



— THE BOOK OF —  
**DANIEL**  
—

# Belshazzar, King of Babylon

## Belshazzar who?

In 1850 one eminent German commentator wrote that Belshazzar was *“simply a figment of the author’s imagination.”*

According to all ancient historians, Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon.

- Cyrus defeated Nabonidus in battle outside the city.
- Nabonidus fled, perhaps to Borsippa.
- After a brief siege, the Persians took Babylon without a fight.
- Soon after, Nabonidus surrendered, and Cyrus spared his life.
- Many officials in Babylon retained their positions.
- Herodotus said the Persians diverted the Euphrates, waded through waist-deep water into the city, and surprised the defenders.

# Kings of Babylon

Ruler	Reigned	Comments
Nabopolassar	626 – 605 BC	First king of Neo-Babylonian Empire
Nebuchadnezzar	605 – 562 BC	Son
Amel-Marduk	562 – 560 BC	Son, murdered
Neriglissar	560 – 556 BC	Brother in law
Labashi-Marduk	556 BC	Son, probably still a child, murdered
Nabonidus	556 – 539 BC	

## John Gill (mid-18th century, Baptist) on Belshazzar

Then followed this king, who by Ptolemy is called Nabonadius; by Berosus, Nabonnedus (t) by Abydenus (u), Nabannidochus; by Herodotus (w), Labynitus; and by Josephus (x), **Naboandelus, who, according to him, is the same with Belshazzar;** whom **some** confound with the son of Neriglissar; **others** take him to be the **same** with Evilmerodach, because he here immediately follows Nebuchadnezzar, and is called his son, Dan\_5:11, and **others** that he was a **younger brother, so Jarchi and Theodoret; but the truth is, that he was the son of Evilmerodach, and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.**

The truth is the Bible didn't tell us that he was the son of Evilmerodach, and John Gill was mistaken. – **Sword Searcher**

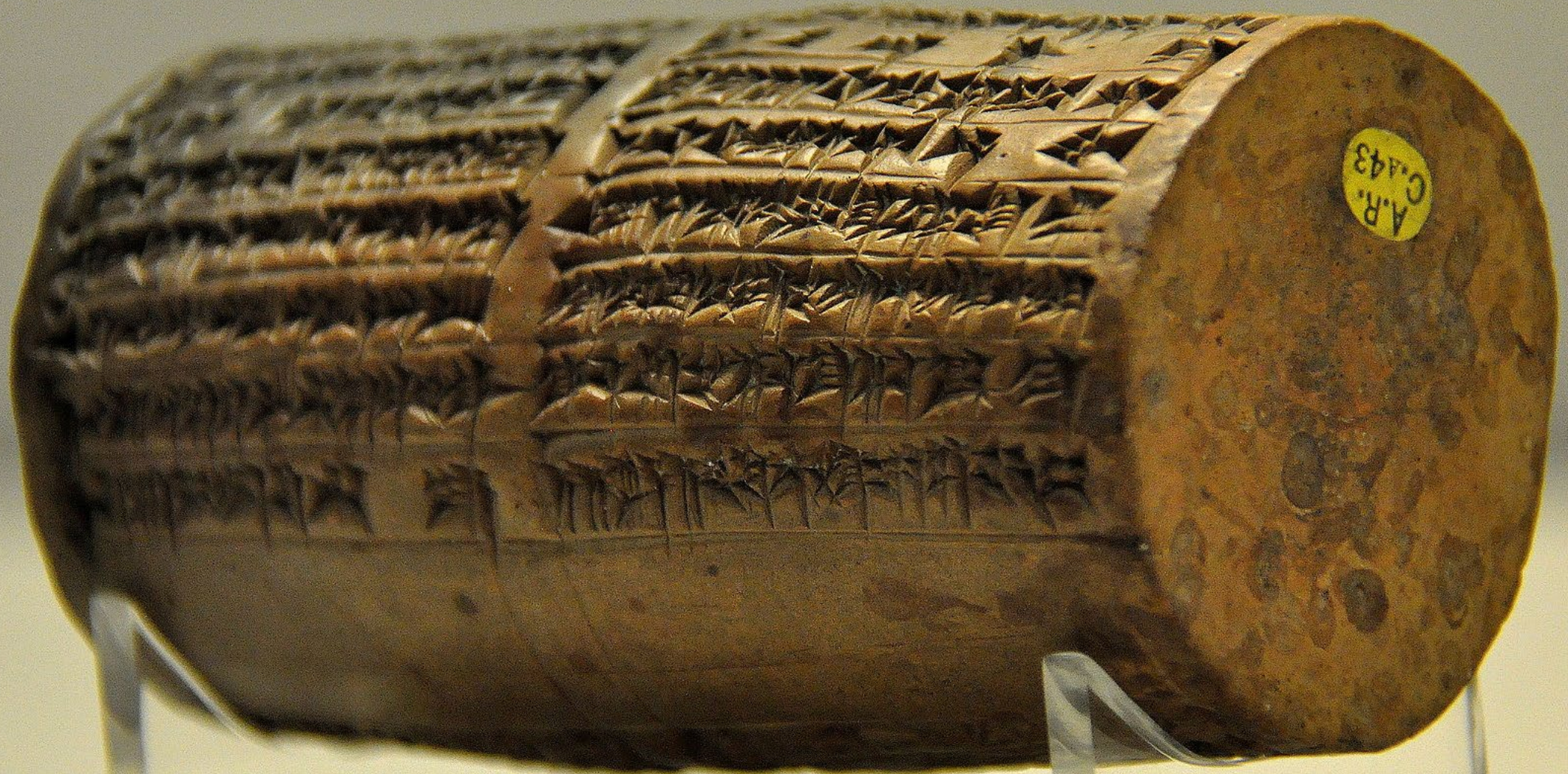
## Adam Clarke (early 19th century, Methodist)

