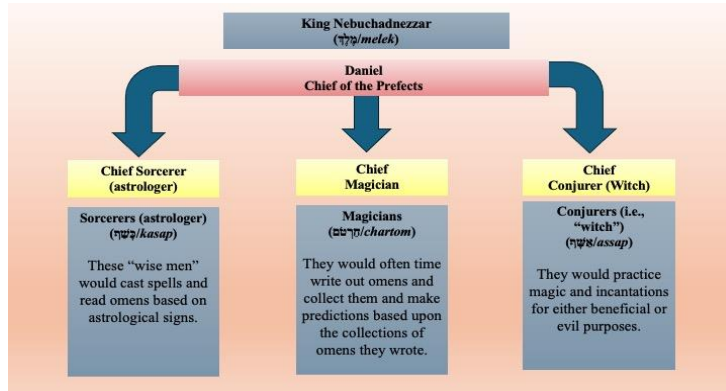


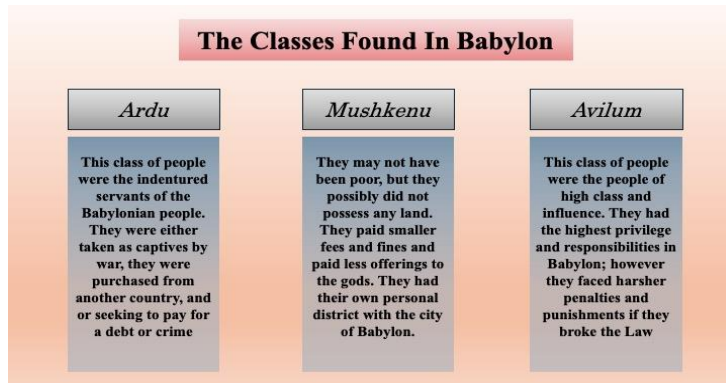
The Book of Daniel-Chapter Three (Part One)

Dr. Luther Ray Smith Jr.

In The Previous Episode: It appears with this statement by Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar gave Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-nego kingly influence “over” (with the Aramaic preposition *לַ/al*, which is the same preposition that is used in v.47 with Daniel) the province of Babylon itself. This is important because his companions were elevated to the position of a nobleman or *Avilums* in Babylon.

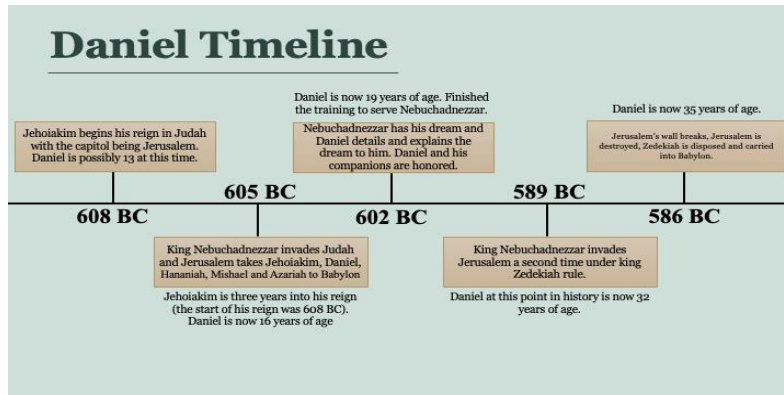


Daniel and his companions, due to giving the details and explanation of the dream they are honored and recognized with authority: For Daniel, he is honored over the “wise men” and Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-nego authority and an “status” increase within Babylon. All of this is due to the God of Heaven revealing Nebuchadnezzar’s dream to Daniel.



Cross-Reference: Jeremiah 52:1-13/2 Kings 25:4-10.

