

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology

Session 1: Persian Empire up to Alexander

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This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt teaching his New Testament : History, Literature and Theology course, lecture number 1 : Introduction to the course and the history of the Persian Empire up to the time of Alexander.

A. Introduction—Behold the Lamb of God (OT Backgrounds) [00:00-2:13]

Good afternoon, my name is Ted Hildebrandt, and I'll be the instructor for this course on New Testament history, literature, and theology. It's taking place at Gordon College. Today, we just want to introduce the course, and then we'll be talking about some history -- some history that plays the background for the New Testament. We'll be going over, starting with the Persians and then working our way down to the Greeks, and then through the Greeks, Alexander the Great, on down into the Hasmonean and the Maccabean period, and then down on and finishing out with Herod the Great, who wasn't Jewish, but we'll talk about that. Largely, it'll be a historical survey to set the background for the New Testament.

As we get started, let me begin this way with the New Testament. There's certain Old Testament foundations that you've got to have in order to understand the New Testament. So when the New Testament opens up with John the Baptist saying to Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That is an incredible statement, and if one does not understand from John 1:29 -- if one does not understand John the Baptist's statement and the importance of the sacrificial system, and the temple cult that came out of the levitical movement of Judaism in the Old Testament, then when John says, "Behold the Lamb of God," you don't really understand what he's talking about. So this course, because it's in the New Testament, we'll assume some knowledge of the Old Testament. And that includes then the statement, "Behold, the Lamb of God," or "look" as the NIV translates it.

B. Jesus as the Climax of the Prophetic Institution [2:14-5:09]

But then next, Jesus Christ is the climax of many of the OT institutions. So what you have is the first institution in the Old Testament would be that of the prophet. And so in Deuteronomy chapter 18, Moses says that there's going to come a prophet like him, and God is going to speak through that prophet: Jesus Christ. There would be many prophets that would come after Moses: you'd have Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hulda; many of the prophets of the 12: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, those kind of prophets. They would then lead toward *the* Prophet who was going to come, and that *the* Prophet who would be to come would be -- well, in one sense Elijah, who is to come before the Messiah -- but then the Messiah Himself would be considered a prophet.

So Jesus is a prophet. He is the *logos* of God -- whereas the prophets say, "thus saith the Lord," Jesus will say, and John will say of Jesus, that he is the *logos*. He is the word of God: "In the beginning was the word, the word was with God and the word was God." And this "word" or this "revelation," this *logos* is going to speak the prophetic message, not in physical, not in words: "thus saith the Lord," although Jesus will speak in words, but Jesus will speak by the incarnation. He will incarnate the word of God. So Jesus is kind of the ultimate prophet, the ultimate revelation of God, where now you have God in flesh speaking. So Jesus is the climax of the prophetic institution of the Old Testament.

Malachi chapter 4, verse 5, in the last statements of the Old Testament, as the Old Testament is winding down in Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, around 400 BC or so, he says, "There's coming a time where this prophet will come before the great dreadful day of the Lord." So Malachi tells them that basically Elijah will come before the day of the Lord. So that's why, when Jesus comes on the scene, many people ask, "Are you Elijah who is to come?" because Malachi chapter 4, verse 5, the very last chapter of the Old Testament, tells of and predicts a prophet who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Now Jesus is going to say, "I'm not Elijah," but he's going to say that John the Baptist comes in the spirit and power of Elijah. So John the Baptist will be the forerunner who announces Jesus would come. So John the Baptist is Elijah, "if you

will hear it,” as Jesus says. So, Malachi chapter 4, verse 5 ends the Old Testament, it kind of ends there, looking forward to “there’s coming a prophet who’s going to announce the day of the Lord,” and coming things there.

C. Jesus as King – Son of David [5:10-7:00]

So that’s Jesus as the climax of the prophetic institution. Jesus as the king, will come as David’s greater son. Jesus will be the son of David, and many people say “*hosanna*”, as they’re singing as Jesus is coming into Jerusalem. They will say, “Hosannah, the son of David!” And the “son of David” goes back to 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 14 where it talks about a son of David who would sit on the throne of David as king over Israel and he would rule forever and ever. And so, Jesus Christ will be that greater son of David that they’re looking for. In Matthew he starts his book in Matthew chapter 1, verse 1: “Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of David.” And so the “son of David” is Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. And so basically, Abraham was told that he would be blessed with land and seed, that his seed would multiply and that he would be a blessing to all nations. That “blessing to all nations” comes through Jesus Christ. He would be the son of David, in that he would sit on the throne of his father David. And so, Jesus Christ is going to play that role as king, and Jesus Christ is going to be king. And even Herod, when the magi come to Herod, they ask, “Where is he that has been born king of the Jews?” And of course that would be Jesus.

When Jesus dies, toward the end, they’ll ask him, “Are you a king?” And they’ll put a sign over his head at the end saying, “Here’s Jesus, King of the Jews.” The Jews will object to that, of course, and want the sign to be taken down, but the rulers will say, “No, the sign stands as I’ve written it.” So Jesus Christ will be the king, the greater King, and ultimately fills that role.

D. Jesus as Priest [7:01-9:50]

Now, the third institution that Jesus fulfills is that of a priest. And the priest basically--the problem is you have with Jesus is that Jesus, because he’s the son of David, he’s from the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Judah, they didn’t do priests and things. The

priestly tribe was the tribe of Levi. So what you've got is this conflict between "How can he be king?" and "How can he be a priest?" Because if he's a king he's going to be from the tribe of Judah, from the line of David, but if he's going to be a priest he's got to be a Levite of the tribe or the line of Aaron, or the Zadokian priesthood--from the Levites down to Aaron the priest, down to Zadok and things. Jesus is not a Levitical priest, however. Actually Hebrews picks this up later on and says, "Wait, Jesus is the priest after the order of Melchizedek," who was a king-priest, and Abraham paid a tenth of all he had in the book of Genesis. And so, Jesus will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

What does a priest do? A priest basically, you work with the sacrificial system, and the cult, and the sacrifices, and the festivals. The priest was the intercessor between God and man. The priests were the one who taught the Torah, that taught the word of God to the people. They basically made intercession for the people through their sacrifices. The people would bring the lambs, and the lambs would be slain, and they would offer them up on the altar to God. Only this time, the priest is not going to take a lamb and offer it up on the altar to God. This time, the priest himself is the Lamb of God, and he is going to offer himself up. And so, you get Jesus as the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

So I just want to basically kind of do that in a cursory way, just to say that as we look at the New Testament, we're going to keep saying at many points, "How is the New Testament foreshadowed and what kinds of depth come from understanding the Old Testament that will provide us with a depth of tradition and understanding that we need in order to understand with depth the New Testament?" So we need to understand the Old Testament, because many of those things, the prophets, the priests, and the king, those institutions flow right into the person of Jesus Christ. The whole sacrificial system, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And by the way, that tells us right up front, Jesus' main function "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Jesus is not going to conquer Rome. Jesus is not going to create a big movement for social justice. Jesus is going to be removing sin through the sacrifice of himself.

E. New Testament Authors—Diversity of Witnesses [9:51-14:31]

Now, the New Testament has a diversity of authors. We've got Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We've got Paul and we've got the writer of Hebrews, whoever that is. You've got Jude, you've got Peter, and you've got John. All these are different writers. So the New Testament is actually quite diverse. The New Testament does not come to us from a single perspective that's been tightly edited to make sure everything agrees. No, the New Testament comes to us with certain conflicts between writers, that actually people have discussed for hundreds and hundreds of years. So, for example, how can Peter say that God does not want anyone to perish? Peter says, "God is not willing that any should perish." But yet in the book of Mark, it claims that Christ told his parables to prevent the repentance of some that heard it. So comparing 2 Peter 3:9 "God is not willing that any should perish," to Mark chapter 4, verse 12, where he says, "Some of the parables were meant so that the people would not understand what He was saying."

