

## **CHAPTER 21: THE BABYLONIAN EXILE AND PERSIAN PERIODS (587-332 BCE)**

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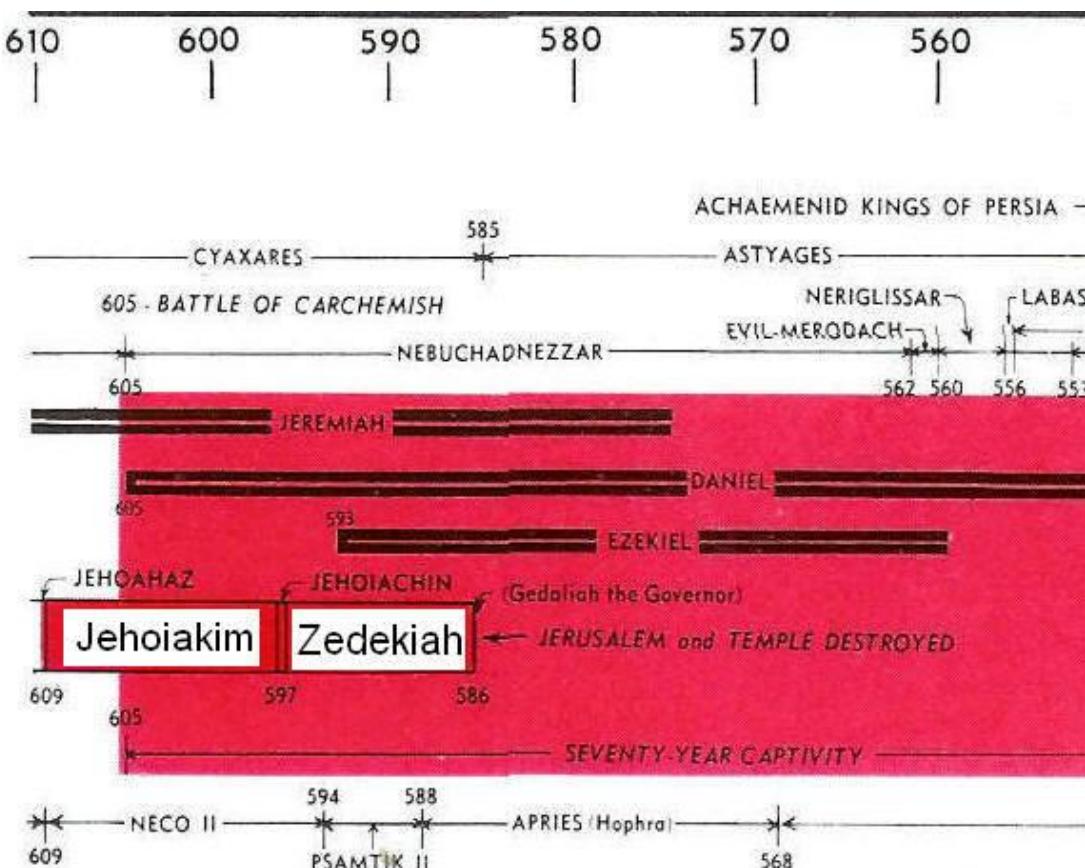
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## GOVERNOR GEDALIAH (586 BCE)

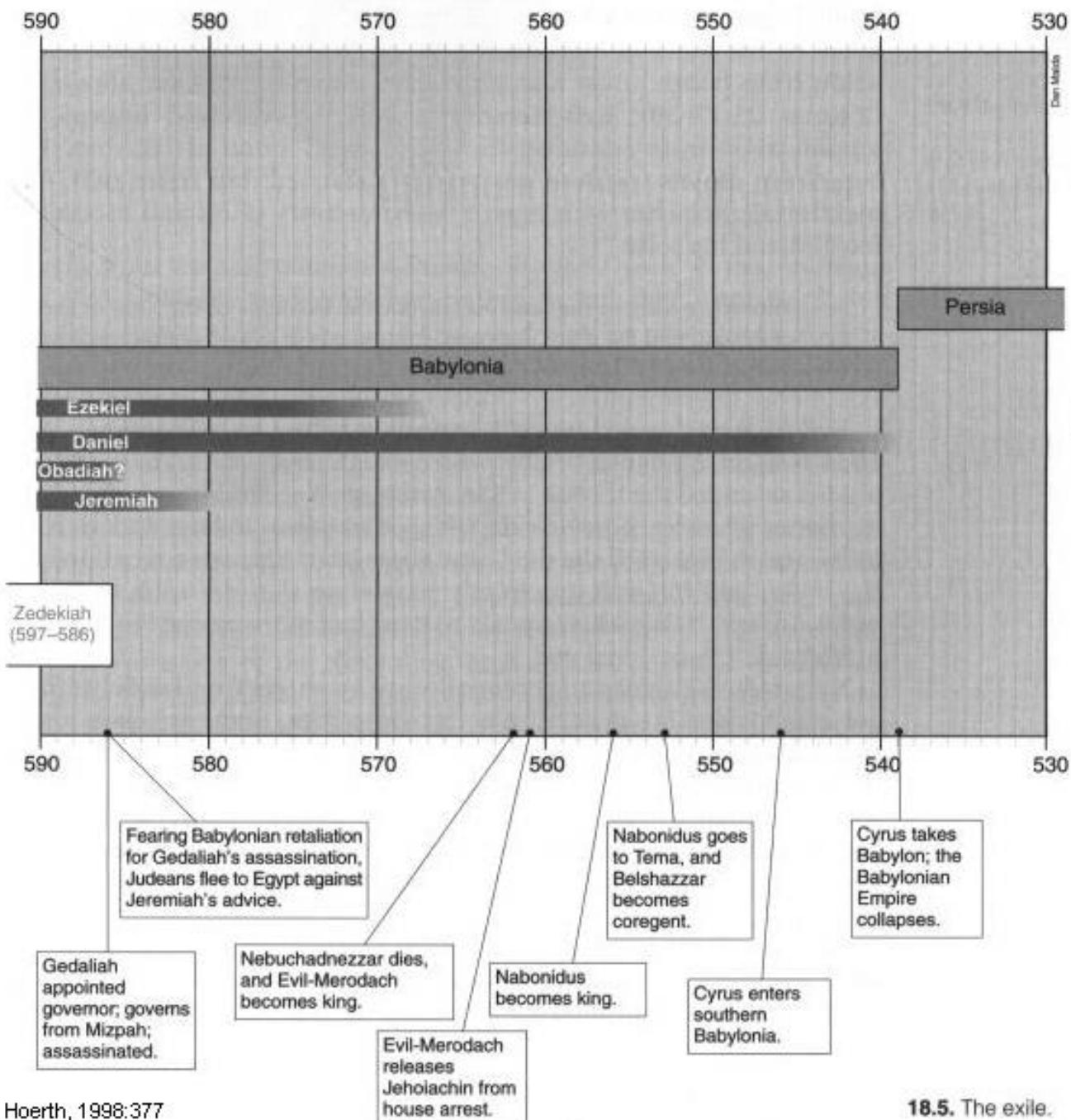
PHOTO LINK: ZEDEKIAH 001 Timeline (Whitcomb, 1968)

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## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: TIMELINE 590-530 BCE (HOERTH)



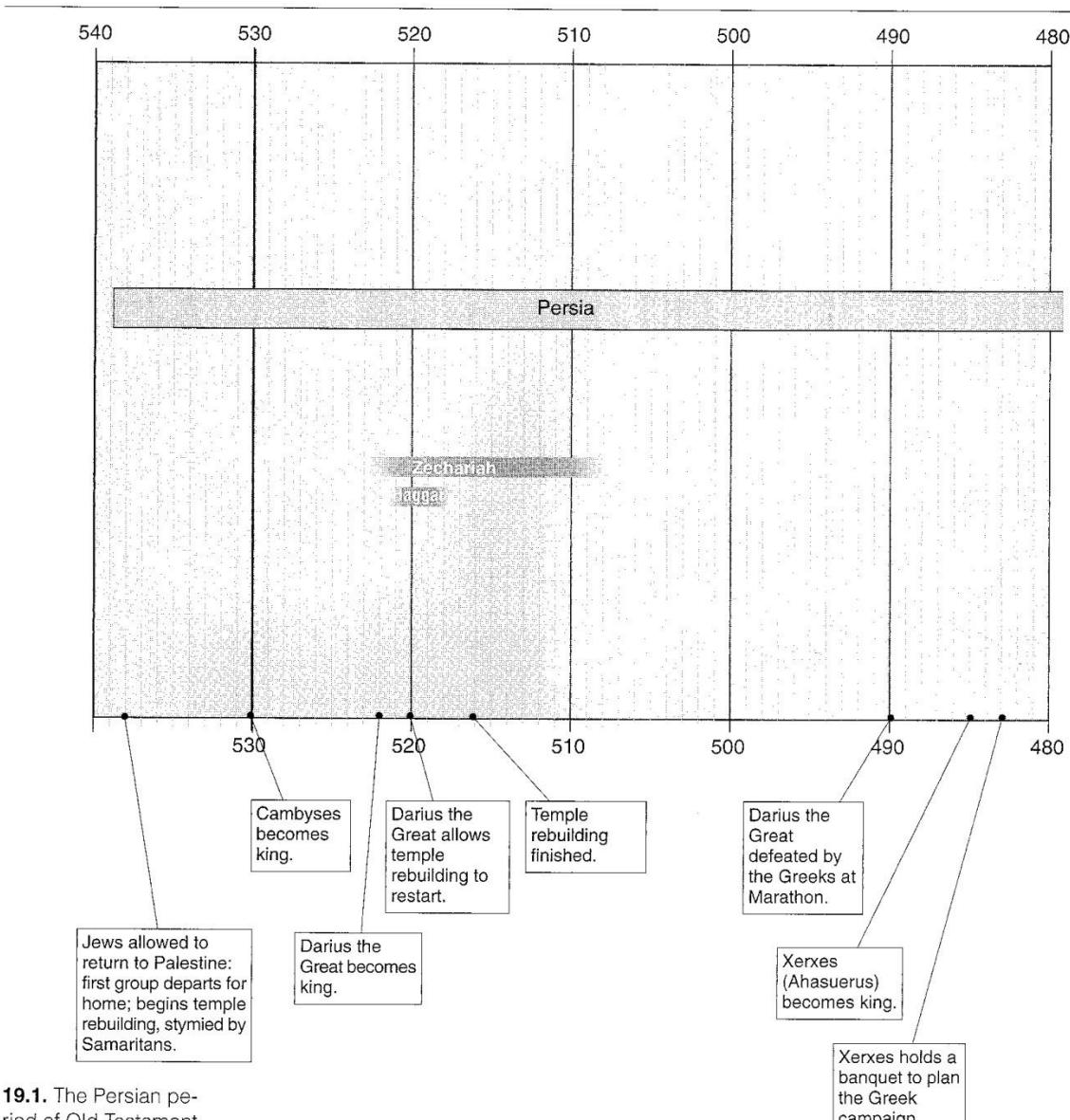
Hoerth, 1998:377

18.5. The exile.

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### PHOTO LINK: TIMELINE 540-480 BCE (HOERTH)

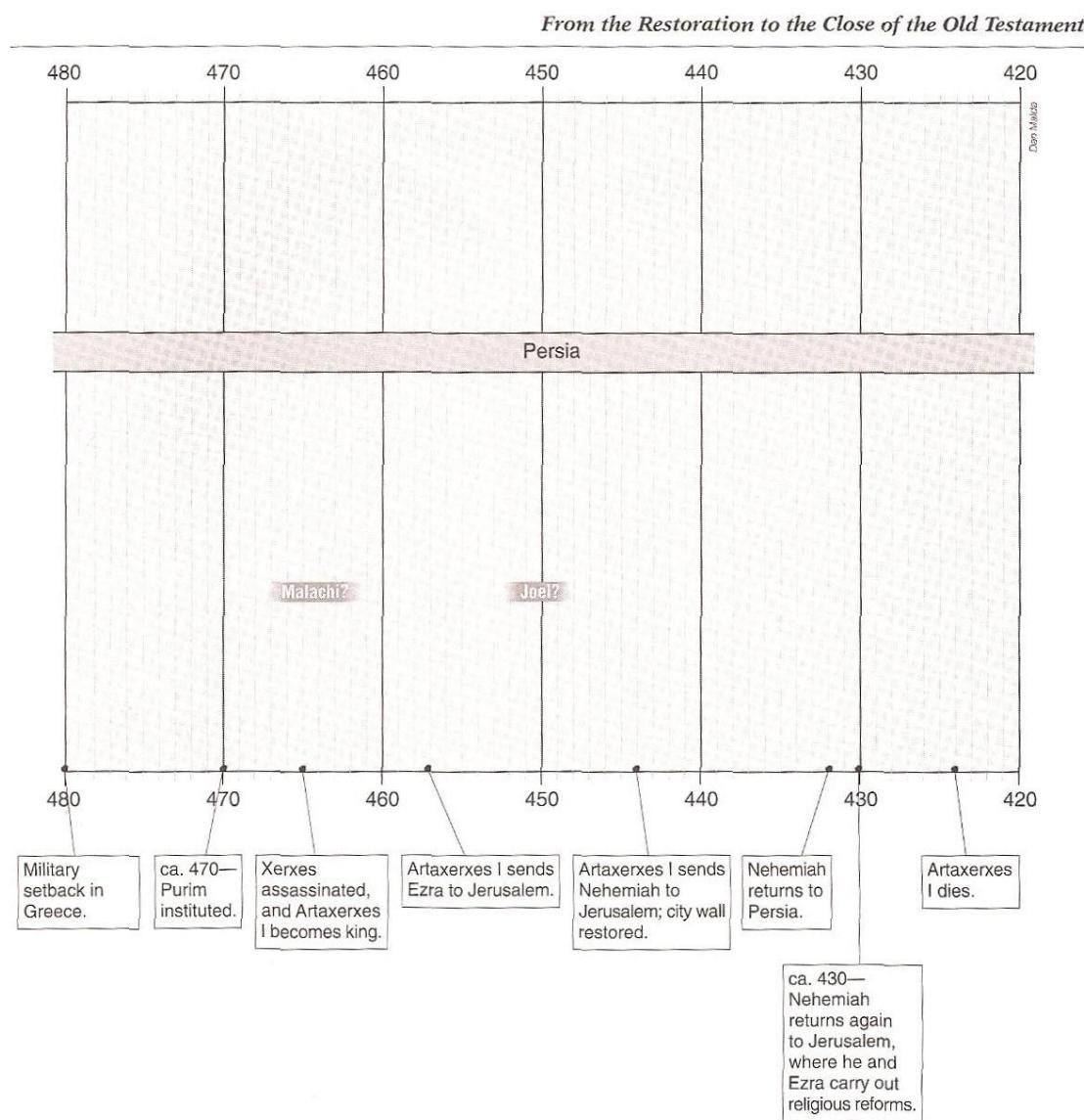
Archaeology and the Old Testament



**19.1.** The Persian period of Old Testament history.

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: TIMELINE 480-320 BCE (HOERTH)



After the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, the Babylonian provincial capital was moved a few miles north to **Mizpah** (2 Kings 25:22-24).

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PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 002 Location Map

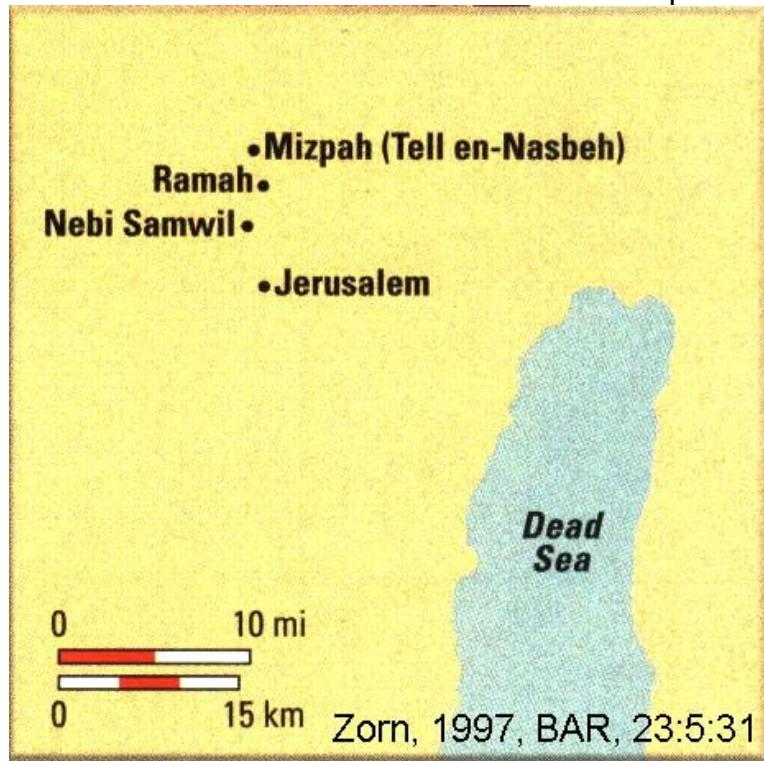


PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 001 Aerial photograph



### ***Mizpah of the Exile Period***

Since Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, Governor Gedaliah's (586-??? BCE) was ordered to move his capital to Mizpah (Jer. 41:8). Excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh conducted between 1926 and 1935 (McCown, 1947; Wamper, 1947) were re-examined by Zorn (1997). The site contains evidence of a thriving capital city there during the Exile.

Tell es-Nasbeh is located 8 miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the southern suburbs of modern Ramallah. The buildings there dating from the Exile period are identified as Stratum 2 by Zorn (1997).

Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, in 586 BCE, an officer came to the Gedaliah court at Mizpah (2 Kings 25:33, Jeremiah 40:8). This officer was named Ya'azaniah (Jaazaniah, Ya'azenyahu). A seal with this name was found in a Stratum 2 tomb at Mizpah and is identified as a seal belonging to this official (Zorn, 1997:37).

PHOTO LINK: SEAL OF YA'AZANIAH 001

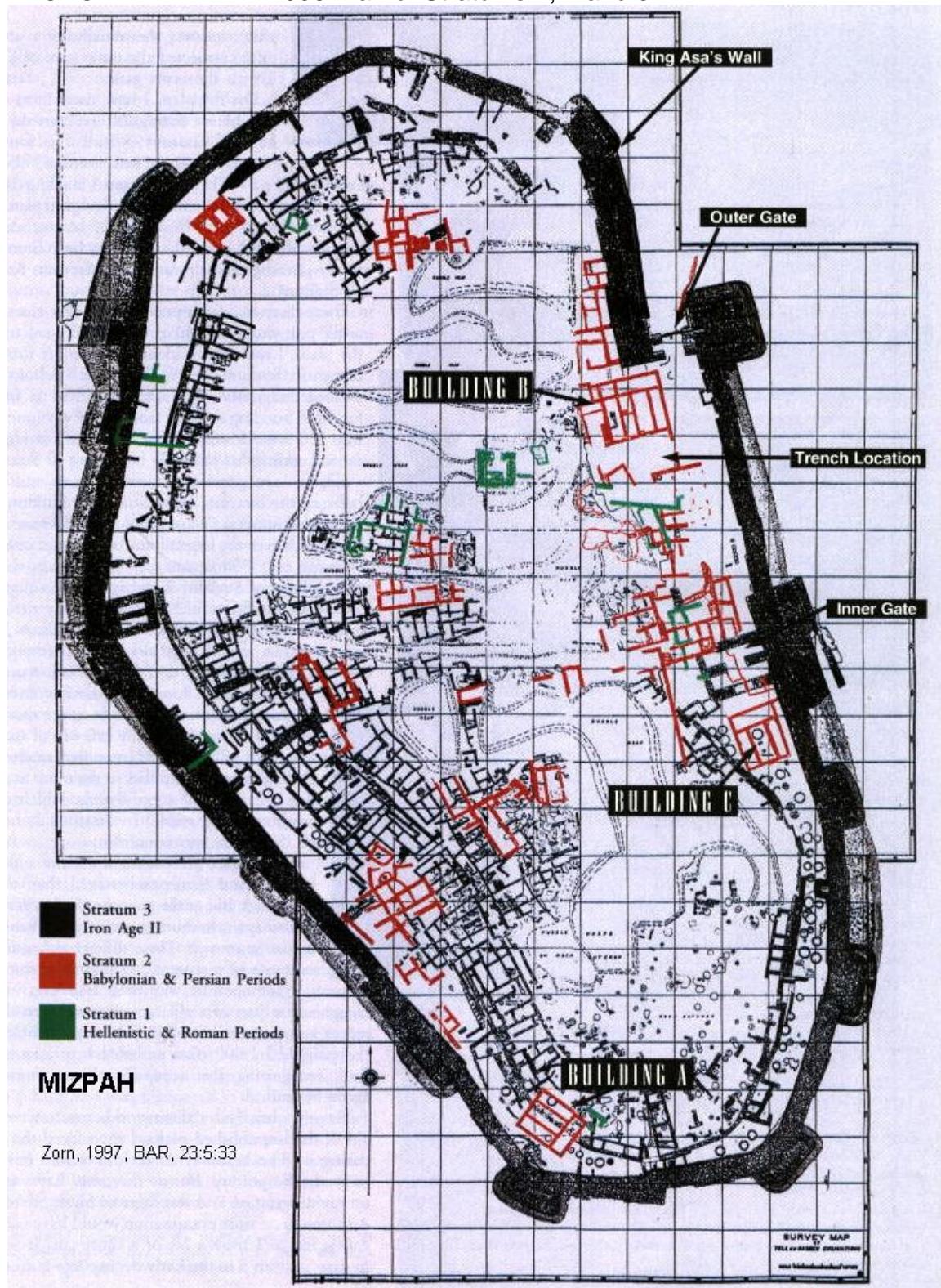


**SEAL OF YAAZENYAHU SERVANT OF THE KING**  
7th century BC, Tell en-Nasbeh (identity of king is unknown)

While much of Judah was completely destroyed by the Babylonians, including Jerusalem, some parts of the country, like Mizpah escaped destruction and continued to flourish through the Babylonian occupation and on into the Persian era. The descriptions of complete enslavement and destitution of the poor remnant Judean population (2 Kings 25:12), while accurate for Jerusalem, may not be true for some parts of Judah, like Mizpah, where wealthy people continued to live. This more lavish living is suggested by over-sized traditional 4-room houses in Stratum 2, which are much larger than those in pre-Babylonian Stratum 1. . During the entire Persian period at Mizpah, the use of the traditional Israelite 4-room house continued, but on grander scales (Zorn, 1997).

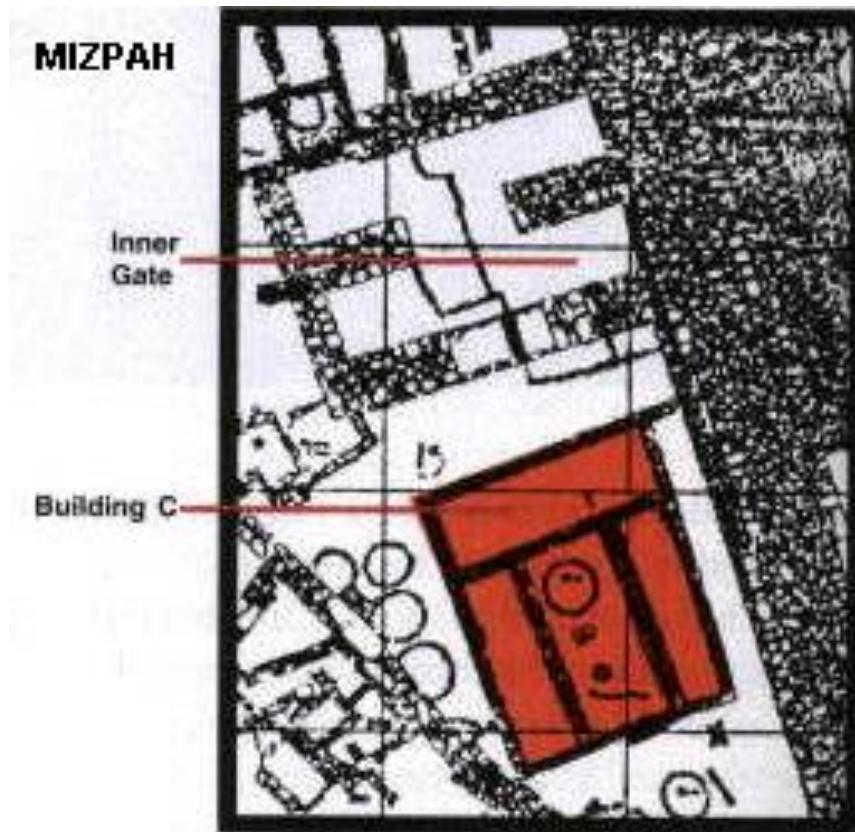
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PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 006 Plan of Strata 1, 2 and 3



CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 005 4-room house built on top of ruined gateway complex

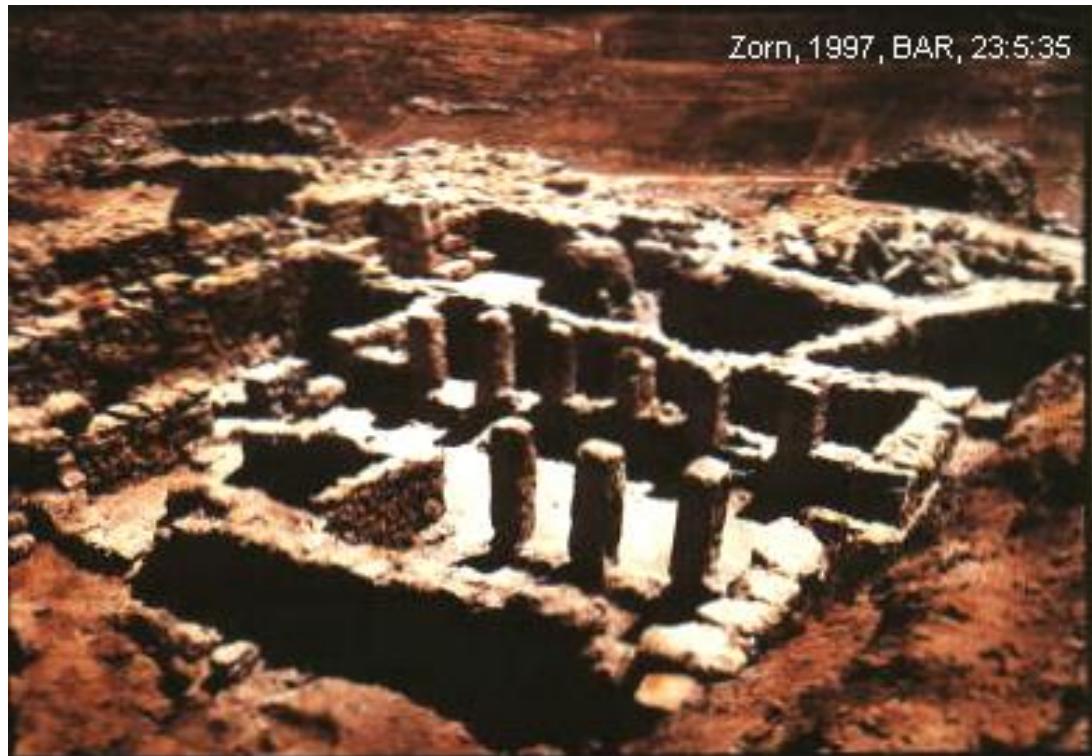


4-ROOM HOUSE (Building C) built inside older  
Gateway complex of King Asa (908-867 BC)

Zorn, 1997, BAR, 23:5:32

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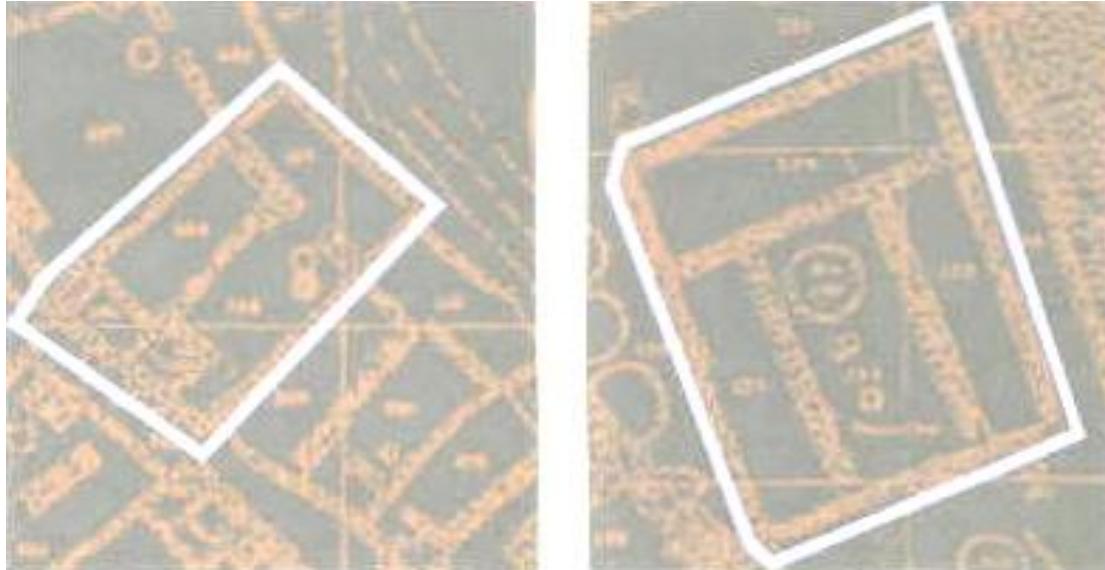
PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 007 4-room house



Zorn, 1997, BAR, 23:5:35

**FOUR-ROOM ISRAELITE HOUSE AT MIZPAH, IRON AGE I**

PHOTO LINK: MIZPAH 008 Plans of 4-room houses



**PLANS OF FOUR-ROOM HOUSES, MIZPAH, EXILE PERIOD**

Zorn, 1997, BAR, 23:5:35; Illustrations by Bade Institute

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Ezra 2:1-63 suggests that many of the returning Judeans settled in Benjamin, the area formerly administered by Gedaliah from Mizpah. (Zorn, 1997)

### ISMAEL THE ASSASSIN (586 BCE)

After Gedaliah became governor, an assassination plot was made by the Ammonites. He refused to take rumors of this plot seriously and after 2 months in office he and his bodyguard were killed by a Judean rebel, Ismael son of Nethaniah who also took hostages. The hostages were rescued, but Ismael escaped into Ammon (Jer. 40:13 to 41:15; Hoerth, 1998:370).

PHOTO LINK: AMMON 013 Map of Ammonite sites



### NEO-BABYLONIAN POLICY

The Neo-Babylonians (Chaldeans) were not inclined to rebuild what they had destroyed. The remnant Judean population became poor “vinedressers and plowmen” (2 Kings 25:12-14) in service to the Babylonians (Jer. 40:9). The Babylonians expected some portion of this diminished production (Graham, 1984, cited by Hoerth, 1998:369).

## PERSIAN POLICY (556 BCE)

When Cyrus the Persian overthrew the Babylonians in 539 BCE it set the stage for the Jews eventual return and the rebuilding of their Temple. Reconstruction commenced in 536 BCE and after much difficulty and opposition was finished in 516 BCE, 70 years after the Fall of Jerusalem. That Second Temple was inferior to Solomon's Temple.

## JEREMIAH: LAST DAYS

Jeremiah had prophesied that Judea should surrender to the Chaldeans, and his counsel after the Fall of Jerusalem was to avoid revolt and accept the Babylonian occupation. He was freed and allowed to return to Mizpah to advise Gedaliah (Jer. 30:1-8).

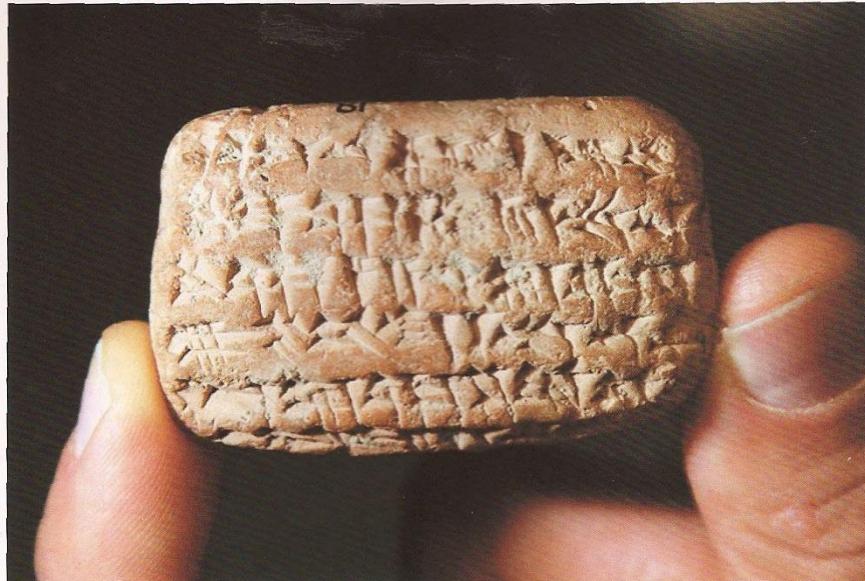
### ***Nebo-Sarsekim (July 18, 587 BCE)***

Jeremiah 39:3 describes a meeting in Jerusalem of Babylonian officials. Two men are mentioned by name: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar (Sin-magir, Jerusalem Bible) and Nebo-Sarekim, a chief officer. This meeting, in the Middle Gate of conquered Jerusalem occurred on July 18, 587 BCE. A tablet with the name Nebo-Sarekim was found in Sippar, an ancient Babylonian city 20 miles southwest of modern Bagdad, and 35 miles north of ancient Babylon (Reynolds 2007, cited by Wood, 2007:66).

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PHOTO LINK: NEBO-SARSEKIM 001 Image of tablet mentioning Nebo-Sarsekim, Sippar.

The tablet mentioning Nebo-Sarsekim was found in Sippar, an ancient Babylonian city 20 mi (32 km) southwest of modern Baghdad and 35 mi (57 km) north of Babylon. In the late 19th century, tens of thousands of cuneiform tablets were recovered from the site and brought to the British Museum (Gasche and Janssen 1997). Later, in 1920, the Nebo-Sarsekim tablet, only 2.13 in (5.5 cm) wide, from the same site, was acquired by the museum.



Wood, B.G, 2007, B&S, 20:3:66

Bible and Spade 20.3 (2007)

The tablet says:

[Regarding] 1.5 minas [0.75 kg] of gold, the property of Nabu-sharrussu-ukim, the chief eunuch, which he sent via Arad-Banitu the eunuch to [the temple] Esangila; Arad-Banitu has delivered [it] to Esanglia. In the presence of Bel-usat, son of Alpaya, the royal bodyguard, [and of] Nadin, son of Marduk-zer-ibni, Month XI, day 18, year 10 [of] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Reynolds, 2007, cited by Wood 2007:66).

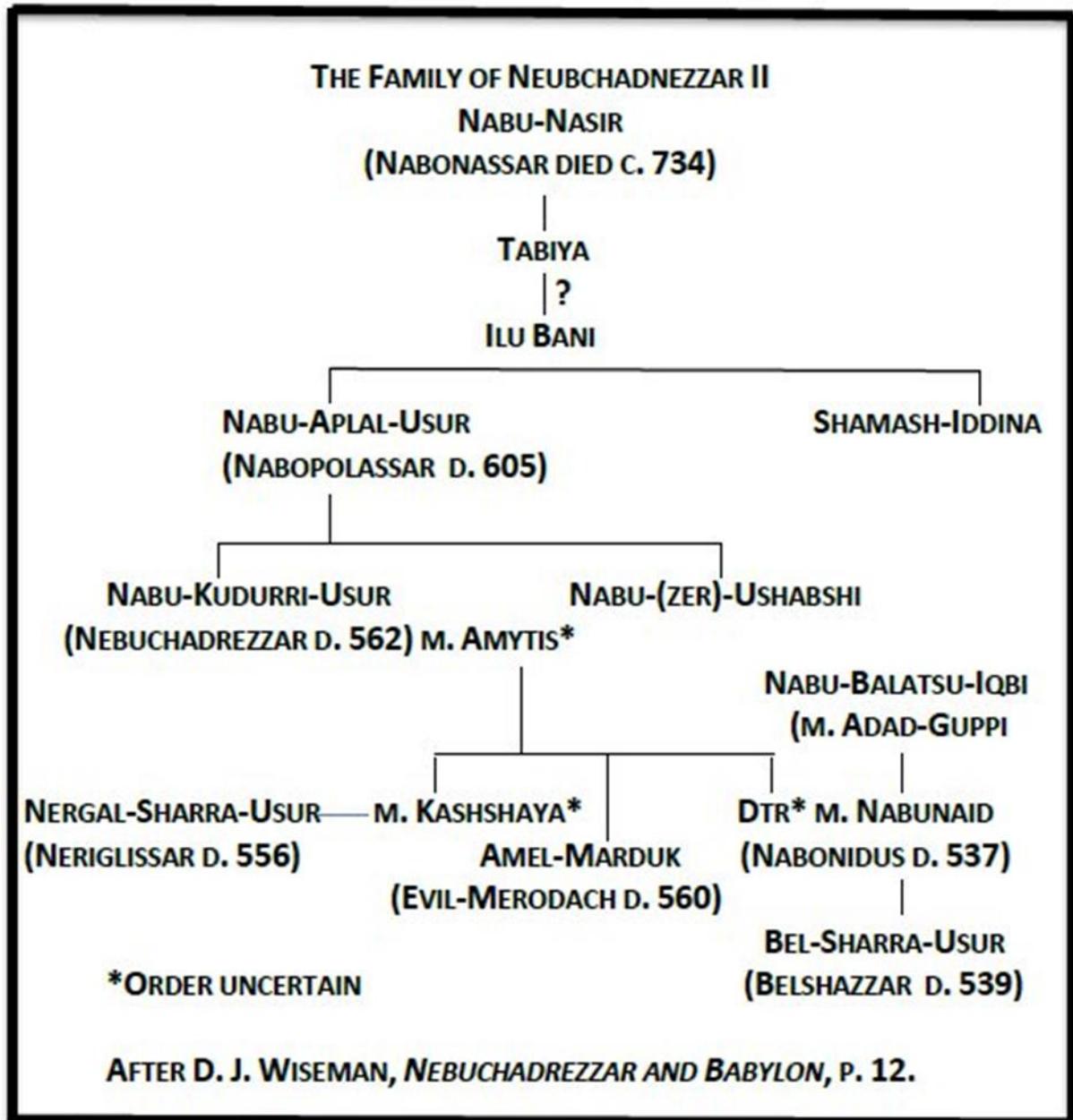
The cuneiform transliteration Nabu-sharrussu-ukim is identical to the Hebrew Nebo-Sarsekim of Jer. 39:3. The literal rendering of his title in this verse is “chief eunuch” and is identical to the title in the Sippur tablet (Reynolds, 2007, cited by Wood, 2007:66).

***Nergal-Sharezer (July 18, 587 BCE)***

The other Babylonian officers mentioned by name along with Nebo-Sarsekim in Jeremiah 39:3 and in Jeremiah 39:13-14 was Nergal-Sharezer. Verses 13-14 say that Nergal-Sharezer was instrumental in getting Jeremiah released from the Courtyard of the Guard. He is also described in Babylonian sources. He was married to Nebuchadnezzar's daughter Kashshaia. Nergal-Sharezer later became king of Babylon (559-556 BCE), and was re-named Neriglissar, a name found in classical sources (Wiseman, 1985:10-12, cited by Wood, 68, 69; Leick, 1999:122, cited by Wood, 2007:68-69)

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PHOTO      LINK:      NEBUCHADNEZZAR      010      Family      Tree;  
[https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;\\_ylt=AwrVrN66AypfN1wAcBIPxQt.;\\_ylu=X3oDMTByNWU4cGh1BGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzYw--?p=NEBUCHADNEZZAR+II+FAMILY+TREE&fr=yhs-sz-001&hspart=sz&hsimp=yhs-001#id=3&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fbible.org%2Fassets%2Fimages%2FHeater\\_BHA\\_19.004.jpg&action=click](https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrVrN66AypfN1wAcBIPxQt.;_ylu=X3oDMTByNWU4cGh1BGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDBHNIYwNzYw--?p=NEBUCHADNEZZAR+II+FAMILY+TREE&fr=yhs-sz-001&hspart=sz&hsimp=yhs-001#id=3&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fbible.org%2Fassets%2Fimages%2FHeater_BHA_19.004.jpg&action=click)



## Exodus to Egypt (586 BCE)

After the assassination of Gedaliah, fear of retaliation by Nebuchadnezzar II lead to a decision by leaders of the remnant Judean community (Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah) to escape to Egypt, a kind or reverse Exodus (Jer. 43). Jeremiah prophesized forcefully against this course of action. Jeremiah and his scribe, Baruch son of Neriah "all went to Egypt and came to Tahpanhes, disobeying the Lord" (Jer. 43:6). There Jeremiah continued to preach against the Egyptian exile and was apparently there against his will (Hoerth, 1998:370).

PHOTO LINK:

NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 006

Coin with image of

Nebuchadnezzar II (RIGHT)



## Queen of Heaven (586 BCE)

These impious political decisions were influenced by religious apostasy. Jeremiah preached against pagan Babylonian practices that had infiltrated Jewish religious practice. Jeremiah 44:18-19 says that the women of Judea made "burnt sacrifices to the queen of heaven and poured drink-offerings to her...making crescent-cakes marked with her image"

"Queen of Heaven" was a title for Ishtar, a Babylonian goddess of fertility. Israelites--women especially--had worshiped her for a very long time, until the revival sparked by King Josiah put a stop to the practice (2 Kings 22). Now, about 35 years after Josiah's campaign, Israelites blamed their downfall on his reform. Jeremiah tried to set the record straight: it was *persistence* in pagan worship that had led to their destruction. (Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998). Images of Ishtar (Sumerian Inanna) are associated with the crescent moon and with the evening star, Venus.

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PHOTO LINK: CRESCENT MOON 001 With star, Muslim symbol

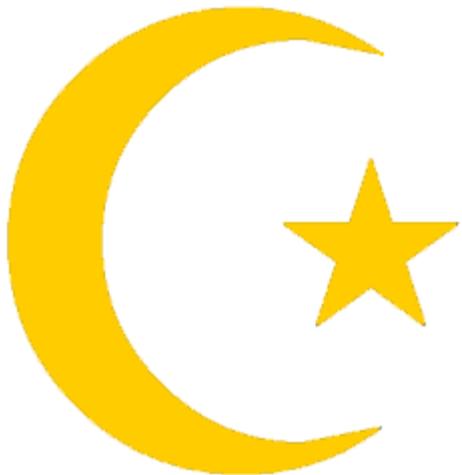


PHOTO LINK: AR012 Two suppliant hands engraved with a lunar crescent and circle between and above the hands



Hazor, Late Bronze Age  
Stele with Lunar Symbol

PHOTO LINK: GA023 Two suppliant hands engraved with a lunar crescent and circle between and above the hands with other massebot

Hazor, Shrine of the Stelae, Late Canaanite  
or Late Bronze II temple of the 13th century BC



BWP:GA23; Photo by David Harris/Israel Dept. of Antiquities and Museums

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PHOTO LINK: IDOLS 009 Babylonian alabaster Ishtar with gold earrings and ruby navel



PHOTO LINK: ASSYRIA 043 Seal of Ishtar from Sheshem destruction by Shalmaneser V (726-722 BCE)



**ISHTAR SEAL, SHECHEM, 724 BC**  
Younger, 2003, BAR, 29:6:43

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PHOTO LINK: ISHTAR 001 Old Babylonian cylinder seal with Ishtar, Gula and king 1800-1600 BCE



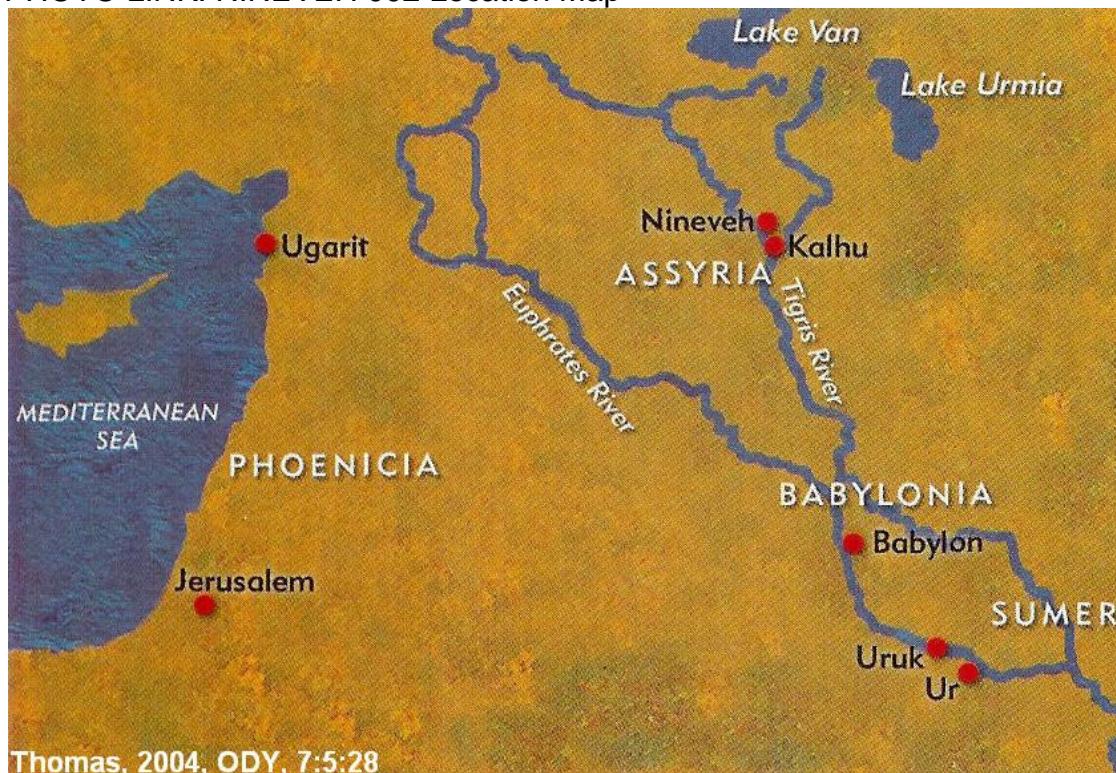
PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 003 Relief of Nabonidus praying to moon.



