**ADDENDUM: DAN. 8**

In our previous lesson on Daniel chapter 8, I purposely did not precisely identify the very important time period of the vision of this chapter. In verse 13, “two saints” are discussing the vision of the chapter and one asks the other a question: “How long shall be the vision concerning “*THE DAILY SACRIFICE AND THE TRANSGRESSION OF DESOLATION, TO GIVE BOTH THE SANCTUARY AND THE HOST TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT”?*  The response in verse 14 is: “two thousand and three hundred days”. It is this 2300 day period that we have not fixed both its beginning and ending dates. The purpose of this addendum is to revisit this chapter and in particular this time period, to see if we can determine the actual boundaries of this 2300 days.

We did identify many things of the vision, and we do not anticipate any change in the information we have already provided. However after much additional study, research, meditation and prayer, I am comfortable in the further identification of specific elements of this vision, especially the time element. I believe that you will find that the time frame of 2300 days, along with the other pertinent facts of the vision, will greatly clarify and strengthen the entire plot of this chapter. Also, there will be a great correlation between the vision of this chapter and other visions of Daniel and even on into Revelation.

Some of this addendum may be redundant, but will serve the purpose of strengthening what we have already written as well as that additional information we are now providing. This redundancy will help us determine the time frame which up until now has eluded us. With this in mind, let us recap some of the significant points of the vision.

Daniel actually receives this vision at the time of the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon (V1). Belshazzar was the last of the Babylonian kings, the one to whom appeared the handwriting on the wall. The third year of Belshazzar’s reign would have been about 550 B.C., ten or eleven years before the fall of the Babylonian empire. This was also about ten years before Cyrus the Great came to power, conquered Babylon and set up the Medes and Persian Empire. Cyrus accomplished this in 539 B.C. This first verse of the chapter applies to the time when Daniel received the vision. The time he received it and the time to which it applied, are two separate events.

Then in chapter 8:2, Daniel says that, “I saw in a vision, and it came to pass, **WHEN I SAW,** that I was in Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam”. At this point a quick review of verses 3-5, and 20-21, clearly defines this vision as covering the empires of Persia and Greece, and afterwards also extending far into the future beyond the empire of Greece. One thing this says to us is that this vision does not cover any of the Babylonian empire, even though it was received by Daniel during the time of Babylonian rule. Daniel saw in this vision that he was “in Shushan in the palace”. The palace or capital of the Babylonian empire was Babylon, not Shushan. Inasmuch as the beginning of this vision is symbolized by a ram with two horns, representing the empire of the Medes and Persians, we can thereby know that Babylon is not a part of this vision. As we have noted, this empire came to prominence under Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C. Was there a “Shushan the palace” in the Persian Empire, and if so, when and what was its significance to this vision? In addition, what, if anything, does this “Shushan the palace” contribute to our search for the boundaries of the 2300 days?

**“SHUSHAN” OR “SUSA”.** Sometimes in the process of interpreting scripture, especially prophetic scripture, seemingly very insignificant details can make a difference. Too often theologians will take entirely too much liberty with those details which they don’t think have any bearing on their interpretation and simply ignore something that could be critical. We may not always understand all the details, but we must be sure they don’t pose a conflict to our conclusions. In the case of “Shushan the palace”, was it just something that prefaced the information about to be given, or was it factual information of some importance within the framework of the vision itself? The immediate answer to this is seen in the fact that “Shushan the palace” statement is a part of the vision proper. In this regard, it becomes a point of introduction to the entire vision. Further, we are going to find that it not only answers the question as to “where” the vision is viewed from, but also “when”, with both of these being critical to our search for the understanding of the 2300 days.

“Shushan” is mentioned only once in Daniel, in chapter 8:2. Again in Neh. 1:1 it is found and then again in the book of Esther it is mentioned 19 times. In history books you may find only the word Susa, which is derived from the Greek. Susa more often refers to the city while “Shushan” is more often in connection with the palace in the city.

Susa is one of the oldest cities in the world, possibly dating as far back as 5000 B.C. The city is connected with the Elamites, even being their capital. The Assyrian king, Assurbanipal, destroyed the city of Susa between 645 and 640 B.C. No record of any importance is made of this city or location for more than 100 years after this. Under king Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian empire arose, and lasted until about 539 B.C., when Cyrus the Great defeated the Babylonians. With this victory Cyrus is now the undisputed ruler of the Persian empire, the greatest ever up until that time. Cyrus had his capital of Persia at Pasargadae. During the time of Cyrus, there is no mention of any significance of Susa. After Cyrus, his son, Cambyses, reigned from 529 – 522, with no reference to Susa or Shushan during his reign. He was followed for less than a year by another brother, Smerdis.

