

Concerning the Seventy Years of Babylonian Captivity and Their Return

Daniel 9:1–2 (NKJV) — ¹In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—²in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

[Darius is probably a title and not a proper name, Cyrus is now the king of Persia, [chapter 10:1](#).]

The **70 years prophesied**.

Jeremiah 25:8–11 (NKJV) — ⁸“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, ⁹behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the Lord, ‘and **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant**, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. ¹⁰Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Ezekiel 24:15-26 — [The Lord told Ezekiel] “...I take from them their stronghold, their joy and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their minds...”

Then:

Jeremiah 29:4–14 (NKJV) — ⁴Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. [Not sons and daughters of the Babylonians.] ⁷And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace [Lesson to learn]. ⁸For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. ⁹For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. ¹⁰For thus says the Lord: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon**, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

So in Daniel **chapter 9** it is the first year Cyrus king of Persia.

Daniel in reading Jeremiah has discovered the prophecies concerning the captivity and the length of that captivity, 70 years. This first year of Cyrus is the 70th year of the Babylonian captivity.

What God had prophesied concerning Nebuchadnezzar, and his son Belshazzar has come to pass. [Note: Daniel’s name given to him is spelled Belteshazzar.]

Jeremiah 25:8–11 (NKJV) —¹²‘Then it will come to pass, when **seventy years are completed**, that I will **punish the king of Babylon and that nation**, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. ¹³So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. ¹⁴(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)’

This is the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon by the Medo-Persian in 539 B.C.

Daniel 5:30–31 (NKJV) — ³⁰That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. ³¹And Darius the Mede [Cyrus—**9:1**] received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

This is the Cyrus spoken of by Isaiah.

Isaiah 44:28 (NKJV) — ²⁸Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.” ’

Isaiah 45:1–7 (NKJV) — ¹“Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held— To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: ²**I will** go before you And make the crooked places straight; **I will** break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. ³**I will** give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, **That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel.** ⁴For Jacob My servant’s sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. ⁵I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. **I will** gird you, though you have not known Me, ⁶That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting **That there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other;** ⁷**I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.**’

So Daniel, in **Daniel chapter 9:1-2**, has discovered the prophesy of the 70 years of captivity and it is the 70th year he discovers this.

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged* (pp. 286–287).

Peabody: Hendrickson. [Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37–c.100)]

The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 11, Chapter 1

Chapter 1

How Cyrus, King of the Persians, Delivered the Jews Out of Babylon, and Suffered Them to Return to Their Own Country, and to Build Their Temple; For Which Work He Gave Them Money.

[There are two numbering systems. There is the original Whiston [William Whiston-1667-1752] numbering system, but also is included in parentheses throughout the text the numbers corresponding to those used in the Greek text]

- (1) In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God commiserated [to feel or express sympathy for] the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city, (2) that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity [his son Belshazzar], and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity; and these things God did afford them; (3) for he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia:—“Thus saith Cyrus the King:—Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; (4) for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets; and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea.”
- (5) This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision:—“My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple.” (6) This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished.

Isaiah 44:28 (NKJV) — ²⁸Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.” ’

Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, (7) for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that

were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and, besides that, beasts for their sacrifices.

3. (8) When Cyrus had said this to the Israelites, the rulers of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites and priests, went in haste to Jerusalem, yet did many of them stay at Babylon, as not willing to leave their possessions; (9) and when they were come thither, all the king's friends assisted them, and brought in, for the building of the temple, some gold, and some silver, and some a great many cattle and horses. So they performed their vows to God, and offered the sacrifices that had been accustomed of old time; I mean this upon the rebuilding of their city, and the revival of the ancient practices relating to their worship. (10) Cyrus also sent back to them the vessels of God which king Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged out of the temple, and carried to Babylon. (11) So he committed these things to Mithridates, the treasurer, to be sent away, with an order to give them to Sanabassar, that he might keep them till the temple was built; and when it was finished, he might deliver them to the priest and rulers of the multitude, in order to their being restored to the temple. (12) Cyrus also sent an epistle to the governors that were in Syria, the contents whereof here follow:—

