

Excerpt from *The Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II at the Ishtar Gate* (Disc. 1901)

Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, glorious Prince, worshipper of **Marduk**, adorer of the lofty one, glorifier of **Nabu**, the exalted, the possessor of intelligence, who the processions of their divinities hath increased. A worshipper of their Lordships, firm, not to be destroyed; who for the embellishment of [the shrines] Bit-Saggatu and Bit-Zida, appointed days hath set apart, and the shrines of Babylon and of Borsippa hath steadily increased. Exalted Chief, Lord of peace, embellisher of Bit-Saggatu and Bit-Zida, the valiant son of Nabopolassar King of Babylon am I.

When he, the Lord god my maker made me, the god **Merodach**, he deposited my germ in my mother's (womb): then being conceived I was made. Under the inspection of **Assur** my judge the processions of the god I enlarged, (namely) of **Merodach** great Lord, the god my maker. His skilful works highly have I glorified; and of **Nebo** his eldest son exalter of My Royalty the processions (in honor of) his exalted deity I firmly established. With all my heart firmly (in) worship of their deities I uprose in reverence for **Nebo** their Lord.

Whereas **Merodach**, great Lord, the head of My ancient Royalty, hath empowered me over multitudes of men, and (whereas) **Nebo** bestower of thrones in heaven and earth, for the sustentation of men, a sceptre of righteousness hath caused my hand to hold. Now I, that sacred way for the resting-place of their divinities, for a memorial of all their names, as a worshipper of **Nebo**, **Yav** and **Istar**, for **Merodach** my Lord, I strengthened. Its threshold I firmly laid, and my devotion of heart he accepted, and him did I proclaim . . . Lord of all beings, and as Prince of the lofty house, and thou, (O Nebuchadnezzar) hast proclaimed the name of him who has been beneficent unto thee. His name, (O god,) thou wilt preserve, the path of righteousness thou hast prescribed to him.

I, a Prince, and thy worshipper am the work of thy hand; thou hast created me, and the empire over multitudes of men thou hast assigned me, according to thy favor, O Lord, which thou hast accorded to them all. May thy lofty Lordship be exalted! In the worship of thy divinity may it subsist! In my heart may it continue, and my life which to thee is devoted mayest thou bless! He, the Chief, the honorable, the Prince of the gods, the great **Merodach**, my gracious Lord, heard and received my prayer; he favored it, and by his exalted power, reverence for his deity placed he in my heart: to bear his tabernacle he hath made my heart firm, with reverence for thy power, for exalted service, greatly and eternally...

Beautiful things for the temple Bit-Saggatu, seen at its very summit: the shrine of **Merodach** with statues and marbles, I embellished as the stars of heaven. The fanes of Babylon I built, I adorned. Of the house, the foundation of the heaven and earth, I reared the summit with blocks of noble lapis lazuli. To the construction of Bit-Saggatu my heart uplifted me. In abundance I wrought the best of my pine trees which from Lebanon together with tall

Babil-wood I brought, for the portico of the temple of **Merodach**. The shrine of his Lordship I made good, and interior walls with pine and tall cedar woods: the portico of the temple of **Merodach**, with brilliant gold I caused to cover, the lower thresholds, the cedar awnings, with gold and precious stones I embellished: in the erection of Bit-Saggatu I proceeded. I supplicated the King of gods, the Lord of Lords. In Borsippa, the city of his loftiness, I raised Bit-Zida: a durable house in the midst thereof I caused to be made... A temple for sacrifices, the lofty citadel of **Bel** and **Merodach**, god of gods, a threshold of joy and supremacy among angels and spirits, with the stores of Babylon, with cement and brick, like a mountain I erected. A great temple of **Ninharissi** in the centre of Babylon to the great goddess the mother who created me, in Babylon I made. To **Nebo** of lofty intelligence who hath bestowed (on me) the sceptre of justice, to preside over all peoples, a temple of rule over men, and a site for this his temple in Babylon, of cement and brick the fashion I fashioned.

I beautifully constructed Imgur-Bel and Nimetti-Belkit, the great walls of Babylon... which Nabopolassar King, King of Babylon, the father who begat me, had commenced but not completed their beauty... I, his eldest son, the chosen of his heart, Imgur-Bel and Nimetti-Bel the great walls of Babylon, completed... Those large gates for the admiration of multitudes of men with wreathed work I filled. The abode of Imzu-Bel the invincible castle of Babylon, which no previous King had effected, 4,000 cubits complete, the walls of Babylon whose banner is invincible, as a high fortress by the ford of the rising sun, I carried round Babylon... The great gates whose walls I constructed... to keep off enemies from the front of the wall of unconquered Babylon...

To **Merodach**, my Lord, my hand I lifted. O **Merodach**, the Lord, Chief of the gods, a surpassing Prince thou hast made me, and empire over multitudes of men, hast entrusted to me as precious lives. Thy power have I extended on high, over Babylon thy city, before all mankind. No city of the land have I exalted as was exalted the reverence of thy deity. I caused it to rest, and may thy power bring its treasures abundantly to my land. I, whether as King and embellisher, am the rejoicer of thy heart, or whether as High Priest appointed, embellishing all thy fortresses.

For thy glory, O exalted **Merodach**, a house have I made. May its greatness advance! May its fulness increase! in its midst abundance may it acquire! May its memorials be augmented! May it receive within itself the abundant tribute of the Kings of nations and of all peoples! From the West to the East by the rising sun may I have no [adversaries]! May they not be multiplied within, in the midst thereof, forever!