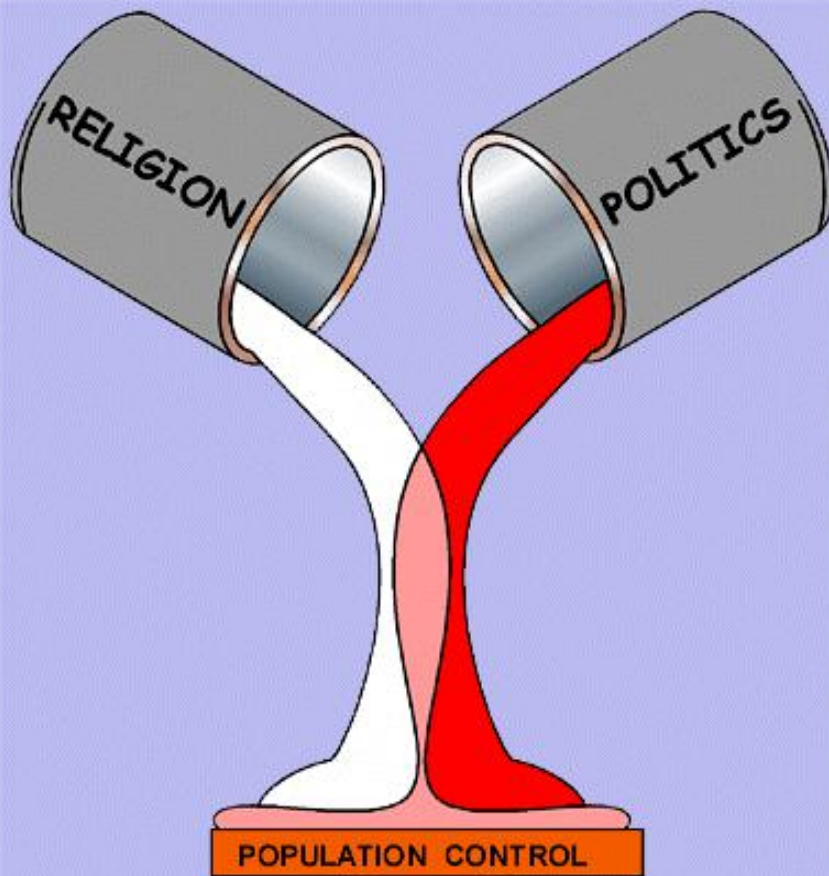


EZRA CHAPTER 4

- Religious conviction is often mistakenly perceived by others as a political position
- Political opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple is escalating
- Zerubbabel was right to refuse the Samaritans' offer to help rebuild
- God commands against illicit mixing, called being unequally yoked in the NT



MIXED

UP

FAITH



- Zerubbabel's was a sincere desire to reignite Torah observance and proper worship of YHWH
- The Samaritans didn't believe him
- It is true that the clan leaders came back under the cover of the "spiritual" to reclaim property
- When Messiah Yeshua came He was a spiritual leader, but Jewish religious authorities and the Romans saw him as a political problem
- Modern politicians often co-opt the spiritual and intertwine it with politics for personal agendas



UNMARKED DIGRESSIONS

- Timeline for Ezra hard to ascertain due to restructure of Bible in later times
- Editor of Ezra zooms out, back in, back out, etc.
- Ezra Chapter 4 structure:
- Vss.1 – 5 main subject
- Vss. 6 – 23 detour
- Vs. 24 back to main subject
- We must adapt to the ancient Hebrew writer.....not him to us!!



