

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990 USA
 © ASK, April 2011 • All rights reserved • Number 4/11

Telephone: 503 292 4352

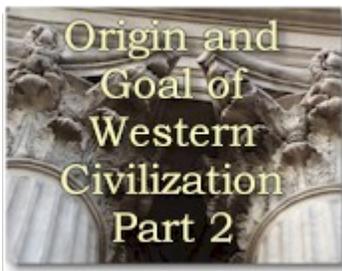
• Internet: www.askelm.com •

E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

Origin and Goal of Western Civilization, Part 2

by Ernest L. Martin, 1986, 1995
 Edited by David Sielaff, April 2011

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for April 2011](#)



EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is Part 2 of Dr. Martin's tape and writings on the topic "[Origin and Goal of Western Civilization](#)." Part 1 focused on the period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and its role in the beginning of the Babylonian system and Western Civilization. Part 2 focuses on the Persian, Greek, and Roman advances of Western Civilization. The entire world at present, East and West, embraces the economics of this Babylonian system that began in the 6th century BC. *DWS*

Review

Before the time of Nebuchadnezzar (and the Jewish prophet Jeremiah) it was common for the nations of the world to worship their own local gods, deities normally reckoned to belong exclusively to the various nations. Look at one incident from the Bible in the 8th century BC, when the Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem ruled by King Hezekiah of Judah. The Assyrian official Rabshakeh cried out to the Jews:

"Let not Hezekiah deceive you ... neither let Hezekiah make you trust in YHWH, saying, YHWH will surely deliver us ... Have any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that YHWH should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?"

• *2 Kings 18:29-35*

The reference of the Assyrian spokesman was to the various local gods of the nations. He included YHWH as being the local god of the Jews. This was the normal belief of the Gentiles at the time. It is no wonder that the prophet Isaiah, when these taunts were being made by the Assyrians, reminded the Jews that YHWH was truly God (and the ONLY GOD [Elohim]). Isaiah repeated several times what God said in Isaiah 45:5: **"I am YHWH, and there is none else, there is no God [Elohim] beside me."** True enough, the righteous Jews recognized this fact, but the vast majority of Gentiles did not.

The Factor that Changed Mankind's Thinking in the 6th Century BC

It was not until the time of Nebuchadnezzar that the Gentiles (in a general sense among the intellectuals) began to realize that the “god” of the Jews was not just a local “god,” but that He was THE God (and the ONLY one) of the entire universe. Three miracles convinced Nebuchadnezzar of this.

- (1) In about the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream given to him by God about a great image with the head of gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron mixed with clay. After Daniel miraculously interpreted the dream for the king, Nebuchadnezzar responded with this evaluation: **“Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings”** (Daniel 2:47). This was Nebuchadnezzar’s first admission that all kings on earth (himself included) were under the power and authority of Daniel’s God. YHWH was not a local God of the Jews, but the supreme power over all.
- (2) Nebuchadnezzar was not completely convinced. A few years later he had Daniel’s three friends cast into the fiery furnace. They miraculously escaped without a hair of their heads being singed. This so greatly impressed Nebuchadnezzar that he said:

“Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

• **Daniel 3:29**

Again, this incident forced Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge that YHWH was supreme as a power.

- (3) Close to seven years before the end of his life (and he reigned about 40 years), Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream/vision about a tree that was cut down and that a seven year span would occur in which a person would eat grass like an ox. Daniel interpreted the vision for Nebuchadnezzar that he was that man, and the king soon underwent the seven year trial. After the period of judgment was over he was restored to his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar openly admitted that the God of Daniel was indeed (and without a shadow of doubt) the only God of power and glory in all creation (Daniel 4:34–35). It took 40 years for Nebuchadnezzar to realize that YHWH was no local God.

Nebuchadnezzar told this information about those remarkable events to his son, Belshazzar:

“... till he [Nebuchadnezzar] knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appoints over it whomsoever he will. And you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this; But have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.”

• **Daniel 5:21–23**

A short time later Belshazzar was killed by the Medes and Persians who captured the city of Babylon and initiated the silver portion of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream prophecy of Daniel chapter 2.

Darius the Median Takes Power and Learns about YHWH

“And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old” (Daniel 5:31). The 62 years refers to how long the Neo-Babylonian kingdom had been in existence. (This was not a reference to how old Darius was.) There was to be a 70 year span that the city of Babylon would be in a top position in the world, and 62 years of it had passed when Belshazzar was killed. Darius the Median ruled from Babylon:

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first.”

• **Daniel 6:1–2**

Not only was Daniel “first” but he was preferred by Darius over the other two presidents:

“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

• *Daniel 6:3*

Then a conspiracy against Daniel was initiated. Look at verse 4.

“Then the [other two] presidents and princes [satraps] sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, ‘We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.’ Then these presidents and princes [satraps] assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him,

‘King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents [they lied] of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes [satraps], the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of you, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not.’

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”

• *Daniel 6:4–11*

Daniel is Saved, Darius the Median Praises YHWH

We know what happens. Daniel is finally thrown into the den of lions. After Daniel comes out unscathed, note the two things that Darius did:

“And the king commanded, and [1] they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. [2] Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth [throughout his kingdom which encompassed the earth]; ‘Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree ...’”

