus was made general of the Persian army by his father Cambyses and all the council of the kingdom. He was sent to Media with thirty thousand soldiers and a thousand commanders all of equal authority under his command. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. s. 2. 5:77} When he came, he was made general of the Median forces by his uncle Cyaxares, who had sent for him, and was placed solely in charge of the war against the Babylonians.

3445c AM, 4155 JP, 559 BC

904. The thirty years of Cyrus' reign started from this time, from the end of the first year of the 55th Olympiad. {Julius Africanus, l. 3.} {*Diod. Sic., l. 9. c. 21. 4:31} Thallus, Castor, Polybius, Phlegon, and other chronologers also count this as the beginning of the reign of Cyrus, as cited by Eusebius. {*Eusebius, Gospel, l. 10. c. 10. (488c) 1:523} In the spring of that year, at the close of the same year of the same Olympiad, Solon left Philocyprus, the king, and the Solians. He was thought to have returned to Athens, as we find in his eulogies, mentioned before from Plutarch. However, he suddenly became sick and died in Cyprus at the age of eighty years. This happened in the year when Hegestratus was the archon of Athens, in the second year of Peisistratus ruling there, according to Phantias, the Ephesian, as cited by Plutarch. {*Diogenes Laertius, Solon, l. 1. c. 2. (62) 1:63} {*Plutarch, Solon, l. 1. c. 32. s. 3. 1:497}

3448c AM, 4158 JP, 556 BC

908. Cyaxares and Cyrus marched against the Babylonian king, Croesus and the rest of the confederates, and gained a major victory over them. The king of Babylon fell in the battle and Croesus, with those who were left, broke his camp by night and fled. Cyrus, who had made a league with the

Hyrceanians who had defected to him from the Babylonians, used their help and guidance along the route to pursue the fleeing enemy. He overtook them and defeated them after another battle. After Croesus sent away his women by night because the days were so hot, he left his camp with all his horses. The Hyrceanians attacked the companies of the Cappadocians and Arabians, killing both their kings. Cyrus spared the lives of those who were taken by force or had yielded to mercy. He divided the spoil of the battle among his soldiers. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 3. c. 2. s. 1. -l. 4. c. 2. s. 33. 5:249-339} [E97]

3457 AM, 4167 JP, 547 BC

923. Cyrus remained at Sardis and built battering rams and other equipment with the intention of razing the walls of all that stood against him. The Carians sent and asked for his help to settle their civil war. He sent Adusius, a Persian, with an army. The Cilicians and Cypriots willingly joined this force. Adusius put an end to their differences, but not without leaving sufficient garrisons of his own in the cities of either party. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 4. 6:251-261}

3464c AM, 4174 JP, 540 BC

933. As soon as Cyrus had subdued Asia Minor, he at once made war on the Assyrians. He marched with his army against Labynetus or Nabonidus their king. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 178,188. 1:221,233} The news of this reached Babylon two full years before the city was besieged {#Jer 51:46} because Cyrus, while marching toward Babylon, was delayed at the Gyndes River, which flowed into the Tigris River. He was unable to cross over because he had no boats. While he was staying there, one of the white horses, which were consecrated to the sun, went into the river and drowned in its swift current. Cyrus was furious about this event and halted his march to Babylon. That summer he had the river divided into three hundred and sixty channels, with the intention of making it so shallow that a woman could pass through it and not get her knees wet. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 189,190,202. 1:237,255} {*Herodotus, l. 5. c. 52. 3:59}

3465b AM, 4175 JP, 539 BC

934. The next year Cyrus marched to Babylon. Here Cyrus defeated Belshazzar, or Nabonidus. The Chaldeans retreated into the city and resolved to endure the siege, which they took lightly for two reasons. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 190. 1:237} {#Jer 51:27,28,30} First, they had more than twenty years of

provisions in Babylon. Secondly, they thought there were many in Cyrus' army who favoured the Chaldeans more than over the Persians. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 190. 1:237} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 5. s. 13,14. 6:267}