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach his son ascended the throne of Babylon. Having reigned about two years, he was slain by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar. He reigned four years, and was succeeded by his son Laborosoarchod, who reigned only nine months. At his death **Belshazzar the son of Evil-merodach**, was raised to the throne, and reigned seventeen years.

This was wrong, too. **Albert Barnes (1834, Presbyterian) – Sword Searcher**, held a similar view. He cites **William Hales (1812, Anglican)** as saying that **Belshazzar was another name of Neriglissar**, and that he was killed by Cyrus who then put Nabonidus on the throne.

This clay cylinder with a cuneiform inscription, found in Ur near the Euphrates River in 1854, was one of the most important discoveries in Biblical archaeology.







In 1854, J.G. Taylor found four cuneiform cylinders in the foundation of a ziggurat at Ur. These were deposited by Nabonidus; all four apparently have an identical inscription.

Nabonidus cylinders from Ur are noteworthy because they mention a son named Belshazzar. The cylinders state:

"As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sinning against your great godhead and grant me as a present a life long of days, and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son -my offspring- instill reverence for your great godhead in his heart and may he not commit any cultic mistake, may he be sated with a life of plenitude."

## Historians View of the kings of Babylon

Nabopolassar (626 BC-605 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC)

Amel-Marduk (562-560). Same as Evilmerodach 2Ki 25:27; Jer 52:31

Neriglissar (560-556 BC)

Labashi-Marduk (556 BC)

Nabonidus (556-539 BC)

# The Skeptics Faith

When the first inscription was found identifying Belshazzar, some skeptics still refused to accept Daniel's account.

## "A Mere Child"

George Rawlinson quoted Henry Fox Talbot as saying it provided **"not the slightest evidence"** that **"Bel-sar-uzur"** (as he appeared on the inscription) was co-regent, and said, **"He may have been a mere child when it was written."** Evidence of Belshazzar's existence was not enough to shake the skeptic's faith in his skepticism.