## EZEKIEL (593-559 BCE)

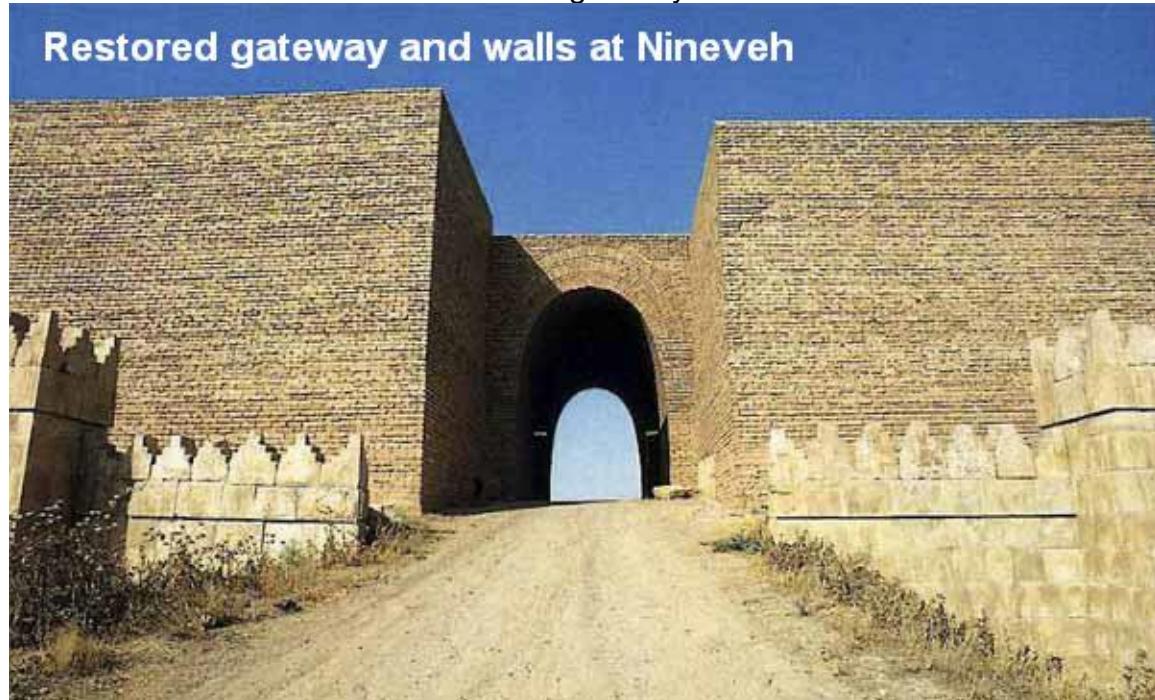
Ezekiel lived during a time of international upheaval. He was born in 621 BCE during the reign of good King Josiah. The Assyrian empire that had once conquered the Syro-Palestinian area and destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel (which fell to the Assyrians in 722-721 BCE) began to crumble under the blows of a resurgent Babylon. In 612 the great Assyrian city of **Nineveh** fell to a combined force of Babylonians and Medes.

PHOTO LINK: NINEVEH 002 Location Map



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PHOTO LINK: NINEVEH 005 Restored gateway and walls at Nineveh



Three years after the fall of Nineveh, Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt marched north to assist the Assyrians and to try to reassert Egypt's age-old influence over Palestine and Aram (Syria). At Megiddo, in 609 BCE, King Josiah of Judah, who may have been an ally of Babylon as King Hezekiah had been, attempted to intercept the Egyptian forces but was crushed, losing his life in the battle (see 2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chron. 35:20-24; Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998). For an expanded discussion of these events, see Chapter 20, p. 193-224.

### ***Ezekiel in Jerusalem (609 BCE)***

Ezekiel was approximately twelve years old when King Josiah died in 609 BCE (2 Chron. 35:20-23; Hoerth, 1998:370).

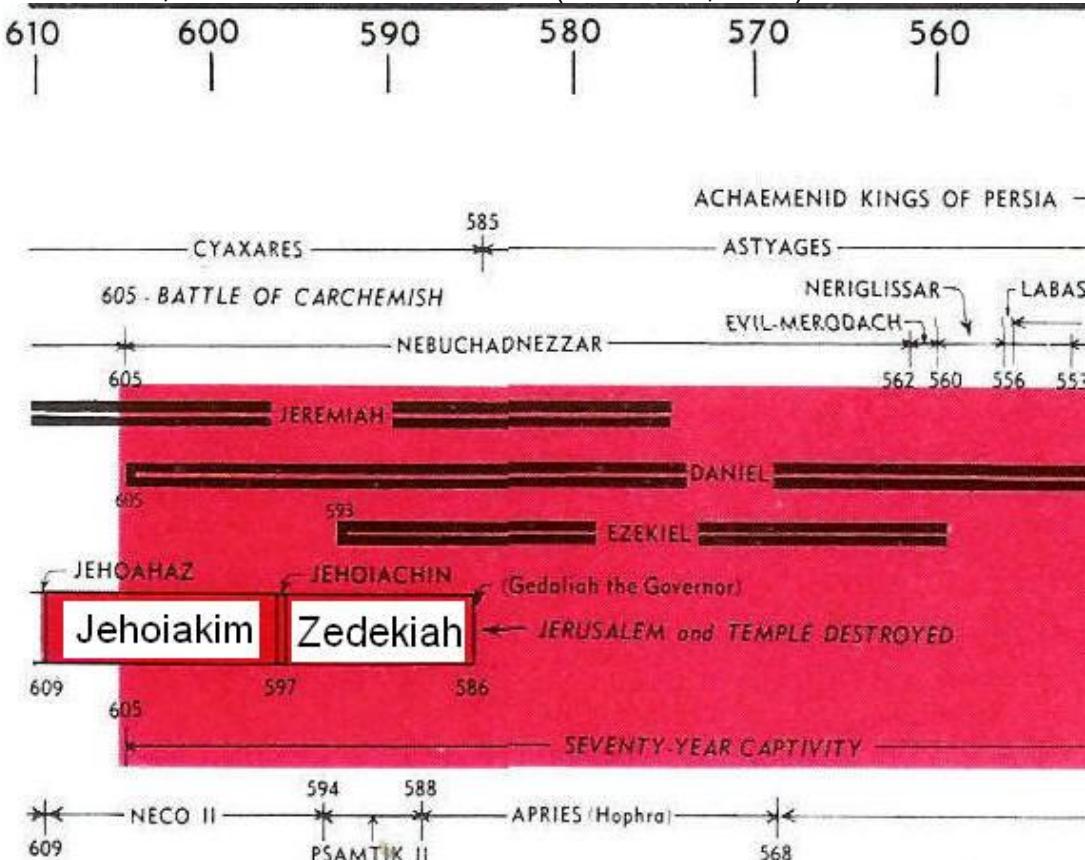
After the Battle of Megiddo, Jehoahaz<sup>1</sup>, a son of Josiah, ruled Judah for only three months, after which Neco installed Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, as his royal vassal in Jerusalem (609 BCE, Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, 1998). This Babylonian appointment of Jehoiakim also lead to the taking of some upper-class Judean hostages to Babylon, among them a teenager named Daniel (Hoerth, 1998:370).

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<sup>1</sup> This Jehoahaz should not be confused with the Israelite King of the Divided Kingdom Period who ruled 814-798 BC).

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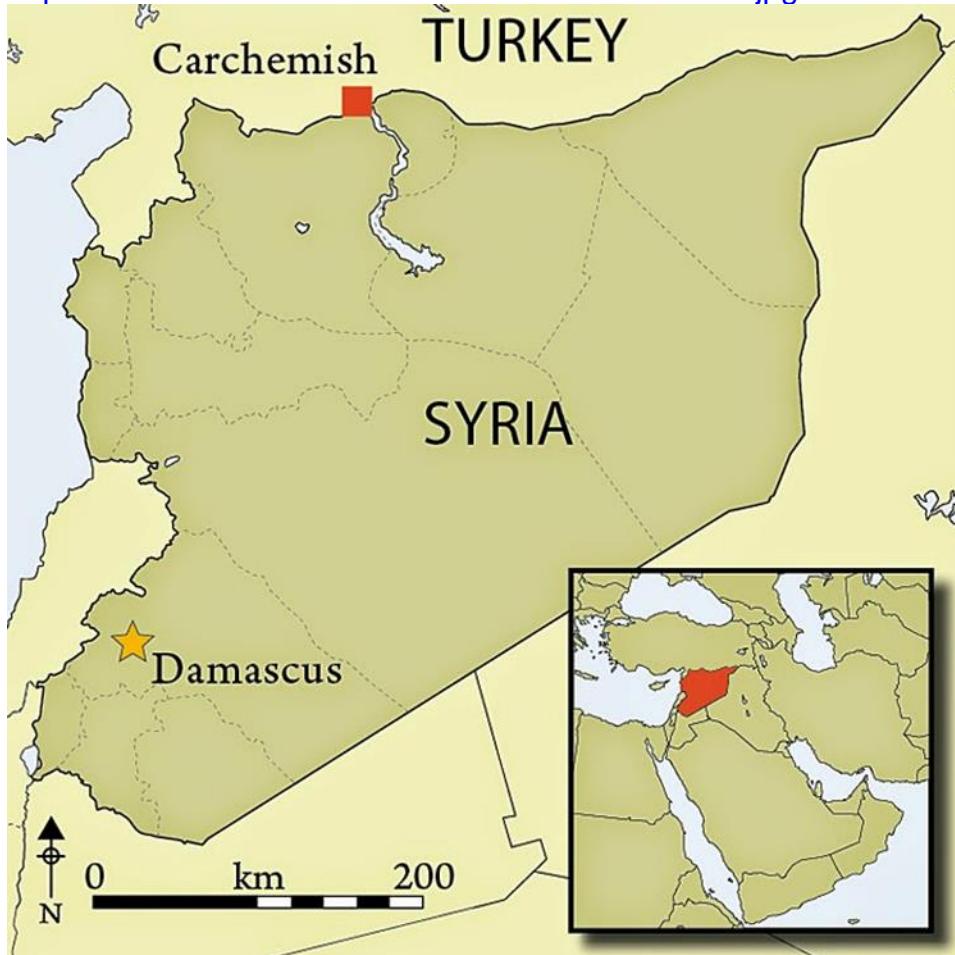
PHOTO LINK; JEHOIAKIM 001 Timeline (Whitcomb, 1968)



In 605 the Babylonians overwhelmed the Egyptian army at Carchemish (see Jer 46:2), then pressed south as far as the Philistine plain. In the same year, Nebuchadnezzar was elevated to the Babylonian throne and Jehoiakim shifted allegiance to him. When a few years later the Egyptian and Babylonian forces met in a standoff battle in southwestern Palestine, Jehoiakim rebelled against his new overlord, Nebuchadnezzar (Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998).

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PHOTO LINK: CARCHEMESH 003 Location map with inset;  
<https://www.hittitemonuments.com/zincirli/zincirliP01.jpg> 8/4/20



### ***Ezekiel in Tel-abib near Babylon***

Nebuchadnezzar soon responded by sending a force against Jerusalem, subduing it in 597 B.C. Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin and about 10,000 Jews (see 2 Kings 24:14), including Ezekiel, were exiled to Babylon, where they joined those who had been exiled in Jehoiakim's "third year" (see Daniel 1:1 and note; Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998). Ezekiel was resettled in a town called Tel-abib, not far from Babylon.

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PHOTO LINK: TEL ABIB 001 Map of Tel-abib



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PHOTO LINK: CHEBAR 001 Map of location of Chebar along river.  
<http://bibleatlas.org/chebar.htm>; Oct. 4, 2010



The Chebar River of Ezekiel (1:1-3; 3:15, 23; 10:15, 20, 22) is associated with Tel-abib. The river is also named Habor, and today is called the Khabour. It flows into the Euphrates at Circesium (Carchemish, or Circesioum, now Karkisia). It was the royal canal of Nebuchadnezzar, the Nahr Malcha, the greatest in Mesopotamia, which connected the Tigris with the Euphrates, in the construction of which the Jewish captives were probably employed  
(<http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/chebar.html>, April 1, 2007)

It began north of Babylon, went through Nippur and ended south of Ur (Hoerth, 1998:371).

To the banks of this river some of the Israelites were removed by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:6; <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/chebar.html>, April 1, 2007).

### ***Call of Ezekiel (592 BCE)***

Five years after his deportation to Tel-abib, Ezekiel received his call to be a prophet (Ezekiel 1:1) when he was 30 years old, in 592 BCE. His messages were similar to the ones Jeremiah was preaching in Judah: Jerusalem would fall and the Exile would not soon be over. This message was proclaimed for 7 years (Hoerth, 1998:371).

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Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne in Jerusalem, but within five or six years he too rebelled. The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem in 588, and in July, 586, the walls were breached and the city plundered. On Aug. 14, 586, the city and temple were burned (Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998).

The events of August, 586 were fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel since 787 BCE. Abruptly, Ezekiel's messages became one of hope and restoration (dry bones of Ezekiel 37 and Ezekiel 40-41). His last datable message is 571 BCE (Hoerth, 1990:372).

Under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, Babylon dominated the international scene until it was crushed by Cyrus the Persian in 539 B.C. Israel's monarchy was ended; the City of David and the Lord's temple no longer existed (Compton's Interactive Bible, 1998).

### ***Ezekiel's Chronology***

The historical narratives of Ezekiel are marked in reference to the year of exile of King Jehoiachin (Ezekiel 1:2). This is unexpected because most scholars think standard practice of the time would have been to date events from the rule of Zedekiah. Seal impressions on jar handles found at three sites (Lachish, Beth Shemesh/Palace of Ramat Rahel and Tell Beit Mirsim) read "Belonging to Eliakim, steward of Yaukin (Jehoiachin)". These lead to the conclusion that after the deportation of 597, an administrator named **Eliakim** continued to manage the royal estates. For many Judeans, Jehoiachin was still considered the legitimate king (Albright, 1942 cited by Hoerth, 1998:372).

Bullea of administrator Eliakim have been found at the Palace at Ramat, Beth Shemesh, and Lachish.

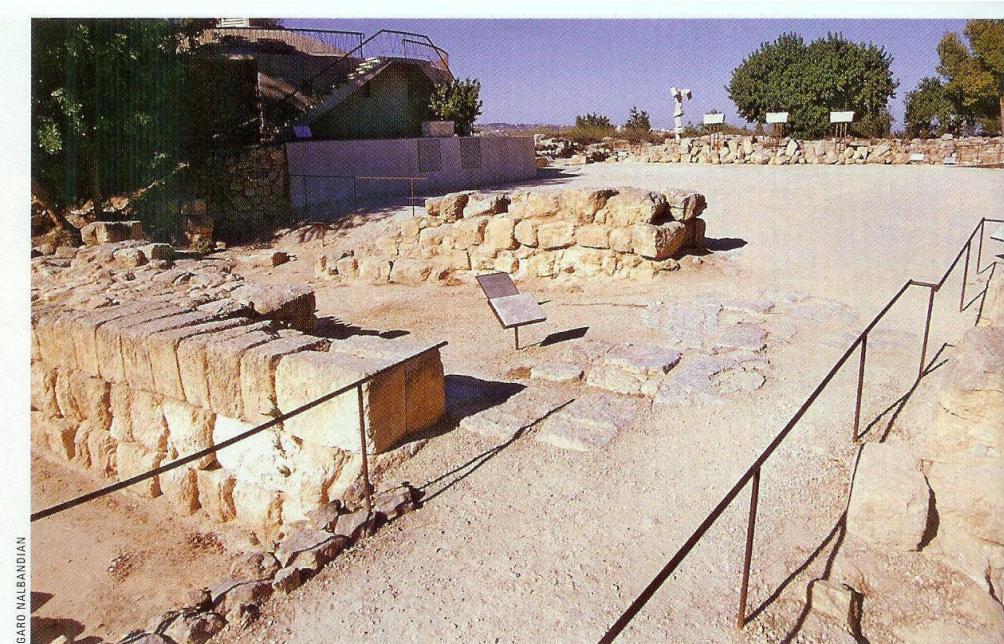
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PHOTO LINK: LACHISH 034 Location Map



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: RAMAT RAHEL 001 Map and palace gateway

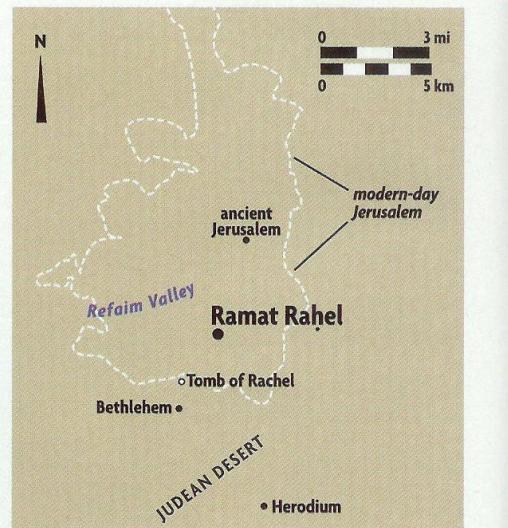


GARO NALBANDIAN

THE PALACE GATEWAY area at Ramat Rahel faces east. The forecourt (center in photo) was paved with crushed lime. The high quality of the palace's construction is evident in the three extant courses at left. The shaped stones were so exactingly cut that no mortar was needed to bond them to each other; even today the stone blocks fit so snugly that not even a knife blade can be placed between them. Author Barkay calls the Ramat Rahel palace the finest structure ever unearthed from First Temple period (mid-tenth-early-sixth-century B.C.E.) Judah.

In the background (upper right in photo) are three replica capitals (see photo, p. 39) and one of four stylized sculptures of falling building stones (see photo, p. 38), modern creations that mark the corners of the ancient palace.

Barkay, 2006, BAR, 32:5:36



CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: BETH SHEMESH 003C Location Map



PHOTO LINK: BETH SHEMECH 005B Strong Wall" at Beth Shemesh, bastion for Solomon's fortress and tunnel of MacKenzie; Bunimovitz and Lederman, 1997, BAR, 23:1:CD

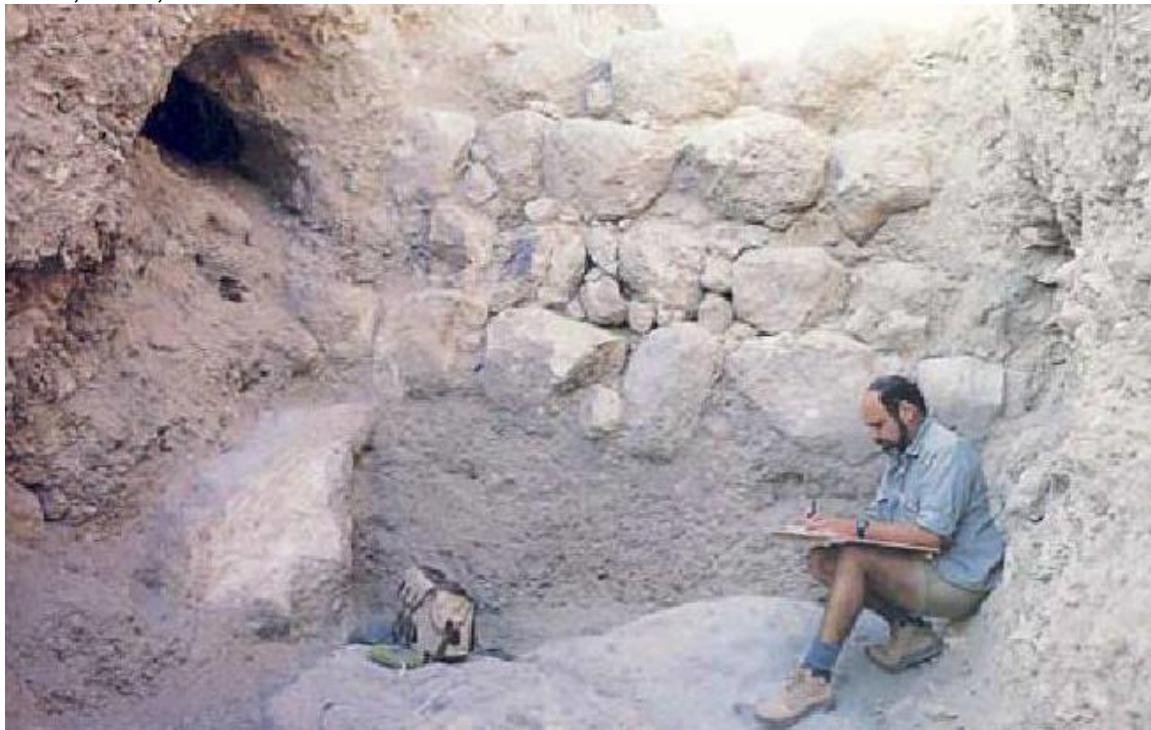


PHOTO LINK: BULLAE ELIAKIM 001 Stamped jar handle **Palace of Ramat**

Rahel reading: I'lyqm ncr ywkn' = 'Belonging to Eliakim servant of Yukan';

[http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal\\_impressions\\_ostracon.html](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal_impressions_ostracon.html); April 1, 2007; Palace of Ramat Rahel



PHOTO LINK: BULLAE ELIAKIM 002

Stamped jar handle **Beth Shemesh**;

I'lyqm ncr ywkn' = 'Belonging to Eliakim servant of Yukan';

[http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal\\_impressions\\_ostracon.html](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal_impressions_ostracon.html); April 1, 2007; Beth Shemesh



PHOTO LINK: BULLAE ELIAKIM 003 Stamped jar handle

**Lachish** reading: I'lyqm ncr ywkn' =

'Belonging to Eliakim servant of Yukan';

[http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal\\_impressions\\_ostracon.html](http://www.specialtyinterests.net/seal_impressions_ostracon.html); April 1, 2007; Lachish Layer III 701 BCE



### **Ezekiel's Temple**

The temple described by Ezekiel from his visions has no archaeological record.

However, his fiction gives insights into Hebrew world view after the First temple's destruction.

The Second Temple initiated by Ezra and Nehemiah bear little

resemblance to the one described by Ezekiel. Scholars refer to it as the "Third

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

Temple.” Characteristics of the multi-level wood-paneled structure such as gateways, outer and inner courts, side chambers and vestibules, archways, doors, windows, sanctuary and altar are described. Some furnishings are described. Details of decoration are given, for example cherubim and palm trees carved on the doors and walls. The purposes of the side chambers are given, for example, for robing of the priests, for consumption of the flesh of sacrifices by the priests, and for singers. Dimensions are given based on the cubit. Hebrew, Christian and Classical commentaries and analysis of Ezekiel’s temple are diverse.

The medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides<sup>2</sup> qualified these chapters of Ezekiel as complex for the common reader and even for the seasoned scholar. Bible commentators who have ventured into explaining the design detail directly from the Hebrew Bible text include Rashi, David Kimhi, Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, and Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michal which all produced slightly varying sketches of the temple envisioned by Ezekiel  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s\\_Temple#:~:text=Ezekiel%27s%20Temple%20is%20an%20unbuilt%20temple%20structure,described%20in%20the%20biblical%20Book%20of%20Ezekiel%20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s_Temple#:~:text=Ezekiel%27s%20Temple%20is%20an%20unbuilt%20temple%20structure,described%20in%20the%20biblical%20Book%20of%20Ezekiel%20)). Accessed 8/10/2020)

Some Christian interpretations of Ezekiel's temple are: it is the temple that Zerubbabel should have built; a literal temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of Christ, a temple which is symbolic of the worship of God by the Christian church today, or a symbol of the future and eternal reign of God. A number of Christian commentators also believe that this temple will be a literal Fourth Temple, which will exist during the Millennial Kingdom, following the destruction of a future temple that will be desecrated by the Antichrist  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s\\_Temple#:~:text=Ezekiel%27s%20Temple%20is%20an%20unbuilt%20temple%20structure,described%20in%20the%20biblical%20Book%20of%20Ezekiel%20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s_Temple#:~:text=Ezekiel%27s%20Temple%20is%20an%20unbuilt%20temple%20structure,described%20in%20the%20biblical%20Book%20of%20Ezekiel%20)). Accessed 8/10/2020).

The geometric symmetry of Ezekiel's temple vision is curious and reflects proto-Greek Euclidian ideals. The interpretation of the temple complex as being situated on a volcano is fascinating.

Here are two video summaries of Ezekiel's Temple with 3D animation:  
<https://youtu.be/oQRegCrJHzk>

<https://youtu.be/ahwjZBW5JOk>

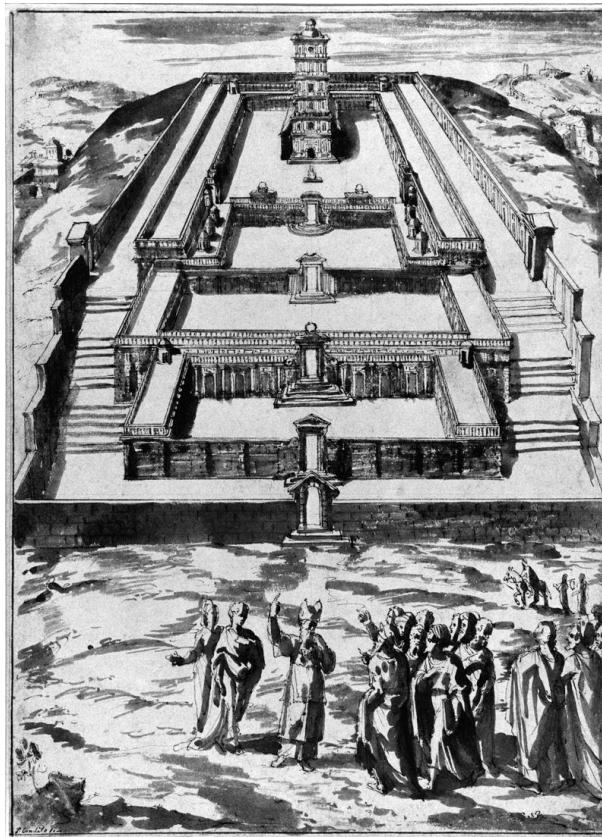
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<sup>2</sup> (1135–1204), Jewish philosopher and Rabbinic scholar, born in Spain; born Moses ben Maimon. His Guide for the Perplexed (1190) attempts to reconcile Talmudic scripture with the philosophy of Aristotle.

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PHOTO LINK: EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE 001; Drawing;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s\\_Temple#/media/File:Pieter\\_de\\_Witte\\_Solomon.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezekiel%27s_Temple#/media/File:Pieter_de_Witte_Solomon.jpg) accessed 8/8/2020



CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

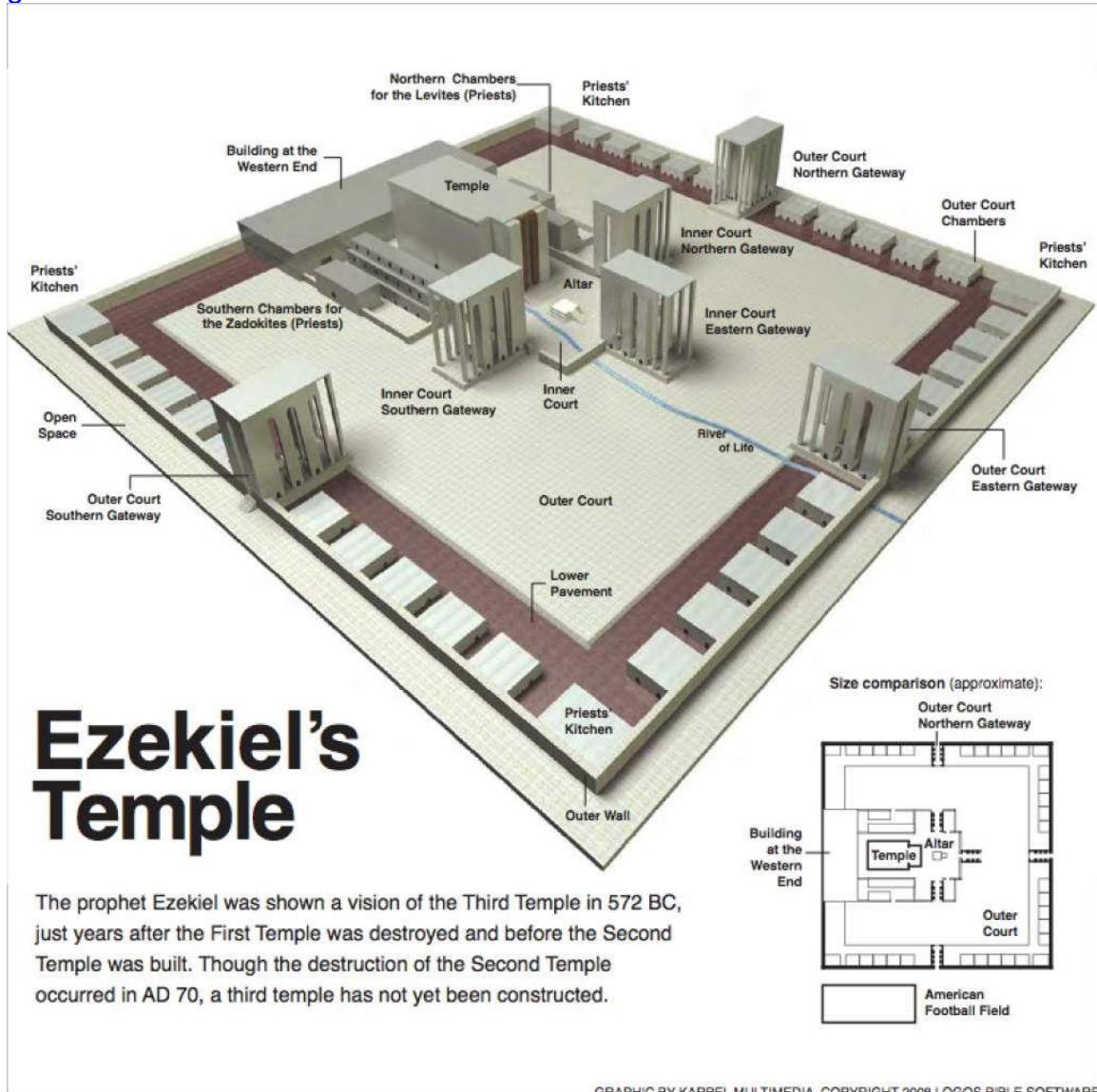
PHOTO LINK: EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE 002; Painting;  
[https://oneyearbibleimages.com/ezekiel\\_s\\_temple.jpg](https://oneyearbibleimages.com/ezekiel_s_temple.jpg) accessed 8/8/2020



**VIEW OF THE SANCTUARY (Ezekiel 40-47)**

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

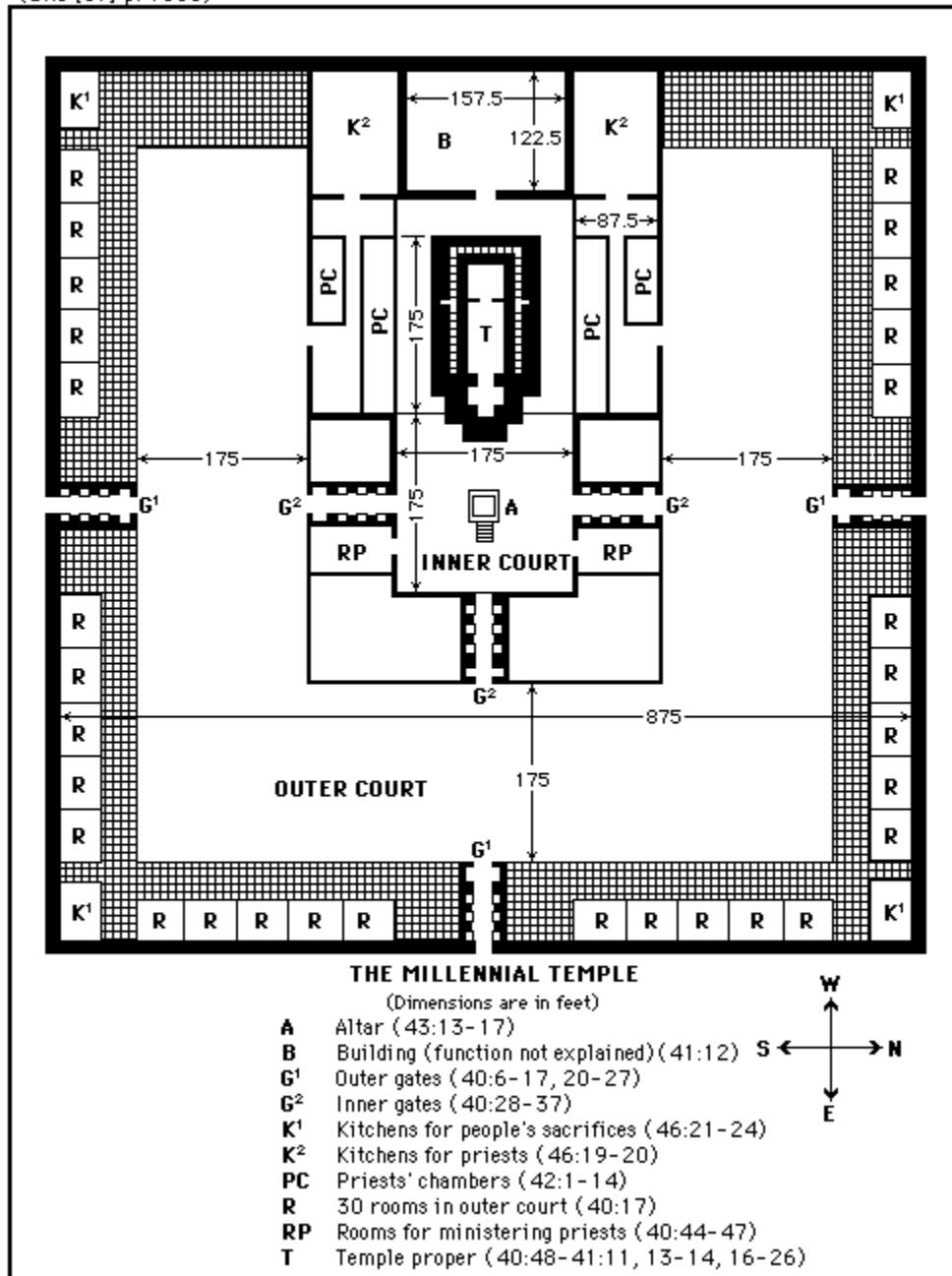
PHOTO LINK: EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE 003; Plan;  
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/b8/00/3b/b8003bbeae1916d43998d41846e60490.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020



CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE 003-02; Plan;  
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/06/b6/52/06b65296398aa478244bcc3e92e7d638.gif>  
 accessed 8/9/2020

(BKC [OT] p. 1303)



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE 004; Central Volcano;  
<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/9d/51/4f/9d514fbcd3db4469a513afbffb72aac7.jpg>  
accessed 8/9/2020



## DANIEL (605-536 BCE)

Daniel was born about the same year as Ezekiel (621 BCE) during the good years of King Josiah. Four years after Josiah's death at the Battle of Megiddo, Daniel was taken to Babylon in the first wave of Babylonian deportations in 605 BCE. Following Babylonian custom, the captured Judean upper class professionals were employed in the Babylonian government as multi-lingual interpreters, scribes and agents.

### *Ezekiel and the Epic of Aqhat*

Ezekiel (593-c.560 BCE) was born 8 years after Daniel (605-536 BCE). Ezekiel's ministry ended about 560 BCE, whereas Daniel lived about 24 years longer. So the inclusion of Daniel in a prophecy invoking Noah and Job seemed out of place in Ezekiel 14:12-20:

"Son of man, if a country were to sin against me by faithlessness, and if I were to stretch out my hand against it and destroy its stock of bread and send famine to it to kill its men and beasts, and if in that country there were these three men, Noah, Danel [not Daniel], and Job, these men would have their lives spared because of



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

integrity...they would not be able to save either son or daughter, they alone would be saved, and the country would become a desert" (Jerusalem Bible, 1971)

PHOTO LINK: ANATH 001 Relief of Ugarit goddess Anath; <http://icas.com/e.o/ill/anath01.jpg>, Oct. 29. 2010 (ABOVE, RIGHT)

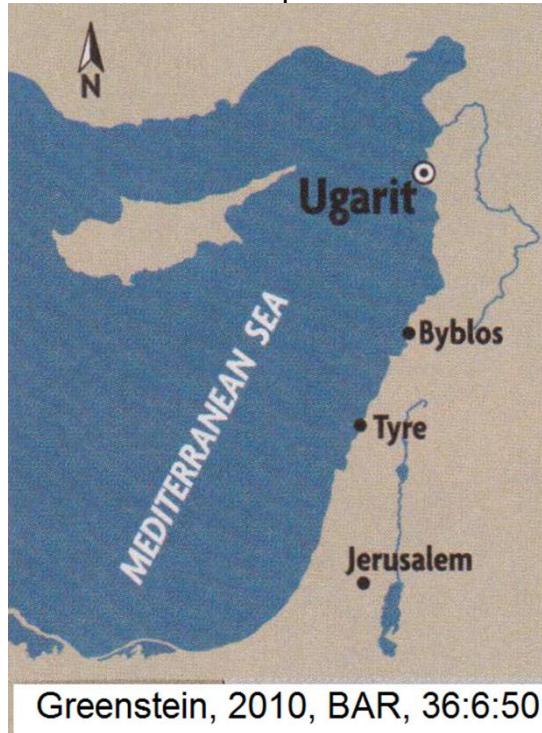
The translators of the Jerusalem Bible for Ezekiel 14:14 noted in their footnote 14a (p. 1185) that the person was Danel, not Daniel. In the Hebrew text, the name has no Hebrew letter *yod* (y) (Greenstein, 2010:51).

At the time of this prophecy, the biblical Daniel was a teenager, not the father of a family. The Danel of Ezekiel 14:14 is an allusion to the Ugarit legend of Aqhat. In that story, Danel is father of Aqhat. This Danel is mentioned, again as an allusion, in Ezekiel 28:3 (Greenstein, 2010:51)

In the Ugaritic epic, Danel is a pious judge. His seven day worship convinced Baal to take Danel's petition to El, chief male deity of the Ugarit pantheon. El grants the petition, and Danel is rewarded with a son, Aqhat.

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: UGARIT 003 Location Map



Greenstein, 2010, BAR, 36:6:50

Some time later Danel offered hospitality to the divine craftsman Kothar, who in return gave Aqhat, a mortal, one of his marvelous bows.

Kothar-wa-Khasis is a Canaanite god whose name means "Skillful-and-Wise" or "Adroit-and-Perceptive" or "Deft-and-Clever". Another of his names means "Deft-with-both-hands". Kothar is smith, craftsman, engineer, architect, and inventor. He is also soothsayer and magician, creating sacred words and spells, in part because there is an association in many cultures of metalworking deities with magic. The god-name Ka-sha-lu in texts from Ebla suggests that he was known in Syria as early as the late third millennium BC. He is also soothsayer and magician, creating sacred words and spells, in part because there is an association in many cultures of metalworking deities with magic. The god-name Ka-sha-lu in texts from Ebla suggests that he was known in Syria as early as the late third millennium BC. In Roman mythology, Kothar is Vulcan.  
(<http://www.mooseforge.com/Ancient/gods.html> accessed 8/9/2020).

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PHOTO LINK: VULCAN KOTAR 001 Relief of Vulcan with forge hammer;  
(<http://www.mooseforge.com/Ancient/gods.html> accessed 8/9/2020).



H6.

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

The bow of Kothar, however, had been intended for the goddess Anath, who became outraged that it had been given to the mortal Aqhat.

The goddess Anath may have parallels with fertility goddesses Anat and Asherah. As a Semitic war goddess, she is sister and possible consort of Ba'al. The dual roles in war and fertility mirror Greek Aphrodite and Roman Venus.

PHOTO LINK: ANTATH 002 Fertility goddess;

<https://vovalia.wordpress.com/2012/04/30/good-old-reliable-anath/> accessed 8/9/2020



Anath made Aqhat a variety of tempting offers, including herself, in exchange for the bow, but Aqhat rejected all of them. Anath then plotted to kill Aqhat, luring him to a hunting party where she, disguised as a falcon, carried her henchman, Yatpan, in a sack and dropped him on Aqhat. Yatpan killed Aqhat and snatched the bow, which he later carelessly dropped into the sea. Thus, Danel's son was tragically later lost to a murderous scheme of the goddess Anath. The inclusion of Danel with Noah and Job is a threesome that would have made sense to Ezekiel's audience (Greenstein, 2010:51-52; Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 8/9/2020)

### **Dreams in Babylonian Culture**

The story of Daniel's interpretation of the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar II are recorded in Daniel 2.

PHOTO LINK: NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 008 Statue of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay from Nebuchadnezzar II's dream;  
<http://www.teachinghearts.org/dre17hdan02.html>; Aug. 16, 2007



At the time there was a professional class of dream interpreters. The Mesopotamians had catalogued thousands of ominous signs, including dreams, and their authoritative interpretations. Nebuchadnezzars wise men would have consulted these catalogues to help them analyze the King's dream. An illustrative list of signs and their meanings is described by Oppenheir (1956:258, 271, 279; cited by Hoerth, 1998:373). Some of the catalogues are contradictory

If a man carries a sprout in his lap and kisses it repeatedly this man will acquire barley and silver. But if it grows out of his lap whatever he owns will be lost.

If a man is clad in the hide of a goat an important person will be removed and will die.

If a man flies repeatedly whatever he owns will be lost.  
If a man takes off and flies once for a subject it means loss of good things, for a poor man loss of poverty, he will see his good wishes fulfilled.

If a man flies from the place he is standing on and rises toward the sky: to this man one will restore what he has lost.

If he eats meat he knows peace of mind.

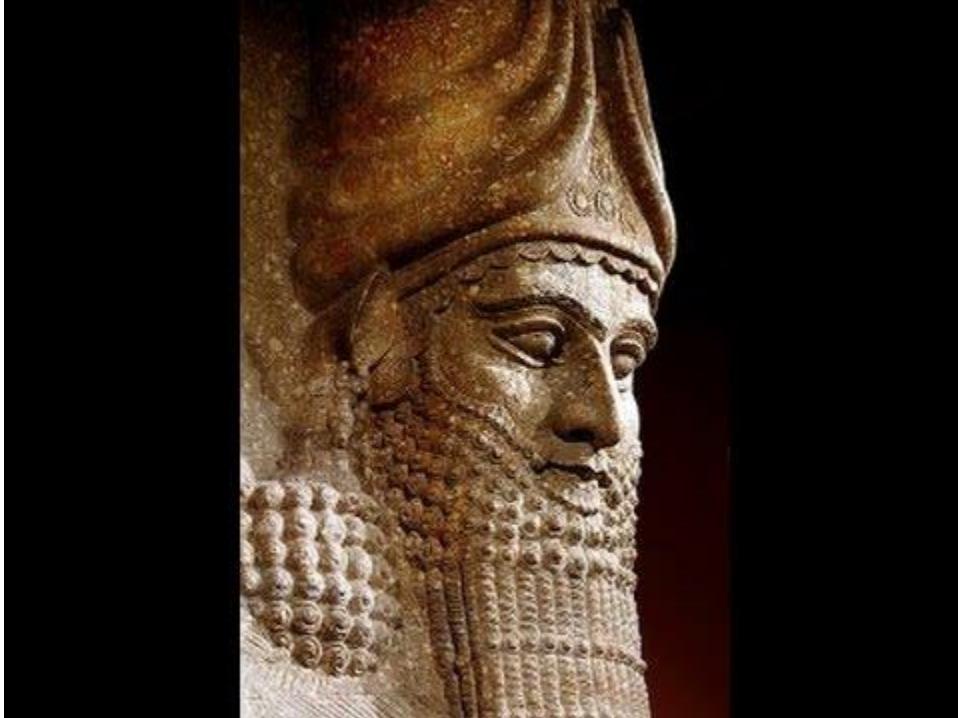
If he eats meat he does not know peace of mind.

If he eats the flesh of his friend he will enjoy a large share.  
If his friend eats his face he will enjoy a large share.  
If he eats the flesh of his hand his daughter will die.  
If he eats the flesh of his foot his eldest son will die.  
If one gives him a door he will grow old.