935. Cyrus made a vast trench around the wall of the city. He cast up the earth toward his own army and made bulwarks along the walls. He placed guards on these and divided his whole army into twelve parts. He ordered that each part should in turn stand watch for a month. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 5. s. 10-13. 6:267}

3466b AM, 4176 JP, 538 BC

936. When Cyrus had spent much time in this work with little to show for it, he finally made a ditch from the river to that vast lake, about forty to fifty miles wide, which Belshazzar's mother, Nicotris, had ordered to be dug. Then he opened the mouths of this and another of various ditches which he had recently built about the city, and let the river flow into them. In this way he made the channel, which was not more than four hundred yards wide, passable for his men to enter into the city. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 190,191. 1:237,239} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 5. s. 15-17. 6:267,269} {#Jer 50:38 51:32,36}

937. Cyrus, with his army, went through the water gates in the wall and got into the city on a festival day, while all the men were banqueting. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 190,191. 1:237239} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 5. s. 26. 6:271} {#Jer 51:39,57} So vast was that city that, as the inhabitants reported, when the people on its outskirts were surprised and taken by the enemy, those who lived in the heart of the city never heard of it. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 191. 1:239} [L145] Jeremiah alluded to this when he said:

“post upon post and messenger upon messenger shall run to tell the king of Babylon that all the outskirts of the city were possessed by the enemies.” {#Jer 51:31} [E101]

938. When Belshazzar and all his nobles were feasting, he ordered his servants to bring all the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar his father, or grandfather, (for he was his son’s son or his son. We do not know which. {#Jer 27:7}) had brought away from Jerusalem. When they glorified the king’s idols and reproached the true God, God sent a hand to write on the wall of the room where Belshazzar sat drinking. It wrote the number of years which the Babylonian empire was to last and that it had now been weighed in the balance and was found wanting, for which reason it was to be transferred to the Medes. This hand of God also declared what was to happen to Belshazzar. When

his wise men of Chaldea could not read the writing, his queen advised him to send for Daniel, who came and read the writing and interpreted it for him. For his efforts, he was publicly proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom, after the king and the queen. {#Da 5:1-31} Since the king's wives are said to have been present at the banquet, {#Da 5:2,3} and the queen to have come in afterward, {#Da 5:10} this must be understood to be speaking of the queen mother, Nicotris. She was the mother of this last king of Babylon, as we have already shown from Herodotus.

939. In the very same night of this banquet, Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, was killed by the soldiers of Gobryas and Gadneas, {#Da 5:30} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 5. s. 30. 6:273} and so the Babylonian kingdom came to an end, just as it had been predicted, {#Isa 13:1-14:32 21:1-17 43:1-28 46:1-13 Hab 2:1-20 Jer 25:1-38 50:1-51:64} and the empire was transferred to the Medes and Persians. {#Da 5:21 6:8,12,15}

The Persian Empire

940. Darius the Mede, son of Ahasuerus (or Cyaxares, the son of Hystages), took over the kingdom which Cyrus had conquered and given to him. {#Da 5:31 9:1} Cyrus had set apart for himself the king's house and all his palaces in

Babylon, so that if he should come to Babylon, he would have a palace of his own to stay in. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 5. s. 17. 6:403} In this first year of Darius' reign, the angel Michael was said to have confirmed and strengthened him in his kingdom. {#Da 10:21,11:1} After this he is said to have reigned for two more years.