Believing scholars pointed out that Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, always alert for usurpers among their many sons, **never named them in public documents unless they had official positions.** But it was not until **another record was found identifying Belshazzar's role** that the general historical accuracy of Daniel 5 was finally admitted.

## Whose Son?

Even now, when all admit that Belshazzar was ruling in the city of Babylon, when all know the writer of Daniel 5 had historical knowledge no other ancient historian possessed, some skeptics will still criticize some details. They say Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, so Daniel is wrong in calling him the “son” of Nebuchadnezzar, ignoring the fact that “son” was often used for “descendant” and the Queen Mother was apparently Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter, so Belshazzar was indeed descended from Nebuchadnezzar.

\*The term son is frequently used to denote filiation at any distance. – son, grandson, great grandson.

# Biblical and Historic View of the kings of Babylon

Nabopolassar (626 BC-605 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) Daniel, Ezek. 2 Kings, I Chron. II Chron.

Amel-Marduk (562-560). Same as Evilmerodach 2Ki 25:27; Jer. 52:31

Neriglissar (560-556 BC) Jer. 39:3, 13

Labashi-Marduk (556 BC)

Nabonidus (556-539 BC)

Belshazzar (552-539 BC) Daniel 5, 7-8

# Darius the Mede

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. (Daniel 5:30-31)

**Forget Belshazzar, Now it's Darius!**

“Darius is almost certainly a figment of the writer’s imagination”. -

Norman Porteous (Daniel: A Commentary 1965)

PROPHECY in the Book of ISAIAH  
Concerning Cyrus King of Persia  
And the Fall of the Babylonian Empire  
the Head of Gold

And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people ... (Isa 44:7)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isa 46:9-10)

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. (Ro 4:17)





Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and **he that formed thee from the womb**, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; (Isa 44:24)

That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; (Isa 44:25)

That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers.... (Isa 44:26a)

...that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: (Isa 44:26b)

That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (Isa 44:27)

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa 44:28)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (Isa 45:1)

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. (Isa 45:3)

# Prophetic Announcement: Cyrus

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa 44:28)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (Isa 45:1)



# Cyrus the Great, King of Persia the God's shepherd.

H. G. Wells, in his book, *The Outline of History*, concedes that the Jews “returned to their city, Jerusalem” and “rebuilt their temple there under the auspices of Cyrus,” the Persian monarch (1931, p. 253).

Isaiah the prophet died approximately a century and a half (140 years) before the birth of King Cyrus. (740–701 B.C.) – thus the false idea of Deutero-Isaiah theory.

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa 44:28)

→ Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (Isa 45:1)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. (Isa 46:9-11)

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD **stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, **All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem**, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up. (2Ch 36:22-23)

# Prophetic Declaration: Rebuild Jerusalem

....that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: (Isa 44:26b)

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa 44:28)