Another kind of conflict between writers, would be "How can Jesus nullify the Mosaic dietary laws?" by Jesus saying, "All things are clean now" in Mark's gospel, Mark chapter 7, verse 15 and 19. But then over in Matthew, Matthew claims, and Luke as well, that "not one jot or tittle, not a dot or tittle, a little seraph, in the Law will disappear until all is fulfilled" in Matthew chapter 5, verse 18. So on the one hand, the dietary laws, Jesus gives new perspective on the dietary laws and changes what the Old Testament had said, but on the other hand "not one jot or tittle will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled." How do you reconcile these things? Are they meant to be reconciled? Are they contradictory or are they complimentary? And so how do you put those two types of things together?

There's another one that's confused people for quite a while, and that's James. How can James say, based on Genesis 15:6, that "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him, it was credited to him, as righteousness." James said basically, "Abraham shows his faith not by just simply believing, but by what Abraham did." What Abraham did declares his faith, not just his simple belief. That's in James chapter 2, verse 22 "Faith without works is dead," "Faith without works is dead." Then you go over

to Paul, and Paul, Romans 4:5 and other places, Paul will take that same example of Abraham and say, “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness. Therefore a person is justified by faith, and by faith alone.” James says, “No, it’s not by faith alone, faith without works is dead.” So you’ve got to have some works to back it up, you can’t just say “I believe” and then run off and do whatever you want. But Paul says, “No, you’re justified by faith and by faith alone, not of works, lest any man should boast.” So how do you reconcile James and Paul? How do you put those things together? There are different writers, different perspectives, different situations that they’re addressing. So we want to, as we go through the New Testament, we want to be sensitive to the different situations and the different problems that Paul is facing versus the problems that James is facing.

A couple other of these problems: How can Paul say that there is neither slave nor free? In Galatians 3:28, a very famous verse, that in Christ there’s neither bond nor free, male nor female, in Christ we’re all one. And yet at the same time, he tells slaves to obey their earthly masters over in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 5. Paul does not abolish slavery. When you get into the book of Philemon, he actually sends Onesimus back to his slave master. So Paul didn’t totally destroy the institution of slavery. But yet in Galatians chapter 3:28, he says, “In Christ there’s neither slave nor free.” So you get this conflict even within Paul himself. You have to ask, were there different situations? What caused Paul to say the different messages?

F. Theological Differences [14:32-17:21]

Here’s one from theology: How does the theology of glory, advocated by Luke-Acts -- Luke-Acts talks about the theology of glory -- fit with the theology of the cross, the despising of the cross and the way to the cross of Paul? Paul talks about the theology of the cross. Luke-Acts talks about the theology of glory.

How do you put those things together? How is it that the Old Testament prophets promised a future, a new covenant, where God would give his people a new heart? God would give his people a new heart, coming out of Jeremiah, I believe chapter 31, and restore them to their land. It promised the Jews would get a new heart, God would build a

new covenant for them, and they would be back in the land. That the diaspora, the spreading of the Jews that had been scattered from the Old Testament -- when the Old Testament ten tribes were scattered in 722 by the Assyrians, where the Jews were scattered in 586 when the Babylonians came in and took them off to Babylon with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Ezekiel. So God says, "I'm going to bring you back to the land and I'm going to give you a new covenant." Well, "restore them to their land," but Paul's letters seem to say the Jews stand condemned, and that many Gentiles have their hearts restored, and that the new covenant focuses on the Gentiles. So how do you bring those things together, that the church now is composed largely of Gentiles? Jewish foundation grows into and extends out to the world. So how do you work the Old Testament new covenant promises to Israel, with the church and the focus on Gentiles?

So, all I'm trying to say is that there's going to be these different people writing from different perspectives, and different situations that they're coming from. And so therefore the New Testament isn't a monolithic, singly edited book that is carefully edited to make sure everybody agrees with everybody else. One of the wonderful things about the Bible is that they let each person speak for themselves and they let the conflicts stay. They did not try to harmonize and smooth over things, they let the roughness and the rough-and-tumble of the different writers, they let it stand as the way it was. This is a kind of confirmation that this book is the Word of God, and that nobody messed with it. They just let the stuff stay, they didn't try to smooth it out, they left it the way it was. So as we go through, we'll want to look and pick up on some of these tensions between the different writers. Largely, different writers write from different perspectives, and different personalities. They write from different situations. They're addressing different problems, and we'll try to understand the different problems of different writers.

G. Jesus at the Right Time [17:22-18:35]

Well, let's make some cultural shifts now. We want to ask some questions about -- and let me just first put this verse up. This is an incredible verse out of Galatians, Paul's Galatians chapter 4, verse 4. It says this: "But when the right time came, God sent his

Son, born of a woman, subject to the law, to redeem those who were under the law.” “But when the right time came.” I want to focus in the first part of this course, actually give an extended lecture, on this “at the right time.” It says, “But when the right time came,” Jesus came at the right time. I know we think, “Why couldn’t Jesus come in the 21st century, and we could put him on TV and broadcast him all over the world through the internet,” or something. No, it says, Jesus “came at exactly the right time.” So we want to set up that timing thing, and we want to watch how God’s providential care that Jesus “came at perfectly the right time” - Galatians chapter 4.

H. Questions about the Historical Backgrounds [18:36-22:21]

As we do this, here are some initial questions we can ask. We want to do a historical study, so we’re going to basically jump out of the New Testament and do a pre-New Testament historical study. We don’t know much from basically 400 BC with Malachi, I often call him “Malachi: The Last of the Italian Prophets.” Christ is going to be born about probably 5 BC. And you say, “Well why wasn’t Christ born at 0 BC because it was ‘BC: before Christ, the year of our Lord; A.D.: afterwards’?” Actually, the guy that figured out the BC-A.D. system, was about 625 A.D., and so he was 600 years after Christ. When he figured things out coming back, actually he missed it. You can understand, the guy is 600 years later and doesn’t have all the technology that we do. When he figured it out he missed it. And now we’re able to, through various, I believe it was through an eclipse, from these eclipses that happened, we can identify exactly when Herod died. Herod died about 4 BC, and therefore Jesus had to come before Herod died. So Jesus was probably born about 5 BC. Not a big deal, but the guy at 625 when he was figuring out the BC-A.D. system missed it by 5 years or so. Now we’ve got it a little bit better. The point is, Malachi is 400 BC, Christ is around 0. We’ve got about 400 years they call the “silent years.” These are the 400 years that are between the testaments. Actually, they really weren’t silent years. There’s much literature from that period, and we want to look at some of the history and things that set up the New Testament.

So, why, for example, is the Old Testament written in Hebrew and Aramaic? The Old Testament prophets and Moses spoke Hebrew, and so it’s in Hebrew. They went to

Babylon and picked up Aramaic. So Hebrew and Aramaic are spoken in the Old Testament. Some of the books, Daniel and Esther, have Aramaic in it. So, it's mostly Hebrew, a little bit of Aramaic toward the end. When you get to the New Testament, the New Testament is written in Greek. Greek is very different than Hebrew. Hebrew is a semitic language, they read from right to left, not as we do from left to right. And as Greek. Hebrew and Aramaic, are both semitic languages are actually very similar in some ways to Arabic today. Greek, on the other hand, is a western language. It reads from left to right. Greek plays the background for Latin. Latin picks a lot up of it from Greek, and ultimately Latin coming down into the romance languages, and even English picking up some of the Latin mixed with Anglo-Saxon and a bunch of other things. So basically, what made the shift from Hebrew and Aramaic over to Greek? That language shift, now you say, "Well language isn't that important." Well, number one, language is important, and language does affect what type of things get communicated and how they get communicated. But the shift in language from a semitic language to a western language also indicates a shift in culture, from an eastern culture, a semitic culture, a near-eastern culture: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, very eastern; to a western, European, Roman, Greek kind of way. Those are two different cultures. The people think in different ways, they communicate in different ways. So what made the switch from Hebrew and Aramaic over to Greek?