941. When Cyrus had set everything in order at Babylon, he returned through Media into Persia to his father Cambyses, and Mandane, his mother, who were still living. From there, he returned into Media and married the only daughter and heir of Cyaxares. As a dowry, he was given the whole kingdom of Media. After the marriage, he left for Babylon, taking his new wife with him. From Babylon, he sent governors into all his dominions: Megabyzus went into Arabia, Artabatas to Cappadocia, Artacamas into Greater Phrygia, Chrysantas into Lydia and Ionia, Adusius went into Caria, while Pharnuchus went into Aeolia and Phrygia on the Hellespont. He sent no Persian governors to Cilicia, Cyprus and Paphlagonia, because they had submitted to him and had voluntarily helped him against the king of Babylon. They were, however, required to pay tribute. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 5. s. 28. 6:409} {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 6. s. 7. 6:413}

942. All the countries which Cyrus subdued in his role of general of the forces of Media, he added to the dominions of Cyaxares. {?Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 5.} [L146] Therefore it is most likely that, at a previous meeting in council, he made that distribution of the governments at the advice of Cyaxares. Xenophon {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 6. s. 1. 6:409} stated about Cyrus:

“It seemed good unto him, to set governors over all the countries which he had subdued.”

943. Daniel, who at this time, it seems, went with Cyrus from Babylon to Media. Cyrus had given control of the kingdom to Cyaxares who then appointed governors to manage the new kingdom. Daniel said of this Cyaxares:

“It seemed good to Darius, to set over the kingdoms, one hundred and twenty governors, that they should be over all the kingdoms.” {#Da 6:1}

944. Over all these governors he set three overseers, the principal one being Daniel. As a result, the rest were envious of him and had the king make a decree that:

“for thirty days, no petition should be made to any god or man, but to himself only” {#Da 6:7}

945. Daniel, having broken this decree by praying to God, was cast into the lion's den, from which he was eventually delivered unharmed. Then Darius cast those who had plotted against Daniel into the same lion's den, publishing through all his dominions that famous decree, that every man should reverence and fear Daniel's God. {#Da 6:1-28}

3467a AM, 4176 JP, 538 BC

946. From the year of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, which began when Jehoiakim was defeated in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, until the end of the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, was almost seventy years. According to Jeremiah the captivity was almost over:

**“Thus saith the Lord, when the seventy years shall begin to be finished with Babylon, then will I visit you and perform my good word unto you and will bring you again to this place ... and when you shall call upon me to depart from thence and when you shall pray unto me, then will I hear you.”
{#Jer 29:10,12}**

947. Knowing the time of the captivity was almost up, Daniel prayed fervently for the remission of his own sins as well as those of his people, and for their release from captivity. The angel Gabriel brought him an answer which applied not only

to this immediate matter, but also intimated the spiritual deliverance of the church, to be finally effected by the death of the Messiah. [E102] As a part of this, he gave that famous prophecy of the seventy weeks. {#Da 9:12-27}

948. When Cyrus had spent one whole year with his wife in Babylon, he assembled his entire army. It was said to be made up of a hundred and twenty thousand cavalry, two thousand scythe-bearing chariots and six hundred thousand foot soldiers. When he had outfitted his troops, he undertook that campaign in which he was said to have subdued all the countries from Syria to the Red Sea. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 6. s. 19. 6:419,421}

3468a AM, 4177 JP, 537 BC

949. After Cyrus' father Cambyses died in Persia, Cyaxares in Media held all the empire of the east. It was from this year that Xenophon {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 7. s. 1. 6:423} reckoned the beginning of the seven years of Cyrus' reign. Based on the records of the Medes and Persians, the Bible reckoned this as the first year, and stated that it was in this year that Cyrus, king of Persia, made that famous edict of his: "Into my hand hath God given all the kingdoms of the earth..." {#Ezr 1:2}

950. This was the year which marked the end of the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, just as had been foretold by Jeremiah and in line with the prophecy of Isaiah, who had mentioned Cyrus by name. {#Isa 44:28 45:13} He gave permission for all the Jews living anywhere in his empire to return to their own country. He ordered those who returned to rebuild the temple of God, leaving them free to build it as large as they wished. {#Hag 2:3} They could use the resources from the king's treasury, and Cyrus restored all the vessels of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar had removed from there. {#2Ch 36:22,23 Ezc 1:1,2,7 5:13,14 6:2-5} [L147]