Darius the Great, 521 – 486, began his reign. Note that when he became king of the Persian Empire, the Persian kingdom had already been in existence since 539 B.C., with no reference of any significance to Susa, and no reference to a palace there. That is because it was destroyed in 645 —640 B.C. One of the many significant endeavors of Darius the Great was to rebuild the city of Susa (or Shushan). In addition he built a very impressive palace there. There were other capitals for Persia (Pasargadae, Persepolis, and Ecbatana), but it is evident from excavations that Susa was the more impressive one. Excavations reveal an inscription in the palace, known as DSF, which describes how Darius built his residence there. I have chosen to include a copy of this inscription from Darius with this lesson which I think will establish both the impressiveness and the timing of the building of this palace in Susa.

I have not been able to find a specific date for the beginning of the building of this palace nor of its completion and occupancy as the resident palace of Darius. But a little calculation will give you a good sense of approximately when it might have been. Darius began his reign in 521 B.C., with no palace at Shushan. Herodotus, known as the father of history, wrote extensively about the “Achaemenid” empire, (Persian) and he did not know of another capital than Susa. The great events of the book of Esther took place in and around Shushan the palace. Not only did they take place there, but the time setting is that of Darius the Great. In fact, Esther finally became queen very near 513 B.C. Following this was the episode of Haman’s wrath at the Jews and the plot to destroy all Jews throughout the Persian empire. This plot was finally foiled between 511 and 510 B.C.

It should be noted that the names of the kings of Persia can cause us a lot of confusion. For example, the name of the king mentioned in the book of Esther is called Ahashuerus. Secular history may not even list an Ahashuerus. One problem is the different languages used. Ahashuerus and Xerxes are the same, just derived from different languages. Then there are two different Xerxes and three different kings named Darius. Some of these are not really names, but assumed titles. So it becomes a tedious and often confusing task to determine the time frame and which king applies to certain specified events. Nevertheless, there is enough solid information to determine that the Darius of Daniel’s vision in chapter 8 is the one ruling from 521 – 486. It is also clear that he is the one who restored ancient Susa, and built an enormous palace there. This was in fact his main residence and very clearly fits the descriptions of Shushan the palace. It is reasonable to assume that if his reign began in 521, that you could expect the construction of this palace at shushan to have been completed somewhere between the 5th and 15th years of his reign: 516 – 506. With this palace available for the 6 month party described in Esther, you can conclude that it was built by sometime around 515 to 511. We will leave it at that for now and explore other events described as taking place within the 2300 days (prophetic years) which we are researching. These events will surely have an impact on the time frame of which they are a part. We must ascertain if they have any relevant connection to the early days of the building of Shushan the palace, where Daniel saw himself in the beginning of his vision.

The main structure of Daniel’s vision (V3-9) included a ram with 2 horns; and a he goat with one horn. When this one horn was broken, 4 other horns took its place and finally out of one of these 4 horns, came forth a little horn which waxed great toward the south, the east and toward the pleasant land. Then he saw some very distinct activities on the part of this little horn (V10-12). A very difficult but important event is credited to this little horn as described in verses 11-12. “By him (the little horn) the “daily sacrifice” was taken away. (Be careful not to make a premature assumption about this daily sacrifice). Then verse 13 provides a question that goes straight to the core of this vision. “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give **both** the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot”? We call your attention to the fact that there are two distinct objects of the vision: (1) the daily sacrifice; (2) the transgression of desolation. There are also two distinct objects to be trodden under foot (by this little horn): (1) the sanctuary; (2) the host. Then in V14, the time frame applicable to this vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation is 2300 days. Twenty three hundred days transposed into prophetic time becomes twenty three hundred years. So Daniel’s vision is a far reaching one.

In Daniel 11:31, we have another reference to this “daily sacrifice” and the “abomination that maketh desolate”. Here we are informed that one of great power shall “take away the daily sacrifice and place the abomination that maketh desolate”. Again, two distinct events, somehow connected to each other, one ending and one beginning at some mutual point.

Next, in chapter 12:6, the question is asked, “how long shall it be to the end of these wonders”? The question is answered in V7, as: “time, times and a half (time)”. We saw this same expression of time in Daniel 7:25. It is also found in Revelation chapters 11, 12, and 13. This should alert us to the application of this time period as being in the church age. Then again, in Daniel 12:11, we are informed that from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, that is, beginning at that point and forward until the abomination that maketh desolate is set up, there shall be 1290 days (years).

What we have thus far is a vision that extends for a period of 2300 years, and covers two conditions: (1) The daily sacrifice and (2) the abomination of desolation. The abomination of desolation was specifically allocated 1260 years of the total of the 2300 years. This leaves a balance of 1040 years to apply to the daily sacrifice. The pertinent question at this point is, can we identify the boundaries of the 1260 years which are applicable to the abomination of desolation? If we can that will effectively lock in the identification of the balance of the 2300 years.