I. Questions about Culture/Religious Context [24:51-28:49]

Another question that comes up, "What significant shifts took place in semitic Hebrew culture when they had to transition over to Hellenistic or Greek culture?" Greek culture is basically built off Alexander the Great, as we're going to see -- or I call him Alexander the Grape. But as we see the shift is over to a western Hellenistic. How does that affect things? What happens between Malachi (400 BC) and the time of the New Testament? And actually much of the New Testament got written down about 50 A.D. to 90 or 95 A.D. So it's written 400 BC to about 50 to 90 A.D. What happened in that interim period?

Where did a thing like the synagogue come from? When you're in the Old Testament you don't read about the synagogues. When you read about Jesus you read Jesus keeps going into the synagogue, getting kicked out of the synagogue, and going into the synagogue. Paul will go into the synagogue, preach, and then get beat up and various things like that. So Paul will begin his ministry in the synagogue. Where did the synagogue come from? It wasn't in the Old Testament, the Old Testament focuses on the temple. Now all of a sudden in the New Testament we've got the temple and the synagogues. What happened there?

Who are the Samaritans and why is there such animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans? They seem to hate each other. At certain points they kill each other. So the Samaritans, what's with that? Why do the Samaritans hate the Jews, why do the Jews hate the Samaritans?

What about the Pharisees and the Sadducees? Now we see in the New Testament, Jesus talks to the Pharisees and a lot of times rebukes the Pharisees, but at other points the Pharisee, you've got a guy like Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night who's a leader of the Pharisees. And so the Pharisees--Paul will end up being a "Pharisee of the Pharisee." So the Pharisees seem to be on the one hand opposing Jesus, but on the other hand their message seems to be a lot of the converts come out of Pharisaism. Why is there a conflict between the Pharisees and Sadducees? Who are the Pharisees and Sadducees and what's the difference? So we'll be looking at those things. We're just setting up, so now we're going to jump out and study that 400 years before the time of Christ.

J. Geography of the Persian Empire [24:51-28:49]

Ok, so we've just been talking about these points here, and I've kind of not pressed the button, and so I've missed the points, but this is what we've been just talking about. Here's the synagogue, where did the synagogue come from? Here are the Samaritans, why did the Samaritans hate the the Jews? Why did the Jews hate the Samaritans, and vice versa? Not just the Pharisees and Sadducees but, by the way, there were other groups besides the Pharisees and Sadducees? There were other groups that

were not just simply Pharisees and Sadducees, and we want to look at some of those as well. But before we do that, we need to understand, the New Testament is going to be written in Koine Greek. We will want to talk about that a little more later. As language impacts how you understand a text, based on the original language, Greek in this case, koine Greek.

So geography: setting up of where things are, affects very much, the culture and things are set up based on geography. I grew up in a place called Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York. Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York, what is part of the culture there? Snow, winter I've seen snow drifts over peoples' houses. You come to New England, is the character of interaction in New England very different? Is New York City different from Los Angeles? Is Louisiana, is the culture in New Orleans different than the culture in Chicago? Is the culture in Chicago different than the culture in Miami? And so, even in America, you can see the different regions, there's different character to the people, to how they think and what they think about. So geography will provide us with another almost like language of understanding someone based on the connection of the culture and where they're from.

So, let's look at some maps then. Here's our first map, and I just kind of want to walk through this. This is a map of what's called the Persian Empire. We're going to see Cyrus the Great, he's going to be one of our great Persians. He's going to be followed by another great man named Darius, who's going to organize it, and then on down into Xerxes, who's going to be married to Esther, by the way, and Artaxerxes, that's about Ezra-Nehemiah's time. So the Persian Empire is largely here. Now because of our involvement in the Middle East, some of this stuff you'll know. So let me walk over and start here, farthest to the east. Here's the Indus River, the Indus River in India will be over here, this Indus River, and this is basically where Afghanistan, Pakistan are in this area. Afghanistan, Pakistan. As you move this way, this is the area of Iran. Iran. And now it's very important to realize the Iranians are not Arabs, they're not Semitic. They're actually Caucasians, a lot of them coming down from Russia. So basically, this is going to be the Persians. The Persians, are the background for the country of Iran today. So the

Persians are not of Semitic backgrounds, they are of Caucasian or Aryan backgrounds, not Semitic. So, this is where Persia will get its start, in Medo-Persia. Behistun Inscription is written here, Susa will be here, and Persia will be here. Now these are mountains. This is a mountainous terrain here, and then from the mountains you go down into the valley. This valley will be this wide, what they call the fertile crescent here. Basically you have the Euphrates River and the Tigris River. I always remember these, to try to get them so I don't confuse them, E.T. Do you remember E.T. in the movies? E.T., so it's Euphrates, Tigris.

K. More Geography of the New Testament: Assyria, Babylon, Syria, Asia Minor [28:50-34:08]

And largely right here up in Assyria will be a place called Nineveh. We're familiar with Nineveh from Jonah and the whale, and that kind of thing. So Assyrian Nineveh will be up here, and then Babylon will be down here. The imagery from Babylon will be even echoed in the book of Revelation. So we'll pick this up at the end of the New Testament, and still echoes of Babylon of old from right here. So, this is the Tigris and Euphrates River. The fertile crescent is where Abraham was from, the fertile crescent; coming down into Syria. Syria to the north of Israel, still Syria to this day. This is going to be Asia Minor, they're going to call it Asia Minor or Turkey. We would call this Turkey today. Then we come down into Israel, and of course, Israel is located here. Damascus is the capitol of Syria. Jerusalem is the capitol down in Israel. So Damascus and Jerusalem, and these two will go at it. You usually fight with your neighbors, and so they will fight with their neighbors here, Syria versus Israel.

Then coming down here into Egypt. Egypt is the "gift of the Nile." Egypt is also the "breadbasket" of the ancient world. So Egypt provided wheat, barley -- considered the "breadbasket" of the ancient world. It's the "gift of the Nile" because this is all the Sahara desert here. It's brown, brown, brown everywhere you look, except for this little ribbon of the Nile River. The Nile River, this is where the Pharaohs, and Egypt, and "let my people go," and all the Exodus took place. Here's Memphis, I always tell people Memphis is where the king is buried. Of course, I'm talking about another king -- Elvis,

but it's Memphis, Tennessee. And then Elephantine. There were some Jews actually scattered down here at Elephantine. They've actually made some finds here of some Jewish remains down here at this place called Elephantine. Way down here, in the south, this place called Elephantine. There are going to be some Jews scattered there. Some of the stuff that they did, from very early times, are going to be the Elephantine papyrus, have made it all the way down. So there we go there.

Libya is here. We know Libya because of Muammar Gaddafi and what's happened there. Here's the Persian Gulf. I always tell people Persian Gulf. This right here, this little very tight in here, this is the Straits of Hormuz. The Straits of Hormuz now is what the Iranians who are here, the descendants of the Persians, are threatening to shut down this, and this is where all the oil comes out of. So a ton of oil comes out of there, and if they shut down, you can see the Straits of Hormuz there. So we've got our air craft carriers parked there now, trying to keep this lane open to the Arabian Sea and things.