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

If one gives him a bolt the secret will not leak out.  
If one gives him a wheel he will have twins.

PHOTO LINK: NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 011 Statue;  
[https://i.ytimg.com/vi/g\\_S598x6Vec/hqdefault.jpg](https://i.ytimg.com/vi/g_S598x6Vec/hqdefault.jpg) accessed 8/9/2020



King Nebuchadnezzar II asked his wise men for an interpretation of his dreams, but would not tell them its content. When no description or interpretation was offered, the king ordered the execution of all his wise men including Daniel and his friends. God revealed the content of the dream to Daniel and also its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar II seems to have done little with the dreams interpretation, but he promoted Daniel (still a teenager) to a higher office.

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PHOTO LINK: GILGAMESH 014 Dream Tablet; <https://christiannews.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gilgamesh-Dream-Tablet.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020



### ***Furnaces in Babylon (586 BCE)***

The story of Daniel's associates Shadrach, Meshach and Aben-digo and their experience in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, dates to 586 BCE. This was the year Jerusalem was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar II. The story in Daniel 2 about the king's image of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay also dates to 586 BCE (Hoerth, 1998:373).

Brick making and hardening of bricks through baking were important construction technologies in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Mesopotamia. It is a land where hard rocks are rare. Bricks were a relatively inexpensive hardened building material, and clay for the bricks was abundant and widespread. Many of the bricks used in Nebuchadnezzar's building projects were stamped with dedicatory messages. These stamped bricks were used structurally rather than as face bricks. Their inscriptions were meant only for the eyes of the gods (Hoerth, 1998:377).

PHOTO LINK: NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 005 Bricks with name of Nebuchadnezzar recording his restoration of the temples to Marduk and Nebu in Babylon (ABOVE)



Bible History Online

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The King of Babylon executed Ahab and Zedekiah by burning them in a brick-making furnace (Jeremiah 29:22).

### ***Splendor of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon***

Nebuchadnezzar expanded, strengthened and beautified his capital city. Today the ruins of Babylon cover over 100 acres. That it was a glorious city is indicated by Daniel 4:30, 36.

Extra-biblical texts expand our understanding of Babylon's splendor: (Thompson, J., 1982a: 191-193, cited by Hoerth, 1998:376):

A great wall which like a mountain cannot be moved I made of mortar and brick.... Its foundation upon the bosom of the abyss ... its top I raised mountain high. I triplicated the city wall in order to strengthen it, I caused a great protecting wall to run at the foot of the wall of burnt brick...

Upon the. . . great gates strong bulls. . . and terrible serpents ready to strike, I placed.... A third great moat-wall ... I built with mortar and brick...

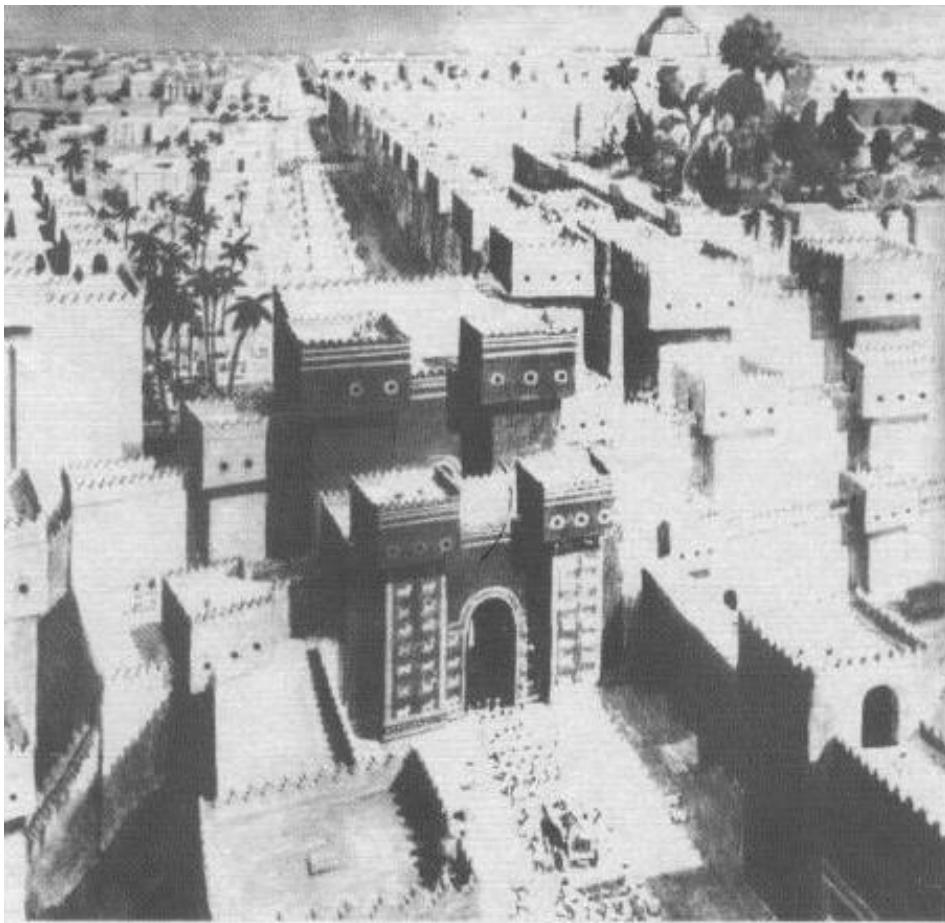
The produce of the lands, the products of the mountains, the bountiful wealth of the sea, within [Babylon] I gathered.... The palace. . . I rebuilt in Babylon with great cedars I brought from Lebanon, the beautiful forest to roof it...

Huge cedars from Lebanon, their forest with my clean hands, I cut down. With radiant gold, I overlaid them, with jewels I adorned them

Babylon's Precession Street was 62 feet wide and paved with imported stone. This avenue was named ***Aibur-Shab*** ("the enemy shall not pass")

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PHOTO LINK: BABYLONIA 002 Reconstruction of Ishtar Gate



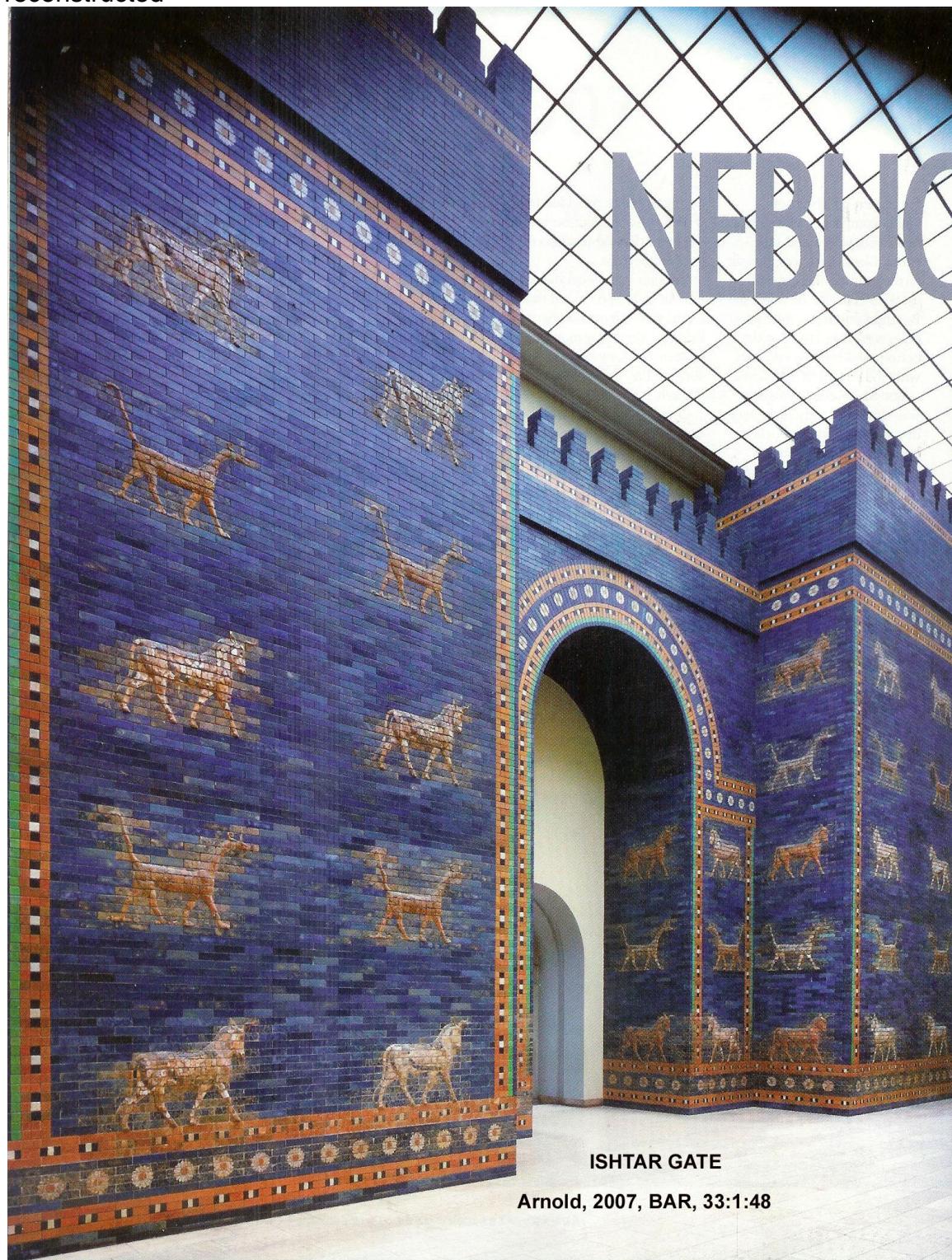
Reconstruction of Babylon Ishtar Gate 6th Century BC.

ABR, 1989, 2:2:Front Cover

The city sprawled over hundreds of acres. It had a wall 70 feet wide over which two sets of chariots could pass side-by-side. The city walls had towers, and wide, wet moats. The inner city had additional defenses: three sets of interior defensive walls, moats, and towers and a fortress with its own massive walls was beside the Palace. This building had hundreds of rooms (Hoerth, 1998:381)

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PHOTO LINK: ISHTAR GATE 001 Ishtar Gate at Babylon, 575 BCE  
reconstructed



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

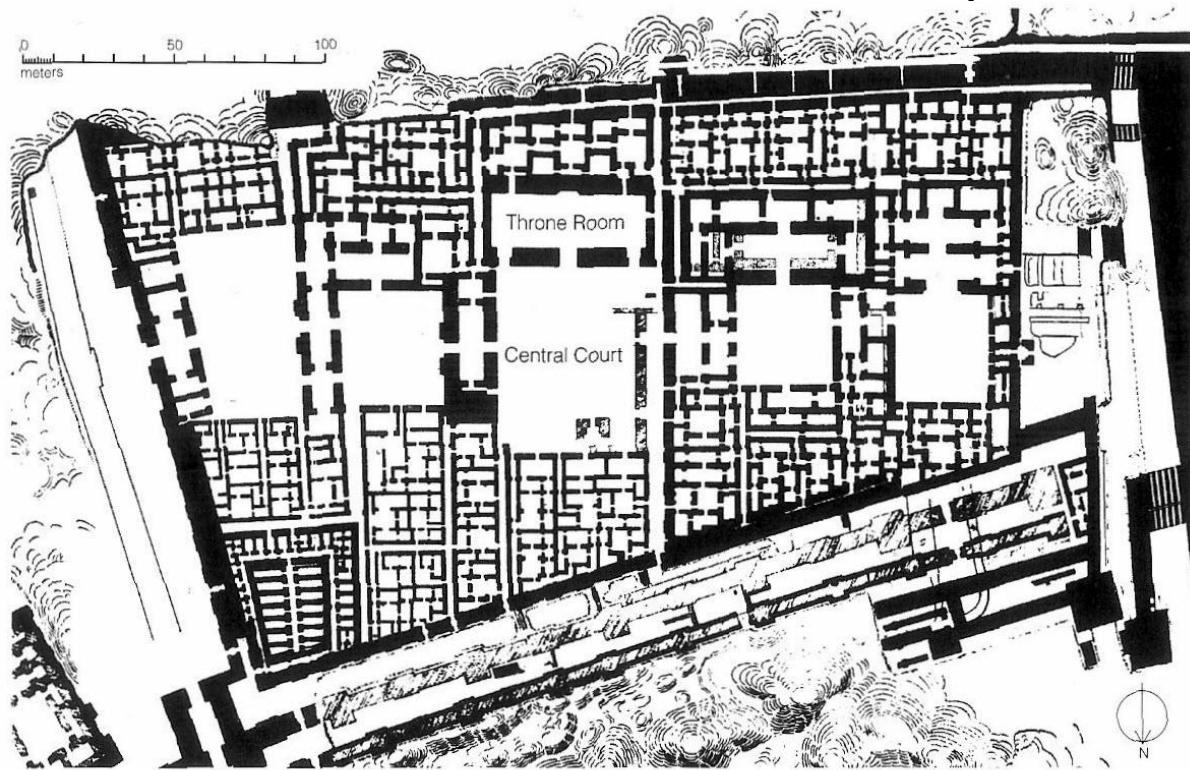
PHOTO LINK: BABYLON 007 Painting



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PHOTO LINK: BABYLON 008 Plan of Belshazzar's Babylon Palace

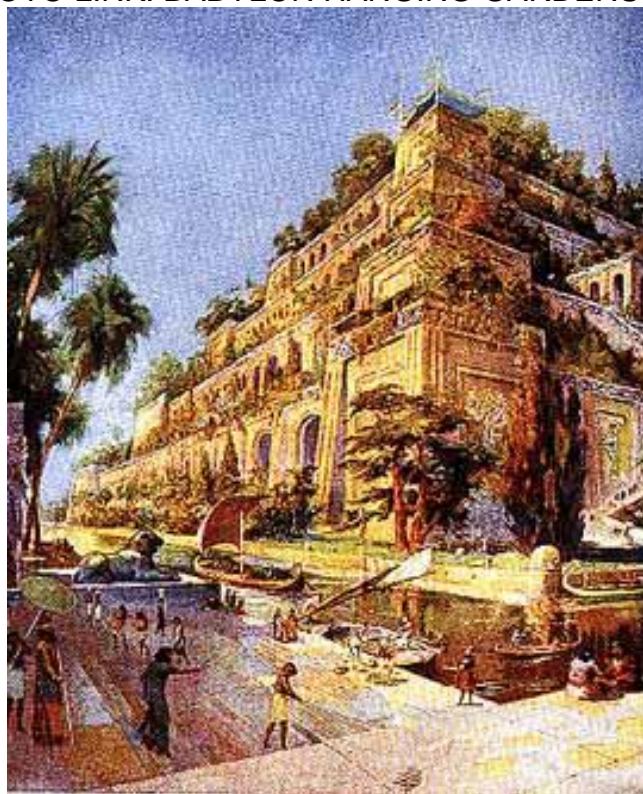
PHOTO LINK: NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 007 Plan of Belshazzar's Babylon Palace



Plan of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace in Babylon. Hoerth, 1998:382

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: BABYLON HANGING GARDENS 001



### ***Dream of the Tree and Nebuchadnezzar's Madness***

Daniel 4 describes the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzars dream of the tree. Daniel said the dream meant that the Babylonian Empire would collapse and that the king would become insane, living with and like wild animals and livestock. Twelve months after the dream and its interpretation, Nebuchanezzar did go mad with boanthropy, a form of insanity where the afflicted person thinks himself to be a bull (Hoerth, 1998:378).

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PHOTO LINK: BULL 001 Wall-Street-Bull;  
<http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/student/club/ibank/Web%20Pictures/Wall-Street-Bull.jpg>; Aug. 20, 2007



### EVIL-MERODACH (562-560 BCE)

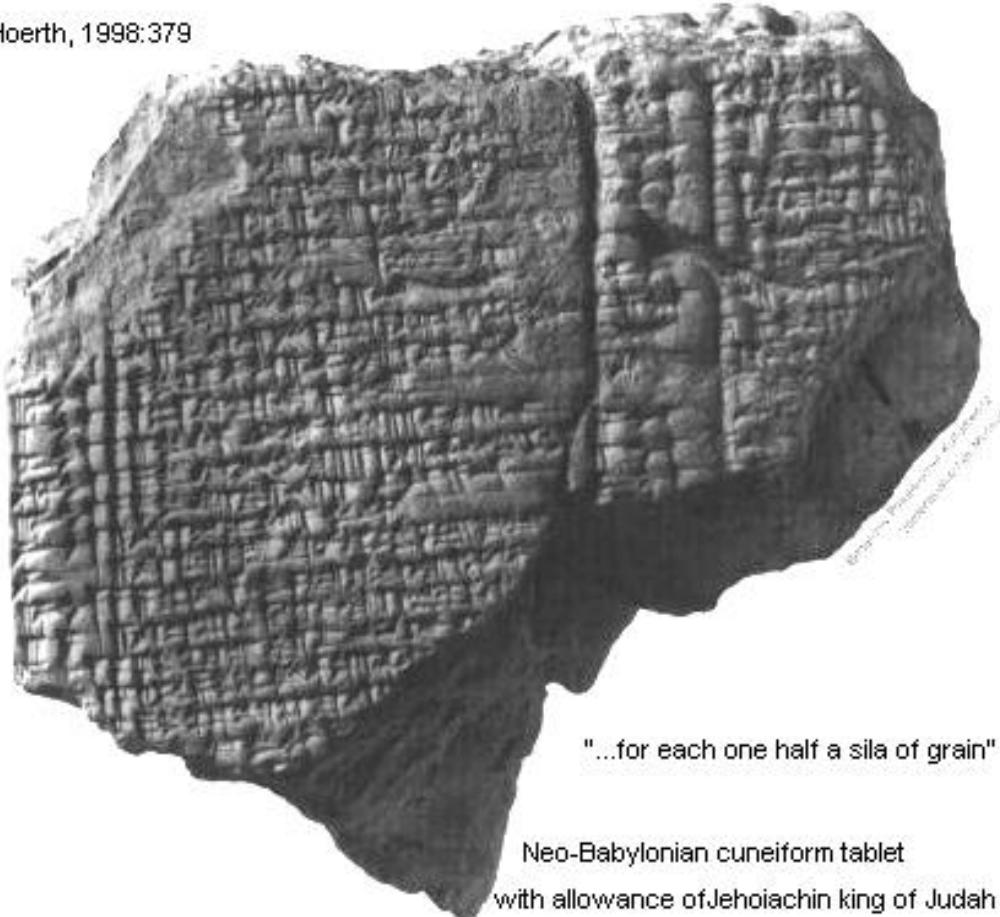
Nebuchadnezzar II died in 562 BCE and was succeeded, briefly, by his son Evil-Merodach (or Awil-Morodach, "Man of Marduk"). He ruled only 2 years. Evil-Merodach released King Jehoiachin of Judah from house arrest and provided him with a regular allowance (2 Kings 25:27-30). A tablet from Babylon mentions king Jehoiachin in regard to delivery of oil and foodstuffs for him and his sons:

"For Jehoiachin king of the land of Judah, for the five sons of the king of the land of Judah, and for eight Judeans, each one half sila of grain "(Saggs, 1988:132, cited by Hoerth, 1998:378).

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PHOTO LINK: BABYLONIA 007 Cuneiform tablet of Evil-Merodach with Jehoiachin's allowance

Hoerth, 1998:379



Neo-Babylonian cuneiform tablet  
with allowance of Jehoiachin king of Judah

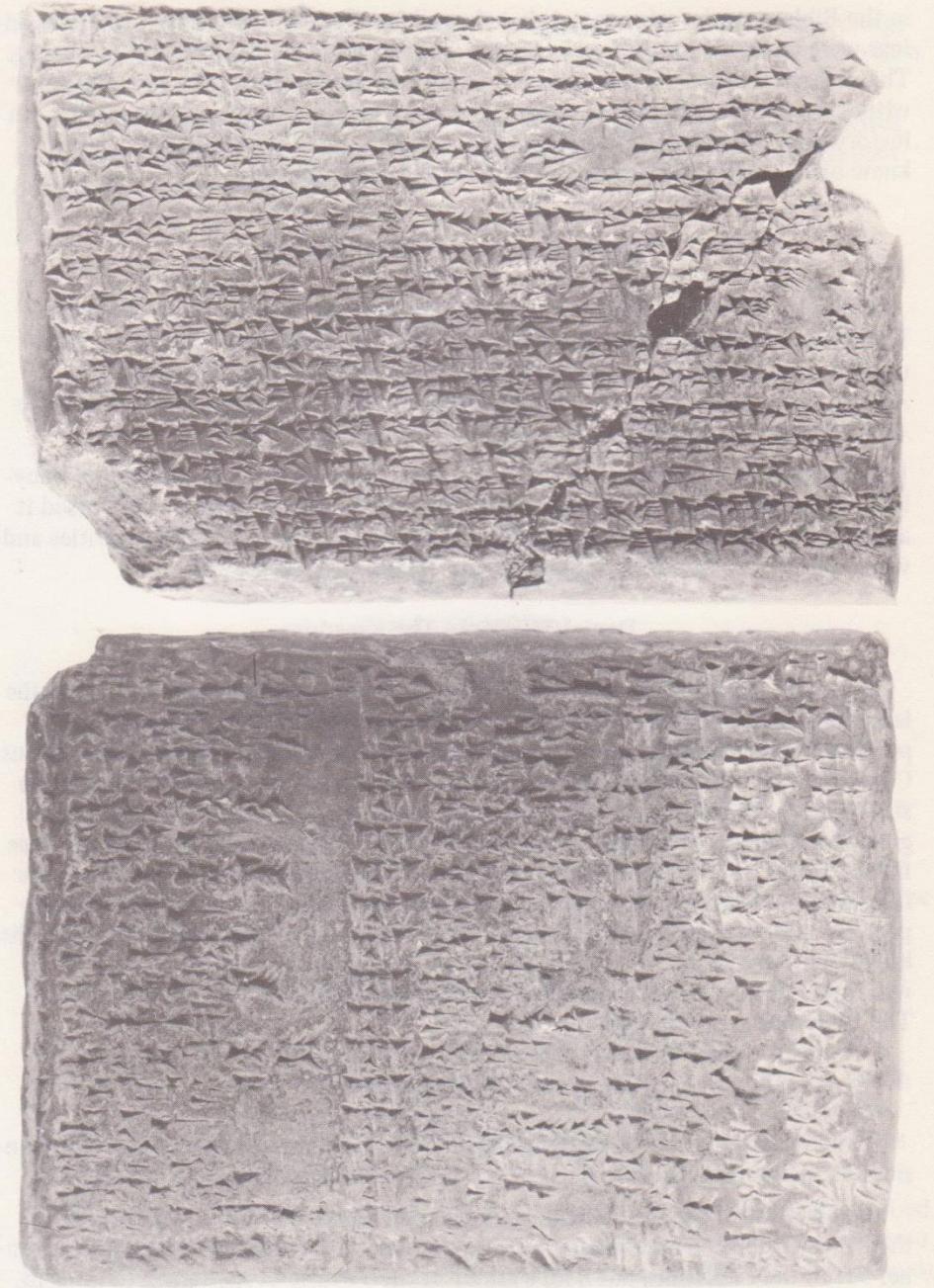
## THE RISE OF THE PERSIANS

After the assassination of king Evil-Merodach (562-560 BCE), two kings ruled Babylonia briefly: Neriglissar (560-555) and Labashi-Marduk (555-556 BCE). Then Nabonidus, a distinguished general (White, 2005:17), usurped the throne in 556 BCE. His rule ended with the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE. His son, Belshazzar, served as co-regent from 533-556 BCE (Hoerth, 1998:378).

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BABYLONIAN NEO 001 Tablets recording Belshazzar's presence in Babylon during Nabonidus' absence

BIBLE AND SPADE Wilson, 1972, B&S, 1:1:10



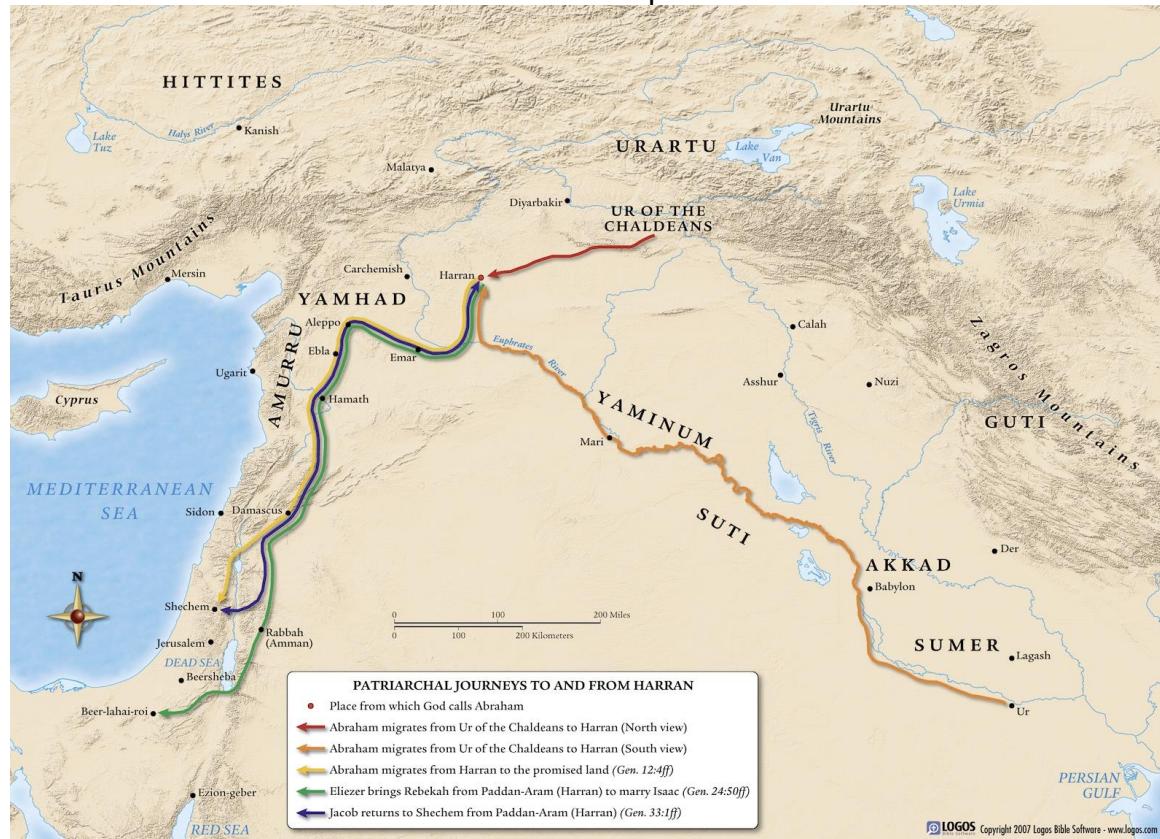
Two tablets from Yale Babylonian Collection recording administrative matters carried out by Belshazzar in Babylon during Nabonidus' absence. These, plus other Babylonian records, indicate that Nabonidus was away from Babylon during the sixth, seventh, ninth, tenth, and eleventh years of his reign.

### ***Nabonidus (556-546 BCE)***

Nabonidus was in his sixties when he took over the empire from Labashi-Marduk. His administration was influenced by his mother for the next nine years, until her death. She was a worshiper of the moon god Sin (Hoerth, 1989:380). Often depicted as a wise old man with a long beard, the moon god Sin was one of the most important Babylonian gods. His main temples were situated at Ur and Harran.

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### PHOTO LINK: HARRAN 002-02 Location map

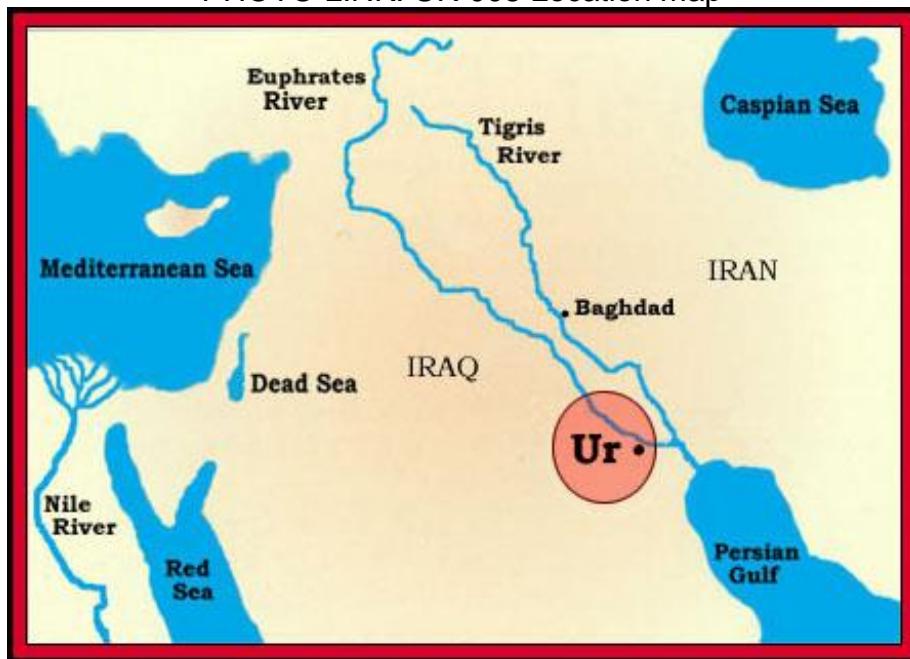


### PHOTO LINK: HARRAN 003 Location map



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: UR 008 Location map



Below is a relief from about 2300 BCE shows Ur-Nammu, the first king of the third dynasty of Ur, making a sacrifice before Sin.

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PHOTO LINK: SIN MOON GOD 002 As old man with beard;  
[http://encarta.msn.com/media\\_121632323/Babylonian\\_Moon\\_God\\_Sin.html](http://encarta.msn.com/media_121632323/Babylonian_Moon_God_Sin.html);  
Aug. 25, 2007



In later Persian history, Sin was depicted as a female goddess

PHOTO LINK: SIN MOON GOD 001  
Persian moon goddess;  
<http://www.bible.ca/islam/islam-photos-moon-worship-archealogy.htm>; Aug. 27, 2007 (RIGHT)

Nabonidus also had an interest in Sin and wanted to restore her temple in Haran which was controlled at that time by the Medes (Hoerth, 1989:380). That action alienated many of Babylonia's more conservative priests (Waters, 2005:17). Nabonidus formed an alliance with Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus forced the Medes to withdraw their forces from Haran in order to strengthen their home defenses. This left Haran unprotected, and Nabonidus



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

moved in and promptly set about to restore Sin's temple. But Cyrus kept on the move with an imperialistic expansion. His Persians eventually took control of Media and much of the Near East, including Babylonia.

### PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 001 Tablet with Nabonidus chronicle and description

Waters, 2005, ODY, 8:6:17

#### Who was Nabonidus?

One principal source of information about the rise of Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.) is the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle. The chronicle consists of a series of cuneiform tablets (such as the 5.5-inch-high fragment shown at near right) listing important events that took place during the reign of the Babylonian king Nabonidus (555-539 B.C.).

Following the death of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C.), Babylonia was briefly ruled by the king's son, son-in-law and grandson. In 555 B.C. the latter was murdered in a conspiracy that placed Nabonidus, a distinguished general, on the throne. Like his priestess mother, Nabonidus was a deeply religious man and a devotee of the moon-god Sin. The 2-foot-tall basalt stela shown at far right is thought to depict Nabonidus, who wears a spiked helmet and raises his right hand towards symbols of Sin (circle with crescent), the sun-god Shamash (winged disk) and the love-war goddess Ishtar (a seven-pointed star representing the planet Venus).

According to the chronicle, Nabonidus had a dream early in his reign in which Marduk, Babylon's supreme deity, instructed him to rebuild



the deserted Sin temple in the city of Harran, which had fallen to a people called the Medes. When Cyrus the Great conquered the Medes, Nabonidus believed the Persian king was acting as Marduk's agent.

Nabonidus's rebuilding of the Sin temple in Harran and his other religious innovations alienated many of Babylonia's more conservative priests. Around 554 B.C., perhaps out of disappointment over his subjects' impiety, Nabonidus named his son, Belshazzar, as regent and left Babylon to spend ten years in voluntary exile in

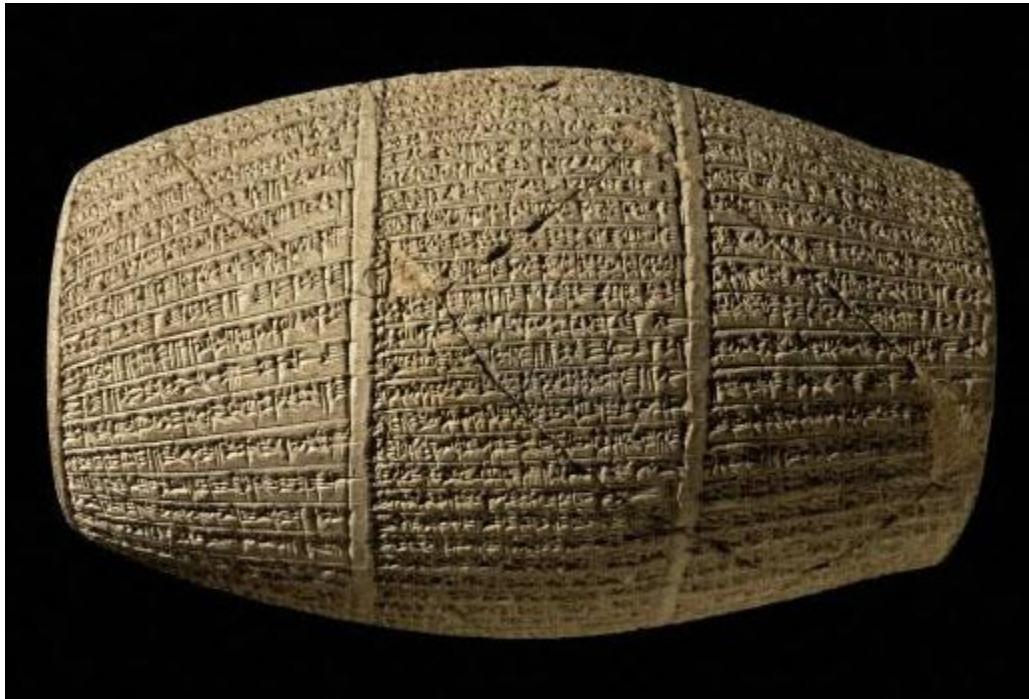
northwest Arabia. The king's absence meant that the annual Babylonian New Year Festival (celebrated to ensure the prosperity of the realm) could not take place—creating further resentment against the already weakened king.

In 539 B.C., about five years after Nabonidus returned to Babylon, Cyrus the Great took control of the city without opposition. Greek accounts indicate that Nabonidus was either sent to govern a province in southern Persia or murdered. According to the biblical book of Daniel, his son Belshazzar was put to death.

### PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 003 Relief of Nabonidus praying to moon; (See ABOVE, ctrl+click to follow link)

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 004 Nabonidus cylinder, British Museum  
[http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/hixclient.exe?\\_IXDB\\_=compass&\\_IXSR\\_=ng3&\\_IXSS\\_=2524%2bwith%2ball\\_unique\\_id\\_index%2bis%2b%2524%3dOBJ4597%26\\_IXNOMATCHES\\_%3dgraphical%252fno\\_matches%252ehtml%26\\_IXMAXHITS\\_%3d1%26\\_IXDB\\_%3dcompass%26\\_IXSESSION\\_%3dV9IUanhQOVE%26\\_IXFIRST\\_%3d1&\\_IXFIRST\\_=1&\\_IXMAXHITS\\_=1&\\_IXSPFX\\_=graphical/full/lg&\\_IXimg=k95547.jpg&submit-button=summary](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/hixclient.exe?_IXDB_=compass&_IXSR_=ng3&_IXSS_=2524%2bwith%2ball_unique_id_index%2bis%2b%2524%3dOBJ4597%26_IXNOMATCHES_%3dgraphical%252fno_matches%252ehtml%26_IXMAXHITS_%3d1%26_IXDB_%3dcompass%26_IXSESSION_%3dV9IUanhQOVE%26_IXFIRST_%3d1&_IXFIRST_=1&_IXMAXHITS_=1&_IXSPFX_=graphical/full/lg&_IXimg=k95547.jpg&submit-button=summary), July 16, 2006  
(See next page)



While Persian power was rising in the east, in 553 BCE, Nabonidus left his son Belshazzar as regent in Babylon while he took an army and moved to Tema. This was an oasis in the Arabian Desert. It was 500 miles from Babylon. This action in the face of international crisis has been explained as the whim of a religious recluse, or as an effort to secure profitable incense trade routes. Belshazzar might have been the real power at the time, and Nabonidus's move to Tema (Tayma) was an act of voluntary exile (Beaulieu, 1989:178-185; Hoerth, 1998:380).

### Tema (Tayma)

The city and oasis of Tema (27°37'30" N, 38°32'30" E, ca 830 meters above sea level, Tema province) is located in the north-west of the Arabian Peninsula, an area which is characterized by its arid climate. Tema is situated in a flat basin and is surrounded by several mountainous heights, such as the Jabal Ghunaym. North of the settlement is a large seasonal salt lake (*sebkha*) which receives its waters from several seasonal wadis. The characteristic environment of the oasis

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

is best represented by the Bir Hadaj well of some 18 m diameter in the city center and extended palm gardens. The rapidly growing modern settlement presently covers about one third of ancient Tema, which has an estimated area of some 500 ha. The most visible remains of the ancient occupation are the high surrounding walls. ([http://www.dainst.org/index\\_3258\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_3258_en.html), April 14, 2007)

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PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 001 Location map of Tayma (Tema) in Saudi Arabia;  
[http://www.dainst.org/index\\_3258\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_3258_en.html); April 14, 2007

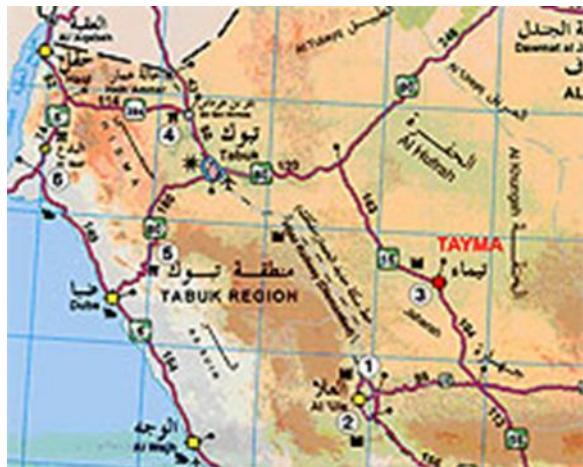


PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 007-02 Location Map;  
[https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/fileadmin/buh\\_bibelmodul/media/wibi/map/map\\_Wilat\\_Tema\\_1.jpg](https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/fileadmin/buh_bibelmodul/media/wibi/map/map_Wilat_Tema_1.jpg) accessed 8/8/2020



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PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 002 View of tell at Tayma (Tema) in Saudi Arabia;  
[http://www.dainst.org/index\\_3258\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_3258_en.html); April 14, 2007



PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 003 City wall of Tayma (Tema) in Saudi Arabia;  
[http://www.dainst.org/index\\_3258\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_3258_en.html); April 14, 2007



PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 004 Plan map



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PHOTO LINK: TAYMA 006 Ruins; <http://saudi-archaeology.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Al-Mubbayat-Tayma.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020



*There are three main factors which impact on the historical interpretation of Tema: the existence of an oasis as a precondition for the settlement of humans, its function as a trade-station on the incense route, and the residence of the Babylonian king Nabonidus in the mid-6th century BCE. The earliest remains of settlement consist of the remains of a silex-industry for the production of beads (probably of the 4th millennium BCE). Archaeological excavations have encountered phases of occupation which may last from the Late Bronze Age (late 2nd millennium BCE) to the Islamic periods. Some recently discovered metal finds can be dated to the late 3rd / early 2nd millennium BCE. The rich record of written sources from the site and its surroundings have provided mainly Taymanitic ('Thamudic') and Aramaic inscriptions of the 1st millennium BCE. Additionally, external sources inform us about contacts between Assyria and the Arab tribes (from the 9th century BCE). After the mention of a caravan from Tema in a source of the mid-8th century BCE from the Middle Euphrates, Tema enters Assyrian written history only when it has to pay tribute to Tiglath-pileser III. Further Assyrian (and biblical) sources recognize the role of Tema as a trading post, and in the following centuries relations between the neighboring cities Tayma and Dedan (presentday Khuraybah/al-Ula) were characterized by rivalry. Further information about the nature of the connections between Tema and superimposed political entities during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods is known only in very general terms.*

([http://www.dainst.org/index\\_3258\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_3258_en.html), April 14, 2007)

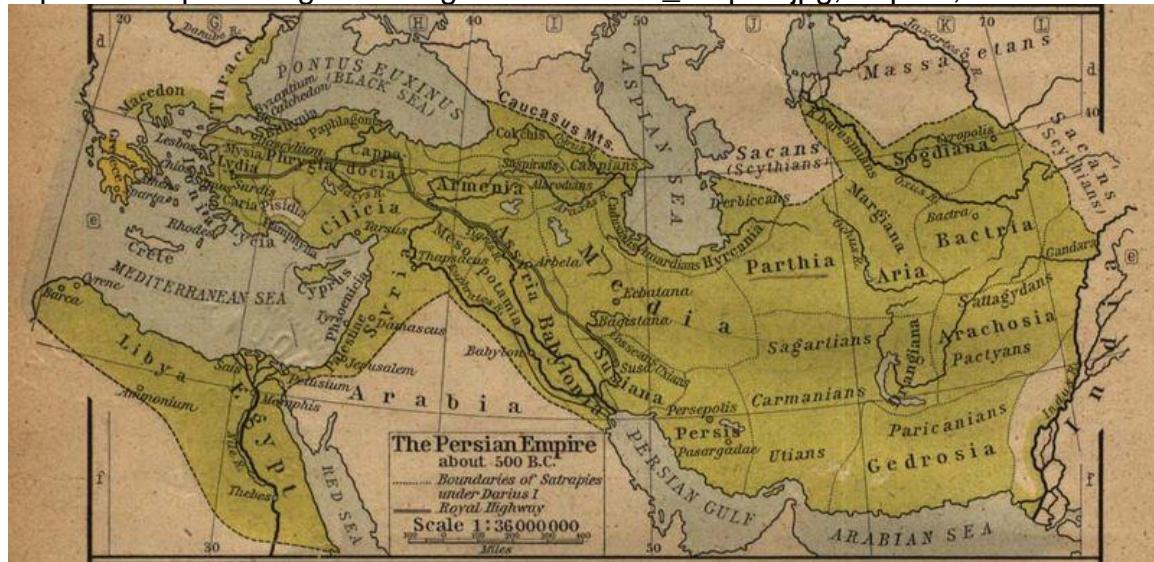
### ***Belshazzar (553-546 BCE)***

Belshazzar is mentioned by name in Daniel, Chapter 5. He was an unpopular and ineffective ruler. Because he was a co-regent while his father, Nabonidus, was in Tema, he could not perform required religious duties during the annual New Year festival. Part of the several-day-long ritual required the King of Babylon to have sex with a selected priestess. This was believed to be a requirement for continuation of the natural order and for the political, social and economic prosperity of the Empire. Each year that this ritual was unconsummated, the displeasure of populace and priesthood against the regime increased (Hoerth, 1998:380).

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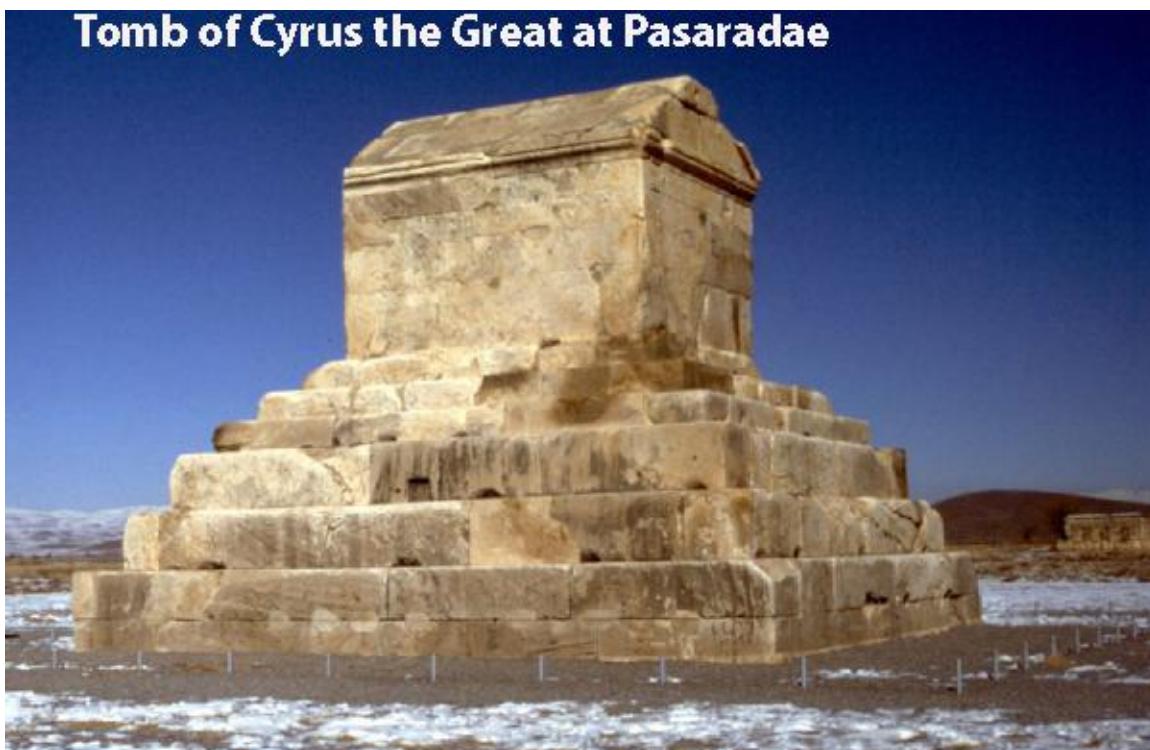
During the years of Belshazzar's co-regency, the Median-Persian empire expanded under Cyrus the Great (550-530 BCE). By 546 BCE, the Persian Empire included Media, northern Mesopotamia, Armenia, India and Asia Minor as far as the Halys River (Hoerth, 1998:381).

