

THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL IN CAPTIVITY

(10 tribes in Assyrian and 2 tribes in Babylonian Captivity)

To acquaint ourselves with the history of the nations in the light of divine prophecy, we must first notice the prophecy of Daniel where God shows to the prophet four universal kingdoms, which ruled the known world. The four beasts rising out of the sea are the characteristics of four nations in control of the world from the days of Daniel to the coming of Christ.

Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar is most widely known through his portrayal in the Bible, especially the Book of Daniel. This book discusses several events of his reign, in addition to his conquest of Jerusalem.

The second chapter of Daniel relates an account attributed to the second year of his reign, in which Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a huge image made of various materials (gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay). The Prophet Daniel tells him God's interpretation; it is that it stands for the rise and fall of world powers, starting with Nebuchadnezzar's own as the golden head. In Daniel chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar erects a large idol made of gold for worship during a public ceremony on the plain of Dura. When three Jews, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (respectively renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by their captors, to facilitate their assimilation into Babylonian culture), refuse to take part, he has them cast into a fiery furnace. They are protected by what Nebuchadnezzar describes as "a son of the gods" ([Daniel 3:25](#)) and emerge unscathed without even the smell of smoke. Daniel chapter 4 contains an account of another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; this time of an immense tree, which Daniel interprets. While boasting over his achievements, Nebuchadnezzar is humbled by God. The king loses his sanity and lives in the wild like an animal for seven years.

Belshazzar

[Daniel 5:1-4](#) describes "Belshazzar's Feast" in which the sacred vessels of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, which had been brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the Captivity, were profaned by the company. 1) The narrative unfolds against the background of the impending arrival of the Persian armies. "King Belshazzar" gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. 2) While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. 3) So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4) As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone."