

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The King of the North

The first earthly kingdom described in the Bible is that of Babel, which is translated through the Greek language into English as Babylon. Nimrod, its first king, also built the cities of Erech, Accad, and Calneh:

- 9 He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh: therefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before Yahweh.
- 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. -Genesis 10

These cities were part of the Babylonian kingdom in the “land of Shinar,” which is the “country of two rivers” (see *Strongs Concordance*) that is also called Mesopotamia. The basin of the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers is largely fed by snow precipitation over the uplands of north and eastern Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. These rivers pass through and/or drain modern Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia (see Dogan Altinbilek, “Development and Management of the Euphrates-Tigris Basin,” *Water Resources Development*, Vol. 20, No. 1, March 2004, pp. 15–33).

After the whole earth was first joined together with the ability to communicate globally, people journeyed to the “land of Shinar” from the “east.” It was there that they pridefully set out to establish a great reputation for themselves by building a city and a tall tower:

- 1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
- 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.
- 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.
- 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. -Genesis 11

Yahweh confounded their efforts by confusing their language and scattering them throughout the earth. He also rescued Abraham from the Babylonian city of Ur, where they were worshipping other gods in the form of idols (See Genesis 11:6-9; 11:28-31; 31:19; and Joshua 24:2-3).

Even though Yahweh rejected Babylon and their plans, He uses them to accomplish His purpose. While the land of Babylon is technically both north and east of Israel, it is often called the “north country.” It was from this north country that Yahweh would bring judgment against the rebellious descendents of Abraham living in the kingdom of Judah:

- 22 Behold, the noise of the rumor has come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, *and* a den of dragons. -Jeremiah 10
- As a consequence of Judah rejecting His word, Yahweh promised that an evil would break forth upon them from “out of the north:”
- 14 Then Yahweh said to me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. -Jeremiah 1

The king of this north country was the king of Babylon. Yahweh called him “my servant” and promised to use him as a tool for His judgment against Judah:

- 9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, says Yahweh, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations. -Jeremiah 25

Ironically, Judah had already witnessed the rejection by Yahweh of other descendents of Abraham, which were called the “seed of Israel.” A previous king from the north, the king of Assyria, led the judgment against Israel because of their unrepentant sins against Yahweh:

- 20 And Yahweh rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.
- 21 For he tore Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drove Israel from following Yahweh, and made them sin a great sin.
- 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;
- 23 Until Yahweh removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. -2 Kings 17

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Even though Judah had seen the judgment of Yahweh against Israel by the Assyrian “King of the North,” they did not learn from history. They continued rejecting Yahweh’s word, just as Israel had done:

18 Therefore Yahweh was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. -2 Kings 17

Consequently, Yahweh kept His word and brought judgment upon Judah. He gave the king of Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, the “King of the North,” who even carried away the spoils of the “house of God” back to “the land of Shinar to the house of his god:”

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. -Daniel 1

Furthermore, the “King of the North” also took some of the people of Judah back to Babylon:

9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained. -Jeremiah 39

Daniel was one of the captives taken into Babylon:

6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: -Daniel 1

After Daniel served the king of Babylon, the role of the “King of the North” was taken over by an alliance of the Medes and the Persians and he continued to serve the new kings. While Daniel was in the kingdom of the north, Yahweh gave him many prophecies, which were revealed through the dreams and visions of the kings, as well as of Daniel. Since many of these prophecies have already come to pass, they are now historical. Some of them, however, are clearly identified to occur at “the time of the end.” Therefore, it is likely that they are yet to be fulfilled.

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One of these important end-time prophecies concerns a major conflict between the “King of the North” and the “King of the South:”

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. -Daniel 11

Both the “King of the North” and the “King of the South,” along with their allies, have historically been two great world powers. While the “King of the North” is represented by Babylon, there is strong evidence that the “King of the South” is represented by Egypt (see “The King of the South, Part 2,” *Come to Understanding*, Vol. 11, No. 14, 2012).

After Babylon destroyed Judah, those that still remained there rejected Yahweh’s clear word and fled into Egypt, hoping for protection from the “King of the North:”

7 So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of Yahweh: thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes. -Jeremiah 44

While in Egypt, they totally rejected Yahweh’s word and worshipped the “Queen of Heaven:”

16 As *for* the word that you have spoken to us in the name of Yahweh, we will not listen to you.

17 But we will certainly do whatever thing goes forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. -Jeremiah 44

Consequently, Yahweh told the people of Judah that had fled into Egypt that He would give them a sign. He said that He would deliver the king of Egypt (the “King of the South”) into the hand of his enemies, just as He had delivered the king of Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon (the “King of the North”):

29 And *this shall be* a sign unto you, says Yahweh, that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:

30 Thus says Yahweh; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life. -Jeremiah 44

Just as the kings of the north had entered into Israel and Judah for their destruction, Yahweh showed Daniel that an end-time “King of the North” will overthrow the “glorious land,” along with many other countries, including Egypt:

41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. -Daniel 11

For such prophecies, many of us feel like Daniel as he said, “I Daniel was grieved in my spirit” (see Daniel 7:15).