PHOTO LINK: PERSIAN EMPIRE 001 Map of Achaemenid Persian Empire;  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Achaemenid\\_Empire.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Achaemenid_Empire.jpg); Sept. 2, 2006



The Persians also conquered parts of the Aegean and the island of Sardis which was made the empire's western capital. Southern Babylonia was also under Persian control in 546 BCE and by 539 BCE, little more than the city of Babylon and its environs were left of the once-grand Babylonian empire (Hoerth, 1998:381).

PHOTO LINK: CYRUS THE GREAT 001



It was with the armies of Cyrus at his gates that Belshazzar held the banquet in his palace described in Daniel 5:17-29. He was in a city that covered hundreds of acres. The handwriting of Daniel 5:5 appeared on the wall of Belshazzar's throne room, just off the central court. His advisor's could not interpret the handwriting, and at the suggestion of the queen, Daniel was brought in to explain the phenomena.

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PHOTO LINK: BELSHAZZAR 001 Painting Rembrandt handwriting on the wall;  
<https://colourlex.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Rembrandt-Belshazzar-detail-FB.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020



PHOTO LINK: NEBUCHADNEZZAR II 007 Plan of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace showing throne room where hand writing on wall was seen and central court; (See ABOVE, ctrl+click to follow link)

In 546, Daniel was in his eighties. He was not very well known to Belshazzar, and was summoned to him at the urging of his wife, the queen. Daniel's interpretation was a condemnation of Belshazzar and his regime. In spite of the bad news, Belshazzar made Daniel "third rank in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:29). That same night, the prophecy came true. Belshazzar was murdered, bringing an end to the Neo Babylonian Empire and Darius the Mede took over administration of a conquered nation for Cyrus the Great (Dan. 5:30-3; Millard, 1985a, cited by Hoerth, 1998:382) A note of caution here: Daniel may be a composite or fictional character and stories about him should be taken more as parable than history

### **Cyrus the Great of Persia (559-530 BCE)**

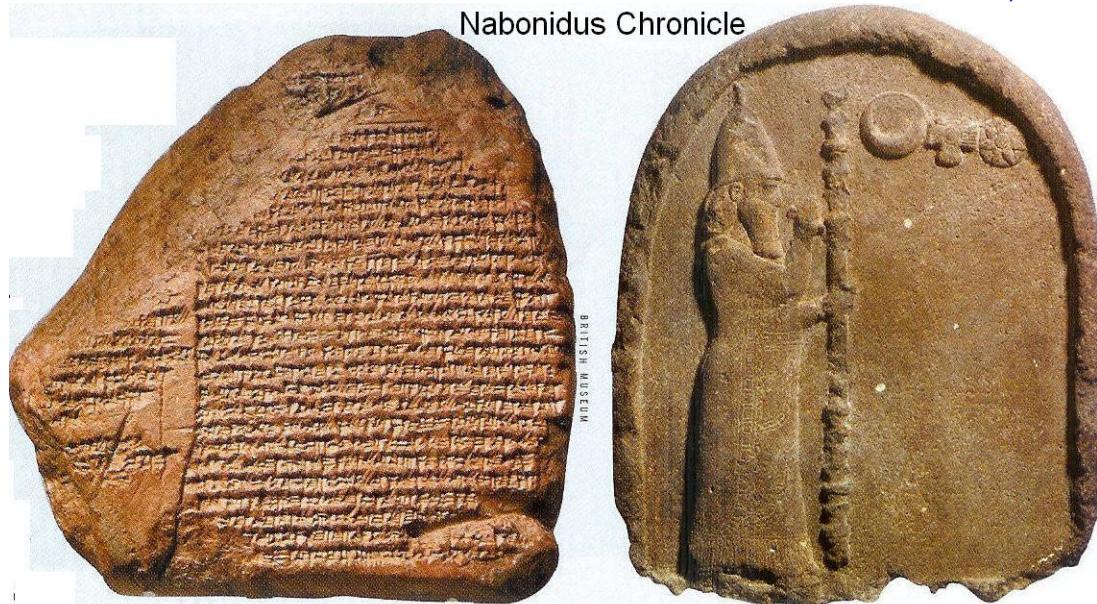
Cyrus entered southern Babylonia in 546 and captured the capital (Babylon) in 539 BCE. His conquest was interpreted as liberation by several cities who were tired of Belshazzar and his absent father Nabonidus.

The history of Cyrus the Great (559-530 BCE) is known from the Nabonidus Chronicle, a series of cuneiform tablets listing important events that took place during the reign of Nabonidus (555-539 BCE). He was a deeply religious man, and devotee of the moon-god Sin. His image is depicted on a 2-foot tall basalt stele. He wears a spiked helmet, and raises his right hand toward symbols of Sin (circle with crescent), the sun-god Shamash (winged disk) and the love-war god

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Ishtar (seven--pointed star representing the planet Venus; Waters, 2005:17).

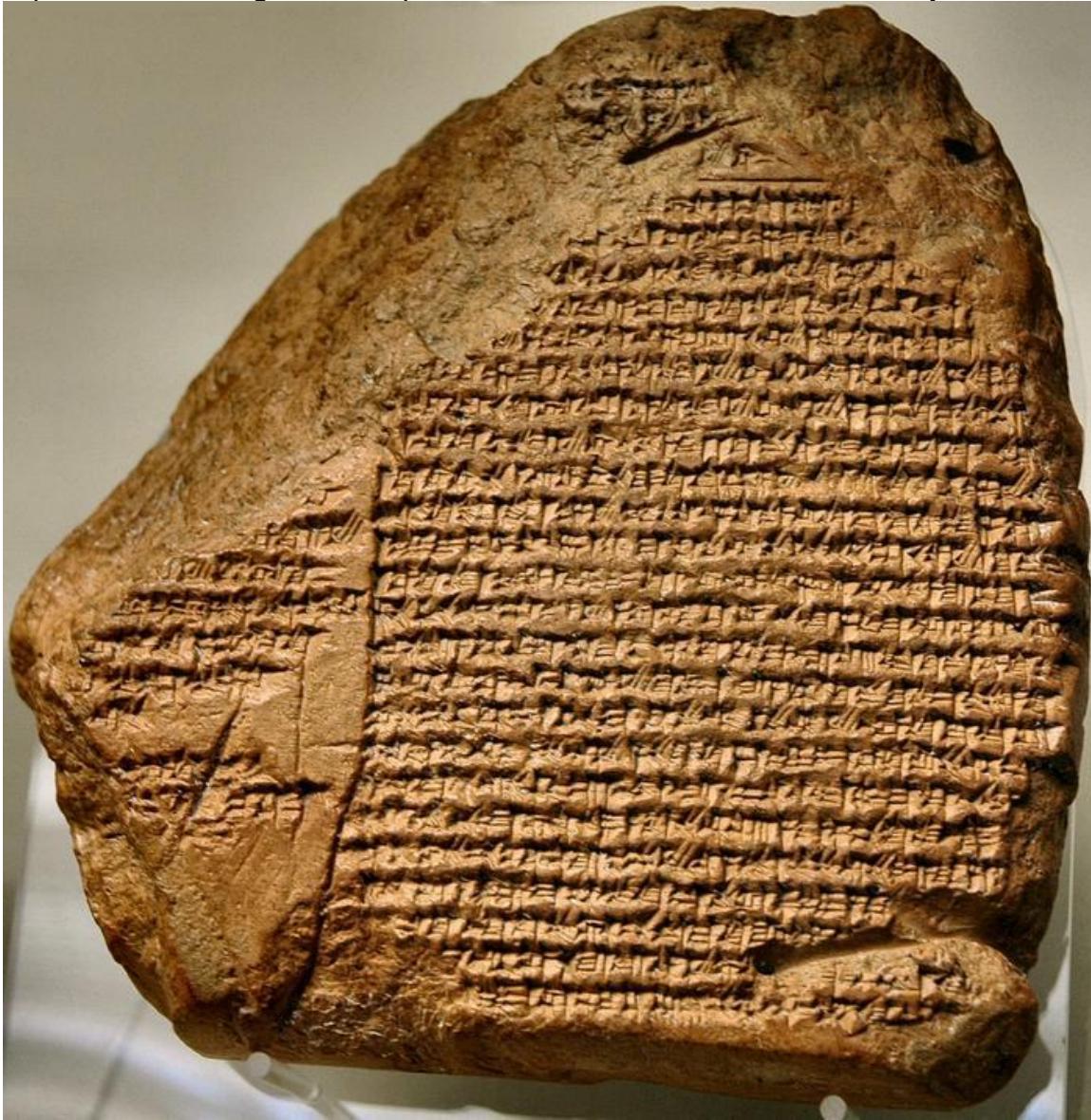
[PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 001-B Tablets with Nabonidus Chronicles;](#)  
Nabonidus Chronicle



Waters, 2005, ODY, 8:6:17

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PHOTO LINK: NABONIDUS 002 Nabonidus Tablet;  
[http://www.livius.org/a/1/mesopotamia/nabonidus\\_chronicle.JPG](http://www.livius.org/a/1/mesopotamia/nabonidus_chronicle.JPG) , July 16, 2006



Cyrus the Great was the Persian king of Fars in the southern part of present-day Iran. In 553 BCE he rebelled against the Medes and by 550 he had defeated them and captured their king, his maternal grandfather Astyages. He then advanced west into present-day Turkey. There he defeated King Croesus of Lydia and captured the Lydian capital of Sardis. The other small kingdoms of Asia Minor also fell to Cyrus. Then he marched his armies eastward to Babylonia. He captured the Babylonian king Nabonidus (mentioned in Daniel) and the city of Babylon in 539 BCE, as told below.

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PHOTO LINK: CYRUS THE GREAT 002 Relief of Cyrus as a winged figure, Pasargadae; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Relief\\_cyrus-cropped\\_level.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Relief_cyrus-cropped_level.jpg); Aug. 10, 2007



Cyrus was an effective military leader. He employed a variety of psychological warfare and propaganda wherein he established a reputation for justice, magnanimity and generosity to the poor himself as being religious. He wanted to have the Babylonians believe that their nation god, Marduk was pleased with Cyrus. The following excerpts from one of Cyrus's inscriptions shows the propagandistic technique (ANE 1:206-7; ANET 315-316, cited by Hoerth, 1998:382-383):

*"Marduk... scanned and looked through all the countries, searching for a righteous ruler willing to lead him in the annual procession. Then he pronounced the name of Cyrus...Marduk, the great lord, a protector of his people, beheld with pleasure Cyrus' good deeds and his upright mind and therefore ordered him to march against his city Babylon. He made him set out on the road to Babylon, going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops...., strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he made him enter his town Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity. He delivered into Cyrus's hands Nabonidus, the king who did not*

*worship Marduk. All the inhabitants of Babylon as well as of the entire country..., bowed to Cyrus and kissed his feet, jubilant that he had received the kingship, and with shining faces...They worshiped his very name. I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate king, king of Babylon... king of the four rims of the earth....When I entered Babylon as a friend and when I established the seat of government in the palace of the ruler under jubilation and rejoicing, Marduk, the great lord, induced the magnanimous inhabitants of Babylon to love me....My numerous troops walked around in Babylon in peace, I did not allow anybody to terrorize any place...I strove for peace....I abolished the corvee...I brought relief to their dilapidated housing, thus putting an end to their main complaints."*

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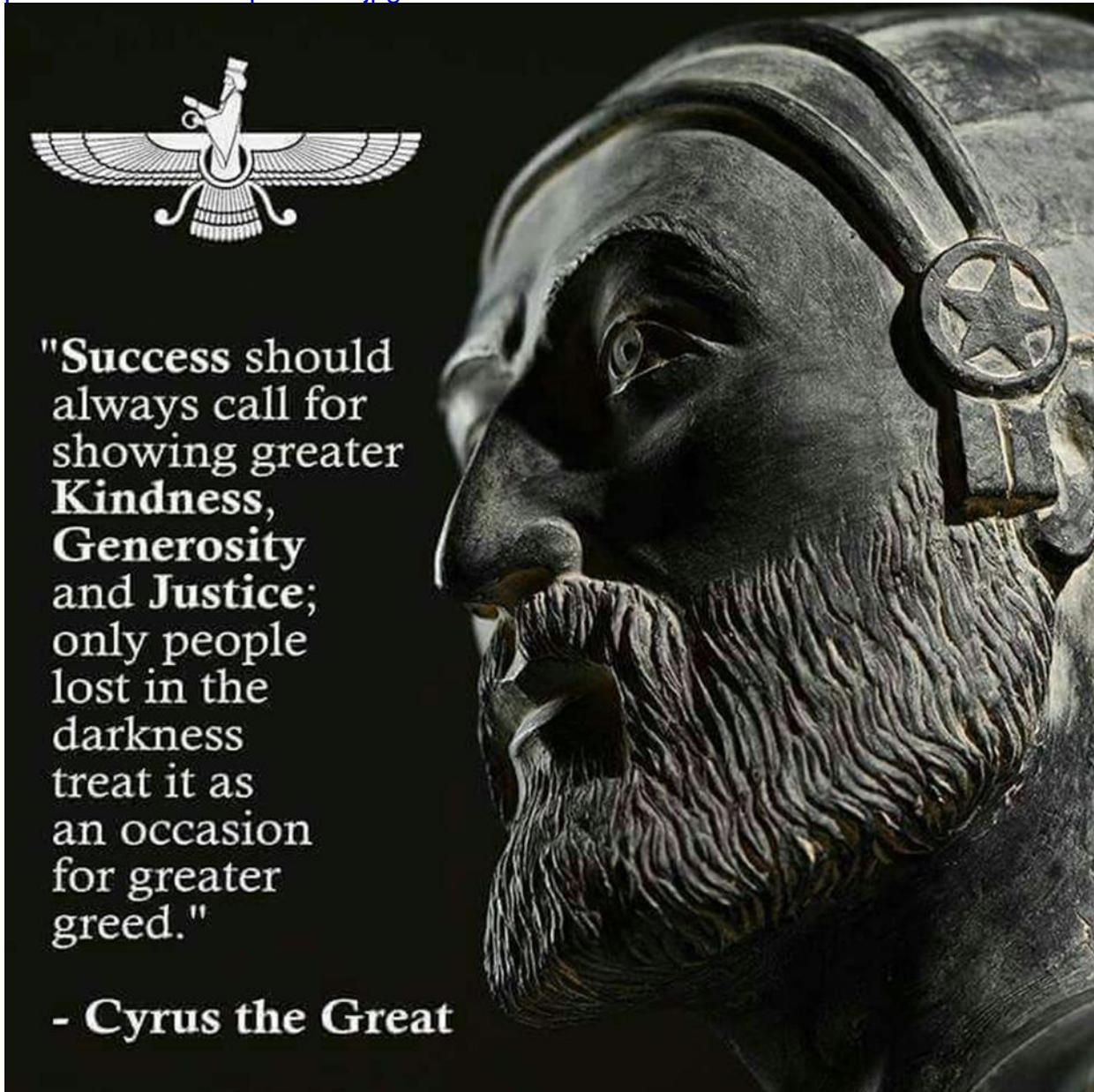
PHOTO LINK: MARDUK 005 Marduk and son;

<http://www.mesopotamiangods.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Marduk-Babylonian-king.png> accessed 8/9/2020.



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: CYRUS THE GREAT 004 Speech on success and greed;  
<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/96/cf/a5/96cfa503b88e64983033d28e0f1d4c03--persian-culture-the-persians.jpg> accessed 9/8/2020



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PHOTO LINK: CORVEE 001 Labor gang; [http://paratroopbelgiumcongo.e-monsite.com/medias/images/006-c-corvee-pont2.jpg?fx=r\\_423\\_317](http://paratroopbelgiumcongo.e-monsite.com/medias/images/006-c-corvee-pont2.jpg?fx=r_423_317) accessed 8/9/2020



### Siege of Babylon and Diversion of Euphrates River

According to Herodotus, the Persians captured Babylon by diverting the Euphrates river and marching down into the city along its riverbed. Nabonidus was captured but not executed. He was not a threat to Cyrus. This event is called the “Battle of Opis.” The triumphal entry of the Persians into Babylon is recorded as follows: (ANE 1:204; ANET 306 cited by Hoerth, 1998:343):

*“Cyrus entered Babylon, green twigs were spread in front of him — the state of “Peace” was imposed upon the city, Cyrus sent greetings to all Babylon. Gobras, his governor, installed sub-governors in Babylon.”*

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PHOTO LINK: OPIS BATTLE OF 001 Map;  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Opis#/media/File:Cyrus\\_invasion\\_of\\_Babylonia.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Opis#/media/File:Cyrus_invasion_of_Babylonia.svg) accessed 8/6/2020.



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PHOTO LINK: EUPHRATES 001 Modern Euphrates River and Valley,  
BWP, 1993, MSS #002



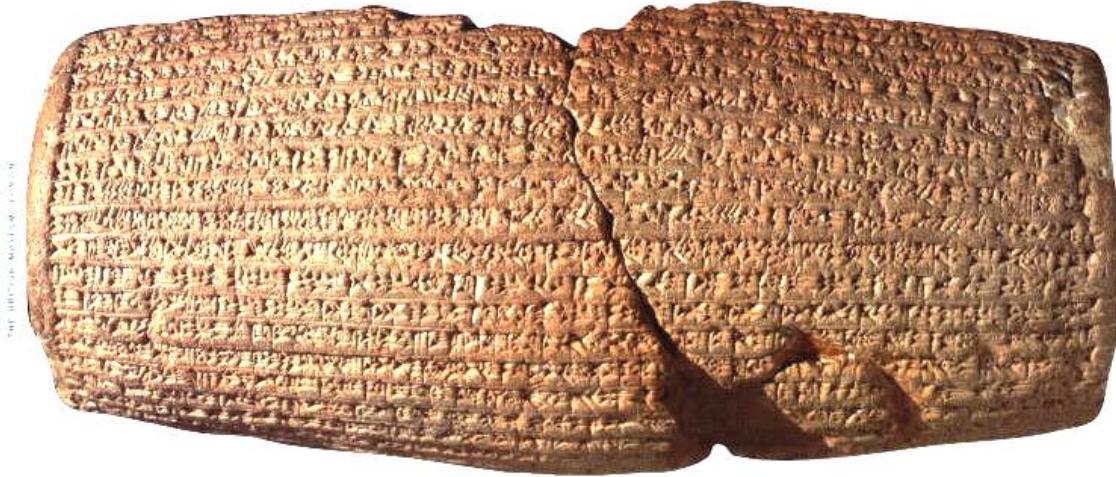
### Decree of Cyrus the Great (538 BCE)

Soon after this event, in the fall of 538 BCE, Cyrus issued a decree permitting the conquered peoples who had been exiled to Babylon to return to their native land and rebuild their temples. This decree is recorded in Ezra 1:1-11. According to Ezra, Cyrus also gave orders to refurbish the temple and restore treasures taken from it by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 5:13-15; cf 6:1-5; Fried, 2003:26). The decree is described on the Cyrus Cylinder.

The Cylinder's text has traditionally been seen by biblical scholars as corroborative evidence of Cyrus' policy of the repatriation of the Jewish people following their Babylonian captivity (an act that the Book of Ezra attributes to Cyrus), as the text refers to the restoration of cult sanctuaries and repatriation of deported peoples. This interpretation has been disputed, as the text identifies only Mesopotamian sanctuaries, and makes no mention of Jews, Jerusalem, or Judea ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus\\_Cylinder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_Cylinder) accessed 8/9/2020).

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PHOTO LINK: PERSIA 001 Cyrus Cylinder



**CYRUS CYLINDER SEAL, 539 BC**

Fried, 2003, BR, 19:5:27; Photo British Museum

PHOTO LINK: CYRUS THE GREAT 001 Tomb at Pasargadae



### Cyrus and Second Isaiah

Cyrus the Persian is identified as “the anointed one” (messiah) in Isaiah 45:1. He is the only non-Israelite to receive this title. More significantly, he is Yahweh’s messiah. At this time in history, “messiah” did not mean the savior of the world in

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the end-times (as in Revelations). Like the Judean kings, who were also "Yahweh's messiah," Cyrus was ruler of Judah because Yahweh gave him that job.

Scholars recognize two or more authors for the book of Isaiah. The Jerusalem Bible (Jones, 1971:970) describes the authors this way:

*Isaiah the prophet was active during the last years of the kingdom of Judah. His vocation to prophecy came "in the year that King Uzziah died," (Is. 6:1) 740 B.C., and it was his mission to announce the fall of Israel and of Judah as the due punishment for the whole nation's unfaithfulness. At this time, the kingdom of Judah, living under the threat of Assyrian invasion, was looking for military alliances to preserve its independence; Isaiah resisted all such human expedients as showing a lack of faith in God and his purposes. When eventually the armies under Sennacherib reached the walls of Jerusalem and called for the surrender of the city, Isaiah advised the king not to capitulate and in fact the city was saved without a battle. This is the background to the prophecies in the first part of the book, which ends with a history of the period written by his disciples, at chapter 39. The prophecies show Isaiah as a man of lofty vision with a strong sense of the transcendence of God; beyond the destined fall of his nation he sees a coming age in which a remnant of the people will survive to rebuild peace and justice under a future descendant of David.*

*In the same part of the book, some prophecies from the time of the Exile, about a hundred years later, have been included. These include oracles against Babylon (ch.13-14), an apocalypse (ch.24-27) and some poems (ch.33-35).*

*Toward the end of Exile, some very fine and profound prophecies were made by an unnamed writer ["Second Isaiah"] with a new depth of theology, looking forward to the coming time when God would comfort his people 'and restore them to Jerusalem. These prophecies in a collection known as "the Book of the Consolation of Israel," form chapters 40 to 55 of the book, and embedded in them are the four "Songs of the Servant of Yahweh" who suffers to atone for the sins of his people.*

*Chapters 56-66 contain prophecies which appear to date from different times throughout the whole age, from the call of Isaiah to the restoration in Jerusalem after the Exile."*

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PHOTO LINK: ISAIAH SCROLL 002 Section of scroll;  
<https://theosophical.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/great-isaiah-scroll.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020.



PHOTO LINK: ISAIAH SCROLL 003 Several scroll sections;  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/31/Great\\_Isaiah\\_Scroll.jpg/480px-Great\\_Isaiah\\_Scroll.j](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/31/Great_Isaiah_Scroll.jpg/480px-Great_Isaiah_Scroll.j) accessd 8/9/2020



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PHOTO LINK: ISAIAH SCROLL 003 Timeline;  
<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/8bWojVoCKvk/hqdefault.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020.



The First Isaiah lived in Jerusalem during the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah (739-690? BCE, Whitcomb, 1968) and composed most of chapters 1 to 39. The Second Isaiah lived in Babylon in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. This author wrote after 539 BCE, because he mentions Cyrus the Great in Isaiah 44:24-45:8 (Fried, 2003:26; Propp:2003:33). Reconstruction of the different literary sources for Isaiah have been based on differences in content, grammar and anachronistic language. Chapters 56-66 are attributed by some scholars to a "Third Isaiah". Second and Third Isaiahs (or their enthusiasts) practiced pseudepigraphy (Greek "false writing"): a common practice to enhance the authority of contemporary writing by attributing it to heroes of the past. This was a natural result of a world view that civilization was on an inevitable decline (Propp, 2003:34).

The identity of Second Isaiah was proposed by Propp (2003:36), based on an analysis of Nehemiah Rabban (1971), to be **Meshullam** son of Zerubbabel, a heir to the house of David (1 Chron. 3:19). This deduction was based on Isaiah 42:18-19:

*"Hear, you deaf; and look, you blind, that yo may see. Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I have sent? Who is blind as meshullam or blind as the Lord' servant."*

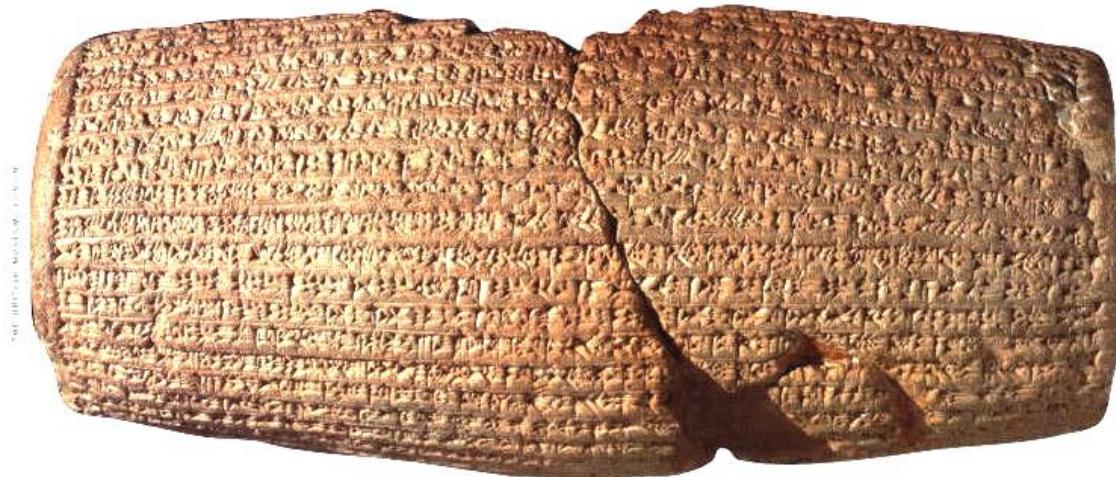
Rabban and Propp understand **meshallum** to be a proper name, not a term such as "my envoy" (Jerusalem Bible) "the one who holds my commission" (New English Bible) , or other manufactured meaning.

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Some conservative scholars think that the book of Isaiah is a unity, and that there was only one Isaiah. The information in what liberal scholars interpret as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Isaiah materials was known by revelation to Isaiah 200 years earlier, during the reign of Hezekiah and Ahaz (see Chapter 21). These contend that the variations between parts of Isaiah are due to changes in his writing style as he got older.

### The Cyrus Cylinder (550-530 BCE)

PHOTO LINK: PERSIA 002 Cyrus Cylinder



CYRUS CYLINDER SEAL, 539 BC

Fried, 2003, BR, 19:5:27; Photo British Museum

The Cyrus Cylinder was found by Hormuzd Rassam at Babylon while excavating there during the years 1879-1882. The clay barrel-shaped inscription is 9 in long. Israel is NOT mentioned by name on the cylinder. Daniel prophesied that Babylon would fall to the Medes and Persians (2:37-39a). Isaiah 44:28-45:1 contains the prophecy about Cyrus. Liberals see this as a Deutero-Isaiah writing in the time of Cyrus or later. Conservatives interpret this as a 150-year old prophecy uttered during Isaiah's lifetime (739-690? BCE, Whitcomb, 1968; Boyd, 1988).

### Sabbatical Disobedience: 70 years

From the death of Solomon to time of Daniel (490 years), Israel had accumulated (490/7=) 70 years of "Sabbatical disobedience". They did not let the land rest the 7th year. This accumulation of sin was counted against the Hebrews and identified as the duration of their punishment per Lev. 26:32-39 and 2 Chron 36:11-21. The Jew's release from captivity in Babylon is described in 2 Chron 36:22,23 and Ezra 1:1-4. The story is consistent with what we know of Cyrus'

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foreign policy from the Cyrus seal and other sources: he gave his god Marduk credit for his defeat of Babylon, but Cyrus, though his vice-regent Darius the Mede, allowed the conquered peoples to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples and cities (Boyd, 1988).

### Fallow Farming Technique and the Jubilee

Fallow is a farming technique in which arable land is left without sowing for one or more vegetative cycles. The goal of fallowing is to allow the land to recover and store organic matter while retaining moisture and disrupting the lifecycles of pathogens by temporarily removing their hosts. Fallowing is also essential to biodiversity, which ensures the presence of predators which can control pests. It is a technique often used in crop rotation. Existing weeds may be affected by predators and pests. These, along with the use of green manure can ensure the restoration of depleted nutrients to the soil composition before another crop cycle (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fallow> accessed 8/9/2020).

Fallow farming was used throughout bible lands going back to Hurrian, Acadian and early Egyptian time periods

The Jubilee (Hebrew: יובל yōbel; Yiddish: yoyvl) is the year at the end of seven cycles of shmita (Sabbatical years) and, according to Biblical regulations, had a special impact on the ownership and management of land in the Land of Israel. According to the Book of Leviticus, Hebrew slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee\\_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(biblical)) accessed 8/10/2020)

Rabbinic literature mentions a dispute between the Sages and Rabbi Yehuda over whether it was the 49th year (the last year of seven sabbatical cycles, referred to as the Sabbath's Sabbath), or whether it was the following (50th) year. The Jubilee ("Year of Release") deals largely with land, property, and property rights.  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee\\_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(biblical)) accessed 8/10/2020)

The biblical rules concerning Sabbatical years are still observed by many religious Jews in Israel, but the regulations for the Jubilee year have not been observed for many centuries. According to the Torah, observance of Jubilee only applies when the Jewish people live in the land of Israel according to their tribes. Thus, with the exile of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (about 600 BCE), Jubilee has not been applicable  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee\\_\(biblical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubilee_(biblical)) accessed 8/10/2020).

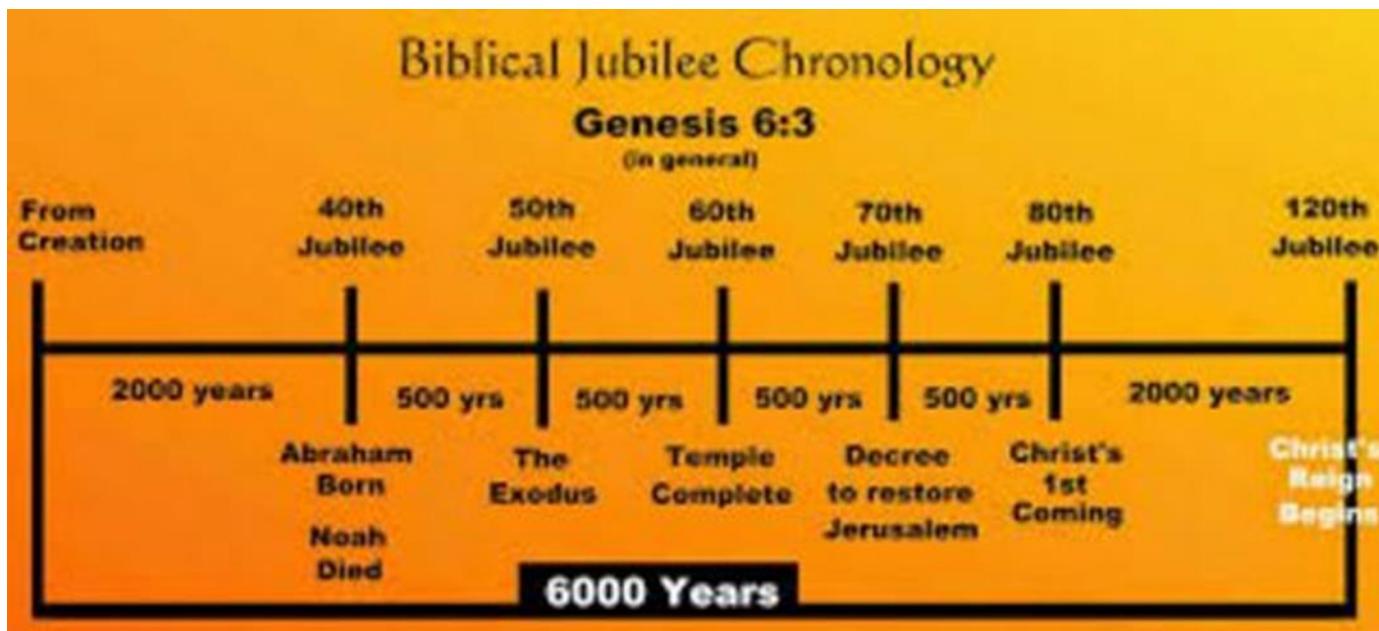
The whole year 6000 will be holy; the first year of the next Sabbatical year will be year 6001 or from early April of 2021 through early April 2022.  
([https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/513212/jewish/When-Is-the-Next-](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/513212/jewish/When-Is-the-Next-)

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

Jubilee-

[Year.htm#:~:text=The%20whole%20year%206000%20will%20be%20holy%3B%20the,wants%20to%20be%20blessed%20for%20forty-nine%20more%20years](#)  
accessed 8/9/2020).

Some people extend the Jubilee out to the end of the world, 2000 years after Christ's first coming. Interpretations for when the next Jubilee year will be vary. A popular interpretation is that is going to be April 2021 through April 2022. The Jewish calendar dates years from the Spring equinox



## THEOLOGY AND NATURE OF THE EXILE



PHOTO LINK: TIGLATH-PILESER III 002-B Full length relief at Nimrud. Halpern, 2003, BAR, 29:5:52.

The first deportations of Israel occurred in 733 BCE under the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 15:29):

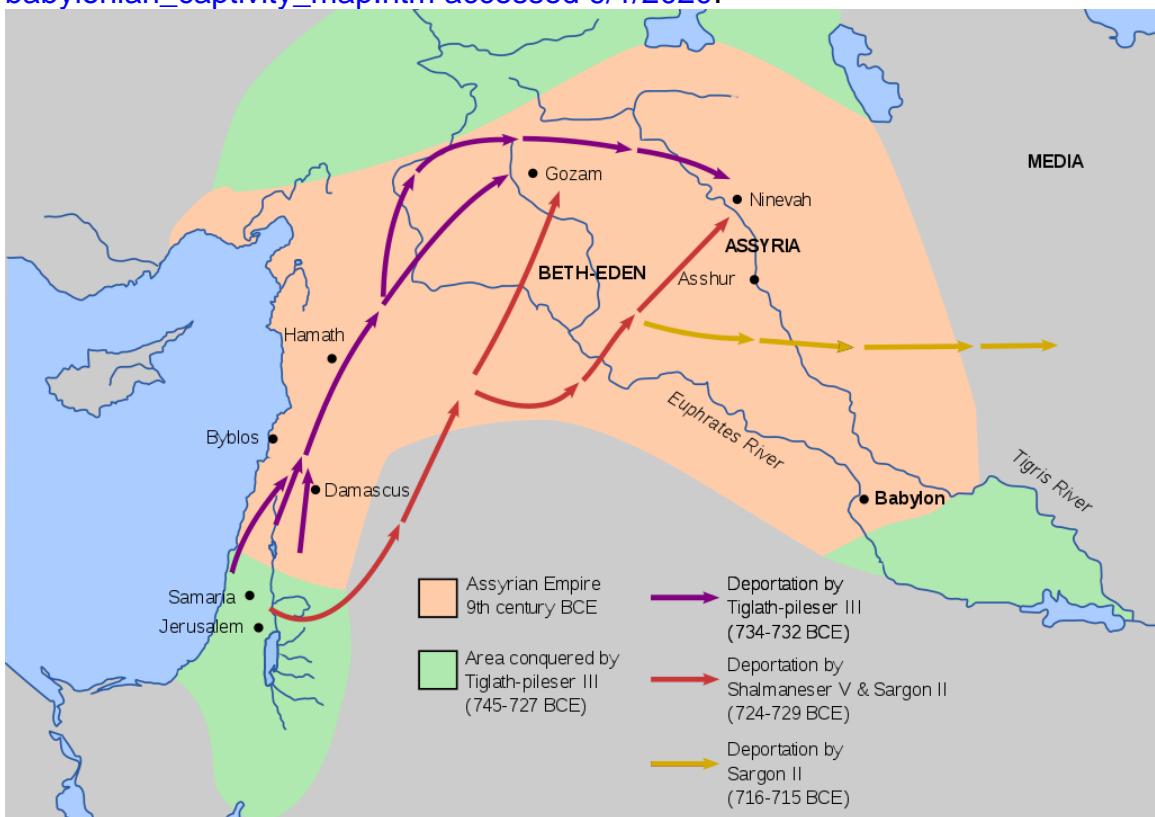
"In the days of Pekah King of Israel, Tiglath-pileser [III] King of Assyria came and took Iyyon, 'Abel-Beth-Nacah, Yanoah, Kedesh and Hazor -- Gilead and Galilee -- all the land of the Naphtali; and he deported the people to Assyria"

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Assyrian deportations of the Northern Kingdom consummated in 722 BCE. Judah fought on alone until the final fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadrezzar II in 586 BCE. After 586 BCE, deportations accelerated and the remnant found themselves with new imported neighbors. The result was a melange of cultural and religious traditions. In the old Northern Kingdom, intermarriage and other forms of social mixing resulted in the Samaritan culture. There was an attempt to continue to practice Yawhism in the ruins of the Temple (Jer. 41:5), and there was on-going violence as poverty and claims to land by foreign immigrants created tension and uncertainty (Hoerth, 1989:385).

PHOTO LINK: ASSYRIAN DEPORTATIONS 002 Map of deportations;

[https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/assyrian-babylonian\\_captivity\\_map.htm](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/assyrian-babylonian_captivity_map.htm) accessed 9/1/2020.



For those deported, life was uprooted and changed forever. But the deportations occurred by families, so there was at least some social cohesion and continuity. These same family groups returned en masse to Judea beginning with Ezra's expedition in August 443 BCE (Hoerth, 1989:385),

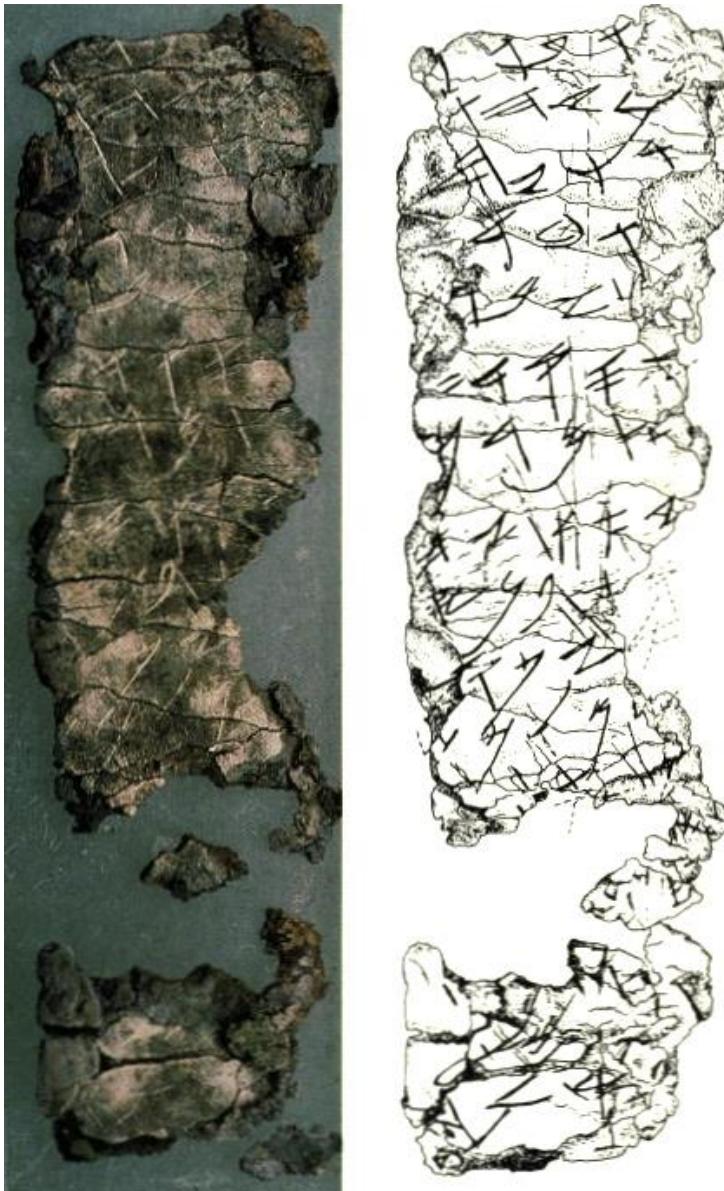
Life in Exile in Babylon, while deadly and difficult at first, was not as severe or unpleasant as may be imagined. Psalm 137 expresses the sorrow and suffering of the first years in exile. As the 70 years of exile unfolded, ties to the homeland weakened. In their new lives, the Judeans became part of the fabric of the Babylonian community (Jer 29:4-7). For some, like Daniel, power and position

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accompanied an envied Persian opulence. Some exiles became wealthy enough, at the end of the exile, to endow the new temple with gold, silver and priestly robes (Ezra 2:68-69). Some were goldsmiths and pharmacists (Neh. 3:8). Jeremiah's letter to the exiles during the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. 29) shows continuing contact and correspondence between the dispersed Jewish communities (Hoerth, 1989:385).

PHOTO LINK: SCRIPTS 039  
Silver Scroll Amulet of Ketef Hinnom, 7th century BCE (RIGHT)

There was religious freedom in Babylon, but no temple. There was a problem of false prophets. But the people had access to their good leaders too, like Ezekiel and Ezra. During the 70-year stay in Babylon, the Jewish synagogue tradition developed. In this tradition, animal sacrifice was replaced by study of the law and communal prayer. After the temple was rebuilt, beginning in 536 BCE, and until its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD, synagogue and temple religious traditions would co-exist. The tradition is illustrated by silver amulet scrolls from the Exile period inscribed with the priestly benediction of Num. 6:24-26 (Barkay, 1983 and 1986, cited by Hoerth, 1989:386).



SILVER SCROLL AMULET, Ketef Hinnom, 7th century BC  
Coogan, 1995, BAR, 21:3:46; Photo and drawing by Bruce and Kenneth Zuckerman

## RETURN FROM EXILE (OR NOT)

*Nippur (5TH century BCE)*

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When given the opportunity to return to Judea, not all did. Excavations of Nippur, a city sixty miles southeast of Babylon, from the 5<sup>th</sup> century revealed hundreds of clay tablets. These business documents contain Jewish names like Benjamin, Gedaliah and Hananiah and indicate that Jews were part of the business community at Nippur long after the Jews were allowed to return to Judea (Coogan, 1974; Stolper, 1976, both cited by Hoerth, 1998:387).