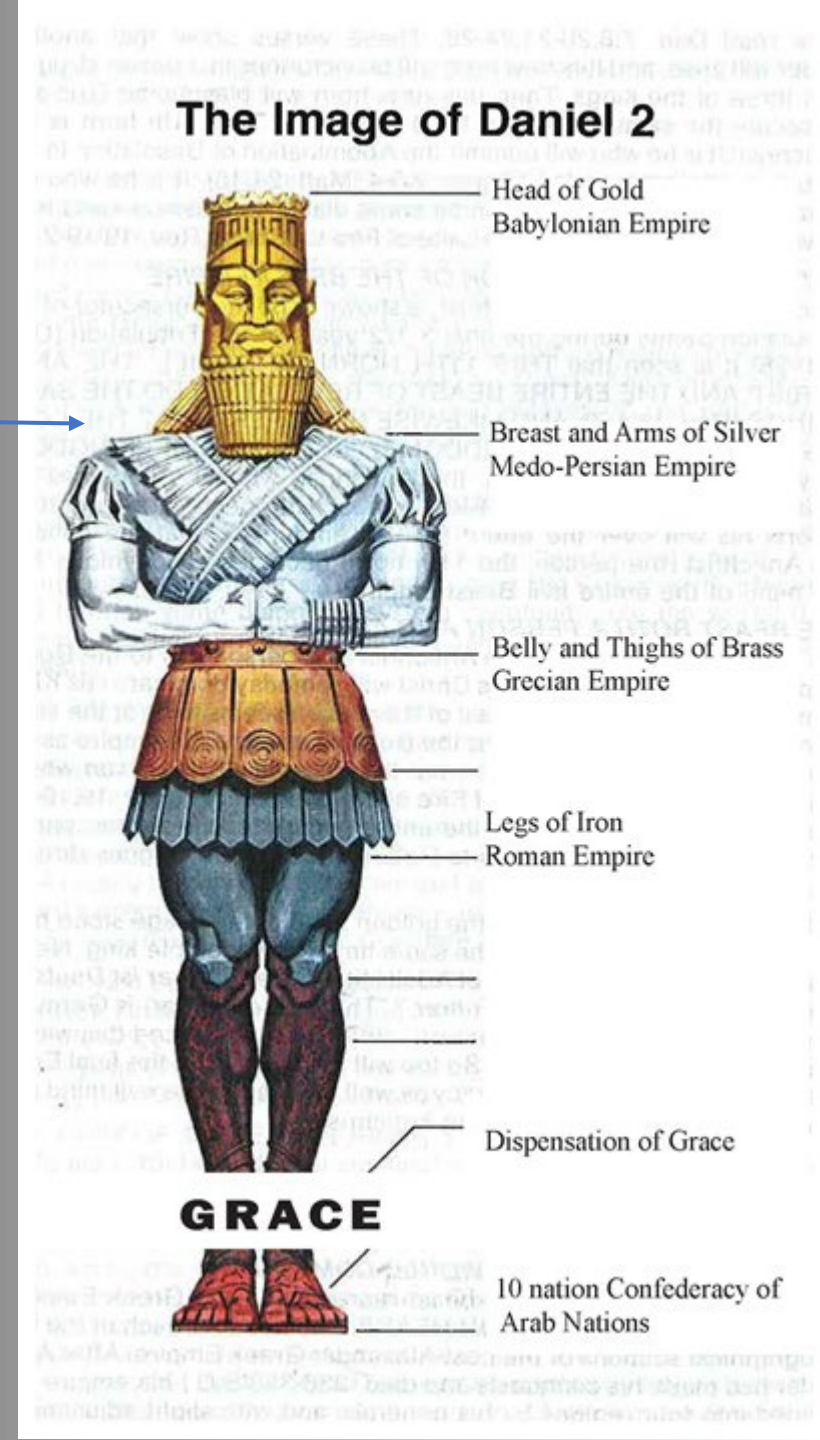
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. (Ezr 1:1-4 cf. 2Ch 36:22-23)

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. (Jeremiah 25:11-13)



In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:2)

The end of the 70 Year Captivity!



And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. (Ezr 3:10-11)

## An Interesting Note:

Josephus, the Jewish historian, stated that the Jews in Babylonian captivity showed Cyrus the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures which contain his name and described his role in the scheme of God. The historian says that it was this circumstance that motivated the ruler “to fulfill what was written” (*Antiquities of the Jews* 11.1.2), and thus to issue his edict permitting Israel’s return to her homeland.

**Antiquities of the Jews – Book XI**  
*Containing the Interval of 253 Years 5 Months.*  
*[From the first of CYRUS to the death of ALEXANDER the Great.]*

**CHAPTER 1.**

*How Cyrus, King of the Persians, (1) delivered the Jews out of Babylon, and suffered them to return to their own country, and to build their temple: for which work he gave them money.*

1. [An. 536.] IN THE FIRST YEAR of the reign of Cyrus; which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon; (2) God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people: according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the Prophet, before the destruction of the city; that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar, and his posterity; and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers; and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them. For he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write thus throughout all Asia: "Thus saith Cyrus the King: since God Almighty hath appointed me to be King of the habitable earth, I believe that He is that God, which the nation of the Israelites worship. For indeed he foretold my name by the Prophets, and that I should build him an house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea."