“KING CYRUS TO SISINNES AND SATHRABUZANES, SENDETH 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. (13) I have also sent my treasurer, Mithridates, and **Zorobabel, the governor of the Jews**, that they may lay the foundations of the temple, and may build it sixty cubits high, and of the same latitude, making three edifices of polished stones, and one of the wood of the country, and the same order extends to the altar whereon they offer sacrifices to God. (14) I require also, that the expenses for these things may be given out of my revenues. Moreover, I have also sent the vessels which king Nebuchadnezzar pillaged out of the temple, and have given them to Mithridates the treasurer, and to Zorobabel the governor of the Jews, that they may have them carried to Jerusalem, and may restore them to the temple of God. (15) Now their number is as follows.—Fifty chargers of gold and five hundred of silver; forty Thericlean cups of gold, and five hundred of silver; fifty basins of gold, and five hundred of silver; thirty vessels for pouring [the drink offerings], and three hundred of silver, thirty vials of gold, and two thousand four hundred of silver; with a thousand other large vessels. (16) I permit them to have the same honor which they were used to have from their forefathers, as also for their small cattle, and for wine and oil, two hundred and five thousand and five hundred drachmae; and for wheat flour, twenty thousand and five hundred artabae; and I give order that these expenses shall be given them out of the tributes due from Samaria. (17) The priests shall also offer these sacrifices according to the laws of Moses in Jerusalem; and when they offer them, they shall pray to God for the preservation of the king and of his family, that the kingdom of Persia may continue. But my will is, that those who disobey these injunctions, and make them void, shall be hung upon a cross, and their substance brought into the king's treasury.” (18) And such was the import of this epistle. Now the number of those that came out of captivity to Jerusalem, were forty-two thousand four hundred and sixty-two.

Now there were 3 different waves of the Jews returning to their homeland, the above is the number of the total that returned to Jerusalem. **Josephus** agrees with Ezra.

Ezra 2:64–65 (NKJV) — ⁶⁴The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, ⁶⁵besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers.

Ezra 1:1–5 (NKJV) — ¹Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ²Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And **He has commanded me** to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. ³Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God),

which is in Jerusalem. ⁴And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. ⁵Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

This first group to return to Jerusalem was led by Zerubbabel, in 538 B.C. — **Ezra chapters 1-6.**

Ezra 2:2 (NKJV) — ²Those who came with Zerubbabel were...

These came up for the purpose from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple. [Note: Cyrus reigned from 559-530 B.C.; Babylon was added to his kingdom in 539 B.C.]

Now **Josephus**, and **Ezra in chapter 4**, tells us that during the reign of Cyrus, as the Jews were busy rebuilding the temple, there were those seeking to hinder the temple being rebuilt.

This is found in **Ezra chapter 4**. But there is a problem because there is mention of King Ahasuerus and King Artaxerxes.

MacArthur explains it thus: He says — “it is apparent, then, that **Ezra 4:1-5** and **4:24-5:2** deal with rebuilding the temple under Zerubbabel [Josephus-Zorobabel], while **4:6-23** is a parenthesis recounting the history of opposition in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.” During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah the walls are restored around Jerusalem, King Ahasuerus and King Artaxerxes, their reign is after the temple is completed.

Josephus does not mention any opposition from these two kings. **Josephus** tells of two kings between King Cyrus and King Darius that opposed the construction of the temple.

King Ahasuerus and King Artaxerxes' reign came after King Darius, during his reign the temple is completed.

So the two previous kings could not have hindered the temple being rebuilt, for it was built before their time.

Josephus give us some details about those who sought to stop the temple and Jerusalem from being rebuilt.

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). *The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged* (p. 287-). Peabody: Hendrickson.