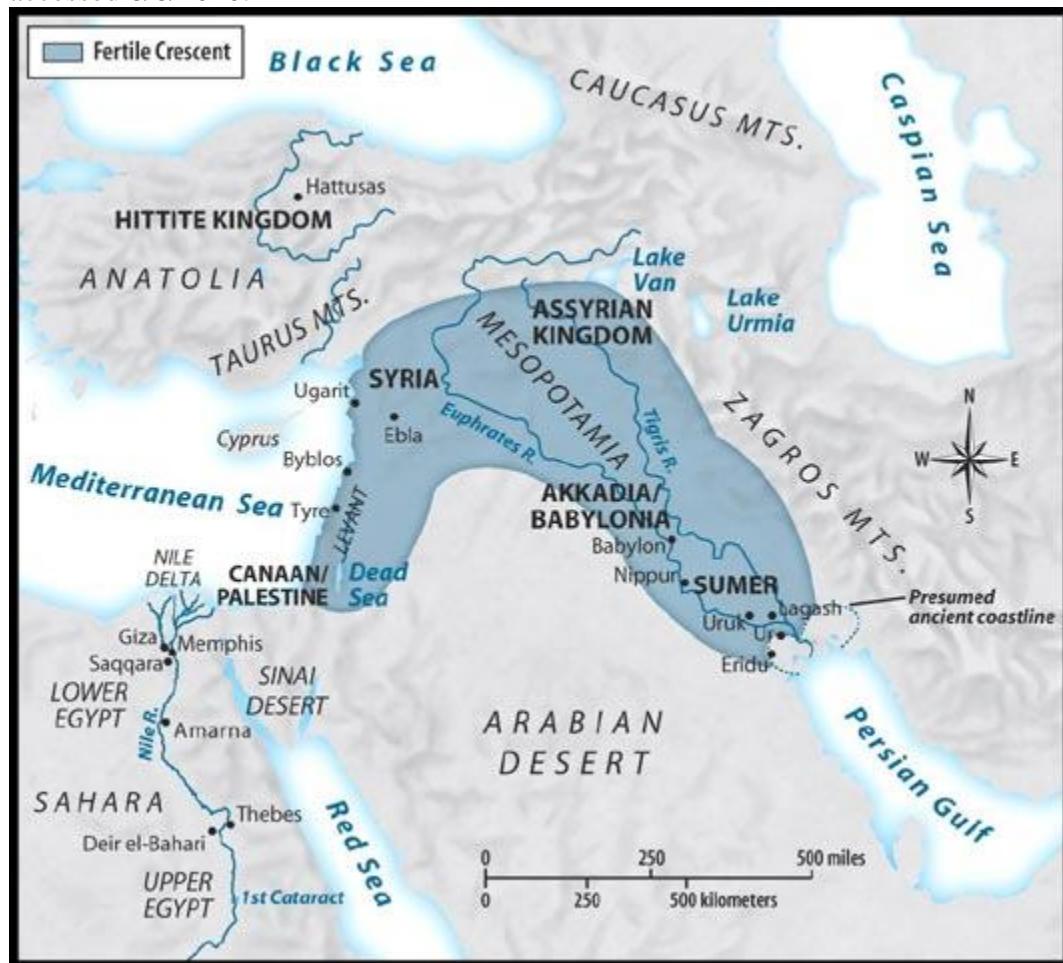
PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR 001-02 Location map;

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-6437411/Babylonian-language-brought-life-short-film-nearly-2-000-years-DIED-OUT.html> accessed 8/8/2020



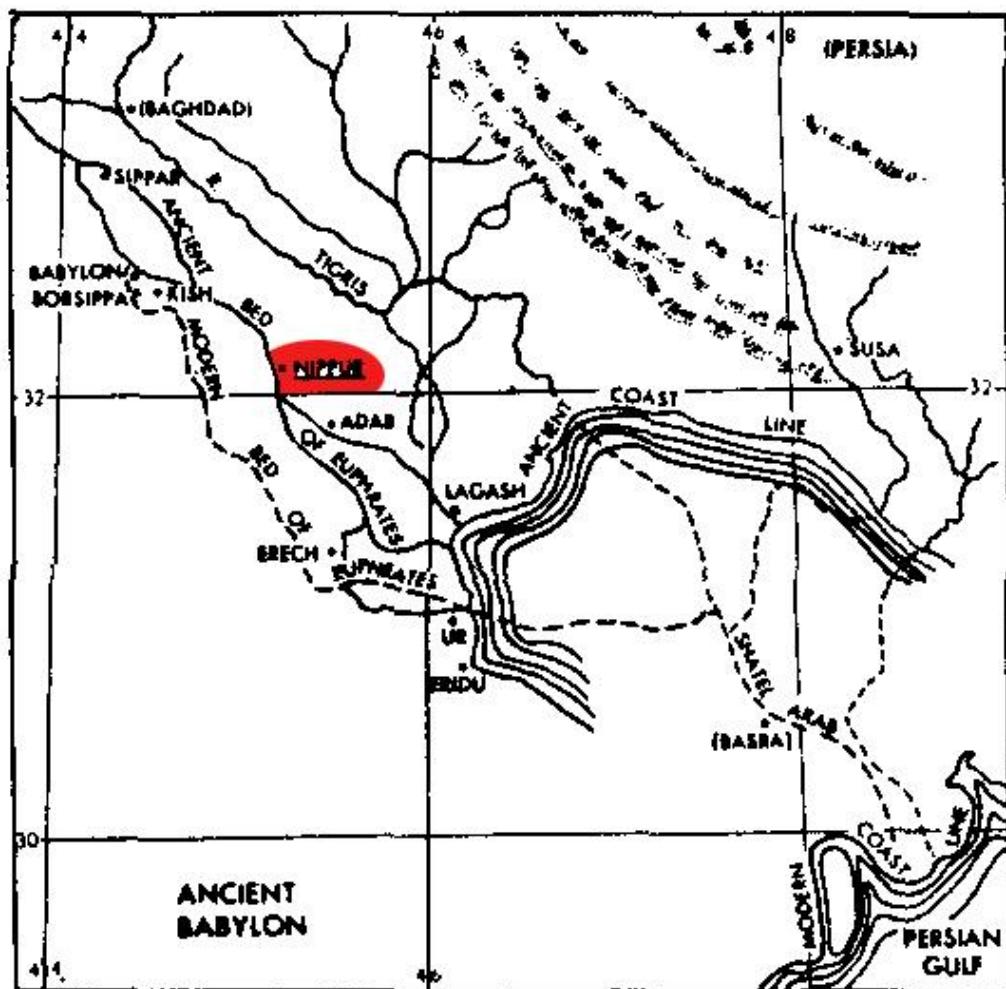
## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: FERTILE CRECENT 001 Map of cities in Fertile Crecent;  
<https://web.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum213/Maps/Maps2HistoryAncient.htm>  
accessed 8/8/2020.



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PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR 001 Location map of Nippur

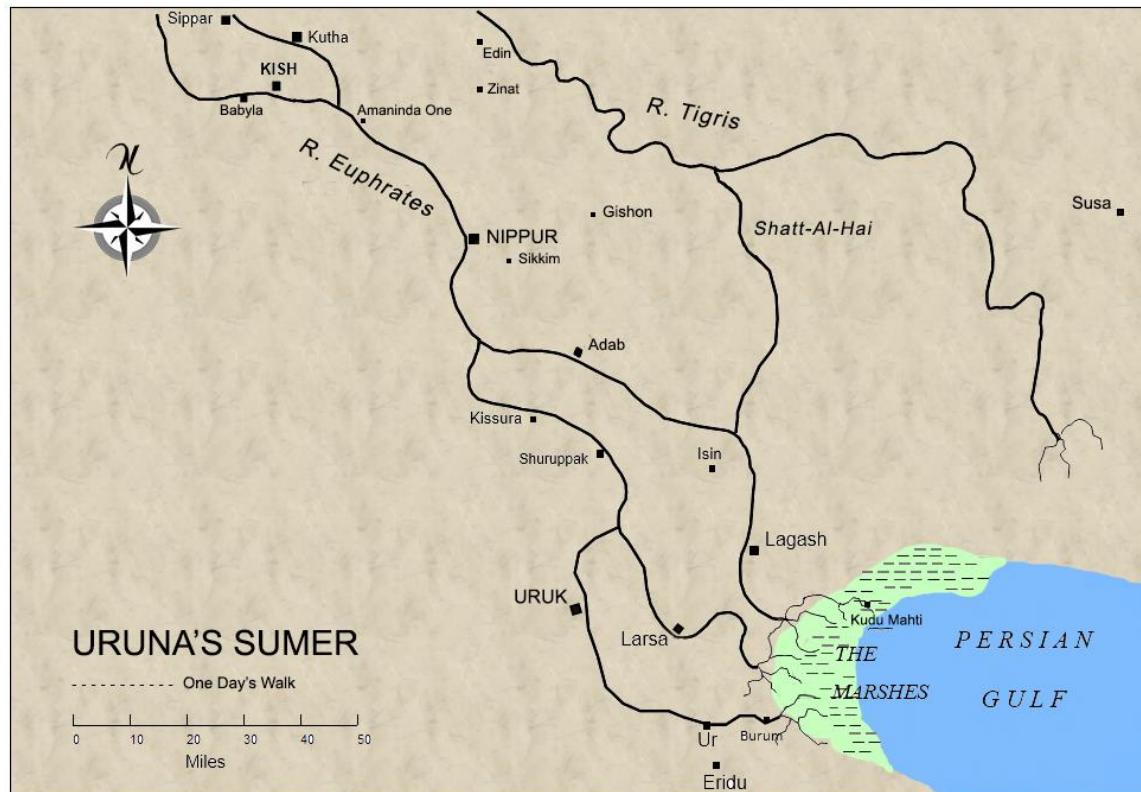


*Mesopotamia: Nippur upper left. Note ancient shoreline reaching to Ur in the time of Abraham.*

Livingston, 1992, ABR, 6:1:27

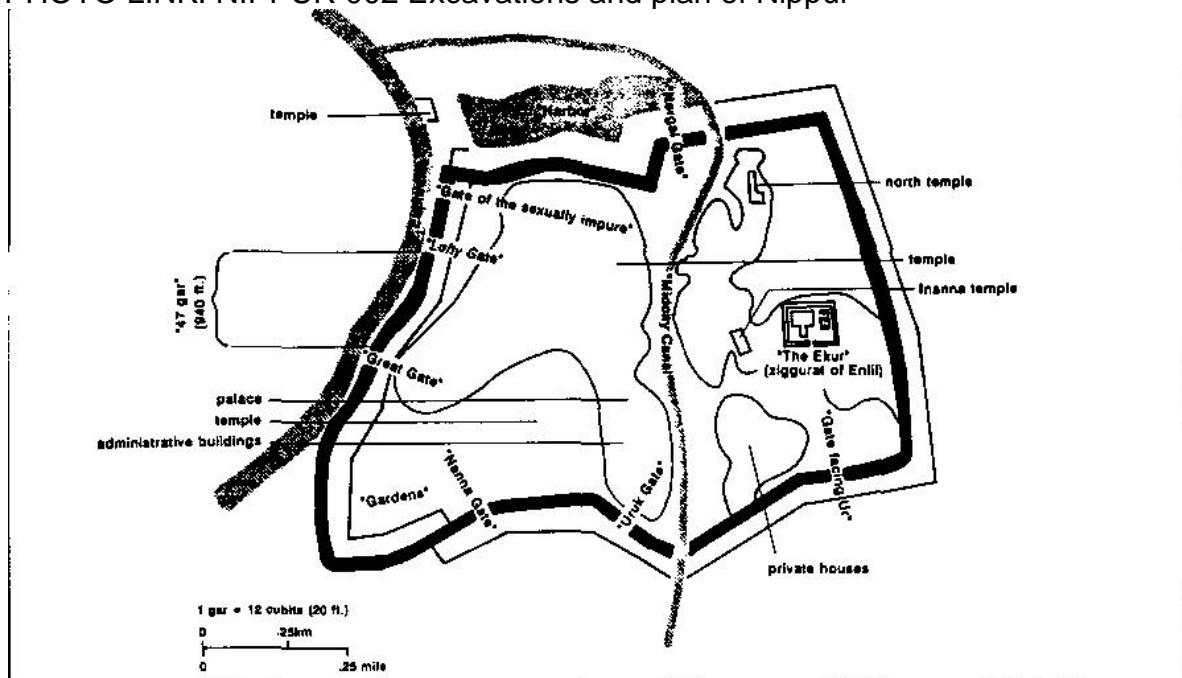
PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR CITY MAP 002 Location during Sumerian empire;  
<http://danielphalen.com/maps.php> accessed 8/6/2020.

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PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR 002 Excavations and plan of Nippur



*City plan of Nippur based on excavations.*  
Livingston, 1992, ABR, 6:1:28

PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR 003 Clay tablet with map of Nippur

Map of  
Nippur  
drawn on  
clay tablet.  
Its remark-  
able  
accuracy  
can be seen  
in the recon-  
struction on  
page 28.

Livingston, 1992  
ABR, 6:1:29



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PHOTO LINK: NIPPUR 004 Aerial photo of Nippur;  
<http://www.rom.on.ca/neac/mesopot.html> ; Sept. 1, 2005

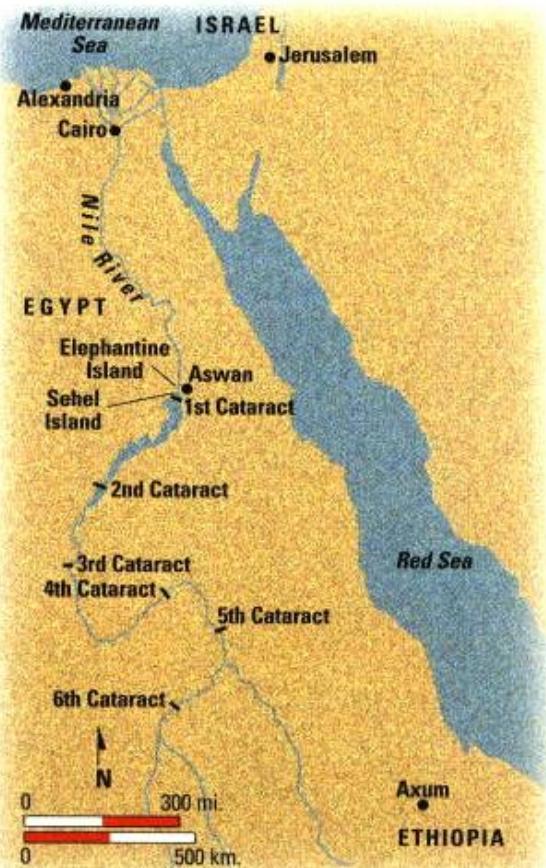


### ***Elephantine (407 BCE)***

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, there was a substantial Jewish community in Elephantine, Egypt. This is part of present-day Aswan, on Egypt's southern border.

PHOTO LINK: ELEPHANTINE 001  
Map (RIGHT)

Several very well preserved papyri have been taken from Elephantine that date to 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE., including the time of Darius the Great (522-486 BCE) and from the time of Jedaniah, son of Gamariah of Elephantine (circa 407 BCE). The Elephantine papyri tell of the destruction and rebuilding of a Jewish Temple in Elephantine in 408 BCE. This temple was 60 cubits long and 20 cubits wide, the same as the dimensions of King Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:2, Porten, 1995).



Porten, 1995, BAR, 21:3:56

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Animal sacrifices were offered there, in spite of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah that specified that only in Jerusalem, were blood sacrifices to be performed (Hoerth, 1998:387).

PHOTO LINK: ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI 001 Letter of Jedaniah of Nov 25, 407 BCE



Elephantine Papyri of Jedaniah, Nov. 25, 407 BC.

BAR, 21:3:63

The Elephantine papyri, like the Nippur tablets, indicate that some Jews of the Diaspora were well content to stay in their adopted countries rather than brave the hardships of return to Judea (Kraelin, 1952, cited by Hoerth, 1998:387).

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PHOTO LINK: ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI 002 Reply to Nov 25 407 BCE Letter



Reply to Jedaniah's letter  
Photo B and K Zuckerman

An example of an Elephantine letter is translated below:

*To our lord Bagoas, governor of Judah, your servants Yedoniah and his colleagues, the priests who are in the fortress of Elephantine. May the God of heaven seek after the welfare of our lord exceedingly at all times and give you favor before King Darius and the nobles a thousand times more than now. May you be happy and healthy at all times. Now, your servant Yedoniah and his colleagues depose as follows:... the priests of the god Khnub ... conspired ... to wipe out the temple of the god Yaho from the fortress of Elephantine.... Coming with their weapons to the fortress of Elephantine, they entered that temple and razed it to the ground.... Now, our forefathers built this temple ... back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt, and when Cambyses came to Egypt he found it built.... [When our temple was destroyed] we and our wives and our children wore sackcloth and fasted and prayed to Yaho the Lord of heaven.... We have also sent a letter ... to our lord and to the high priest Johanan and his colleagues the priests in Jerusalem and to Ostanes the brother of Anani and the nobles of the Jews.*

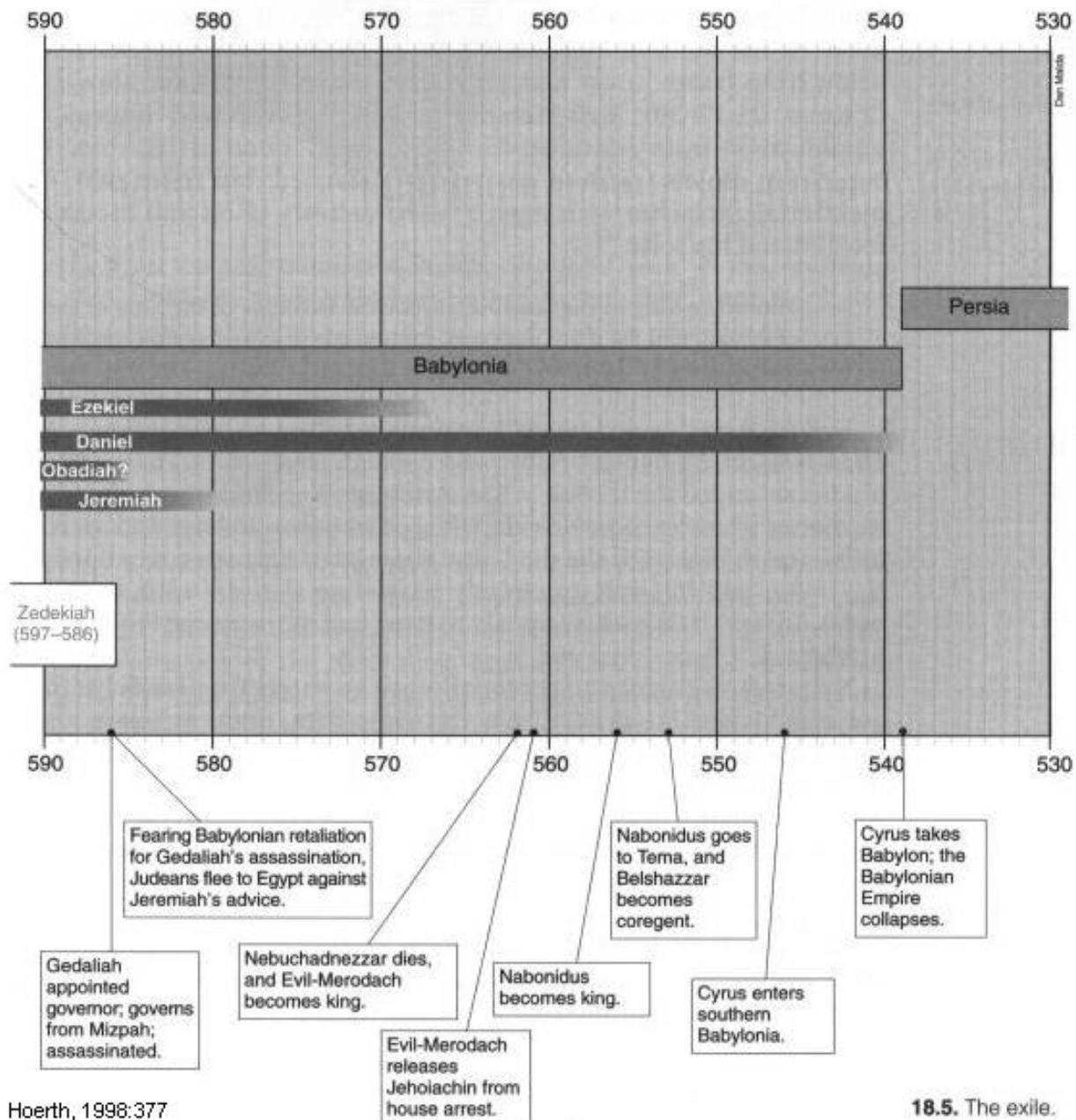
—Letter from Elephantine Jews to the governor of Judah (from Hoerth, 1998:388).

## END OF EXILE AND RETURN TO JUDEA

The Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 568 B.C. by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II. After a 47 year exile in Babylonia, and after the conquest of the Neo-Babylonian Empire by Cyrus the Great in 539 BCE, Jews were allowed to return to their ancestral homes. The stories of Daniel are set in this time of political transition (Demsky, 1996), when Persia extended its rule throughout Mesopotamia and the Levant (Hoerth, 1998:388)

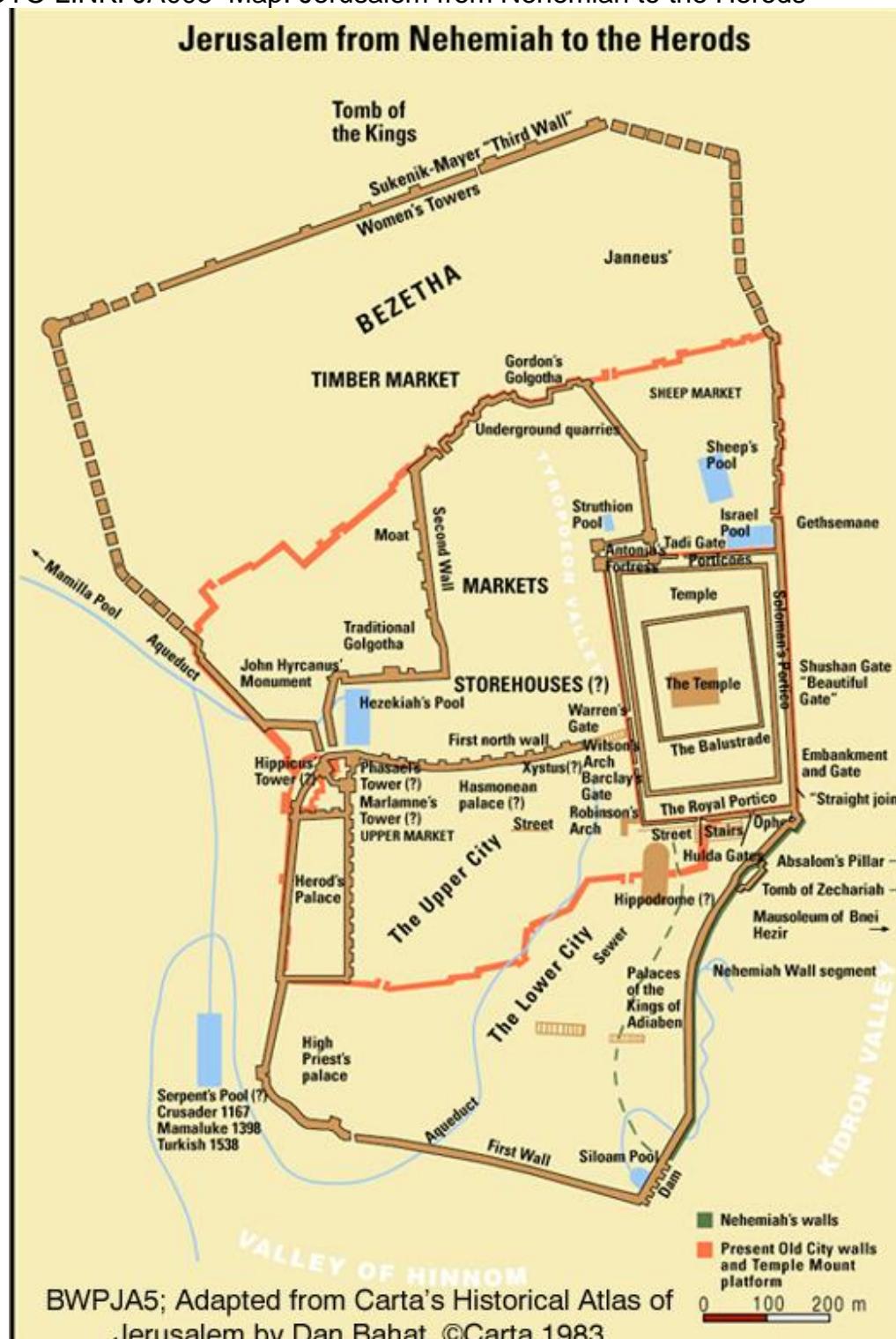
## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: TIMELINE 590-530 BCE (HOERTH, 1998:377)



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PHOTO LINK: JA005 Map: Jerusalem from Nehemiah to the Herods



## **Persian Repatriation Policies**

While the Assyrians and Babylonians deported conquered peoples to their capitals, the Persians generally encouraged people to live where they wanted. The Persians were also more ecumenical and tolerant toward the religions of their conquered peoples. They encouraged non-Persians to follow their own religious traditions and even assisted those groups in restoring god statues and temples. These practices are reflected in the book of Esther (Hoerth, 1998:389).

The proclamation for the release of the Jews is recorded in Ezra 1:2-4 (a Hebrew version), and in Ezra 6:3-5 (an Aramaic version).

### Ezra 1

*2 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:*

*" 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. 3 Anyone 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. 4 And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.' "*

### Ezra 6

*3 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem:*

*Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be ninety feet<sup>A</sup> high and ninety feet wide, 4 with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. 5 Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God.*

Ezra 2 :64 says that

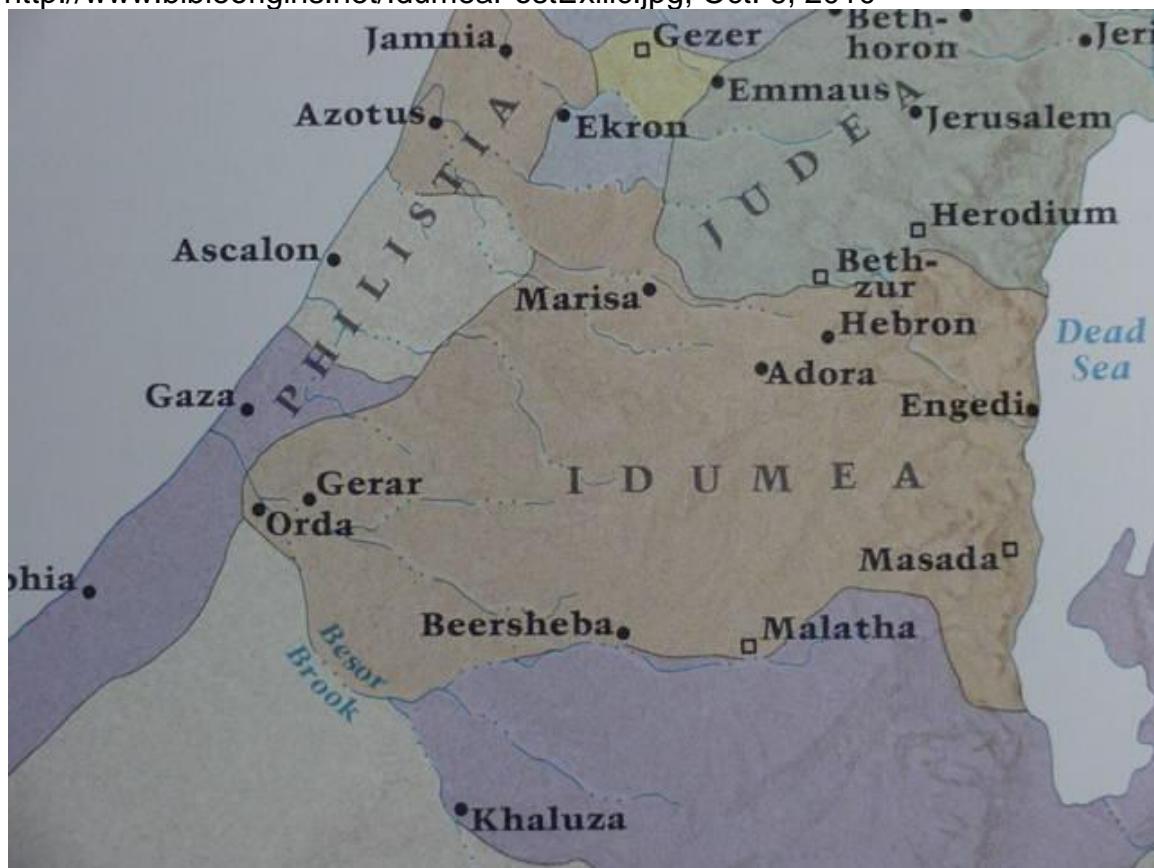
*64 The whole company numbered 42,360, 65 besides their 7,337 menservants and maidservants; and they also had 200 men and women singers. 66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 67 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.*

This would have been a fraction of the total number of Jews living in Mesopotamia in 536 BCE.

### **Palestine Under the Persians**

When Jews returned to Jerusalem and Judea, their homeland was grouped with Phoenicia, Syria and Cyprus into the administrative district (satrapy) called “The Land Beyond the River” (i.e. the Euphrates). The capital for this satrapy was Damascus. Palestine was divided into four provinces: Galilee, Samaria, Judah and **Idumea**. Populations had been displaced during Assyrian and Babylonian rule, and in 536 BCE, most of the population was concentrated along the coast. The main coastal centers of population were Tyre and Sidon (Kamzenstein, 1979, cited by Hoerth, 1998:389).

PHOTO LINK: IDUMEA 001 Map of Post-Exilic Idumea;  
<http://www.bibleorigins.net/IdumeaPostExilic.jpg>; Oct. 6, 2010



The coastal cities in this period have a prevalence of Greek pottery which is an indication of the region's cosmological character. There is an abundance of pottery (amphoras) designed for shipping of commodities. These signal increased traffic in the Mediterranean shipping lanes. (Hoerth, 1998:389).

PHOTO LIN: PHOENICIAN SEAFARING 002 Minoan vs Phoenician ships;  
<https://www.slideserve.com/tevin/seafaring-traders> accessed 8/9/2020

PHOTO LINK: POTTERY 032 Phoenician amphora Ashkelon 4th century BCE

Phoenician amphora,  
Ashkelon, 4th century BC



Stager, 1991,  
BAR, 17:3:CD

### *Judah at the Return of the Exiles*

When the Jews returned, almost all their ancestral land was inhabited by foreigners, and they feared for their own safety. Worship was reinstated, and work commenced immediately on rebuilding the Temple. Samaritans from northern Palestine offered to help in the rebuilding project, but were rebuffed by the Zerubbable and the other Judean leadership because the Samaritans were considered unorthodox (Ezra 4:1-3).

The Samaritans then began a program of interference and intimidation. This resulted in the discontinuance of Temple construction. Ezra 4:5 relates that

*5They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia (e.g. Darius the Great).*

## DARIUS THE MEDE (539-525 BCE)

Daniel 5:31 states that “Darius the Mede” took over the Persian-Median kingdom from Cyrus.

A candidate for “Darius the Mede” is the governor Gubare/Gobras who played a key role in the capture of Babylon and in its later administration (Hoerth, 1998:384; Wilson, 1972b, Shea, 1991). Others theorize that Darius is an old Persian title somewhat equivalent to “Caesar”, or “Augustus” in the old Roman Empire, and that Darius and Cyrus are the same person (Hoerth, 1998:340, citing Yamuchi, 1990:50-59). This Darius should not be confused with a later ruler with the same name: Darius the Great. Some scholars think this biblical Darius is a fiction. Others equate this Darius with Cyrus the Great. Convolutions of history proliferate under the fascinating world view of biblical inerrancy

Here is a video explaining the maximalist interpretation:

<https://youtu.be/03qg6y9vJ-I>

## CAMBYES II (530-522 BCE)

When Cyrus the Great died in August, 530 BCE, he was succeeded by his son Cambyses II. This ruler is not mentioned in the Bible. From Persian, Greek and Egyptian sources, it is known that he passed through Palestine in 525 BCE on his way to war with Egypt. He conquered Egypt with the aid of the Cypriot tyrant Polycrates of Samos and the Greek commander Phanes of Halicarnassus. While he conquered northern Egypt, his expeditions into southern Egypt (Kush) and into Carthage were failures.

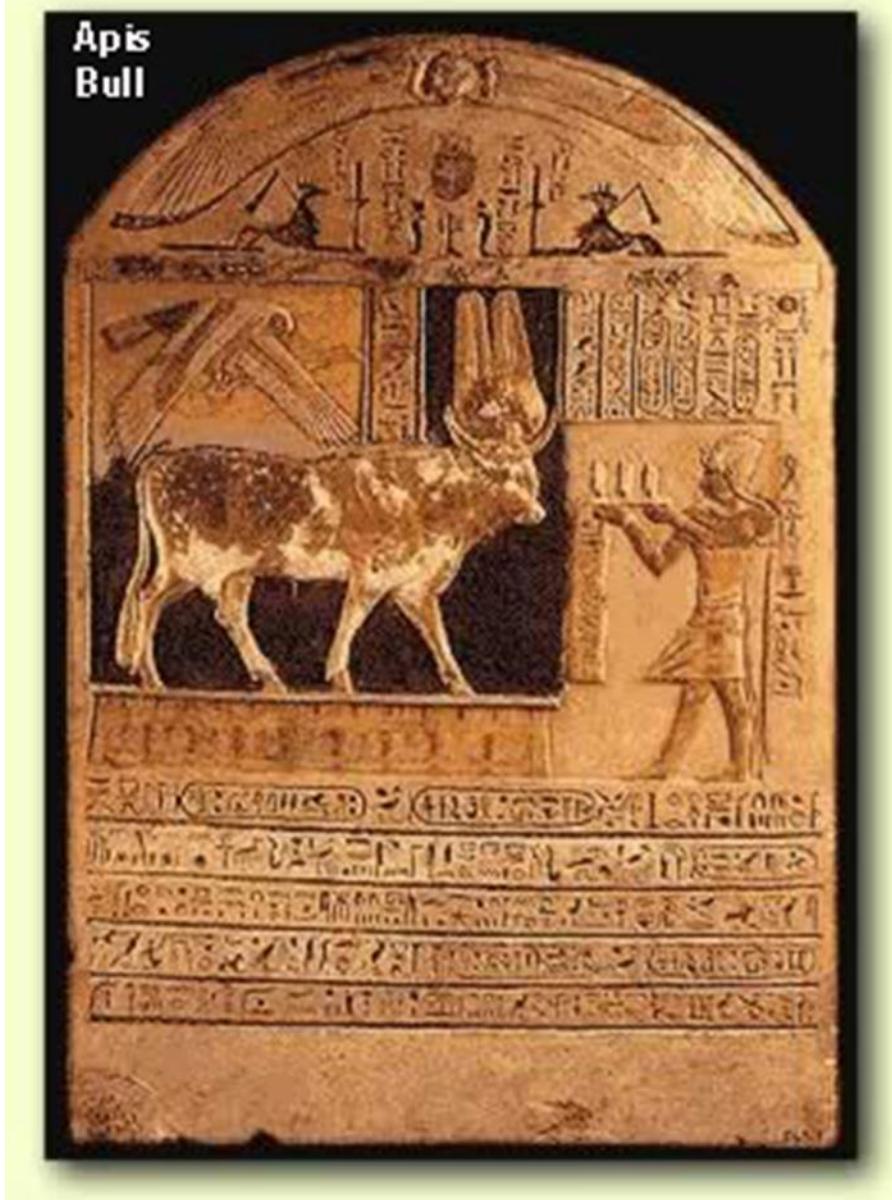
(Hoerth, 1998:391, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses_II), Aug., 8, 2007)

PHOTO LINK: CAMBYSES II 001-02 Depiction (relief) of Cambyses II worshipping the Apis; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses_II)



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PHOTO LINK: APIS BULL 004 Plaque of Apis Bull;  
<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/bull.htm> ; Dec. 21, 2005



<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/bull.htm> ; Dec. 21, 2005

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PHOTO LINK: CAMBYSES II 002 Unfinished tomb in Iran;  
<http://touregypt.net/featurestories/cambyses2.htm>; Aug. 8, 2007



Meanwhile back in Persia, Smerdis (Bardiya), the king's brother, rose against him and was acknowledged throughout Asia. Cambyses returned in 522 BCE, but was killed (or committed suicide) in Palestine or Syria. At this time, reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple had not advanced beyond laying of new foundations (Hoerth, 1998:391, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambyses_II), Aug., 8, 2007).

Bardiya known as Smerdis among the Greeks (possibly died 522 BC), was a son of Cyrus the Great and the younger brother of Cambyses II, both Persian kings. There are sharply divided views on his life. Bardiya either ruled the Achaemenid Empire for a few months in 522 BC, or was impersonated by a magus called Gaumāta until he was toppled by Darius the Great (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bardiya> accessed 8/9/2020)

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PHOTO LINK: BARIYA 001 Relief of Gaumata on Behistun inscription;  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bardiya#/media/File:Gaumata\\_portrait\\_on\\_the\\_Behistun\\_inscription.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bardiya#/media/File:Gaumata_portrait_on_the_Behistun_inscription.jpg) accessed 8/7/2020



## DARIUS THE GREAT (520-485 BCE, or 522-486 BCE)

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 005 Relief; [http://www.livius.org/dad/darius/darius\\_i\\_t03.html](http://www.livius.org/dad/darius/darius_i_t03.html); Aug. 9, 2007



Darius was an uncle of Cambyses II. He consolidated his power within 2 years of the death of Cambyses II (in 520 BCE). His success was due to his high position in the Immortals, the elite corps of the Persian army. In time, he would be known as "Darius the Great". His rise to power was commemorated in a monument and trilingual inscription on a high cliff where it could not easily be defaced. The monument is 70 miles southwest of **Ecbatana**. Darius is the third figure from the left. His image is 5 feet, 8 inches high. The inscription was

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written in Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian. It was an important inscription for deciphering Mesopotamian cuneiform. Here is a video about the Behistun monument and inscription:

<https://youtu.be/SX6ZdgkaWh0>

PHOTO LINK: BEHISTUN MONUMENT AND INSCRIPTION 002 Relief portion only; <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~ancientpersia/behistun.html>; Au. 10, 2007



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PHOTO LINK: BEHISTUN MONUMENT AND INSCRIPTION 001 Darius is 3<sup>rd</sup> figure from the left, largest, 5 feet 8 inches high;  
<http://www.livius.org/a/1/iran/behistun.JPG>; Aug. 8, 2007



PHOTO LINK: MEDIAN EMPIRE 001 Map highlighting location of Ecbatana (orange dot)

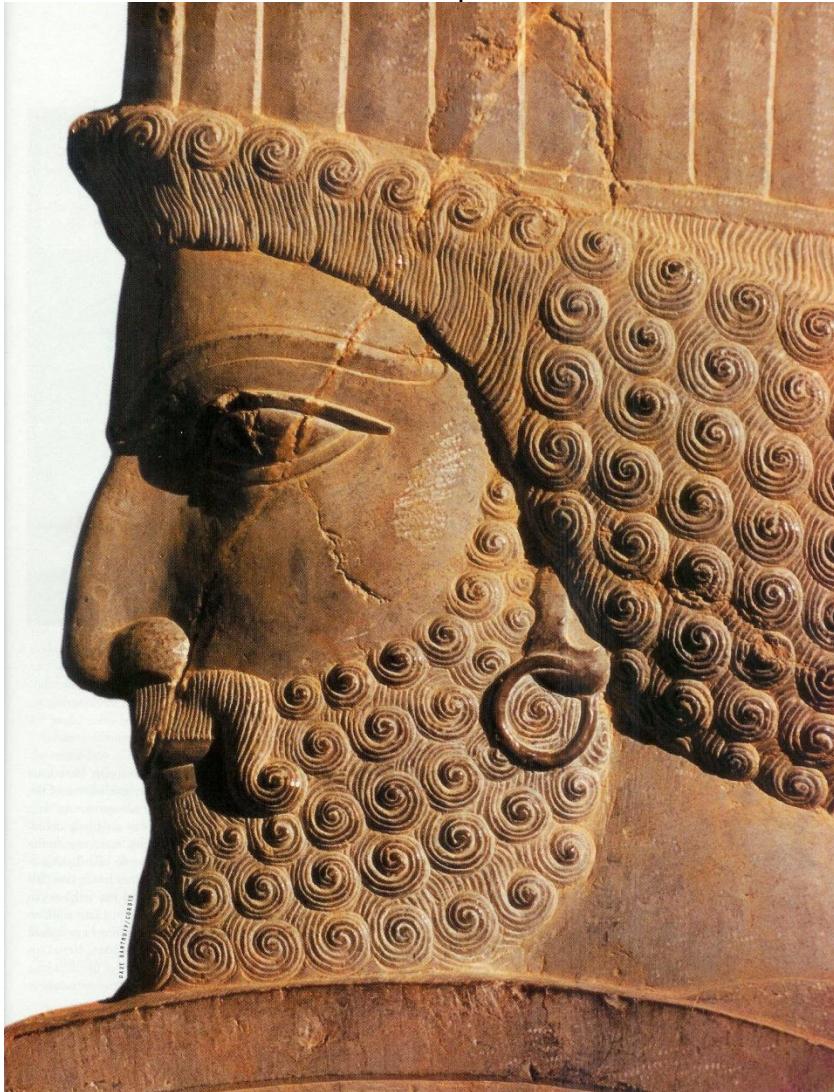


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In August of 520, Haggai began his ministry, who came to Jerusalem at a time when work on the temple has stopped. Within a month of his preaching, work resumed (Hoerth, 1998:393)

Darius the Great (522-486) left a record of his activities at Mount Bisitun (or Behistun) in present-day Kermanshah, Iran. Darius had put down a revolt in 525 BCE by Bardiya, brother of Cambyses II who was successor to Cyrus the Great. This Bardiya was really an imposter named Gaumata, whom Darius called "the Magnus". The real Bardiya had died years earlier, perhaps at the hands of Cambyses himself (Waters, 2005:13-14)

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 001 Relief of facial profile for Darius from Persepolis



Darius, relief at Persepolis. Water, 2005, ODY, 8:6:14

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PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 008 Standard weight from the reign of Darius the Great.  
Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:110.



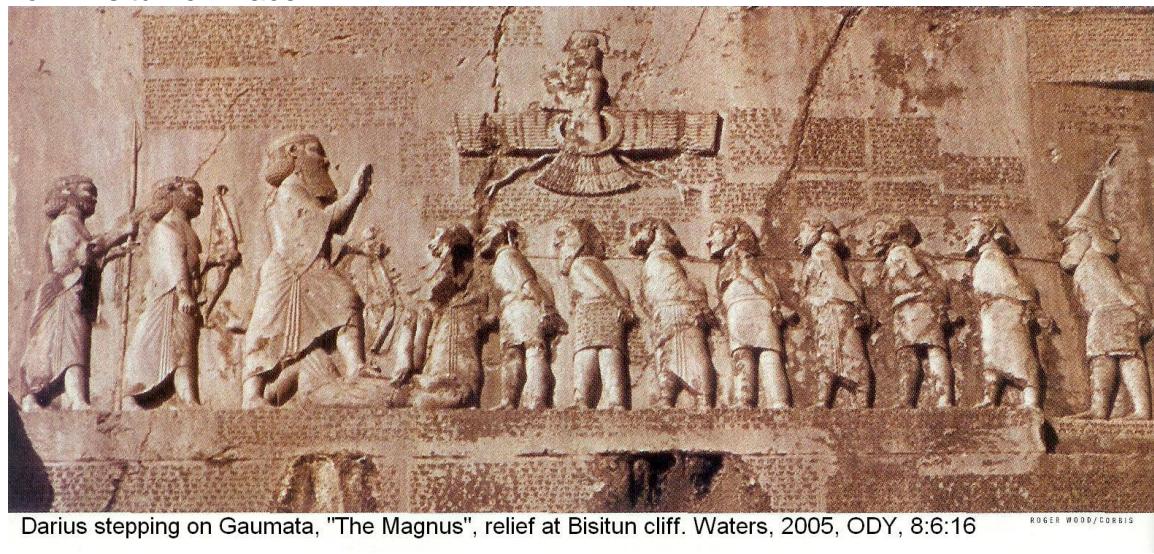
Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:110

Dan Brose

A standard weight from the reign of Darius the Great.

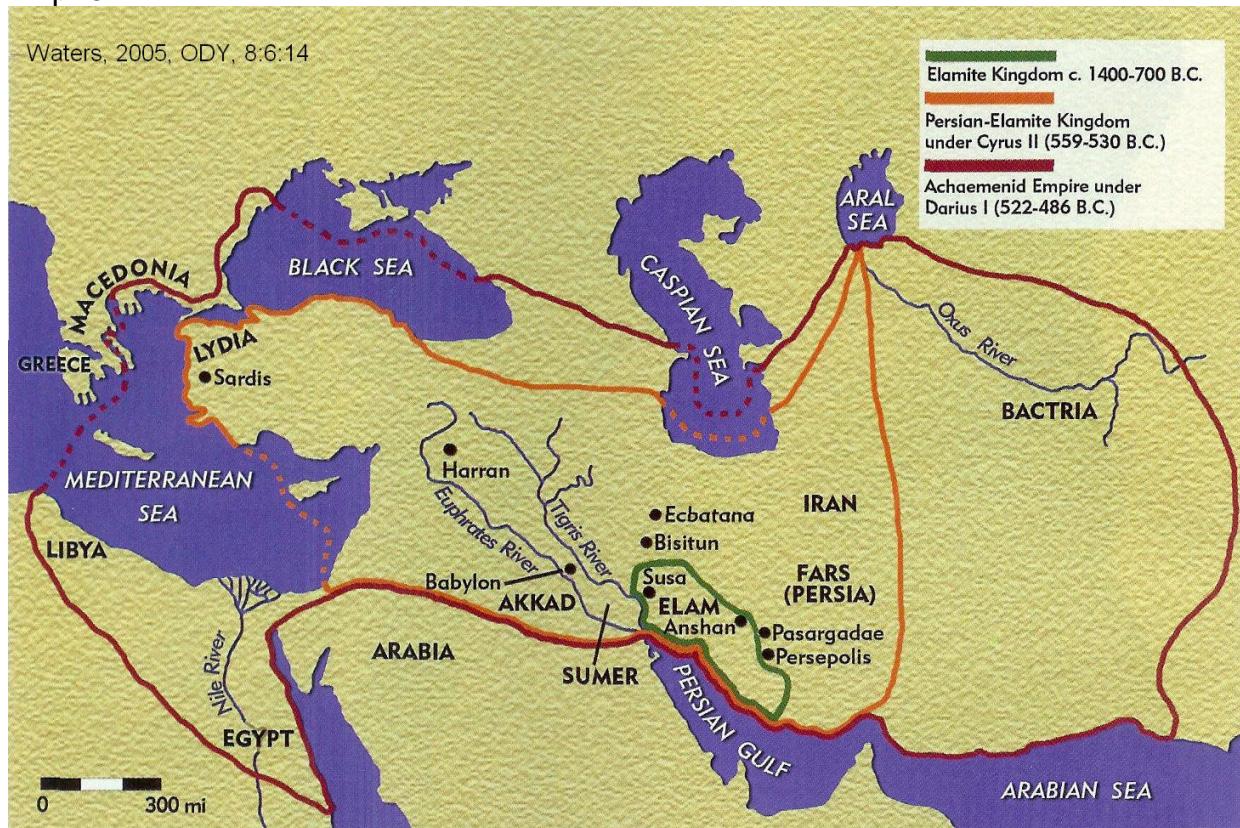
## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 002 Relief of Darius capturing Gaumata, "The Magnus" from Bisitun cliff face.



