

# P E R S I A













# **Time Warp**

**New Timeline: After the Flood**

# Beginning of Persia



Map 1  
**THE NATIONS OF GENESIS 10**

- JAVAN** Descendants of Japheth (Gen. 10:2-5)
- PUT** Descendants of Ham (Gen. 10:6-20)
- LUD** Descendants of Shem (Gen. 10:21-31)
- (Lydia) Later Biblical name

© Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1983

## ELAM

Son of Shem (Gen. 10:22). The name is Semitic. The Elamites gave their name to Elymais, the region on the left or E. bank of the Tigris, opposite Babylonia, between it on the W. and Persia proper on the E., and S.W. of Media. The region is also named Susiana or Susis from its capital Susa, called Shushah in Dan. 8:2, where Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1) waited on King Artaxerxes, and where Ahasuerus (Xerxes) held his court in Esther's (Est. 1:2; 2:5) time. Daniel mentions the river Ulai near, i.e. the Greek Euloeus. From Darius Hystaspes' time to Alexander the Great it was the Persian king's court residence.

\* *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by BibleSoft

<sup>21</sup> Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

<sup>22</sup> The sons of Shem:

Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram. <sup>23</sup> The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech. <sup>24</sup> Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber. <sup>25</sup> Two sons were born to Eber:

One was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan. <sup>26</sup> Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, <sup>27</sup> Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup> Obal, Abimael, Sheba, <sup>29</sup> Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.

<sup>30</sup> The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.

<sup>31</sup> These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

# History

**539 BC Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians so Darius the Mede ruled in Babylon**



# Belshazzar Humbled



• Rembrandt

# BABYLON FELL (539 BC)

Cyrus entered under the water gates



Daniel 5  
(Belshazzar's Feast)



# Babylon's Fall (Herodotus)

144

"[Cyrus] placed a portion of his army at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough: he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where Nitocris dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly: he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became fordable.

"Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the river-side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man's thigh, and thus got into the town.

*The History of the Persian Wars 1.191 (430 BC)*

## Babylon's Fall (Herodotus)

---

144

"Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street-gates which gave upon the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and so took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare) long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt the capture but too certainly. Such, then, were the circumstances of the first taking of Babylon."

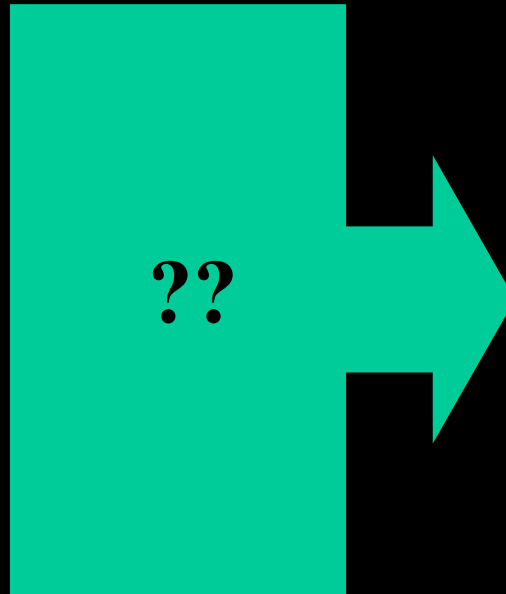
*The History of the Persian Wars* 1.191 (430 BC)

# Amazing Prophecies

460



**Stamford  
Raffles (1819)**



**Lee Kwan Yew  
(1959)**

**Did you hear that Raffles wrote 140 years before Lee Kwan Yew, "Behold, a man named Lee will arise to make Singapore its own country..."?**

# Amazing Prophecies

460



**Isaiah (700 BC)**

41:2-3, 25

44:28

45:1-2

45:13-15



**Cyrus (539 BC)**

"When I say of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd,' he will certainly do as I say. He will command, 'Rebuild Jerusalem'; he will say, 'Restore the Temple' "  
(Isa. 44:28 NLT)

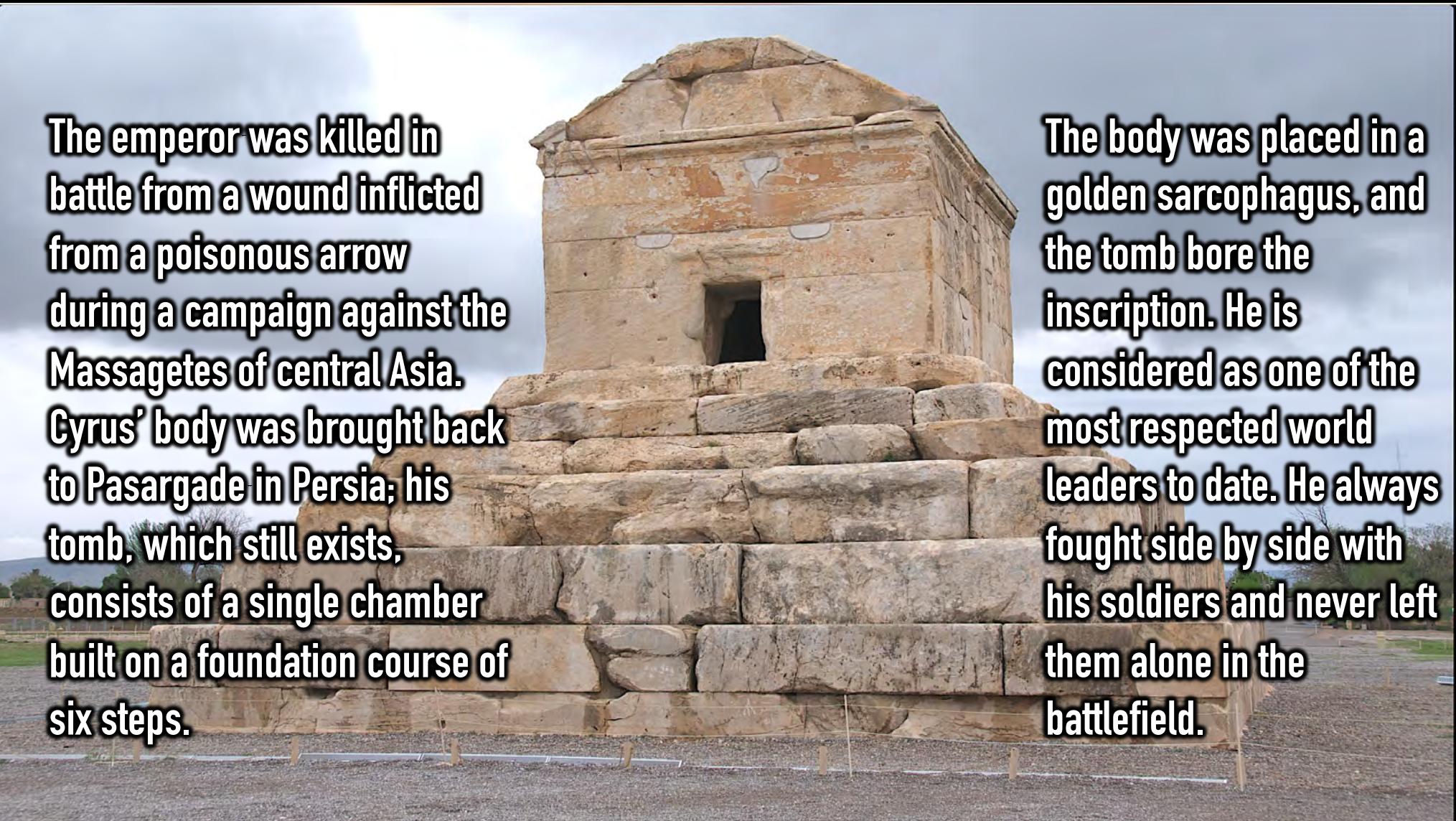
# Cyrus Prophesied



**“Who has stirred up this king from  
the east,  
rightly calling him to God’s service?  
Who gives this man victory over  
many nations  
and permits him to trample their  
kings underfoot?  
With his sword, he reduces armies to  
dust.  
With his bow, he scatters them like  
chaff before the wind”  
(Isaiah 41:2 NLT).**

**“He delivers up nations before him, and subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, as the wind-driven chaff with his bow. He pursues them, passing on in safety, by a way he had not been traversing with his feet.” Isaiah 41:2b-3**

**Cyrus moved from country to country, conquering every king in his path. Around 550 BC he unified the Medes and Persians to defeat the powerful kingdom of Lydia (Asia Minor) in 546 BC. Turning south to Babylon, his army under the command of Darius conquered the city in 539 BC.**

The image shows the Tomb of Cyrus the Great, a well-preserved ancient stone structure. It features a single chamber with a small, dark, rectangular entrance. The tomb is built on a foundation of six wide, rectangular stone steps. The structure is made of large, light-colored stone blocks, some of which show signs of weathering and repair. The background is a clear, bright sky, and the foreground is a flat, gravelly area with some sparse vegetation.

