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The Key to Old Testament History

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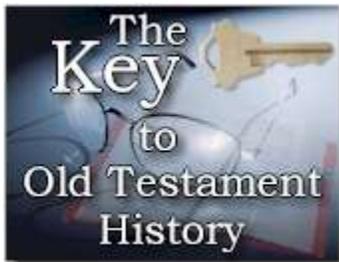
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The key to Old Testament history is a prime factor in the comprehension of prophecy. Indeed, all Bible prophecy has as its foundation a proper understanding of Old Testament history. Confusion exists today over Old Testament history. Most preachers and even theologians are unaware of the significance of this subject, and it needs to be rectified. In fact, the central key for even doctrinal truths in Scripture is solidly anchored to the interpretation of scriptural history.¹

I want to give that key before we even investigate the history of the Old Testament and the proper interpretation of it. Many overlook this matter today, and yet it is there in the Holy Scripture as plain as it could be. Primarily in one prophecy we will find the key to the whole matter, substantiated by another prophet who gives the same thing in a different language. They lived at the same time.

Once we understand what they say, and believe what they say, then we will be able to realize what the Old Testament is all about. As a result, we will also be able to comprehend better what the New Testament message is about. That message involves us today. It involves prophecy for our day, just on the horizon in front of us. This principle must be understood, or we will never understand what the Old Testament Scripture is all about or what the New Testament, which is based upon the Old, is all about.

The Bible is the key to understanding all history. It makes no difference if the history is that of Palestine, which the Bible is primarily concerned with, or the history of Egypt on the flank of Palestine and formerly a

¹ There can be no doubt, the study and understanding of history is essential for the comprehension of doctrine. Doctrine itself is history. Christ Jesus was an historical personality, and His message cannot be understood without a realization of the history in which it was given. *ELM*

powerful riverine civilization in the past. We can go “**between the rivers**” in Mesopotamia where we find Babylon and Assyria. Those two kingdoms came into prominence about the 9th century BC and existed down to the time of the Babylonian captivity of the people of the Kingdom of Judah. Those nations can be better understood when we let the Bible be the guide to understanding what happened in the Near East at that time.

Before the 9th Century BC

When you go back before the 9th century BC, you absolutely need the Bible or you will be in serious trouble trying to understand what was happening in the time of King Solomon, and just before that with his father David, or what was happening in Egypt or Assyria, or places in the north in Asia Minor. You can extend the influence of biblical events even to Greece and the eastern Mediterranean.

The Bible has significant relevance even later to the times before the 6th century BC because something happened that makes all of history prior to that time very problematic as far as secular historical interpretation is concerned. However, we can understand events back to the 9th century adequately as far as Mesopotamia is concerned, and somewhat in Egypt as well because we have a great number of records which have come down from those countries.² Scripture must inform those records as well.

We need a complete reexamination of what is important in the comprehension of history prior to the 6th century BC. If you go back before the time of Saul and David into that great dark age period that we call the time of the Judges, and then back on into the time of Joshua, the time of the Exodus and Moses, and then to what was happening in Egypt in that glorious period of time, then further back to the time of the Patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even back to the flood, you can generally pick up what was going on very well indeed if you will stay with the biblical revelation.

Major Prophets of the 6th Century BC

Yet to understand that time before the 9th century and even before the 6th century BC there is an essential key that has been stated in Scripture plainly by two major prophets. One of them was Jeremiah. The other was Daniel. They were contemporaneous with one another. Jeremiah was older and died before Daniel, but their lives overlapped. Their prophecies are most important both as to chronological and geographical prophecies to pin together other prophecies of the Old Testament about

- [1] what was happening at that time,
- [2] what was going to happen on their time horizon, and
- [3] what will happen in the remote future to our time today.

Jeremiah and Daniel provide not only an historical basis but a chronological one as well. This was done by God so you and I can begin to realize and recognize what the New Testament prophecies given by Christ and His apostles are all about — and particularly those prophecies given by the apostle John in the Book of Revelation.

In fact, the Book of Revelation cannot be understood apart from the Book of Daniel. It is impossible. The basis of Revelation is Daniel. Daniel lived at a crucial time in world history. He lived at a time when a great era ended in his generation (the same generation of Jeremiah and the prophet Ezekiel). The 6th century BC was a time of profound change taking place in the Western or Near East civilization today.

While the Bible has the keys to everything, secular histories (if you appraise them properly as some his-

² We would like to have more records and there are many records still in the mounds of the Middle East. There are well over 25,000 mounds or “tells” as they are called in the Arabic, artificial mounds where there were once cities. You can include about 3,000 in Greece. We cannot get into most of those mounds to find out what is there. Of the records that have been discovered already, you will need the Bible as the central truth, the standard for interpretation of what was happening in the Middle East before the 6th century BC, and particularly before the 9th century BC or you will be in confusion, and confusion is what the scholarly world is in today. *ELM*

torians have done) make known the importance of what occurred during that period of history. They come to the same conclusion that Jeremiah and Daniel came to, but the two biblical prophets give us inspired prophetic indicators. What Jeremiah said would happen in his lifetime was true, and what he said would occur later in the future will occur precisely. The same goes for the prophecies of Daniel given a bit later.³

The prophecies announced to the world at that time was that a new age was soon to emerge on earth. The history of the earth was almost embryonic in one way of looking at it, before the emergence of what you and I today call Western civilization. This civilization exists today in all areas of the world, and it is being emulated through the advances in Western civilization. This means not only technical and scientific advances, but advances of a psychological, social, and religious nature. Western civilization is the key civilization to help us understand the development of societies in India, China, throughout Europe, and even into the New World. Here in the United States or in Central and South America, we are nothing more than offshoots of European or Western civilization that has spread around the world.