• *Daniel 6:24–26*

Remember that Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian King had three events that taught him that YHWH was God of gods. Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, knew better (Daniel 5:21–22) and he was “**found wanting**.” He was soon judged by God (Daniel 5:25–28). Now here is Darius with the den of lions and Daniel was tossed in but he was not harmed (although others were later killed by the same lions). Darius understood that the God of Daniel was indeed most powerful, as Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar learned. Darius goes on to say:

“I make a decree, ‘That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel [YHWH]: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever [Aramaic, *alam*, “for the ages”], and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed [not come to harm], and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He [1] delivers and [2] rescues, and he [3] works signs and [4] wonders in heaven and in earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power [paws] of the lions.’

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

• *Daniel 6:26–28*

All of these Gentile kings in the 6th century BC were learning something that they did not know before. There were not just local gods everywhere as they thought. We find out later that there were angels in charge of the various nations, and some people worshipped these angels, each thinking their ruling angel was God. What they really had to find out is that there is only one God and His name is YHWH.¹

Two hundred years before this event, Isaiah prophesied powerfully in 66 chapters, as we have it in our King James Version, showing that there is one God, but people in the world did not know that. They always looked upon YHWH as a local deity, nothing more than the god of the Israelites and the Jews. At the beginning of this new era of civilization, even the head of gold and his son Belshazzar, and the next successor, Darius, begin to learn (and publicly informed their own people) that the God of gods is YHWH, and He is in charge of all. There are no others. He is the only one.

This information was placed in the consciousness of these kings who established what we call Western civilization, embracing the entirety of the world today. It began in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. People were beginning to understand that there was something very powerful with YHWH, with the God of the Jews. Although His temple in Jerusalem was destroyed because of a judgment against the Jews, He was not disturbed by that event. Nor had He been defeated. No, He was the King of kings, He was the Lord of lords, He was the God of gods, the only God. That was what they were beginning to learn.²

From that time forward in the consciousness of the men who continued to rule through the rest of the Babylonian phase of the image that Daniel interpreted, through the silver portion, through the brass portion, down to the period of the iron and iron mixed with miry clay, people would not understand details of the Almighty God. They would not know what He wanted them to do, but God did plant in their consciousness that there was one God, and they knew better when they worshipped a multiplicity of Gods after this time.

Cyrus the Persian Learns about YHWH

It was soon to be made quite clear that there was only one God. Consider a successor of Darius whose name was Cyrus. Cyrus certainly knew that YHWH was the God of gods and the Lord of lords. He fully understood that fact.

Go to the first verse of the Book of Ezra. After Darius died, Cyrus came to the throne and began to rule in Babylon about 538 BC. Cyrus wanted to respect the God of gods, the true God. Cyrus knew who He was. In the first chapter of Ezra (and you find virtually the same thing in the last three verses of the Book of Second Chronicles) it says:

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah³ [the prophet of Judah] might be fulfilled, YHWH 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, ...”

• ***Ezra 1:1***

¹ These angels were put in charge of the nations after the judgment upon the Sons of God told about in Psalm 82. Although the sentence of doom was pronounced in the time of King David, it was not carried out until in the time of Jeremiah. As I wrote in my article [“Elohim and the Son of God, Part 1”](#):

“Here is the sequence of events: God took away the inheritance from the Sons of God in Psalm 82:8. He did not assign it to Jesus Christ right away. It was not given to him until later, as it says in Hebrews. Who was running things in the meantime? The Prince of Persia, the Prince of Grecia, other angels, the King of Tyre (a cherub). You see this reflected in the pagan writings. The lesser gods did not respond like the older gods did, like the ancient gods did who went away about 600 BC using our timeframe. There is a radical shift in history and religion [beginning] during the time of Jeremiah.” *DWS*

² This vital information about YHWH was written and witnessed to the world throughout the generations, even to our time today, through the Book of Daniel. Of course, you would find few scholars (few even among evangelical Christian or conservative and orthodox Jewish scholars, all of whom love the truth of Scripture) actually take the text seriously enough to believe that the text means what it says, even though YHWH’s recognition by Gentile rulers is repeated over and over in Daniel. *DWS*

³ This is referring to the prophecy in Jeremiah 25:11 regarding the land of Judah being desolate for 70 years. *DWS*

Notice what Cyrus says next. He had enough common sense to realize that YHWH was not a local god. He was something far more powerful. In fact, He was the God of gods and the Lord of lords:

“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘YHWH God of heaven [not just of the Jews] has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he has 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 YHWH God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.’”

• **Ezra 1:2–3**⁴

Who was God? Cyrus knew who He was. He had learned by this time. Some 70 years before, his predecessors would not have known this. To Nebuchadnezzar, to the ancient Assyrians and early Egyptians, the early Elamites, Moab, Ammon, and others, they all considered YHWH as a god, but just a local god of the Israelites.