So, coming back up, here's Greece. Here's Athens. Athens -- the Parthenon, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, all that kind of stuff. Spartans -- Spartans will be down here, Mount Olympus over here. The Greeks are over here. So what's happening is the Persians, who have this whole empire, now look out, they've actually captured Egypt. They're going to want to take Greece. So there's going to be continual battles back and forth, Xerxes and others, between the Persian empire trying to push this way, and the Greeks trying to keep them out. So basically this is going to be the battle to win the Persian Empire. The Greeks then are going to defeat the Persians. You see what a huge empire, the Greeks, this little thing of Greece over here, is going to take this whole empire over. That's where Alexander the Great will come in.

Now let's get another take on this. This is kind of a satellite image of it. Why I like this picture here is, because here you can clearly see the Zagros Mountains of Iran. And you can see how the Iranians live in this mountainous territory. Iraq is down in the fertile plain. So what happens is, the mountain people always come down to the plains, wanting to conquer the plains. The plains people always want to keep the mountain folk up in the

mountains. So this is Iran versus Iraq, and that's been going on for literally thousands of years. So that's Iran, Iraq. Here's Babylon, up there is Nineveh, and over here to the Syrian Desert. Here's Damascus and Jerusalem and the conflict that you're going to have even to this day between Damascus and Jerusalem. Here's Asia Minor, Turkey up there, Sinai Peninsula down here. Then you can see this beautiful shot of the Nile River and the Nile River Delta. Then there's going to be a city right here that will be real important later on, and it will be called Alexandria. And the Egyptians, the Ptolemies, will build this Alexandria, naming after Alexander. That's where one of the greatest libraries of the ancient world will be. It's the Library of Congress of the ancient world. So these are kind of maps, and we are going to see movements back and forth with the apostle Paul. The apostle Paul will be on the Damascus road, and that's where he will have his conversion experience. Antioch in Syria will be the place Christians are first called Christians. They'll send out missionaries from this area all over the world. So we'll see various connections at points in the New Testament with them.

L. Geography of Ancient Greece [34:09-36:32]

Here's a close-up of Greece. I want to do two areas here. Largely, you've got, this is the western part of Turkey. And you'll have cities like Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Smyrna, Philadelphia and Laodicea. As I say those names, they may sound familiar. This is the book of Revelation, addresses the seven churches in the western part of Turkey. Here's Ephesus, Ephesus was Paul wrote the Ephesians to the church at Ephesus. So basically this is the western part of Turkey, Paul's going to spend three years at Ephesus later in his third missionary journey. Then you cross over there up into the north, and that's where Macedonia is. Macedonia, Philip of Macedon, Alexander was from up there. This is where Philippi will be. Philippi named after Philip of Macedon, Alexander's father. Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Berea, those are churches that Paul founded up there. Basically they will support Paul in his ministry quite a bit. Now Paul is going to come down here because he wants to hit Athens. Athens is where a lot of your classical Greek: your Platos, your Aristotles, and your Socrates -- Athens, classical stuff. And here's Corinth, right in the Corinthian Gulf coming in here, the separation of Achaia and

basically the Peloponnesus down here. Sparta is going to be located way down to the south. So the Spartans and the Athenians are going to fight one other here and here, going back and forth, and so Corinth is kind of right in the middle. You're going to get traffic both ways through that little isthmus that goes across here. Here's Mt. Olympus too, some of you are probably familiar with Mt. Olympus, Zeus, and all that kind of stuff. So Sparta, Athens, Corinth. Corinth, Paul is going to write the letter to the Corinthians, Paul is going to spend a year and a half there. So this is Greece: Macedonia, Achaia, the Peloponnese with Sparta, and basically they're going to go back and forth and we'll see various things. This is the Aegean Sea area here. The Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean are out here. So that's just kind of a broad overview of several maps, just to get our feet under us geographically because of what's going to happen next.

M. The Rise of the Persians [36:33-40:05]

Now, I want to switch away from geography and return now to the history by going through some of the history of this period. So let me begin with the rise of the Persians. What happened to Jonah in Nineveh and these types of things? You've got major Old Testament movements. Nineveh (the Assyrians) is going to fall in 612 BC. Jonah goes to Nineveh in Assyria and Jonah prophesies to the Assyrians and he says basically, "Nineveh, repent." Lo and behold, the people of Nineveh, who are really terribly cruel, repent at the preaching of Jonah. Doesn't that sound like Jesus said something like that? Jesus uses Jonah as some of his background. So they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and yet Nahum, a few years later, predicts again against Assyria that God is going to destroy Nineveh. And sure enough, in 612 BC, the Babylonians come up from the south, Babylon, goes up to the north to Tikrit area up where the Kurds are today in Iraq and defeat Nineveh, 612 BC, Nineveh is wiped out. By the way, it says "laid dormant ever since." Archeologists have been in there and done some great archeology work in Nineveh. But Nineveh, 612, falls to the Babylonians, and the Babylonians now are the new ones in charge. Assyria captures Samaria and scattered the ten northern tribes of Israel in 722 BC.

So the Babylonians are taking over. This is just the time Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Jeremiah is prophesying during this time in the Old Testament. Basically the Jews revolt against Babylon. Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, you remember some of those stories, comes in and takes away some of the intelligentsia to Babylon in about 605-597. The Jews finally revolt, and Nebuchadnezzar has had enough, and basically they go in and they wipe out the temple in 586 BC. From Old Testament we only learned four basic dates in the Old Testament. One of them was Abraham was 2000 BC, David was 1000 BC. One of the other dates that we learned was 586 BC was when the first temple was destroyed. This first temple was built by Solomon, it was overlaid with gold, it was magnificent. It was destroyed in 586 by the Babylonians, they leveled it. They flattened the temple, and threw the whole thing down. They took the people captive, they hauled them off to Babylon. Jeremiah told them ahead of time that they would be in Babylon for 70 years because they had not kept the Sabbath laws in terms of the Sabbatical Year. God says, "My land is going to have its rest." They hadn't given the land rest for 490 years, and God says 70 years, "I'm going to take you out of the land, let the land have the rest." The Jews were judged at that time in Babylon, and the people were deported to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and the temple is gone.

Now with the temple gone, it totally freaked out the Jewish people because the temple was where they worshipped God. God should have protected them from Nebuchadnezzar, and now the temple is flattened. It raises all sorts of questions about how strong is God? Is Jehovah/Yahweh as strong as we thought? Well look, he couldn't protect himself in Jerusalem, and now the temple is gone. And so this is very much a reflective time for Judaism, what happened, what went wrong?

N. Cyrus the Great of Persia [40:06-42:41]

Some people believe that the books of 1st and 2nd Kings are kind of a response to that telling the people what went wrong; you guys sinned, you rejected the Lord, you broke his covenant and because you broke his covenant, God's judgment fell on you. So that's why you were hauled off to Babylon; it wasn't that God was weak, God was

accomplishing his purposes. He told you that he would haul you out of the land; do you remember the blessings and cursing from the book of Deuteronomy chapters 28 and also Leviticus? The blessings and curses. They had rejected the covenant so God hauls them out of the land; that's 586, they go out for 70 years. So now they're sitting in Babylon, the Jews are sitting in Babylon, Ezekiel and Daniel. All of a sudden in 539, Babylon falls to Cyrus. Cyrus the Great comes in and takes over. This Cyrus--he's actually Cyrus II, but he's called Cyrus the Great--he comes in in 539 and Babylon falls to the Persians coming down out of the mountains of Iran into the plains of Iraq and taking over Babylon. Cyrus, who's king of the Medo-Persians, is a kind of a combination empire there, the Medo-Persians. The Medes and the Persians got together. Cyrus leads them into Babylon and they defeat Babylon in 539.

