

Four Kingdoms and God's Eternal Kingdom

The Statue in the Book of Daniel

The Kingdoms and King
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream



...The God of Heaven will
set up a Kingdom that
will never be destroyed...

—Daniel 2:44

Illustration of authentic Babylonian carving.

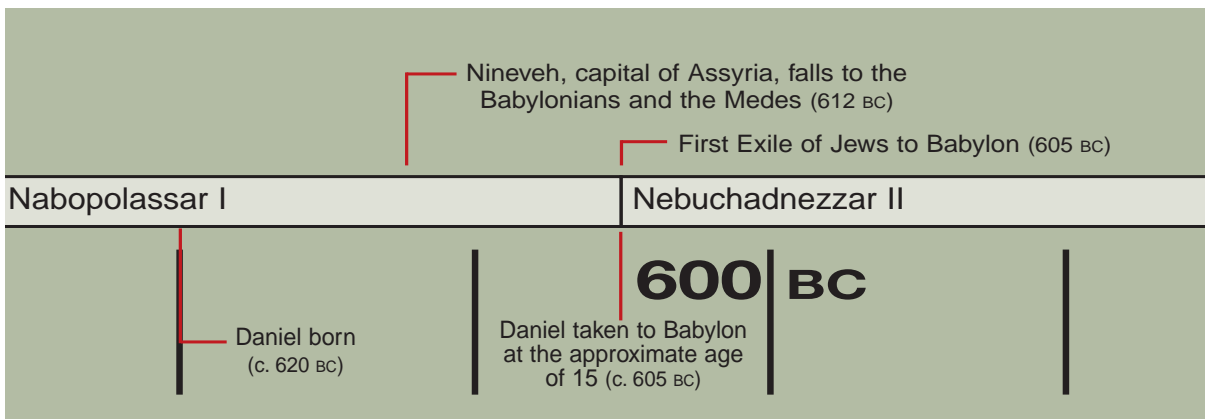
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Head of Fine Gold



Historical and Biblical Background of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- About 600 years before Jesus was born, Babylonia (Iraq today) was the most powerful and wealthy kingdom in the Middle East.
- King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem and took Daniel and others captive to Babylon to serve in his court. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the sacred objects and vessels from the Temple of God back to Babylon.
- One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The king threatened to kill his advisors if they could not both tell him the dream and interpret it. (Dan. 2:5-11)
- Daniel asked the king for some time to interpret the dream. After Daniel prayed, God revealed the dream and its meaning to him. (Daniel 2:12-23)
- The dream showed a statue with four sections. The head was gold. The chest was silver. The belly and thighs were bronze. The legs were made of iron and the feet were iron mixed with clay. A large rock struck and destroyed the statue and became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35)
- Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar the dream and interpreted it. (Daniel 2:36-45) The King made Daniel ruler over Babylon.



Babylonia (626-539 BC)



Head of the Statue (Daniel 2)

- The head of the statue, made from fine gold, represented the kingdom of Babylonia, which the Lord gave King Nebuchadnezzar to rule.
- The gold symbolized the superior power of Babylonia.
- Eventually Babylonia would be destroyed by an inferior kingdom.
- When King Nebuchadnezzar heard Daniel's interpretation, he said, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

Vision of Beasts – Lion (Daniel 7)

- More than 50 years after King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel had a vision about four great beasts (like a lion with eagle's wings, a bear, a leopard, and a terrifying powerful beast).
- The four beasts are four kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian kingdom is compared to a lion in Jeremiah 4:7; 50:44, and to an eagle in Ezekiel 17:3, 11, 12.
- Images of lions with eagle's wings were popular in Babylonia, and can be found on ancient Babylonian architecture and currency. (Daniel 7:4)

Judah, the Southern Kingdom, falls to Babylon
The Temple and Jerusalem destroyed (586 BC)

Gedaliah appointed governor over the
Babylonian Province of Judah (586 BC)

Cyrus comes into power in
Persia (559 BC)

Belshazzar in charge of
Babylon (550 BC)

Neriglissar

Nabonidus (Belshazzar in Babylon)

Amel-marduk

550 BC

Daniel dies
(c. 540 BC)

Chest and Arms of Silver



Historical and Biblical Background

- In 539 BC, Darius the Mede (from Media) took Babylon without a fight.
- By 538 BC, Mesopotamia and Judah were under Persian rule. Later the Persians gained control of Egypt and Libya.
- King Cyrus and the other kings of the Persian empire developed a policy that allowed all people the freedom to worship their own gods, and live their own ways.
- In 538 BC, Cyrus issued a decree ordering the restoration of the Jewish community. Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. (Ezra 1:2-4)
- The Persians paid to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 6:8)
- The vessels taken by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon were returned to their rightful place in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:7-11)
- In 457 BC, King Artaxerxes of Persia sent Ezra to Judah for religious reform and spiritual guidance. (Ezra 7:1-6)
- Nehemiah governed Judah from 444-430 BC. While in Judah, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

Cyrus's edict allows Jews to return to Jerusalem (538 BC)

Jewish Temple is rebuilt (536 BC -516 BC)

Roman Republic established (509 BC)

King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) of Persia makes E

Cyrus	Cambyses	Darius	Xerxes	Artaxerxes
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500 BC

450 BC