2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his Prophecies. For this Prophet said, that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be King over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and an ambition seized upon him, to fulfil what was so written. So he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that "He gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, (3) and the temple of God; for that he would be their assistant; and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver, for the building of the temple; and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices."

# Prophetic Details: How Cyrus Overthrew Babylon

That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (Isa 44:27)

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: (Isa 45:2)

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. (Isa 45:3)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (Isa 45:1)

# Herodotus



Herodotus was a Greek writer and geographer credited with being the first historian. Around the year 425 B.C., Herodotus published his magnum opus: a long account of the Greco-Persian Wars that he called "The Histories."

# Herodotus: King Cyrus and the Gyndes River

[1.189] Cyrus on his way to Babylon came to the banks of the Gyndes, note a stream which, rising in the mountains, runs through the country, and empties itself into the river Tigris. The Tigris, after receiving the Gyndes, flows on by the city of Opis, and discharges its waters into the Erythraean sea. note When Cyrus reached this stream, which could only be passed in boats, one of the sacred white horses accompanying his march, full of spirit and high spirit, walked into the water, and tried to cross by himself; but the current seized him, swept him along with it, and drowned him in its depths. **Cyrus, enraged at the insolence of the river, threatened so to break its strength that in future even women should cross it easily without wetting their knees. Accordingly, he put off for a time his attack on Babylon, and, dividing his army into two parts, he marked out by ropes one hundred and eighty trenches on each side of the Gyndes, leading off from it in all directions, and setting his army to dig, some on one side of the river, some on the other, he accomplished his threat by the aid of so great a number of hands, but not without losing thereby the whole summer season.**

# Herodotus: King Cyrus and the Capture of Babylon

[1.190] Having, however, thus wreaked his vengeance on the Gyndes, by dispersing it through three hundred and sixty channels, Cyrus, with the first approach of the ensuing spring, marched forward against Babylon. The Babylonians, encamped without their walls, awaited his coming. A battle was fought at a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian king, whereupon they withdrew within their defenses. Here they shut themselves up, and made light of his siege, having laid in a store of provisions for many years in preparation against this attack; for when they saw Cyrus conquering nation after nation, they were convinced that he would never stop, and that their turn would come at last.