Western civilization is indicated in the biblical revelation. YHWH has His hand in this. He is very much in charge of history. James, the half-brother of Jesus, said that **“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world”** (Acts 15:18, **“world”** in Greek is *eon* meaning “age”). From the beginning God knows it all. He knows exactly what is occurring now, and He knew it **“from the beginning of the world [eon].”** Anyone with common sense should realize that YHWH Himself, through His Son, ought to be able to know what will happen in history (the Son made the “eons,” Hebrews 1:2). Nothing surprises them in history. God is Elohim. He is El Shaddai, the Almighty One. He knows everything, in knowledge and in power, and He can perceive anything at any time.

That is why God calls certain prophets at particular times to give information on these subjects. We should pay attention first to the prophets and then to the evaluations of historians, even if they do not appreciate the scriptural revelation. Some do not believe in Christ Jesus or that He is the true axis of history. Yet they must accept what the biblical revelation says occurred in the 6th century BC leading directly to Christ Jesus and His Second Coming.

Jesus came right on time, right on schedule, to the very day. One day we will understand this. When YHWH begins to work, He works right on time. When we comprehend all of the calendrical matters of the past, which we will do as time goes on, you will see that Christ Jesus came into the world exactly on time. He was crucified on a tree on the Mount of Olives right on schedule, He was resurrected from the dead right on schedule, and He was presented before the Father in heaven, YHWH Himself, on schedule.

He will return right on schedule also. Though He says that there will be a short work at the end of the age, and He will cut short certain things; the things He will cut short are the tribulations, the trials, and the troubles. He will not cut short His time schedule. It has already been planned, and there is no question in my mind that it will occur. What we have to know is the history of these matters.

Prophecy is history in advance; but to understand what that history is for the future; we must know the foundation on which those prophecies are established. Once we do, we will truly appreciate what will happen in the years ahead. We also must realize that the geographical center of prophecy is the Middle East, and particularly in Israel, and most specifically Jerusalem.⁴ God is very much in history, and doctrine is history. All the teachings of Christ and the apostles can be understood only through the historical scenario.

The events of the 6th century BC give us the key to understand the whole of Old Testament history and the periods of time before that. By the 6th century the history of the world had gone on for about 3,500 years. You cannot appreciate what happened before that time unless you know what occurred in the 6th century BC.

³ One historian was Karl Jaspers, a German philosopher and historian who died in 1969. He wrote [*The Origin and Goal of History*](#) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953). See Dr. Martin’s comments on Jaspers’ book in [“Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization.”](#) Jaspers correctly showed that events beginning in the 6th century BC and continuing over centuries, changed the course of history. Jaspers did not believe the Scriptures were inspired by God, nor did he believe in Christianity. *ELM / DWS*

⁴ See [“The Geopolitics of Israel, Ancient and Modern,”](#) in an excellent 2008 article by Dr. George Friedman explains the influence that the geography of Israel has to its political relationships of surrounding peoples, kingdoms, and empires. *DWS*

The type of mentality — spiritual, social, and political — that predominates in the world today had its origin in the period of the 6th century BC, as God told the people at that time, even before He made the change from one system to another. He told His prophets what would happen, and He told one prophet in particular to carry this commission out fully to all the rulers of the world. The prophet Jeremiah fulfilled that commission precisely as YHWH instructed him to do. The prophet Daniel followed and relied on the writings of Jeremiah.⁵

Jeremiah the Prophet

Jeremiah was commissioned as a young man. Tradition says he was about age 17 years old when he was called by YHWH to take a message to the kings of Judah. Jeremiah was an Aaronic priest, born in a village called Anathoth (Jeremiah 1:1), north and east of Jerusalem about 4 miles. He knew Jerusalem very well indeed; being a priest he had access to the Temple. Anyone with common sense would have believed Jeremiah and his teachings. Some Kings of Judah relied upon him, others did not. That was when they got in trouble.

Jeremiah brought to a conclusion one age (called an *olam*, or an eon) and introduced a new age. Back then the whole mental activity and appreciation, the psychological understanding of things, and the religious concepts of the old age were vastly different than you and I are familiar with today. Look carefully at the prime commission given to Jeremiah to understand why we do not know much of history prior to Jeremiah, and why we now have a civilization that differs fundamentally from before Jeremiah. God picked this prophet to introduce a new world civilization, not just in Palestine, but a civilization that embraced the entire world.

