

# Daniel 09 – Marduk's Silver Chest: Persia

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Daniel 2:39

## Prologue: All Civilizations Come via Noah: Babylonia Is the Pinnacle before Change

- All knowledge came through Noah and his three sons of which Shem clung to the true knowledge of God probably establishing a priesthood that was still extant in Abraham's day; i.e., Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20; Gen 14:18)
- Abram lived with Terah, his father, in Ur during [Ur Kingdom](#), during its weakening
- Terah probably moved the extended family after Haran was killed and settled along the Balikh River possibly establishing or renaming the village. [Harran](#) (Gen 11:31-32)
- Terah probably worshipped the moon god, Sin, which was also extant in Harran, possibly why this attracted him
- Abram was instructed to continue to Canaan alone after the death of Terah to finish the journey originally started by Terah but aborted by idolatry (Gen 12:1-3)
- This predicated Babylon; however, [Law codes](#) were already in use showing high degree of civilization that continued after Babel and spread from this region

## Prologue: Marduk and Hammurabi: Kings Rule by Laws

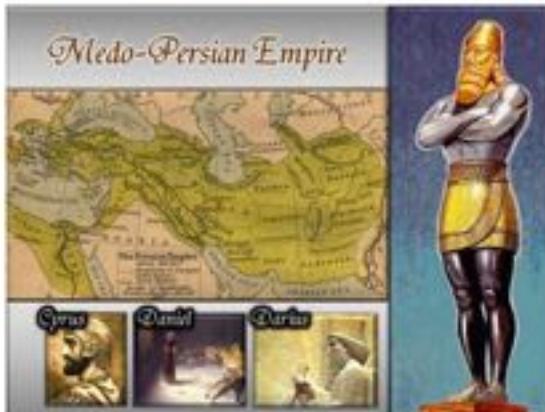
- Hammurabi's famous law code supposedly was given by Marduk to the king which legitimized its supremacy as discussed in earlier lessons
- Law Codes not based on man but came from god to prevent another Cataclysm (Job); Israel's God gave the only moral basis for Law to define sin not only by actions but as originated in the ungodly, asreiboi, thoughts of sinners
- Babylon was considered the seat of culture of its time much like Paris was considered the seat of Western culture in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe
- "The ancient scientists who lived in the city made important discoveries in mathematics, physics and astronomy. Among their many accomplishments, they developed [Hippopede](#), used mathematical models to track the planet [Jupiter](#) and developed methods of [locking time](#) that are still used today. Ancient Babylonian records are still used by modern-day astronomers to study how the [rotation](#) of the Earth has changed." <http://www.sciencenews.org/2010/01/29/ancient-babylon-control-of-meteorites-challenged.html>

## Prologue: Mesopotamian Culture Intertwined with Judaism

- As previously indicated, Abram came from Mesopotamia in its early days coming out of idolatry: Sin Moon god (Gen 14:13-18)
  - Abraham believed God and became the father of both a physical people, Jews, and a spiritual people, True Jews and Christians (Gen 15:1-6; Gen 17:1-12; Gen 21:1-10)
  - False Jews remained trapped in their idolatry though warned of God many times of the consequences: Captivity (Exodus 1:10-12)
  - God has returned His people back to the idolatrous land of their beginnings to experience the harshness of Satan's tender mercies, Hammurabi's Law Code
  - Now God will show mercy to the king who brought them into captivity to bring them to rage at the mercy they have refused (Exodus 1:10-12)
  - God's first step was to declare their captor as the pinnacle of civilization and show him mercy, of which this is the first step, while they suffer wrath for their sin

## Chest/Arms of Silver

- Daniel describes chest and arms being one empire
- Persia began as two distinct kingdoms that became one
- Cyrus was of Achaemenian Persian, vassal of Media
- Cyrus possibly means "The Sun" if title is Iranian
- First major Japheth kingdom as Egypt descended from Ham; deviated from Shemites: Babylonia, Israel



## Persia's Beginnings

- Persians and Medians began as nomadic peoples from the Asian steppes as have so many peoples throughout history; Aryans or Noble Ones
  - In the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. tribes coalesced into a single government that eventually included all the nomadic mountainous tribes; these are the Medians
  - In the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Media was a vassal to Assyria but allied with Babylon to defeat Assyria; thus, it became a major independent power separate from Babylon
  - In the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Cyrus II, though now called the Great, rebelled against and defeated the Median king, his grandfather, to become King of Persia
  - Daniel records the Persian defeat of Babylonia; thus, identifying Persia as the next empire after Babylonia: Chest and arms of silver (Dan 2:38ff)
  - What Persian contributions established her as the chest and why was Persia shown as silver, a less precious metal than gold, is the purpose of our lesson