So we want to look then at Cyrus. The Iranian or Aryans are non-Semitic, so Cyrus is not Semitic like the Babylonians would have been; so this is a shift culturally. Now I want to go through Cyrus, 539 for Cyrus, he's the first major king of the Persian Empire and I want to discuss this Persian period, which would be from 539 when Cyrus takes Babylon down to 333 B.C. Now I always tell people 333 B.C. is one of the dates I want you to learn. 333 B.C. is half of 666, right. Whose number is 333? 333 B.C. is Alexander the Great. And so that's one date I want you to get fixed in your head. So 400 B.C. is when the Old Testament stops but in 333 is when Alexander starts going off. (It's actually 334 but I rounded it off, 333 is easier to remember because it's half of 666.) So in 333 B.C. Alexander's going to go and take over the whole world in about 10 to 12 years.

O. What Cyrus the Great Did (BBBLE) [42:41-47:01]

But, let's go back to Cyrus. Cyrus is taking down Babylon in 539 BC. I want to use this little acrostic "B B- Bible," "B-B-B-L-E" for what did Cyrus initially do.

First of all, Cyrus in the **Bible**. Cyrus is predicted by name about 2-300 years before he lived. Okay, in the time of Isaiah, Isaiah's writing a little before 700 B.C. (Cyrus is alive in about 539) Isaiah says this, "Who says to Cyrus," this is Isaiah chapter

44 verse 28, “Who says to Cyrus, he is my shepherd,” (the word ‘shepherd’ is another name for ‘king’, kings were called shepherds). “He is my shepherd and he will accomplish all that I please. He will say to Jerusalem; Cyrus will say to Jerusalem, ‘Let it be rebuilt’ and of the temple ‘Let its foundation be laid.’” In Isaiah chapter 45 verse 1, “This is what the Lord says [col amar YHWH]: to His anointed.” Do you know what the word for anointed is in Hebrew, it’s the word “Meshiach;” say that a couple of times fast; sounds like Messiah, doesn’t it? It is the word for Messiah; that’s exactly what Messiah is. Messiah means “anointed.” So here, Cyrus the Great is called in Isaiah 45:1, he’s called the Messiah, the anointed one; this is Cyrus. So that term Messiah is applied to Cyrus, the person Cyrus, the term Messiah will later be applied to Jesus, Himself. By the way, when Messiah, “Meshiach” from Hebrew comes over into Greek, guess what it is in Greek, “Christos.” So Jesus will be called the “Christos.” Jesus is the Anointed One; we will call him Jesus Christ. The word for Christ, or Christos, means “anointed one.” It means Messiah. So Jesus the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christos: Jesus Christ. That very term, “the anointed one,” the “Meshiach,” is used of Cyrus in Isaiah chapter 45 verse 1; “This is what the Lord says: to his anointed, to his Messiah, to Cyrus, (and it lists him by name,) whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations (and Cyrus will subdue nations.

Now we notice then, Cyrus is mentioned in the Bible over in Ezra. Cyrus gives a decree, and this decree that Cyrus gave is cited in Ezra, chapter 1 verses 2 through 4. And I want to read it, it actually fulfills what Isaiah had predicted about this anointed one and what this anointed one would do. Ezra chapter 1 verses 2 and following, it says, “This is what Cyrus, king of Persia says, (notice the little introduction, it sounds familiar, only with different names, doesn’t it) the LORD (that is Yahweh) the God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah any one 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.” So Cyrus takes over Babylon and he frees the Jews to go back and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. So Cyrus is a deliverer, he’s a savior; he saves the

Jewish people and sends them back to build the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus' decree in chapter 1 of Ezra mentions that; he even says they can use royal money out of the treasury to rebuild.

P. Why Cyrus was Great—benevolence [47:02-48:33]

So Cyrus, this is my next point, Cyrus is a benevolent person. Cyrus is benevolent; where the Assyrians were cruel and impaled people and chopped off their heads and flayed them, took their skin off their bodies while they were alive and set them out for the birds to devour. The Assyrians were cruel scattering the ten northern tribes of Israel. Babylon deported the Jews to Babylon for 70 years after blinding their king Zedekiah and a whole bunch of things there, but anyways the Babylonians deported the people. Now Cyrus comes in and he's benevolent, and he says, basically "go back." He allows the peoples that were deported by the Assyrians and by the Babylonians to go back to your homeland. Therefore, Cyrus was a good person; in many ways, this guy was benevolent. It is one thing to be strong; it's another to be benevolent and kind. Cyrus was strong, he was a warrior. But he's also kind and benevolent, and his rule was one of benevolence. He sent the people back and respected local customs, you can go back and build your own temple to the God that you serve, Jehovah. So he reverses the exile but a lot of the Jews never go back. When Ezra and Nehemiah go back there's what, 42,000 who return. There's Jews scattered all over the world now and some of them never go back. Actually, some of them are still in New York City; there's more of a Jewish population in New York City than there is in Israel right now. The diaspora, the scattering, is still continuous until this day.

Q. Cyrus' Expansion: Babylon [48:34-51:05]

Cyrus is going to be the emperor, the king; he is the great king. As he looks out on the empires, he says, "okay, I've got Babylon." He sees three empires. First, he's up in the mountains of Iran, he looks out and he sees three empires. The one is right at his foot, that's Babylon, so he's taken Babylon now; that's the B, he's taken Babylon. He

looks out to Turkey and he sees in Turkey, or Asia Minor, he sees the empire of Lydia. Lydia in Turkey, and there's a man there named Croesus; and this Croesus is very, very wealthy. Rumor has it, that Croesus sits on a gold throne. Cyrus has heard that, and says, "okay, so we've taken Babylon now, I've freed the people." By the way, when he took Babylon, just a little bit of some interesting things about that, Babylon had a leader at that time called Nabonidus and this guy Nabonidus who's going to fight against Cyrus is kind of a mystic. He actually left Babylon, Babylon served the god, Marduk, but so Nabonidus says, "I'm not so much into the god of the sun," so he went off and he was a mystic and he went down into Arabia and was off doing things, and the people were saying, "Where's our king? He's off being a mystic, doing a monk-ish thing in the desert." So Babylon, when Cyrus came they were kind of ready. Rumor has it, well I was taught anyways, that Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River and went into Babylon and conquered Babylon, not by breaking in the gates, not by battering rams on the walls, but they actually went under, where the Euphrates River was diverted the Euphrates River and sent his men under. Edwin Yamauchi, who is an expert on the Persians, and has written a 4-500 page book on the Persians, Dr. Yamauchi says that he doesn't think that the Euphrates River was diverted, the Euphrates River's pretty big to divert, but he thought that it was more likely that it was probably a canal that was off of the Euphrates and they diverted the canal and went under the canal. Needless to say, Cyrus was a good warrior. He was smart, he went under the walls, through diverting this canal and sent his men under and they captured Babylon. The people in Babylon actually viewed Cyrus as a deliverer. They were happy he was here; because Cyrus has more respect for the gods of Babylon than their own king Nabonidus did who was off in the deserts.

R. Cyrus takes out Lydia (Croesus king of Lydia) [51:06-54:22]

So he takes Babylon, now he looks to Lydia. When he goes after Croesus, who's very wealthy. He wanted basically to bring Asia Minor and Lydia, Croesus in particular, under the sovereignty of Persia. You could say that Cyrus was a good Calvinist because he was wanting to gain sovereignty, but it was actually his own sovereignty over that

area. So he goes out and basically what you have then is, Croesus knows Cyrus is coming after him. He sends over to the Delphi Oracle; over in Greece and says basically, ‘Delphi Oracle, tell me what’s in my future here? I’m going to have to fight Cyrus, am I going to win or am I going to lose?’ And the Delphi Oracle brilliantly says, “A great empire will be destroyed.” Now when Croesus heard, “a great empire was going to be destroyed,” he figured that he was going to win against Cyrus. But as a lot of these oracles are, it wasn’t Cyrus’ empire that was destroyed, it was his own. So the Delphi Oracle was ambiguous, and so you see the oracle hit it either way; either way one of them was going to win and one of them was going to lose. It turns out, Croesus lost.