Jeremiah's commission went from the latter part of the 7th century BC into the early 6th century (from the late 600s BC to the early and middle 500s BC).⁶ The prophets Ezekiel and Daniel came a bit later, but the one who introduced this change, talked about it, and was given the commission by YHWH Himself to bring about the change was Jeremiah, priest, and prophet. He had the authority of the Father and of Christ Jesus (before He became Christ) supporting him on earth. YHWH worked through and guided the teachings of Jeremiah (along with Daniel) to show this change in civilization. In fact, some terminology in the New Testament can be understood only if you recognize what was going on in the time of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. Jeremiah tells us when he was given his commission to carry this message to the kings of Judea and to all the Jews:

“Then the word of YHWH came unto me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations.’”

• *Jeremiah 1:4–5*

Notice the first thing: Jeremiah had a prehistory as far as the commission was concerned even before he was conceived in the womb. Few people have been called to specific commissions even before they were born. Jeremiah did not have perfection, but he did have a commission given to him before he was formed in the womb. Jeremiah objected to his commission:

“Then said I, ‘Ah, Lord YHWH! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.’ But YHWH said unto me, ‘Say not, I am a child: for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you,’ says YHWH.’

Then YHWH put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And YHWH said unto me, ‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.’”

• *Jeremiah 1:6–9*

⁵ Daniel mentions this in the 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel. Daniel himself received majestic teachings from dreams and visions that helped further establish Western civilization into which the Christ, the Messiah, came a bit over 500 years later. *ELM*

⁶ **Editor's note on BC and AD centuries:** Recall how ancient centuries are designated: the 7th century BC includes the years from 699 BC to 600 BC; the 6th century BC includes the years from 599 to 500 BC; the 5th century BC includes the years from 499 to 400 BC, and so on. The 1st century BC includes the years from 99 to 1 BC. Therefore, “late 1st century BC” would be the years from about 25 to 1 BC (there is no year “0”). Christ's birth in 3 BC would be within the “late 1st century BC” period. The 1st century AD would encompass the years from 1 to 99 AD. *DWS*

Verse 10 tells us the words YHWH put into Jeremiah's mouth. YHWH accomplished His will through Jeremiah, though he was a human, though he had problems, and though at times (in the 15th chapter) he had great doubts, but he came right back in faith, and he carried on to the end. He was successful. Daniel knew Jeremiah was successful. Everyone at the time knew that Jeremiah was successful.

Here is what God told Jeremiah to do and it is most important for us to recognize it: **"See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms ..."** (Jeremiah 1:10). Notice that he did not just say Judah. He did not just say Israel, which had already been taken captive by the Assyrians about 100 years before. He did not just say **"to the Jews,"** or **"to the Israelites."** He said, **"over the kingdoms."** That meant all the nations, all the kingdoms on earth back at that time. It applies in a typical sense to all nations on earth today.

Jeremiah's Commission: To Tear Down, and Build Up

Jeremiah is a universal or an international prophet. He is one who was given a commission over all nations on the earth, and YHWH was going to start to do something. It was going to be outstanding. Even historians today can see how powerful and how successful YHWH was in what He was doing through His prophet Jeremiah. God gave Jeremiah words into his mouth to speak.

Jeremiah 1:10	Description
<p>"See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to root out, and • to pull down, and • to destroy, and • to throw down, <p>[1] to build, and [2] to plant."</p>	<p>Jeremiah would initiate changes to social, political, and religious systems that had developed in the world up to that time.</p> <p>There were four things that Jeremiah would do in a negative sense. The changes began with destruction.</p> <p>Jeremiah would do two things that were positive</p>

Jeremiah not only announced the destruction of the kingdoms, nations, and civilizations of the past, but he was also **"to build, and to plant"** new ones. That meant he was to take what was left, the remnant of the people of the nations at that time and he was going to build and plant new kingdoms and nations. This began at the end of the 7th century BC, somewhere around 629 BC when Jeremiah was 17 years old. Jeremiah lived at least 10 years (maybe longer) after the destruction of Jerusalem and Temple in 586 BC [traditional dating].

"Moreover the word of YHWH came unto me, saying, 'Jeremiah, what see you?' And I said, 'I see a rod of an almond tree.'⁷ Then said YHWH unto me, 'You have well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.'"

• *Jeremiah 1:11–12*

That means it is certain because life is dependent upon it. **"Then said YHWH unto me, 'You have well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it'"** (Jeremiah 1:12). It will not wait 1,000 years, or to our time almost 2,600 years later to be fulfilled (though there are typical revelations here that will occur in the future). As far as tearing down the nations and kingdoms, and building and planting, it was completed in Jeremiah's lifetime.

Jeremiah Chapter 25

The 25th chapter of Jeremiah was given some time later as far as the prophecy was concerned. Here you begin to see the commission put into action. This comes down to about 603 BC, or 25 to 26 years after Jere-

⁷ The almond tree is a significant tree of prophecy and of symbolism. Aaron's rod came from the almond tree (Numbers 17:8). It was a symbol of the power of YHWH, that Moses and Aaron used. The Menorah, the 7 branched lampstand in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and later of the Temple, was also made in the form of an almond tree. The almond tree is no doubt the symbol of the tree of life. That is why YHWH says to Jeremiah that this symbol of his commission be the almond tree. *ELM*

miah was commissioned.