The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 11, Chapter 2

1. (19) When the foundations of the temple were laying, and when the Jews were very zealous about the building it, the neighboring nations, and especially the Cutheans, whom Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, had brought out of Persia and Media, and had planted in Samaria, when he carried the people of Israel captive [if I remember correctly, the Assyrian king, Shalmanezar, took Israel captive in 722 B.C.], [so these Cutheans] besought the governors, and those that had the care of such affairs, that they would interrupt the Jews, both in the rebuilding of their city, and in the building of their temple. (20) Now as these men were corrupted by them with money, they sold the Cutheans their interest for rendering this building a slow and careless work, for Cyrus, who was busy about other wars, knew nothing of all this; and it so happened, that when he had led his army against the Massagetae, he ended his life.

So the Jews had begun to return in 538 B.C. to rebuild the temple. It was, no doubt, a slow and tedious work.

And the opposition had probably started as soon as the Jews began to return to their homeland.

There was, no doubt, a lot of cleaning up to do, and since they did not have modern equipment, everything was done by hand, with the use of animals. The reconstruction of the temple began 8 years before King Cyrus died, 530 B.C.

Then Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, became ruler. And when he took the throne the governors in Syria, and Phoenicia, and in the countries of Ammon, and Moab, and Samaria, wrote an epistle to Cambyses.... In this letter they said — It is fit, O king, that thou shouldst know that those Jews who were carried to Babylon, are come into our country, and are building that rebellious and wicked city, and its market places, and setting up its walls, and raising up the temple: (23) know, therefore, that when these things are finished, they will not be willing to pay tribute, nor will they submit to thy commands, but will resist kings, and will choose rather to rule over others, than be ruled over themselves.

So the advice these governors gave to the king was to stop the building of the temple.

When Cambyses had read the epistle, being naturally wicked, he was irritated at what they told him; and wrote back to them as follows: “Cambyses, the king, to Rathumus, the historiographer, to Beeltethmus, to Semellius the scribe, and the rest that are in commission, and dwelling in Samaria and Phoenicia, after this manner: (27) I have read the epistle that was sent from you; and I gave order that the books of my forefathers should be searched into; and it is there found, that this city hath always been an enemy to kings, and its inhabitants have raised seditions and wars. We also are sensible that their kings have been powerful and tyrannical, and have exacted tribute of Celesyria and Phoenicia: (28) wherefore I give order, that the Jews shall not be permitted to build that city, lest such mischief as they used to bring upon kings be greatly augmented.”

So some time before King Cyrus dies the building of the temple is being hindered, while King Cyrus was at war, where he was slain in battle, and eventually the reconstruction of the temple comes to a complete stop under his son Cambyses.

Cambyses dies in 521 B.C.

Then **Bardiya**, the son of Cambyses, became ruler in 522 B.C. but in about a month he was killed by Persian aristocrats. [According to online Wikipedia](#). **Josephus** makes no mention of him in his works, maybe because of his short reign.

Darius [seems to have been his real name] ascended the throne in 522 B.C. by overthrowing the legitimate Achaemenid monarch Bardiya, whom he later fabricated to be an imposter named Gaumata. The new king met with rebellions throughout his kingdom and quelled them each time. [According to online Wikipedia](#).

King Darius became the ruler in 522 B.C. Here we see how God moves upon men to accomplish His purpose.

Ezra 4:24 (NKJV) — ²⁴Thus 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.

In — **Ezra 5:2 (NKJV)** — ²So Zerubbabel [Josephus-Zorobabel] the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

But when they resumed the building of the temple — **Ezra 5:3 (NKJV)** — ³At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: “Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?”

Then a letter was sent to King Darius to inquire about whether or not King Cyrus had actually given a decree that the Jews could rebuild the temple. In the letter the governor Tattenai said he was told by the Jews that King Cyrus had given the decree.

So we have King Darius response.