Also notice too, the difference between horses and camels. Croesus was a horse man, Asia Minor had a lot of horses. What’s the deal with horses? Horses are about this big; horses are about this wide. A horse is pretty big, you’ve got to get up on a horse; so you get on the back of a horse. What’s a horse compared to a camel? A camel is this high and a camel is this wide; and a camel you’re high up. So when Croesus’ horses came out against Cyrus’ camels, the horses freaked. I’ve often thought it was because the camels smelled and the horses, um...I had the “privilege,” I don’t know if it was a privilege, we were down in Sinai one time and I got to sleep next to a camel all night and this camel breathed on our tent. I just want to tell you, that’s some of the worst breath you’ll ever smell in your life; camels never brush their teeth and the breath was just terrible. It was raunchy, it was an absolutely wretched smell as he breathed all night. Then they gurgle, really deep; all night he was gurgling and then breathing on our tent – it was like being in a septic tank with this camel. So camels stink; now I have a great deal of respect for the animal of the camel, it’s an incredible beast in the middle of the desert, absolutely incredible. But when you put camels against horses, camels have a certain advantage there. So anyways, Cyrus defeats Lydia and destroys and takes over basically. So now you have the Persian Empire going all the way from actually the Indus River, over through Afghanistan, over through Persia in Iran, to Iraq, they’ve now taken Syria and Israel; but he still hasn’t taken Egypt. So what he does is; he can’t be everywhere at the same time but he sends his son, Cambyses, we’ll look at him next,

down to take Egypt. He sends his son, who's not really a warrior like he is, down into Egypt; he sends his son to take Egypt.

S. The Death of Cyrus [54:23-56:38]

Now, we've talked about Babylon and Nabonidus, Nabonidus was the mystic king of Babylon; he defeats Nabonidus there. And here's Lydia, Croesus and the Delphi Oracle. The things that we mentioned earlier; so you see the "B-B-B-L-E" okay, from our acrostic; and Egypt he left to his son, Cambyses. We'll look at this next. It's Babylon, Lydia and Egypt, the three kingdoms that he takes. One other comment on Cyrus and this is to honor the man; Cyrus was a very, very old man, he was about 70 years old when he was finishing up fighting in Lydia and these areas up here. Then he went north and took some other territories up here. Cyrus was a 70 year old man, now you've got a 70 year old man going out to war. This guy is a warrior; he leads his troops. Does he stay at home or does he lead his troops? Is he the king out in front of his troops and leading his troops. At 70 years of age he's still leading his troops. Do you remember David, David didn't lead his troops. It says, "In the spring of the year, the times when kings go off to war," David was back in Jerusalem messing around with Bathsheba. Cyrus isn't like that; Cyrus at 70 is out leading his troops. Now, by the way, should 70 year old men go out to war? No, Cyrus ends up getting killed in battle. Now when he falls, when the king falls, you see something very important from his men. His men pick up his body, and transport his body a thousand miles; they carry the body of Cyrus a thousand miles so it can be properly buried, I believe it was in Susa down in Persia. They take his body back a thousand miles. Does that show the respect that this king who was a warrior-leader, that he had from his men; that even after his death that they respected his body so much that they would carry it a thousand miles for a proper burial? Cyrus was a great man. The Old Testament even calls him the "Meshiach," the term for "the anointed one." So Cyrus is a good, benevolent person; and his troops honor him in that way.

T. The Reign of Cambyses [56:39-57:43]

Now, I wish I could say that of his son. Unfortunately his son had problems. The son, Cambyses, is a minor character; I don't really want you to know too much about him. But Cambyses is going to go down here into Egypt. This is where the delta area is, the delta blues, kind of thing. This is the land of Goshen where Israel was. Here's Mount Sinai, the Sinai Peninsula over here. Here's Memphis – where the king is buried – Elvis. And then down here, there were some Jews down here. Here's where Alexandria was. Alexandria was up here in the delta. They build Alexandria in honor of Alexander later on. So Cambyses is going to come over here and try to take Egypt. Because Egypt is the “breadbasket” of the ancient world, there's a lot of food and things that they have got there. Whenever there's a famine, where do you go? Whenever there's a famine, we saw that in Genesis with Abraham and with Jacob and his kids; whenever there's a famine in Israel you go to Egypt because there's food there. This is the breadbasket, the Nile River. You're always good when you got water and food.

U. Cambyses, son of Cyrus [57:44-60:02]

Now Cambyses takes over from his father about 530-522, about an 8 year period. I'm not really interested in this guy. I want to use an acrostic called “TEASE” to kind of remember some of his stuff. He set, first of all, out to take Egypt. Egypt had this guy Amasis who was over Egypt at the time, was pharaoh or whatever. Amasis then gives his daughter, was supposed to give his daughter to Cambyses. Kind of like what you saw with Solomon, remember Solomon got the daughter of pharaoh in an earlier period. In earlier periods, the Egyptians would not give their daughters to anyone foreign but later on, they would. So he comes down here to Egypt and he's supposed to get Amasis' daughter but it turns out this king Amasis doesn't give Cambyses *his* daughter, he takes the daughter of the priest and gives the daughter of the priest to Cambyses. So Cambyses marries this woman that's not even related to the king; so Cambyses feels totally violated by Amasis because of this switch. So what he does is Amasis ends up dying (and by the way, when someone dies in Egypt, what do they do, they entomb, they basically prepare the body and they basically fix the body. Cambyses then takes his sword and he starts

whacking the dead body of Amasis; well, you don't do that in Egypt, that's really bad because they respect the body afterwards and that's why they do all these things with the embalming the body. So he hacks the body but he can't hack the body apart because it's been embalmed, what he does is he ends up burning the body of Amasis and things which is again a total violation of the king. The people see this as a total violation of Egyptian culture. So this guy, Cambyses, has no sensitivity toward Egyptian culture and mutilates the calf that is the body of Amasis.

It's under Cambyses that the temple building in Jerusalem stops. It's under him – short period so it's not a big deal; but the temple rebuilding in Jerusalem stops.

V. Cambyses and the Apsis Bull [60:02-61:24]

Now the Apsis bull. The Apsis bull; the Egyptians had this god, so to speak of this Apsis bull. The Apsis bull that they would prance through the streets and everyone would worship the Apsis bull. What Cambyses does, he's a Persian, he doesn't care about this Apsis bull; he looks at it and probably says, "hey, there's some good steaks there." And he kills the Apsis bull, he takes a sword and he stabs the Apsis bull. Again totally violating the Egyptian culture, he stabs the Apsis bull their god. It's just really a bad move on his part. The irony is that when Cambyses is getting on his horse he stabs himself and dies of the stab. Now some people think Cambyses committed suicide; that's possible, he wasn't the kind of man that filled his father's shoes. Cyrus was a great man, he was not; so some people think that he committed suicide. Other people say he stabbed himself and in effect died from it. It's kind of ironic, people noticed, that he stabbed himself and died but he also stabbed the Apsis bull. So there's kind of like a karma thing there; where he did the bad thing and the bad thing comes back on his head. So Cambyses, all I can say is, Cambyses had real problems; he never did fill his father's shoes but he did take over Egypt and there's all sorts of conflicts down there.