In our previous lesson entitled “Daniel’s Horns Chapters 7 & 8, we identified and sought to provide ample proof that this 1260 year period began under emperor Justinian I, by way of the “Codes of Laws” he instituted in 529 AD. Rather than repeat that information here, you may like to review it in order to acquaint yourself as to how Justinian answers to the requirements of the “little horn”. Particular attention should be given to the fact that this “little horn” is the instrument by which two notable things occurred: (1) taking away the daily sacrifice, and, (2) set up or fulfill the abomination of desolation. In all of the combined history relative to the beasts and horns of Daniel 7 and 8, and the empires and powers they represent, nothing answers to these two events as clearly, completely and, unfortunately, as tragically and as abominable as the laws and actions of Justinian. It was truly an epochal turning point, not only in the history of the church, but of the inhabited world. Prior to his day, God’s people lived for centuries under the blight, ridicule, suffering and mockery of the universal worship of pagan gods and their related religion and worship. **The laws of Justinian ended this pagan rejection of God and also began the 1260 year period of the rule of papal power and the abomination of desolation brought on by this power.**

By the institution of Roman laws designed and adopted under Justinian I, we have one of the most significant milestones in the history of God’s people and his church. To be sure, it is not a milestone that bodes good for the church, for evil and tyrannical days will follow. Under Justinian we have the uniting together of the religious power of the Roman church and the civil power of the empire. In other words, we have the marriage of the church and the state. Under the laws of our country we maintain a separation of church and state. History will demonstrate that this is true precisely because of the inherent problems created under the union of the Roman state and the Roman church.

There is a powerful analogy or type of this union recorded for us in the story of Elijah of the Old Testament. Ahab was a wicked king, and he married wicked Jezebel. Together (with Jezebel calling the shots) they set up every ungodly and idolatrous practice possible in Israel. Elijah, representing the word of God, told Ahab there would be no rain for 3 ½ years. (3 ½ transposed into prophetic time becomes 1260 years, typical of the 1260 years of our lesson). As a result, Jezebel, (representing the apostate church) through the civil powers of king Ahab, searched for Elijah for all of these 3 ½ years to destroy him. Finally Elijah confronts Ahab and all of the prophets of their idolatrous system and slays them. God sends rain and Elijah (representing the word of God) is taken up in chariots of fire. Finally Ahab and Jezebel are also slain. All of this story typifies the 1260 years of the abomination of desolation that started when Justinian I, the representative of Roman civil power, voluntarily united with or married the “holy see” of the Roman church. Together they went down a path of abominable desolations away from the truth of God’s word. This marriage of the “Holy Roman Empire” with the civil powers of Rome, created a religious / civil anomaly that ravaged the saints of God with their wrath, tyranny and idolatrous union for 1260 years, from 529 to 1789. (More on the ending of this later).

Based on this calculation and identification of the 1260 year period (529 – 1789), as previously noted, the remainder of the 2300 years is effectively locked in place. Twelve hundred and sixty from twenty three hundred leaves one thousand and forty years. (2300 – 1260 = 1040). Then counting back 1040 years from 529 AD, you arrive at 511 BC. Rather than just accepting this 511 BC date as the beginning point of the 2300 years, by default as it were, we owe it to the integrity of the vision to provide reasonable justification for doing so. In other words, there surely is a reason for accepting 511 BC as the beginning of a vision of such importance and covering such a long period in the history of God’s people.

We began this addendum with a short review of Daniel’s vision of chapter 8. We noted that this vision did not transpire during the time of the Babylonian empire, even though Daniel received it then. The specific facts, symbols and direct statements of the vision assigns its beginning to the Persian empire. In addition, the vision begins as Daniel sees himself at “Shushan the palace”. We have shown that there was no palace at Shushan (or Susa) when the Persian empire began under Cyrus in 539 BC. His capital was in Parasagadae. It was not until the reign of Darius (aka Ahashuerus), who reigned from 521 to 486 BC, that a palace was built at Shushan. As we have noted, if you allow reasonable time after the beginning of the reign of Darius for the decision and the rebuilding of the city along with a very elaborate palace, you would allocate several years. We also called attention to the reign of Ahashureus who married Esther. The memorable words of Mordecai to Esther that she had come to the kingdom “for such a time as this”, bring our focus to an enormous juncture in the lives of God’s people. It was an episode so important that, depending on which way it turned out, the entire purpose and plan of God to bring our savior to the world through the tribe of Judah, could have been destroyed. But by God’s marvelous providence, through Esther the queen, the wicked plot of Haman to destroy every Jew in every province, was miraculously stopped. This took place in either 511 or 510 BC. Without any doubt, the major focus, insofar as the Persian empire is concerned, is this event that prevented this great world power from carrying out this diabolical plot. Whatever else Daniel’s vision of Persia may have included, surely this was the focal point. This great event that transpired in “Shushan the palace” in 511 or 510 BC, coupled with the calculations of the 2300 year period (2300 – 1260 = 1040) bringing us to 511 BC, is an astounding prediction and fulfillment of the longest prophetic time frame of the entire Bible. To be able to identify this much history even within a 10 to 20 year margin would be satisfactory. To identify it within one year can be attributable only to God.

