

The “Genesis” of Babylon

Babylon was located about 50 miles south of Baghdad and was founded along the Euphrates River.

It is believed that the city of Babylon was founded by the Akkadians in 2300 B.C. in Mesopotamia.

Historical Quote: “[The city of Babylon] was founded around 2300 B.C. by the ancient Akkadian-speaking people of southern Mesopotamia.” (History.com (2024). Babylon. Retrieved from [https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-middle-east/babylon.](https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-middle-east/babylon))

Cross-Reference: Genesis 10:6-10.

Observations

- The descendants of the sons of Noah are recorded after the flood (Genesis 10).
- The list of descendants of Japeth (vs. 2-5).
- The list of descendants of Ham (vs. 6-20).
- The list of descendants of Shem (vs. 21-31).

Beginning

- The Hebrew word is ראשית (raysheeth')
- This word occurs 51 times in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- "First," "beginning," or "chief."
- This word in this context marks the beginning of an event or status.

Observations

It would appear, based upon the biblical text, that Babylon (i.e., Babel) was not established by the Akkadians in a general sense, but by Nimrod (Gen 10:6-10).

The Kings of Babylon: Leadership and Rule

Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.)

- Is the sixth and most influential ruler of the Amorite Dynasty.
- Immediate Family: *Sin-muballit* (Hammurabi's Father), *Iltani* (Hammurabi's Sister), *Samsuiluna* (Hammurabi's son).
- Code of Hammurabi: One of the earliest written legal codes in the world.
 - The purpose of this code was to unite all of the provinces of Southern Mesopotamia. The code was a set of 282 laws that guided those under this system with a set of rules that if broken would enact fines and punishments. This code was carved into a huge black stone pillar.

Nabopolassar (626-605)

- First ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire
- Nabopolassar was the father of Nebuchadnezzar II.

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- He was a chieftain (i.e., governor) of Babylonia, but after the death of King Ashurbanipal in 626 B.C., he became king of Babylon.
- He began various projects over Babylon, but when he died, they were completed by his son. These projects included irrigation and beautification of Babylon.
- Naboplassar overthrew the Assyrian Empire and destroyed Nineveh in 612 B.C.
- This overthrowing of Nineveh was prophesied in the books of Nahum (2:1-3:7) and Zephaniah (2:13-15).
- If you recall, God sent Jonah to avert the destruction of Nineveh. This was before its destruction by Naboplassar.

Nebuchadnezzar (605-561)

- After Naboplassar (i.e., his father) died, he led an army against the Egyptian army and defeated them. Egypt, due to their defeat, did not challenge him (2 Kings 24:7).
- Nebuchadnezzar went on to conquer all of Syria, Lebanon, and Northern Israel.
- Nebuchadnezzar went on to conquer Israel and Jerusalem due to three sieges in the historical account.

Nebuchadnezzar's Conquest of Israel

1. *Jehoiakim*: Bound him with chains, stole property from the temple, and took all these things to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:6).
2. *Jehoiachin*: He was brought to Babylon and more valuables were taken from the temple (2 Chron. 36:10).
3. *Zedekiah*: Slaughtered the sons of the king, gouged out his eyes, chained him, and brought him to Babylon. Temple dispossessed and destroyed (2 Kings 25:1-7; 2 Chron. 36:15-21).

Babylon's Custom and Culture

Housing

The homes in Babylon were built with three floors and a flat roof. The first floor consisted of a courtyard which possibly held a small garden, and some animals like chickens. The second floor consisted of the bedroom, and the flat roof was used for cooking and for a place to catch a breeze during a hot day.

Babylonian City

Within the center of the city, there lay a 300-ft. tall temple tower (i.e., ziggurat). This could be seen from a great distance away.

One other sight was *Procession Avenue*. This was a street that had brick animals on both sides of the street as decor and led to the Ishtar Gates. It was about a half-mile long.

Ishtar Gate – It was the eighth gate of the city of Babylon and was a double gate that strengthened its fortification. The gate had a roof and a door that was made of cedar

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and bronze. The front gate was dressed with bulls and dragons and was built with glazed bricks.

The Seven Deities of Babylonia

Enlil: He is the god of the elements: wind, earth, air, and storms.

Enki: He is the god of magic, wisdom, fresh water, trouble, crafts, and healing. He is also the creator of human beings.

Inanna (Ishtar): She was the goddess of eros, sensuality, fertility, war, also political influence.

Nabu (or Nebo): He is the god of literacy and writing and vegetation. He is a scribe for the god Marduk.

Nanna: He is associated with the moon and possibly associated with a woman giving birth.

Ninhursag: She is the goddess that is mostly responsible for fertility, sex, childbirth, pregnancy, and crops. Her name means "lady of the sacred mountain."

Utu: He is primarily the god of the sun and light and justice (due to his quality).

"One Deity To Rule Them All"

Marduk (Bel): He is one of the most important gods of the Babylonians during this time. He was an obscure god at one point in Babylonian antiquity, but by the time King Nebuchadnezzar rose to power, he was a prominent god of Babylon. In fact, he is mentioned in the introduction to the Code of Hammurabi.

He was the god of thunderstorms; it was written that after this god destroyed another god, Tiamat, the god of chaos, he then became the Lord of Heaven and Earth. All of humanity owed its allegiance to Marduk, and the fate and destiny of kingdoms were in his hands. Two chief temples recognized Marduk: The Esagila and Etemenanki, which was a ziggurat with a shrine of Marduk on the top.

Conclusion

This historical and cultural data ought to be considered when observing the book of Daniel so that we have a general idea of some of the activity that was occurring during this time in history and to help underscore some of the thinking and activity of the Babylonians.

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