W. Cambyses and Ethiopia [61:25-62:05]

He tries to go down to Ethiopia and this place called Siwa, out in the desert and actually loses his men in a dust storm in the desert. The dust storms over there just basically a huge dust storm that covers his men and he lost then a huge part of his army as he was perusing out in the desert this thing that he was going to be a god or something like that. He goes out to the west of the Nile River and lost his troops in the desert; which isn't a really smart move either. So what I'm basically saying is Cambyses wasn't too smart; he violated the culture and he ends up stabbing himself and dying. So that's Cambyses, not a big deal.

X. The Reign of Darius—the organizer of the Persian Empire [62:06-65:56]

This next guy is a big deal. Cyrus was the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great; a great and benevolent man who took over many of the kingdoms. Now Darius will be from 522 down to 486. Darius is the organizer of the Persian Empire. Darius is the organizer, as Cyrus was the founder of the Persian Empire. The huge Persian Empire, all the way over to Greece, Darius was its organizer. What he's going to do is several things. First of all, Darius is going to make the Behistun Inscription. What is the Behistun Inscription? If you ever get over to London, one of the most important places, and as a Gordon College student you have to go there because when you come back from London, there's going to be one question that I'm going to ask you: did you go – have fun in London – no... did you go to the British Museum? The British Museum is incredible. When you walk into the British Museum, you walk in, and you see this stone and they let you walk right up to this stone. And this stone is called--and if I say to you, Rosetta Stone, what do most of you think? Yeah, most of you think, "Rosetta Stone, the computer program that teaches you all of the languages that you want." You buy the software and it's called the Rosetta Stone. No, in London, in the British Museum they actually have the Rosetta Stone there. Now, what is the Rosetta Stone? It has three languages on it. And basically through the Rosetta Stone because there were three languages they were able to decode Egyptian hieroglyphics because the Rosetta Stone

allowed them to read Egyptian hieroglyphics. So the Rosetta Stone is incredibly important because of this connection.

The Behistun Inscription is also that important. What is the Behistun inscription? Darius, when he took over, some people think he wasn't really sure in other words, he wasn't in the line of Cyrus, so he's got to do a PR job on the people. So what [Darius] does essentially is shave off part of a mountain and he puts up there, "I am the great Darius and I am this great person." We tells all this PR stuff about how great he is, but when he does it, he does it in three languages. And the third language he uses, I believe, is Akkadian; so basically there comes a guy, an Englishman. He finds these inscriptions that have been there for thousands of years, up on, I think the guy did this in the 1800's or the late 1800's and so what this guy, (I think it was Robinson, I'm not sure of the actual explorer that did this.) This explorer basically got a ladder, this ladder was over a hundred feet high and this guy climbs up a ladder that is a hundred feet high, the sheer ledge that he put the ladder on was only 18 inches; so he lays this ladder, and this guy climbs up this mountain he records, by hand, all the writings on the one, all the writings on the next and all the writings on the third. The third one was Akkadian, or Babylonian. It was through this Behistun Inscription that we learned how to read Akkadian or Babylonian, ancient Babylonian. So Darius records this Behistun Inscription on the side of a mountain, which is absolutely incredible. Now you will not see the Behistun Inscription in the British Museum. The British Museum ripped off everything they could rip off from the ancient world but they couldn't get the mountain. So to this day the Behistun is in Iran. But it was recorded and things, but people say he was viewed as a usurper and that was why he did this mountain style advertisement or billboard, basically a billboard on the side of the mountain. So Darius, that was very helpful for us these days.

Y. Darius Organizing the Empire: Satraps [65:57-67:08]

He also was benevolent. Darius was benevolent. And so actually, the king down in Egypt, the guy who leads the Apsis bull down in Egypt Darius actually pays the guy, like a hundred talents of gold, or whatever it was. So he pays this guy some money and

so he honors Egyptian culture. So basically, he's firm but he's benevolent; it's a good combination if you're a parent and can pull it off. I was never able to pull it off.

What did he do? This guy is basically the organizer of the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire goes all the way to India and all the way over to Greece. It's huge; down into Egypt and up into Turkey, all the way over to Babylon, Afghanistan, Iran, all the way over to Egypt. What Darius does is he organizes it into provinces. He calls them satrapies, satrapies. And basically has each person rule over these provinces. And so he divides the empire up into these provinces. Brilliant move. Then through controlling these certain individuals ruling these provinces he can control the whole empire, kind of thing. This is a very good move. This guy is the organizer.

Z. Darius & the Streets in the Persian Empire [67:09-69:59]

He also then built a street system. One of the things he's famous for is that he built a street system. Whenever you have an empire, you need communication from various parts of the empire; and so basically he built this street system, all through the empire he builds roads. You need roads for communication. So what happens is once you have this road network built all over your empire you can control the empire better. You can send your troops out on the roads and things. So this street system that he built, and then he would send couriers that would run messages over these roads that were built. I should read you what Herodotus was a Greek historian. The Greek historian, Herodotus comments about Darius' street system and what was going on with these couriers and stuff and he says this. This is what Horatius says of Darius, see if you've ever heard this before, "these, neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor darkness of night prevent from accomplishing each one from his appointed task with utmost speed." "These neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor darkness prevent..." this statement, said of Darius and his street system, is over the New York City post office and this is what our post office "neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail," stop our postal system from going through; unless it's on Saturday, that is. But anyways, this quote from Herodotus is over our postal system and it comes from Darius the one who organized the road system. Well, Darius was actually quite an impressive person with this street system.

AA. Darius and the Suez Canal [69:00-69:35]

Darius also tried to build the Suez Canal. He went down to Egypt and saw that they need this transportation of boats; if you don't have the Suez Canal you have to go all the way around Africa. I'm not sure if he understood, what "all the way around Africa" meant, but he basically started digging and tried to construct the Suez Canal. He didn't have the equipment, and you know, you've got all the sand and things like that, to do it, but he had the idea and he started to actually implement the Suez Canal. That showed great foresight, of something that would happen many centuries and millennia later when people would build the Suez Canal, he actually came up with the idea and tried to implement it.

AB. Darius and Greece [69:36-70:09]

Now, he's got to tangle with Greece; he's got Egypt, he's got Turkey, he's got Mesopotamia. He's got to tackle with Greece. The problem is, he sends his troops over to Greece and it turns out, at sea, he sends his guys over to Greece, he lost 20 thousand men at sea. The ocean is incredible, if you've been on the ocean, and basically 20 thousand of his guys perish at sea. So he tries to take Greece but he wasn't able to do it. Darius is a great man, but Greece is still a tough nut to crack.

AC. Under Darius the Jews Finish Building 515 BC [70:10-73:02]

However, although he doesn't take Greece he does finish the building of the second temple. So under Darius, the second temple in Jerusalem is finished about 515 B.C. So the first temple under Solomon, Solomon's about, oh I don't know just after 1000 B.C. down to about 931 thereabouts. So you have four or five hundred years of the first temple, Solomon's temple. The Babylonians destroy the first temple (586 BC) and the second temple is finished under Darius in 515. The second temple, the Jewish people actually date these periods in what they call the "First Temple Period" and the "Second Temple Period." The second temple will go from 515 B.C. all the way down to Jesus. Jesus will come into the second Temple. By the way, will Jesus use this temple imagery to speak? He will say what? "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,"

John chapter 2. The people get a little feisty with that and say, “What do you mean you’re going to rebuild this temple.” Herod took 46 years to build this temple. Now what’s Herod have to do with anything?

The second temple was probably actually pretty small, and Ezra and Nehemiah when they talk about the second temple being finished the old people actually wept, because they said the second temple was nothing compared to the first temple. So the old people wept and the young people were saying “yea, we finished it.” But the old people that had seen the first Temple say this is nothing compared to the old one. So basically it’s small. Herod then, Herod rebuilds this massive platform and we can go see it, if you take the program “Get Lost in Jerusalem” I can show where you exactly where the crease in the wall is where Herod expanded the platform on the Temple Mount and built, after 46 years--Herod was an incredible builder, built this second temple. He took what Zerubbabel and Joshua built and basically makes it a huge thing.