“Therefore thus says YHWH of hosts;

‘Because you [the kings and people of Judah] have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says YHWH, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them [1] against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and [2] against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations [desolate for a long time in the future].”

• **Jeremiah 25:8**

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, is called **“my servant.”** He was a servant for judgment. YHWH Himself, the Father, called Nebuchadnezzar to do a job for Him, to wipe out and destroy the nation of Judah along with nearby nations:

“Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle [lampstand]. And [1] this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and [2] these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

• **Jeremiah 25:10–11**

This prophecy took place in the 6th century BC, but we need to understand the overall history of the time to understand how that is best interpreted. I am willing to look into Gentile history to comprehend what was going on, but we must use as a basis what YHWH Himself said was going to happen. You and I who have the spirit of God in us, which motivated Christ Jesus and the apostles, and I hope we would appreciate the Word of God first, and then go interpret history in the Gentile nations round about.

“And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, says YHWH, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual [eonian, age-lasting] desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.”

• **Jeremiah 25:12**

Notice the phrase **“all the nations.”** YHWH is backing up what Jeremiah said. He said, **“I will touch your mouth,”** meaning I will give you words to speak; do not be afraid of their faces; tell them what I want you to tell them. Be prepared for persecution (YHWH said elsewhere in other places), but you, Jeremiah, will do what I tell you because judgment is coming upon these nations:

“For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them [of the Babylonians] also: and I will recompense [repay] them [1] according to their deeds, and [2] according to the works of their own hands.”

• **Jeremiah 25:14**

Judgment Upon the Nations

These verses introduce a series of judgments upon the nations of the world starting in Jeremiah 25:15. The judgments of the 6th century BC began geographically with Judea. They were God’s people, the people in covenant relationship with Him until He divorced them a few years after this event. YHWH punished them by destroying the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The Jews were exiled to Babylon as Jeremiah prophesied. In verse 15 the judgments begin. Remember, Jeremiah was a prophet to all nations of the world.

“For thus says YHWH God of Israel unto me; ‘Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.’”

• **Jeremiah 25:15**

They shall drink, although they will not want to do so. They will drink because judgment shall come upon all

nations to whom Jeremiah was to be sent. How many nations was Jeremiah sent to? It is all in the 25th chapter of Jeremiah.

“And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at YHWH’s hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom YHWH had sent me: To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse; as it is this day.”

• **Jeremiah 25:16–18**

The phrase **“as it is this day”** was inserted much later when the Old Testament was canonized. God deals with Jerusalem, with Judea, His own people first. But He does not stop there. Jeremiah was sent to all the nations of the world. The next nation to be judged has the same judgment prophesied to them:

Jeremiah 25:19–26	Geographic Comments
“Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;	all the territories of Egypt, north and south
and all the kings of the land of the Philistines,	southwest Palestine
and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,	also Philistine cities
Edom,	southeast of Jerusalem
and Moab,	east of Jerusalem across the Dead Sea
and the children of Ammon,	east and a bit north of Jerusalem ⁸
And all the kings of Tyre,	a Phoenician city north on the coast
and all the kings of Sidon,	Phoenician sister city of Tyre
and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,	the Phoenician colonies in the Western Mediterranean
Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, And all the kings of Arabia,	the Arabian Peninsula to the Euphrates River in the north.
all the kings of the mingled people	the dark, mixed people in the Arabian Peninsula
that dwell in the desert,	in the Arabian Peninsula to the Euphrates, all will have judgment.
And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam,	beyond the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, to the east; Elam is an old name for Persia.
and all the kings of the Medes,	North of Elam, to the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea.
And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another,	all north of the Caucasus Mountains

⁸ Edom, Moab, and Ammon were nations descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham. They were also going to be judged. Since that time no one has heard of a Moabite or an Ammonite kingdom because they were uprooted. *ELM*

and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth:	Jeremiah's judgment embraced all nations, even those not mentioned.
and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them."	Last is Sheshach, which is Babylon

Jeremiah sent epistles (letters) to them. It does not mean he went to each nation or kingdom. He did not have to go personally. All he had to do was to tell them through emissaries, and the message got to the nations. Since Jeremiah's time there has never been a nation of Elam that you can identify. Nations have followed in the footsteps of Elam (Iran today), but that nation, that society back there, civil, military, social, and religious, perished at that time. All **"upon the face of the earth"** did not just mean all nations in the Middle East. It meant all nations on earth would come under a judgment of YHWH. One period of civilization was to cease, to be torn down, uprooted, destroyed. Another civilization was to rise in its place.

To Build and to Plant

Jeremiah prophesied not to destroy only, but also to build and plant. That is why what followed Jeremiah was to be very different than what went on before, and why he becomes an axial prophet. In his time a fundamental change took place in the history of this world. Finally:

"And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them."