Now they were learning something far different. Nebuchadnezzar was given those three major miracles involving Daniel and his three friends to convince him that there was only one God. Just before he died Belshazzar was convinced there was only one God. He should have believed what his father Nebuchadnezzar taught him (Daniel 5:22). Darius, after Belshazzar, made a declaration to his empire that YHWH was the only God and there was no other.

Now we find Cyrus saying the same thing. And it says: **“he is the God”** (Ezra 1:3). He is the Elohim. It means there are no others. How did Cyrus learn that? It was because of a prophecy about Cyrus written by Isaiah long before Cyrus was born.

Is this not interesting? You see, from the beginning of the Babylonian phase, the gold phase, and now even to the silver phase, people were receiving in their consciousness the concept that they had not yet realized fully: YHWH was not just in covenant with Israel as a local God, He was the supreme, the Creator. From that time forward people began to recognize this fact.⁵

In fact, there was a prophecy about this Cyrus. No doubt this was shown to him and he realized what it was all about. Going back to the time of Isaiah at the end of chapter 44 we find this prophecy:

“That says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and [he] shall perform all my pleasure’: even saying to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built’; and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’

Thus says YHWH 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 [the gates of Babylon]; and the gates shall not be shut;

I will go before you, and make the crooked places straight [mountains level, for you]:⁶

⁴ The Concordant Version gives further insight and makes even clearer this passage of Ezra 1:1–3:

“In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to conclude the word of Yahweh from the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh aroused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he had a proclamation passed throughout his kingdom, and also in writing, saying,

‘Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia: Yahweh Elohim of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He Himself has committed to me to build for Him a House in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Anyone among you of all His people, may his Elohim be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and let him rebuild the House of Yahweh Elohim of Israel. He is the One, Elohim, Who is in Jerusalem.’” *DWS*

⁵ Remember that several Jews were in powerful positions in the courts of the Gentile kings during the exile from the land of Judah. There was Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Mordecai, Queen Esther, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, among others. *DWS*

⁶ God did the same for King David, as it says in 2 Samuel 7:8–9:

“I took you from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with you whithersoever you went, and [I] have cut off all your enemies out of your sight, and [I] have made you a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.”

I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron [for you]: And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,

[why?] **that you may know that I, YHWH, which call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called you [Cyrus] by your name:**

I have surnamed you, though you have not known me. I am YHWH, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded you, though you have not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am YHWH, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I YHWH do all these things.”

• *Isaiah 44:28–45:7*⁷

Isaiah says that **“from the rising of the sun, and from the west,” all will know who God is.** Over 100 years later here was Cyrus being given a commission and he was a Gentile. It says that he did not know YHWH. He was not reared with the Word of God next to him, but when these prophecies were shown to him and he became ruler over all Persia about 538 BC, the first thing he does is to make a decree that you Jews, and other people also, can go down and build this temple in Jerusalem to YHWH, because He is the God of gods and Lord of lords.

This is what was being slowly and gradually instilled in people’s minds throughout the world: the fact that there was one God. It meant that they should have recognized this information. It did not mean that all people did at first, of course, but they should have been recognizing it — they were told by their Gentile rulers! The information was fully available to them. The marvelous miracles in the Book of Daniel substantiated that YHWH was not simply a local god of the Israelites. That information was given in such glory that anybody who lived in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, of Belshazzar, and then Darius the Median, should have been able to realize who the true God was, and they ought to start worshipping Him.⁸

Do you know something? Most of them did not worship YHWH. They wanted to do it in one way, but they wanted to do it their way, just like the ancient Israelites and Jews during the period of the divided kingdom before their exiles. That is what happened in history since that time. The Old Testament portion of the Bible was completed and canonized by Ezra the priest and the Great Sanhedrin not long after Cyrus let the Jews go down to Jerusalem. The information was in the midst of them, and people still went astray.⁹

What Went Wrong?

Throughout the period of time that will last until the stone comes down out of that mountaintop and hits those 10 toes on the base of that image (Daniel chapter 2), people ought to know who God really is. They should to be able to use His teachings and His ways to perpetuate a proper civilization on this earth. On almost all occasions they have gone wrong.

Some have tried to bring in a one-world universal type of religion, but in almost every case they have misused the biblical revelation to try to bring in their own ways, using the name of the God of gods, calling

[continuing note from previous page]

God will do the same for another King Cyrus in the future. See Dr. Martin’s article [“Iran in Prophecy.”](#) DWS

⁷ Compare the last paragraph of this Isaiah quote with the Ezra 1:2–3 passage. YHWH’s declaration about Himself as Supreme in the prophecy about Cyrus in Isaiah 45:6–7 accurately predicts Cyrus’ written decree and its message about God. DWS

⁸ Soon they will begin to worship Him again, properly recognizing their God. Even the Book of Daniel will come to be widely recognized as being both truthful and as containing messages from God and about God. People will begin to read Daniel, not simply for protection from evil, but so they can learn knowledge about their Creator to teach others: **“... the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And those among the people who are wise shall make many understand ...”** (Daniel 11:32–33 Revised Standard Version). DWS

⁹ See Dr. Martin’s book [Restoring the Original Bible: the Design and Development of the Holy Scriptures](#) (Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 1994/2004). This book can be read complete online. DWS

on His power and His authority to buttress and support their own religious practices, their own philosophies, their own ways of looking at religious teachings (not God's). They have not gone by the way that the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) says we should be going. This whole system will come under judgment because from the beginning of the head of gold, the knowledge of YHWH as the God of gods (and not a local Jewish god) who will introduce a kingdom that will come to earth with the Second Advent of Christ.

