

Middle East Kings

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Revised on 3/15/2026

Kings of Babylon 626-549 BC

King	Reign	Father	
Nabopolassar	626-605 BC	Assyrian descent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restored Babylon in 620 BC ▪ 609 BC Pharaoh Necho II was delayed in a battle with Judah and killed King Josiah before getting defeated at Carchemish while helping to defend Assyria. ▪ 607 BC – Nebuchadnezzar first siege of Jerusalem (Dan 1:1 – coregent of his Dad)) ▪ 605 BC Battle of Carchemish (end of Assyrian Empire where Israel’s northern kingdom was exiled since 739 BC) - with help from Media King Cyaxares and Persian King Teispes, crown prince Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Assyria ▪ 588 BC Israel Southern kingdom taken by Babylon
Nebuchadnezzar II	605-562 BC Jer 25:1	Nabopolassar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daniel exiled to Babylon (620-536 BC) – Daniel’s prophetic ministry in Babylon begins. Jeremiah is the only true prophet during this time. (2 Kings 24:1-7, Dan 1:1-6, Jer 1:9,10) ▪ King Jehoiakim of Judah paid tribute for three years before he died (2 Ki 24:1-6) ▪ “On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar” (Eze 1:2-3). ▪ Conquered Egypt all the way to the river Euphrates (2 Ki 24:7-8) ▪ 597 BC. Second siege of Jerusalem by Babylon, King Jehoiachin/Jeconiah, Ezekiel, Mordecai, and 10,000 Jews exiled to Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-16, Eze 1:2, Es 2:5-6) ▪ 588 BC. Final siege of Jerusalem, 40,000 Jews exiled 2 Kings 25:1-21, Ezek 24:2 ▪ 575 BC.Rebuilds Babylon and constructs the Ishtar Gate
Amel-Marduk	562-560 BC	Nebuchadnezzar II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daniel in Babylon
Neriglissar	560-556 BC	Son in law of Amel-Marduk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daniel in Babylon
Labashi-Marduk	556 BC	Neriglissar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daniel in Babylon
Nabonidus Evil-merodach	556-539 BC	last native king of Babylon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 1st yr released Jehoiachin from prison in 37th yr of exile (2 Ki 25:27-30) ▪ 539 BC Conquered by Cyrus the Great – Daniel 81 yo
Belshazzar (coregent w/his father)	549-539 BC	Nabonidus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vashti is his daughter (Stateira/Amestris) ▪ Daniel in Babylon ▪ Conquered by Cyrus the Great and Vashti taken

Kings of Mede 700-539 BC

Media King	Reign	Father	
Deioces	700-647 BC		First Iranian Empire
Phraortes	647-625 BC	Deioces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Died in battle against Assyria
Cyaxares	624-585 BC	Phraortes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 612 BC. Destroyed Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. ▪ Formed Median Empire ▪ “At its height the Median Empire stretched from Asia Minor to the Hindu Kush, and south to the Persian Gulf, ruling the Persians as vassals.” (History of Iran) ▪ 620 BC Daniel born
Astyages Ahasuerus	585-549 BC	Cyaxares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overlord of Persia ▪ Gave his daughter to Cambyses son. Cyrus the Great’s maternal grandfather ▪ 585 BC Daniel (35 yo) exiled by Nebuchadnezzar ▪ Cambyses I son married his daughter
Cyaxares II Darius the Mede King of Babylon Haran Stele	549 – 539 BC	Astyages Daughter was wife of Cyrus II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Median descent (Da 9:1). Cyrus the Great’s uncle ▪ 539 BC Conquered Babylon at 62yo (Da 5:31) – born @600 BC. With Cyrus the Great. ▪ 539 BC. Daniel is 71 yo - appointed commissioner & successful (Dan 6:1,28) Daniel assisted the king (Dan 11:1). ▪ Daniel’s vision of Persian kings occurs (Dan 11:2-4), therefor next “three kings” start after Cyaxares II. ▪ End of Media as a sovereign nation, but it still existed as a country under the Achaemenid Empire