Ezra 6:1–12 (NKJV) — ¹Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. ²And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus:

³In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: “Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, ⁴with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king’s treasury. ⁵Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God”—

⁶Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the region beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who are beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. ⁷Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site. ⁸Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king’s expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given

immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. ⁹And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, ¹⁰that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. ¹¹Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. ¹²And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

Now **Josephus** give us how it was that King Darius came to issue this degree.

The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 11, Chapter 3

1. (31) After the slaughter of the magi, who upon the death of Cambyses, attained the government of the Persians for a year, those families who were called the seven families of the Persians, appointed Darius, the son of Hystaspes, to be their king. [Josephus does not mention Bardiya] Now he, [Darius] while he was a private man, had made a vow to God, that if he came to be king, he would send all the vessels of God that were in Babylon to the temple at Jerusalem. (32) Now it so fell out, that about this time **Zorobabel**, who had been made **governor of the Jews** that had been in captivity, came to Darius, from Jerusalem; for there had been an old friendship between him and the king. **He was also, with two others, thought worthy to be guard of the king's body; and obtained that honor which he hoped for.**

The next parts concern these three men, the kings guards, one of whom was Zorobabel.

2. (33) Now, in the first year of the king's reign, **Darius feasted those that were about him**, and those born in his house, with the rulers of the Medes, and princes of the Persians, and the toparchs of India and Ethiopia, and the generals of the armies of his hundred and twenty-seven provinces; (34) but when they had eaten and drunken to satiety [to indulge to excess] and abundantly, they every one departed to go to bed at their own houses, and **Darius the king went to bed**; but after he had rested a little part of the night, he awaked, and **not being able to sleep any more, he fell into conversation with the three guards of his body**, (35) and promised, that to him who should make an oration about points that he should inquire of, such as should be most agreeable to truth, and to the dictates of wisdom, he would grant it as a reward of his victory, to put on a purple garment, and to drink in cups of gold, and to sleep upon gold, and to have a chariot with bridles of gold, and a head-tire of fine linen, and a chain of gold about his neck, and to sit next to himself, on account of his wisdom:—"And," says he, "he shall be called my Cousin." (36) **Now when he had promised to give them these gifts, he asked the first of them, "Whether wine was not the strongest?"—the second, "Whether kings were not such?"—and the third, "Whether women were not such? or whether truth was not the strongest of all?"** When he had proposed that they should make their inquiries about these problems, he went to rest; (37) but in the morning he sent for his great men, his princes, and toparchs of Persia and Media, and set himself down in the place where he used to give audience, and bid each of the guards of his body to declare what they thought proper concerning the proposed questions, in the hearing of them all.

3. (38) Accordingly, the **first of them** began to speak of **the strength of wine**; and demonstrated it thus: "When," said he, "I am to give my opinion of wine, O you men, I find that it exceeds everything, by the following indications: (39) it deceives the mind of those that drink it, and reduces that of the king to the same state with that of the orphan, and he who stands in need of a tutor; and erects that of the slave to the boldness of him that is free; and that of the needy becomes like that of the rich man, (40) for it changes and renews the souls of men when it gets into them; and it quenches the sorrow of those that are under calamities, and makes men forget the debts they owe to others, and makes them think themselves to be of all men the richest; it makes them talk of no small things, but of talents, and such other things as become wealthy men only; (41) nay more, it makes them insensible of their commanders and of their kings, and takes away the remembrance of their friends and companions, for it arms men even against those that are dearest to them, and makes them appear the greatest strangers to them; (42) and when they are become sober, and they have slept out their wine