**The emperor was killed in battle from a wound inflicted from a poisonous arrow during a campaign against the Massagetes of central Asia. Cyrus' body was brought back to Pasargade in Persia; his tomb, which still exists, consists of a single chamber built on a foundation course of six steps.**

**The body was placed in a golden sarcophagus, and the tomb bore the inscription. He is considered as one of the most respected world leaders to date. He always fought side by side with his soldiers and never left them alone in the battlefield.**

## **Tomb of Cyrus the Great**

# CYRUS CYLINDER



**What:** Clay cylinder, 22.5 cm by 10 cm, inscribed with arguably the world's first known human rights charter

**Antiquity:** 539 BC when Persian emperor Cyrus conquered Babylon

**Contents:** Freedom of worship for all, call for repatriation of deportees

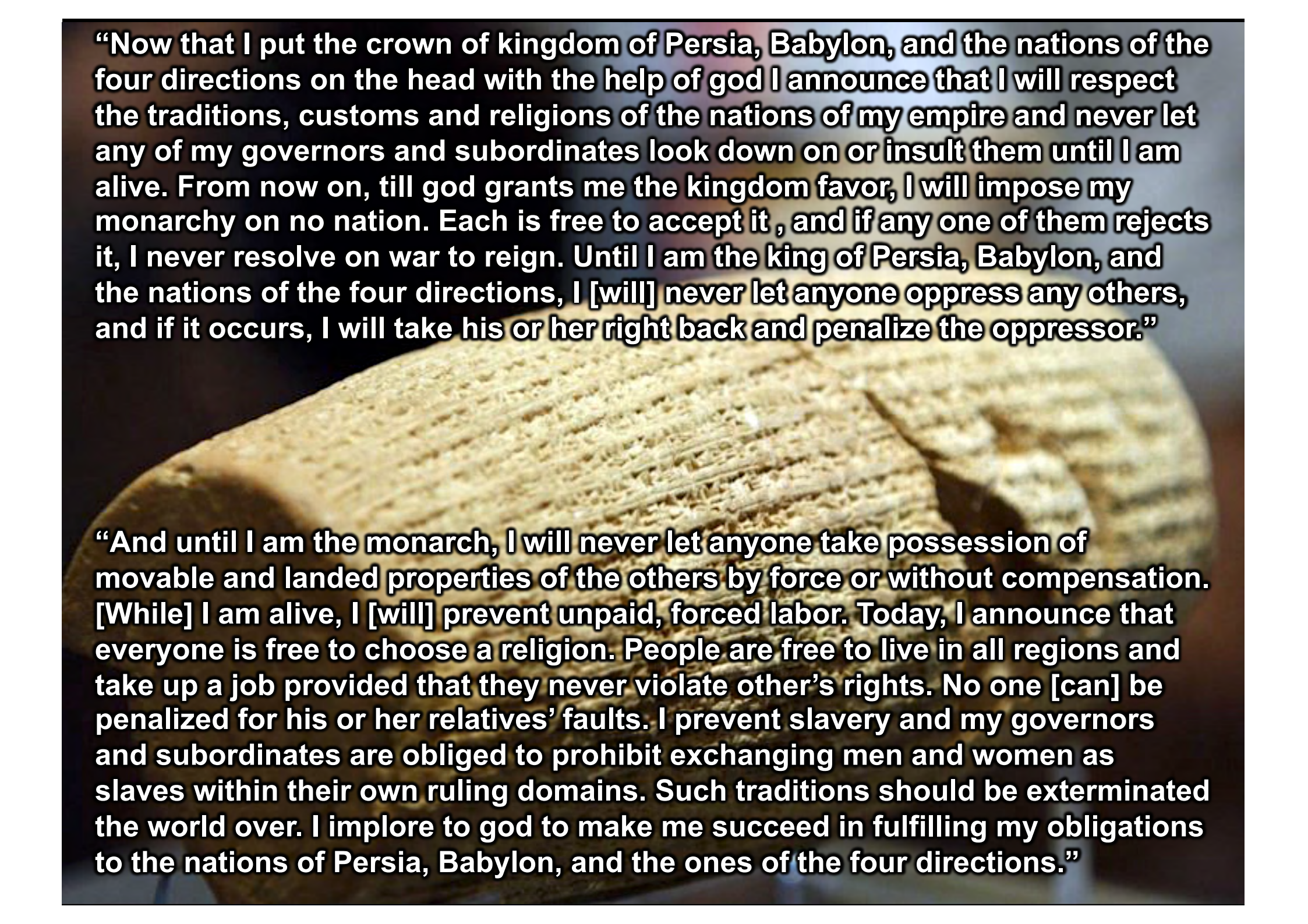
**Place:** London Museum

“I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four rims (of the earth), son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, family (which) always (exercised) kingship.”

# Policies of Cyrus the Great

## Cyrus Cylinder

**"I am Cyrus, king of the universe..."**  
**"Nabonidus, the king who did not fear me..."**  
**"Since the gods of foreign lands made permanent sanctuaries which are now dilapidated, I returned people to their lands and made provisions to rebuild"**



**“Now that I put the crown of kingdom of Persia, Babylon, and the nations of the four directions on the head with the help of god I announce that I will respect the traditions, customs and religions of the nations of my empire and never let any of my governors and subordinates look down on or insult them until I am alive. From now on, till god grants me the kingdom favor, I will impose my monarchy on no nation. Each is free to accept it , and if any one of them rejects it, I never resolve on war to reign. Until I am the king of Persia, Babylon, and the nations of the four directions, I [will] never let anyone oppress any others, and if it occurs, I will take his or her right back and penalize the oppressor.”**

**“And until I am the monarch, I will never let anyone take possession of movable and landed properties of the others by force or without compensation. [While] I am alive, I [will] prevent unpaid, forced labor. Today, I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion. People are free to live in all regions and take up a job provided that they never violate other’s rights. No one [can] be penalized for his or her relatives’ faults. I prevent slavery and my governors and subordinates are obliged to prohibit exchanging men and women as slaves within their own ruling domains. Such traditions should be exterminated the world over. I implore to god to make me succeed in fulfilling my obligations to the nations of Persia, Babylon, and the ones of the four directions.”**



# CYRUS II (559-530)





*The Persian Empire in the fifth century BC, extending 'from India to Ethiopia' (Est. 1:1).*

The boundaries of the empire that Cyrus II initiated and Darius I consolidated stretched from Greece to India