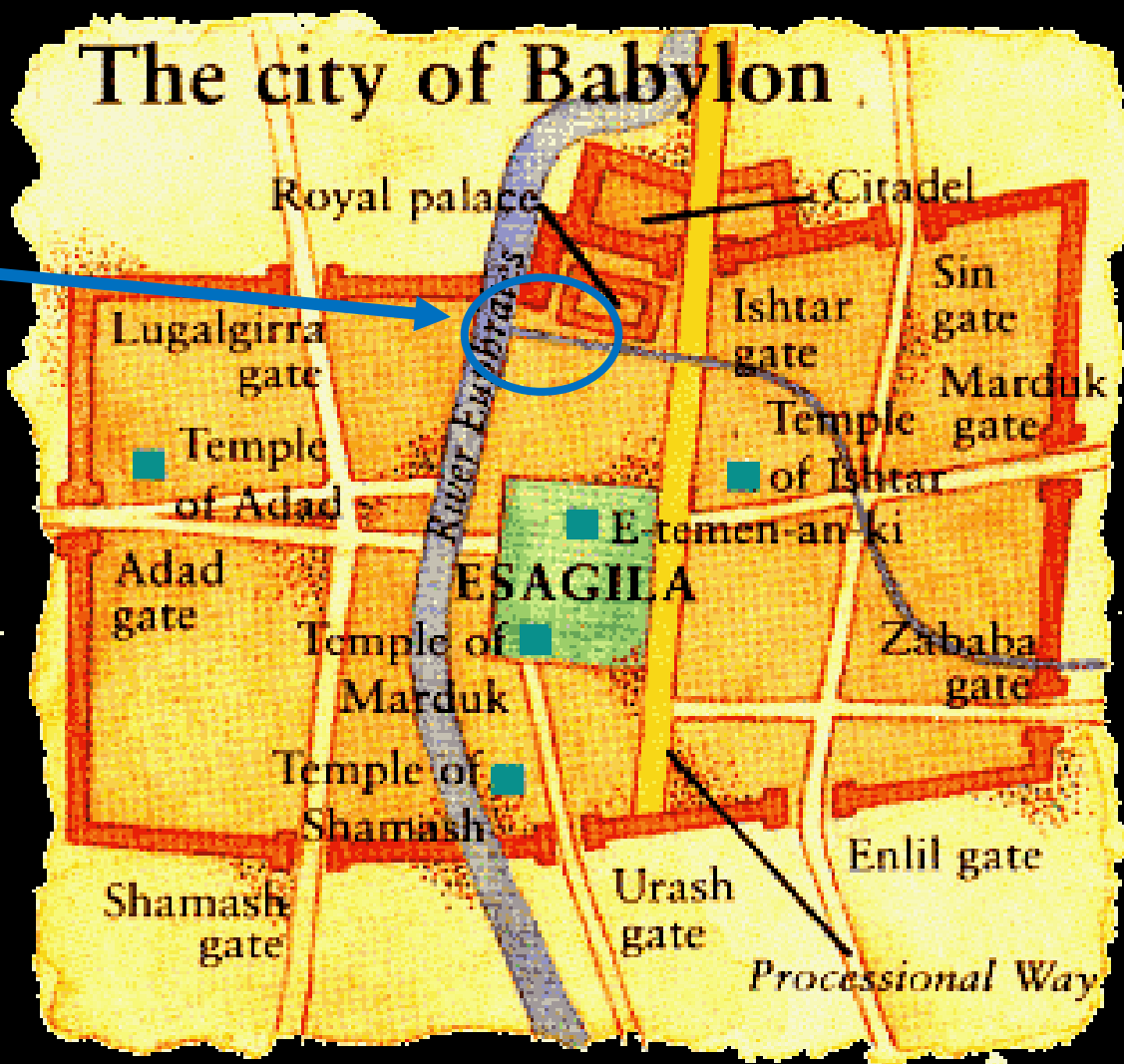


[1.191] Cyrus was now reduced to great perplexity, as time went on and he made no progress against the place. In this distress either some one made the suggestion to him, or he bethought himself of a plan, which he proceeded to put in execution. He placed a portion of his army at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough: he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where his general dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly: he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became travelable.

Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the river-side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about midway up a man's thigh, and thus got into the town. Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would never have allowed the Persians to enter the city, but would have destroyed them utterly; for they would have made fast all the street gates which gave access to the river, and mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But, as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise and so took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents at Babylon declare) long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt about the capture. Such, then, were the circumstances of the first taking of Babylon.

# Herodotus: King Cyrus and the Capture of Babylon

Point of Entry “stream”  
off the Euphrates





Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. **In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. (Da 5:1-6)**



Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; **God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.** TEKEL; **Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.** PERES; **Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.** Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. **In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.** (Da 5:24-30)

**Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; (Ezra 1:7)**

# Prophetic Details Fulfilled

- ✓ That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (Isa 44:27)
- ✓ And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. (Isa 45:3)
- ✓ Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (Isa 45:1)
- ✓ ...that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: (Isa 44:26b)
- ✓ That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (Isa 44:27)
- ✓ That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isa 44:28)

# The Cyrus Cylinder Confirms the Bible



The Cyrus Cylinder is an ancient clay cylinder, on which is written a declaration in Akkadian cuneiform script in the name of Persia's Achaemenid king Cyrus the Great. It dates from the 6th century BC and was discovered in the ruins of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Babylon (now in modern Iraq) in 1879. It is currently in the possession of the British Museum.



