

The real problem bringing about this apparent impasse between the secular data and the biblical record has nothing to do with a difficulty or mistake in the Canon. In wrongly deciding upon the decree of Cyrus as being the fulfillment of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy,¹ Anstey himself actually created the problem between Ptolemy and the Scriptures (as did *Companion Bible* in a similar vein). However when the decree in the 20th year of Artaxerxes is seen to be the only one of the four edicts which meets the requirements of the prophecy, the drastic and radical removal of 82 years (or 110, *Companion Bible*) of history is not at all necessary (again, see Appendix M, pp. 300-308).

Thus, the difficulty arose from well-intending biblicists having made faulty judgments with regard to Scripture and then forcing that error on the Canon, the very opposite of the practice of the Assyrian Academy. Both sides, the secular and the biblicist, therefore must be seen as being guilty of such practices from time to time and strong responsibilities toward one another's data must be better faced if the ultimate goal of reconstructing the truth is ever to be obtained.

Nevertheless, with the exception of this mistaken final conclusion, the present writer holds Anstey and the main of his work in the highest esteem. He has been selected, not for ridicule, but because of his deep commitment and the fact that he so well serves to illustrate how easy it is for even the most honest well-intended researcher to miss the mark and having done so, take the created mistake and use it to "correct" the efforts of others.

Having hopefully learned from such and trusting that this author is not guilty of the same error, let us return from this necessary digression to where we left off with a similar problem, yet of a much smaller magnitude. Namely, that the c. 445 BC date for the 20th year of Artaxerxes, although coming into very close proximity, probably does not precisely bring the 483-year Daniel 9:25 prophecy into the lifetime of Christ Jesus. It is now time to see if a discrepancy, regardless of how small it may be, is demanded between the Canon and the Hebrew Text.

¹ Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-284.

3. THE RESOLUTION OF PTOLEMY AND THE ANCIENT HISTORIANS

Being contemporaries of Artaxerxes I Longimanus and Themistocles, the testimonies of Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus concerning the date in which that Persian monarch came to the throne must not continue being ignored by nearly all scholarship. Indeed, we have seen that Ussher and Anstey had an impressive array of ancient data, most of which was far older than that of Ptolemy, upon which to formulate conclusions which differed a few years from the Canon.

Having related that Eratosthenes, the astronomer-chronologer from whom Ptolemy not infrequently referred, and Apollodorus framed a chronology within which they made all the known facts of past history to fit as best they could, many credible former researchers have been called to testify that much of this was founded on conjecture, guesses, and "certain vague floating traditions". Besides, Eratosthenes flourished (c. 275-194 BC) and wrote many years after the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus and was thus not an eyewitness nor even in the immediate proximity to the event under examination. He, Apollodorus, and Ptolemy are all late compilers of this history.

Another allegation often repeated by Anstey and others is that Ptolemy is not corroborated in this period of Persian history, that his witness stands alone against many who contradict it.² To this Anderson has argued that Julius Africanus, writing around AD 240, independently confirmed Ptolemy's dates for Artaxerxes Longimanus in his *Chronographies*.³ In it, Africanus does define that king's 20th year as the 115th year of the Persian Empire (reckoned from Cyrus at 559 BC) and the 4th year of the 83rd Olympiad (445 BC).⁴ Of course it may equally be contended that as Ptolemy preceded Africanus by about a century, the latter's statement is not truly independent but rather derived from consulting the Canon.

Regardless, Ptolemy cannot rightly be as easily dismissed as Bullinger, Anstey, Mauro, etc.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, etc.

³ Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

⁴ Africanus, *Chronographies, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 135.

would have us believe, especially with respect to the magnitude of error which they have ascribed to him. After all, no less authority than Sir Isaac Newton, himself a most capable astronomer, defended Ptolemy with regard to the years of Cambyses and Darius I stating that their years were “determined by three eclipses of the moon recorded by Ptolemy, so that they cannot be disputed”.¹

As to Xerxes’ dates, Sir Isaac Newton continued (*Chron. Amended*, pp. 353–354) saying that his expedition against the Greeks took place at the time of the 75th Olympic Games (480 BC), adding the critical comment that all chronologers agreed on that date. Diodorus Siculus (c. 80–20 BC), writing nearly a century before Ptolemy, gives these same facts² with regard to Xerxes and is undoubtedly Newton’s primary source for that information.