## Persia in the Bible: Cyrus Anointed; Kings Ruled by Laws

- Cyrus is unique of all the Gentile rulers in Scripture
  - God not only called him by name nearly 150 years before he began conquering; also, God anointed Cyrus for his task (Isa 41:8)
  - Title anointed one is Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ; mashiach) same as given to Christ; every believer is anointed, filled by the Holy Spirit which is the New Covenant (Gal 3:14; Acts 2:14; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:18; 1 Pet 1:2)
  - Cyrus' anointing is reiterated by Paul when he wrote that God guides rulers to punish evil and promote good; but Satan also influences rulers to accomplish his program; Marduk's image epitomizes both forces simultaneously (Rom 13:1-7)
  - Persian rulers were bound by ratified laws that could not be undone making them slaves to the laws of man; Daniel in the Lion's Den and the decree to kill the Jews could only be offset by another decree to kill those who attacked the Jews are two examples (Dan 6:3-7ff)

## Persia in the Bible: Japheth Ended Mass Deportations

- Defeat of Babylon ended Shemite or Semitic empires; Persia came from the line of Japheth
  - Cyrus the Great, and all subsequent Persian kings ended the practice of mass deportations of conquered populations; they did not end slavery
  - Persia allowed semiautonomous rule and cultural religions if tribute and homage were current
  - This change in empires allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple; this decree was reinforced when opposed by regional governors; even Darius decreed completion of Jerusalem's walls (Ezra 6:15-16; Neh 6:4)
  - Judah was part of the province, Beyond the River; never again would they regain autonomy (Modern Israel is a Zionist, atheistic, socialist state and not the return spoken of in Scripture (Ezekiel 36:22-28; Isa 43:1-10)

## Persian Religion: Monotheism of Zarathustra

- Zarathustra (Gk-Zoroaster) may have developed his monotheism in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries in the northern mountains of Media, later Persia (Axial Age)
  - It is not clear if Cyrus was aware of this religion but Darius included it in inscriptions though it is unclear if he was a practitioner
  - Clearly a decentralized monotheism that periodically worshiped at fire temples, sans animal sacrifices; it replaced Magi religion after this tribe led a nearly successful rebellion against the Achaemenid dynasty
  - Image of Zarathustra depict him with the halo (Aureola) borrowed from paganism (Nike-Victory) and carried forward in Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy images (Christ, Mary, etc.) and used today (Statute of Liberty, Justice)
  - It embraced an unequal dualism; good winning over evil (Egyptian Ma'at)
  - God, Ahura Mazda (Light), wins over Darkness; yet, another system of works

## Recapping Persia in the Bible

- Cyrus, King of Anshan, conquered Media and later Babylon to become Persia
- Cyrus, Sun, reduces Magi power, religion, which is replaced by Zoroasterism with halos about its main prophet and god
- This monotheistic dualism spread through Persian empire weakening polytheism
- Asebeta scholars state this influenced coming Christianity
- More likely it was influenced by already monotheistic Judaism as we shall learn



## Persia's Greatness

- Persia became the greatest and largest empire to date, acknowledged in the Bible (Is 11:4)
- Begun by Cyrus, Darius made Persia great
- Communication system was rapid, accurate and envied by Alexander the Great
- Waystations built along the roads like our Pony Express
- This road system promoted trade & military responses

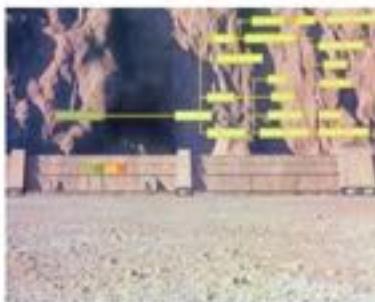


## Persia and Israel's True Legacy

- Persia had a legacy with Israel long before it came into existence which we shall explore both with biblical and historical sources
  - Persia's communication system of roads would not have been practical if it had not developed a flexible, lightweight **written** communication system
  - Before Darius, Persia used cuneiform writing on lumps of clay which was cumbersome, heavy and brittle; not designed for rapid transport
  - Man's first known writing was pictographs in Mesopotamia; as in Egypt
  - Sumer developed a form of cuneiform markings to represent sounds and ideas
  - This form continued until nearly 1,000 B.C. when a new form of writing appeared with the Arameans using letters to gradually replace cuneiform writings
  - It was thought the Aramaic writing developed from Phoenician letters; but, where did the Phoenicians get the letters? The answer will surprise you