Figurines of Immortals, 5th century BC.  
Museum of Antiquities, Athens



# Immortal Regiments, c. 331 BC



# The Elite Regiment of Immortals, c. 333 BC

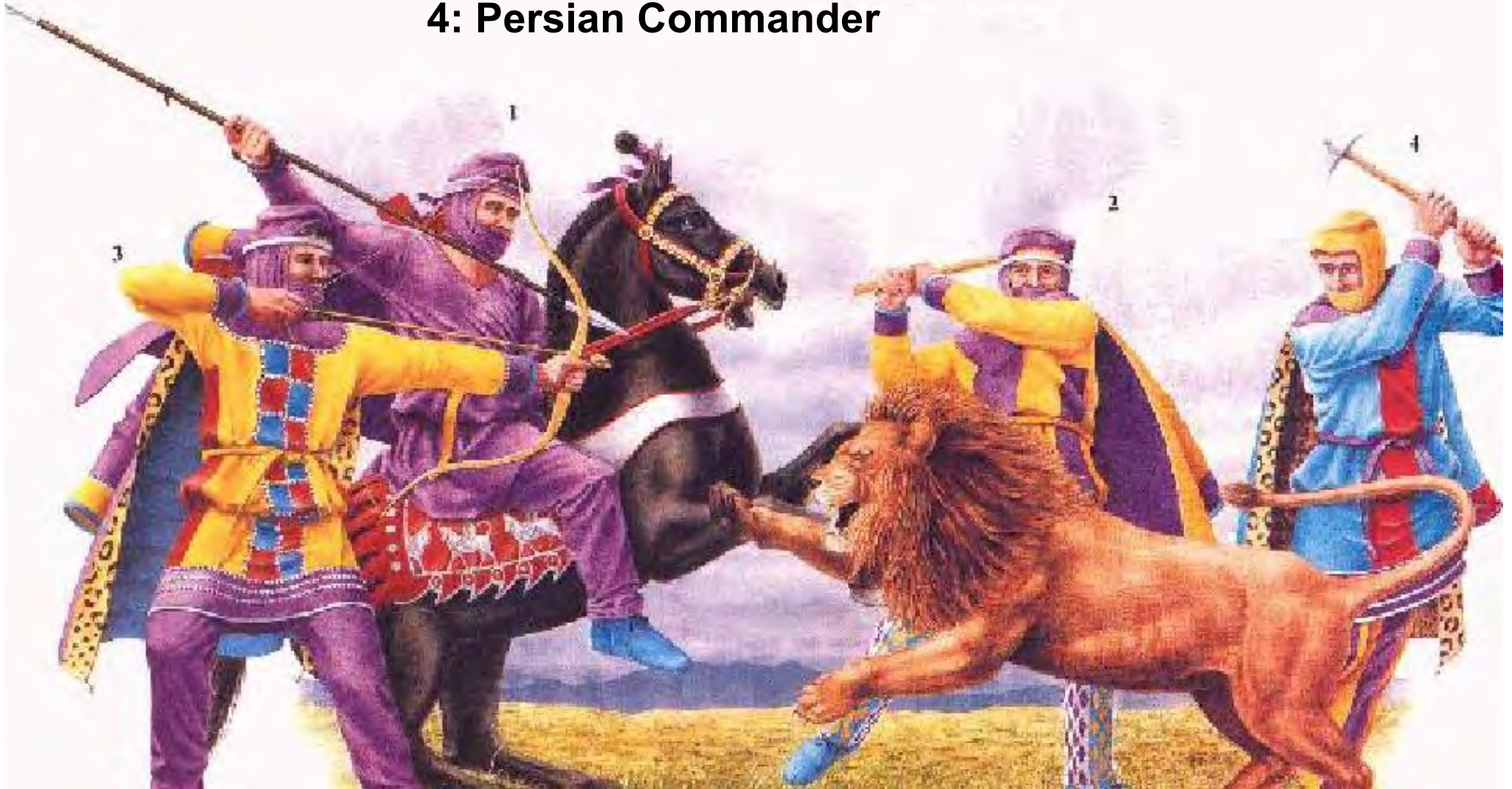




**Persian National Cavalry at Issus c. 333 BC**

# The Sidonian Army, c. 333 BC

- 1: King Abdalonymus
- 2: Sidonian Royal Spear Bearer
- 3: Sidonian Treasury Archer
- 4: Persian Commander





Darius  
the Great  
(521-486 BC)