951. Cyrus made Sheshbazzar captain of the Jews who were returning to Jerusalem. In line with Cyrus' orders, Mithredath, the treasurer, gave to Sheshbazzar all the vessels belonging to the temple, for the purpose of returning them to Jerusalem. {#Ezc 1:7-11 5:14,15} Sheshbazzar was his Chaldean name, but his Hebrew name was Zerubbabel. {#Ezc 3:8,10 5:16}

3468c AM, 4178 JP, 536 BC

952. The Jews were preparing to return to their country, and the poor were given an allowance to help with the costs. {#Ezc 1:5,6} There were 42,360 of the children of the

province, or poor people of the Hebrews born in Chaldea, who returned. Their captain was Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, or Salathiel, and their high priest, Jehu, or Jeshua, the son of Jozadak. In addition there were 7337 proselytes, and manservants and maidservants, who also returned. {#Ezr 2:1-70 Ne 7:6-67 12:1-9} However, the total sum given in Ezra is only 29,818. In Nehemiah, the sum is 31,031. Neither of these add up to 42,360 but at the end of each list the total of 42,360 was given as the number of the whole congregation. {#Ezr 2:64 Ne 7:66} To tally to 42,360, the Hebrews (in their great Chronicle, chapter 29) stated that we must include in this number those of the other tribes of Israel who came back from the captivity with the Jews. For even at the time of the end of the Jewish state there still existed a remnant of the other ten tribes, {#Ac 26:7} made up not only of some from the dispersion, {#Jas 1:1} and some still at Jerusalem {#2Ch 9:3 Lu 2:36} and in other cities of Judah, {#2Ch 11:16 31:6} but also of those who still lived on their lands, for Shalmaneser had not taken away everyone belonging to the tribes. {See note on 3327 AM <<697>>} He had left a remnant of them in their own country who, together with the Jews and Benjamites and Levites, were later carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. They were now being given their liberty and sent back again by Cyrus. After this first year of Cyrus, all the Israelites are said to have lived in their own cities. {#Ezr 2:70} In the sixth year

of Darius, they are said to have been present at the dedication of the temple, and there to have offered twelve male goats for the sin of all Israel. {#Ezr 6:16,17} When Christ preached the gospel in Galilee, {#Mt 14:14} he fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, that the people of Zebulun and Naphtali would see a bright light. {#Isa 9:1,2} The chief men of their fathers' families came to Jerusalem and brought offerings, according to their ability, toward the rebuilding of the temple, a total of sixty-one thousand drachmas of gold, five thousand pounds of silver and a hundred priests' robes. The priests, the Levites and the rest of the people all settled again in their own cities. {#Ezr 2:68-70}

3469a AM, 4178 JP, 536 BC

953. On the first day of the seventh month, during the Feast of Trumpets, the Israelites all came from their cities to Jerusalem and there built the altar. Every morning and every evening they offered the required daily sacrifice to God, and on the fifteenth day of the same month they kept the Feast of Tabernacles. They also provided materials and workmen for the building of the temple, for which Cyrus had given them permission. {#Ezr 3:1-7} [E103]

960. Cyrus died at the age of seventy years. He had first been made general of the Median and Persian armies a full thirty years earlier. He took Babylon nine years before his death and reigned for seven years, plus a month or so.