• ***Jeremiah 25:26***

Sheshach will be the last to drink. Sheshach is a cipher for Babylon.⁹ After all the others are destroyed, then Babylon will be destroyed.

A few decades after this prophecy was given the Babylonian empire was taken over by the Persians and Medes under King Cyrus. Two hundred and some odd years later Persia was conquered by the Hellenic peoples under Alexander the Great. Then deterioration began to set into the city of Babylon. By the time of Christ hardly anything was left of the city. The Babylonian political system had infiltrated all of the other civilizations of the world, even in the Indus Valley, in China, and even in the New World.

Babylon itself went down but did not completely disappear. Jeremiah was told more by YHWH:

"Therefore you shall say unto them,

'Thus says YHWH of hosts, the Elohim of Israel; Drink you, and be drunken, and spue [vomit], and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.'

And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at your hand to drink, then shall you say unto them,

'Thus says YHWH of hosts; You shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth' says YHWH of hosts."

• ***Jeremiah 25:27-29***

There was to be major destruction. Not everyone would perish, but there were to be great political disturbances and revolutions. Many people would be slain. There was to be a change of attitude, a change of civilizations. Daniel later would take up the mantle of Jeremiah and show what would result from this great revolution, the great change of civilization. He would take the prophecies down to the time of Messiah, the Prince of Israel, who would come on the scene, and inaugurate the great messianic kingdom that would arrive on earth. He has not come yet. We are still in the same system that developed in the 6th century BC.

Our system is not part of the 9th century BC when the Assyria was in power, the ancient Egyptians before then, back to the old Elamite kings before that, or the Hittite kingdoms of Asia Minor. Our civilization is not

⁹ ["Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization"](#) gives details on how to decode and identify the term "Sheshach." DWS

part of any of that. A complete change, a new age came on the scene with Jeremiah (substantiated by Daniel):

“Therefore prophesy you against them all these words, and say unto them,

‘YHWH shall roar from on high ... against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for YHWH has a controversy with the nations [all of them], he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword,’ says YHWH.

Thus says YHWH of hosts,

‘Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts [boundaries] of the earth. And the slain of YHWH shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

Howl, you shepherds [leaders of God’s people], and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, you principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions [scatterings] are accomplished; and you shall fall like a pleasant [valued] vessel.’”

• Jeremiah 25:30–34

The nations shall be broken up, but the last nation to drink of YHWH’s cup is Sheshach or Babylon (Jeremiah 25:26). Babylon will finally be destroyed as the last of the nations to be punished some 2500+ years later. All the others were to receive their punishment soon after Jeremiah said his prophecies. Sheshach, that is Babylon, **“shall drink after them,”** as the last to drink of the winecup of the fury of YHWH.

That full prophecy against Babylon has not yet happened. We are still in the civilization which emanated from Babylon — not from Assyria 100 years earlier, or Egypt 300 or 1,000 years earlier, or the Hittite countries, or the Elamite countries, or the Moabite countries, or Ammon, or any of them. All were important nations before the 6th century BC.

There are great prophecies of Isaiah about Moab (east of the River Jordan from Israel) as in the 16th chapter of Isaiah. You find the same thing in Jeremiah how the nation of Moab and the children of Ammon, the children of Lot, were all to end at that time. You find the same thing in Ezekiel. You very seldom hear a mention of those kingdoms in a later time after the 6th century BC, and certainly not in a political sense.¹⁰ The people were dispersed exactly as it says in Jeremiah chapter 25. The nation of Elam was a great and powerful nation before the 6th century BC, but it disappeared from history.

These nations will come back at the end of the age we are living in at the present time. Other prophecies show that. That is why we must be careful and understand what happened at this axial period when a new epoch, a new age, was being introduced. The system brought in by YHWH Himself was to be made up primarily of Gentile nations which would control this world until the Messiah would come. Even the Jews, the Israelites, the people of YHWH Himself would be subject to this new national, social, and religious environment which was counter to YHWH Himself. He said it would be that way.

Why would YHWH bring in a Babylonian system as He did in the 6th century BC? God knows exactly what He is doing. Because Israel and Judah refused to obey Him and went into rebellion against Him, He sent and gave to them a bill of divorcement. He even forbade them to use His holy name. From that time forward the Israelites have never used the name of YHWH in public. They are not allowed to use it because they are not married to him any longer. They will marry Him again when the great Prince of Israel comes back, and the messianic kingdom is finally established on earth. You see, at the time of Jeremiah even Israel was cut off from God. [See Dr. Martin’s article “[The Divine Names and the New Testament](#).” DWS]

In the time of the apostle Paul a new revelation that had never been made known before, called the Mystery, was first introduced in 63 AD, but you cannot find anything about it in the Old Testament, not even in this axial period when Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel lived. The Mystery was a new revelation as we find

¹⁰ You will have geographical identifications of the nations once there, because the Kingdom of Jordan at the present time has its capital of Amman in the old territory of the Ammonites. But you cannot say that the Ammonite kingdom continued to exist after the 6th century BC. *ELM*

in the books of Ephesians, Colossians, and in subsequent books written after that time. The Mystery is what we as believers are under at the present time.¹¹

All the world, believe it or not, is under a different type of a system from us believers, the gentile system that began a short time after Jeremiah. YHWH meant for it to happen. He said it would happen and it has in fact developed. Historians from a secular point of view have seen these changes take place beginning in the 6th century BC. Our Western civilization which predominates in a technical and political sense over all nations, had its origin in the commission given to Jeremiah. Remember, Jeremiah 25:34 says all nations were to be destroyed, politically disturbed by revolution and by death at that time, and were to be dispersed, just like the time of the Tower of Babel.