Newton added that the Battle of Salamis was fought in the autumn and that an eclipse³ took place a short time later on October 2nd. Herodotus mentions this same solar eclipse⁴ and Ussher, citing him, also dates the famous naval conflict at Salamis as 480 BC.⁵ The point is that having mentioned the October 2nd eclipse, Newton uses it to set the first year of Xerxes’ reign as 485 BC (Anno Nabonassar 263) adding that he reigned “almost twenty one years by the consent of all writers”.

The importance of this or any support certifying Ptolemy can hardly be overstressed. This is all the more true since Robert Newton has recently shown the extreme limitations of Ptolemy’s king list. Robert Newton convincingly illustrated that any modern historian or chronologist using Ptolemy’s lunar eclipse records, even if many or all of the aspects of these eclipses were

fabricated as Newton charged, would seem to verify his king list. Moreover, he showed quite remarkably that any king list, regardless of its accuracy, would seem to be eclipse validated such that, taken alone, Ptolemy’s king list is of little value.⁶

However, Robert Newton goes on to show that the later part of his king list has independent verification such that there is strong confirmation for its correctness for Nebuchadnezzar and reasonable affirmation for Cambyses. From this, Newton concluded that any error in Ptolemy’s list could be no more than a few years for dates after –603 JP (604 BC Gregorian), but as there was no astronomical confirmation available for earlier dates, errors before that year could be of any size.⁷

Yet from the foregoing testimony by Ussher, Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, and Sir Isaac Newton, it cannot be fairly said that Ptolemy is not on firm ground at this place in the Canon. The length of Artaxerxes Longimanus’ reign and the date of Alexander the Great are also settled within very narrow bounds by ample ancient voices, all of which confirm Ptolemy. What then is to be done with the impasse between Ussher and his sources (Thucydides, Charon of Lampsacus, etc.) and Ptolemy? Amid so much conflicting evidence and doubt, can the truth be found?

Although from all that has now been said on the matter, we may not be unconditionally certain; still, it is believed that a heretofore unattained responsible resolution has been reached. It is offered that, in general terms, all of the formerly cited witnesses (page 224 ff.) have told the truth and are basically correct!

The solution proposed by this author is that, as many writers have heretofore stated, following Xerxes’ humiliations at the hands of the Greeks in battles such as Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea etc., his spirit was crushed resulting in the giving of himself over to a life of indolent ease, drink, the sensual enjoyment of the harem as well as dallying with the most beautiful women of the court and the wives of some of his

¹ Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

² Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, *op. cit.*, Book XI, 53–57.

³ Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, *op. cit.*, p. 354. Although Newton calls it a lunar eclipse, it was solar as the current text indicates. Undoubtedly this was a lapse by the great genius, almost certainly having been written during his final illness at the advanced age of 85.

⁴ Herodotus, *The Histories*, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, Bk. 9, 10.

⁵ Ussher, *Annals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 141 (1658 = 121, 126).

⁶ Newton, R., *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 372–376.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 375–376.

chief officials.¹ Further, that after some time of this debauched living, his desire and/or abilities to govern were diminished or impaired to the extent that he placed Artaxerxes Longimanus on the throne as his pro-regent some years before his death in his 21st year of rule, leaving the affairs of state in his son's hands.

Thus when Themistocles' flight ended, he arrived with Artaxerxes I Longimanus' having just come to the throne as Thucydides and Charon of Lampsacus reported. Most scholars have assumed from their histories that with Artaxerxes in power, his father was dead. Yet in point of fact, at no place in his narrative does Thucydides make mention of Xerxes' actually being dead at this time!² This allows the possibility that Ephorus, Dinon, Clitarchus, Heracleides, Diodorus Siculus and others were also correct in part in maintaining that Xerxes was alive at the time the fleeing Athenian arrived at the Persian court and was the monarch with whom the interview was conducted rather than Artaxerxes. Xerxes was alive, but it was Artaxerxes with whom Themistocles spoke.