Remains of Persepolis



Court scene, early 5th century BC

- 1: Xerxes I
- 2: Barmuch
- 3: Spearbearer

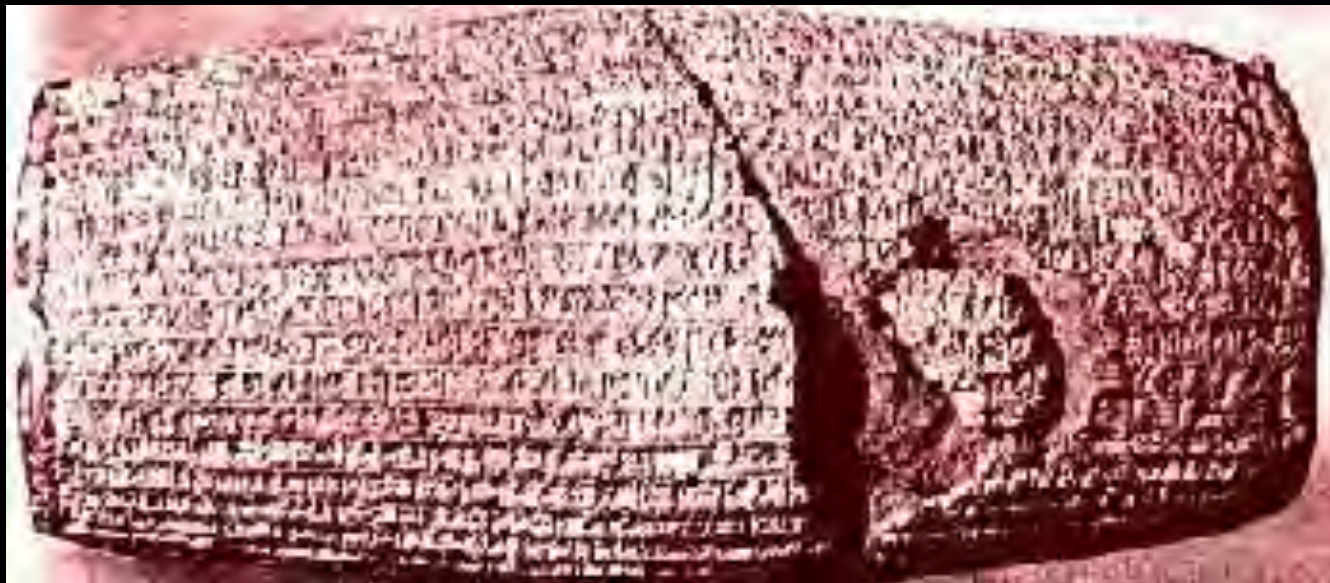


Xerxes of Persia

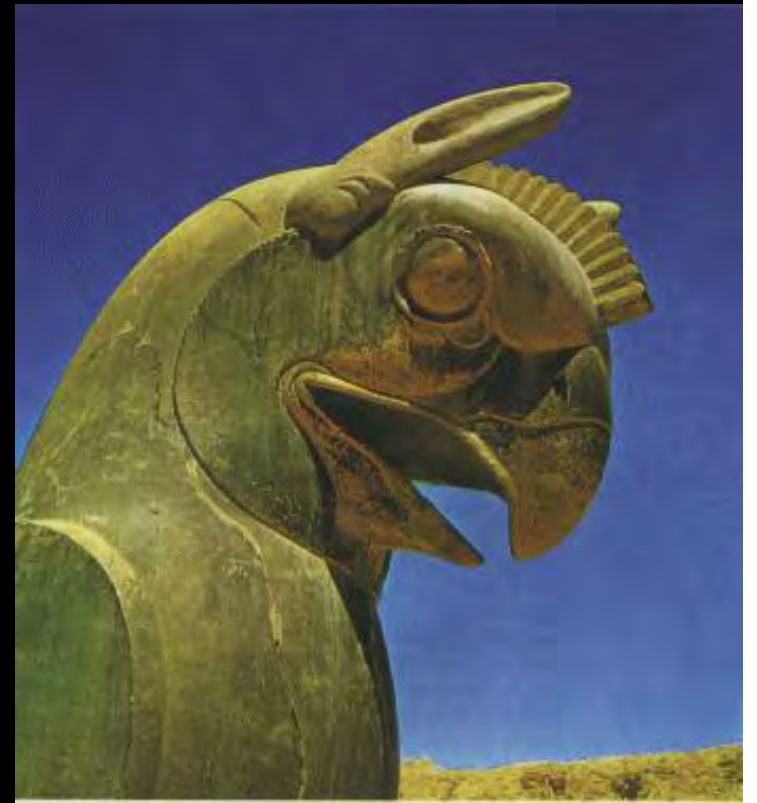
# Language and Literature

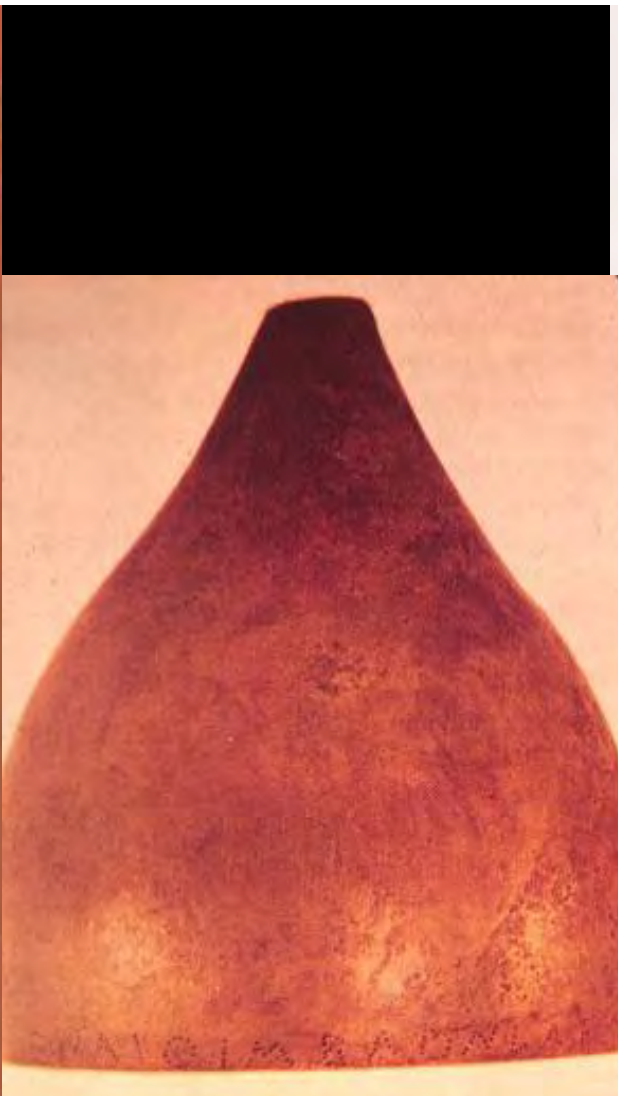


- Cyrus Cylinder tells of two key events:
- Victory over Babylon (Dan. 5:30-31)
  - Return Peoples to Homelands (Ezra 1:1-3)

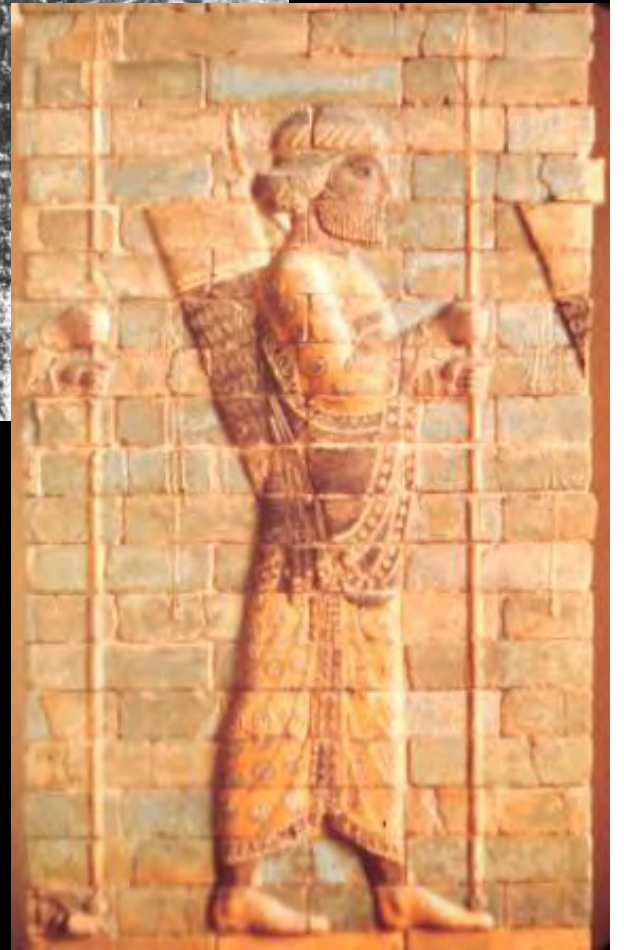


# **Art and Architecture**









***What the Bible Says About  
Persia***

**PERSIA.** An empire which extended from India to Ethiopia, comprising one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, Esth. 1:1; Dan. 6:1. Government of, restricted by constitutional limitations, Esth. 8:8; Dan. 6:8-12. Municipal governments in, provided with dual governors, Neh. 3:9, 12, 16-18. The princes advisory in matters of administration, Dan. 6:1-7. Status of women in, queen sat on the throne with the king, Neh. 2:6. Vashti divorced for refusing to appear before the king's courtiers, Esth. 1:10-22; 2:4. Israel captive in, 2 Chr. 36:20; captivity foretold, Hos. 13:16. Men of, in the Tyrian army, Ezek. 27:10. Rulers of: Ahasuerus, Esth. 1:3. Darius, Dan. 5:31; 6; 9:1. Artaxerxes I, Ezra 4:7-24 . Artaxerxes II, Ezra 7; Neh. 2; 5:14. Cyrus, 2 Chr. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13, 14, 17; 6:3; Isa. 41:2, 3; 44:28; 45:1-4, 13; 46:11; 48:14, 15. Princes of, Esth. 1:14. System of justice, Ezra 7:25. Prophecies concerning, Isa. 13: 17; 21:1-10; Jer. 49:34-39; 51:11-64; Ezek. 32:24, 25; 38:5; Dan. 2:31-45; 5:28; 7; 8; 11:1-4.

# Persian Kings in Biblical History

149

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>B.C. Date</b>	<b>Name In Persian</b>	<b>Name In Bible</b>	<b>Bible References</b>
Cyrus	539-530	Koorush	Cyrus	Isaiah 45, Daniel, Ezra 1-3
Cambysses	530-521	Cambujieh	Ahasuerus	Ezra 4-6
Guamata	521	Berooyeh Doroughi	?	?
Darius the Great	521-486	Darryoosh	Darius	Ezra 5-6
Xerxes	486-465	Khashayarshah	Ahasuerus	Esther 1-10
Artaxerxes I	464-423	Ardeshier Deraz Dast	Artaxerxes	Nehemiah 1-13; Ezra 4:7-23; 7-10

# *How Persians Affected Israel*

# How Persians Affected Israel

150



**Jewish life revolved around Solomon's temple for 400 years (959-586 BC)**

The background of the slide is a painting of the Temple of Solomon. It shows a grand structure with stone walls and several large, fluted columns. In the foreground, there is a large, ornate basin, likely the Silver Sea, with several figures in traditional Jewish attire standing around it. A large, bright red banner is superimposed diagonally across the center of the image, containing the text 'Temple Destroyed!' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Temple  
Destroyed!**

Jews Maintained  
Holiness at the Basin

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build a Temple for Him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you - may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem'" (Ezra 1:1-3).

Of all of the human empires that affected the people of Israel, the Persians did something rather unique - they permitted the *return* of the people of the southern kingdom of Judah, *by God's command* (see above verses), 70 years after their exile by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar.

# The Postexilic Era

295  
296  
560

 Temple work

**Prophets:**

Haggai  
Zechariah

Malachi

605

586

539

536

520

516

483-473

444-425



72 years

**Others:**

Zerubbabel

Esther Ezra

Nehemiah

**Persian Kings:**

Cyrus

Darius

Xerxes

Artaxerxes

# سَبَيِّينَ اسْتَعْرَقَ كُلُّ مَنَّهُمَا ٧٠ سَنَةً

سبي الشعب

605 ق.م.