961. Authors differ as to how he died. Some say that he was killed in a battle against the Massagetae or Scythians. Others say he was decapitated by Tomyris, the queen of the Scythians, and she threw his dead body into a tub full of blood. She told him to satiate himself with blood, since he had so thirsted after it in his lifetime. {*Herodotus, l. 1. c. 214. 1:269} {Justin, Trogus, l. 1. c. 8.} {*Valerius Maximus, l. 9. c. 10. ext. 1. 2:357} However, Diodorus stated that when she had taken him prisoner, she crucified him. {*Diod. Sic., l. 2. c. 44. s. 2. 2:31} Ctesias related that, having been wounded in the thigh by a certain Indian in a battle against the Derbicans, the country bordering on Hyrcania, he killed Amorraeus, their king, and his two sons, whereupon he himself died, three days later. {Ctesias, l. 11.} Johannes Malela of Antioch, quoting a forged book attributed to Pythagoras of Samos, stated that he was killed in a naval battle against the Samians. Xenophon reported that he died a natural death in his own country of Persia. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 7. s. 25-28. 6:437-439} He ordered his sons

to wrap his body neither in gold nor silver but in plain cloth and bury him in an out-of-the-way place. [L149] They were to call together all his friends, Persians and others, to his grave, and dismiss them after having there presented them with whatever was fit to be given them at the funeral of a fortunate man. His tomb was made at Pasargada. This is stated by those who recorded the noble acts of Alexander the Great, such as Curtius, Plutarch and Arrian. {*Plutarch, Alexander, l. 1. c. 69. 7:417} {*Curtius, l. 10. c. 1. s. 30-35. 2:477} {*Arrian, Anabasis, l. 6. c. 29. s. 4-11. 2:193-197} According to Strabo, Aristobulus was sent by Alexander to see the tomb. He also recounted this inscription found on his tomb: {*Strabo, l. 15. c. 3. s. 7. 7:167,169}

“Oh man, I am Cyrus, who founded the Persian monarchy and was king of Asia; and therefore envy me not that I have a monument.”

962. Strabo, quoting from Onesicritus, cited a Greek epitaph written for Cyrus, (if such a thing can be believed), in Persian letters. It was:

Here Cyrus I do lie,
Who king of kings was high.

963. It is of the same dubious nature as that one cited by Lucian, with the same Onesicritus as its source, namely that Cyrus, who missed his friends whom his son Cambyses had killed, died of grief at the age of one hundred. {*Lucian, Octogenarians, l. 1. (13) 1:233} [E104]

964. Cyrus left his kingdom to his eldest son Cambyses and to his younger son, Tanaoxares or Tanyoxarcas, whom Herodotus called Smerdis. {*Herodotus, l. 3. c. 30. 2:39} Justin called him Mergis. {Justin, Trogus} Ctesias claimed that Cyrus left Tanaoxares the governments of Bactria, Choromnea, Parthia and Carmania. Xenophon, however, stated that he received the governments of the Medes, the Armenians and Cadusians. {*Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 7. s. 11-13. 6:429}

965. In the beginning of the kingdom of Ahasuerus (for it is by that name that Cambyses is known in the Scriptures) the Samaritans, who before had secretly fought to undermine the Israelites, now openly sent a letter to the king against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. {#Ezr 4:6} They knew very well what difference there was between the natures and dispositions of the father and the son. Cyrus was naturally kind and loving to those who were under him, while his son was uncontrollable by nature and impulsive in his

resolutions. {*Diod. Sic., l. 10. c. 12. s. 14. 4:75} {*Herodotus, l. 3. c. 89. 2:117}

3483a AM, 4192 JP, 522 BC

1003. Artaxerxes sent a letter forbidding the rebuilding of Jerusalem until he should so order. The Samaritans, encouraged by this reply, came swiftly to Jerusalem and forced the Jews to stop building both the city and the temple, although Cyrus had expressly ordered them to finish the temple. [L156] They stopped all work until the second year of the reign of Darius. {#Ezr 4:17-24}

3484a AM, 4193 JP, 521 BC

1014. This was the third sabbatical year held by the Jews, after their return from Babylon.

3484c AM, 4194 JP, 520 BC

1015. Mordecai, the Jew, in the Greek edition of Esther {#/Apc Est 11:1-12}, is said to have had a dream on the first day of the month of Nisan, in the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the Great (or Ahasuerus or Darius, the son of Hystaspes) concerning a river signifying Esther and two