This solution differs from Ussher, Vitranga, Kruger, and Hengstenberg who interpreted Thucydides, etc. as meaning that Themistocles arrived at the onset of the *sole* reign of Artaxerxes I; hence they rejected Ptolemy's 21 years for Xerxes' kingship, conceding him only 11 or 12 years. The above resolution completely maintains the integrity of the Canon.

Although, as previously stated, there is some discrepancy as to the exact date for this event with Diodorus Siculus setting the year as 471, Cicero placing it as 472, and Eusebius along with Ussher opting for 473 BC, it seems certain to this author that it should be placed somewhere between 473–470. Nor should it be thought that he is alone in this determination among today's scholars.

As recently as AD 1990, Doctor Edwin M. Yamauchi, internationally noted professor of history at Miami University of Ohio, has decided in favor of Thucydides and that it was

Artaxerxes I Longimanus before whom Themistocles appeared, giving 471/470 BC as the date for the ostracism of Themistocles.³ This is all the more significant when we take into account that the foreword to Dr. Yamauchi's *Persia* was written by Donald J. Wiseman, world renown Professor Emeritus of Assyriology at the University of London. While not meaning to imply that Professor Wiseman agrees with all of Dr. Yamauchi's determinations, we read:⁴

The author's writings on archaeology and the Bible always give a balanced presentation of the evidence, and he brings out clearly and fairly those controversial points where scholars differ in interpretation. For this Yamauchi has rightly earned a good international reputation.

Thus if, for example, we take 473 BC as the year in which Xerxes installed Artaxerxes I Longimanus as his pro-regent (see section from Chart 5 on page 237), the Jews would quite naturally begin to reference the dates associated with him from that year as that would have been the point from which they began to have dealings with him as their sovereign. Numbering from that date would place his 20th year over the Jews as 454 BC (or AM 3550 inclusive, exactly as Ussher)⁵ and the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy brings us to AD 30 for its fulfillment (454 BC + AD 30 = 484 less one for going from BC to AD = 483). This date agrees with our previous determination.

Going to the other extreme and taking 470 BC as the commencement year of Artaxerxes' pro-regency would result in 451 BC as being his twentieth and AD 33 would be the 483rd year from that point. However, Tertullian says that Tiberius received word from Pilate about the events associated with Christ's death, His resurrection, as well as the miracles done by Him publicly prior to this along with those being done by His disciples in His name, and this disallows AD 33. Why? Because upon hearing that

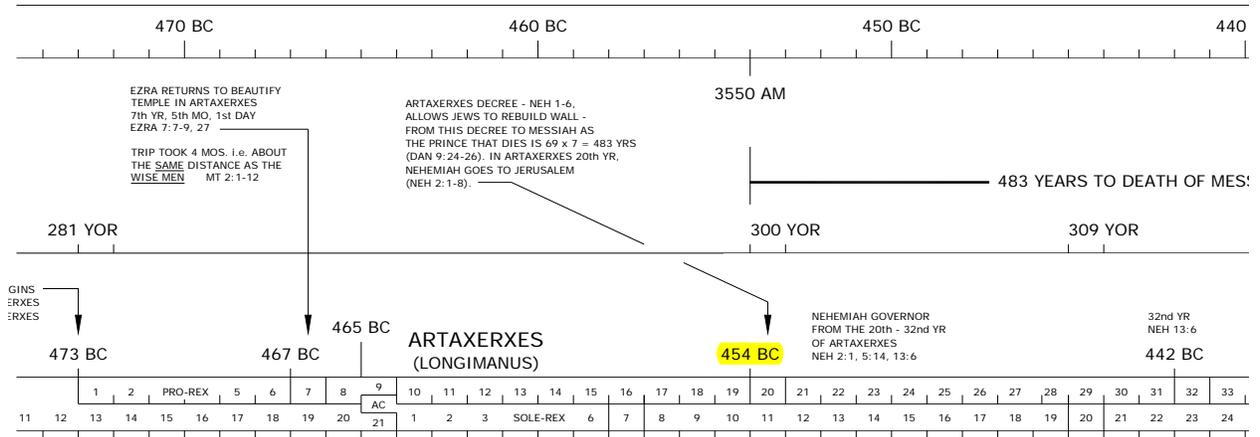
¹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997), p. 499.