It will strengthen this conclusion of the beginning of the 2300 years as being around 511 BC, if we note other important evidence surrounding this time. To begin with, Cyrus the Great came to power in 539 BC. One of his first acts was to issue an edict that granted freedom to all captives under his authority. This especially applied to the captive Jews. This was indeed a great day for these captives who had been promised, specifically by Jeremiah, that their captivity would last for only 70 years, which was almost over. There must have been great jubilation throughout all the provinces where they were scattered. After this decree, and with time taken to organize a return, plus about 6 months to travel, they would have arrived back in Palestine sometime in 537 BC. Fifty thousand joyous Jews made their return. Keep in mind, that as momentous as this freedom was, it did not come from Shushan the palace. The city of Susa still lay in ruins at this time.

The returning Jews had authority and finances from Cyrus to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. This work met with severe opposition by foreigners dwelling in the land. After an exchange of accusations and research into the original decree authorizing this rebuilding of the temple, the project was finally completed about 515 BC. This falls under the time of Darius, who was by then no doubt reigning from Shushan. In addition, at this time Esther was queen, though the plot to destroy the Jews had not yet been revealed and spoiled and Mordecai had not as yet been elevated next to the throne (in Shushan).

It was also during this time of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied. Their ministry was around 520 BC., just shortly after Darius became king. Haggai urged the resumption and completion of the temple construction. He then compared it to the temple that would be built in Jerusalem later, even the church. Zechariah spoke of the past sins of Judah, yet gave many prophecies of the coming of Christ. Both of their ministries were important to the work of God around 520 BC. Even though Darius was king at the time of their prophecy, it is extremely unlikely that he was at Shushan at that time.

Finally you have the marvelous episode with queen Esther and the ultimate preservation of the people of Judah and through them the preservation of the lineage of Christ’s descent into the world. This occurred at 511-510 BC, and was played out entirely at Shushan the palace.

Daniel 8:2, says: “And I saw in a vision, and it came to pass, **when I saw** , that I was “at” Shushan “in” the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai. The vision begins at Shushan in the palace and ends 2300 years later at the seat of power of the Holy Roman Empire, extending from 511 BC to 1789 AD. The key to the beginning of this long period of the “daily sacrifice” and the “abomination that maketh desolate”, is one little insignificant seeming statement: **“When I saw”,** I was at Shushan in the palace. During this long period, the idolatrous, loathsome worship of paganism reigned as the religion of the state. During this pagan period the Hebrew people of God were subject to and under oppression by the various empires which perpetuated this heathen, pagan worship. This paganism was completely eliminated, during the later days of the ancient Roman Empire. During the reign of Theodosius there was a great effort towards the elimination of paganism. It was finally outlawed with penalties for it’s practice during the reign of Justinian I and the code of laws he established. This was in 529 AD. This same code of laws also gave license to a new religion of the (Roman) state, that of the orthodox Roman Catholic Church, which Justinian not only embraced, he made it the state religion and then voluntarily submitted to the authority of the “Holy See” of this Roman church. This union with the Roman Empire and the Roman church lasted until its overthrow by the forces let loose in the French revolution in 1789. Just as it had been under centuries of the pagan state religion, so also under the Roman state religion, the people of God suffered cruel and unusual punishment and oppression. Thus, for at least this period of 2300 years, the people of God saw little relief from oppression fostered in false religion and empowered by the force of the state.

A new day for the church of God began at the end of this 2300 year period. This ending will be included in the subject of another lesson.

**ADDENDUM RESEARCH & STATISTICS SECTION**

RESEARCH STATISTICS ABOUT THE 2300 YEAR PERIOD.

Determining the beginning and ending times of the 2300 year period, along with the identification of the events associated with this period, is a very difficult task and one that has many areas where mistakes can easily be made. In addition, many of the historical accounts available do not provide clear and decisive evidence. This is especially true for establishing the beginning of the period. It is much easier to establish where the 1260 year portion of the total period begins and ends. The beginning of the entire period is hindered by the duplication of names for kings and because of this the differences of position taken by many commentators. I have tried to search through all of this in order to find a cohesive chronology to fit the events and time frame. Because this process is so tedious and sometimes conflicting, I have developed this section in an effort to lay out a process of research and statistical information that can be used to verify the conclusions we have reached. We have put the 2300 year period between 511 BC and 1789 AD. The following information will help explain why.