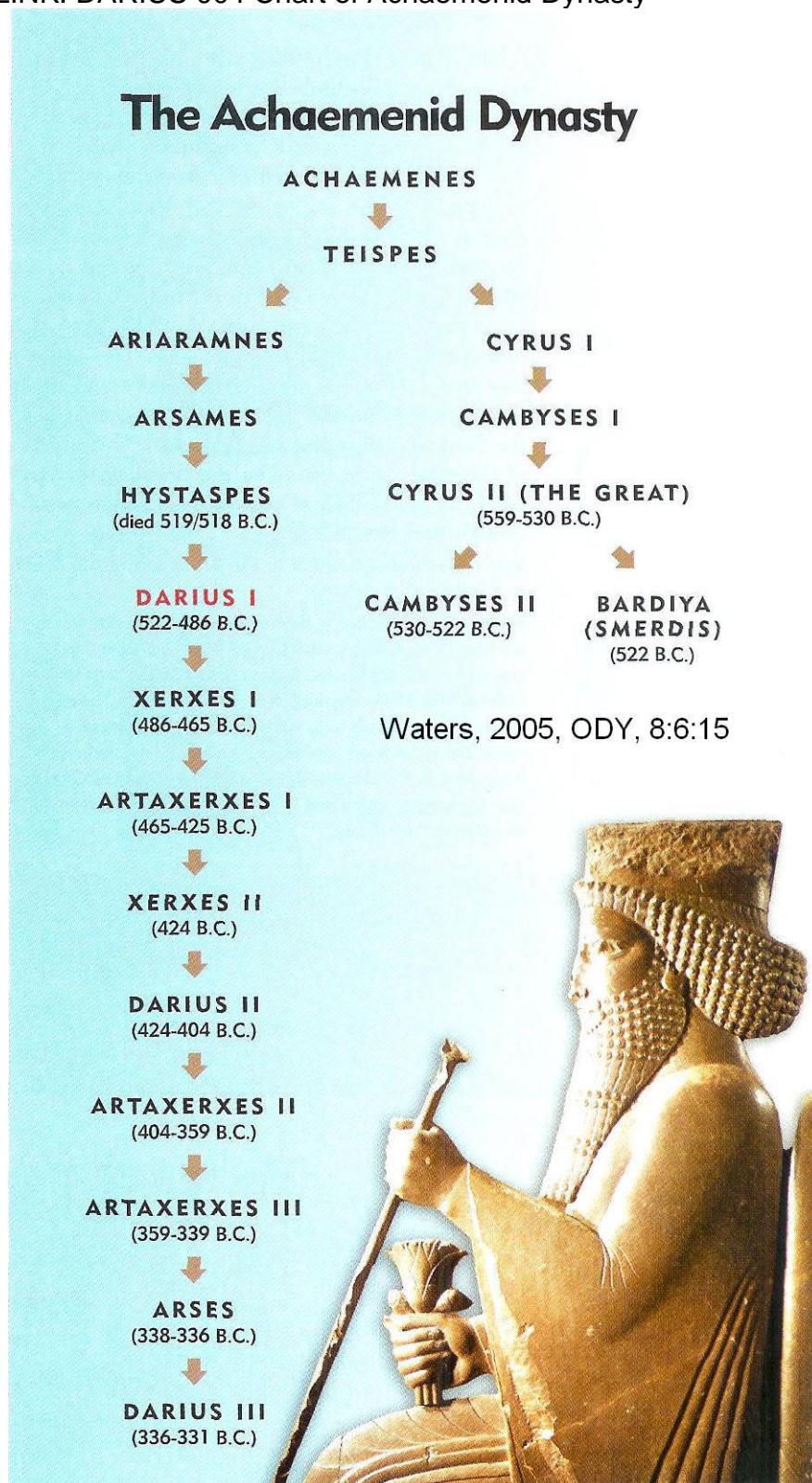
Darius stepping on Gaumata, "The Magnus", relief at Bisitun cliff. Waters, 2005, ODY, 8:6:16

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 003 Map of conquests of Darius the Great, Achaemenid Empire



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PHOTO LINK: DARIUS 004 Chart of Achaemenid Dynasty



### ***Darius and Daniel (520-485 BCE, or 522-486 BCE)***

While Daniel was included in the new government, consistent with Persian policy that local peoples be involved in local government, he apparently became so unpopular in his old age that other officials plotted his death. They nearly succeeded when they maneuvered Darius the Great to issue a decree that Daniel could not obey, a failing that lead to a sentence of death in the lion's den. God protected Daniel from the lions, and his accusers, their wives and children got eaten by them instead. Daniel was a very old man at this time, and probably died shortly afterwards. He was too old to make a return journey to Palestine, but may have seen a first group of Judeans leave for their old homeland (Hoerth, 1998:384). Caution should be taken here, as many scholars think the character of Daniel and this exploits are legendary, not historical.

PHOTO LINK: DANIEL 002B



Deblauwe, 2003, ODY, 6:4:22

Photo by Werner Forman

**NIMRUD IVORY, Assyrian Kalhu, 8th century BC.**

## **BOOK OF ESTHER (becomes queen in 478 BCE)**

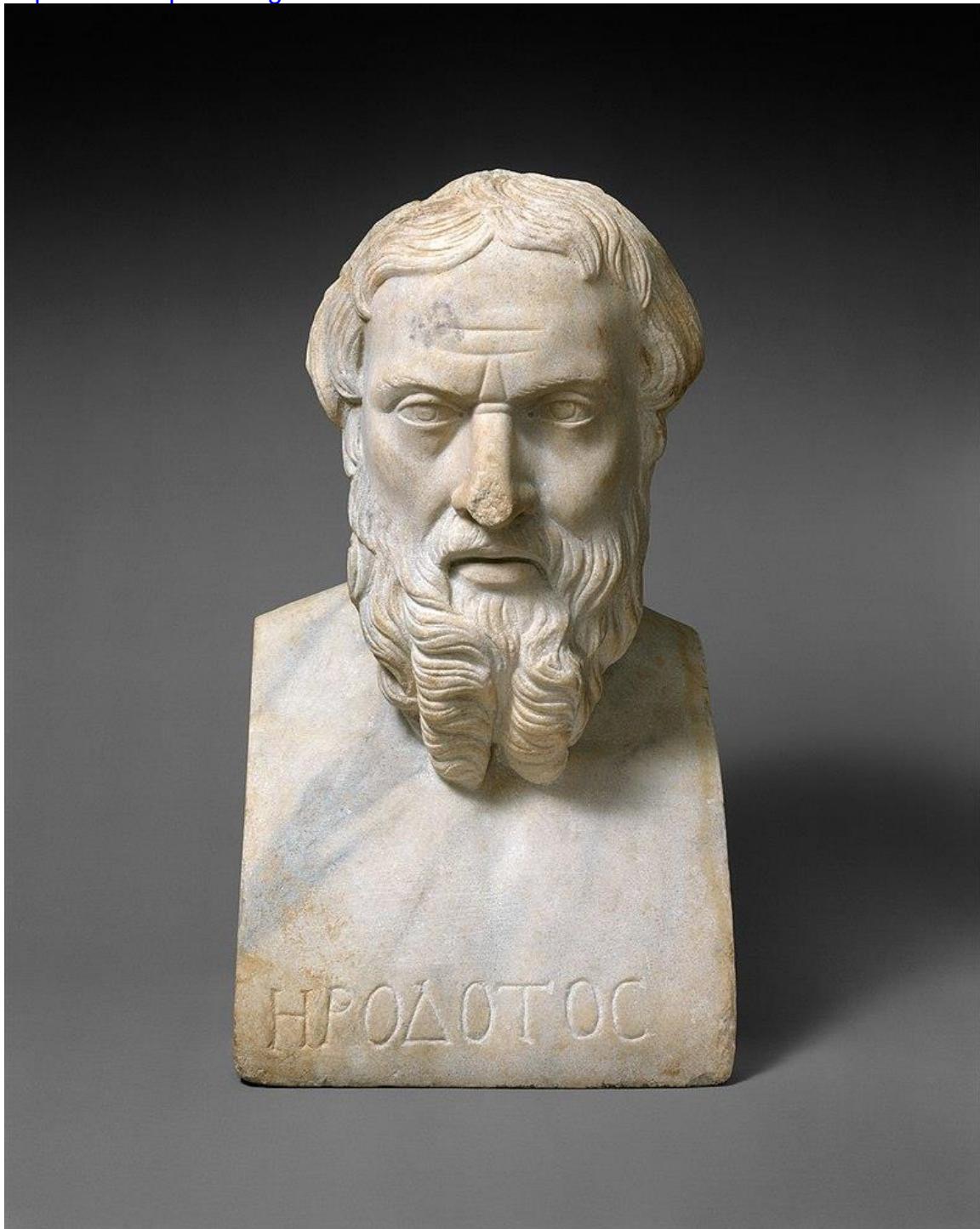
### ***Canonical Controversy***

The placement of the Book of Esther has always been controversial. It was not included in many ancient canons of the Old Testament. New Testament writers neither quoted nor alluded to it. The Essenes of Qumran had a negative view of the book and it is only Old Testament book NOT found in Dead Sea Scrolls. God not mentioned by name but King of Persia is named 190 times (Shea, 1983). The questions that were (and are) raised about Esther are answered depending on how the book is viewed: as a myth, as history or as an epic.

The chronology of Esther is questioned by minimalist scholars who say that the book describes events from Esther's arrival at court in seventh year of Ahasuerus (=Xerxes in 2:16) to at least the 12th year (3:7). But the historian Herodotus indicates that Amestris was Xerxes' queen in during this 5-year interval (Shea, 1983).

CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: HERODITUS 001 Bust o Heroditus;  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus> accessed 8/11/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

BOOK OF ESTHER	YEAR	PERSIAN HISTORY
	<b>486 BCE</b>	Xerxes takes throne
	<b>485 BCE</b>	Suppression of Egypt and Revolt
	<b>484 BCE</b>	
180-day feast of Susa/Shushan: Fall of 483 to Spring of 482 (Esther 1:1-4)	<b>483 BCE</b>	Preparation for Greek Campaign at Susa/Shushan
New Year Festival in spring (Esther 1:5)	<b>482 BCE</b>	New year marks beginning of Xerxes' 4 <sup>th</sup> reginal year; Revolt in Babylon delays Greek Campaign
	<b>481 BCE</b>	Xerxes departs Persia and arrives in Sardis with his army in the fall, spends the winter there
Decree to assemble beauties for selection of new queen in winter of 480/479 (Esther 2:1-4)	<b>480 BCE</b>	First Greek Campaign; Battle of Thermopylea in August; Sea Battle of Salamis in September; reached Sardis in November
12 month preparation for selection of queen (Esther 2:12)	<b>479 BCE</b>	Xerxes stays in Sardis for winter; Battles of Platea and Mycale
Selection of new queen not later than Jan. 20, 479 (Esther 2:2- 18)	<b>478 BCE</b>	Xerxes left Sardis to return home first of September
	<b>477 BCE</b>	

Adapted from Shea, W., 1983a, Esther and history, B&S, 12:3-4:92

Shea (1983a) showed that the chronological information in Esther can be understood in light of known Persian history as shown in the table, above.

### ***Historical Background to Esther (485-465 BCE)***

Comparison of cuneiform (neo-Babylonian) and Greek (Herodotus) sources indicate that in 483 BCE, the Persian Empire was ruled by Khshayarsa (Hebrew **Ahasuerus**), son of Darius the Great. To the Greeks, he was known as Xerxes I. He suppressed an Egyptian revolt early in his reign in 485 BCE, one year after the death of Darius in 486 BCE. A 180-day (6 month) period of preparation for war took place in Xerxes' 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This preparation was for a Greek campaign that was planned soon after Egypt was pacified. These 6 months probably began in the fall and ended in the spring. During these winter months, Persian Kings spent their time at the capital Susa (or Shushan) on the eastern end of the Mesopotamia plain. In the summer, Susa was hot, so they escaped to residences at higher altitudes in the Iranian plateau. Celebrations for the spring New year's

festival that signaled the start of Xerxes' 4th regnal year (Shea, 1983).

PHOTO LINK: AHASUERUS 001 Graphic;  
<https://image1.slideserve.com/2252887/ahasuerus-l.jpg> accessed 8/11/2020



- Powerful
- Rash and quick tempered
- Proud
- Self-centered
- Wicked

Xerxes' father, Darius the Great, was defeated by the Athenians in the plains of Marathon in 490 BC. The city of Athens had been attacked by a Persian Fleet, and after the battle, rushed home to its defense. When the reinforcements arrived, Darius' Persian fleet retired. The marathon race was introduced into the modern Olympic Games in 1896. It commemorates the legend that a courier ran over 20 miles from the battle on the plains of Marathon to Athens to proclaim the victory, upon which he died from exertion Xerxes' campaign was planned, in part, to reverse this defeat (Hoerth, 1998:395).

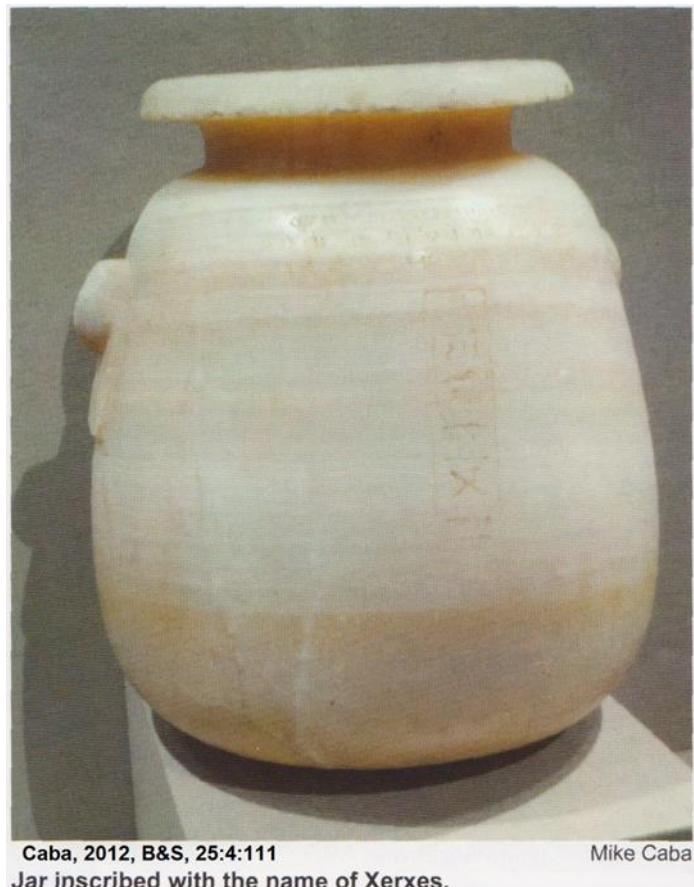
CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: AR025 PHOTO LINK: AR25 Dor, Persian-Period Phoenician Fertility Figurine Mold (RIGHT)



CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: XERXES I 002 Jar with inscribed name of Xerxes. Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:111.



Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:111  
Jar inscribed with the name of Xerxes.

Mike Caba

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: XERXES I 001 Map of the Greco-Persian Wars 492-449 BCE



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: PERSIA 003 Greko-Persian wars map;  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Greco-Persian\\_Wars-en.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Greco-Persian_Wars-en.svg) accessed 9/11/2020.



The Greek campaign was delayed for another year because of a revolt in Babylonia. In the spring or summer of 481 BCE Xerxes' army arrived at Sardis in western Anatolia. This was in his 5th reginal year. From this staging area, in his 6th year, or 480 BCE, the first great land battle of the Greek campaign was fought at Thermopylae in August<sup>3</sup>, followed by a major sea battle at Salamis in September. That battle involved ships conscripted from Egypt and Phoenicia. But the Persians sailed into a trap in the bay of Salamis. His fleet was forced into shallow water where it could not maneuver. As Xerxes watched, his fleet was decimated (Green, 1970, cited by Hoerth, 1998:396). Then Xerxes left Athens for Anatolia by the first of October, crossed the Hellenspont by mid-November and returned to his winter staging area in Sardis by the end of November (Shea,

<sup>3</sup> The battle at Thermopylae was immortalized in Greek history. The pass at Thermopylae was only about 50 feet wide. A few thousand Spartans were able to stall the entire Persian army at that pass. A traitor revealed a secret passage that lead up into mountains and then down behind the Spartan lines. Xerxes sent his Immortal elite guard up the path. When the Spartan commander Leonidas found out about it, he realized the futility of his position and dismissed his allies. Instead of retreating, however, he kept his own forces of 300 soldiers at Thermopylae. There he held the Persians back long enough to permit the orderly evacuation of Athens.

CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

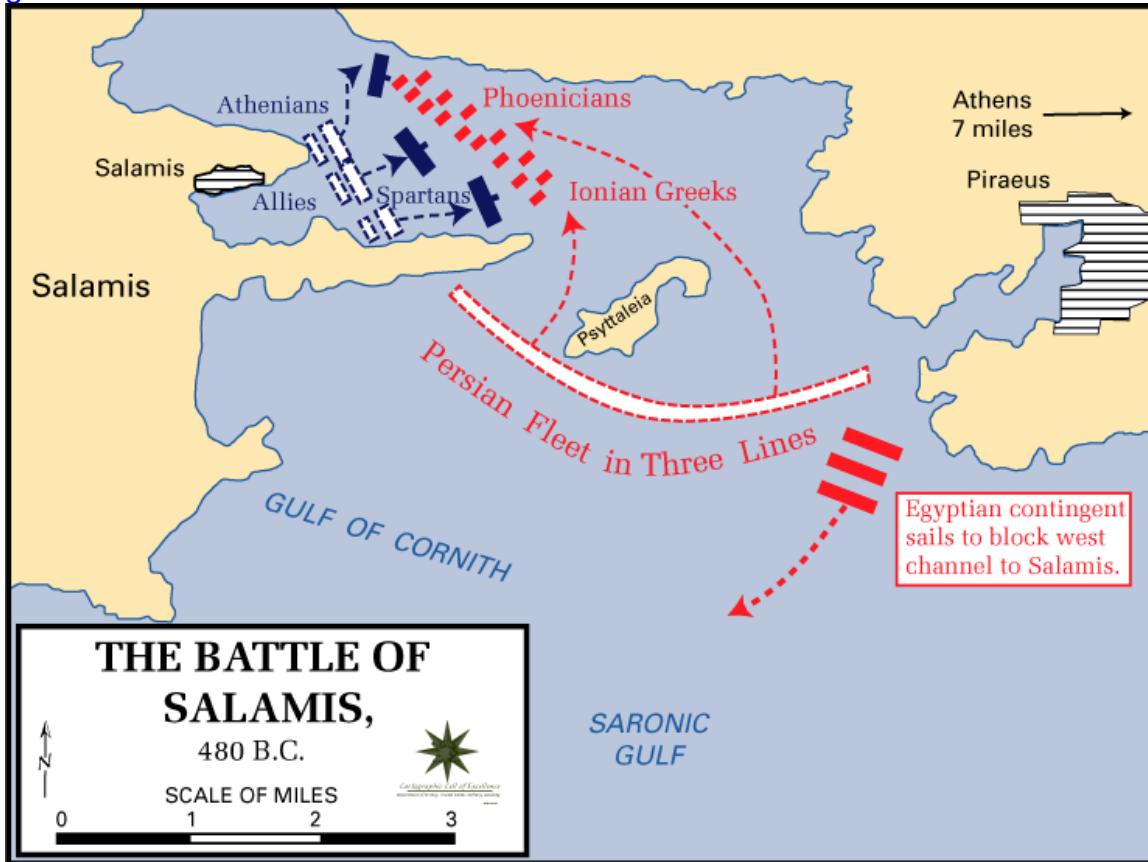
1983).

PHOTO LINK: THERMOPOYLAE 001 Drawing; <https://www.ancient-origins.net/sites/default/files/Battle-of-Thermopylae.jpg> accessed 8/9/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: SALAMIS BATTLE OF 001 Map of Battle of Salamis;  
[http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/sites/core/files/images/Battle\\_of\\_salamis.jpg](http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/sites/core/files/images/Battle_of_salamis.jpg) accessed 8/7/2020.



In 479 BCE Xerxes had another disastrous campaign where his army was defeated at the battle of Mycale on the coast of Asia Minor. Survivors of this expedition returned to Sardis in August of 479 BCE. Xerxes left for winter capital at Susa around the first of September, which was the beginning of the 7th Babylonian-Persian month of his 7th regnal year (Shea, 1983).

### ***Application to the Esther Story***

The 6-month "banquet" of Esther 1:1-4 corresponds to the 6 months of Xerxes' 3rd year (484-483 BCE) when he was planning the Greek campaign. The 7-day celebration in Susa/Shushan of Esther 1:5-12 corresponds to Xerxes' New Year festival in the spring of 482 BCE. Xerxes' order to assemble all the beautiful women at Susa (Esther 2:1-4, 12, 16) issued from his winter staging area in Sardis in 480-479 BCE. Therefore, we perceive an approximately 3-year interval between the events of Esther 1 and those of Esther 2 (Shea, 1983, Hoerth, 1998:395).

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: SUSA 001 Location Map; <https://ancientpages.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/susamap.jpg> accessed 8/7/2020.

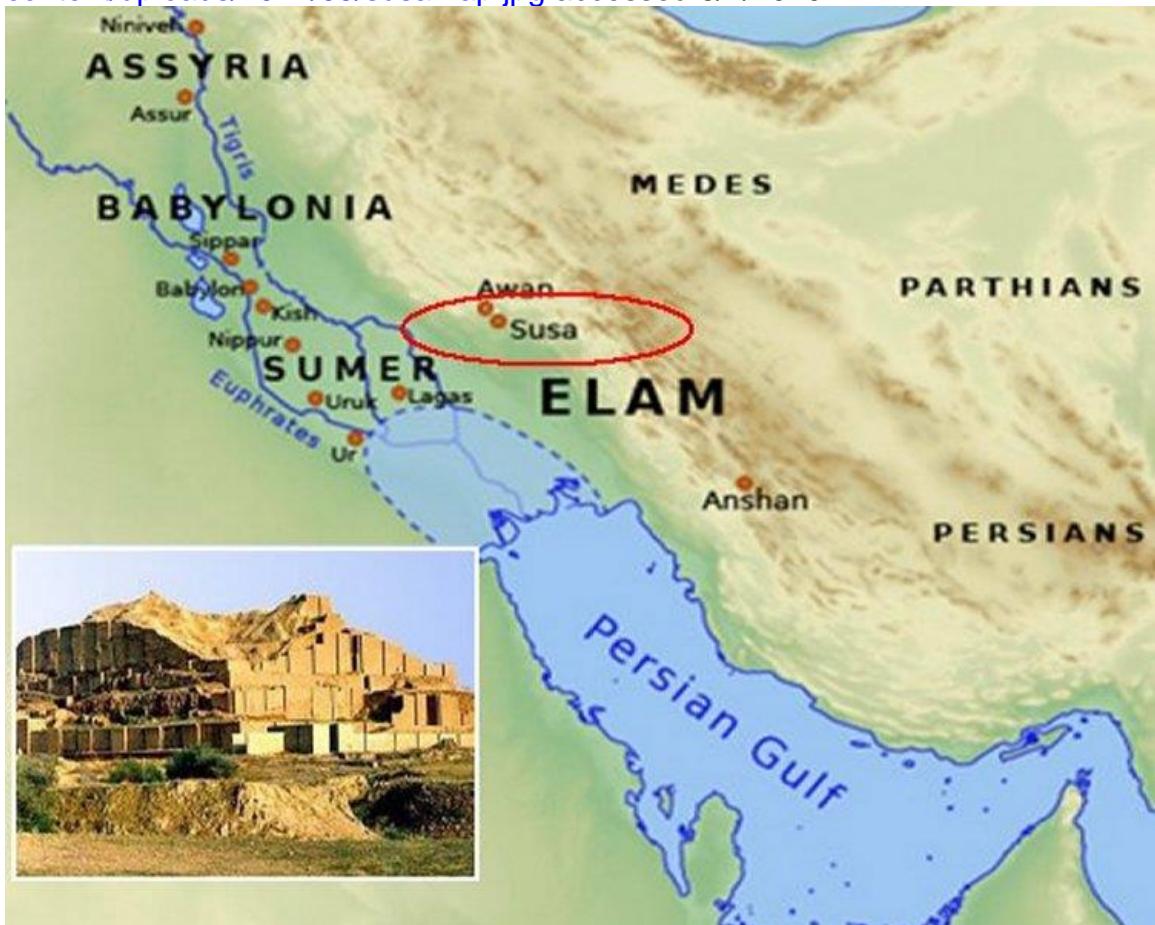


PHOTO LINK: SUSA 002 Excavations 18<sup>th</sup> century;  
<https://www.mediatorehouse.com/p/164/iran-archaeology-susa-14278587.jpg>  
accessed 8/7/2020.

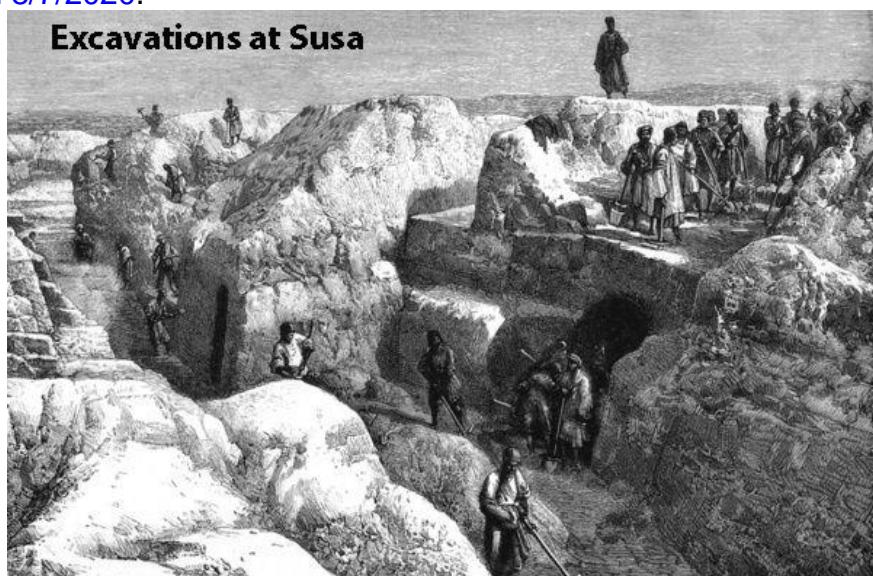


PHOTO LINK: SUSA 003 Excavations modern;  
[https://www.livius.org/site/assets/files/18212/susa\\_acropolis\\_excavations1.jpg](https://www.livius.org/site/assets/files/18212/susa_acropolis_excavations1.jpg)  
accessed 8/11/2020.



To understand the historical context of Esther, it is important to identify the Biblical Queen Vashti (Esther's predecessor). Herodotus reports that in 480-479 BCE while in Sardis, Xerxes fell in love with the wife of his brother Masistes and tried to have an affair with her. Greek sources do not indicate the presence of Amestris in Sardis at this time. This was unusual, because normally Persian wives accompanied their kings in the royal entourage. Perhaps her absence is due to her disfavor by refusal to appear before the king recorded in Esther 1:10-12. Following this interpretation, Greek Amestris would be Biblical Vashti. Linguistic comparisons between Amestris and Vashti are possible . Further marital complications for Xerxes are recorded by Herodotus following his return to Susa. This time Xerxes had an affair with Masites' daughter, Artaynte. Amestris got some revenge at the king's birthday when she asked (and by royal rules) received Masistes's wife as a gift. She promptly had her mutilated. Following these power confrontations, Amestris-Vashti was demoted (Esther 1:19) but not killed or exiled. The Greek records as silent about Xerxes' marital status until his son by Amestris (Artaxerxes I) was born in his 12 year. So there is a window of possibility for Esther to be chief wife ("queen") between his 7th and 12 years (Shea, 1983).

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PHOTO LINK: ARTAXERXES I 002 Silver bowl of Artaxerxes. Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:112.



**Silver bowl of Artaxerxes.**

Mike Caba  
**Caba, 2012, B&S, 25:4:112**

CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: ARTAXERXES 003 Monument;



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

The story of Esther is set in Susa, it was the winter capital and one of the three capital cities of Persia. The others were Ecbatana (summer capital) and Persepolis (ceremonial capital).

PHOTO LINK: MEDIAN EMPIRE 003 Map;

[http://www.ariarman.com/images/Q\\_1\\_IRAN\\_MEDIAN\\_EMPIRE\\_MAP.jpg](http://www.ariarman.com/images/Q_1_IRAN_MEDIAN_EMPIRE_MAP.jpg); Oct. 7, 2010



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: PERSIAN EMPIRE 001-02 Map;  
<https://ancientempiresblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/map-of-persian-empire.jpg> accessed 8/7/2020.

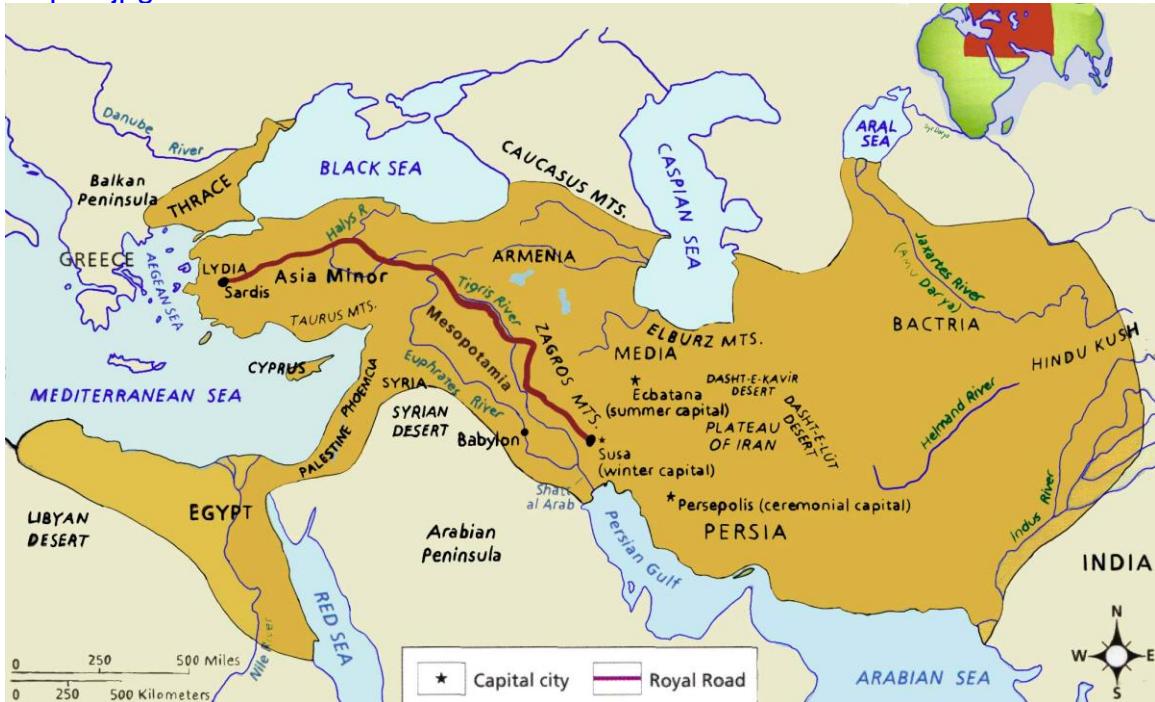


PHOTO LINK: ECBATANA 002 Map;  
[https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~rauhn/Hist303/h303rv3s06\\_files/image003.jpg](https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~rauhn/Hist303/h303rv3s06_files/image003.jpg)  
accessed 8/11/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LOOK: ECBATANA 003 Excavations;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecbatana#/media/File:Excavations\\_in\\_Ecbatana.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecbatana#/media/File:Excavations_in_Ecbatana.jpg)  
accecced 8/11/2020.



PHOTO LINK: ECBATANA 001 Golden rhyton;

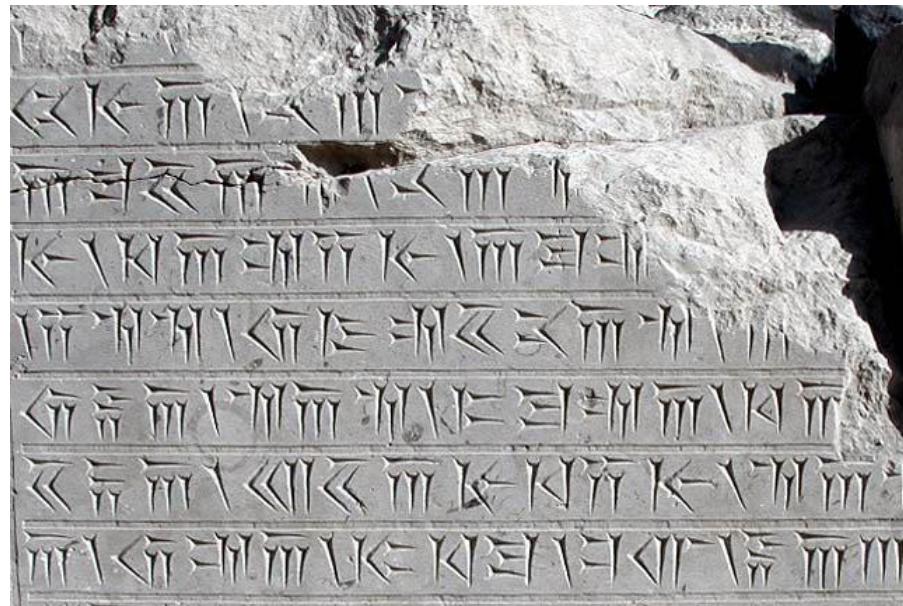
<http://www.livius.org/a/1/iran/rhyton2.jpg>; Aug. 8, 2007

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: PERSEPOLIS 001 Ruins of ancient city of the Persians;  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Persepolis\\_IRestorer.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Persepolis_IRestorer.jpg); Aug. 7, 2007

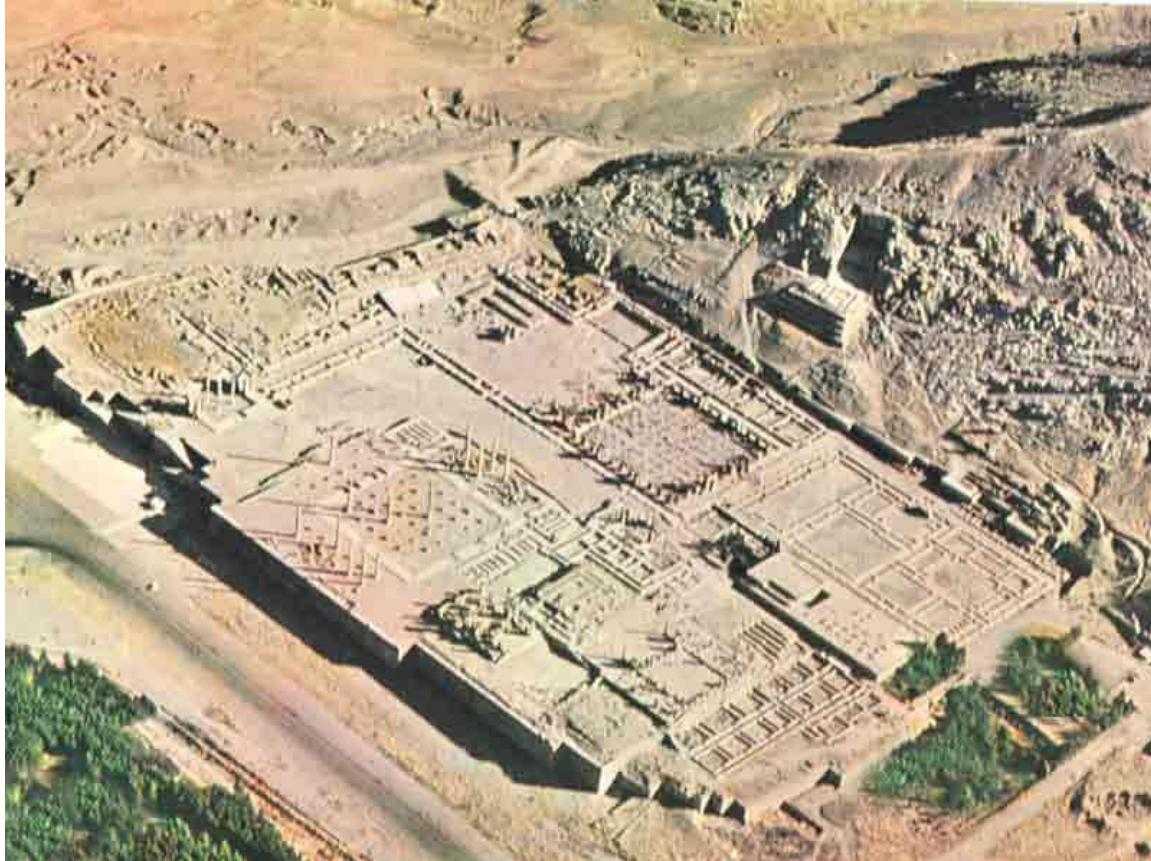


PHOTO LINK: PERSEPOLIS 002 Inscription at Persepolis, photographer: Ramin Dehdashti; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Persian\\_Ancient\\_Texts.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Persian_Ancient_Texts.jpg); Aug. 9, 2007



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: PERSEPOLIS 003 Aerial photograph of Persepolis;  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:AerialViewPersepolis.jpg>; Aug. 9, 2007



Esther 2:20-23 tells of an attempt to assassinate Xerxes. This plot was foiled by the Jewish official Mordecai, who was Esther's uncle. Other assassination attempts are known from Persian records. In one of them, Xerxes's brother and sister-in-law fled from the court and attempted to set up a rival government. They were captured and tortured (Hoerth, 1998:399-400).

The story of the planned genocide of the Jews in Persia is the centerpiece of the Esther story. An official named Haman, who hated Mordecai, used **divination** and deception to trick Xerxes into issuing a decree for the annihilation of all Jews in the Persian Empire. Esther used her influence with Xerxes to reverse the decree and Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai (Hoerth, 1998:400).

### Persian Divination Practices

Divination is the art or technique of gaining knowledge of future events or distant states by means of observing and interpreting signs. Various objects or events may serve as media of divination. Here we discuss only those interpretive acts which have the general structure of "A is a sign of B" (e.g., seeing a black cat is a

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bad omen)(<https://wwwiranicaonline.org/articles/divination> accessed 8/11/2020)

PHOTO LINK: DIVINATION 006 Persian divination bowl;  
<https://artofdivination.blogspot.com/2017/10/divination-in-ancient-iran-persia.html>  
accessed 8/11/2020.



Classical and early Muslim sources refer to the practice of divination among Persians. Magi interpreted the eclipse of the sun as the waning of the fortune of the Greeks, against whom the Persian king was marching. Zoroastrian priests who told the future events by looking into flames. Persian works on divination, which were into Arabic. These books listed all the techniques that the Persians used for divining during their dominion Persians wrote names or words on the shafts of their arrows. The inscribed word was interpreted as an omen when an arrow was pulled out to shoot at the enemy. The same warlord interpreted the actions of his enemy, who changed his mounts from elephant to horse, mule, and donkey, as evidence of his waning fortune

(<https://wwwiranicaonline.org/articles/divination> accessed 8/11/2020)

CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

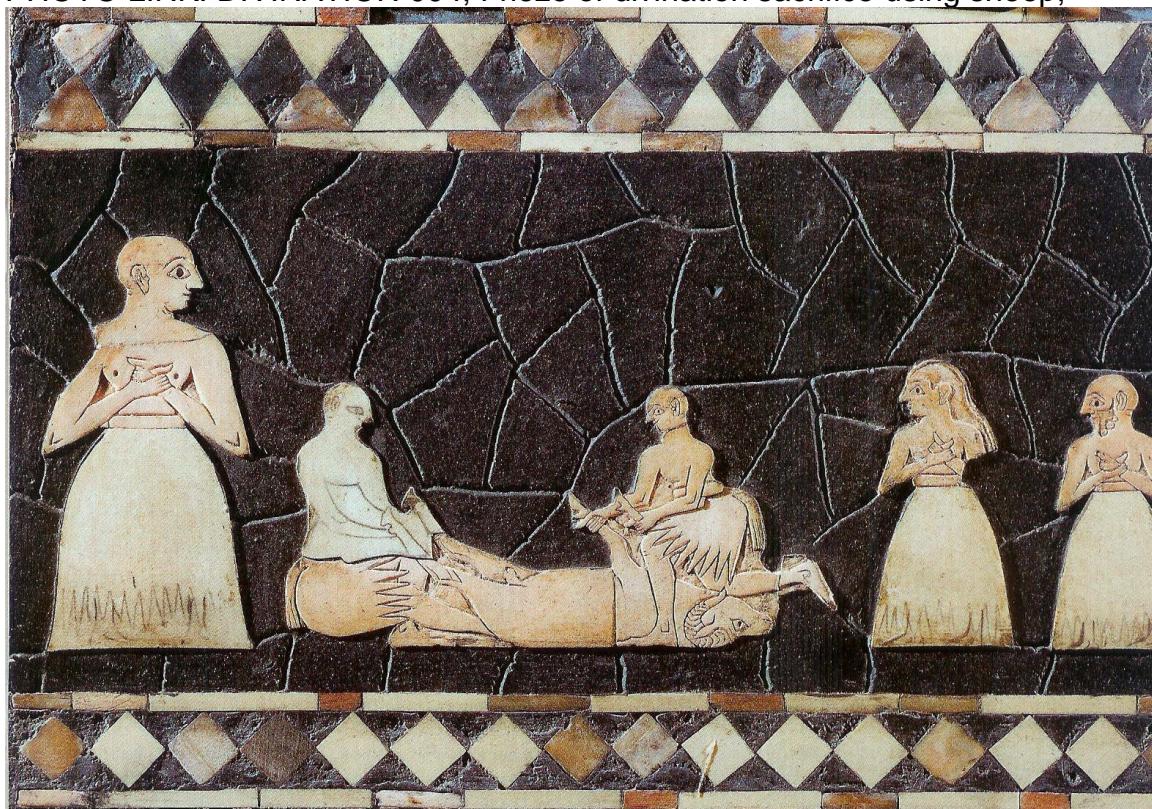
PHOTO LINK: DIVINATION 003; Sheep slaughtering



CUNEIFORM TABLETS, made of mudbrick, preserving the records of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, have survived in vast quantities. Of the roughly half-million in the possession of museums and research institutions, only a fraction have been studied. The fragment shown here, part of the collection at the British Museum, is published in Assyriologist Ulla Koch-Westenholz's *Babylonian Liver Omens*, which examines a portion of ancient tablets dealing with the Babylonian practice of slaughtering sheep and studying their organs for portents of the future.

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PHOTO LINK: DIVINATION 004; Frieze of divination sacrifice using sheep;



SACRIFICE FOR DIVINATION, Temple of Shamash, Mari, Syria, 3rd millennium BC

Hallo, 2005, BAR, 31:2:35, photo by Art Resource

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PHOTO LINK: DIVINATION 005 Model of liver for learning divination, Iraq;



MODEL OF SHEEP LIVER, southern Iraq, 1900-1600 BC

Hallo, 2005, BAR, 31:2:35

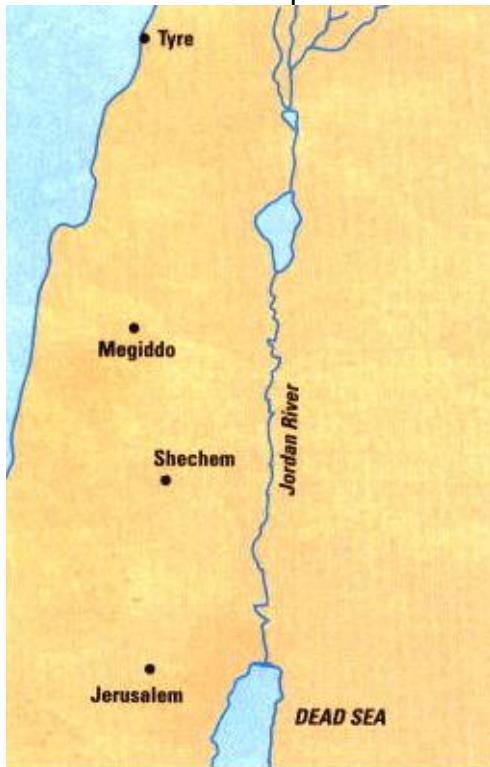
The commemoration of the Jewish deliverance from Haman is called Purim, and became a new annual celebration. In 465, the protections around Xerxes finally failed, and he was murdered. Esther would have been relatively young at this time, but nothing more is known about her (Hoerth, 1998:400).