- in the night, they arise without knowing anything they have done in their cups. I take these for signs of power, and by them discover that wine is the strongest and most insuperable of all things.
4. (43) As soon as the first had given the forementioned demonstrations of the strength of wine, he left off; and **the next to him** began to speak about **the strength of a king, and demonstrated that it was the strongest of all, and more powerful than anything else that appears to have any force or wisdom.** He began his demonstration after the following manner; and said, (44) “They are men who govern all things: they force the earth and the sea to become profitable to them in what they desire, and over these men do kings rule, and over them they have authority. Now those who rule over that animal which is of all the strongest and most powerful must needs deserve to be esteemed insuperable [**unbeatable**] in power and force. (45) For example, when these kings command their subjects to make wars, and undergo dangers, they are hearkened to; and when they send them against their enemies, their power is so great that they are obeyed. They command men to level mountains, and to pull down walls and towers; nay, when they are commanded to be killed and to kill they submit to it, that they may not appear to transgress the king’s commands; and when they have conquered, they bring what they have gained in the war to the king. (46) Those also who are not soldiers, but cultivate the ground, and plough it, after they have endured the labor, and all the inconveniences of such work of husbandry, when they have reaped and gathered in their fruits, they bring tributes to the king; (47) and whatsoever it is which the king says or commands it is done of necessity, and that without any delay, while he in the meantime is satiated [**has great abundance**] with all sorts of food and pleasures, and sleeps in quiet. He is guarded by such as watch, and such as are, as it were, fixed down to the place through fear; (48) for no one dares leave him, even when he is asleep, nor does anyone go away and take care of his own affairs, but he esteems this one thing the only work of necessity, to guard the king; and accordingly to this he wholly addicts himself. How then can it be otherwise, but that it must appear that the king exceeds all in strength, while so great a multitude obeys his injunctions?”
5. (49) Now when this man had held his peace **the third of them, who was Zorobabel,** began to instruct them **about women, and about truth,** who said thus: “**Wine is strong,** as is **the king also,** whom all men obey, **but women are superior to them in power;** (50) for it was a woman that brought the king into the world; and for those that plant the vines and make the wine, they are women who bear them, and bring them up; nor indeed is there anything which we do not receive from them; for these women weave garments for us, and our household affairs are by their means taken care of, and preserved in safety; (51) nor can we live separate from women; and when we have gotten a great deal of gold, and silver, and any other thing that is of great value, and deserving regard, and see a beautiful woman, we leave all these things, and with open mouth fix our eyes upon her countenance, and are willing to forsake what we have, that we may enjoy her beauty, and procure it to ourselves. (52) We also leave father, and mother, and the earth that nourishes us, and frequently forget our dearest friends, for the sake of women; nay, we are so hardy as to lay down our lives for them; **but what will chiefly make you take notice of the strength of women is this that follows:** (53) Do not we take pains, and endure a great deal of trouble, and that both by land and sea, and when we have procured somewhat as the fruit of our labors, do not we bring them to the women, as to our mistresses, and bestow them upon them? (54) Nay, I once saw the king, who is lord of so many people, smitten on the face by Apame, the daughter of Rabsases Themasius his concubine and his diadem taken from him, and put upon her own head, while he bore it patiently; and when she smiled he smiled, and when she was angry he was sad, and according to the change of her passions, he flattered his wife, and drew her to reconciliation by the great humiliation of himself to her, if at any time he saw her displeased at him.”
6. (55) And when the princes and rulers looked one upon another, **he began to speak about truth;** and he said, “**I have already demonstrated how powerful women are; but both these women themselves, and the king himself, are weaker than truth:** for although the earth be large, and the heaven high, and the course of the sun swift, yet are all these moved according to the will of God, who is true and righteous, for which cause we also ought to esteem truth to be the strongest of all things, and that what is unrighteous is of no force against it. (56) Moreover, all things else that have any strength are mortal, and short-lived, but truth is a thing that is immortal and eternal. It affords us not indeed such a beauty as will wither away by time, nor such

riches as may be taken away by fortune, but righteous rules and laws. It distinguishes them from injustice, and puts what is unrighteous to rebuke.”