Cyrus



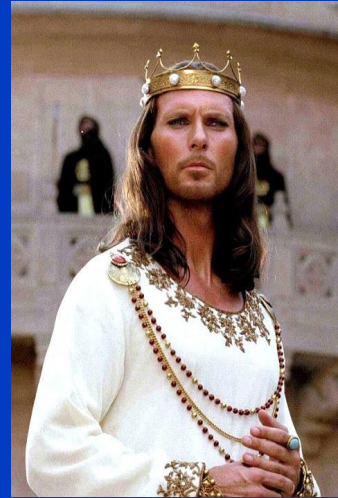
2 Kings

Cambyses
&
Bardiya

Darius



Xerxes



Artaxerxes

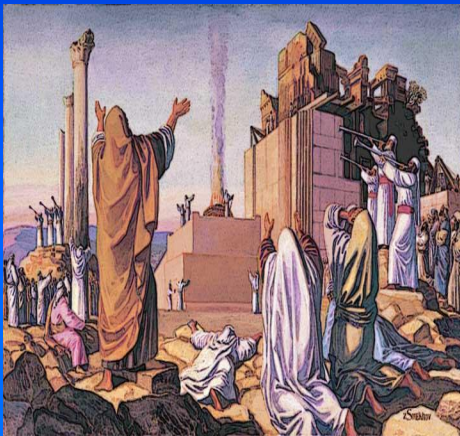


Ezra 4 Vss. 1 - 5 + Vs. 24

Ezra 4 Vss. 6 - 23

559
B.C.

REBUILD TEMPLE



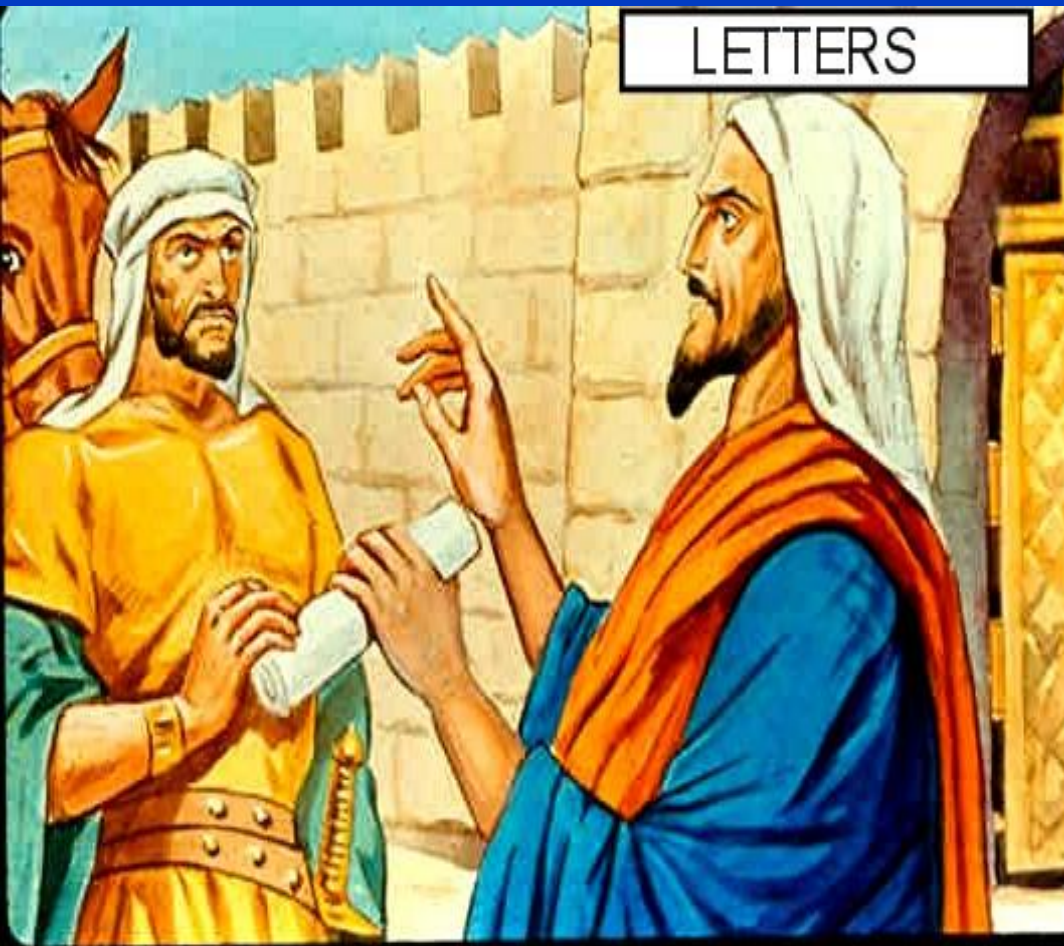
486
B.C.

REBUILD WALLS



424
B.C.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS TRY TO STOP THE REBUILDING EFFORT



- 4 different instances are reported in Ezra chapter 4
- Vs. 4 Local officials complain to Cyrus and Darius
- Vs. 6 Charges brought to Xerxes
- Vs. 7 Letter to Artaxerxes
- Vs. 8 Another letter to Artaxerxes

Cyrus

2 Kings

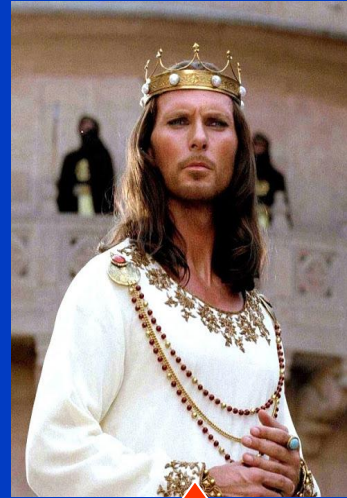
Darius

Xerxes

Artaxerxes



Cambyses & Bardiya



559 B.C.

486 B.C.

424 B.C.

AT LEAST 50 YEARS SINCE JEWS BACK IN JUDAH

EXILE ENDS





- Esther chapter 3
- Overlay the stories of Ezra and Esther for better understanding
- Haman of course was aware of the “Jewish problem” in Judah
- Xerxes seemed to have no knowledge of this issue yet



- Judah is merely a small district in the Persian Empire
- Whatever the local Persian officials told the government in Susa about the situation in Judah was taken as accurate
- Jews in Judah now seen as troublesome, perhaps disloyal
- Persian Jews sympathized with the Jews who had returned to Judah
- Thus when Haman issued the death decree a substantial number of non-Jewish Persians welcomed it

NO TAXES IS NO TAXES NO MATTER THE REASON

- Haman offers a fortune to the Persian treasury if he can wipe out the troublemakers (the Jews)
- This will make up for the potential loss of taxes (and taxpayers)
- Book of Ezra deals with Jews in Judah, while Book of Esther deals with Jews in Susa, during Xerxes reign



KING ARTAXERXES SEARCHES THE OFFICIAL RECORDS



- Artaxerxes followed Xerxes
- The Haman incident happened years earlier
- *Rechum* asks the king to research the royal archives
- The king responds that indeed *Rechum's* accusations are correct
- 2Kings 24:1 – 10
- The King orders all work to stop and not to continue unless he orders it