586

539

536

516

سبي الهيكل

وَتَصِيرُ كُلُّ هَذِهِ الْأَرْضِ خَرَابًا وَدَهْشًا، وَتَخْدُمُ هَذِهِ الشُّعُوبُ مَلِكَ بَابِلَ  
**سَبْعِينَ سَنَةً**. وَيَكُونُ عِنْدَ تَمَامِ **السَّبْعِينَ سَنَةً** أَنِّي آعَاقِبُ مَلِكَ بَابِلَ، وَتِلْكَ  
 الْأُمَّةُ، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ، عَلَى إِثْمِهِمْ وَأَرْضِ الْكَلْدَانِيِّينَ، وَأَجْعَلُهَا خَرَابًا أَبَدِيَّةً.  
 (إرميا ٢٥ : ١١-١٢)

# How Persians Affected Israel

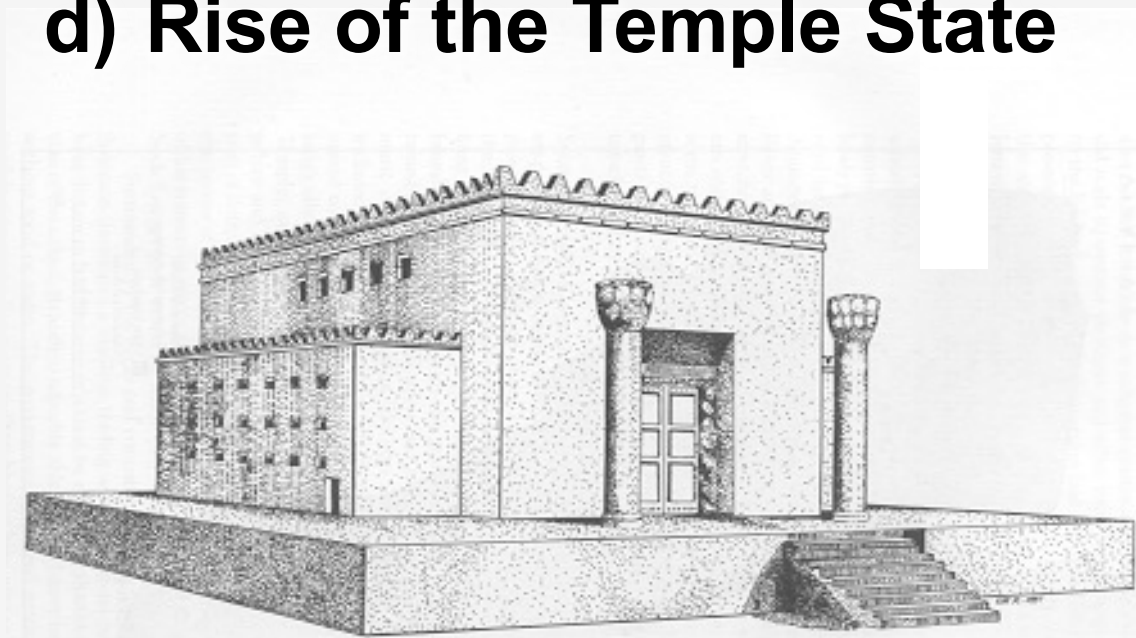


**"I am Cyrus, who founded the Persian empire. Grudge me not therefore, this little earth that covers my body."**

# How Persians Affected Israel

150

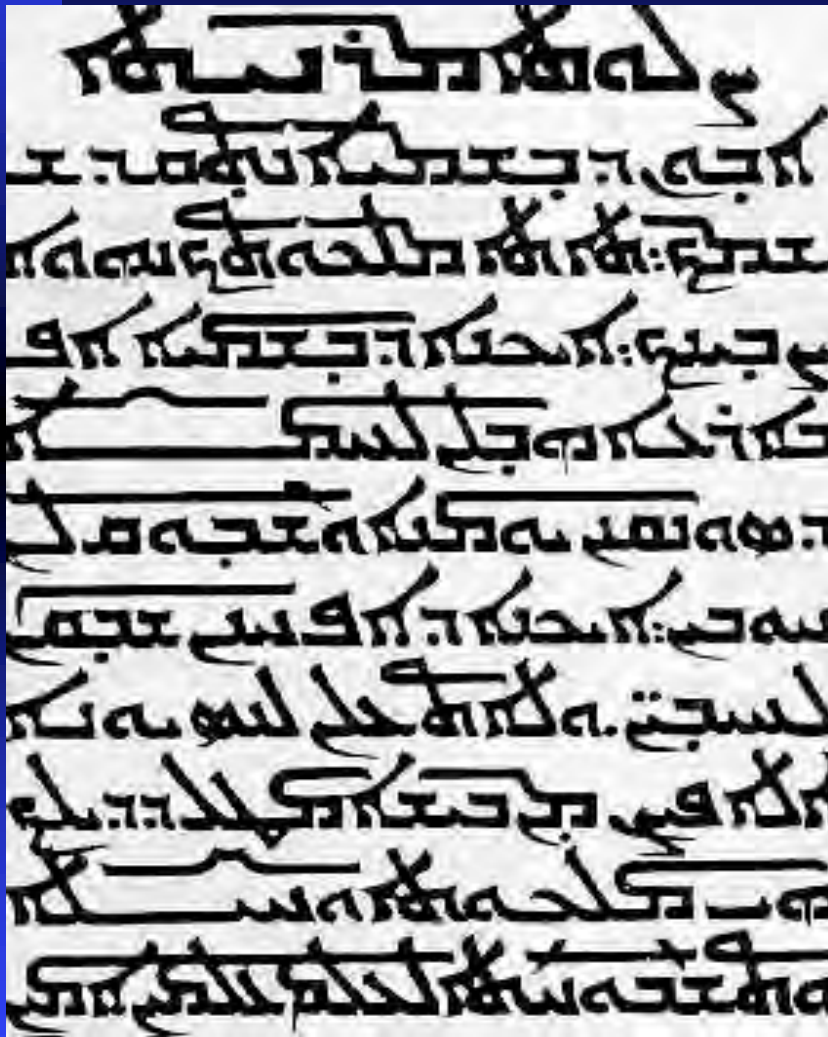
- a) Restoration of Temple Worship
- b) Law of Moses Reestablished
- c) Economic and Spiritual Life Revived
- d) Rise of the Temple State