Preliminary Historical Information

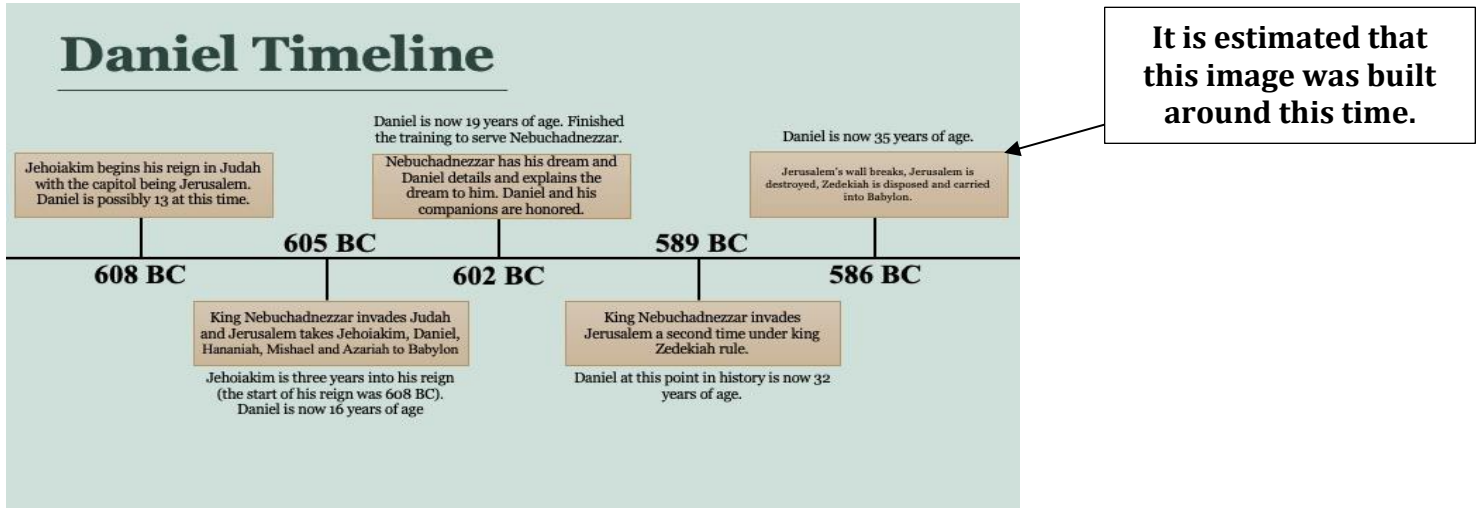


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The Possible Impact of this Event: Due to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar disposed the king of Jerusalem and Israel, gathered the rest of the things from the temple and burned it to the ground demonstrated in his mind that his god rules over the God of Israel. This would solidify in his mind that Marduk is indeed the Lord of heaven and earth.

Daniel 3:1 NASB95: “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon...”



Basic Observations In Daniel’s Statement

- King Nebuchadnezzar made (or rather ordered his servants) to make an **image**.
 - We have the substance of what the image is made out of (**Gold—the same Aramaic word written in Daniel 2:32**).
 - We have the measurements described concerning this golden statue (**height=Sixty cubits and width=6 cubits**).
 - The golden image was **60 cubits (or approx. 90 feet tall!), and 6 cubits (or approx. 9 feet wide!)**

ܩܒܝܬ (Cubit)

ammâ/awmaw'

- This Aramaic word occurs four times in the Scriptures.
- This Aramaic word occurs 1 time in the book of Daniel.
- This word corresponds with the Hebrew word that is spelled the same.

A *cubit* is an archaic standard of measurement that was usually the length of a person’s forearm (from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger), usually the measurement was 18 inches in length.

- We also have the region or area that this statue is established.
 - The plain of Dura.

The Plain of Dura: The plain of Dura is a place that is located in the southeast region of Babylon near the Euphrates River. This place was more than likely just outside of the city of Babylon. This place would more than likely be a big enough place to house the image as well as the have a great many people stand before this statue.

First Pertinent Question of Chapter Three: What is (or was) the *golden image*?

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A Possible Answer

HERODOTUS

- Herodotus was born possibly in 480 BC and died between 430-420 BC (This was during the time of the Persian Empire).
- Herodotus was a historian that wrote extensively about the Persian, Egyptian, and Grecian Empire. He also wrote thoroughly about the Greco-Persian wars.
- Herodotus's account of history was so voluminous it is divided by historians into nine volumes (or books).

Book I: Chapter 183: "...In the Babylonian temple there is another shrine below, where is a great golden image of Zeus, sitting at a great golden table, and the footstool and the chair are also of gold; the gold of the whole was said by the Chaldeans to be of eight hundred talents' weight. Outside of the temple is a golden altar. There is also another great altar, whereon are sacrificed the full-grown of the flocks; only sucklings may be sacrificed on the golden altar, but on the greater altar the Chaldeans even offer a thousand talents' weight of frankincense yearly, when they keep the festival of this god; and in the days of Cyrus there was still in this sacred demesne a statue of gold twelve cubits high. I myself have not seen it, but I tell what is told by the Chaldeans. Darius son of Hystaspes purposed to take this statue but dared not; Xerxes his son took it, and slew the priest who warned him not to move the statue. Such is the adornment of this temple, and there are many private offerings besides...."