**A PROFILE OF 5 PERSIAN KINGS.**

**CYRUS THE GREAT.**

a. He was born in either 590 BC, or 576 BC; which is uncertain.

b. His reign is from 559 to 529 BC, when he died in battle, nearly 30 years. However his Persian empire is reckoned from 539, when he conquered Babylon.

c. He was known as a benevolent ruler; it was Cyrus who freed the Hebrew captives.

d. His empire included territories from the Median empire, Lydian empire, and Babylonian Empire, and was the largest empire up to his time.

e. His capital was at Pasargadae, at current Fars.

f. When he conquered the Medes in 549, he accepted the Median crown but assumed the title of “King of Persia”.

g. His son Cambyses succeeded him at his death in 529.

h. In 1971, the U.N. recognized him as issuing the first human rights charter in history.

i. His reign had a powerful impact upon the world through his philosophy, religion and literature. Cyrus embraced Zoroastranism.

j. He is one of history’s towering figures.

k. He was prophesied in Is. 44:28 and 45:1-3

l. He set up satraps (governors) over provinces.

m. His domain reached from the Indus River in the east to near Egypt in the west. (No territory in Egypt).

**CAMBYSES**

a. He was the son of Cyrus.

b. He reigned from 529 to 522, a total of about 7 years.

c. He murdered his brother Smerdis.

d. He was an apparent drunk, which contributed to his early death by suicide.

e. The lack of detail about him suggests the lack of greatness and accomplishment.

f. He conquered some of Egypt, but failed to conquer other territories.

g. Darius, his successor, was his lance bearer, who says Cambyses took his own life.

h. He died in Ecbatana and was buried in Pasargadae.

i. He was succeeded for a few months of 522, by one posing as his dead brother Smerdis.

**DARIUS THE GREAT.**

a. Born in 549 BC.

b. Reigned from 522 to 486 BC, nearly 38 years.

c. He was a nephew of Cyrus the Great.

d. The territories he ruled included Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Caucasius, Central Asia, Lybia and parts of Arabia. His territory reached from India to Ethiopia.

e. He made military reforms such as pay for soldiers, training and organization for them.

f. He was a worshipper of Ahura Mazda, but also tolerated all religions.

g. He restored the empire to the governance of Cyrus, but governed greater territory.

h. He divided the empire into provinces governed by satraps.

i. His army was made of many nationalities, including Assyrians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Indians, Egyptians, Jews and Arabs.

j. In approximately 518 – 516, he built a new capital in Persepolis. The walls around the city were 60 ft. high and 33 ft. wide.

k. He was a great reformer and organizer and financier; reorganized the legal code.

l. Around 516, he built an elaborate palace residence in Susa (Shushan).

m. He dug a canal from the Nile River to the Suez Canal and his ships could sail from the Nile thru the Red Sea, by Saba, to Persia.

n. He built an extensive road network all over the country. Included was a “Royal Road” from Susa to Persepolis and from Sardis to Susa. It had rest stations, garrisons and inns.

o. He is remembered for his “Behistun” Inscriptions, describing his reign, chiseled into the face of rock near the town of Behistun.

p. He developed commerce within and without the empire.

q. Because of his diplomacy and expansions his population increased.

r. He had the good will of his subject nations and promoted the aims of their priests.

s. His name was on the temples of Egypt. Egypt considered him a great law giver and benefactor.

t. He standardized weights and measures which was a boon to trade.

u. He opposed slaver. All workers on his great construction projects were paid instead of slave labor which was revolutionary for his day.

v. The Persian Empire was at its greatest during his reign. He died at age 63.

**XERXES I.**

a. Born in 519 BC, the son of Darius the Great. His mother was Atossa, daughter of Cyrus.

b. His reign was from 485 to 465.

c. He destroyed a large golden stature of Bel from Babylon and it brought him ill will.

d. Many nationalities served in his army as they had in his father’s.

e. His military expeditions were not very successful.

f. He completed the construction his father Darius had started in Persepolis and Susa.

g. Some accounts of his death say that he was assassinated by his son Artaxerxes.

**ARTAXERXES I.**

a. He was the son of Xerxes I.

b. He reigned from 464 to 424, the longest of any Persian kings.

c. The empire greatly weakened under his reign.

d. His military expeditions were mainly to suppress insurrection and revolts in territories.

e. He moved his capital back to Babylon.

f. He is known as Longimanus allegedly because one hand was longer than the other.