When Jews left Babylon they not only went back to Judea, but some took many of the Babylonian teachings with them to China, India, and places like that. There they developed indigenous religious beliefs based on the teachings of Babylon when the world came to a kind of ecumenical belief. The knowledge emanating from Babylon spread out through all North Africa, into Europe, into the Indus Valley, into China.

Even as late as the Reformation the Babylonian influence was noted. Marco Polo for example, some 800 years ago, went into China with Catholic missionaries and they were amazed to find some of the same things that people were worshipping in Western Europe being worshipped in China. There were statues that looked like the Madonna and things of that nature, though they had a Chinese motif to them. Obviously, many types of indigenous beliefs had combined and come on the scene by that time; many philosophies had developed. But most of the religious and philosophical beliefs that dominate the world today (and they have dominated it for the past 2,600 years) came right out of this foundational period of the 6th century BC.

The Prophet Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Great Image

Jeremiah had a companion prophet who followed him. YHWH was not to leave the world or His people Israel without knowledge of what was to happen. God gave dreams to Nebuchadnezzar and others. He put a prophet in their midst to interpret these dreams and Daniel himself received visions. Daniel was given great ability to interpret what was to happen in the years following this 6th century axial period.

Proceeding from what Jeremiah wrote about the destruction of the old world and the rising of a new civilization, in Daniel chapter 2 we have Nebuchadnezzar receiving a vivid and overwhelming dream. He saw a great image with a head of gold. The breast part of the image was made of silver. The middle and thigh area were made of brass. There are increasingly inferior metals as you go down. The legs of this image were made of iron, while the toes, the base upon which the image was founded, was made up of miry clay and of iron. Then he saw a mountain. Out of the mountain he saw a stone cut out but not by any hands. The stone rolled down the mountain and struck the image on the base of its ten toes. The image fell over. The rock from the mountain began to pummel the image to powder. Winds came, and all the gold, silver, brass, iron, and miry clay which made up this vast image, now turned into powder, was blown away and vanished in the wind.

This stone, later interpreted, was to be the kingdom of God on earth. It would be a kingdom that would never see an end. This is all in Daniel chapter 2. When it came to the interpretation of this dream, only one man in Babylon, through the spirit of YHWH, was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar what it meant.

“You, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before you; and the form thereof was terrible.”

• **Daniel 2:31**

The fulfillment of this prophecy of the image has never occurred in history. Those 10 toes represent 10 kingdoms that will exist at the end of the age just prior to the Messiah's Second Coming. Elsewhere they are called 10 horns. In the Book of Revelation these kingdoms are mentioned and given relevance for the fulfillment of prophetic interpretation just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. **“The stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth”** (Daniel 2:35). The stone that did the pummeling was the

¹¹ See my July 2021 Commentary, [“The Mystery, a Definition.”](#) DWS

Kingdom of YHWH here on earth:

“This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. YOU, O king, are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given YOU a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.”

• *Daniel 2:36–37*

Who dispatches political power and authority on this earth? Who governs in the kingdoms of men, whether they be Gentiles or whether they be Jews or Israelites? YHWH does.¹²

“Wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven has he given into YOUR hand, and has made YOU ruler over them all. YOU are this head of gold.”

• *Daniel 2:38*

If you look at the text carefully, it says that the power and authority of Nebuchadnezzar reached out to embrace all areas of the earth. If you look at the history at the time of this axial period, though scanty, here and there you find that Nebuchadnezzar’s influence did indeed reach out even into India, China, and from there spread out to other areas of the world. It might be said that he did not have complete political control, but when you come to social and religious matters, and people believe the headquarters of religion happens to be in an area called Babylon, and people give credence to that, we find that indeed Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold with tremendous influence throughout the entire world.

“And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.”

• *Daniel 2:39*

Again, this does not necessarily mean direct political rule, but it could. We are emphasizing religious and social control. No matter where you look, there are similarities of beliefs throughout the earth currently. We still need the Bible as a guide to help us understand these things. The information is very limited and difficult outside of Scripture. The information is garbled and scholars are not able to put together all the secular information to sustain all of this. But when the Bible says something, I tend to believe it. I think that most of us believe that YHWH works in the kingdoms of man and that he can influence man from one end of the earth to the other. And though we may not have the adequate records to substantiate some of these things, one of these days we may.¹³ Note a fourth kingdom:

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas you saw the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom [this end time kingdom] shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with miry clay.”