After the time of Cyrus, other Persian kings came up, and we have records of some of them in the Bible. King Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther is one example. About 200 years later the Persian Empire extended into Egypt, to the borders of Greece and all the way to India. They absorbed most of what Babylon formerly had controlled, but they became overextended. Then it says in the Bible, in that great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw, after the silver portion, there was to come a brass or copper section. It was going to come from the west as stated in the later prophecy of Daniel 8:5, 21:

“And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. ...

And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.”

• ***Daniel 8:5, 21***

This first king of the brass section was not going to come from India, from China, or from Egypt. It would come from the west. A he-goat with a large horn between his eyes was going to come against the Medes and the Persians (the ram with two horns) and the ram would be broken. This he-goat from the west which would come from Greece, from Macedonia, represented Alexander the Great. God put it into his heart to take over the great Persian Empire with a very small army in about 333 to 332 BC. Alexander the Great became for all intents and purposes the ruler of the central part of the world.

Alexander Learns about YHWH

Alexander the Great followed in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Median, and Cyrus the Persian in the sense that he also came to recognize that the God of gods was none other than YHWH. We have the record of the events in the *Jewish Antiquities* written by Josephus the Jewish historian in Book 11 of that work. Alexander took his army from Macedonia across the Bosphorus Strait into Asia, and he began to conquer throughout Asia Minor (Turkey today). Finally he came down the coast of what we call Canaan. He besieged the city of Tyre which lasted for some time. Then he continued on and came to the city of Jerusalem in 332 BC.

The Jews in Jerusalem at the time were very fearful thinking that Alexander would probably destroy them, the city, as well as the Temple.¹⁰ When they found that he was at the outskirts of the city the high priest put on his white garments and put the mitre on his head according to the laws of Moses. The Jewish leaders agreed among themselves that they would open the gates of Jerusalem and walk out to meet Alexander and have no quarrel with him. This is exactly what happened.

When Alexander approached Jerusalem he looked over the city from the area called Mount Scopus today. From there Alexander was able to see the Temple as well as the entire city before him. The people with Alexander thought that he was going to plunder the city and put the high priest to death.¹¹

¹⁰ The Jewish leaders had this fear because they previously wrote to Alexander respectfully informing him that they intended to honor their oath of allegiance to King Darius. (This Darius of Josephus was different than those mentioned in the Books of Daniel and Ezra.) Alexander was angered by this response (Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:317–325). Like most great conquerors Alexander was a butcher of men. *DWS*

¹¹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:329–330. From the top of Mount Scopus, an extension of the Mount of Olives to the north, you are able to get a full view of the city of Jerusalem. *ELM*

“For when Alexander while still far off saw the multitude in white garments the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the gold plate on it on which was inscribed the name of God [which would have been YHWH, יהוה in Hebrew], he [Alexander] approached alone and prostrated himself before the name and first greeted the high priest.¹² Then all the Jews together greeted Alexander with one voice and surrounded him, but the kings of Syria and others were struck with amazement at his action [his prostration] and supposed that the king’s mind was deranged.

And Parmenion [Alexander’s general and second in command] alone went up to him and asked why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews, whereupon he replied,

‘It was not before him that I prostrated myself, but [before] the God of whom he has the honor to be high priest, for it was he that I saw in my sleep dressed as he is now, when I was at Dium in Macedonia, and, as I was considering with myself how I might become master of Asia [the continent], he urged me not to hesitate but to cross over confidently, for he [God] himself would lead my army and give over to me the empire of the Persians.

Since, therefore, I have beheld no one else in such robes, and on seeing him now I am reminded of the vision and the exhortation, I believe that I have made this expedition under divine guidance and that I shall defeat Darius [the last king of the Persians] and destroy the power of the Persians and succeed in carrying out all the things which I have in mind.’ ...”

• **Josephus, Antiquities 11:329–335**¹³

According to the records Josephus cites, Alexander said that while he was still in Macedonia, even before he took the army to attack the Persians, he had a remarkable vision in a dream. He saw a man come out in special garments followed by many others in white garments. He was told that he was to conquer. The God of this high priest said He would protect him, guide him, and deliver him. Of course, that is exactly what the Book of Daniel said would occur and that he would be victorious. When Alexander arrived at Jerusalem, events seen in his vision occurred in sequence.

We were not back there in 332 BC so we must rely on the written records that Josephus was referencing. Josephus was a Levitical priest of his own nation and an historian. I suspect that the Jews believed that this actually happened some 400 years before Josephus wrote his account. I have no reason for not believing this account to be true, because we know from other sources that Alexander gave favors to the Jews after that time, and he did not destroy the Temple or Jerusalem. In fact Josephus goes on to say that Alexander gave his hand to the high priest and with the Jews running beside him he entered the city of Jerusalem:

“Then he went up to the temple where he sacrificed to God under the direction of the high priest, and showed due honor to the priests and to the high priest himself. And, when the book of Daniel was shown to him, in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he believed himself to be the one indicated; and in his joy he dismissed the multitude ...”