The Cyrus Cylinder is one of many kingly proclamations on stone or clay known from ancient Mesopotamia. What makes it unique is not its form, but rather the policy it records: Cyrus's decision to allow deported peoples to return to their settlements and to restore their desecrated sanctuaries.

Cyrus's actions had particularly momentous consequences for one group of exiles in Babylon: the Jews.

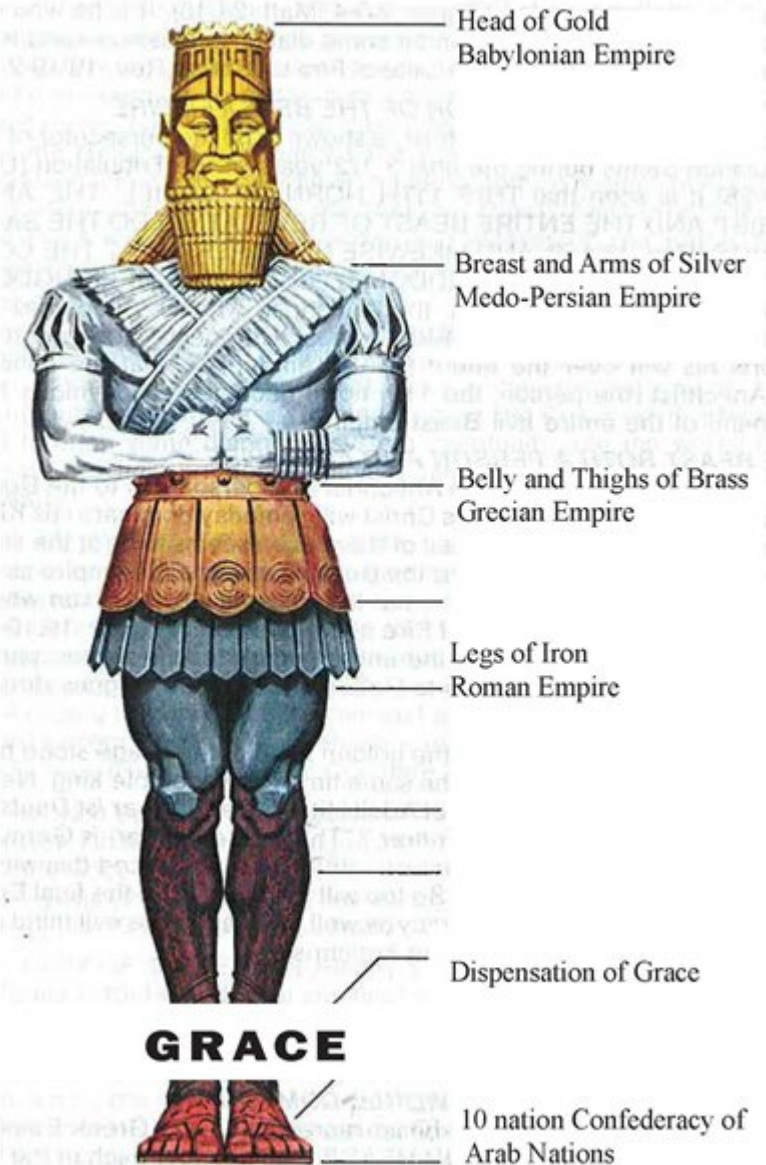
Though the Cylinder does not mention the Jews by name, it echoes Cyrus's biblical edict that exhorted the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple.



All of this and much more are details on how God would overthrow Babylon the head of Gold and bring in the arms and chest of Silver, the Medo-Persian empire.



## The Image of Daniel 2





— THE BOOK OF —  
**DANIEL**  
—