

SECTION LIX

THE TWENTIETH YEAR OF ARTAXERXES

“**K** NOW therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25).

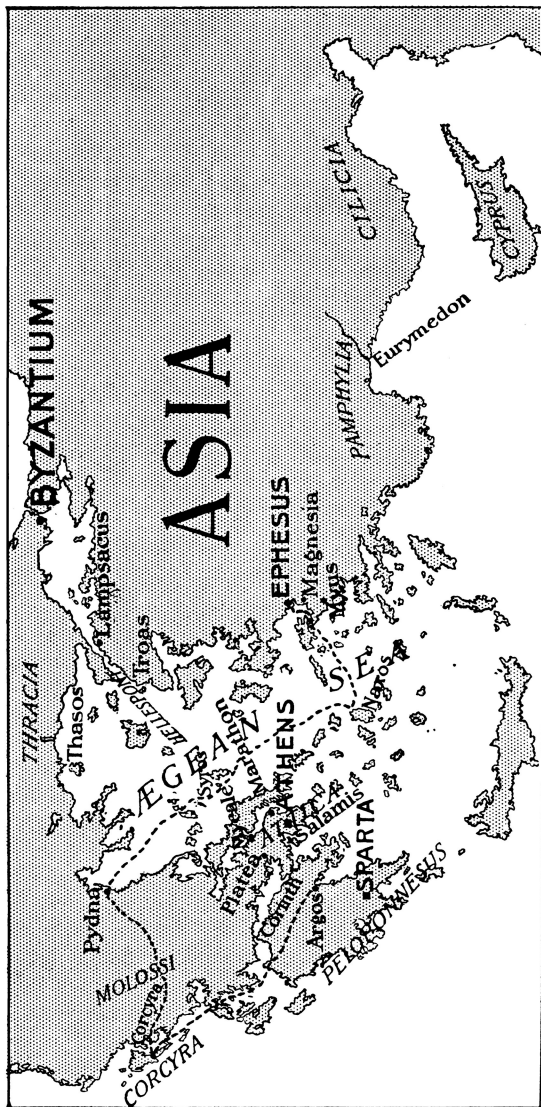
Notice that the period of 69 weeks (of years), which pointed to the coming of the Messiah, was to date from the *going forth of the commandment*.

823 The decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. authorised only the rebuilding of the *temple* (Ezra. 1:1-3). Although this implied also the erection of dwelling houses, Jerusalem was not then a walled city, but an open village.

824 When Ezra went up to Jerusalem in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, his commission was confined to matters connected with the temple (Ezra 7). An attempt, indeed, was made by the followers of Ezra to restore the city walls (See Ezra 4:11-13), but when Artaxerxes was informed of this he immediately wrote: “Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not rebuilded, *until commandment shall be given from me*” (Ezra 4:21). This commandment came from Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. 2); and Nehemiah and his faithful helpers built the walls in “troublous times,” even as foretold by Daniel (Neh. 4).

825 According to the marginal reference in many Bibles, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes is 445 B.C. We believe, however, that the correct date is 455 B.C.

Chronologists are agreed that Xerxes, the father and predecessor of Artaxerxes, ascended the throne in 485 B.C., but opinions differ as to the length of his reign; for although Ptolemy's Canon assigns 21 years, it is recognised that this period is not *astronomically* fixed. The Canon is authoritative only where its dates are based upon astronomical observations. It was not compiled until about six centuries after Xerxes; and the records of several early writers disagree with it in this



MAP OF GREECE AND ASIA MINOR.

This map shows (by the dotted line) the route taken by Themistocles, when he fled from Greece to Asia. Themistocles had been expelled from Athens, and was living in Argos, when the authorities in Athens sent officers to arrest him. He immediately fled from Argos to the island of Corcyra. Unable to remain there he fled to Molossi, and was conducted across country to Pydna. He sailed from Pydna to Ephesus, passing the island of Naaxos during the voyage. The famous Greek historian, Thucydides, states that when Themistocles arrived in Asia, Artaxerxes had just succeeded to the throne of Persia. As we know the time of Themistocles' flight and arrival in Asia, this enables us to fix the date of the accession of Artaxerxes to the throne, and hence his 20th year of reign, namely, 455 B.C.

instance. Reliable history proves, rather, that Xerxes reigned for 11 years only.