• **Josephus, Antiquities 11:336–337**

It goes on to say that the high priest asked for certain privileges, and Alexander honored all his requests.

This is all in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 11.¹⁴ This is most interesting because Alexander was given a vision by God to show: [1] who God was, and [2] that Alexander was an instrument in God’s hands to overthrow the Persians just as it says in Daniel chapter 8.

¹² Proper protocol is for the less powerful person to greet the greater first, in other words the high priest should have greeted Alexander, but remarkably the Macedonian King greeted the high priest first. DWS

¹³ Marcus translation, Loeb edition, Harvard University Press, 1966. DWS

¹⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* is available online at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/index.htm#aoj>. However, this online translation is the older Whiston translation from the 1700s. DWS

Of course, this fits exactly with the information that Daniel (in chapter 2) told Nebuchadnezzar about the brass portion of the image from his dream. It came to pass precisely. This means that Alexander, besides Nebuchadnezzar, came to understand who the true God was. Not only Belshazzar, not only Darius the Median, and not only Cyrus, but now we find that at the very beginning of his conquest of the world (more or less),¹⁵ Alexander was also shown who God was.

Alexander in Egypt

What happened to Alexander after this? He went to Egypt and conquered that land. Then he did this: Alexander wanted to find out about all the mysteries of all religions of the Egyptians. He had not been there before, so he journeyed to the oasis of Amman, some 100-odd miles into the desert south and west of Memphis (Cairo as we know it today).

He went to the chief temple, and the high priest in charge of that temple allowed Alexander to go through all of the degrees of the mysteries in one day. Normally it would take a supplicant several years to be introduced to the various mysteries. That person had to go through many steps and finally would be told what the mystery religions of the Egyptians were all about. What Alexander discovered was that the Egyptian religion with their gods and goddesses, with Egyptian names, were virtually the same as those he learned about in Macedonia when he was educated by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in Greece. When he came through Asia Minor he was introduced to various religions and deities there.

When he considered the information this Egyptian priest gave to him, he came to the conclusion that all of the deities around the world were really one and the same. He was amazed at this. He had just come from Jerusalem where the vision he had years before in Macedonia was fulfilled in the Jewish capital, and he knew that there must be just one God. He did not know all the ramifications of it, obviously, but what he learned in Egypt was that all the pagan gods were the same.

Alexander decided to bring in a universal world religion devoted to the one God, to combine all these religions together and make one religion. He also said we will have one political entity, and he was going to be in charge of it. Alexander felt he had been ordained of God for all of this. Then do you know what he did? He wrote a letter to his mother in Macedonia, explaining all of these things to her. The high priest down in Egypt did not want him to do that. He said, what if the common people learn that all of the gods we are worshipping really are just one God, or that they are all just one.¹⁶

Another factor revealed in the mysteries was that most of the local gods being worshipped were nothing more than heroes or dead men, people who lived before. But the mysteries also taught there was one true God. The common people were worshipping gods that did not even exist. The Egyptian high priest thought to command Alexander not to send that letter. Alexander replied that he was Alexander and he would do as he pleases. He sent the letter to his mother and sure enough the letter got out. From that time forward people began to realize that the mystery religions of Egypt (which they inherited from other areas of the world and especially Babylon) were nothing more than tom-foolery.

Alexander himself began to more fully realize there was one God, so he tried to bring in a one-world religion, a one-world government. From Egypt, he completed his conquest of the Persian Empire, and went all the way to India to the Indus River. He came back about 10 years later wanting to establish Babylon as

¹⁵ See Philo, "On Cherubim," ¶63 (XIX) about Alexander the Great:

"... for they say that he, when he determined to lay claim to the supreme dominion over Europe and Asia, stood in a suitable place, and looking around him upon every thing, said, 'All things on this side and all things on that side are mine,' ..."

DWS

¹⁶ For the literary references see my article "[The Pagan Immortal Soul and 'Double Doctrine'](#)" about the pagan practice of giving one set of teachings to the general population and a secret, more truthful teaching to the initiated (and usually the wealthy and powerful) believers. For more references see also Dr. Martin's articles "[The Secret of Ancient Religions, Part 1](#)" and "[The Secret of Ancient Religions, Part 2](#)." DWS

the capital of his world empire. Next he wanted to go along North Africa, into Europe, and conquer all of that, bringing in a one-world government under himself as ruler.

After Alexander

Since that time every conqueror has wanted to emulate Alexander the Great. Even the Romans wanted to do that to a certain extent. The Romans of the early Empire in the time of Christ and the apostles knew there was really only one God. They abandoned most of their earlier Republican Roman gods long years before. They had enough sense to understand these things.

