**PERSIAN KINGS**

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| Cyrus II, the Great (559-530 BC) | 10/12/539 conquered Babylon w/o a fight.  Issued edit allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem & begin to rebuild Temple (536 BC).  Head of Achaemenid dynasty. |
| Cambyses II (529-522 BC) | Died w/o an heir. |
| Darius I (521-486 BC) | Established Susa palace & those @ Persepolis  & Babylon).  Jewish exiles resumed building Jerusalem Temple (520). |
| Xerxes (485-465 BC) | Ahasuerus of Esther.  He invaded Greece by building a bridge over the Hellespont; defeated 300 Spartans at Thermopylae Pass; conquered most of Greece & burned Athens; but his navy was decisively defeated by the Greeks at Salamis. |
| Artaxerxes (464-424 BC) | Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai & Zechariah |
| Xerxes II (425-424 BC) | After a reign of 45 days, he was murdered by his half-brother Sogdianus. |
| Darius II (423-404 BC) | Son of Artaxerxes I by a Babylonian concubine & also known as Nothus (from Greek nothos, meaning “bastard”). Seized the throne from his ½ brother, Sogdianus, whom he executed. Dominated by eunuchs & the cruel & ambitious [Parysatis](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Parysatis), his ½ sister & wife. Intrigue & corruption were rife at the Achaemenid court. |
| Artaxerxes II (404-359 BC) | Son & successor of Darius II, surnamed Mnemon, meaning “the mindful.” When Artaxerxes took the Persian throne, [Athens](https://www.britannica.com/place/Athens); power had been broken in [Peloponnesian War](https://www.britannica.com/event/Peloponnesian-War) (431–404) & Greek towns were subject to the Achaemenid Empire. In 404, Artaxerxes lost [Egypt](https://www.britannica.com/place/Egypt). The following year, his brother [Cyrus the Younger](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cyrus-the-Younger) began a [rebellion](https://www.britannica.com/topic/insurrection-politics), but was defeated & killed at [Cunaxa](https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Cunaxa) (401). The rebellion revealed the superiority of the Greek hoplites & led the Greeks to believe Persia was [vulnerable](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vulnerable). |
| Artaxerxes III (359-338 BC) | Called Ochus, he murdered all the royal family soon after becoming king & began 2 major campaigns against Egypt. The 1st failed & was followed by rebellions throughout the W part of the empire. He defeated the  [Pharaoh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharaoh) in the 2nd & after 6 decades brought Egypt back under Persia. |
| Arses (338-336 BC) | Put on the throne by the eunuch who poisoned his father & then poisoned him. |
| Darius III (336-330 BC) | A distant member of the Achaemenid dynasty, he was put on the throne by the eunuch who poisoned Arses, but he poisoned the eunuch, who was plotting to kill him also. He was defeated by Alexander the Great. That ended Achaemenid dynasty rule. |