**COMMENTARIES ON AHASUERUS.**

a. Strongs # 325 under Ashasuerus. A title rather than a name. Often translated as Xerxes or Artaxerxes.

b. Matthew Henry. He says the “learned” do not agree who this Ahasuerus is. He says it would seem that he is one of the first kings of Persia. He says Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was the Ahasuerus who hindered the building of the temple. (This won’t fit, if it refers to Cambyses, because he only reigned about 7 – 8 years and we can trace Mordecai under Ahasuerus for over 14 years.

c. Erdman’s. He says Ahasuerus is Xerxes who ruled from 485 to 465.

d. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. This source says that Ahasuerus was the Xerxes who ruled from 485 to 465.

e. Pictorial Bible Dictionary. This source says that Ahasuerus is Xerxes of 485 to 465. It notes some military expeditions which the writer thinks parallels the story in Esther. However, this source also says the Ahasuerus of Ezra 4:6, is the same Xerxes, but this will not fit.

f. Dr. Adam Clarke. He says Ahasuerus is Artexerxes I, who reigned from 464 to 424.

g. Josephus, page 334. He says Ahasuerus is Artexersxes I, 464 to 424.

h. Thompson Chain Reference Bible Survey, by Hanke, p. 272. This source says Esther became queen of Persia in 478 which would put her marrying Xerxes of 486 to 465.

i. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, p 633. This source says Ahasuerus is Xerxes 486 to 465. This source also assigns Shushan the palace to Daniel’s supervision.

j. Thompson Chain Reference Bible. This source puts the story of Esther with Darius the Great, 521 to 486. The margins show the events of Esther as occurring about 510 BC.

**TIMELINES OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.**

The purpose of this time line coupled with the time line for Mordecai is to help identify who Ahasuerus is and what the dates are, which in turn will contribute to the establishing of the prophetic time of chapter 8 of Daniel.

All of the following references are from the book of Esther.

1:3, 3rd year of the reign of Ahasuerus.

2:12, Esther has been in purification for 12 months.

2:16, Esther is taken to the king in the 7th year of his reign.

3:7, in the 12th year of Ahasuerus , and the first month of that year, day to day, month to month to the 12th month….. This would bring you to the 13th year of Ahasuerus.

3:12-13, letters were prepared and sent to all the provinces throughout the year to the 12th month. This would bring you to the 14th year of Ahasuerus.

8:1-2, It was after Haman was hanged that Mordecai was advanced over the house of Haman. This establishes that Mordecai was alive and well all through the events of Esther.

9:4, 17, 20, 29. These all attest to the continued life of Mordecai along with his greatness. After the 14th year of Ahasuerus, he is alive, well, and ruling next to Ahasuerus.

**TIMELINES FOR ESTABLISHING MORDECAI’S AGE.**

Esther 2:5-7. Mordecai was carried captive into Babylon when Jeconiah was carried captive.

II Kings 24, Jeconiah, son of Jehoiakim, (V6) began to reign at age 18, (V8) and the king of Babylon took him (in the 8th year of his reign) (V12) and carried him to Babylon. This is also when Mordecai was carried as per Est. 2:5-7.

II Kings 24:17-18, The king of Babylon made Zedekiah king. In the 11th year of his reign was the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem, when Zedekiah was taken to Babylon. This was in 586 BC. Thus, Mordecai was carried to Babylon in 598 BC.

II Kings 24:12, tells us that Jeconiah was taken to Babylon in the 8th year of the king of Babylon, which would have been 598 BC.

How old was Mordecai when he was taken to Babylon in 598? Nothing clearly establishes this, but the following will help.

Jer. 27:20, tells us that Jeconiah, king of Judah, was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, **and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem.** Mordecai was in this group.

Jer. 29, speaks of carrying away of Jeconiah and the queen and the eunuchs, the princes, carpenters and smiths into Babylon. This is when Mordecai was carried captive. He was carried with adult workers. This does not completely prove that he was of this age, but since he was carried then there is a good chance he also was an adult.

Esther 2:3, tells us they were to gather “fair young virgins” to become queen to Ahasuerus.

If you assume an age of 20 for Mordecai when carried captive, this would make him 97 years old in 521, when Darius began to reign. Whoever Ahasuerus was, Mordecai was still living and ruling in the 14th year of that kings reign (see Esther time line above). This would bring you (if it was Darius) to 507, and would mean that at that time Mordecai would be 111 years old. (Whether or not Darius was the Ahasuerus of Esther, Mordecai would still have been 111 years old in 507, if he was 20 when carried away. If he was 10, then 101; or if he was 1 year old, he would be 92 in 507. The point is that Mordecai was an old man during the reign of Darius. This becomes critical when you try to apply the events of the book of Esther. If, on the other hand, they fit in the reign of Darius, this becomes a major point of emphasis on the events of Daniel 8. And don’t forget that Mordecai could have been *more* than 20 years old when carried away.