Indeed, even the Roman Emperor Nero in 64 AD wanted to move his capital to Jerusalem because he was given teaching by two of his astrologers that out of Jerusalem at this time would come forth a world kingdom. They were going by the biblical revelation, of course. Nero did not move his capital to Jerusalem because the Jewish war began that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. But even people in Rome began to know that there was something about the God of Israel that He was not just a local god. He was something more than that.¹⁷

Some 300 years later the whole of the Roman Empire finally accepted “Christianity,” as we might call it, along with many, many trappings from the pagan world, from Greece, Persia, from ancient Babylon (the head of gold). They also tried one way or another to bring in a world government. That was the philosophy of one-worldism. That was what Nebuchadnezzar tried to do. Alexander wanted to do it. So did the Romans. Even the Roman Emperor Constantine in the 4th century AD wanted to do it. The teaching practically took over all of Europe later. In fact, that is what Mohammad wanted to do in the 7th century AD. To this very day the idea of one-world religion and a one-world political state is in the consciousness of man.¹⁸

How the Concept of One-Worldism Developed

A prime philosophical and religious concept that Babylon bequeathed to the world in the time of Nebuchadnezzar was what we call “Chaldeanism” or “Astrology.” Since the appearance of the heavens are always uniform no matter where one goes on earth, the teachings behind the various heavenly signs also took on uniformity throughout the earth. The names that the Babylonians may have given to the several celestial signs might not have been the same ones in India, China, Egypt, Europe or even the New World, but the heavenly signs were always the same and the teachings associated with them were in many cases uniform. This is what Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar gave to the world, a religion that came from Babylon that all people on earth came to emulate.

Note what Hastings’ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* in its article “[Ages of the World \(Babylonian\)](#)” says on this significant contribution of Babylonian religion to all other religions on earth:

“The Babylonian doctrine, which we find popularized in myths, dramatic and festive customs and games, inquires into the origin of things and the development of the world from its beginnings in chaos to its renewal in future aeons. The doctrine has spread over the whole world. We find it again in Egypt, in the religion of the Avesta, and in India; traces of it are discovered in China, as well as Mexico and among the savage nations of South America ...

Babylonia was, moreover, according to constant tradition, the home of astronomy (‘Chaldean wisdom’), and there the science of the stars formed the basis of all intellectual culture.”

• *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. I, p. 184*

¹⁷ Regarding Roman views about the Jews, their God, and Jerusalem, see Dr. Martin’s article “[The Expectation of Christ’s Second Coming in Apostolic Times.](#)” *DWS*

¹⁸ This same idea of one-worldism is evident in transnational political institutions as the League of Nations, the European Union, and the United Nations, the World Bank, etc. *DWS*

When Nebuchadnezzar came to the realization that there was indeed only one supreme God, he adopted the only concept that made sense to him. He believed that the one God revealed His plan in the star patterns that the Babylonians and Chaldeans could show were always consistent and uniform. Alexander the Great saw the same thing. Thus, the one God that Daniel and his three friends worshipped under the name of YHWH, must have been (to the Gentiles) the same god called Osiris in Egypt, Zeus to the Greeks, Jupiter to the Romans, Baal Shamayim to the Syrians, Marduk (or Merodach) to the Babylonians. This is the one principle concept which brought ONE WORLDISM into effect in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹

Nebuchadnezzar and later Alexander were willing to admit that there was one supreme God, and even that His name was YHWH to the Jews, but these Gentile kings differed from the Jews (and the teaching of the Holy Scriptures) in one way. They identified YHWH with the chief gods of the heathen. And it has been that way ever since. YHWH was not the only God as Isaiah said.²⁰

The Roman Concept in the Time of Christ

The Romans of Christ's day inherited completely the ideas of religion that came from Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great. The very early Roman religious beliefs (with their local and parochial deities) had given way to the "modern" concept of the need for one universal religion and society. Again, the authoritative *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* states in a different article titled "[Caesarism](#)":

"The old Roman religion was practically inoperative in the Imperial time. The worship of Janus, and of some other Latin and Sabine deities, was continued and offered by the State. But the worship of other Roman deities had decayed. As early as the close of the Punic wars [late third and early second centuries BC], there was a tendency on the part of the people to transfer their devotions to the gods of other peoples. The gods of Olympus [in Greece] were identified with the gods of Rome, and the more abstract forms of the Roman deities were made concrete and anthropomorphic by their identification with the more lively gods of Greece. Nor were these identifications limited to the gods of Greece and Rome. From Egypt there came the worship of Isis, and after a long struggle this worship was allowed by the Roman authorities. The worship of Aesculapius and Cybele also had a recognized place and validity."

• *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. III, p. 51*

Indeed, this process went even further. The Romans sought to destroy the religion of any people who maintained their local gods, keeping them peculiar to themselves. Note what the *Encyclopaedia* article says:

"With the fall of the nations [when Rome conquered them] their gods also were held to be subdued. The gods of the besieged city were invited to leave it ere [before] the final assault was made. When the city or the State fell, the gods were dishonoured. They had not been able to defend their followers. This result was modified by the practice which grew up of identifying the gods of the conquered peoples with the gods of Rome. We have seen how this was accomplished in the case of the gods of Greece. Though the names were different, yet it was thought that in principle and essence they were the same. Thus the gods of the peoples with whom Rome was brought in contact came to be regarded as the local forms of the gods known under other names as gods of Rome. This identification was made easier by the fact that the

¹⁹ See Dr. Martin's article "[The Key to Old Testament History](#)" and particularly its companion article "[The Basics of Old Testament History](#)" which discusses how civilizations were broken down in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and a new one was built up from the ruins of the old. DWS

²⁰ Isaiah understood that there were other gods, but compared to YHWH the other gods were as nothing. This concept was understood and put forth later by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthian *ekklesia* in 1 Corinthians 8:5-7:

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge." DWS

gods of Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt were known to the Romans under the names already given to them in Greece.”