² Thucydides, *History of Peloponnesian War*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, Book I, Ch. 137–138.

³ Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), pp. 225–226.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Foreword, p. 9.

⁵ Ussher, *Annals, op. cit.*, page 152 (1658 ed., page 137). Based on Thucydides and Charon, Dionysius Petavius (a French Jesuit historian and theologian) also dated the 20th of Artaxerxes as 454 BC (rather than 445 BC) in his *Opus de Doctrina Temporum* (2 Vols., 1627; see Anstey, *Romance, op. cit.*, p. 280).



many believed Christ to be a god, Tiberius proposed to the senate of Rome that Jesus be included among their gods. It was rejected¹ — and Orosius adds that it was due mainly to the adamant opposition of Sejanus, the anti-Semitic prefect of Tiberius.² Tacitus fixes Sejanus' death at 18 Oct., AD 31.³ This being two years *before* 33, the crucifixion could not possibly have taken place in 32 or 33! How could Sejanus die in AD 31 and yet address the Roman Senate after a 32 or 33 crucifixion? Writing in AD 417, Orosius adds that Augustus died in AUC 767 (AD 14) and that Christ died in the 17th year of Tiberius' sole reign⁴ which was AD 30! (see my page 256)

Taken from Chart 5, the above illustrates the author-modified Ussher-Thucydides solution to the Daniel 9:25 “483-year” prophecy. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, Artaxerxes Longimanus became associated on the throne as pro-rex with Xerxes I around 473 BC (also see Chart 5c and the display on p. xiv).

Not only does AD 30 fall during the accepted life time of our Lord, the solution must be seen as superior to Anderson’s expediency for the reasons given above as well as the fact that the chronology does not suddenly have to resort to inserting 360-day years instead of the solar year (which were used in the present work from

the Flood forward, see page 225). Moreover, the fact that not one historic event is known of Xerxes after his 11th year⁵ should be viewed as a most significant circumstance in support of this resolution. To the possible objection that Artaxerxes would have been too young at this time to assume the responsibilities of the government, it is replied that the Hebrew Text unmistakably places him of sufficient age in the seventh year of his dominion to have already fathered more than one son (Ezra 7:23).

We now remind our reader that beginning at year 220 and continuing to this point we have established AD 30 as best fitting the examined data in establishing the crucifixion year. Before closing this section, the following material is also presented toward forever fixing the correctness of this determination. Taken alone, these proofs are not of themselves deemed to be as significant as those already delineated but as a group, they must be seen as most substantial.

1. Whereas this author is absolutely not into numerology, it is nevertheless well-known that because of the frequency of the occurrence of the number “forty” and the uniformity of its association with a period of probation or testing, this number has long been recognized as

⁵ Sir Robert Anderson has taken exception with this by offering that the Book of Esther speaks of the 12th year of Ahasuerus and that the narrative carries into his 13th (*The Coming Prince, op. cit.*, pp. 256–257). This is true (Est.3:7, 12; 8:9; 9:1, 13–17); however, Anderson accepts that Ahasuerus is Xerxes and thus erroneously considers that these two years apply to Xerxes’ reign. Of course, it has already been shown that this identification is false. Besides, the scenario offered herein allows for Xerxes to still be alive over a full 21-year reign as Ptolemy listed.

¹ Tertullian, *Apology*, 5 & 21 (written c.207 AD).
² Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, (New York: Columbia UP., 1936), pp. 325–326. Neither refers to the well-known Catholic forgeries.
³ Tacitus, *Annals, op. cit.*, vi., 25 & 15 (written c.117 AD).
⁴ Orosius, *Seven Books of History, op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.