**EZRA TIME LINES.**

Ezra was a worthy scribe of the things of God. He and Nehemiah were contemporaries and were both present and active in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The book of Ezra records information for us about events with the people of Judah for two distinct time periods. Chapters 1 through 6 provides information from the time of the decree of Cyrus allowing them to return to Jerusalem, and chapters 7 through 10 provide information during the reign of Artaxerxes I, who reigned from 465 to 424. We will not take the time to comment on the entire book, but some portions of it will shed much light on what we are researching.

In chapters 1-3, is the account of the decree of Cyrus allowing them to return to Jerusalem, followed by an accounting of those who returned in chapter two, which is followed in chapter 3 by the start of the construction of the temple.

Chapter 4 begins with the account of the adversaries that did all that they could to frustrate the purpose of this building with all kinds of accusations, lies and road blocks. They hired counselors all the days of Cyrus, even unto the reign of Darius to stop this building project. This would have been the remaining 6 years of Cyrus, the 7 years of Cambyses, up to the beginning of the reign of Darius in 522. Then verses 6 & 7 there is a most interesting and complicated scenario. They read: In the reign of “Ahasuerus”, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him and accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. Verse 7 continues: And in the days of “Artaxerxes” wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of their companions, unto “Artaxerxes” king of Persia!!! So we have Darius, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes all involved in this opposition by these adversaries with letters being written unto them (or him?). Follow on through this chapter to see the sequence of events regarding this letter writing and, especially, how it ends. In verse 8 they wrote to Artaxerxes; in verse 11 they sent the letter to Artaxerxes; in verse 17 the “king” sent an answer; in verse 23 the copy of Artaxerxes letter reaches Rehum and Shimshai and is read before them. Then notice verse 24, which says this letter from Artaxerxes caused the work of building the temple to cease unto the second year of the reign of “Darius”. There are several problems here. First, history does not provide a king Artaxerxes until 465 BC. Then the effect of this letter writing stops the building until the 2nd year of the reign of Darius which would have been 520 or 519 BC. Beyond this, it is a provable fact that the work was restarted and the temple was completed in 515 BC, during the reign of Darius.

The sequence of kings of Persia are Cyrus, Cambyses, Smerdis (7 months), Darius, Xerxes and then Artexerxes. History of the kings of Persia does not list a “Ahasuerus”. Cyrus is a known quanity. Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes of verses 6 & 7, and following throughout the chapter are the same king. Then verse 24 tells us that this opposition lasted until the 2nd year of the reign of Darius (the Great), 519 BC. Chapter 5 gives an account of Haggai and Zechariah prophesying to Judah to resume the building of the temple. Their prophecy was in 520, during the reign of Darius. This chapter also informs us that a letter was written to “Darius”, still trying to oppose the building. This letter made reference to a “decree by Cyrus” which the builders had mentioned to those trying to stop the construction. In this letter to Darius, request was made that search might be made to see if, in fact, Cyrus had made such a decree. In chapter 6:1, Darius made such a search and there was found in Acmetha, in the province of the Medes, a roll containing the decree of Cyrus. Therefore Darius gave decree that the building be not hindered, but aided in its progress. Then verse 14 says that they finished the building according to the commandment of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, king of Persia. Following this in verse 15 it says, “The house was finished in the 3rd day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king”. This would have been in 516 or 515. The original decree of Cyrus was issued in 539 BC, and the construction, after all opposition was put down, was finished in 515 BC. During this time you have Cyrus, Cambyses, (Smerdis) and Darius.

To resolve who this Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes is, you are left with only two options. (1) There is a possibility that they refer to Cambyses, who ruled from 529 to 522. (2) The other is that they refer to Darius the Great. Either option will fit with all other events having a bearing on any prophecy or scriptural event of any significance. Either option will also have a bearing on the events of the book of Esther also.

**AVERAGE NATURAL LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR THESE TIMES.**

As strange as it may seem, this will help us as we try to draw final conclusions, especially about who Ahasuerus is and when the events of the book of Esther were. Even though I will start these statistics with Moses, you will notice a distinct drop off in the life span when you get to the kings of Israel. I have not used any that were killed (except Paul and Peter), only those who died a natural death.

Moses, 120; Joseph, 110; Joshua, 110; David, 70; Solomon, 59(?); Amaziah, 54; Azariah, 68; Hezekiah, 54; Manasseh, 67; Daniel, 92-95; Jeremiah, 65(?); Darius the Great, 63; Paul, 65; Peter, 65; John, 96.