### ***Jewish rebellions during the reign of Xerxes (486-464 BCE)***

In the archaeological record, there is a lapse of occupations early in the 5th century BCE at **Samaria** and at the destruction of **Shechem** in c. 475 BCE. Both sites were centers for large Jewish populations, correspond to the fighting "in the king's provinces" mentioned in Esther 9:16. This fighting is reflecting Haman's decree of 473 BCE.

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### PHOTO LINK: SHECHEM 003 Location Map



Stager, 2003, BAR, 19:4:28

### PHOTO LNK: SCHECHEM 010 Ruins of Schechem



The Middle Bronze Age ruins of Shechem, looking southeast from the base of Mt. Ebal. Abraham traveled freely between Shechem and Beersheba. In Genesis 12:6, Shechem is referred to as a *mâqôm* ("place") indicating it was uninhabited. When Jacob came to Shechem after returning from Haran, however, Shechem was an *îr*, or "city" (Gn 33:18), which was fortified (Gn 34:20, 24). Archaeological findings at Shechem indicate that it was founded at about the time of Jacob.

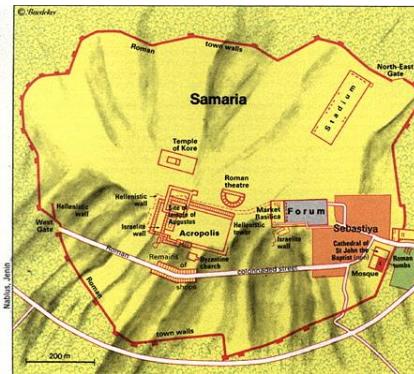
Ray, 2004; B&S, 17:2:38. Photo B.G. Wood

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: SAMARIA 003 Location Map; <http://www.bibleplaces.com>  
accessed 8/20/2020



PHOTO LINK: SAMARIA 002 Plan;  
<http://www.planetware.com/map/samaria/samaria-map-isr-samar.htm>; Aug 26, 2006



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: SAMARIA 009B Wine press



Shea (1983:96) ends his study of Esther in these words:

*"In summary, we have considered historical matters in the book of Esther: the identification of Vashti, the date when Esther came to court, the archaeological evidence from Palestine that may have resulted from fighting involving the Jew's as a consequence of Xerxes' decrees. In each case the details described in the book of Esther have been found compatible with the available extra-Biblical evidences. These correlations do not prove the historical accuracy of the book of Esther, but they certainly point in that direction."*

## PERSIA AFTER XERXES (456-332 BCE)

### *Artaxerxes I (465-424 BCE)*

PHOTO LINK: ARTAXERXES I 001 Image on coin;  
[http://fouman.com/history/img/Coin\\_Ardashir\\_Artaxerxes\\_I\\_Makrocheir.jpg](http://fouman.com/history/img/Coin_Ardashir_Artaxerxes_I_Makrocheir.jpg); Oct. 7, 2010



Iranian Historical Photographs Gallery : [www.fouman.com](http://www.fouman.com)

There was a complex power struggle after Xerxes I died in 465 BCE. A younger son of Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, became king in 464 BCE. The Bible picks up the history in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (457 BCE). This was the year that Ezra traveled to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra 7:6). Ezra was probably a Persian official in charge of Jewish affairs. He was selected to promote the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem and to establish a judiciary. (Ezra 7:11-26). A listing 1,800 people who accompanied Ezra on the three and a half month journey to Jerusalem is given in Ezra 8. Ezra instituted some reforms in Jerusalem, and then returned to the Persian court (Hoerth, 1998:399-400).

At the time of the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7, Persia was dealing with revolts on two fronts. The Egyptians had allied themselves with the Athenians. The Greek states were revolting for control of the eastern Mediterranean. In this situation, the Persians wanted stability for their land bridge into Egypt. The year after Ezra went to Jerusalem, a Persian fleet and army moved south from Syria to put down the Egyptian uprising (Hoerth, 1998:401).

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PHOTO LINK: SALAMIS BATTLE OF 002 Painting,  
[https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308426274462499610/?nic\\_v2=1a18yJuJS](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308426274462499610/?nic_v2=1a18yJuJS)  
accessed 8/11/2020



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PHOTO LINK: PERSIA 004 Painting of land army;

<https://weaponsandwarfare.com/2015/11/03/the-persian-army-part-ii/> accessed 8/11/2020.



Thirteen years after Ezra's first journey to Jerusalem (444 BCE), Nehemiah was sent by Artaxerxes I to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls. He was the king's "cupbearer", and possibly an eunuch (see Yamauchi, 1990:260-264, cited by Hoerth, 1998:401). This chronology has been reinterpreted by Demsky (1996). Nehemiah may have come to Jerusalem two years before Ezra, see discussion below.

Nehemiah came to Jerusalem with letters of passage, and a letter instructing the king's administrators to provide timber from the "king's forest" for his rebuilding projects. He also came with army officers and cavalry troops. Artaxerxes knew that rebuilding Jerusalem would be opposed by her neighbors (Hoerth, 1990:401).

Nehemiah secretly inspected the walls (Nehemiah 2:11-16) and organized a rebuilding program (Nehemiah 3) Despite numerous attacks on the project (Nehemiah 3:33-6:19), in 52 days the city walls had been restored and new doors placed on the gateways (Nehemiah 6:15; 7:1).

During this time (mid 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE), refortification was occurring throughout coastal Palestine and in the Hill Country. These refortifications, and the

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

rebuilding of Jerusalem, were part of Persia's effort to stabilize the region and retain control (Hoglund, 1992:165-205, cited by Hoerth, 1998:402).

### **EZRA (458-440? BCE) AND NEHEMIAH (445-420? BCE)**

The first phase of reoccupation was lead by a Jewish "prince" (Ezra 1:7-11) and "high commissioner" (Ezra 5:14-16), appointed by Cyrus the Great of Persia, named Sheshbazzar. This commissioner laid the foundation for a Second Temple. A later governor (or Sheshbazzar given a new name, Zerubbable, 521-516 B.C., Haggai 1:1:) came to Jerusalem with a second set of returnees and rebuilt the Temple with financial assistance from Cyrus (Ezra 6:4). The building project continued through the reign of Cyrus' successor, King Darius even in the face of opposition lead by Tattenai, the governor from the district of Samaria (Ezra 4-6; Demsky, 1996; Hoerth, 1998:392).

During this period of turmoil, the prophet Zechariah appeared on the scene, and complemented the prophecies of Haggai (Zech 8:3-9; Hoerth, 1998:393).

The charges of Tattenai caused the work on the Temple and walls of Jerusalem to stop while an inquest into Cyrus' original decree was made. The Persians were sophisticated bureaucrats. They kept tablets and scrolls on shelves, in baskets, and in jars. Tags and other labeling devices were developed to facilitate document identification and retrieval. There system impressed Alexander the Great who adopted it for his library in Alexandria (Hoerth, 1998:393).

When the Cyrus decree was discovered in the Ecbatana archives, Darius also supported the repatriation and rebuilding project (Ezra 6:11). The return of Jews to Palestine was lead by a scribe (Ezra) and 13 years later by an administrator (Nehemiah). There is disagreement about which one of them came to Jerusalem first and even if they ever met (Demsky, 1996).

These divergences of opinion are due to apparent discrepancies in the Ezra/Nehemiah text itself (Demsky, 1996):

Ezra 6:14-15[The temple was completed] on the 23rd day of the month of Adar in the 6th year of the reign of King Darius" (April 1, 515 BCE.)

Ezra 7:1     "After these events, during the reign of King Artaxerxes [Ataxerxes I, grandson of Darius, 485/487 BCE]...Ezra came up from Babylon."

Ezra 7:7     A certain number...went up to Jerusalem in the 7th year of *the reign of King Artaxerxes.*" (457 BCE)

Neh. 1:1-2    "The words of Nehemiah...in the month of Chislev, in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes." (December, 446 BCE)

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

- Neh 2:1      "In the month of Nisan, in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes."  
(March-April, 445 BCE)
- Neh 5:14     "...the King appointed me governor in the land of Judah from the  
20th to the 33rd year of King Artaxerxes." (444/443-433/432 BCE)
- Neh 13:6     "...I was away from Jerusalem, for in the 32nd year of King  
Artaxerxes of Babylon" (433 BCE)
- Neh. 8:9      Both Ezra and Nehemiah present at the reading of the Torah
- Neh. 8:9      Both men present at the celebration for completion of rebuilding of  
the city wall.

A literal reading of the text indicates that Ezra came first and Nehemiah came 13 years later. But Nehemiah 2:17-18 suggests that reconstruction had not yet begun when he (Nehemiah) arrived. Demsky (1996) suggests that Ezra used a religious calendar (months are numbered) based on a sabbatical 7-year cycle (Ex 23:10-11; Lev 25:1-7; Deut 15:1-6) whereas Nehemiah used the Babylonian civil calendar which is tied to kingships. The earliest sabbatical year we can date is the one recorded in 1 Maccabees 16:14-16 and in Josephus Antiquities 13.230-247 in 136/135 BCE. This interpretation requires the phrase "*of the reign of King Artaxerxes.*" in Ezra 7:7 to be an editorial gloss and changes the date of that verse from 457 to 443. This harmonizes the Ezra-Nehemiah accounts and places Nehemiah in Jerusalem two years before Ezra and his people came in August 443. Two years prior to this, the walls, under the leadership of Nehemiah, had begun to be rebuilt (Demsky, 1996).

According to Ezra 2, fifty thousand Jews responded to the proclamation of freedom by returning with Ezra to Judea. This was probably a fraction of the total Jewish population of Babylon at the time (Hoerth, 1998:289).

## BUILDING ACTIVITY IN PERSIAN PERIOD (587-332 BCE)

Almost all the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple occurred during the reign of Darius the Great.

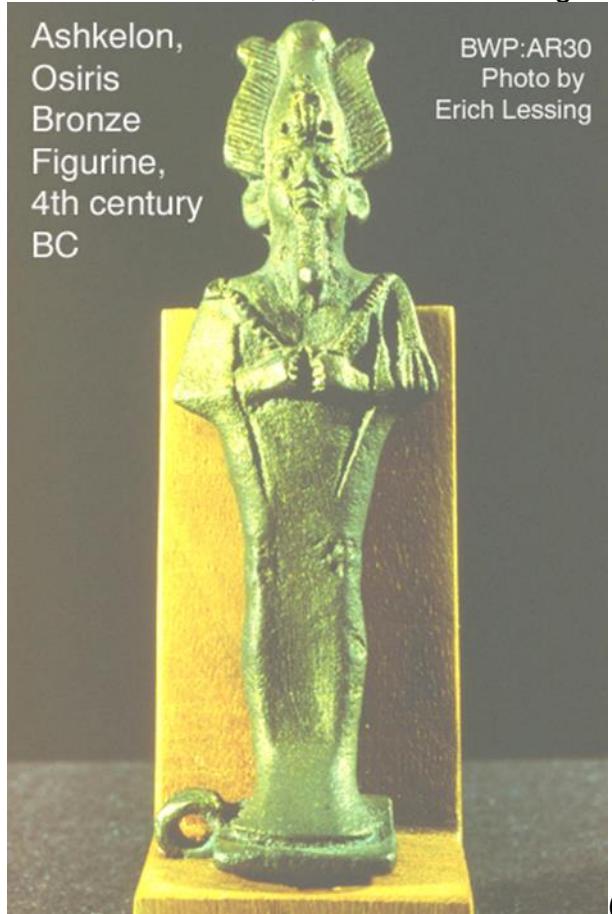
Thirty one years after the Temple was reconstructed he died in 485 BCE. There is no biblical record of the events of those 31 years, but they set the stage for the story of Esther. The Esther story takes place under the reign of Xerxes (Ahasuerus; 483-465 BCE). The rebuilding of the city walls took place under the administration of his son Artaxerxes I (465-424 BCE), which included Ezra and Nehemiah.

In Palestine there are few unambiguous architectural finds for the Persian era

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

(587-332 BCE). This is because Persian toleration, trade practices, and policy of assimilation of local culture make differentiation of Persian era buildings and artifacts difficult to interpret. A distinctive change in city planning which the Persians brought to their Palestinian holdings was the Hippodamian principle: a grid pattern for cities. Many of the older cities were abandoned or not resettled in Persian Period (Megiddo, Tell Jamma, Tell al-Hasi, Jericho, etc.). Often the uppermost layers of these tells have eroded away. There were several resettled Persian sites (Samaria, Shechem, Ashdod, **Askelon**, Ramat Rehal, etc) that were destroyed by Hellenistic-Roman construction projects. Another factor in the poor preservation of Persian artifacts was that resettlement occurred on the slopes of larger sites, not on the old palace-fortresses. That is why excavations for Persian era artifacts on top of tells don't find them (Wood, 1975).

PHOTO LINK: AR 030 Ashkelon, Osiris Bronze Figurine, 4th century BCE



(RIGHT)

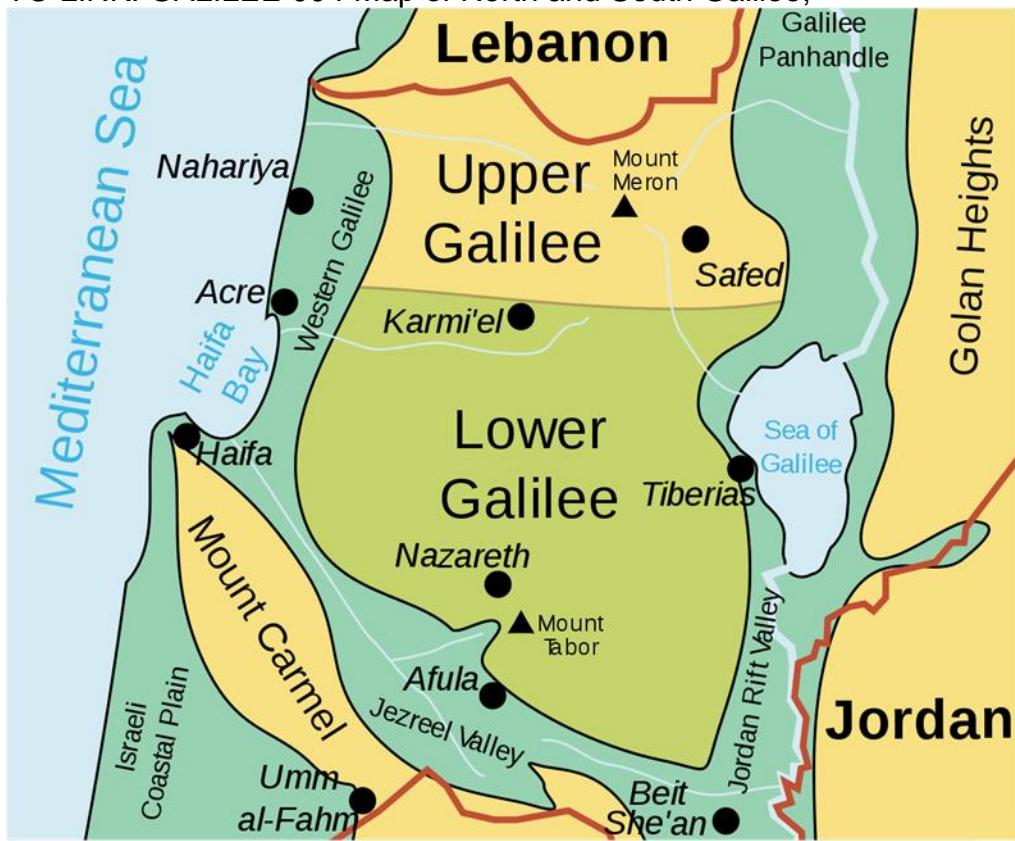
PHOTO LINK: GA 035 Dor, Persian Period, 538-332 BCE; Figurines  
**Phoenician Tanit votive figurines**  
Dor, Persian period (538–332 BC)



BWP:GA35; Photo by Zev Radovan

In the Persian period, there were regional differences in the timing, character and degree of assimilation. Judah was gradually resettled. The northern territories and Benjamin (Tell al-Nasba, Gibeon, Beth-el, Tell al-Ful) continued to be populated after destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The coastal cities (and maybe **Galilee**) were quickly heavily re-settled because of their strategic importance for international trade on the Mediterranean (Wood, 1975).

PHOTO LINK: GALILEE 004 Map of North and South Galilee;



Persians exercised a form of city planning. At tell Abu-Hawam (near Mt. Carmel) the main building faces on main thoroughfare and parallels the long axis of city. At Shikmonah (south of Haifa), one section of city has houses built with great symmetry along 2 intersecting streets. Tell Megadim has a built-up area bisected by wide, straight central road. On either side of road are narrow lanes that intersect it at right angles. Housing complexes between lanes are further divided into sub-units uniform in size and shape (Wood, 1975).

### **Tell Abu Hawam**

Tell Abu Hawam, a site on the estuary of the Qishon River north of the Carmel Ridge, within the municipality of Haifa, has aided archaeologists in the quest for knowledge of contacts and trade relations in the ancient world, especially between the Aegean and the Levant. Its auspicious location is midway between Cyprus and the Nile Delta, where maritime and terrestrial routes met, and at the foot of the Carmel Ridge, which protects it from the prevalent southwesterly winds and enhances its usage as a harbor. The drawbacks of the site include its position on an active geological fault line, the swamps of the Qishon River, and the proximity of the Carmel Ridge, which hampered the continuation of the terrestrial trade route. The site is now located c. 1.5 km from the coast due to geomorphologic changes, silting caused by the Qishon River, and industrial and

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

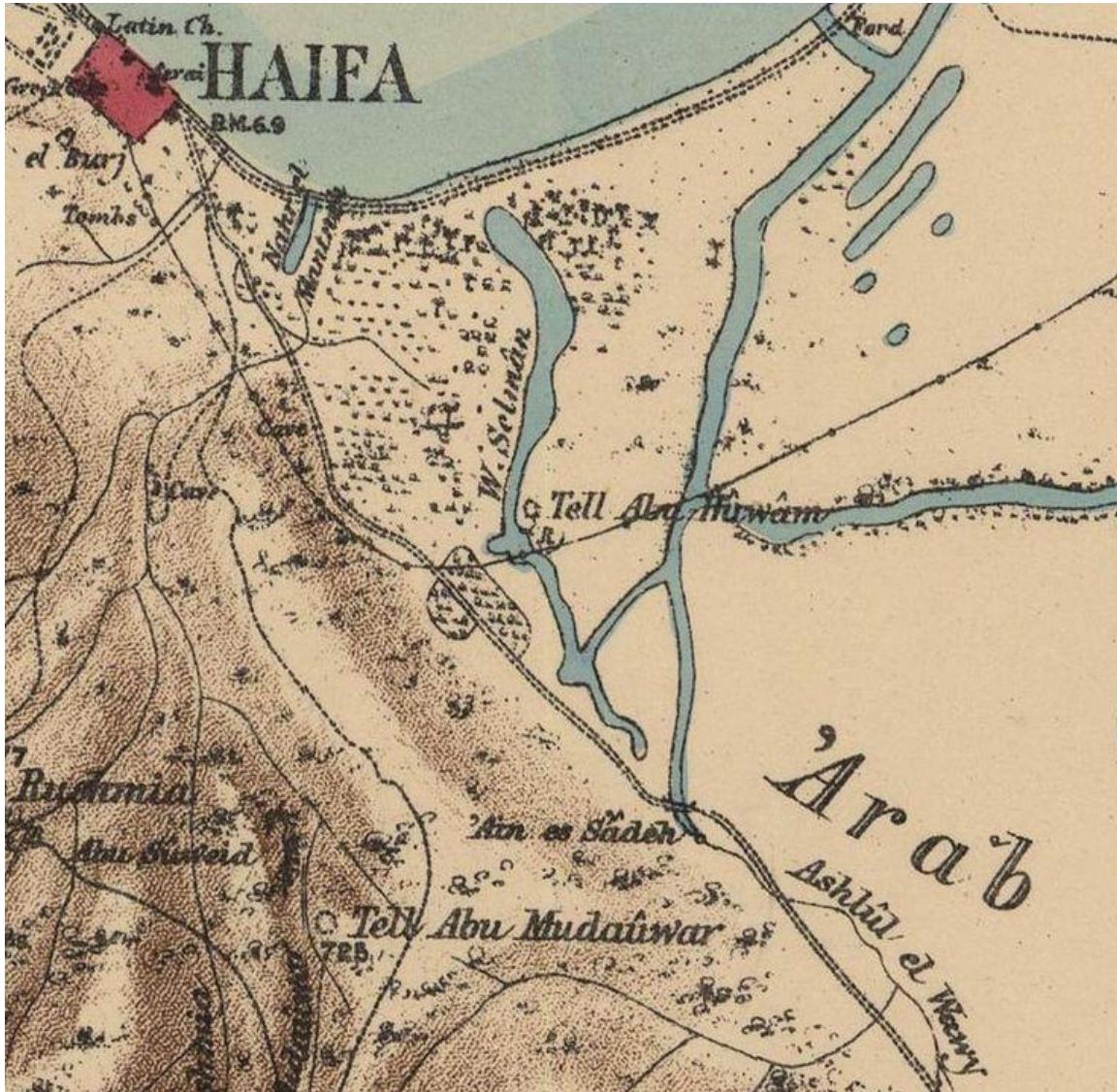
urban development that changed the river's course and dried the area (<https://www.baslibrary.org/new-encyclopedia-archaeological-excavations-holy-land/0/0/12/abu-hawam-tell> accessed 8/11/2020).

PHOTO LINK: ABU HAWAM 001 Unusual cooking ware;  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Unusual-Cook-Ware-from-Tell-Abu-Hawam-Photo-M-Artzy-Drawing-S-Zagorski\\_fig8\\_303543556](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Unusual-Cook-Ware-from-Tell-Abu-Hawam-Photo-M-Artzy-Drawing-S-Zagorski_fig8_303543556) accessed 8/11/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: ABU HAWAM 002 Location Map;  
[https://www.pinterest.com/pin/79235274682762371/?nic\\_v2=1a18yJuJS](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/79235274682762371/?nic_v2=1a18yJuJS)  
accessed 8/11/2020.



### Tel Shikmona

Tel Shikmona (Šiqmônah, Hebrew: תל שיקמונה, Tell as-Samakh), also spelt Sycamine,[1] is an ancient tell (mound) situated near the sea coast on the modern city of Haifa, Israel, just south of the Israeli National Institute of Oceanography ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel\\_Shikmona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Shikmona) accessed 8/11/2020)

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK SHIKMONA 001B Ruins;

[https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Shikmona\\_\(14\).JPG](https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Shikmona_(14).JPG) accessed 8/11/2020



PHOTO LINK: SHIKMONA 002B Aerial photograph near Oceanographic Institute, <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/eis368009.shtml> accessed 8/11/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: SHIKMONA 003B Four room house;  
<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/eis368009.shtml> accessed 8/11/2020



### ***Tell Megadim***

Excavations at Tel Megadim (Tell Saħar) succeeded in uncovering a considerable portion of the uppermost strata of the site, dating to the Persian and Roman–Byzantine periods. In 1994 an archaeological salvage excavation was made between the acropolis of the tell and a railroad track that bisects the site. This trench, measuring c. 175 by 8–10 m, revealed the complete occupational history at the site, including strata from the Chalcolithic period, Early Bronze Age I, Early Bronze Age IV, Middle Bronze Age II, Late Bronze Age II, and Persian and Byzantine periods.

(<https://www.baslibrary.org/new-encyclopedia-archaeological-excavations-holy-land/0/0/101/megadim-tel> accessed 8/12/2020).

### ***Persian Road Building***

The administration of Darius the Great instituted a program of road building and made it one of his priority projects. This Persian Royal Road was 1,700 miles long. It connected Susa (at the northern tip of the Gulf of Arabia) to Arbela (near Nineveh in Mesopotamia) and thence to Sardis (on the west coast of Anatolia,

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

modern Turkey). This Persian “pony express” system could enable a courier to ride with a message an average of 240 miles. They road between stations that were about 15 miles apart at which fresh horses could be supplied. Thus, a message from Susa could reach Sardis in a week. The mantra for the U.S. Post office is based on a description of the Persian mail system made by the 5<sup>th</sup> century historian Herodotus (Hoerth, 1998:393):

*Neither snow nor rain nor heat or gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds*

From the Royal Road, secondary routes branched to other destinations throughout the Persian Empire, including Jerusalem. If the Royal Road system was in full use during the reign of Darius the Great, messages from the administrators in Jerusalem and the bureaucrats in Ecbatana in 520 BCE could have occurred within 4 to 8 weeks (Hoerth, 1998:394).

PHOTO LINK: PERSIAN ROYAL ROAD 001 map With Achaemenid Empire; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Map\\_achaemenid\\_empire\\_en.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Map_achaemenid_empire_en.png); Aug. 9, 2007



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: PERSIA 006 Persian pony express courier;  
[https://anotherq.blogspot.com/2015\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](https://anotherq.blogspot.com/2015_04_01_archive.html) accessed 8/12/2020



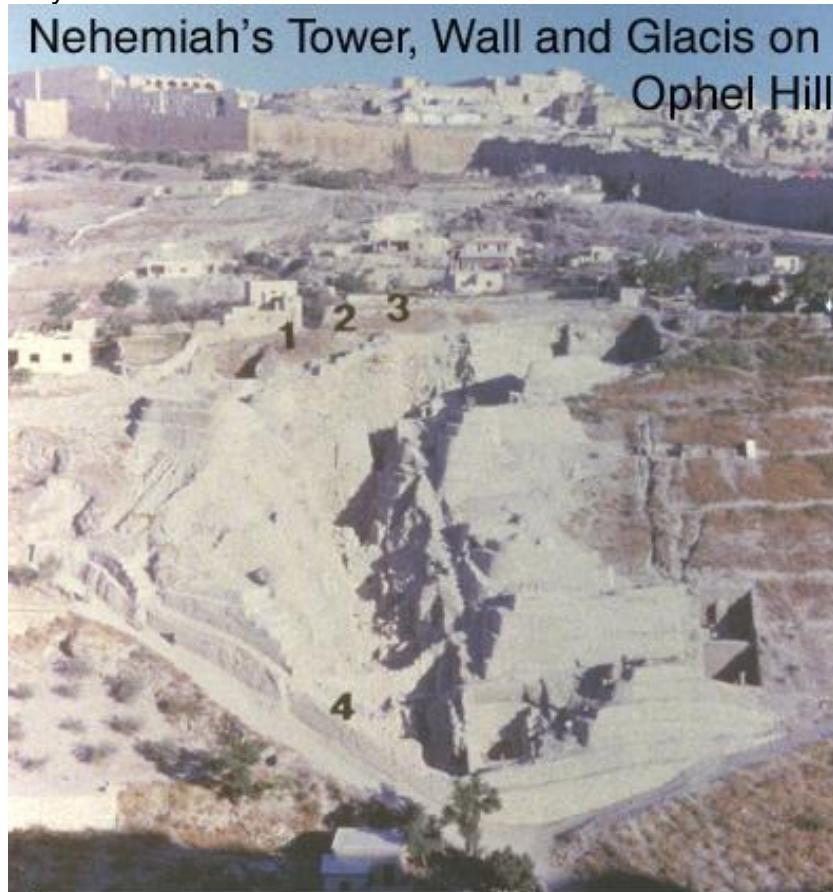
### ***REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM (520-516 BCE)***

The conquests of Cyrus the Persian brought an end to the Exile in 538 B.C.E. It was not until 520 BCE that Darius had reaffirmed the decree of Cyrus regarding the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. With some justice, the Jewish antagonist Tattenai of Samaria ("Transupharates", Jerusalem Bible) was required to pay for some of the reconstruction (Ezra 6:6-12)

But it was a small and weakened Jewish community that attempted to rebuild Jerusalem during the following two centuries of Persian control. The wall segments at the top of the excavation trenches in the photo below are practically the only architectural remnants of the period that have come to light.

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PHOTO LINK: JA037 Jerusalem: Nehemiah's Tower, Wall and Glacis on Ophel Hill, 5th century BCE



Tower upper left (Nos. 1 and 2) erected over the rubble of the 7th-century BC houses . Stepped-structure (No. 3) is dated early Israelite LB II.  
BWP:JA37; Photo by P.G. Dorrell/PEF Jerusalem Excavation Fund

*"Photo JA037, above, shows the eastern crest of Ophel Hill viewed from Silwan Hill to the southeast during Kathleen Kenyon's mid-1960s excavations. She demonstrated that the square-cornered tower at the upper left (below Nos. 1 and 2; mistakenly dubbed David's Tower after R. A. S. Macalister's 1923 investigations) was erected over the rubble of the 7th-century B.C.E. houses uncovered below and was, therefore, a post-Exilic construction. Yigal Shiloh's more recent excavations have shown that the stepped-structure immediately to the north of the tower (No. 3; once thought to be a Jebusite wall) goes back to early Israelite times, but its upper portion apparently was reused as part of a post-Exilic fortification (see JA12: Ophel Hill: The Stepped-Structure) and was supplemented by additional new wall elements farther north (to the right of*

No. 3). When Nehemiah supervised the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (Nehemiah 1–6), he evidently chose a defense line here along the crest of Ophel Hill, 100 feet up the slope from the earlier city wall, which Kenyon located in her lowest trench (No. 4). Nehemiah incorporated the upper remains of the stepped-structure, which he found poking up above the rubble, supplementing it with new fortification walls and towers such as the ones to the left and right of No. 3.

We can thus see evidence here of the haste and makeshift measures reflected in Nehemiah's account of the 5th-century B.C.E. wall rebuilding, and we can extrapolate from these remains a line for the city's wall in the early Second Temple period that enclosed a much smaller area than its predecessors" (Biblical World in Pictures, caption to photograph JA37).

### **Rebuilding of the Wall (c. 446 BCE)**

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem from Babylon, he surveyed the city at night (Neh. 2:11-15). The city wall was in such bad condition that Nehemiah's donkey could not follow the path (Neh. 2:14). The wall was reconstructed in 52 days (Neh. 6:15). The Jerusalem of the Second Temple period was smaller than the one destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. In 2009 Manzar reported on excavations that commenced in 2005 in the northern part of the City of David. Part of the wall reconstructed by Nehemiah was found at the Stepped Stone Structure. These excavations uncovered a large building which is called the Large Stone Structure. It had walls 7 to 11 feet thick. Just below this Large Stone Structure on the eastern slope is the Stepped Stone Structure. It is the largest Iron Age structure in all of Israel. It was built to support the Large Stone Structure, which was part of King David's palace. (Mazar, 2009:26).

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PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 001. Stepped Stone Structure, Large Stone Structure and North Tower.



Wall 20 (W20) of the Large Stone Structure joins the Stepped Stone Structure. They are architecturally related. As Wall 20 goes further south, it comes to the remains of an ancient tower. On this eastern fortification line of the City of David, east of the Large Stone Structure are two towers. The Northern Tower is only a

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

few feet away from the northeast corner of the Large Stone Structure. It is the smaller of the two towers. The tower leans against the city wall (Wall 27). Sixty five feet south of the North Tower is a more massive and imposing South Tower. Much of the wall is missing between these two towers, but the parts that survive indicate that city wall once connected them (Mazar, 2009:27).

PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 002 North Tower and adjoining walls build directly into and on top of the Large Stone Structure.



THE LEANING TOWER. As a result of earlier excavations in the area next to the Northern Tower, its structural integrity was severely weakened. When this was exposed in the new excavations, it became necessary to dismantle the 9-foot-high tower so it could be properly restored. During this process it became clear that the tower and its adjoining walls were built directly into and on top of the massive stone foundations of the Large Stone Structure (David's palace; visible at right in the foreground) and the Stepped Stone Structure (visible at left in the background).

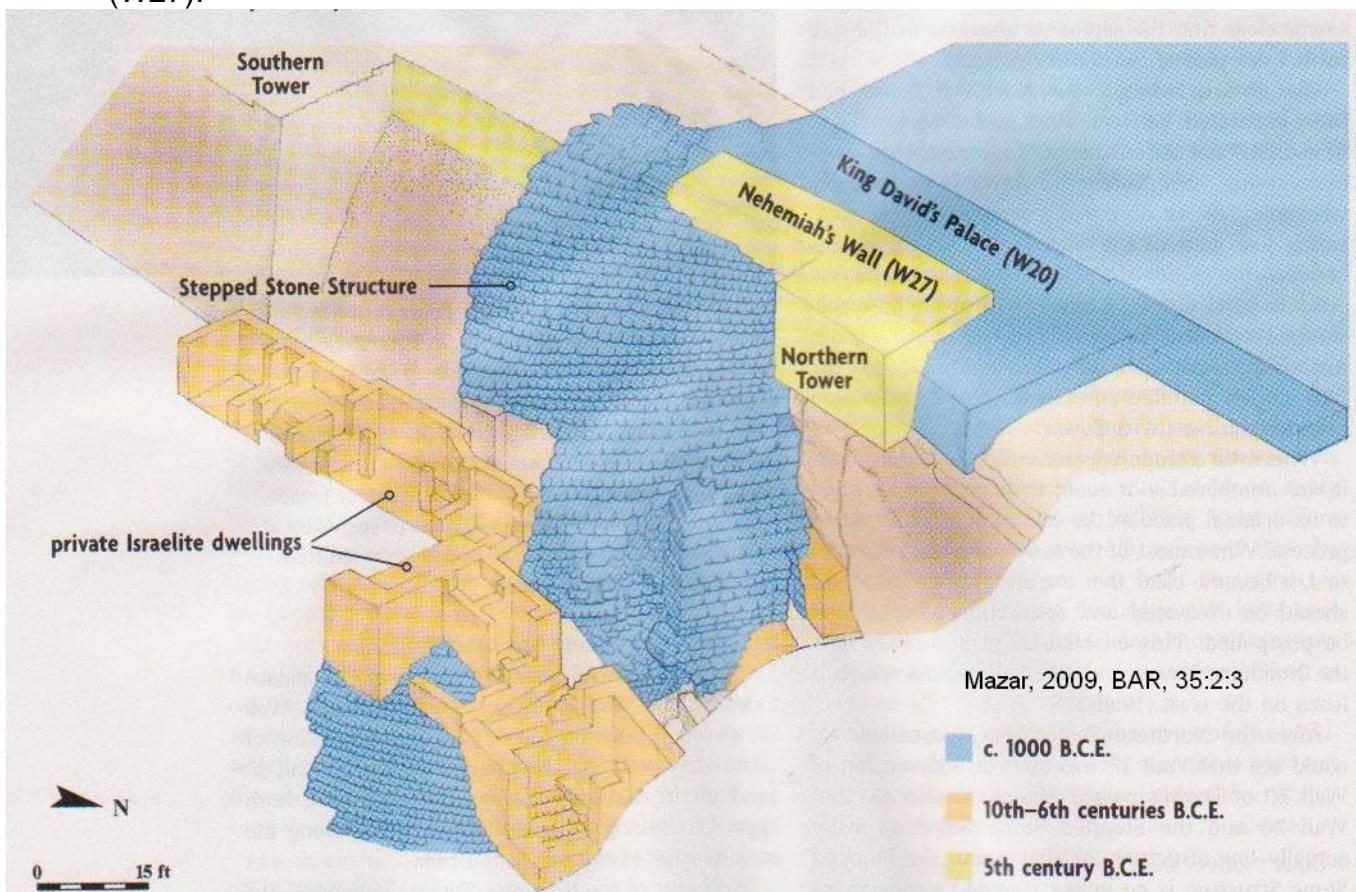
Mazar, 2009

BAR, 53:2:27

The North Tower had been removed and reassembled because it had been weakened by excavations performed in 1923-1925. When the Northern Tower was removed, it was found to have been built atop layers of debris containing Persian-period artifacts. Two dog burials were also found. The practice of burying dogs is a Persian practice. Beneath these Persian era strata was found destruction debris from the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. In the debris was found a scaraboid seal belonging to Shelomit (1 Chron 3:19). These findings showed that Wall 27 was built atop the older Wall 20 (of King David's Palace) and at the same time as the North Tower. The materials used to make these structures show that they were built in haste. The workmanship of the wall was shabby. The excavators reported:

"The interstices [between the stones of the tower] are very roughly filled up with chips and with large quantities of mortar. The stones have no smooth finished face, and the filling of the interstices is so carelessly done that the wall face presents a series of openings and cracks". (Mazar, 2009:30).

PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 003 Drawing showing Stepped Stone Structure, Large Stone Structure (W20), North Tower and Nehemiah's Wall (W27).



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PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 004: Pottery, below North Tower



PERSIAN PERIOD POTTERY (538-322 BC) from beneath North Tower. Manzar, 2009, BAR, 35:2:31

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PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 005: Debris layer with pottery, below North Tower.



Pottery from beneath the North Tower. Manzar, 2009, BAR: 35:2:31

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PHOTO LINK: BABYLONIAN CONQUEST 001 : Head of clay figurine, arrowheads, inscribed weights.



In the materials excavated from the period of the **Babylonian destruction**, bullae (clay seal impressions) of two of Jeremiah's opponents were found: Yehuchal ben Shelemyahu (Shelemiah) and Gadalyahu (Gedaliah) ben Pashur. They were ministers of King Zedekiah, the last King of Judah before it was destroyed (Jer. 38:1-13)

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: BULLEA OF GEDALYAHU 001



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: BULLAE OF YEHUCHAL 001.



Mazar, 2006, BAR, 32:1:27

JUST THE RIGHT ANGLE of sunlight—and the hawk eyes of Yoav Farhi, an area supervisor on Mazar's dig—led to the discovery of this .4-inch-wide bulla, a lump of clay that had sealed an ancient document. Inscribed in three lines, the bulla reads, "Belonging to Yehuchal son of Shelemiyahu son of Shovi." The Book of Jeremiah twice mentions a Yehuchal (Jehucal in English Bibles) son of Shelemiah, indicating that this bulla dates to the late seventh-early sixth century B.C.E. Fittingly, Mazar studied this bulla with the help of a table of ancient letters prepared for an earlier excavation by Yair Shoham—Mazar's late husband and father of their three sons.

The stratigraphy of Wall 27 and the North Tower, and the quality of their construction indicate that they were built by Nehemiah

### Rebuilding of the Temple (516 BCE)

The Persian-period Second Temple at Jerusalem was a much smaller and less magnificent edifice than either Solomon's Temple which preceded it, or Herod the Great's Temple which replaced it just before the Christian Era.

Reconstruction was completed in 516 BCE in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of King Darius (Ezra 6:15).

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

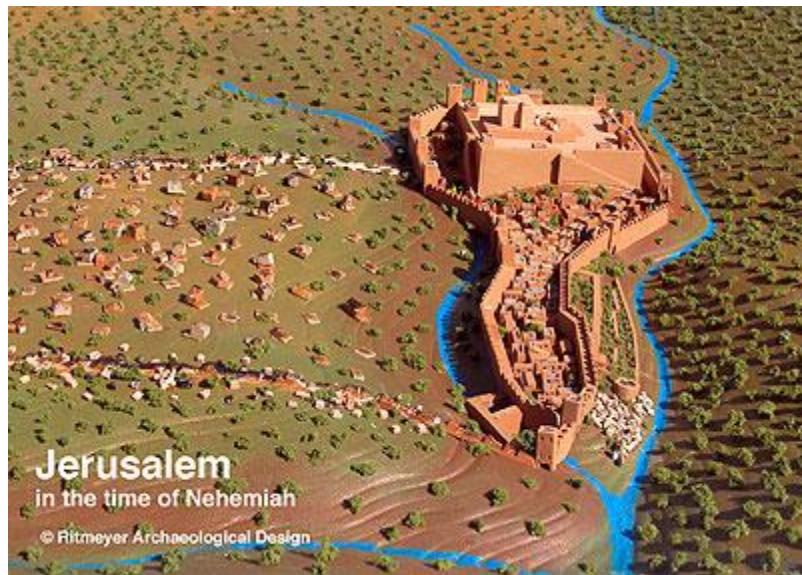
PHOTO LINK: SECOND TEMPLE 001 Model;

<http://menorahnews.blogspot.com/2015/10/the-temple-of-solomon-in-jerusalem.html> accessed 8/11/2020.



PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S TEMPLE 001 Diorama of temple in Persian time;

<http://www.themessiahinthetemple.com/history-jerusalem.html> accessed 8/12/2020



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S TEMPLE 002 Plan of temple;  
<https://visualunit.me/tag/nehemiah/> accessed 8/12/2020

### JERUSALEM REBUILT UNDER EZRA & NEHEMIAH

© Mark Barry 2015 | visualunit.me | Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use. Note: this layout is indicative only, as many of the locations mentioned in Nehemiah are difficult to pinpoint precisely.

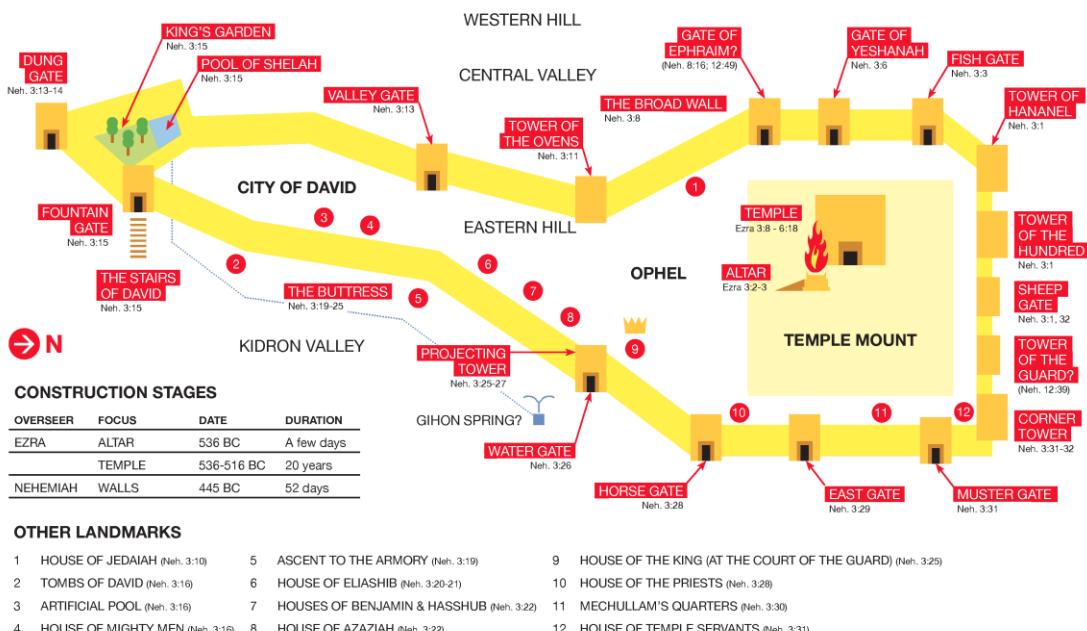
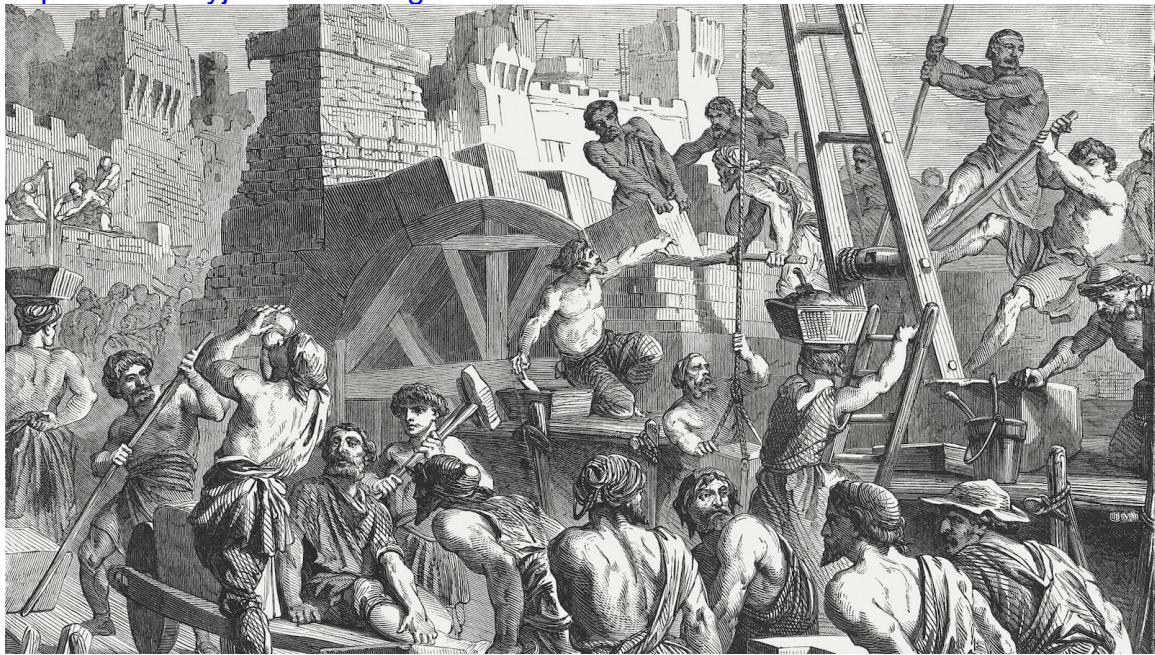


PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S TEMPLE 003: Drawing of temple construction;  
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ezra-nehemiah/> accessed 8/12/2020



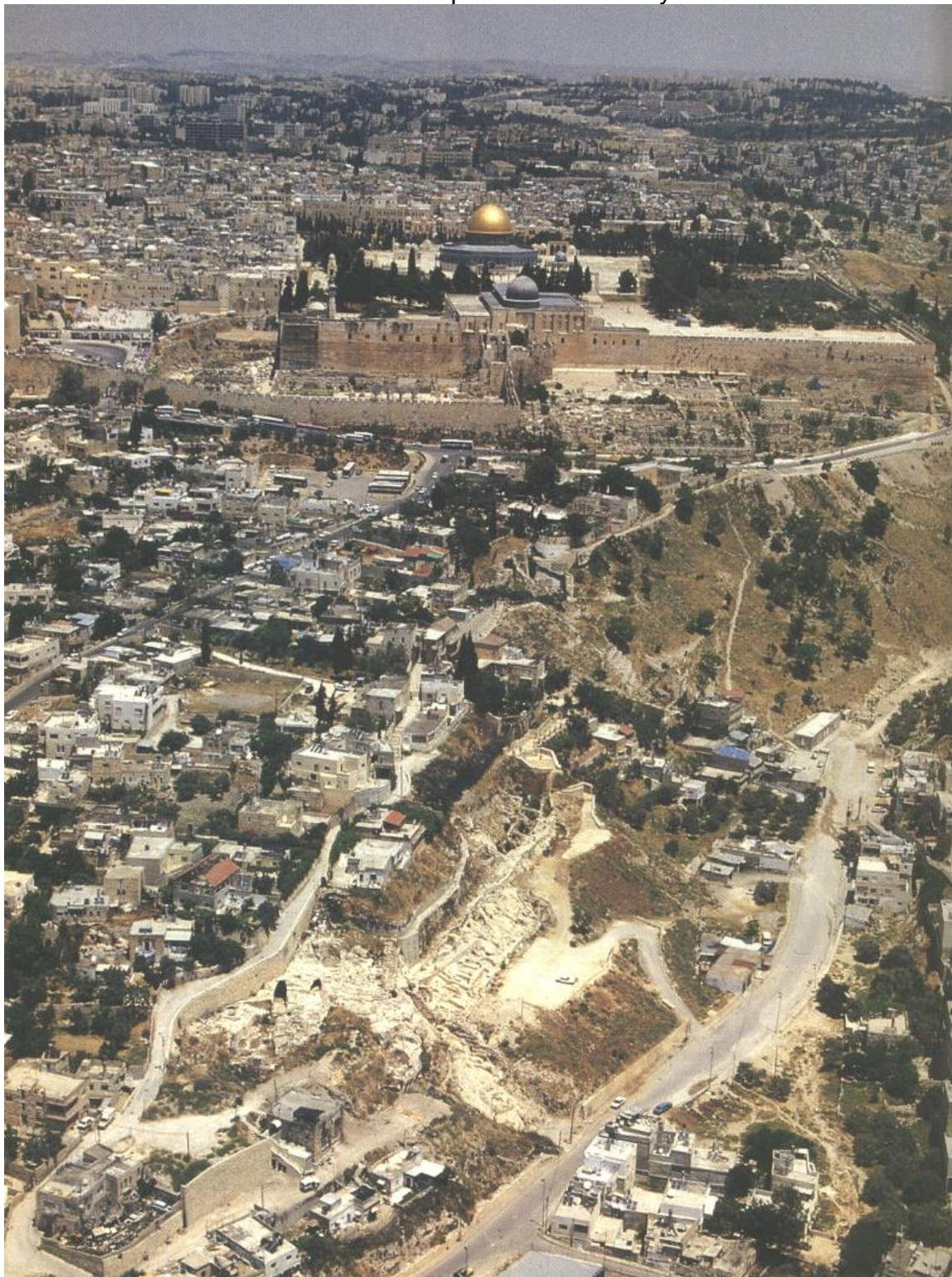
### **Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period (587-332 BCE)**

When the Judeans returned to Jerusalem, the city walls were restored as described in chapter 3 of the Book of Nehemiah. The initial rebuilding took only 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15). The area encompassed by Nehemiah's wall is thought by most scholars to be an area of the Temple Mount and a small ridge extending south of the Temple Mount known as the "City of David". The Temple Mount is the area on which the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple, and (400 years later) Herod's Temple would be built (Ussishkin, 2005:27). In order to understand this construction project, it is necessary to know about earlier wall-building programs in the area.