7. (57) So when **Zorobabel had left off his discourse about truth**, and **the multitude had cried out aloud that he had spoken the most wisely**, and that it was truth alone that had immutable strength, and such as never would wax old, the king commanded that he should ask for somewhat over and above what he had promised, for that he would give it him because of his wisdom, and that prudence wherein he exceeded the rest; “and thou shalt sit with me,” said the king, (58) “and shalt be called my cousin.” **When he had said this, Zorobabel put him in mind of the vow he had made in case he should ever have the kingdom. Now this vow was, “to rebuild Jerusalem, and to build therein the temple of God, as also to restore the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged, and carried to Babylon. And this,”** said he, **“is that request which thou now permittest me to make, on account that I have been judged to be wise and understanding.”**
8. (59) So the king was pleased with what he had said, and arose and kissed him; and wrote to the toparchs, and governors, and enjoined them to conduct Zorobabel and those that were going with him to build the temple. (60) He also sent letters to those rulers that were in Syria and Phoenicia to cut down and carry cedar trees from Lebanon to Jerusalem, and to assist him in building the city. He also wrote to them, that all the captives who should go to Judea should be free; (61) and he prohibited his deputies and governors to lay any king’s taxes upon the Jews: he also permitted that they should have all the land which they could possess themselves of without tributes. He also enjoined the Idumeans and Samaritans, and the inhabitants of Celesyria, to restore those villages which they had taken from the Jews; and that, besides all this, fifty talents should be given them for the building of the temple. (62) He also permitted them to offer their appointed sacrifices, and that whatsoever the high priests and the priests wanted and those sacred garments wherein they used to worship God, should be made at his own charges; and that the musical instruments which the Levites used in singing hymns to God should be given them. (63) Moreover, he charged them, that portions of land should be given to those that guarded the city and the temple, as also a determinate sum of money every year for their maintenance: and withal he sent the vessels. And all that Cyrus intended to do before him relating to the restoration of Jerusalem, Darius also ordained should be done accordingly.
9. (64) Now when Zorobabel had obtained these grants from the king, he went out of the palace, and looking up to heaven, he began to return thanks to God for the wisdom he had given him, and the victory he had gained thereby, even in the presence of Darius himself; for, said he, “I had not been thought worthy of these advantages, O Lord, unless thou hadst been favorable to me.” (65) When, therefore, he had returned these thanks to God for the present circumstance he was in and had prayed to him to afford him the like favor for the time to come, he came to Babylon, and brought the good news to his countrymen of what grants he had procured for them from the king; (66) who, when they heard the same, gave thanks also to God that he restored the land of their forefathers to them again.

Under the order of King Cambyses in 530 B.C., the temple reconstruction was stopped.

So it was not until 521 B.C., under King Darius, nine years later, the temple is back under way to be rebuilt.

Ezra 6:15 (NKJV) — ¹⁵Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

That would be 516 B.C.

So in 538 B.C. the temple, by King Cyrus begins to be rebuilt and is finished in King Darius’ reign in 516 B.C., which is about 23 years, 9 of which the rebuilding lay silent.

There appears to be a contradiction to **John 2:20 (NKJV)** — ²⁰Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

Albert Barnes—As Herod began to rebuild the temple [the temple, now 500 years old, was in need of repair] sixteen years before the birth of Jesus [16 B.C.], and as what is here mentioned happened in the thirtieth year of the age of Jesus [30 A.D.], so the time which had been occupied in it was *forty-six years*. This circumstance is one of the many in the New Testament which show the accuracy of the evangelists, and which prove that they were well acquainted with what they recorded. It demonstrates that their narration is true. Impostors do

not trouble themselves to be very accurate about names and dates, and there is nothing in which they are more liable to make mistakes.

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The temple was finished in 516 B.C. King Darius died in 485 B.C.

Now Darius' son **Ahasuerus**, perhaps better known in history as **Xerxes**, became ruler in 485 B.C. He died in 465 B.C. It is believed King Ahasuerus is the same one mentioned in Ester. Also to remember there are still a lot of Jews in Babylon.

