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THE CHRONOLOGY OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH

A Scripture summary of Newton's chronology for Ezra and Nehemiah is Ezr.1:1-3:7 (Ezr.2:1, 70, cp. Neh.7:5-73); Neh.7:73b-8:12; Neh.8:13-18 (cp. Ezr.3:4); Neh.9:1-12:26. Believing that Darius the Persian was Darius II Nothus (BC 423-404, as did Newton, see p. 363 in his *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*), this author acknowledges that the genealogy from 12:10-26 could have been prophetic or a later inserted addition (Ezr.3:8-Neh.7:4; Neh.12:27-13:31). Again, Newton places everything from Nehemiah 7:5 to 12:9 together as occurring in the first year of Cyrus (*Chronology*, p. 358).

Sir Isaac Newton also considered the naming of Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus & Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 as being given in order of succession and that these names represent Cyrus, *, Darius I Hystaspis, Xerxes I (of Marathon) & Artaxerxes I Longimanus (*Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, p. 368-370: by his *, Newton indicates that others would place the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:7 there – FNJ included!).

We agree that the natural reading of Ezra 4:5 discloses they are in order of succession; however, the two monarchs given in verses 4:6-23 are those who ruled between Cyrus & Darius. Darius is again named at vs. 24, underscoring that the discourse begins with Cyrus (vs. 5) and ends with Darius - thus, the Ahasuerus in Ezra 4:6 is Cambyses, and the Artaxerxes from 4:7-23 is Pseudo-Smerdis (Patizithes his Magi brother was the real power behind the throne). The word "kings" in Ezra 4:13 & 4:22 seems to imply a plural reign - Pseudo-Smerdis on the throne in Babylon, while King Cambyses is with the army in Egypt. This further indicates that the Artaxerxes here is Pseudo-Smerdis.

Sir Isaac Newton makes no mention of the Book of Esther and its "Ahasuerus" but states on page 370 that he takes "the book of Esdras to be the best interpreter of the book of Ezra", and I Esdras 3:1-2 makes the Ahasuerus of Esther Darius I Hystaspis. We agree with this identification.