The "City of David" is that portion of Jerusalem conquered by David about 1000 BCE. This area has been excavated several times, beginning over 100 years ago. The earliest fortification wall enclosing the City of David dates to about 1800 BCE, known as Middle Bronze Age II (MBII, Ussishkin, 2005:28). There are different opinions about what happened to the MBII wall of c.1800 BCE. Some archaeologists think it was in use as late as 720 BCE. The MB wall surrounded an area of about 10 acres on the **southeastern** ridge called "City of David". A section of this wall was excavated on the *eastern* slope of the ridge. No archaeological excavations have been conducted on the western side of the ridge that expose the MB wall in that area (Ussishkin, 2005:28-31).

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PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM 018 Temple Mount and City of David

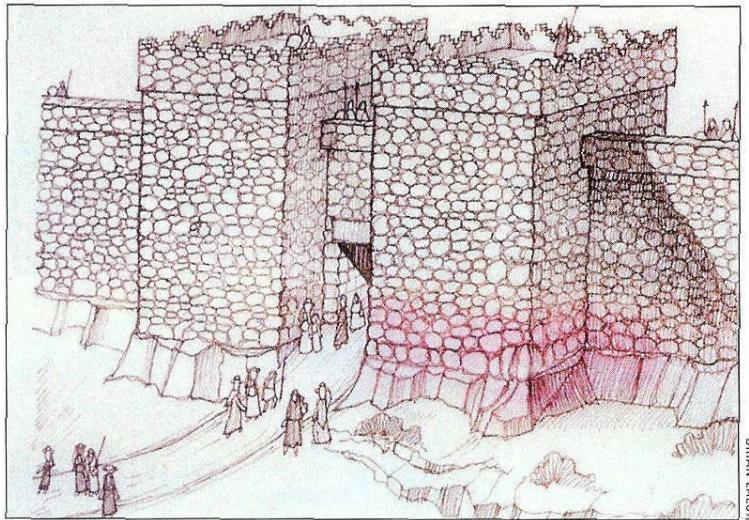


**TEMPLE MOUNT AND CITY OF DAVID. Shanks, 1998, BAR, 14:4:24**

Photo by Zev Radovan

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

### PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 001 Drawing of MB wall 1800 BCE



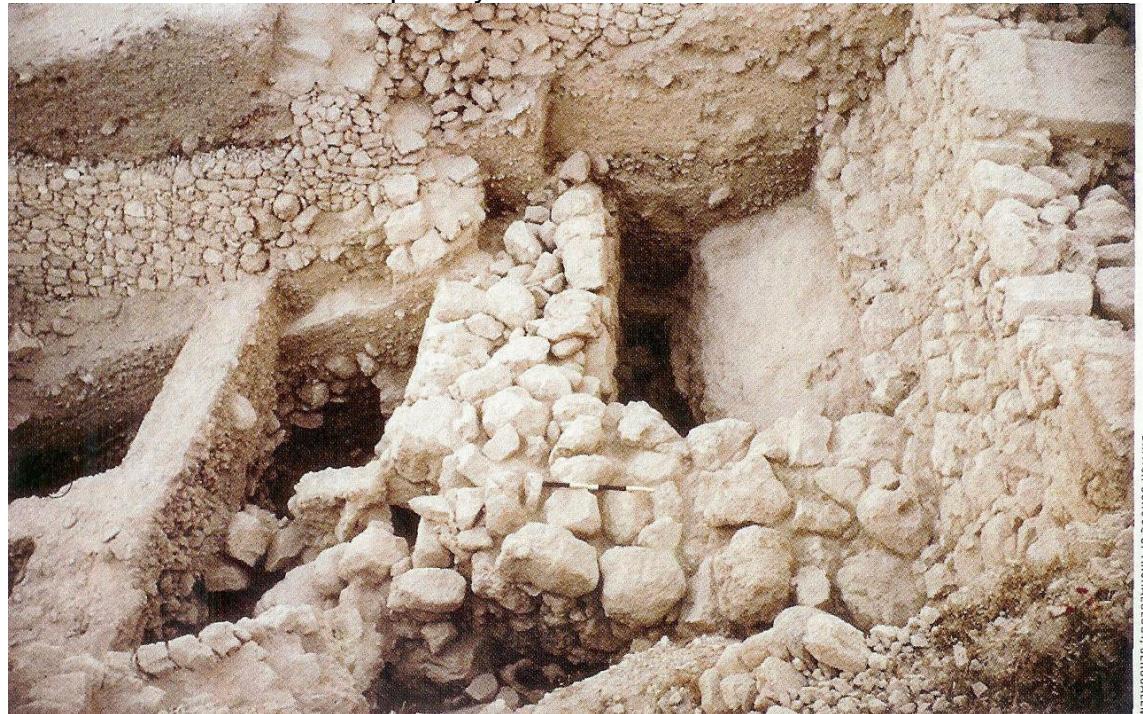
Ussishkin, 2005, BAR, 31:4:30

AN IMPRESSIVE CITY WALL protected Middle Bronze Age Jerusalem starting in about 1800 B.C.E. Remains of an angled portion of the wall, perhaps part of a gate, appear at center and lower right in the photo at bottom; the drawing shows what the wall and a heavily fortified gate-tower might have looked like (the tinted area in the drawing represents parts of the wall uncovered in excavations). This section of wall was discovered by British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon along the eastern slope of the City of David. Some scholars believe that when the exiles returned from Babylonia in the late sixth century B.C.E., they built a wall further up the eastern slope; author Ussishkin argues, however, that they more likely would have restored the remains of the eighth century B.C.E. wall lower on the slope built by King Hezekiah.

A strong fortification wall was built to protect Jerusalem in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE by King Hezekiah. At this time, the city had expanded to become the largest and most populated city of Judah. When this wall was built, Hezekiah also improved the water delivery system for Jerusalem with a underground aqueduct known as Hezekiah's Tunnel. It connected the Gihon Spring with the southern end of the city. The 8<sup>th</sup> century wall in the City of David was built on the same slope and downhill of where the MB builders constructed their wall. Excavations in the present Jewish Quarter of the Old City and at various sites on the southwestern ridge show that in the later part of the First Temple period (before the Babylonian Exile), the city had grown to include Mount Zion and the **southwestern** ridge. A section of Hezekiah's wall in the Jewish Quarter is named the Broad wall. It is 23 feet thick (Ussishkin, 2005:28-31).

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PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 002 Section of MB wall excavated by Kathrine Kenon eastern slope City of David

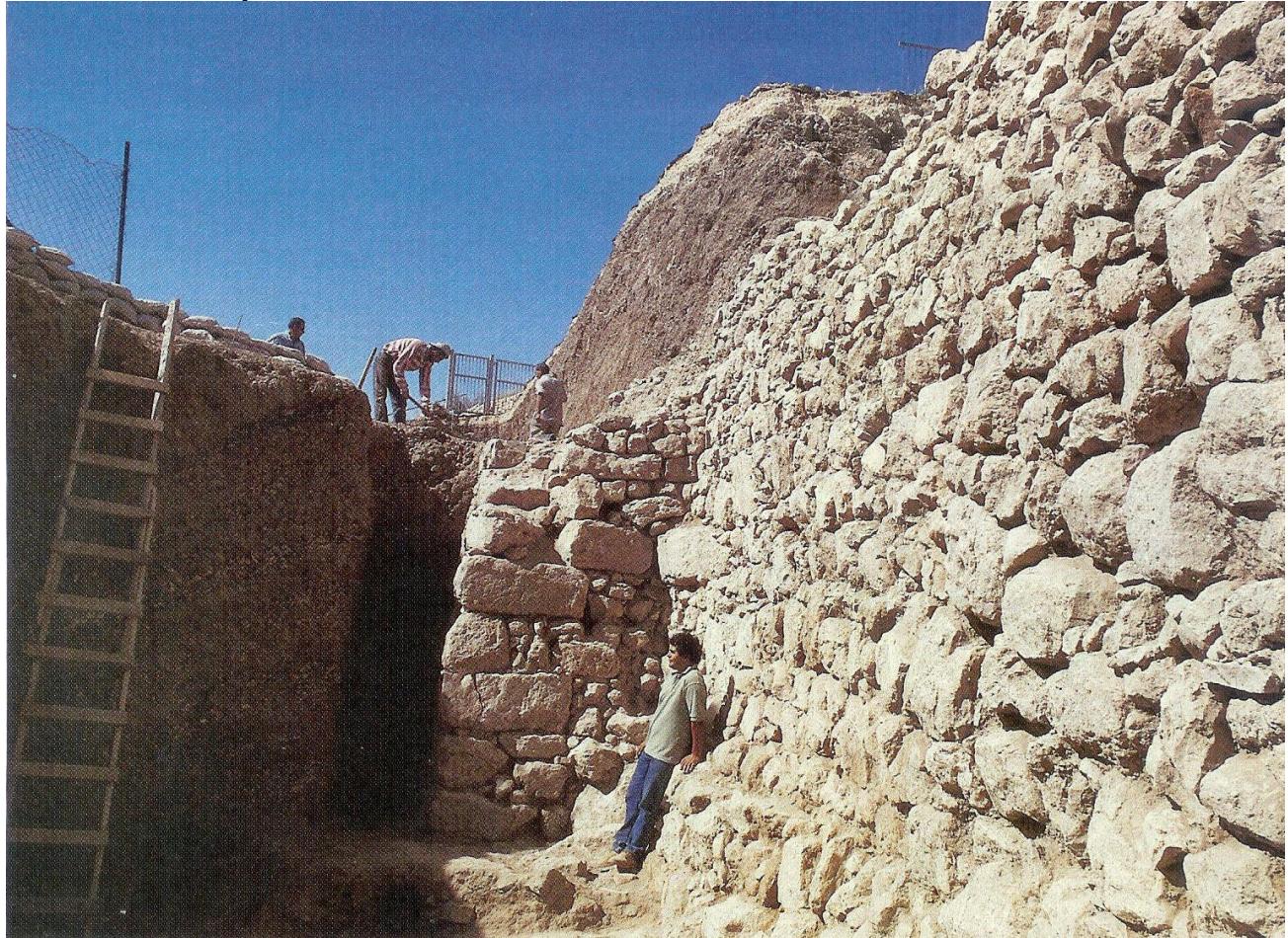


BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY, JERUSALEM

Middle Bronze Age II wall, City of David, Ussishkin, 2005, BAR, 31:4:30

## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 003 Hezekiah's tower, eastern slope City of David, 8th century BCE

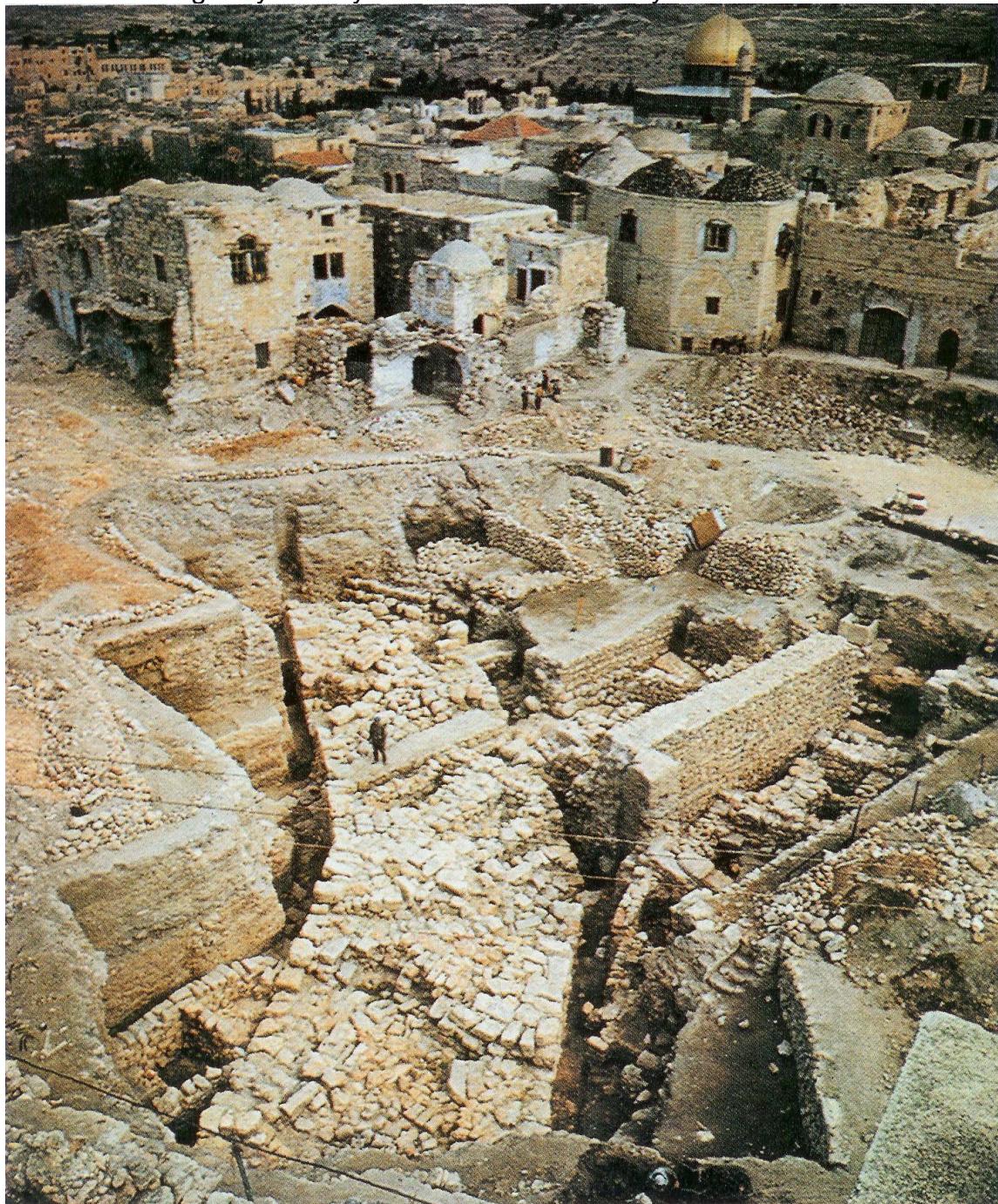


Ussishkin, 2005, BAR, 31:4:31

HEZEKIAH'S TOWER? Archaeologist Eli Shukron leans on a length of wall he and Ronny Reich discovered in 1999 along the eastern slope of the City of David (shown on plan, p. 35). Just beyond Shukron is an offset that may have been part of a tower. The wall and tower are thought to have been built by King Hezekiah in the eighth century B.C.E.; both stand lower on the eastern slope than does the previously known Middle Bronze Age wall, indicating that Hezekiah sought to bolster the city's defenses in anticipation of an attack by Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 B.C.E.

CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 004 Broad Wall in Jewish Quarter of Neheiah 3:8 originally built by Hezekiah in 8th century BCE 23 feet wide



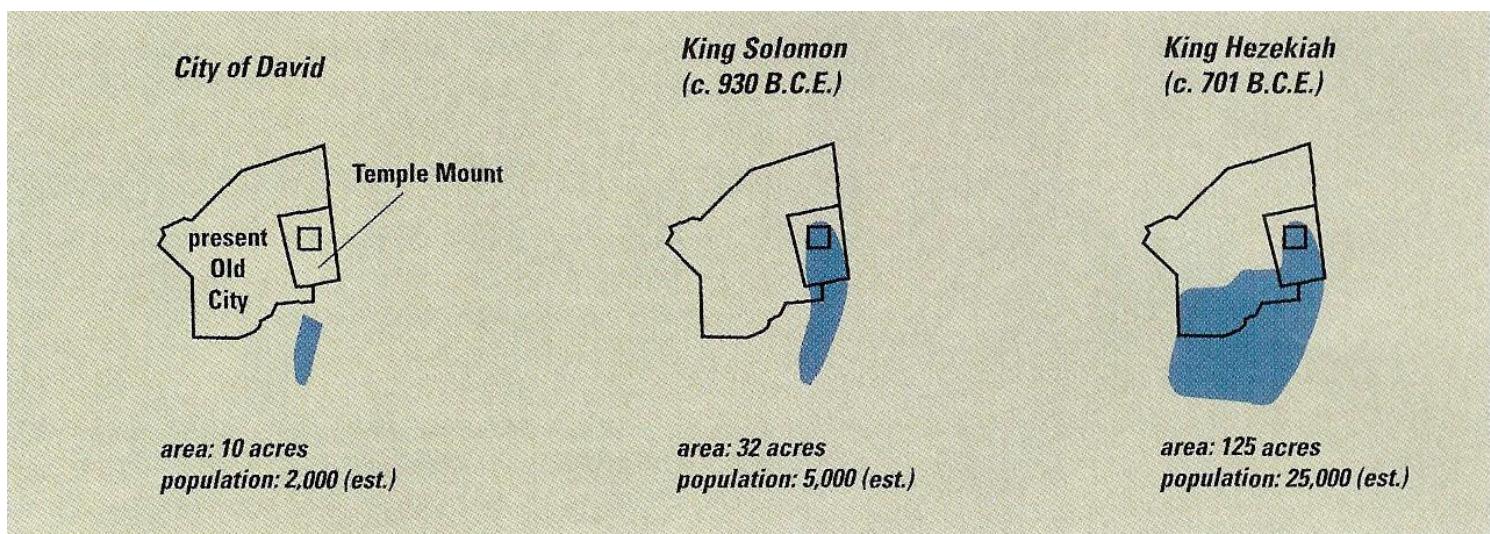
"Broad Wall", 8th century BC, Jerusalem. Ussishkin, 2005, BAR, 31:4:32. Photo N. Avigad

## Small Wall Theory

Most scholars think that the wall built by Nehemiah was relatively small. The poor community of exiles abandoned the mid-slope walls on the eastern side of the city (the Kidron Valley side), and built a new wall higher up the slope (Ussishkin, 2005:28).

Most scholars think that the wall built by Nehemiah followed the western edge of the ridge known as the “City of David”. They built a new wall further upslope, rather than restore the old one. (Ussishkin, 2005:28,35).

PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 005-B Walls from 1800 BCE to 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Hezekiah)



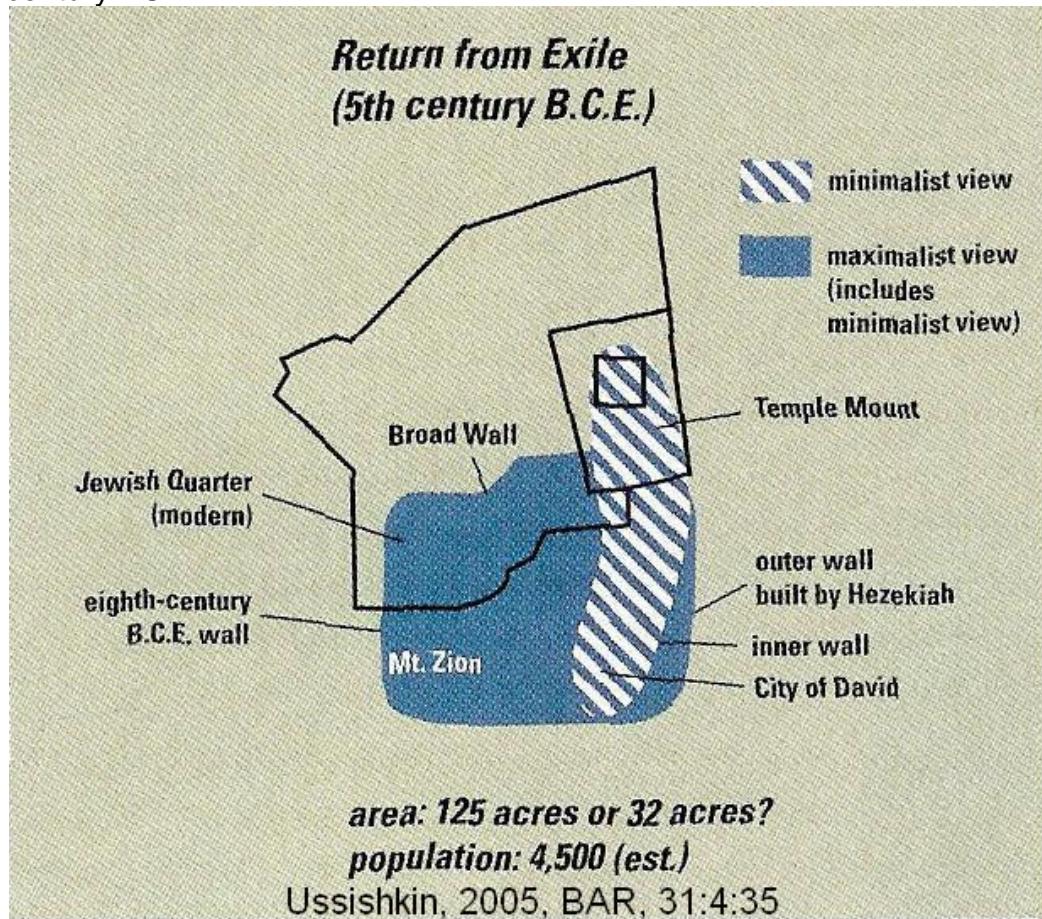
Ussishkin, 2005, BAR, 31:4:35

Hoerth (1998:402) is a proponent of the small-wall theory

*“Nehemiah’s walled city...covered approximately the same space as did Solomon’s city, built was only about one-fourth the size it had been in Hezekiah’s day....Much of Nehemiah’s repairs followed lines established in Solomonic and later times. That little work had to be done from the foundation up helps explain why the project could be completed in under two month’s time.”*

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PHOTO LINK: JERUSALEM WALLS 005-C Walls from Nehemiah's time, 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE



### Big Wall Theory

Ussishkin (2005) suggests that the wall of Nehemiah was much larger than most scholars believe. His reconstruction of Nehemiah's wall includes the southeastern ridge, below the City of David and also the southwestern ridge, including Mount Zion. The wall Nehemiah rebuilt was essentially the same as the one the Babylonians destroyed. The city was not as populated as at the time of deportation, but it was just as big.

If the returning exiles had built a smaller wall, approximating the city in the time of Solomon, they would have had to construct a western wall, or rebuild the MB II wall of 1800 BCE. There was no First Temple period wall on the western side of the city of David. That is because the wall for Jerusalem at that time extended much further to the west to include Mount Zion. The larger area is also indicated by the number of gates mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah for the restored wall. Seven are mentioned. To have that many gates in a small, 10-acre area is unlikely (Ussishkin, 2005:33-34).

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PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 007 Wide wall section;

[http://www.generationword.com/jerusalem101-photos/broad-wall/IMG\\_3617.JPG](http://www.generationword.com/jerusalem101-photos/broad-wall/IMG_3617.JPG)  
accessed 8/9/2020.



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PHOTO LINK: NEHEMIAH'S WALL 008 Broad Wall;  
<https://biblereadingarcheologydotcom.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/broad-wall.jpg?w=680> accessed 8/9/2020



This theory is consistent with Nehemiah 7:14:

*"The city was large and spacious; there were few people in it, and no houses had been built"*

The act of re-occupying Jerusalem was a symbolic and patriotic act. Most returning exiles couldn't make a living there. They sought farming country outside the city:

*"The leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one in every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while*

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*the remaining lived in other town. And the people gave their blessing to all those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem" (Nehemiah 11:1-2)*

Ussishkin concludes (2005:35):

*"Nehemiah restored the line of the previously existing First Temple wall: Even on the difficult lower slope, it would have been easier to restore the wall than to build an entirely new one upslope"*

## NEHEMIAH'S RETURN TO PERSIA AND FATE OF JERUSALEM (432 BCE)

Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes in 432 BCE (Neh. 13:6) and stayed there for 2 years, or so, before returning to Jerusalem. During that time, apostasy and tolerance of those who had opposed the rebuilding program had infiltrated back into Jewish religious and administrative practice. The high priest, Eliashib, had furnished housing for Tobiah. This man was half-Ammonite and half Jew. With Sanballat, Tobiah had tried to hinder Nehemiah in repairing Jerusalem several years earlier (Neh. 2:10, 19; 13:4ff.).

## JUDAISM AFTER RECONSTRUCTION

Together, Nehemiah and Ezra created a functioning Judaism in Jerusalem under Persian domination. This subordinate condition of Jewish culture would persist under the Greeks and Romans and on into New Testament times. The pattern of subjugation was disrupted during the Maccabean Revolt of 167-63 BCE when Jewish Hasmonean kings ruled Judea.

### **Lachish of the Exile Period**

The city of Lachish, destroyed in 586 BCE by the Babylonians, was re-occupied during the Exile, Persian and Hellenistic periods. These periods are found in Level I of the Lachish excavations. From the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, there was no sign of violent destruction. On the summit of the mound, a residency was the main building. It was built on the site of the Judean palace-fort destroyed in 586 BCE (King, 2005:46).

PHOTO LINK: LACHISH 001-02 Location Map;  
<http://holylandphotos.org/browse.asp?s=1,2,6,27,463> accessed 8/8/2020

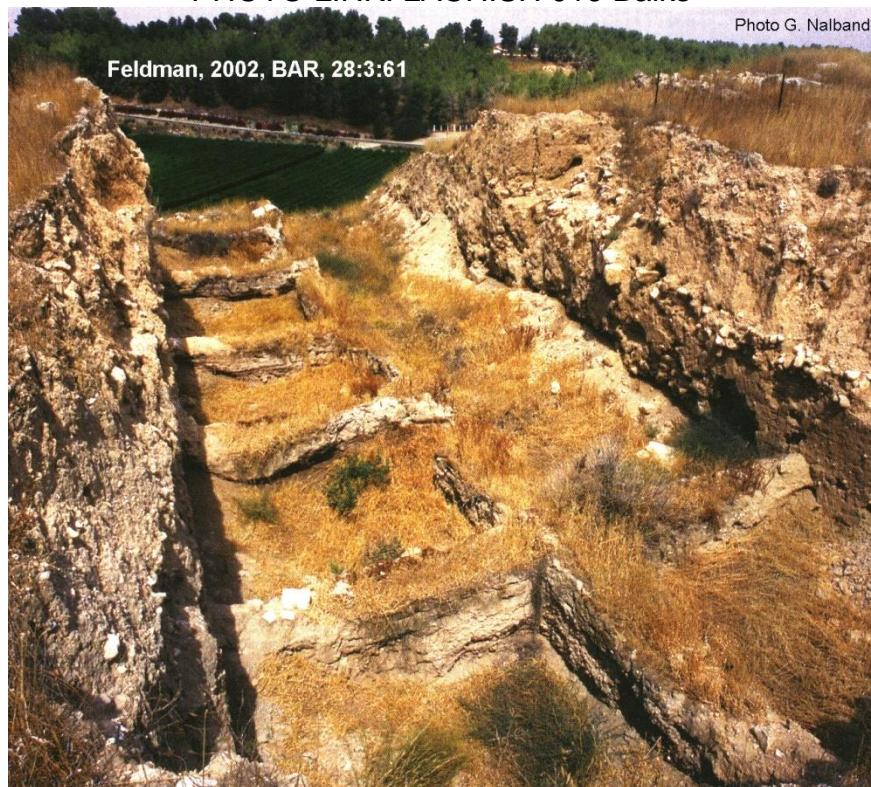


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### PHOTO LINK: LACHISH 013 Aerial photo



### PHOTO LINK: LACHISH 019 Balks



STRATIGRAPHIC BALKS AT LACHISH FROM USSISHKIN EXCAVATIONS

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**PHOTO LINK: LACHISH 022 Stratigraphic summary chart 13<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE**

### LACHISH LEVEL BY LEVEL King, 2005, BAR, 31:4:41

	DATES	EVENTS	MAJOR FINDS
<b>Level I</b>	4th century B.C.E.	Alexander the Great defeats Darius III; Persian empire falls	Solar Shrine; fortified city wall and gate; Palace
	6th century B.C.E.	Persian empire established	
<b>Level II</b>	Early 6th century B.C.E.	Babylonians conquer southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.E.); Lachish destroyed;	fortified city; city wall and gate; "Lachish Letters," Palace-fort in ruins
	Second half of 7th century B.C.E.	Assyrian empire falls to Babylonians (612 B.C.E.)	
<b>BREAK IN HABITATION FROM SECOND HALF OF 7TH CENTURY B.C.E. TO 701 B.C.E.</b>			
<b>Level III</b>	8th century B.C.E.	Lachish destroyed (701 B.C.E.); Assyrians conquer northern kingdom of Israel (722 B.C.E.)	Assyrian siege ramp; Judean counter ramp; fortified city with two walls; densely populated; third Judean palace-fort
<b>Level IV</b>	9th century B.C.E.	Kingdoms of Israel and Judah established; rise of Assyrian Empire	second Judean palace-fort; two city walls with gates
<b>Level V</b>	10th century B.C.E.	Lachish settled by Israelites; Pharaoh Shishak invades Israel (c. 925 B.C.E.); Lachish destroyed	first Judean palace-fort;
<b>BREAK IN HABITATION FROM 12TH CENTURY B.C.E. TO END OF 11TH CENTURY B.C.E.</b>			
<b>Level VI</b>	12th century B.C.E.	Lachish destroyed by invading Israelites or "Sea Peoples" (second half of 12th century B.C.E.); Egyptians control Canaan, including Lachish; Reign of Pharaoh Ramesses III (c. 1182-1151 B.C.E.)	Acropolis Temple (Fose Temple abandoned); monumental public building; unfortified city; Ramesses III cartouche
<b>Level VII</b>	13th century B.C.E.	Egyptians control Canaan	Fosse Temple; domestic area in unfortified city

### ***Aramaic Ostraca and Israelite Temple at Maqqedah***

Thousands of ostraca dating to the 4th century BCE from Maqqedah describe several aspects of life under Persian Rule.

PHOTO LINK: MAQQEDAH 001 Aramaic ostracon of "Temple of Yaho"



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PHOTO LINK: MAQQEDAH 002 Location map of Khirbet el-kom = Maqqedah



Maqqedah is mentioned in Joshua 10 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Its location is modern Khirbet el-Kom, about 15 miles west of Hebron. After the Babylonian conquest, this part of Judah became populated by many different ethnic groups who lived together under Persian rule. An ostraca from this period describes a "Temple to Yaho". Yaho is a form of the name Yahweh. As at Elephantine, the Jews built a temple to Yahweh in Maqqedah as an alternative site of local worship and as a supplement to the Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem. Archaeological remains of this temple have not yet been found. (Dorsey, 1980 cited by Lemaire, 2004:60)

PHOTO LINK: ELEPHANTINE 003



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PHOTO LINK: ELEPHANTINE 005 Location map;  
<https://isthatinthebibl.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/elephantine-map.jpg>  
accessed 8/12/2020



## THE RISE OF THE GREEKS

### *From Macedonia to Palestine*

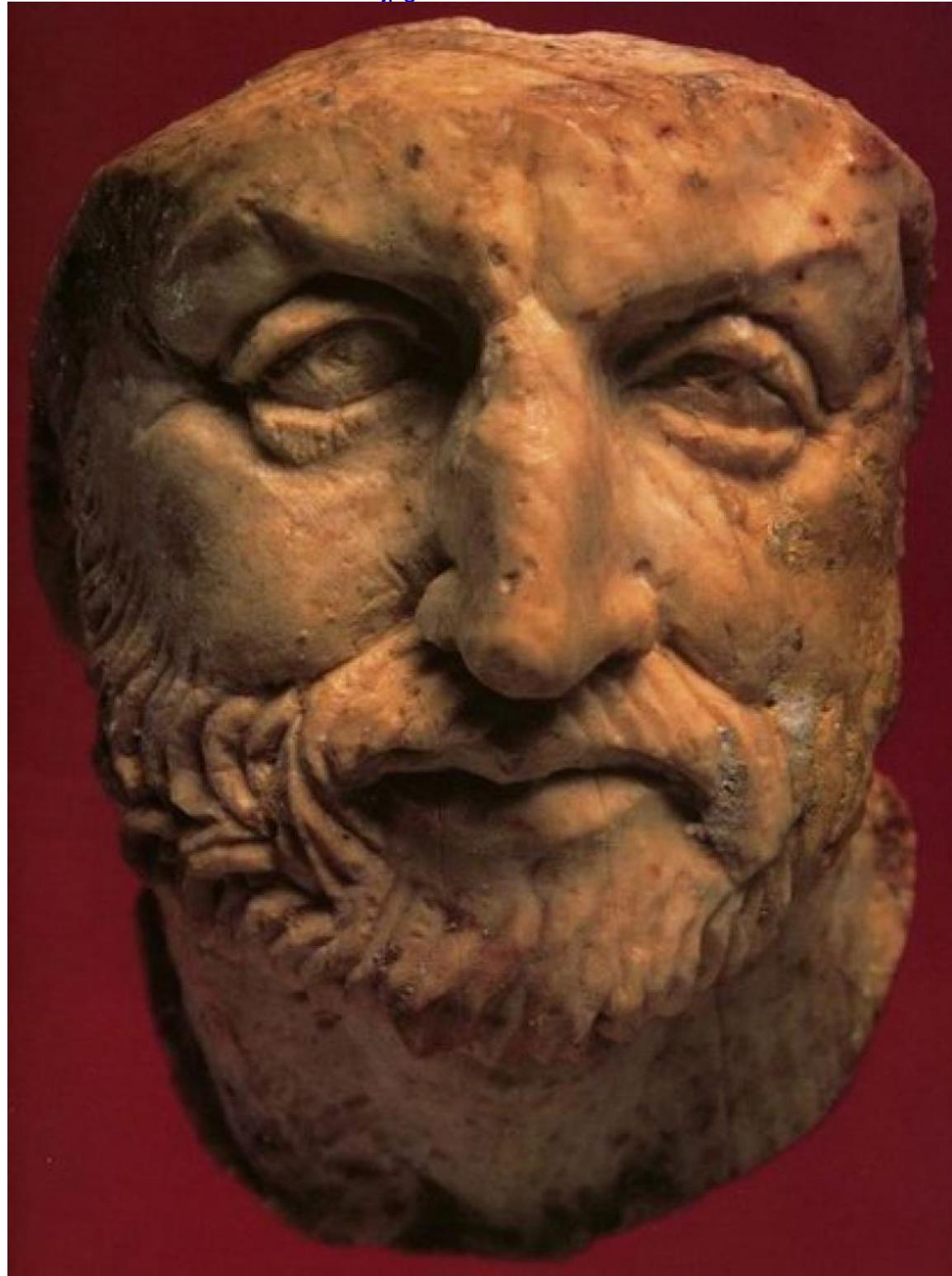
When the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah and Ezra during the reign of Artaxerxes (457-424 BCE), the Persian Empire was at the height of its power and influence. From that time, up to 337 BCE, there was on-going wars and rebellions between the Greek city states (particularly Athens and Sparta) and the Persian rulers. A crusade by Philip II of Macedonia against Darius II of Persia failed when both leaders were assassinated.

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PHOTO LINK: PHILIP II OF MACEDONIA 001; Bust of death mask;

<https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-WwrX8oLYK9I/ViNPLv7qLTI/AAAAAAAFAFM/aQvrxOwoVEw/s1600/philip-ii-of-macedon-28-12-2012-05-06-39.jpg>

accessed 8/12/2020



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PHOTO LINK: PHILIP II OF MACEDONIA 002; Painting of assassination;  
<https://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large/philip-ii-382-336-bc-granger.jpg> accessed 8/12/2020



*Assassination of Philip II*

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS II PERSIAN 001 Coin;  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/38/Drachma\\_Darius\\_II\\_Obverse.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/38/Drachma_Darius_II_Obverse.jpg) accessed 8/12/2020.



## CHAPTER 21: The Babylonian Exile and Persian Periods (587-332 BC)

PHOTO LINK: DARIUS II PERSIA 002 Relief;  
<https://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/demigodshaven/images/4/41/Darius.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20110820052037> accessed 8/12/2020



The new Persian leader was Darius III, and the new Greek leader was Alexander of Macedonia, later known as Alexander the Great. After revenging a rebellion at Thebes, Alexander invaded Asia Minor in 334 BCE. Darius III sent money into Greece to discourage support for Alexander (arch-rivals Sparta and Athens accepted the money).

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PHOTO LINK: SPARTA 001 Location Map; <http://www.civilization.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Map-of-Peloponnese.jpg> accessed 8/12/2020.



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PHOTO LINK: DARIUS III PERSIA 001 Marble relief;  
<https://nationalviews.com/darius-iii-king-of-persia-history-biography-facts-death>  
accessed 08/12/2020



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PHOTO LINK: DARIUS III PERSIA 003 Drawing, death of Darius III before Alexander; [https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/preview/M/M819/M819179-88\\_Alexander-before-the-Dead-Body-of-Darius-III-the-Last-King-of-Persia.jpg](https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/preview/M/M819/M819179-88_Alexander-before-the-Dead-Body-of-Darius-III-the-Last-King-of-Persia.jpg) accessed 8/12/2020.



At the Granicus River, the forces of Darius III were defeated by those of Alexander. Later, another battle occurred at Issus that the Greeks also won. Alexander captured the Persian baggage train with the royal family and the ambassadors of Sparta, Athens and Thebes. Darius's wife died while in Alexander's custody and was given a royal burial. Then Alexander continued south and attacked Tyre, Persia's only naval base in Phoenicia. Twice Darius proposed terms for peace, but was rejected by Alexander both times. After a seven month siege, Tyre fell. Alexander moved on to Gaza which was taken in two months. With this conquest, in 332 BCE, the Jewish population in Palestine changed from Persian to Greek control.

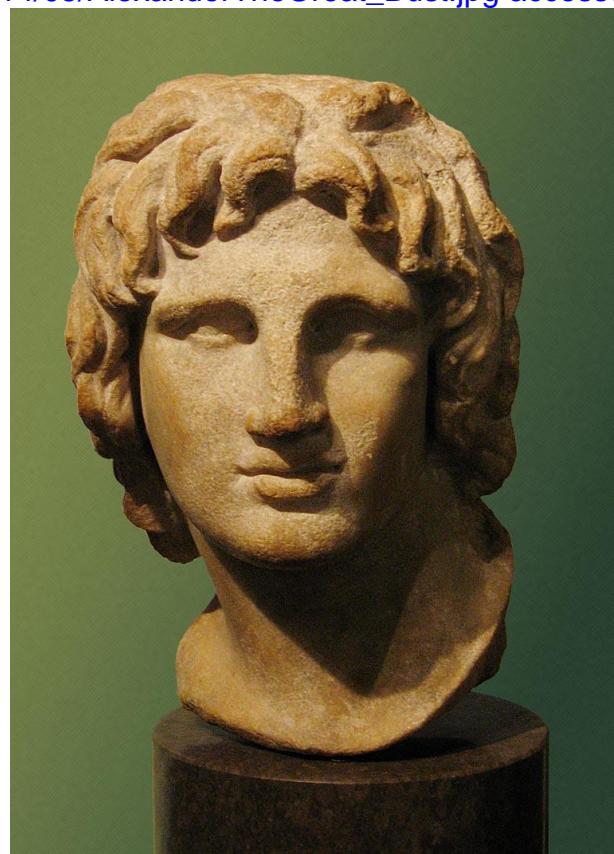
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PHOTO LINK: ALEXANDER THE GREAT 001 Image from Mosaic;



PHOTO LINK: ALEXANDER THE GREAT 002 Bust;

[http://28oa9i1t08037ue3m1l0i861.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/AlexanderTheGreat\\_Bust.jpg](http://28oa9i1t08037ue3m1l0i861.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/AlexanderTheGreat_Bust.jpg) accessed 8/12/2020



## **Egypt**

Alexander marched on down to Egypt where he was greeted as a liberator from the hated Persians. The Egyptians invented a story to justify accepting him as Pharaoh. Plans for a new Greco-Egyptian city were made: Alexandra. This would become a port to replace Tyre and Gaza.

### **Battle of Gaugamela**

After becoming "Pharaoh", Alexander set his sites on the Persian homelands. Darius III retreated beyond the Tires and Euphrates rivers and engaged the Greeks at Gaugamela. The Persian army was larger, but when a flanking movement by Darius' chariots and elephants failed, Alexander broke through the line protecting the Persian king. Darius III fled, and leaderless, his army collapsed. Alexander had won three consecutive battles against Darius III, and in 331 BCE, the Persian Empire came to an end. In Babylon, as in Egypt, Alexander was greeted as a liberating hero.

## **THE APOCRYPHA**

The biblical apocrypha (from the Ancient Greek: ἀπόκρυφος, romanized: apókruphos, lit. 'hidden') denotes the collection of apocryphal ancient books thought to have been written some time between 200 BC and 400 AD. Some Christian Churches include some or all of the same texts within the body of their version of the Old Testament.

The seven books which compose the Protestant Apocrypha, first published as such in Luther's Bible (1534) are considered canonical Old Testament books by the Catholic Church, affirmed by the Council of Rome (AD 382) and later reaffirmed by the Council of Trent; they are also considered canonical by the Eastern Orthodox Church and are referred to as anagignoskomena per the Synod of Jerusalem.

The Biblical Apocrypha in modern translations include the following:

Tobit  
Judith  
Esther (portions)  
First Book of Maccabees  
Second Book of Maccabees  
Book of Wisdom  
Ecclesiasticus  
Baruch  
Daniel (portions)