Then Ahasuerus's son, **Artaxerxes** became ruler in 465 B.C. It was during his reign the 2nd and 3rd groups left Babylon. Again Ahasuerus was the King mentioned in Ester, then Ester was Artaxerxes' step mother, wife of King Ahasuerus, and had no doubt some influence of him and his queen to look favorably upon the Jews, and no doubt especially Nehemiah, who became the king's cupholder.

The second group to leave Babylon — it was not until 458 B.C. the second group led by Ezra went to Jerusalem under King Artaxerxes. This is found in **Ezra chapters 7-10**.

Ezra 7:6–9 (NKJV) — ⁶this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. ⁷Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year [458 B.C.] of King Artaxerxes. ⁸And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. ⁹On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

The third exodus from Babylon is found in **Nehemiah chapters 1-3** which was in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes. So that would be 445 B.C.

In **Chapter 1** of **Nehemiah** some men from Jerusalem have returned to Babylon and Nehemiah ask how things were going. **Nehemiah 1:3 (NKJV)** — ³And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.”

The **temple is rebuilt**, but the **walls are still in disrepair**.

Then the rest of the chapter is Nehemiah's prayer for Jerusalem, confessing their sins —

Nehemiah 1:8–11 (NKJV) — ⁸Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; ⁹but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’ ¹⁰Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. ¹¹O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man [King Artaxerxes].” For I was the king's cupbearer.

Then in **Chapter 2** Nehemiah comes before the King with a sad face, something he had never done before, and when the King noticed he inquired what it was that trouble him.

Nehemiah 2:2–3 (NKJV) — ²Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.” So I became dreadfully afraid, ³and said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?”

Then we read — **Nehemiah 2:4–5 (NKJV)** — ⁴Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it.”

And Nehemiah continued to speak to the King and Queen — **Nehemiah 2:7–8 (NKJV)** — ⁷Furthermore I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River,

that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, ⁸and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

And so Nehemiah leads some of the Jews back to the City of David to rebuild the walls.

Nehemiah is then send to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Which would be the year 445 B.C.

The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 11, Chapter 5

(177) He [Nehemiah] also gave orders that the builders should keep their ranks, and have their armor on while they were building. Accordingly, the mason had his sword on, as well as he that brought the materials for building. He also appointed that their shields should lie very near them; and he placed trumpeters at every five hundred feet, and charged them, that if their enemies appeared, they should give notice of it to the people, that they might fight in their armor, and their enemies might not fall upon them naked. (178) He also went about the compass of the city by night, being never discouraged, neither about the work itself, nor about his own diet and sleep, for he made no use of those things for his pleasure, but out of necessity. (179) And this trouble, he underwent for **two years and four months**; for in so long a time was the wall built, in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Xerxes [Artaxerxes], in the ninth month.

That would have been in the year 442 B.C.

Nehemiah's account of when the wall was completed is different.

Nehemiah 6:15 (NKJV) — ¹⁵So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.

So if the wall, according to Nehemiah, was finished in 52 days, it was completed in record time the same year, 445 B.C., Nehemiah came to Jerusalem.

Albert Barnes — *in fifty and two days* — Josephus states that the repairs of the wall occupied two years and four months. But Nehemiah's narrative is thoroughly consistent with itself, and contains in it nothing that is improbable. The walls everywhere existed at the time that He commenced his task, and only needed repairs. The work was partitioned among at least thirty-seven working parties [Nehemiah Chapter 3], who laboured simultaneously, with material ready at hand; and, notwithstanding all menaces, uninterruptedly.

Nehemiah 4:7-9 (NKJV) — ⁷Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored **and the gaps were beginning to be closed**, that they became very angry, ⁸and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. ⁹Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

So it appears the walls were not completely broke down, but the gates were burned and had to be replaced.

Nehemiah 6:16 (NKJV) — ¹⁶And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.