## Traditional Alphabet Development

- The Proto-Sinaitic alphabet discovered in caves in Egypt in early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Wm Petrie
- Dated between 1900-1800 B.C. the asebela scholars concluded it was not Hebrew; however, that view is now challenged
- Reason for rejection is that Hebrews were not in Egypt if Exodus dated 1240 B.C.; yet, if the Exodus occurred in 1440 B.C. then there was a Hebrew who could have developed this system



This early alphabet ties these two men together

- Amenophis III, never happy, was most likely Pharaoh over Joseph
- Joseph gained learning and power to bring Hebrews into Egypt
- To avoid assimilation, Joseph probably developed an alphabet system from Egyptian Hieroglyphics to preserve their heritage; Moses had documents

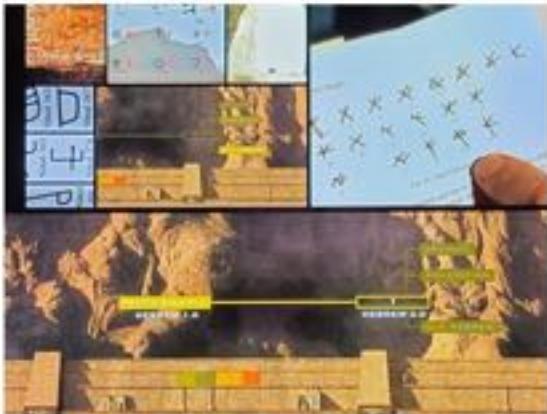


Follow the Alphabet in its travels

- When the Hebrews left, this alphabet disappears in Egypt
- This alphabet appears in ancient Israel before Solomon's reign
- Alphabet travels to Phoenicia when Solomon writes to Tyre's king, Hiram

Alphabet  
Disperses

- Alphabet disperses under the spread of Phoenician and Israel influence
  - Letters stand for sounds easily learned and written
  - From Phoenicia it travels to influence Aramaic, Greek and eventually, English
  - So, what does this have to do with Persia?



## Suggested Progression

- Chart is possible progression of hieroglyphics to letters
  - System of 24 letters with limitless combination for words to convey concepts
  - When Darius adopted Aramaic it had morphed into square letters
  - Jews remaining in Persia adopted this square script transforming Hebrew into the form we have today

## Write These Words...Read These Words

- God's command to Moses to write down His words so the people could read them was silliness if it was so complex that years of training were needed to master the language. (Ex 34:12)
    - Further, it would have been impractical for knowledge of God to travel if it was written in such a complex form that only a certain caste could read and write.
    - Hence, Joseph, Hebrew, developed an easy to learn and use system of writing that was copied and adopted to variety of languages and later transformed the original script into a stylized form that has survived thousands of years.
    - God used Persia to influence Hebrew which expanded throughout the empire along the road system used for military, commerce and exchange of ideas.
    - This was Persia's true legacy; but not the only one.

## Darius' Garden of Beauty

- Darius had an irrigation system developed for his garden that contained plants and trees from about his kingdom
- Persian *Pari daiz*, enclosed garden, was translated by the Greeks into *paradeisos* and finally entered English as Paradise
- Our idea of biblical Eden expressed by Persian word



## Persian Achievements

- Persia under the hand of God, as are all rulers less they destroy all before their time, developed communications, transport and written systems, that were not previously known
  - Their adoption of the Aramaic alphabet script, originally Hebrew developed, facilitated the transfer of ideas and information and in turn also influenced Hebrew into the script that transmitted God's words throughout the empire
  - Their nomadic beginnings were retained by seasonal migrations even by the monarchs between their respective capitals: Susa, Babylon and Ecbatana
  - They developed a ceremonial capital to collect the annual tribute designed to convey the beauty, might and wealth of their great kingdom: Persepolis
  - Their change to a monotheism, a works-based faith, fell short of embracing true faith in God; however, it was the first major empire to reject ancient polytheism; i.e., remaking its foundational value-base without disrupting its culture

## Contribution to Satan's Kingdom

- Persia built upon the Semitic achievements of Babylon, even to having a capital there
  - They showed the importance of good communications which continue today
  - They taught cultures to garden, develop a tranquil place of enclosed peace
  - They allowed ethnicities in their empire to maintain their culture when peace and taxes were maintained
  - They underwent major cultural shifts relatively peacefully even changing their fundamental values under Zoroastrianism
  - But they made laws that control them placing themselves in poor predicaments
- Persia was easily offended and aroused the ire of a people who never forgave; who measured all things by themselves: Our next level of Marduk