826 The famous Greek historian, Thucydides, is regarded by both ancient and modern critics to be the most exact chronicler of the period in question. He was born in 471 B.C., and thus lived during the reign of Artaxerxes. Thucydides states that his reason for recording the events of his own times, was that no one had undertaken this work except Hellanicus, who had only "mentioned them briefly, and not accurately with regard to their chronology."

827 The principal event which enables us to determine the year when Artaxerxes began to reign, is the flight of Themistocles from Greece to Asia. This great Athenian general and statesman was obliged, on the discovery of some treasonable documents, to fly from his country to escape arrest. Thucydides says that when Themistocles arrived in Asia, Artaxerxes "had just succeeded to the throne" (Book I, chapter 137).

828 Several later writers say that Themistocles fled to Xerxes; but this contradiction may be accounted for when it is remembered that Themistocles' flight occurred at the time of the transference of the throne from Xerxes to his son Artaxerxes. In the ancient manuscripts these names must have appeared very frequently, and the error may have crept in through one being mistaken for the other. The works of Aristotle and Ctesias show instances of this.

829 The statement of Thucydides, that Themistocles fled to Asia (Persia) when Artaxerxes had "lately come to the throne," is supported by the historian Charon, who lived in Asia during the reign of Artaxerxes. Plutarch (1st century A.D.) expresses his confidence in these two ancient writers: "Thucydides, and Charon of Lampsacus, say that Xerxes was dead, and that Themistocles had an interview with his son Artaxerxes; but Ephorus, Dinon, Cltarcus, Heraclides and many others, write that he came to Xerxes. The chronological tables better agree with the account of Thucydides" (Plutarch, *Them.* c. 27).

830 Thucydides' accuracy is also upheld by Nepos, a Roman historian of the 1st century B.C. Nepos wrote: "I know that most historians have related that Themistocles went over into Asia in the reign of Xerxes, but I give credence to Thucydides in preference to others, because he, of all who have left records of that period, was nearest in point of time to Themistocles, and was of the same city [Athens]. Thucydides says that he went to Artaxerxes" (Nepos, *Them.* c. 9).

831 The earliest writer to express the view that Themistocles fled to Xerxes, namely, Ephorus, lived more than a hundred years after Thucydides.

832 The unanimous reliance of modern critics on Thucydides is voiced by the great chronologist, Fynes Clinton (1781-1851): "Thucydides is allowed the praise above all historians of being scrupulously exact and accurate." Mahaffy, also, in *Problems in Greek History*, says: "Thucydides gives us a sketch of the famous 50 years that elapsed between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. He proposes to correct the inaccuracies of Hellenicus his only predecessor in this field, and there can be little doubt that what he has condescended to give us, is both accurate and valuable."

833 Thucydides himself wrote: "Very likely the strictly historical character of my narrative may be disappointing to the ear. But if he who desires to have before his eyes a true picture of the events which have happened . . . shall pronounce what I have written to be useful, then I shall be satisfied. *My history is an everlasting possession*, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten" (Book I, chapter 22).

834 That the reader may have before him the causes which led to the flight of Themistocles, and the particulars of the flight itself, we shall briefly summarise the history of that time. We suggest frequent references to the map on page 296. Most of the names are very ancient, and cannot be found in the majority of maps.

835 Darius, the father of Xerxes, after his second unsuccessful attempt to conquer Greece at Marathon in 490 B.C. (his first failure was in 492 B.C.), was preparing for a third expedition when he died. Xerxes on coming to the throne (485 B.C.) carried forward his father's project, and in the year 480 B.C. brought a great army and navy against Greece.

836 The fleet of the Greeks (composed of vessels contributed by the allied Grecian states, and therefore known as the "allied fleet") was stationed in the narrow strait between the island of Salamis and the Attic coast near Athens. It was here that the famous "battle of Salamis" took place, when the Persian armada suffered defeat (479 B.C.).