**dragons portending himself and Haman. {#/ Apc Est 10:4-13}
[L159] [E111]**

3484d AM, 4194 JP, 520 BC

1016. In the second year of king Darius, which was in the 65th Olympiad, Haggai the prophet reproved the Jews for their idleness in not rebuilding the temple. Their neglect in this matter was the cause of crop failures and other plagues that continually happened to them between the first and third Sabbatical years. He earnestly persuaded them to change their ways. Then Zerubbabel, the governor of the Jews and Joshua, the high priest, and all the people earnestly began to rebuild the temple on the twenty-fourth day of the same month. {#Hag 1:1-15}

3485a AM, 4194 JP, 520 BC

1017. On the twenty-first day of the seventh month in the same year, Haggai encouraged the Jews to persevere in the work with a promise of God's presence and blessing on them. The beginnings of this present structure did not compare with the glory of the former temple of sixty-nine years earlier. However, he told them that the Messiah, who was born five hundred and sixteen years later, as it turned out, would be first shown in this temple, and that on account of

this, peace would flow to all nations. If they considered that fact, then they would have to acknowledge that the glory of this temple would excel the beauty of the former. {#Hag 2:1-9}

1018. In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the people were exhorted to repentance by Zechariah, the son of Berachiah. {#Zec 1:1-6}

1019. On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of this same second year, about halfway between seedtime (which immediately followed the end of the sabbatical year) and the harvest, the temple began to be built on its old foundations by Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, with the assistance of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. {#Ezr 5:1,2 Hag 2:10,18,19}

1020. On the same twenty-fourth day, the two last prophecies of Haggai were revealed to him. One vision concerned the end of the plagues which they were experiencing. The other was about the overthrow of various kingdoms and the exaltation of Zerubbabel. {#Hag 2:10-23}

3485b AM, 4195 JP, 519 BC

1021. Tatnai, governor of the countries on the west side of the Euphrates River, together with Shetharboznai and the Apharsachites, their associates, came to Jerusalem to hinder the work on the temple. They asked the elders of the Jews by whose command they were doing it. The elders replied that they were doing it by the authority of the edict of Cyrus, and continued with their work. {#Ezr 5:3-5,13,16} The laws of the Medes and Persians were perpetual and unalterable. {#Da 6:8,12 Es 1:19 8:8} Therefore, it was lawful for the Jews to proceed in the work without expecting any new order about it.

1022. Their enemies sent a letter to Darius containing the Jews' answer and desiring that a search might be made of the records at Babylon. They wanted to see whether or not any such grant had been made by Cyrus, and desired to know the king's further pleasure concerning this. {#Ezr 5:5-17}

1023. The work was thus interrupted, and the famine continued in Judah because the grain was not yet ripe. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the prophet Zechariah had a vision of horsemen galloping up and down over the face of the whole earth, which was at rest and quiet. [L160] When in the vision the prophet asked what this meant, God graciously answered

with many comforting words to the angel who was entreating God to cease his anger and fury against the Jews, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. These seventy years mentioned in the vision are to be reckoned from the coming of the Babylonians and their last siege laid to Jerusalem. {See note on 3415c AM. <<841>>} {#Jer 34:1 Eze 5:12,13 Zec 1:7-13} This exhortation, which is recorded in Zechariah, {#Zec 2:6,7} was sent to the Jews still remaining in Babylon. They were told to get out as fast as possible, to avoid that calamity which Darius brought upon Babylon a while later, when he took it.