Who is "Zeus?"

Herodotus used the Greek phrase Zeus to describe the god of the Babylonians. Another name that the historian used is known as "Zeus Belus."

- The Greek word "Zeus" is the title that means "Sky Father" (in fact, this title is used to refer to the Greek god).
- The Greek word "Belus" is the royal title that means "lord."

It is believed that the god that Herodotus was referring to be the Babylonian god *Marduk*.

Facts About Marduk

Marduk was the god of Babylon, and when Babylon rose to power Marduk became the highest god of Mesopotamia (i.e., the fertile crescent).

Marduk was highly honored and respected among the people of Babylon and considered him so holy that his name was never spoken. Instead, they would use the Aramaic word *Bel*, which means "Lord."

Through a Cuneform tablet, which is known as the *Enuma elish* ("When on High") described when he battled and conquered Tiamat (a goddess) and as a reward for defeating Tiamat he became known as "the Lord of the Gods of Heaven and Earth."

Because of this victory nature and humankind was to give their allegiance to him. Additionally, the destiny of kingdoms and the servants and citizens of these kingdoms he was sovereign over.

It is possible that this action by Nebuchadnezzar was completed either at a festival known as the *Atiku* Festival, which was a new year festival that honored Marduk, Nabu, and all of the other gods of Babylon, or it was similar to the *Atiku* Festival.

Tablet of Nebuchadnezzar: "I am Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the exalted prince, the favourite of the god marduk, the beloved of the god Nabu, the arbiter, the possessor of wisdom, who revernces their lordship, the untiring governor who is constantly anxious for the maintenance of the shrines of Babylonia and Borsippa, the wise, the pious, the son of Nabopolasser, king of Babylon..."

Daniel 3:2a NASB95: ""Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates..."

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Details With Daniel's Description		
Satraps	ܐܫܚܕܪܦܢܝܢ (<i>akhashdarpan'</i>). Occurs 9x in the book of Daniel.	The people in this position of authority like that of a king over specific region (<i>satrapies</i>)
Prefects	ܣܓܢ (<i>segan'</i>) Occurs 9x in the book of Daniel.	The people in this position of authority are governors of certain groups.
Governors	ܦܚܗ (<i>pekhaw'</i>). Occurs 4x in the book of Daniel.	The people in this position ruled over certain districts or city-states in the region of the Babylonian empire (Cross-Reference: Ezra 5:9)
Counselors	ܐܕܪܓܐܝܘܪ (<i>ʾāḏargāzar</i>) Occurs 2x in the book of Daniel.	The people in this position were more than likely the advisors of the rulers (i.e., <i>sorcerers, magicians, and witches</i>).
Treasurers	ܓܗܕܘܒܘܪ (<i>ghedawbawr'</i>). Occurs 2x in the book of Daniel.	The people in this position may have been responsible for collecting tribute to the king and distributing funds for projects throughout the empire.
Judges	ܕܗܘܒܘܪ (<i>dethawbawr</i>). Occurs 2x in the book of Daniel.	These people in this position were responsible for evaluating disputes between parties as it pertained to Babylonian law.
Magistrates	ܩܝܦܝܐ (<i>tiptāyē</i>). Occurs 2x in the book of Daniel.	The people were more than likely those who would explain and enforce the law of Babylon (judge/sheriff).

Daniel 3:2b NASB95: “...all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up...”

This statement by Daniel includes all of the other smaller rulers in the provinces throughout the region of Babylon. These people were possibly chosen by the governors (ܦܚܗ pekhaw') who ruled over the districts or city-states of Babylon.

ܩܝܦܝܐ (Dedication)

ḥānukā'/chanookkaw'

- This Aramaic word occurs 4 times in the Scriptures.
- This Aramaic word occurs 2 times in the book of Daniel.
- This Aramaic word corresponds to the Hebrew word that is spelled in the same manner.
- “Consecration,” “dedication”
- This word describes some ceremony that included a recognition of this image.

The Importance of These Statements in Verses 2-3: This statement is important because this lets the readers (in this case all of the citizens in Babylon know) that the entire leadership of Babylon was found in the plain of Dura (more than likely not far from the city of Babylon) to pay homage to a possible image of Marduk.

To Sum Up: All of those who have small and great influence in the region of Babylon are standing on the plain of Dura standing in front of the 90-foot structure of who I am convinced is the false god Marduk.

To Be Continued...