837 Although nearly two-thirds of the allied fleet was contributed by the Athenians, over whom Themistocles was leader, yet to maintain unity among the allies, who would only follow Sparta the capital city of the Peloponnesians, they agreed that the chief command should be given to a Spartan admiral, Eurybiades. Nevertheless, the successful issue of the battle of Salamis was due to the foresight and ability of Themistocles.

838 Xerxes, afraid of his personal safety, fled back to his country by way of his bridge of boats across the Hellespont

(479 B.C.), leaving his general Mardonius to finish the war. Mardonius was defeated at Platea by the Grecian army under the command of the Spartan Pausanias (479 B.C.), and on the same day the remainder of the Persian fleet was destroyed at Mycale.

839 The Persians still held many places on the Thracian and Asiatic coasts; but in the year 477 B.C., the allied fleet, now under the command of Pausanias, captured Cyprus and Byzantium from them (See map). At this time Pausanias began a treasonable correspondence with Persia. He was recalled to Sparta and another commander was sent to take his place. In the meantime, however, all the allies transferred their allegiance to Athens, being greatly offended at the conduct of Pausanias. They were also now of the opinion that the Athenians, with their superior navy, were the natural leaders and protectors of Greece. This was the beginning of the "Athenian Supremacy," an important landmark in history. (Our knowledge of the date when the Athenian Supremacy began, 477 B.C., which is agreed to by all modern chronologists, enables us to fix the time of Themistocles flight, and hence the date of the accession of Artaxerxes to the throne.)

840 Pausanias was acquitted because of insufficient proof, and immediately returned privately to Byzantium; but the Athenians, now in undisputed command of the fleet, drove him away by force. He went to Troas to live there; but was again summoned back to Sparta on the charge of corresponding with the Persians. Positive evidence against him was still lacking, however, and he was released once more.

841 Soon after his second release Pausanias resumed his communications with the Persians, and at this time he also began a correspondence with Themistocles, who had lately been expelled from Athens by his rivals, and was now living at Argos in the Peloponnesus (See map). Pausanias was betrayed by a servant, who opened and displayed to the authorities a treasonable letter addressed to the Persians. This furnished the evidence necessary for his conviction and death. The complicity of Themistocles was then discovered, and officers were sent from Athens to apprehend him. Themistocles fled from Argos to Corcyra; but unable to remain there he fled to the continent opposite, and took refuge with Admetus, king of the Molossians. On the arrival of his pursuers "very shortly afterwards," Themistocles was conducted across country to Pydna, from which place he sailed in a ship to Asia.

842 In the voyage across the Ægean Sea, the ship was driven southward by a storm and fell in with the Athenian fleet. The Athenians were besieging the island of Naxos,

which had revolted from the alliance. Themistocles persuaded the master of the ship not to betray him; and a few days later he was landed at Ephesus.

843 On his arrival in Asia, Themistocles sent a letter to Artaxerxes who had lately ascended the throne of Persia, asking to be granted an audience, but begging first a year's time in which to learn the language of the Persians, after which he promised to lay before him plans for the subjugation of Greece. Artaxerxes granted his request; and at the end of the year Themistocles appeared at the court. The king was greatly pleased with Themistocles, and conferred upon him great honours, making him governor of Magnesia, besides giving him the revenues of Lampsacus and Myus.

844 Soon afterwards Themistocles was called upon by Artaxerxes to fulfil his promise to lead the Persians against the Greeks, who were now aiding the Egyptians in their revolt against Persia. The Athenian fleet, under the command of Cimon, was then at Cyprus and Cilicia, not far from the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia, and it was at Eurymedon that Artaxerxes' first encounter with the Greeks took place. He was defeated there by Cimon, both by land and sea (470 B.C.). Themistocles, however, fell sick and died before this engagement. It is reported that he died voluntarily by taking poison, rather than fulfil his promise to lead the Persians against his own countrymen. (The portion of history which is directly connected with our subject, is related by Thucydides in Book I, chapters 93-100.)

845 Thucydides did not affix dates to his work; but from the "Universal History" of Diodorus, which was compiled in 8 B.C., we can get the dates of a few of the important events of which Thucydides wrote. Diodorus used the records of the Olympiad games as the basis of his chronology. These games were celebrated at exact intervals of four years. Each year a chief magistrate, called an archon, was elected to office at Athens. Thus, Diodorus indicated his dates by mentioning the names of the archons, together with the Olympiad numbers.