After Moses and Joshua, the life span drops off to between 60 and 70 in general. Daniel is an exception to this, having lived for 90 to 100 years, depending on how old he was when he was carried captive. The application we can make of this information is to apply it to the life of Mordecai, which will give us a guide as to how long he could have expected to live. When you exceed that expectancy by an extreme number of years you know that you have a problem somewhere with other information. Determining how old Mordecai was has a direct bearing on who Ahasuerus was and therefore what era of time it was.

**WHO WAS AHASUERUS?**

Was he Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes or Artaxerxes? And what difference does it make? That is what we want to try to answer now. To do so will require that we compare various statistics and facts regarding each of these kings. In doing this we feel sure that it will provide some strong support for our conclusions about the 2300 years of Daniel chapter 8.

**Cyrus** could not have been Ahasuerus because: (1) Even though he reigned from 559 to 530, the emphasis is from 539 to 530. The Persian Empire actually began after he conquered Babylon in 539. He could not have been Ahasuerus therefore because we can track Mordecai for 14 years and Cyrus does not have that many. (2) Cyrus did not rule from Shushan but from Parasagadae. Shushan (Susa) was in ruins at the time of Cyrus. (3) Cyrus did not meet the requirements of Est. 1:1, that is, he did not reign from India to Ethiopia. His territory was less than this.

**Cambyses** could not have been Ahasuerus because: (1) He only reigned for 7 years which will not cover the necessary time span. (2) His capital was not at Shushan because it was still in ruins during his reign. (3) His domain did not reach from India to Ethiopia.

**Xerxes I** could not have been Ahasuerus because: (1) Because we can track Mordecai to the 14th year of the reign of Ahasuerus and this would mean that Mordecai would have been as much as 146 years old which is very extreme and unlikely. (2) This likely would mean that Esther would hardly qualify as a “fair young virgin” at that time. (3) He is not nearly the central figure of power in Persia that his father, Darius was. (4) He is not the king that built the capital at Persepolis and residence at Susa (Shushan). (5) Since Darius is the one who built the capital at Persepolis and residence at Susa, Darius would get the credit for it and not Xerxes.

**Artaxerxes I** could not have been Ahasuerus because: (1) He moved his capital for his reign to Babylon and not Shushan. (2) Mordecai would have been 167 years old if he was 20 years old when brought to captivity. (3) Esther would have also been far beyond a “fair young virgin”. (4) He was not the one who established the empire from India to Ethiopia, and in fact lost some of what he had to begin with.

This leaves **DARIUS THE GREAT** as the only one with all the qualifications that will meet all of the requirements of being Ahasuerus, with many more. We conclude that Darius is the Ahasuerus of Esther because: (1) He ruled from 522 to 486; Mordecai would have been about 110 years old when last mentioned in the book of Esther, if he was 20 when he was carried captive. If he was 10 when carried captive, he would have been 100; if only 1 year old, he would have still been older than his peers at about 91. To presume that he was older than this defies logic and is totally unlikely. (2) He is the one who built a capital at Persepolis and a residence palace at Susa (shushan). Construction was started at approximately 518 to 516. (3) He established the Persian Empire from India to Ethiopia as required by Est. 1:1. No one else meets this requirement. (4) According to Strong’s Concordance, Ahasuerus is a title and not a name. (5) By referring to the profile of Darius you will see that he was the greatest king to ever rule Persia in many areas. (6) Assuming that he was Ahasuerus, this would mean that the story of Esther begins to unfold at about 512 to 510, which coincides with the time frame of the 2300 years. We don’t say that it is necessary for the story of Esther to even be related with this 2300 years. What we do assert is that her story unfolded in Shushan the palace, built by Darius; and that the approximate ages of her and Mordecai will only fit within the reign of Darius. In addition he is the only one that perfectly fits the requirement of his domain being from India to Ethiopia.

While it is not necessary that the story of Esther be during the reign of Darius, it certainly becomes another point in establishing the beginning of the 2300 years. In reality, since we can satisfactorily establish the 1260 year portion of the 2300 years, we have effectively locked it in at 511 BC. With all of the events during the reign of Darius plus the story of Esther added to this, it provides very satisfactory boundaries on each end of this great era. With God knowing what was going on with his people and that they were about to face the possibility of destruction, giving Daniel this great vision starting at this precise time is surely not coincidental as much as it is providential. In addition, since it is very likely that Daniel had been dead now for some several years, raising up another person out of Judah to be next to the king was in the favor of their well being. One other incidental factor to consider in the mix of all of this is that Persia was the first empire to establish a “state religion”.

Thus, this great 2300 year period of the vision for the “daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation”, takes the world of God’s people in the days of Daniel, etc., and follows them through the desolation of the dark ages, bringing them to an ultimate deliverance from centuries of subservience to foreign governments and religion and gives them freedom to serve the Lord by the inspiration of his holy word. What powerful proof that he is with us still today.