- [“Caesarism,”](#) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. III, p. 53*²¹

This means that by the time of Christ the whole world was beginning to work toward a type of universal religious belief. And because of the moral and ethical values taught by the Holy Scriptures (and certain prophecies that were seemingly coming to pass), it was becoming common in certain areas of the Gentile world to recognize **“the God of the Jews”** (Romans 3:29) as the only God. With the canonization of the Old (and then the New) Testament, the people were provided with some divine literature that made sense.

When it became evident that Christ had actually been resurrected from the dead (and the proofs of this were abundant), the whole of the Gentile world within Western Civilization began to see the efficacy of the teachings of the apostles.²² This is why in the 4th century AD, the whole of the Roman world officially adopted the Christian religion (or at least the authority of the apostles) as being the one universal religion that should govern the entirety of the world. Thus, the Catholic Church came into existence. The word “Catholic” itself means “Universal.”

Emperor Constantine of Rome

What Constantine the emperor did in the 4th century AD was to force the Catholic religion upon all his subjects within the Empire of Rome. Masses of peoples (with their various religious beliefs) supposedly became “Christians.” What was attempted was a blending together of all the religions within the Empire under the banner of “Christianity.” This is what Nebuchadnezzar tried to do, and he failed. This is what Alexander the Great tried to do, and he failed. But when Constantine became head of the Roman Empire, he did what all others were unable to accomplish. Although the people came to recognize (as did Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander) that **“the God of the Jews”** was indeed the true God, they nonetheless blended local religious customs and doctrines of the various nations within the imperial jurisdiction into a “Catholic” or “Universal” belief. From that time forward, all governments within what we call Western Civilization, or societies in close geographical contact with what we call “Christendom” today, have tried to bring in a universal type of world religion.

Even when Mohammed came on the scene in the 7th century AD (at the decay of the Byzantine Empire in the east), he tried to bring in a final world religion that would bring all peoples together into a harmony and unity under the one God. Since the time of Mohammed the world has seen numerous leaders come and go who attempted in their ways to bring in a one world government and religious belief. All of them have failed!

But the time is soon coming (and it is not very far on the horizon in front of us), when the goal of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Augustus, Constantine, Mohammed, Napoleon, and even Adolph Hitler will finally be achieved. This one world government is prophesied to occur just prior to the second advent of Christ Jesus back to this earth. There is coming on the earth a man called in the Book of Revelation, **“the Beast”**

²¹ The text of Hastings goes on, vol. III, p. 53:

“Julius Caesar and Tacitus illustrate this process, for they thought they recognized the Gallic and Teutonic deities as other forms of Mercury, Jupiter, Mars, and Minerva. Thus there was established a sort of identity between the gods of the victors and those of the vanquished; and the latter received a place within the pantheon of Rome ...

Still this process did not lead to satisfactory results. There was needed a universal religion for the Empire. This was pressed on the governing minds [the ruling class] of the Empire from many points of view. ...

But the need for a common religion for the Empire became more obvious to the ruling class. In fact, such a need was apparent to many empires before the problem became a practical one to the rulers of Rome. It was the main motive of Antiochus Epiphanes in his persecution of the Jews. It was also a spur to action and a leading force in the active process of Hellenization carried on by the successors of Alexander.” DWS

²² See Dr. Martin’s article [“Proof of the Resurrection.”](#) DWS

(Revelation chapter 13). He also has other names like **“the Man of Sin,”** and **“the Son of Perdition”** (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and **“the Antichrist”** (1 John 2:18, 22). This government will be the last attempt of the Babylonian system (the last part of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw) to bring in a one world kingdom and religion. It will finally succeed.

What may be surprising is the fact that the Father (YHWH Himself) will allow this last world kingdom to proclaim that YHWH Himself and His Son Christ Jesus should be the ones worshipped. That’s right! YHWH and Christ will be required to be worshipped at that time, but note this, **NOT IN THE RIGHT WAY.** What we find the prophecies telling us is that this final Babylonian ruler, called the Antichrist, will come in the name of YHWH and Christ. The man will claim to be God Himself sitting in the temple of God at Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4), yet he will be energized by Satan himself. He will be the “Antichrist” which primarily means “instead of,” a term which signifies that he will come to take the place of Christ, even calling himself the deity (2 Thessalonians 2:14), and claim to be the true Christ returned from heaven to earth.²³

Just because someone uses the true names of the Father (or says he comes in His authority) does not necessarily mean that the person is truthful. The apostle John told us: **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try [test] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (1 John 4:1). Christ Himself said:

“Not every one that says unto me, ‘Lord, Lord [even YHWH, YHWH],’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord [YHWH, YHWH], have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.”