846 According to Thucydides, the flight of Themistocles took place after the beginning of the Athenian Supremacy; and his death occurred before the battles on the river Eurymedon (Book I, Chapters 128-138). From the chronological table of Diodorus (given on next page) it will be seen that the date of the transference of the supremacy from the Spartans to the Athenians, was 477 B.C.; and that the date of the battles on the Eurymedon was 470 B.C. Consequently, between these two dates, 477-470 B.C., Themistocles' flight and death took place.

Artaxerxes, therefore, began to reign *previous* to 470 B.C., because Thucydides states that when Themistocles arrived in Asia, Artaxerxes was on the throne.

Chronology of Diodorus Book XI Chapters I to 13

<i>Olyp.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Archon</i>	<i>Date B.C.</i>	<i>Event</i>
75th	1st	Callias	480	Xerxes' expedition against Greece; and the sea fight at Salamis.
„	2nd	Xantippus	479	Victory of the Greeks over Mardonius at Platea; and, on the same day, the battle of Mycale.
„	3rd	Timosthenes	478	Rebuilding of Athens by the policy of Themistocles.
„	4th	Adimantus	477	The treason of Pausanias, and the transference of the supremacy to the Athenians. The death of Pausanias.
76th	1st	Phedon	476	Hiero, king of Sicily, prepares to besiege Agrigentium, etc.
„	2nd	Dromoclidēs	475	Threatened war between the Athenians and the Spartans for the dominion of the sea.
„	3rd	Acestorides	474	Hiero wars with the Etruscans, etc.
„	4th	Menon	473	War between the Tarentines and the Japygians, etc.
77th	1st	Chares	472	The death of Theron, prince of Agrigentium, etc.
„	2nd	Praxiergus	471	The banishment of Themistocles and his death.
„	3rd	Demotion	470	Battles on the Eurymedon. Cimon, the Athenian general.

847 Diodorus gives the date 471 B.C. for the death of Themistocles, and as the narrative of Thucydides shows that Themistocles was in Asia at least two years before his death, he arrived in Ephesus in 473 B.C. Thus the beginning of Artaxerxes' reign may be assigned to 474 B.C., and hence his 20th year to 455 B.C.

848 While Diodorus gives the date 471 B.C., the year before the battles of Eurymedon, for the death of Themistocles, which is quite in accordance with the sequence of events related by Thucydides; he also appears to confine the ostracism of Themistocles to the same year. Here, however, Diodorus is in error, for according to Thucydides some years must have intervened between Themistocles' banishment from Athens, and his death.

849 Clinton, in a comparison of Thucydides and Diodorus, says: "Formerly the authority of Diodorus was too highly rated. The accuracy of Diodorus is now better estimated, and no critic would make it a matter of doubt or question which of the two writers should be followed. Where the dates of Diodorus

are consistent with the course of events, and confirmed, or at least not contradicted, by other authorities (as for instance the date of the Athenian Supremacy), we may receive them with confidence."

850 The foregoing evidence is decisive that the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes is not 445 B.C., but, rather, in agreement with the historical fulfilment of the 70 weeks of Daniel, 455 B.C. Why, then, is the former date so generally accepted? Apparently the first to confuse the chronology of this period was Henry Dodwell, a great theologian who lived between 1641 and 1711 A.D.

851 Dodwell, when compiling his "Annals of Thucydides" from the records of ancient writers, misread a passage in Isocrates' "Panatheniakos" (436-338 B.C.). He misunderstood Isocrates to say that, previous to the transference of the supremacy to the Athenians at Byzantium, the Spartans had held the supremacy for ten years. He thought this ten years commenced at the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., because the Spartan admiral Eurybiades was then given sole command of the allied fleet. In consequence of this misunderstanding, Dodwell dated the Athenian Supremacy from 470, instead of 477 B.C., and thus Themistocles' flight, and the accession of Artaxerxes to the throne, were assigned to later dates than the records of history warrant.