**2<sup>nd</sup> Temple - Zerubbabel**

# How Persians Affected Israel

151

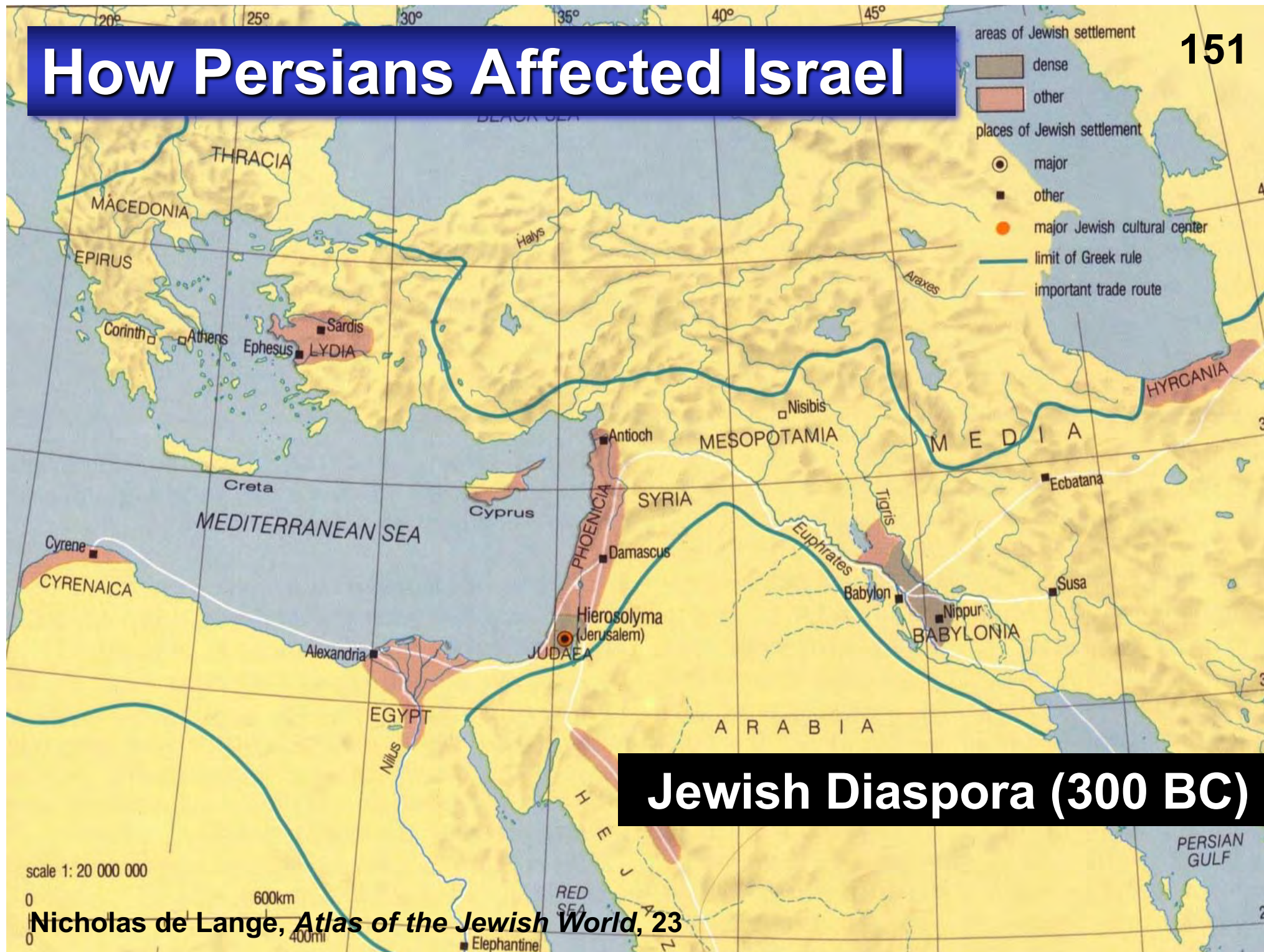


Aramaic was the language of the Semitic culture, the language of the Hebrew Patriarchs, and under the Persians, the *lingua franca* of the Fertile Crescent.

The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic

# How Persians Affected Israel

151



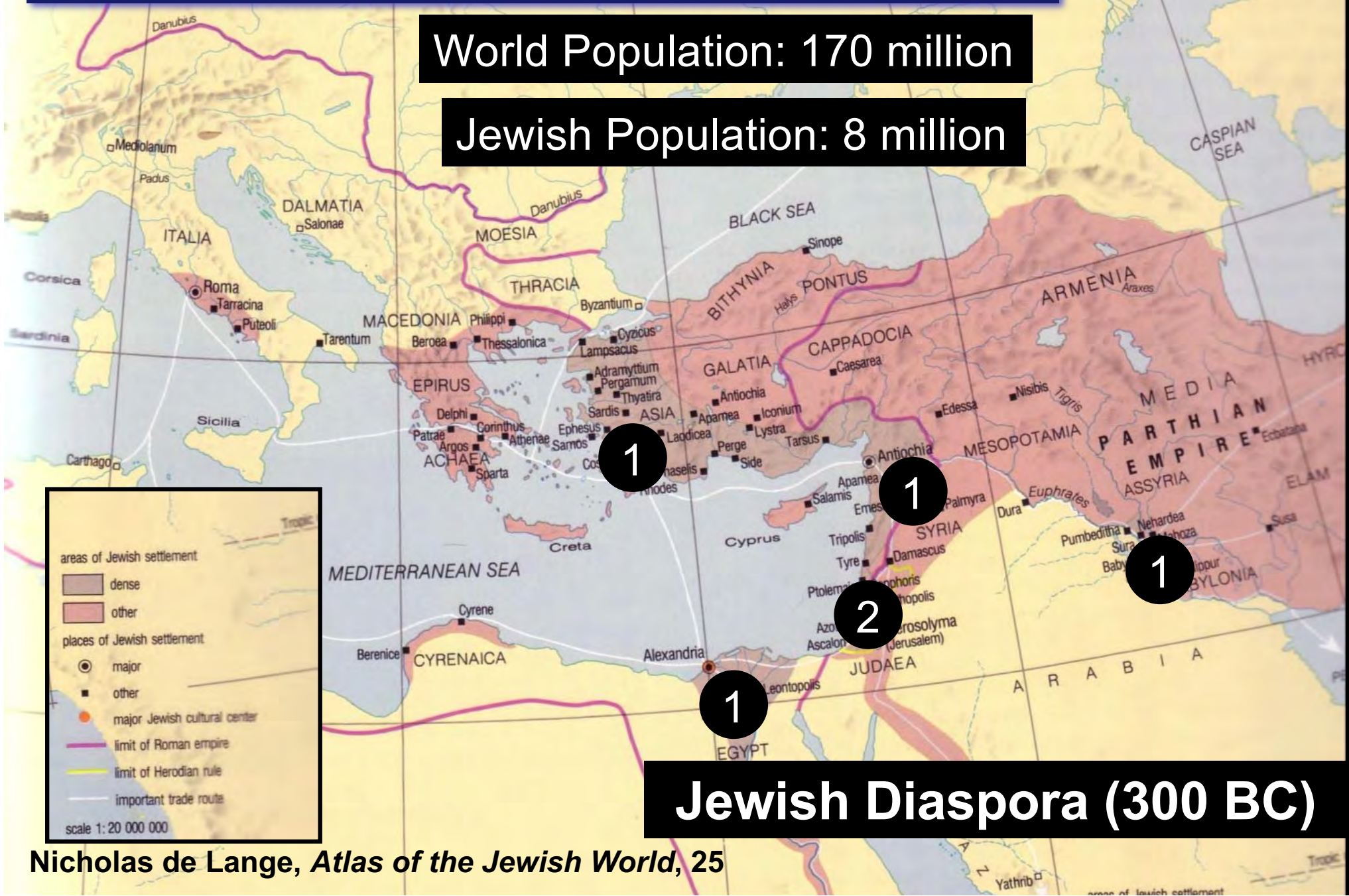
## Jewish Diaspora (300 BC)

# How Persians Affected Israel

151

World Population: 170 million

Jewish Population: 8 million



**Jewish Diaspora (300 BC)**

# How Persians Affected Israel

151



When orphaned at a young age, Esther was raised by her older cousin, Mordecai, who worked in the household of the Persian king (Esther 2:5-7). They apparently did not make use of the permission granted by Cyrus for the exiles to return to Jerusalem (approximate dates):

536 BC - the return from Babylon to Jerusalem

536-516 BC - the rebuilding of the Temple

478 BC - Esther became queen of Persia

473 BC - Esther saved the Jews from massacre

457 BC - Ezra went from Babylon to Jerusalem

444 BC - Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem



After the king divorced Vashti, Esther was chosen to be his wife. There has long been speculation why Queen Vashti refused to appear before the people at the great banquet (Esther 1:10-12), which triggered the divorce (Esther 1:19).

After the king divorced Vashti, Esther was chosen to be his wife. There has long been speculation why Queen Vashti refused to appear before the people at the great banquet (Esther 1:10-12), which triggered the divorce (Esther 1:19).

While it may be that she simply had enough of a banquet that had turned into a 7-day binge (Esther 1:10), others believe that the correct translation of her refusal "to appear wearing her royal crown" is "to appear wearing *only* her royal crown.

After the king divorced Vashti, Esther was chosen to be his wife. There has long been speculation why Queen Vashti refused to appear before the people at the great banquet (Esther 1:10-12), which triggered the divorce (Esther 1:19). While it may be that she simply had enough of a banquet that had turned into a 7-day binge (Esther 1:10), others believe that the correct translation of her refusal "to appear wearing her royal crown" is "to appear wearing *only* her royal crown." **This theory would seem to be supported by the statements that the king was very drunk (Esther 1:10) when he made the demand to "display the queen's beauty to all the people" (Esther 1:11). If that is what happened, it would seem that the king was little more than a common fool—a condition that the Lord capitalized on to move Esther into position to fulfill her mission.**



## Esther 5:1-2

Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

<sup>2</sup> When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.



**Esther and Mordecai**  
1685 Oil on canvas,  
93 x 148.5 cm

**Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest**

**GELDER, Aert de**  
**Dutch painter (1645-1727)**

# Esther Risked Her Life for the Jews



# Key Verse

(Mordecai to Esther)

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief & deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you & your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

(Esther 4:14).