And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas you saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

• *Daniel 2:40–43*

“Mingle themselves with the seed of men.” That means there will be an ecumenical movement to bring all the seed of men together. Already people want that to happen. The general philosophy was to mingle the seed of men together, not only in a physical genetic sense, which was one way Alexander the Great tried to do it, but also from a philosophical and in a religious way. The religious ecumenical movement is picking up strength. Visits of the Pope around the world frequently stress the ecumenical side of togetherness and how

¹² Notice that Daniel in talking to Nebuchadnezzar does not use the name YHWH publicly. There was a reason for that; by the time this event happened, Judah was close to having divorce papers given to her and to Israel. *ELM*

¹³ Perhaps some discovery such as King David’s Tomb, or series of discoveries will cause such records to be discovered. *DWS*

we should all cooperate. This is nothing more than mingling the seed of men together.

It will happen at the end of the age. We see it occurring in front of our eyes. Hindus will continue being Hindus. Chinese will continue being Chinese with their basic beliefs. Communism will be succeeded in China with something else. If the Bible means anything at all we will find that religion will have a revival in China in the next few years.

“Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

• *Daniel 2:45*

I believe all these events will take place. Here is this image that will last until the Second Coming of the Messiah when He will set up His kingdom on this earth. In Daniel chapter 4 more information is given to the central theme that the system that will develop shall have a Babylonian tinge to it whether it is Persian, or later Greek, or whether it is Roman, British, American, Chinese, or Indian. Our modern society is basically Babylonian because the head is Babylon. The head governs the philosophical, the religious, and even the political attributes that govern all of us today. Babylon would continue to control until the stone comes and destroys the 10 toes which is the last of the Babylonian kingdom. The entire image is all made up of Babylon through various stages and various Gentile powers.

In Daniel chapter 7 more information is given. Daniel saw a vision by night. On the great sea four beasts came forth, diverse from one another (Daniel 7:3):

“The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.”

• *Daniel 7:4*

If you go back to chapters 3 and 4 of Daniel you find that this describes what happened to Nebuchadnezzar personally back then. The lion refers to the Babylonian kingdom.

“And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, ‘Arise, devour much flesh.’”

• *Daniel 7:5*

The bear represents the Medo-Persian kingdom that succeeded the Babylonian kingdom.

“After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.”

• *Daniel 7:6*

The leopard refers to the Greco-Macedonian kingdom of Alexander the Great back at that time:

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue [of the other three animals] with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

• *Daniel 7:7*

The feet of this beast did the stamping and no doubt there will be 10 toes of the image in Daniel chapter 2. It also had 10 horns. Then a little horn came up (verse 8), having eyes of a man and these horns reign until the “Ancient of Days” comes and God’s judgment begins (verses 9, 13, 22) at Christ’s return to earth.

Daniel is adding flesh to the skeleton of prophetic events to occur (from the 6th century BC to the Second Coming of Messiah, and into the millennial age), during which this Babylonian system was to develop from

the axial period established by Jeremiah and sustained, as Daniel said something very interesting:

“I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke: I beheld even till the [the 4th] beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts [the other three, the lion, bear, and leopard], they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.”

• **Daniel 7:12**

It means the first three beasts have no political dominion. Their political power was taken away. The Babylonians no longer rule the world politically, neither do the Persians or Medes or the Greeks. But it says that **“their lives were prolonged [or sustained] for a season and time.”** If their lives will be prolonged, that means they will still exist throughout all this period. **You will find Babylon around somewhere.** You will find Persia around somewhere. You will find Greece around somewhere having influence, though dominion-wise others will take over, especially this fourth and terrible beast. Go to verse 17:

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever [unto the *eon* or age], even for ever and ever [for the *eon* of the *eons*, or the age of the ages].”

• **Daniel 7:17–18**

This terrible fourth beast that will exist at the end of the age (and have 10 toes on his feet in the other vision), is part of and comes from the other three beasts. But verse 17 says **all four beasts exist at the end of the age.** The first three are without political power while the fourth one **has** great political power. Yet the influence of the first three beasts will be in evidence.

What it means is this: since Babylon (the lion or the head of gold) is where the psychological parts of a body really are, where you really govern yourself, the government there will be philosophical. It will be religious. It will be what dominates this entire system. Even the Book of Revelation calls this system that we are under today **“Babylon the Great”** (Revelation 17:5). It makes no difference where the headquarters is politically. It could be in Europe. It could be in the Middle East. It could be in Jerusalem, and **in fact it will be in Jerusalem at the end of the age.**¹⁴

“Babylon the Great” will be overthrown because Babylon is the head of gold. The system that developed in the 6th century BC when the axial prophets were called to the scene, Jeremiah particularly, was supplemented by Daniel. Daniel gave a scenario of events that will occur up to the Second Advent of Messiah.