852 Clinton shows in his large and valuable work on chronology that scholars are now agreed that, the Spartan supremacy of ten years spoken of by Isocrates did not precede, but *followed* that of the Athenians. They support Diodorus, who placed the Athenian Supremacy in 477 B.C. (See table).

853 Dodwell's deductions were thoroughly refuted by Vitringa (1659-1722), and again independently by Kruger (1838). These celebrated writers agreed with Ussher in placing the accession of Artaxerxes in 474 B.C.; but their arguments, and those of Ussher, have been largely overlooked.

854 Archbishop Ussher (1581-1656) held that Artaxerxes ascended the throne in 474 B.C. But although the inscriber (probably Bishop Lloyd, 1627-1717), who undertook to affix dates in reference Bibles, used the chronology of Ussher, he rejected Ussher's date for the 20th year of Artaxerxes, inserting instead the date given by Dodwell, *i.e.*, 445 B.C. Corsini, in his "Greek Chronology," adopted Dodwell's views; and thus many have been misled. Clinton, even, although he successfully opposed Dodwell in a number of his opinions, was unable to shake off his influence in this particular case. The primary cause of the confusion has been: too great reliance upon the

authority of Ptolemy's Canon, and the want of independent research by later writers.

855 In Jerome's Eusebius (264-340 A.D.), the arrival of Themistocles in Asia is placed in the 4th year of the 76th Olympiad, that is, in 473 B.C., thus correctly placing the beginning of Artaxerxes' reign in 474, and hence his 20th year in 455 B.C.

856 Cicero (106-43 B.C.) indicates, though indirectly, the year of Themistocles' flight from Greece to Asia. In "Laelius," XII, 42, he draws an analogy between the actions of Themistocles, and the Roman patrician Coriolanus. Coriolanus was banished from Rome on account of some political matter. Greatly offended at his treatment he fled to the Volscians, and taking sides with them led them in their war against the Romans. Cicero writes:

857 "No person ever possessed a greater share of power, or was more eminently distinguished among the Grecian states, than Themistocles. This illustrious general, who was commander in chief of the Grecian forces in the Persian war, and who by his services upon that occasion delivered his country from the tyranny with which it was threatened; having been driven into exile by the jealousy his great talents had raised, did not acquiesce under the ingratitude of his fellow citizens with the submission he ought; on the contrary, he acted the same traitorous part under this unmerited persecution, as Coriolanus did amongst us [Romans] about twenty years before. But neither the one nor the other found a coadjutor among their respective friends: in consequence of which just dereliction, they each of them perished by their own desperate hands."

858 As the flight of Coriolanus to the Volscians was in 492 B.C., Cicero therefore places the flight of Themistocles in 473 B.C., thus supporting the historical accuracy of Thucydides.

859 That Cicero knew of the time when the flight of Coriolanus took place, is shown by a statement he makes in another place. In Brutus, X, he says: "For the dangerous war with the Volsci, who were headed by Coriolanus, then a voluntary exile, happened nearly at the same time as the Persian war." According to Clinton, the first Persian armament, under Mardonius, was in 492 B.C.

860 This testimony of Cicero is of some force, because he had as his chronological guide the annals of his learned friend Titus Pomponius Atticus, who bestowed much attention on chronology. Although none of the writings of Pomponius are now extant, we have a notice of his "Roman Annals" which

is highly commended for its chronological accuracy and exactness. Cicero himself extols his friend in the words: "Whom I may justly commend as a most exact and scrupulous relator of the Roman history."

861 Aelian (2nd century A.D.) records an incident in his "Varia Historia" (3:21), which enables us to approximate the date of Themistocles' death. He says:

862 "Themistocles, while still a boy, was returning at a certain time from an elementary school, when Pisistratus met them [*i.e.*, the boy and his tutor]. The tutor-slave asked Themistocles to withdraw a little out of the way as the tyrant was getting near. But he quite boldly replied: 'Not a little. Is not this sufficient way for him?' To such an extent did something shine forth from Themistocles even at that time betokening his nobleness and greatness of mind."