**"..for  
such a  
time as  
this"**



**"..for  
such a  
time as  
this"**

**“That vile Haman...”**



# What Lessons Can We Learn from Studying Persia?



**A Review of Our  
Study of Ancient  
Peoples the Past  
Few Weeks...**

# What Empires and What Order?



**Babylonian**



**Greek**



**Assyrian**

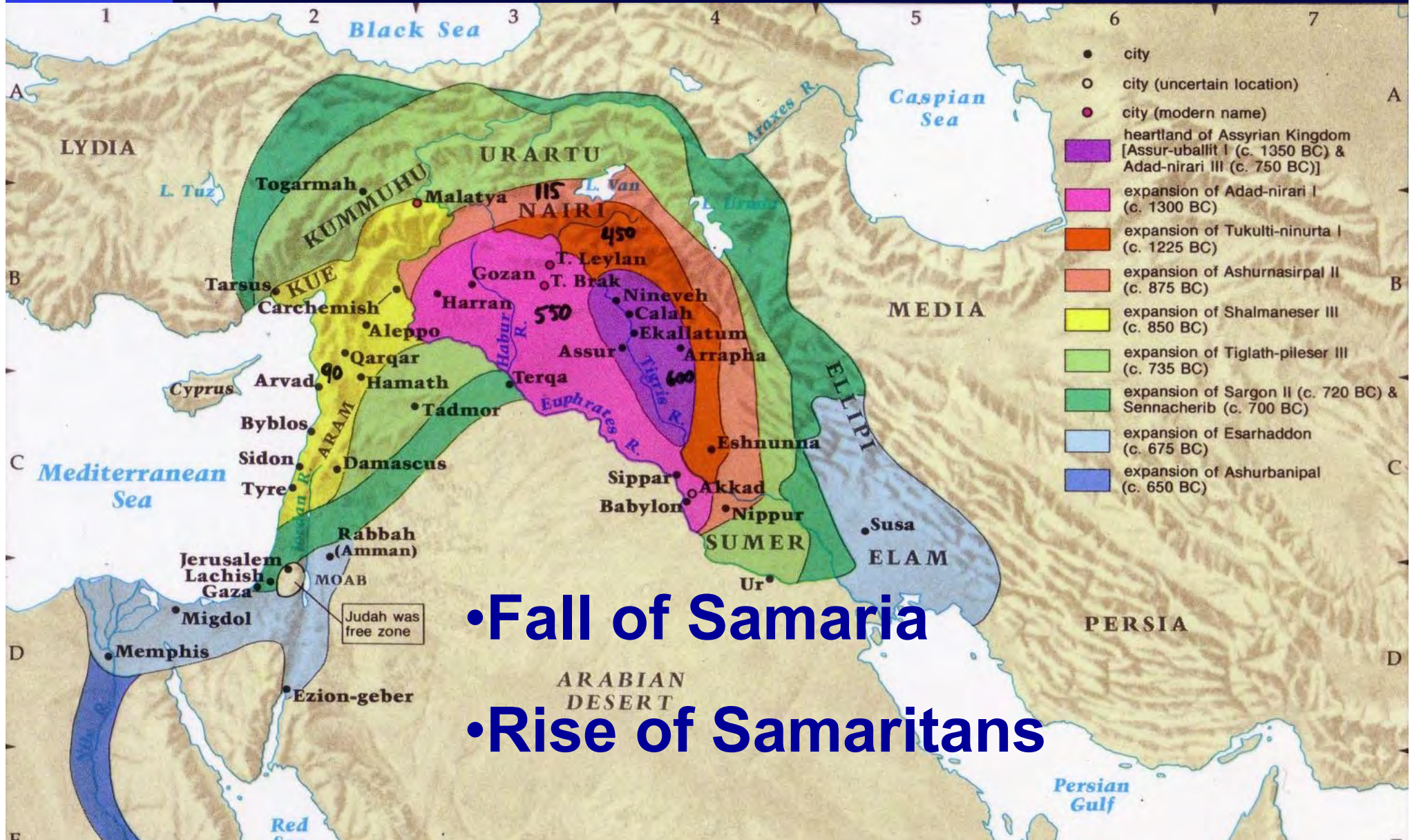


**Medo-Persian**



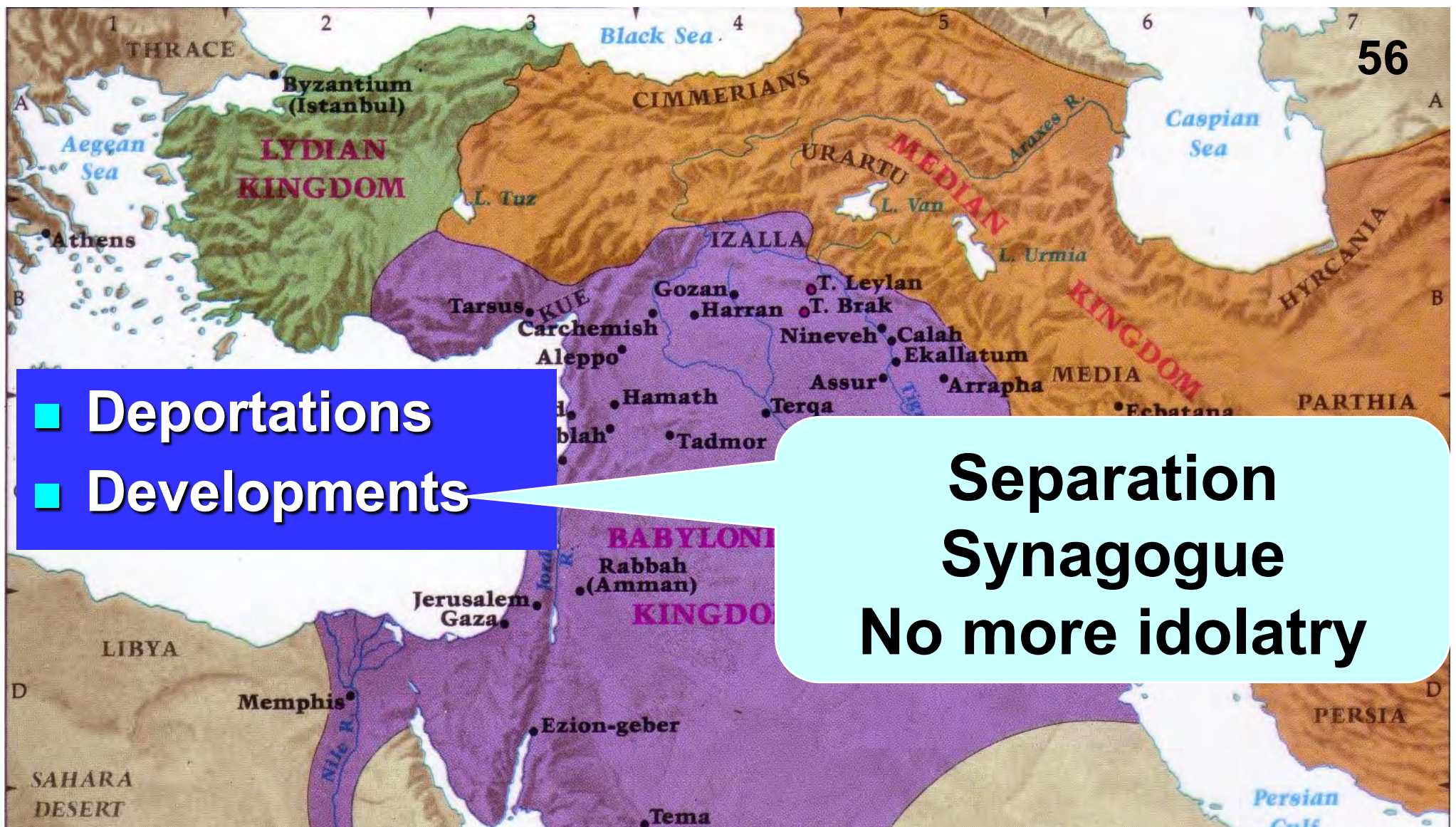
**Roman**

# Assyrian Developments



• Fall of Samaria

• Rise of Samaritans



- Deportations
- Developments

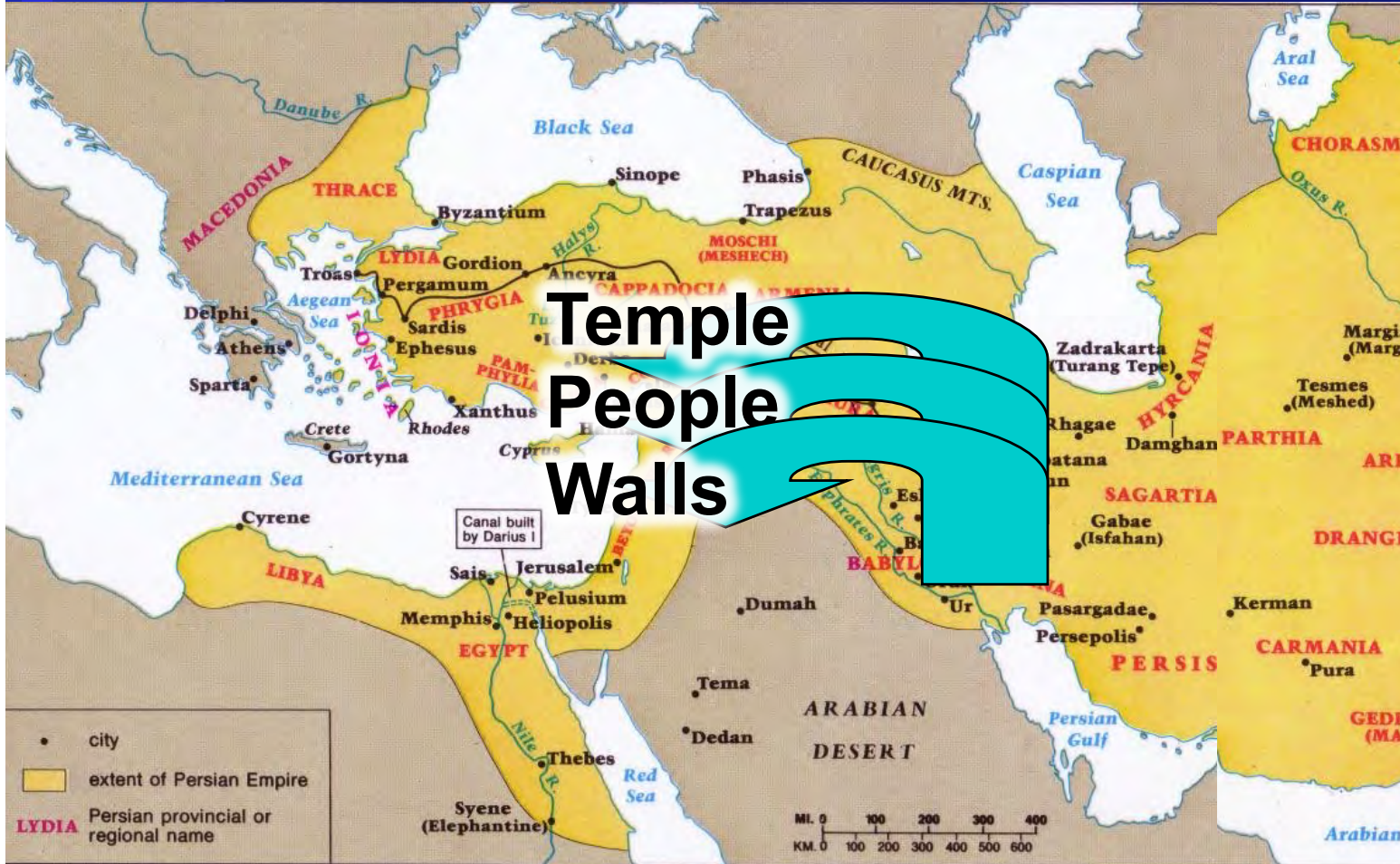