Return to Daniel Chapter 2

Remember in Daniel chapter 2, how that stone will come down and hit this image on the toes, cause it to fall, and pummel this image into powder? Winds come and blow it away. It is interesting that the Pharisees and Scribes in the time of Christ Jesus were very upset with Him because He said the religious, philosophical, and social systems governing the Jewish people in the 1st century (who were His people in Palestine, Galilee, Perea, and Jerusalem), **were part of this Babylonian system.** He said **their** Jewish system would be absolutely destroyed along with the other.

Something new needed to come along. That new thing that was not revealed to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, or to others, is called **the revelation of the Mystery** [see Dr. Martin’s **“The History of the Revelation of the Mystery”** DWS]. Something new came into the world at that time that separates any person who wants to be part of it, any person whom YHWH has called before the foundation of the world, who has His spirit in them, can separate themselves from this Babylonian system — politically, religiously, socially, and in every other way.

Christ in the 1st century AD told the Jews they were part of this Babylonian system and they needed to

¹⁴ Dr. Martin demonstrates this in his 1974 article, **“Mystery Babylon the Great.”** In addition the physical city of Babylon will be rebuilt. F.E. Marsh wrote an article in 1925, **“Will Babylon be Rebuilt?”** and Dr. Martin wrote an 1975 article with additional information, **“The Rebirth of Babylon.”** DWS

change drastically their political and religious ideas and philosophies when the Second Advent of the Messiah occurs. Understanding the axial period is important to interpreting what was happening in New Testament times because the people then were trained in the Law and the Prophets like the apostle Paul and others. They had synagogue services every Sabbath. They even met during midweek. They were very conscious of what the prophets had said. Indeed, their whole lives were being motivated by Moses.

Christ came along and said they were teaching the commandments of men. They were not teaching what Moses said! They were part of the Babylonian system and here was Christ trying to show them how to exit themselves from this system that was to be destroyed. He gave them a parable:

“Jesus said unto them, ‘Did you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”

• **Matthew 21:42**

He was referring to Himself as the stone. There is a capstone on the government of God, the household of God, on the real family of God, and that capstone is **“the head of the corner.”** That stone is none other than YHWH represented in the person of Christ. He **is** the head.

That is what Paul said when the revelation of the Mystery was revealed (Ephesians 2:20). He becomes the head of everything. He is the head of this building and at the same time a cornerstone. The only form of architecture that can describe this sufficiently is a pyramid form. When you have a pyramid without a stone at the top, and if you want a complete government from the top down and not a government of the head of gold (or silver or brass or iron), like the Babylonian system, if you want the real one, you must take:

“The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,¹⁵ and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

• **Matthew 21:42–43**

What nation is that? That nation is described in Ephesians and Colossians. It is a new nation with citizens whose citizenship is in heaven. That is the revelation of the Mystery **“bringing forth the fruits thereof.”** Note verse 44 and how it goes right back to that Babylonian image that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed and Daniel interpreted for him — how that stone was going to come down out of that mountain, destroy that Babylonian image, grind it to powder, and the wind would take all vestiges of it away.

Then the Kingdom of God will emerge throughout the earth (Matthew 21:44). It is a kingdom based upon righteousness, goodness, and the principles of YHWH, and not upon the principles of man like this Babylonian system. Christ is saying in the clearest language that the political and religious system that existed in Palestine in His time was part of the Babylonian system that began in the 6th century BC.

“And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them.”

• **Matthew 21:44–45**

The scribes, chief priests, and Pharisees would be ground to powder. The whole of Western civilization, and India, China, and the New World — all of it from the 6th century — went into a Babylonian phase which will continue until the Second Coming of Christ. It makes no difference what religious group is in charge, whether they have a hierarchical system or a democratic system, you will find that most is part of Babylon, somehow,

¹⁵ Jesus was speaking with scribes and Pharisees who He later said, **“were sitting in Moses’ seat”** (Matthew 23:2), but they corrupted Moses. They raised up a religion of their own creation that no more resembled Moses than Moses resembled Abraham’s religion. We need to understand that. They went astray from what the teachings of the Bible were really saying. *ELM*

In fact, there are deficiencies in the Commandments of God. See Dr. Martin’s 1978/1979 article **“[The Ten Commandments](#)”** where he points out these inadequacies in the Commandments according to God’s own words.

somehow. All of us have been caught up in it. What we do with the revelation of the Mystery is to become members of a new nation, a completely new people, not Jew, not Gentile, but the citizens of heaven (Ephesians 2:15–20, 4:24; Colossians 3:10–11).

That is what Paul was saying with the revelation of the Mystery in 63 AD. That is what real Christianity means, if you want the term Christianity to be applied correctly. It came on the scene when Paul and the others at the time began to receive this information. The entire world is still “in Babylon” at present, just as the Book of Revelation says.

Mystery Babylon will be destroyed at the end of the age. We need to know the importance of the axial prophets Jeremiah and Daniel to recognize what will happen in the time leading to the Second Coming of Christ. That is why the key to understanding Old Testament history is in the writings of Jeremiah and Daniel, and through the period they wrote about and lived through. If you want to fully understand the Old Testament you need to understand this important axial period of history.

Ernest L. Martin, 1986
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