863 Plutarch states that Themistocles "died at Magnesia in the 65th year of a life almost entirely spent in great political and military employments" (*Them.*, book 12). According to Clinton, Pisistratus died in 527 B.C. Assuming that the episode narrated by Aelian took place in the last year of the life of Pisistratus, and that Themistocles was then a boy of eight years of age, the date of Themistocles' death during his 65th year would be 471 B.C., thus confirming the chronology of Diodorus (See table, page 301).

864 A modern writer (Kleinert) who supports the views of Dodwell, wants to substitute one of the sons of Pisistratus; because, according to Dodwell's theory, Pisistratus would have been dead some time before the birth of Themistocles. But this is really an acknowledgment of the force of the argument. There can be no doubt that it was Pisistratus himself to whom Aelian referred. Thus the harmony of the Scriptures in connection with the prophetic period of the 70 weeks of Daniel is well supported by reliable history.

865 The famous German exegetist, E. W. Hengstenberg, to whose admirable work, *Christology of the Old Testament*, we are indebted for the arguments in this Section, draws attention to the perplexity of two able writers who endeavoured to reconcile Thucydides' account of the flight of Themistocles, with Ptolemy's Canon.

Wagner, who contended for a twenty-one years' reign for Xerxes on the authority of the Canon, admitted that he was unable to harmonise this with the history of Thucydides. He wrote: "These three things are certain, that Themistocles, before Olympiad 77:3 [*i.e.* 470 B.C., the date given by Diodorus

for the battles of Eurymedon], or certainly not later, was carried by ship to Naxos, that he arrived in Persia [Asia] shortly after the accession of Artaxerxes to the throne, and that Artaxerxes began to reign before Olympiad 78:4 [465 B.C., the date in Ptolemy's Canon].

866 "There is only *one* method" he continued "of reconciling these apparently contradictory facts: That Themistocles when he had embarked on the ship at Pydna, did not immediately come to the king of the Persians [Artaxerxes]; but after the lapse of some five years." And we are to believe that all this time, during which Xerxes is supposed to be reigning, Themistocles remained concealed somewhere in Persia! Hengstenberg remarks: "We need only to read the 137th chapter of Thucydides impartially, to see that this is impossible. To such forced hypotheses are they driven, who are determined to abide by the authority of the Canon."

867 The other writer, Kleinert, makes a candid confession. He says: "The difficulties connected with the view which I have defended, of the period of Xerxes' reign [*i.e.*, that Xerxes reigned 21 years], I am far from overlooking. My efforts to remove them may not always have been successful: and *who knows whether it is possible to remove them at all?*" He goes on to say that he can still imagine the opposite opinion (*i.e.*, that Xerxes reigned for 11 years only) fighting its way to victory, through all the objections that can be brought against it.

868 Hengstenberg suggests a possible reason for the undoubted mistake in Ptolemy's Canon in assigning to Xerxes a reign of 21 years: When compiling his list of kings from the records of ancient chronologists, Ptolemy mistook *ιά* for *κά*, which in the Greek represent the numerals 11 and 21 respectively.

869 We know of two ancient chronologists from whom Ptolemy may have derived his data, namely, Berosus and Manetho. Berosus, a priest of Belus living in Babylon in the 3rd century B.C., added to his historical account of Babylon a list of kings, chronologically arranged. Manetho, an Egyptian priest, also of the 3rd century B.C., wrote in Greek a history of Egypt with an account of its Dynasties. Of these works only fragments now exist.

870 Manetho (in fragments Nos. 68 and 69) confirms Herodotus as to the length of the reign of Darius, the father of Xerxes. It may have been to the lists of these ancient chronologists that Plutarch referred, when he said that "the chronological tables better agree with Thucydides." This would prove that in Plutarch's time (1st century A.D.) the

tables of Berosus and Manetho did not show 21, but 11, years for the duration of Xerxes' reign.

The Great Pyramid of Gizeh in the land of Egypt, by its wonderful, and most accurate, Pyramid-inch time-measurements, wholly supports the date 455 B.C. for the 20th year of Artaxerxes, and hence, also, the dates for the first advent of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, pointed forward to by the prophetic period of the 70 symbolical weeks of Daniel. And all the measurements of the Great Pyramid, on which the corroborative time-measurements are based, are conclusively supported by the precise scientific features of the building, as will be shown in Vol. III of *Great Pyramid Passages*.