**Separation  
Synagogue  
No more idolatry**

# Babylonian Rule over Israel

57, 59

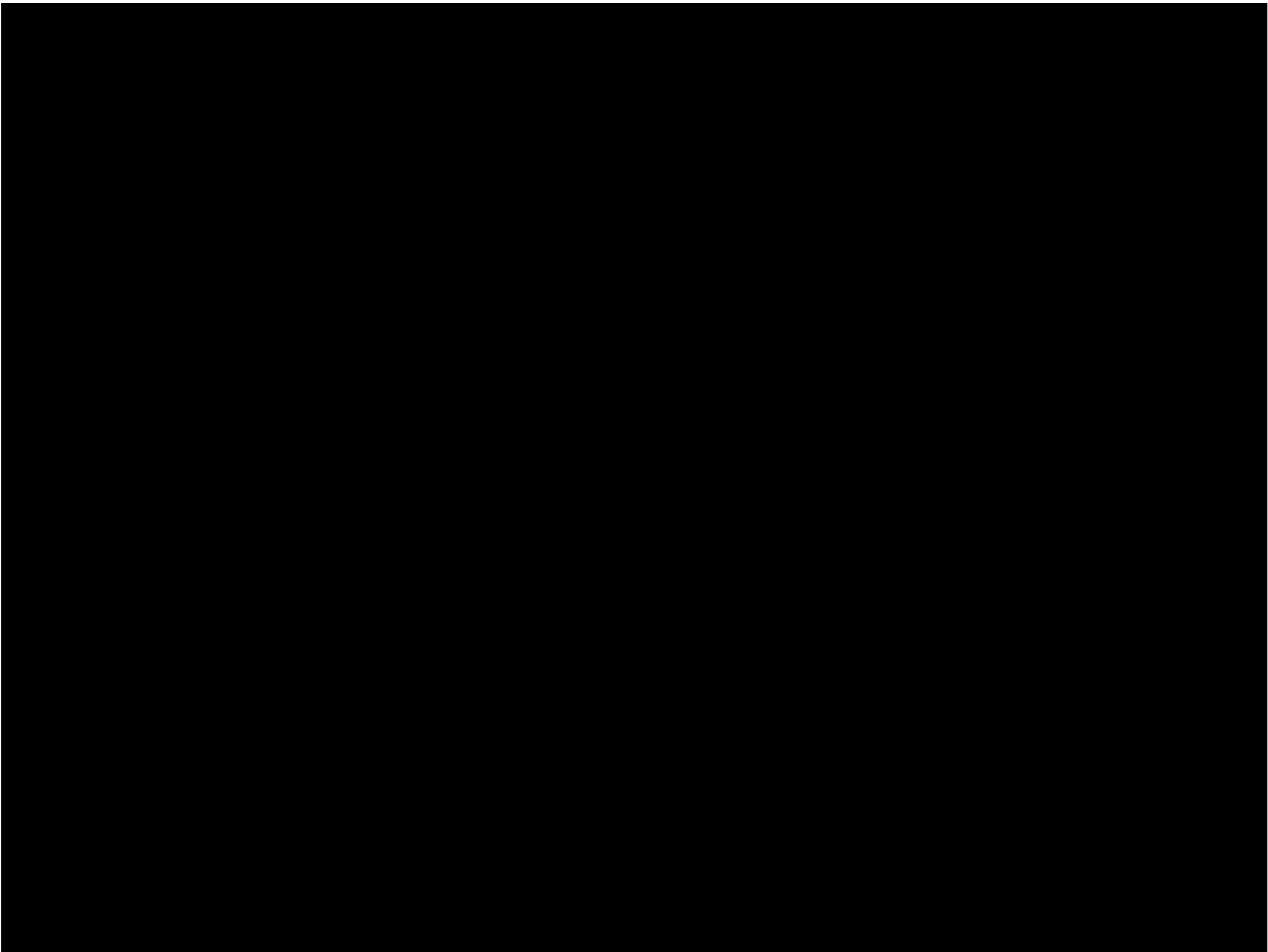
# The Persian Era

- Returns
- Developments



# Intertestamental Empires





# Get this presentation for free!



BIBLE STUDY  
DOWNLOADS

[Home](#) [Downloads](#) [FAQ](#) [Links](#) [Contribute](#) [Contact](#)

Search...



Bible Study Downloads has thousands of PowerPoint® and Word files in 42 languages for free download [here](#).

## OT Backgrounds link at [BibleStudyDownloads.org](http://BibleStudyDownloads.org)