Kings of Persia 700 – 539 BC

King	Reign	Father	
Achaemenes	~705 BC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ruled same time as Israel’s southern king Manasseh
Teispes King of Anshan	~640 BC	Achaemenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 605 BC Battle of Carchemish
Cyrus I King of Anshan King of Persia	? - 600 BC	Teispes	
Cambyses I Ahasuerus King of Anshan King of Persia	600-559 BC	Cyrus I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Son married Astyages daughter ▪ King #1 in Dan 11:2 ▪ Ruled same as Babylon kings: Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar II

Kings of Achaemenid Empire 559 - 522 BC

<p>Cyrus II 559-530 BC</p> <p>Cyrus the Great King of Persia (Ez 4:3) King of Media, Lydia, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt</p> <p>Son of Cambyses I & Princess Mandane of Media (Asytages daughter)</p> <p>Married Darius the Mede's daughter (knew Daniel?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Persian king who ruled along side the Mede kings Astyges and Cyaxerexes II until 550 BC ▪ Founded the Achaemenian Empire which was the largest ancient empire with capitol in Susa. ▪ Cyrus' religion was Zoroastrianism and believed in only one god, Ahura Mazda, who was the one uncreated god, eternal source of all that is good and true, and promoted free will. Compare this with Ezra 1:2 "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to rebuild for Him a house in Jerusalem." Did Daniel convince Cyrus that this uncreated god was the One True God? ▪ King #2 in Dan 11:2 prophecy ▪ 559 BC 1st yr reign as king of Persia. Proclamation to rebuild temple (2 Chr 36:22-23, Ezr 1, 5:13, Isa 44:28-45:7 & Cyrus Cylinder). Zerubbabel (@28yo), would-be-king of Israel (1 Chr 3:15-19, Mt 1:12) and Jeshua/Joshua, high priest, led 42,360 Jews from Judah and Benjamin southern tribes back to Jerusalem (Ez 2:2, 64, Neh 7:7, 12:1, Hag 1:14). For Cyrus to decree the return of Hebrews temple treasures that were in Babylon proves that Cyrus and Astyges were united. ▪ 559 BC – 536 BC. Daniel enjoyed success under Cyrus II for 23 yrs (Dan 6:28) ▪ People of land try to stop temple construction (Ezr 4:5) ▪ 557 BC. Temple work began second year after exiles return (Ez 3:8). Assyrian captives (10 tribes of northern Israel whose kings were evil and the people worshiped other gods along with the Lord, included Samaria) want to help rebuild temple. Zerubbabel and Jeshua refuse their help (Ezr 4:13). Zerubbabel completes temple foundation (Zech 4:8-10). ▪ 556 BC 3rd yr reign Daniel's vision about great conflict. Angel Michael visits him (Dan 10) ▪ 549 BC. Medes capture Babylon (the end of the great city and Mesopotamian Empire), Daniel commissioned by Darius the Mede. ▪ 549 BC (Conquered Media and king, his maternal grandfather Astyges – according to Herodotus which conflicts with earlier resources) ▪ 547 BC Conquered Lydia and king Croesus ▪ 539 BC Conquered Babylon (along with Darius the Mede) and king Nabonidas/coregent Belshazzar along with Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. All exiled Israel tribes now under Achaemenian rule. ▪ ?? BC Conquered Sumer & Akkad ▪ 536 BC Daniel died
<p>Cambyses II 530-522 BC King of Persia, Media, Lydia, Babylon, Egypt 1st son of Cyrus II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best fit for Ezra's Ahasuerus - "Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezr 4:6). He did not react. ▪ Coruler with Cyrus II in 530 BC ▪ Lived in Egypt for a long time. ▪ King #3 in Dan 11:2 ▪ 522 BC Died of gangrene without any children