Jesus would come into the Herodain temple, the second temple. Now after Jesus dies, the second temple will be destroyed about 70 A.D. So 70 A.D. the Romans were going to come in and they will wipe out the temple and throw every stone down like Jesus predicted in the Olivet Discourse. Some of those stones that were thrown down were found now by archeologists. Some of the stones that were thrown down from the Temple Mount were actually found. It was in 70 A.D. that the Romans totally destroyed it again. So you have the Second Temple Period, from about 515 B.C. to about 70 A.D., after the time of Christ. About 40 years after Christ dies the Temple is destroyed. So the second temple was completed under Darius. Darius was the organizer of the Persian Empire and he did a good job with it.

AD. Xerxes: Babylon, Esther and Greece (BEG--300) [73:02-74:48]

Who is this next Persian king Xerxes? Xerxes starts at about 486 and goes down to about 465, he has about 20-21 years there. And the acrostic I use for him is “BEG-300.” Basically, he’s the son of Darius and was groomed for the job. Babylon rebels; so his first thing is that Babylon rebels here. What does Xerxes do? He takes the Bel Marduk statue of their god and melts it down. He takes the gold statue of Bel Marduk

and he melts it down. Again, do you see how that really violates these people? This is their major god, and he melts it down. It just kind of shows you, he's in your face, he doesn't respect them, and he takes it down. What I want to say is: "Xerxes is a jerk-ses," that's how I do him. He's a jerk kind of person. It turns out, he's Esther's husband. The book of Esther, this is the guy with Esther. Do you remember that Xerxes had his wife, Vashti come out, rumor has it Dr. Philips and others think, that Vashti the queen was told to come out into a party with nothing on but a crown on her head; and Vashti says, "I'm not going out there like that." And then Xerxes says, "Well, then you aren't going to be my queen." So then he searches the empire and finds Esther and Esther becomes his queen. And you have the book of Esther taking place. Xerxes was Esther's husband. He was a 'jerk-ses' – but he did spare the Jews after Haman tried to kill the Jews. Xerxes actually gives a decree to spare the Jews recorded in the book of Esther. And so, "for such a time as this," as Esther happens, and that's Esther's husband.

AE. Xerxes in Greece [74:49-76:21]

He goes to Greece; Xerxes actually makes it to Greece. He goes to Athens, and he's going to torch Athens; he's going to burn the place down. He isn't strong enough to actually hold the territory so he basically just burns it down and so he's going to take back off. He actually loses his battle at Salamis and things. So Xerxes makes it to Greece, but he has some problems making it there. When he does make it there he burns it down. In the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. the Greeks won and the Persians retreated. At the battle of Thermopylae, we get 300 Spartans holding off thousands and thousands of Persians; they were in this very narrow pass, and these 300 Spartans held off and stood up to Xerxes' thousands. It just shows the great warrior-ness of the Spartans. The 300 gave then it slowed the Persians down, and gave the Greeks time to rally their forces to oppose Xerxes. And so, "300" there's a movie, not saying I recommend it, my son forced me to go see it, but the movie "300" actually narrates that battle. There are some good parts and some bad parts in that movie, I should just tell you up front.

So this is Xerxes; Xerxes attacks Greece, torches Greece, fights with Greece. And Xerxes is Esther's husband.

AF. The Reign of Artaxerxes [76:22-77:47]

Now Artaxerxes is during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Nehemiah is the cup bearer of Artaxerxes. In the Bible when you read the story of Nehemiah, Nehemiah is a wonderful book about leadership and if you're interested in leadership principles there's a guy named Jack Murray who, if you go to my website, he's got five lectures about leadership out of the book of Nehemiah. It is a great book for leadership; Nehemiah was a leader and cup bearer for the King Artaxerxes. And Nehemiah is the wall builder; when Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem now, he's going to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and do it at night and some really cool stuff there. Nehemiah is the wall builder in Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem has got a temple, finished under Darius, but it needs a wall to protect it, and Nehemiah is going to build the walls of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes. So Nehemiah's the wall builder.

Egypt revolts at this time. And he will put that down. And it helps with the Greeks. What you see is the Greeks over in the west and Egypt uniting and pushing back on the Persian Empire. So you notice, regionally, how the people from the west push back on the people from the east and the people from the east push over to the people in the west. So there's some kind of geography behind that as well. Ezra returns as a scribe and priest and so you've got that type of thing going down.

AG. The Disintegration of the Persian Empire [77:48-81:45]

So after Artaxerxes, I want to say, basically the Persian Empire is going to deconstruct and basically disintegrate. So these last guys are totally unimportant. But Darius II, what he does is he sets up these Peloponnesian Wars. What are the Peloponnesian Wars? Do you remember when I showed you a picture of Greece, and Athens was north in Achaia and Sparta was south on the Peloponnesus. What happens is Sparta fights with Athens and Athens fights with Sparta. And so these two – well they're both Greek, fighting against themselves. It's kind of like the American Civil War with the North versus the South. And so Sparta's in the south. Spartans are warriors, the

Athenians are more of your philosopher types but they have their warriors as well. And they go back and forth. Now when the Spartans start winning, who will the Persians support? When the Spartans start winning then the Persians would support Athens and Athens would come up; when Athens would start defeating Sparta then the Persians would support Sparta. So what the Persians did was they kept them at war. They would support the loser so then whoever was the loser would come up and keep fighting each other and killing each other. Kind of sounds like American policy in some ways, we always support the loser and the people go on fighting. So Persia purposefully kept the Greeks fighting. By the way, if you keep them fighting against themselves than they can't fight against you. There is some strategy there. But the Peloponnesian Wars happens during this period and the Persians are supporting the battles between Athens and Sparta around this time, this is right around 400 B.C. This is about the time the Old Testament, Malachi, is ending.

Here's a wonderful book called the Anabasis by Xenophon. The Anabasis was written by Xenophon; he was a Greek historian and he basically tells the story of 10 thousand, 11 thousand of these Greek mercenaries who hire themselves out. Actually the Greeks were mercenaries; they hired themselves out to the Persians to fight in one of the battles. There was a power struggle in the Persian Empire and so he hired these 10 thousand Greeks because these Greeks were known to be great warriors. These Greek warriors come over and they're fighting for this guy, I think his name was Cyrus, either the III or IV or whatever, and they fight for this guy, but then the guy ends up getting killed. Now you've got all these 10 thousand Greeks in the middle of Mesopotamia over by Babylon. Well what do the Greeks want to do – the Greeks want to go home. What the story of the Xenophon is, tells the heroic tales of, this is apparently one of the great stories of the ancient world, these 10 thousand Greek soldiers as they fight their way home going back from Mesopotamia and being mercenaries to the Persians back to Greece. And the Anabasis by Xenophon tells their story of how they come back to Greece and things. This is kind of a heroic tale and one of the great heroic tales coming out of the Greeks and with the Persians in that regard.

Darius III is the end of the Persian Empire. Largely, this Darius III guy will end up banging heads with Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great or “Alexander the Grape” as I call him; Alexander the Great will fight Darius III and defeat him and trounce him. So this is when Alexander, we said before Alexander’s date was what? - half of 666; Alexander’s date is 333 B.C. Alexander takes over. The Persians run largely from about 500 down to about 300; you have about 200 years of Persian rule, and then in 333 Alexander is going to go through and he’s going to conquer the whole Persian Empire and pay them back for all of the agitating they’ve done in Greece for years. Alexander will kind of put it back in their face.

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