

Babylon and Beyond

The Babylonian Captivity

Series Introduction

- Our goal for this series is to cover the period from the fall of the Kingdom of Judah to the birth of John the Baptist.

The Rise of Babylon

- The origins of Babylon stretch back to Noah's great-grandson Nimrod establishing a kingdom at Babel – Genesis 10:10, 11:9
- The long history of Babylon includes the rule of Hammurabi and multiple dynasties.
- The nomadic Chaldeans settled with the Babylonians around 600 B.C.
- In 620 B.C., Nabopolassar led a revolt against Assyria, leading to the fall of the Assyrian empire in 612 and the rise of the Babylonian empire.

Nebuchadnezzar and the Jews

- Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar II took the throne in 605 B.C. and reigned for 43 years.
- Before becoming king, he besieged Jerusalem in 606. and took captives – Daniel 1:1-2
- In the second year of his reign (603), Daniel interprets his dream of a great statue – Daniel 2
- In 598, he returns to Jerusalem, taking captives (including king Jehoiakim) and spoils – II Chronicles 36:6-7, Jeremiah 52:28
- In 597, he besieges Jerusalem, taking captives (including king Jehoiachin) and spoils – II Kings 24:10-16, Esther 2:6
- In 593, king Zedekiah appears before the Babylonian court – Jeremiah 51:59
- In 588, he begins his final siege against Jerusalem – Jeremiah 39:1, 52:3-5; II Kings 25:1-2
- In 587, he takes more captives from Jerusalem – Jeremiah 52:29
- About this time, he builds the great statue that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship – Daniel 3
- In 586, Jerusalem falls to the Babylonian siege and – II Kings 25:3-4, Jeremiah 39:2-3
 - Most survivors are taken captive – II Kings 25:11-2; II Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 39:9-10, 52:15-16
 - A few final leaders were captured and executed – II Kings 25:18-21, Jeremiah 52:24-27

- In 582, 745 more captives are taken – Jeremiah 52:30
- In 570, he has the vision of a tree, which Daniel interprets to be that he will be humbled before God and man – Daniel 4:4-27
- From 569 to 562, he goes insane and lives a wild animal – Daniel 4:28-33
- Before his death in 562, he regains his senses and proclaims the greatness of God – Daniel 4:1-3, 34-37

Rulers after Nebuchadnezzar

- Nebuchadnezzar is followed on the throne by his son Evilmerodach, (a.k.a., Amel-Marduk), who reigns from 562-560 – II Kings 25:27, Jeremiah 52:31
- Evilmerodach was assassinated by his brother-in-law Neriglissar, who reigned from 560-556.
- Neriglissar dies and is succeeded by his son Labashi-Marduk, who reigned maybe three months.
- Nabonidus, one of the conspirators against Labashi-Marduk, took the throne and ruled from 556-539.
 - His religious affiliation with the moon god Sin rather than Marduk was controversial, and he spent time in exile at Tayma from 552-542.
- Nabonidus's son Belshazzar served as a regent or co-ruler in his absence – Daniel 5:7, 7:1, 8:1
 - He is ruling Babylon when it falls to the Persians in 539.

The Jews Under Babylonian Captivity

- The Jews were aware they were being judged by God for 70 years – Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10
- God spoke at this time through prophets like Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel.
- The many Jewish captives were resettled in Babylon and were allowed much liberty to maintain their ways.
 - They could own a house (Ezekiel 8:1), maintain customary positions (Jeremiah 29:1), write correspondence (Jeremiah 29:25), and practice trades (II Kings 24:14-16).
- They mourned their sin and looked forward to the restoration to come – Psalm 137