Kings of Achaemenid Empire 522 BC

<p>Bardiya/Smerdis 2nd Son of Cyrus II</p> <p>Guamata (imposter) 522 BC (7 mos) King of Persia, Babylon, Egypt</p> <p>Assassinated by Darius?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is strong evidence that Baridya was assassinated in secret by Cambyses II and this king was an imposter named Guamata who pretended to be Baridya. He seized royal power without opposition and was liked by the people for ending taxes. He also destroyed sanctuaries. Guamata was a “magian” (priest of Zoroastrian monotheistic religion). It makes sense that he would decree work to be stopped on the Jewish temple if he didn’t believe Ahura Mazda and the One True God were one and the same (as Cyrus did). ▪ This makes him the best fit for the Ezra’s Artaxerxes - “In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam...and the rest of his colleagues wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the text of the letter was written in Aramaic and translated from Aramaic” (Ezr 4:7). Same letter was also from Rehum the commander & Shimshai the scribe (Ez 4:8-11). ▪ More evidence of the imposter – “the Aramaic language gained prominence in many regions of the Persian Empire, influencing the language and writing system.” Since the imposter was a Mede, is this why the letter had to be translated from Aramaic? ▪ Guamata was a Mede – did he have direct access to the records of Darius the Mede who conquered Babylon that others did not have (see Dan 5:30)? Does this fact also explain why the next king, Darius I, made such a big deal about being from the line of old Persian kings? ▪ He found the Babylonian records about Judah and decreed to stop work on the temple (Ez 4:14-24). ▪ Work on the temple stopped until the second yr of Darius I (Ez 4:24). During these two years the Jews built grand homes for themselves in Jerusalem. Because they stopped working on the temple, God caused a famine, their money to run out quickly, and nothing they did came to fruition (see Hag 1:1-11). ▪ King #4 - This prophecy best fits Bardiya because his reign was only months long and the next king was not his son. “Then a fourth [king] will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will stir up the entire empire against the realm of Greece. A mighty king will arise... will rule with great authority...do as he pleases...as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up ...though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority...because his sovereignty will be removed and given to others besides them” (Dan 11:3-4). ▪ 522 BC Murdered by Darius I who believed this king was an imposter (well documented). ▪ iranicaonline.org/articles/guamata
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Kings of Achaemenid Empire 522 - 486 BC