1024. The edict of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple was found at Achmetha or Ecbatana, in the province of the Medes. Darius sent this and a second command in favour of the Jews to Tatnai and his companions. They were ordered not to hinder the work of the Lord's house but help it along. The costs of the project were to be taken from the king's tribute. Tatnai and his companions were to pay the costs for the daily sacrifices that were to be offered by the priests at Jerusalem. With this new command, and the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, they enthusiastically completed the work. {#Ezr 6:1-14}

1035. When Esther's turn came to be brought before king Ahasuerus, she was brought from the house of the women to the king's chamber by Hegai, the eunuch. {#Es 2:12,15} {*Herodotus, l. 3. c. 69. 2:91}

“The women in Persia come round in their turns, to their husband's beds.”

1036. In the seventh year of Ahasuerus' reign, in the tenth month called Tebeth, when Esther came to the king, she found grace and won his favour and approval more than all the other maidens. He put the crown of the kingdom upon her head and made her queen in Vashti's stead. {#Es 2:16,17} From this I gather that as Vashti was Atossa, so Esther was the one Herodotus called the virgin, Artystone. He said that Darius loved her more than all his wives, and made a solid gold statue of her. {*Herodotus, l. 3. c. 88. 2:117} {*Herodotus, l. 7. c. 69. 3:383} Hadassah was another name given to Esther and sounds much like Atossa. Herodotus makes Artystone to have been Cyrus' daughter and Atossa's sister. We do not know whether Herodotus was not so well skilled in the Persian genealogies, or whether the Persians themselves, out of sheer envy, concealed the name of Esther.

3490b AM, 4200 JP, 514 BC

1037. In honour of his new marriage, Ahasuerus made a most sumptuous feast for all his princes and servants and called it Esther's feast. He relieved the provinces of many taxes and distributed gifts commensurate with the wealth of so great a king. {#Es 2:18}

3494b AM, 4204 JP, 510 BC

1039. Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, of the tribe of the Amalekites, hated the Jew Mordecai because he would not fall down and adore him as others did. He resolved on his account to take revenge on all the Jewish nation (which had always been at odds with his country {#De 25:19}) and to destroy it. To establish a good time to do this, he cast pur that is, lots, before him on the first month called Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus. The lot fell on the twelfth month of Adar. {#Es 3:1-7}

1040. For vacuous reasons, he offered Ahasuerus ten thousand talents of silver, (which the king would not accept), and obtained a grant from him to destroy the Jews. {#Es 3:7-11}

1041. On the thirteenth day of the first month, the king's edict was proclaimed in Susa, and copies of it were dispatched by couriers into all the provinces of the empire. On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of Adar, all Jews without regard to sex or age were to be killed. {#Es 3:12-15} When it was announced, Mordecai, Esther and all the Jews humbled themselves before the Lord in fasting and prayer. {#Es 4:1-17} To this day, their posterity, in memory of this, observe a solemn fast on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, which they call Esther's fast.

1042. Esther went to the king in gorgeous apparel and was graciously received by him. She invited the king to a banquet. Meanwhile, Haman was busy having a gallows made for Mordecai. {#Es 5:1-14}

1043. One night, when Ahasuerus could not sleep, he had the records read to him. It was found that two of his servants, Bigthan and Teresh his doorkeepers, had plotted his death and that Mordecai had revealed this conspiracy to him. Thereupon, he ordered that Mordecai should be highly honoured publicly by none other than Haman himself. {#Es 6:1-14} [E114]

1044. Shortly after this, Haman was hung on the gallows he had made for Mordecai. {#Es 7:1-10} Haman's house was

given to the queen. Mordecai, her uncle, who had raised her, had great honours bestowed upon him. {#Es 8:1,2,15-17}

1045. On the twenty-third day of the month of Sivan there was an edict proclaimed at Susa, and copies of it were sent away speedily by couriers into the hundred and twenty-seven provinces. It stated that the Jews, on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, which was the day appointed for their massacre, could defend themselves and could kill any who had wanted to kill them. They could keep the spoil of any man killed. In Susa and in all the provinces there was great rejoicing among the Jews, and people in various countries became Jews. {#Es 8:9-17}