

Handout Daniel Lesson 4

The Kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire

Ruler	Reigned	Comments
Nabopolassar	625-605 BC	He drove Assyrian armies from Babylon in 616 BC and sent his son with a powerful army to destroy the Assyrian Empire.
Nebuchadnezzar II	605-562 BC	He was the son of Nabopolassar who defeated the combined armies of Assyria and Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish and took possession of the Assyrian Empire.
Evil-Merodach	562-560 BC	He was the son of Nebuchadnezzar II. His brother-in-law murdered him and took his throne.
Nergalsharezer/Neriglissar	560-556 BC	He was the son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar. He murdered Evil-Merodach and declared himself king.
Labashi-Marduk	556 BC	He was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar and son of Nergalsharezer/Neriglissar. Nabonidus led a coup against him, murdered him and became king.
Nabonidus and his son and co-ruler/regent Belshazzar	556-539 BC	Nabonidus was the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He was not a Chaldean. He was an Aramaean or Assyrian usurper from Haran in Mesopotamia (Turkey). For c. ten years, he ruled with his eldest son Belshazzar as co-ruler/regent.

The events in Chapter 5 unfold in three parts:

1. Belshazzar witnesses a vision during a royal feast (verses 1-12).
2. He summons Daniel to interpret the written evidence of the vision (verses 13-28).
3. Belshazzar reacts to Daniel's interpretation, and the events that prove Daniel's interpretation is right (verses 29-6:1).

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Mene, teqel, and parsin/peres are units of weight, frequently used in weighing precious metals and equal a mina, a shekel, and a half mina. A mina equaled fifty shekels. Daniel uses wordplay in his interpretation:

- “has measured” (verse 26), in Aramaic, *menah*, is a play on the word *mene*.
- “you have been weighed” (verse 27), in Aramaic, *teqiltah*, is a play on the word *teqel*.
- “has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians” (verse 28), in Aramaic, *paras*, is a play on the word *parsin*. “The Persians” in Aramaic, *paras* is another play on the word *parsin*.

It is Daniel’s interpretation that God has numbered Belshazzar’s days; they have come to an end because he has been “weighted” and found to be worthless. God destines his kingdom to be divided among the Medes and the Persians.

The events in Chapter 6 unfold in four parts:

1. Daniel’s exalted position in the court of the king and the enmity of the other ministers (verses 2-5).
2. The plan to discredit Daniel and cause his death (verses 6-16).
3. Daniel in the lion’s pit, his salvation, and the fate of his accusers (verses 17-25).
4. The king’s profession of faith in Daniel’s God (verses 26-29).

Daniel 6:29 ~ *This Daniel flourished in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.* The Interlinear Bible translation of the Aramaic reads: *Darius in the reign of was made to prosper this Daniel, in the reign of the Persian Cyrus* (IBHE, vol. III, page 2056). The English translation appears to list two different men, Darius and Cyrus. However, the Aramaic can be understood to identify Darius and Cyrus as the same man with Darius the personal name and Cyrus the throne name of the last Gentile king Daniel faithfully served and gave his witness of the One, True God of Israel.

Book of Isaiah contains prophecies of a Gentile king named Cyrus, anointed by the God of Israel to act as His instrument to fulfill His will concerning the covenant people: *Thus says Yahweh to his anointed one, to Cyrus whom he says, “I have grasped by his right hand to make the nations bow before him and disarm kings, to open gateways before him so that their gates be closed no more: I myself shall go before you ...”* (Is 45:1-2a; also see Cyrus’ name in 44:28).

The History of Cyrus the Great of Persia, founder of the Achaemenid Empire

600 BC	Birth of Cyrus, son of Cambyses and Mandane, daughter of King Astyages of Media and the granddaughter of King Alyattes of Lydia.
549 BC	Cyrus conquered the Kingdom of Media.
547 BC	Cyrus conquered the Kingdom of Lydia. The Ionian Greek cities on the Aegean Sea coast that were vassals of the Lydians become subject to Cyrus.
539 BC	In October 539 BC, Cyrus conquered Babylon.
539/8 BC	The Edict of Cyrus allowed all Babylonian captives to return to their homelands, including the citizens of Judah.
530 BC	Cyrus died on December 4 th , succeeded by his son Cambyses II.