<p>Darius I 522-486 BC Died 64yo He is not heir to the throne - his kingly line comes down through an uncle if Cyrus I was a brother to Ariaramnes</p> <p>Darius the Great Darius the Persian (Neh 12:22, Ez 4:24)</p> <p>King of Persia, Babylon, Egypt</p> <p>Son of Hystaspes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behistun Inscription: “My father is Hystaspes; ... Arsames; ... Ariaramnes; ...Teispes; ... Achaemenes. Eight of my dynasty were kings before me.” ▪ His father, Hystaspes, was a Persian satrap of Persis (directly east of Persian gulf and in the southern portion of the Achaemenid Empire). “He accompanied Cyrus on his expedition against the Massagetae. However, he was sent back to Persis to keep watch over his eldest son, Darius, whom Cyrus, after a dream, suspected of considering treason.” Died in 499 BC. ▪ King #5 “Then the king of the South [Hystaspes] will grow strong, along with one of his princes [Darius I] who will gain ascendancy over him and rule; his domain will be a great realm indeed” (Dan 11:5, names added). ▪ Achaemenid Empire is now the greatest it ever has been: The Caucasus (mntns between Black and Caspian seas) to western Asia. Made network of roads, Royal Road. Innovated agriculture. Freedom of nationality & religion. Tributes of precious metals funded empire for successive generations. Introduced standard weights and measures, divided kingdom into provinces. Palace of Darius in Persepolis still standing. ▪ Start of reign. Subdued Babylon revolt. Took Vashti to marry his son. Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) is a Babylonian name - meets Darius? ▪ 499-493 BC Ionian Revolt - Greek city-states in Ionia (located on the western coast of Asia Minor, present-day Turkey) rebelled against Persian rule, seeking assistance from mainland Greece. Athens and Eretria supported the Ionian cities, leading to the destruction of the Persian-controlled city of Sardis, which provoked Persian retaliation. ▪ 492-490 BC 1st invasion of the Greco-Persian Wars in response to Ionian revolt. ▪ 490 BC Battle of Marathon won by Athenians. ▪ 522- 520 BC. People of land try to stop temple construction (Ezr 4:5). ▪ 520 BC - 2nd yr of reign – 39 yrs after Cyrus decreed to build the temple. Haggai gives prophecy to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, with Jeshua, high priest, to resume temple work (Hag 1:1, 4) w/out telling Darius. Word of Lord to Zechariah (Zech 1:1) for Zerubbabel (Zech 4) and Jeshua (Zech 3) as two olive trees (Zech 4:3-6). Tattenai informs Darius I of Cyrus’ decree (Ezr 5:6; 6:1,8), Darius’ decrees to resume temple work (Ezr 6:1,7). Darius funds temple building & sacrifices. (Ez 6:8-9). “The Lord stirred up the spirit of...the people; they came and worked on the house of the Lord” (Hag 1:14). Zephania prophesied while Josiah was king - “The crown will become a reminder in the temple of the Lord ...Those who are far away will come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you will know that the Lord of armies has sent me to you. And it will take place if you completely obey the Lord your God” (Zeph 6:14-15). Zeph came true with Zech 6:11-15 ▪ *Zechariah - son of Berechiah, grandson of Iddo (Zech 1:1) was a priest and tribal leader of 30 yo or older, under King Joiakim (Ne 12:16) who was taken captive in 599BC. This makes Zechariah over 100 yo in 520 BC. ▪ 516 BC 6th yr of reign. Temple is finished in ~41 yrs by Zerubbabel who is ~ 71yo (Ez 6:15, Zech 4:8-10). “It took forty-six years to build this temple” (Jn 2:20). Israel is under Achmenian empire. Temple later refurbished by Herod the Great (18 AD) and destroyed by Rome in 70 AD.
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Kings of Achaemenid Empire 486 - 424 BC