• **Matthew 7:21–23**

The truth is, the name of the Father and His Son are powerful and many evil forces will begin to use these names (and the authority that those names have) to lead people astray.²⁴ This will especially be the case in the next few years because all people on earth are soon going to realize that the one God, YHWH, will send His Son back to this earth in glory and power. Just before He arrives, the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Constantine and others will be fulfilled.

A world kingdom will arrive on this earth which will last for 3½ years (Revelation chapter 13) and the man who heads it (his number is 666), will claim to be no less than Christ Jesus returned to earth. So clever will this counterfeit be, as I stated before, that even the apostles, if they did not know better, would accept it as the truth (Matthew 24:24).

For the present, there is one principle that must be taken into account to separate the false apostles and ministers (who speak in the name of the Father and Christ) from those who have the Holy Spirit directing their lives. It is simple. If anyone uses the teachings of the Holy Scripture, and the authority of the Father and Christ, to make slaves out of anyone (that is to say, he or she is a “go-between” for you to obtain access to God), you can know that person is false. This is exactly what leaders over the centuries have tried to do. There is, however, only one mediator between you and the Father. That person is Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

No minister, priest, prophet, or teacher has the right to be any type of mediator for any of us. Ernest L. Martin (or anyone else) is no one’s mediator to reach the Father — only Christ Himself can fulfill that role.

²³ Recall that Satan will be expelled from heaven just before the return of the true Christ. He will come to earth to deceive almost all in the earth that he is the Christ returning from heaven. So clever will be his subterfuge that Christ told His own apostles that the system established on earth by this false Christ will look so good on the surface that even His apostles might want to believe in its truthfulness — if they did not know better (Matthew 24:24). *ELM*

²⁴ I have come to believe that this general knowledge about God will likely include a general acceptance of universal salvation, although unbiblical teachings will mix with the biblical teaching to make a poisonous doctrine. *DWS*

If anyone says he or she is directed by God to rule over you, you can rest assured such a person is following in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet this is precisely what the Antichrist will do in the years just ahead of us. All the apostles we need are those who left their writings in the Holy Bible. No one needs any others.

What Comes Next?

What will happen in the next few years in advance of us? Read Revelation chapter 13. It says that man-kind will achieve what they have long wanted, a one-world government. They have wanted one political system on this earth, one type of philosophical system, and certainly one religion. Do you know the religion they want? Since Nebuchadnezzar learned who YHWH was, since Belshazzar learned it, since Cyrus knew of it, since even Alexander the Great knew of it, since certainly Nero knew many of these things, and Constantine in the 4th century knew who God was, they began to adopt their systems to bring in their type of government that was counter to what the Word of God says.

The world government of the Antichrist will last for 3½ years. This will occur just before the true Messiah comes back to the world, when that true Stone of Daniel 2:34–35, 45 comes down out the mountain slope and hits the base of that image on its 10 toes. We are still within that image period to this very day. Something else is also in our midst. Most people in the world, certainly in Western civilization, have learned — just like Nebuchadnezzar and the others learned — that the God of gods is none other than YHWH Himself, though they do not use His name any more.

They know who He is. They know that Jerusalem will be the headquarters of a world kingdom to happen in the future. That is why Mystery Babylon will be centered in Jerusalem in a few years ahead of us. It will look so much like the biblical teaching of the beginning of the Millennium that even the apostles, if they did not know better, would accept it. We must be very careful on all of these things.

Just because people use the Bible, just because people use God's name, just because they view those things correctly (even Nebuchadnezzar did that), we have to be careful because Christ Jesus even said that **"... many will come in my name, saying I am the Christ [the Messiah] and shall deceive many"** (Matthew 24:5). He will say to them as He will say to others: **"I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity"** (Matthew 7:22–23).

We have to be careful. I am not casting stones against anyone specifically, because let me tell you, Ernest Martin has been as much in Babylon as anybody. I want to come out of this whole system if possible. We are growing in grace and knowledge. That is what all of us should want to do. One of these days after Christ Jesus comes back, we will see just how much we do not understand. Believe this.

But if our hearts are right, if we have God's Holy Spirit, if He is directing us as best as possible, and we come into a period when knowledge is being increased, then we will use that knowledge properly and in a profitable way, not to control people to make slaves out of them, like individuals today who raise up church denominations and want to become apostles or want to become a great leader. They misuse or abuse the Holy Scripture. That is what Nebuchadnezzar did with what God revealed to him. That is also what Belshazzar did and what Alexander the Great did. That is what Constantine the Great did. We should not want to do that.

We should let Christ Jesus be the one to rule us and in us. If we do that we will be able to understand that this Babylonian system of Western civilization will be supplanted by something better in the next few years ahead of us. When that time comes this world will finally understand that YHWH and His ways are the best for all peoples.²⁵

Ernest L. Martin, 1986, 1995
Edited by David Sielaff, April 2011

²⁵ See my Commentary for October 24, 2004, "[Big News in Science](#)" which lists passages that may relate to the world acknowledging God before Christ's return. *DWS*