<p>Xerxes I 486-465 BC</p> <p>Xerxes the Great Ahasuerus King of Persia Pharaoh of Egypt King of India & Ethiopia (Est 1:1)</p> <p>2nd son of Darius I & Atossa (daughter of Cyrus the Great). Became king at 32 yo due to mother's father.</p> <p>Married Esther</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temple completed 30 yrs prior to his reign, so this is NOT the Ahasuerus of Ezr 4:5. ▪ "It happened in the days of Ahasuerus [Persian king of all province kings including his son], the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Cush over 127 provinces, in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which was at the citadel in Susa" (Est 1:1-2). This kingdom was inherited. ▪ 483 BC - 3rd year of reign. Held banquet for Persian and Median armies and Vashti dethroned (Es 1:3) ▪ Built a canal through the Athos peninsula in Northern Greece that aides in his invasion of Greece (began decline of the Persian empire) ▪ 480-479 BC 2nd invasion of the Greco-Persian Wars – massive invasion to conquer all of Greece. ▪ 480 BC Battle of Thermopylae. Famous last stand of the 300 Spartans led by King Leonidas. Xerxes was victorious & burned Athens. ▪ 479 BC Battle of Plataea – Sparta and Athens defeat Persian army, ending Persian invasion and securing Greek independence. ▪ 479 BC – Xerxes treasury is depleted from wars with Greece. He focuses on his harem and building projects. This agrees with 2nd chapter of Esther. Married Esther (Es 2:17). ▪ 474 BC 12th yr of reign. Decree made to kill Jews in one year (Es 3:7-13). Mordecai, made second in command (Es 8:2, 9:4), decree made that Jews could retaliate (Es 8:11-12). Purim initiated (Es 9:20-22) ▪ 474 - 464 BC. Mordecai is second to Xerxes 1 (Es 10:1-3). ▪ Assassinated by his royal guard commander. Darius, his son, was killed shortly after ▪ Ahasuerus is Xerxes I - https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2020/06/05/xerxes-an-archaeological-biography/
<p>Artaxerxes I/Cyrus 465-424 BC Artaxerxes Longimanus</p> <p>King of Persia Pharaoh of Egypt King of Babylon (Neh 13:6)</p> <p>Son of Xerxes I 3rd born (mother Esther?)</p> <p>Josephus ascribes this king as Esther's king, but the dates do not support this.</p> <p>Not Artaxerxes of Ezra 4 because temple construction was done</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early reign – rebellion/revolt in Egypt lasted 10 yrs. Delian league (Greece) assisted Egypt. ▪ ? BC - Exiled by Greece but fled via alliance of a corrupt Athenian general. ▪ 457 BC - 7th yr of reign, 59 yrs after temple completion. Artaxerxes provides a decree for Ezra (scribe/priest) to leave Babylon and go to Jerusalem (Ez 7:1,6, 11-28, Neh 2:1-10). He brings priests and Levites (Ez 8:1-32). Was Nehemiah his cup bearer yet? ▪ Purification of Levitical line results in Meshullam sending away his son-in-law who was Tobiah the Ammonite's son (Ezr 10:14-15, Neh 6:18, 9:2) perhaps fueling Tobiah's rage against Nehemiah. ▪ 449 BC Established Peace of Callias ending the Greek-Persian hostilities. ▪ There is a shift in the decree with "your God" as opposed to Cyrus saying "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me..." Cyrus recognized the One True God whereas Artaxerxes was allowing for freedom of religion. ▪ 445 BC 20th yr of reign. Sent Nehemiah, his cup bearer, to Jerusalem (Neh 2:1-10). The temple was finished while the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt (Ne 6:10). Tobiah the Ammonite comes against the wall construction. Nehemiah finished wall in 52 days (Neh 6:15). ▪ 445 - 433 BC. Cyrus appointed Nehemiah governor (Neh 5:14). Nehemiah finds the record of those who first returned to Jerusalem (Neh 7:5). Nehemiah and Zerubbabel (governor appointed by Cyrus) paid temple singers (Neh 12:47). ▪ Ezra died in 440BC? ▪ 433 BC - 32nd yr of reign. Nehemiah requested a leave of absence from Darius (Neh 13:6). ▪ 431 BC Funded Sparta's campaign against Athens.

Kings of Achaemenid Empire 424 - 330 BC

King of kings	Reign	
Xerxes II Son of Artaxerxes I	424 BC 45 days	Assassinated by Sogdianus
Sogdianus Secydianus Pharaoh of Egypt Son of Artaxerxes I (illegitimate)	424-423 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assassinated by half-brother Ochus ▪ Following the death of Artaxerxes I, in 424 BC, there was a struggle for power between his sons. The victor, Ochus, adopted the name Darius (Greek sources often call him Darius Nothos, "Bastard"), in reference to his unattested lineage. Wikipedia ▪ Is the undated lineage because his grandmother was Jewish (Esther)?
Darius II /Ochus King of Persia, Egypt Son of Artaxerxes I	423-404 BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immediate successor of Artaxerxes I according to Babylonian records ▪ "As for the Levites, the heads of fathers' households were registered in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua; so <i>were</i> the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian" (Neh 12:22). ▪ Eliashib is High Priest (Jeshua's grandson Neh 3:1, 20, 12:10)
Artaxerxes II Mnemon Son of Darius II	404-359 BC	Last book of OT dates during his reign – Malachi 420-397 BC
Artaxerxes III Ochus Son of Artaxerxes II	359-338 BC	Poisoned by eunuch Bagoas – Persia weakened after his death
Artaxerxes IV Son of Artaxerxes III	338-336 BC	Did not want to be controlled by Bagoas, so he was poisoned also
Darius III Codomanus	336-330 BC	Persia fell in 330BC to Alexander the Great (Greece/Macedon)

Map

Achaemenid Empire under Darius the Great



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