

# HISTORY OF THE JEWS

By Josephus

Book Ten

[continues]

## CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW THE KING OF BABYLON TOOK JERUSALEM AND BURNT THE TEMPLE AND REMOVED THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM AND ZEDEKIAH TO BABYLON. AS ALSO, WHO THEY WERE THAT HAD SUCCEEDED IN THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD UNDER THE KINGS.

NOW the king of Babylon was very intent and earnest upon the siege of Jerusalem; and he erected towers upon great banks of earth, and from them repelled those that stood upon the walls; he also made a great number of such banks round about the whole city, whose height was equal to those walls. However, those that were within bore the siege with courage and alacrity, for they were not discouraged, either by the famine, or by the pestilential distemper, but were of cheerful minds in the prosecution of the war, although those miseries within oppressed them also, and they did not suffer themselves to be terrified, either by the contrivances of the enemy, or by their engines

of war, but contrived still different engines to oppose all the other withal, till indeed there seemed to be an entire struggle between the Babylonians and the people of Jerusalem, which had the greater sagacity and skill; the former party supposing they should be thereby too hard for the other, for the destruction of the city; the latter placing their hopes of deliverance in nothing else but in persevering in such inventions in opposition to the other, as might demonstrate the enemy's engines were useless to them. And this siege they endured for eighteen months, until they were destroyed by the famine, and by the darts which the enemy threw at them from the towers.

Now the city was taken on the ninth day of the fourth month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. They were indeed only generals of the king of Babylon, to whom Nebuchadnezzar committed the care of the siege, for he abode himself in the city of Riblah. The names of these generals who ravaged and subdued Jerusalem, if any one desire to know them, were these: Nergal Sharezer, Samgar Nebo, Rabsaris, Sorsechim, and Rabmag. And when the city was taken about midnight, and the enemy's generals were entered into the temple, and when Zedekiah was sensible of it, he took his wives, and his children, and his captains, and his friends, and with them fled out of the city, through the fortified ditch, and through the desert; and when certain of the deserters had informed the Babylonians of this, at break of day, they made haste to pursue after Zedekiah, and overtook him not far from Jericho, and encompassed him about. But for those friends and captains of Zedekiah who had fled out of the city with him,

when they saw their enemies near them, they left him, and dispersed themselves, some one way, and some another, and every one resolved to save himself; so the enemy took Zedekiah alive, when he was deserted by all but a few, with his children and his wives, and brought him to the king. When he was come, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked wretch, and a covenant-breaker, and one that had forgotten his former words, when he promised to keep the country for him. He also reproached him for his ingratitude, that when he had received the kingdom from him, who had taken it from Jehoiachin, and given it to him, he had made use of the power he gave him against him that gave it; "but," said he, "God is great, who hated that conduct of thine, and hath brought thee under us." And when he had used these words to Zedekiah, he commanded his sons and his friends to be slain, while Zedekiah and the rest of the captains looked on; after which he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him, and carried him to Babylon. And these things happened to him, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had foretold to him, that he should be caught, and brought before the king of Babylon, and should speak to him face to face, and should see his eyes with his own eyes; and thus far did Jeremiah prophesy. But he was also made blind, and brought to Babylon, but did not see it, according to the prediction of Ezekiel.

We have said thus much, because it was sufficient to show the nature of God to such as are ignorant of it, that it is various, and acts many different ways, and that all events happen after a regular manner, in their proper season, and that it foretells what must come to pass. It is also

sufficient to show the ignorance and incredulity of men, whereby they are not permitted to foresee any thing that is future, and are, without any guard, exposed to calamities, so that it is impossible for them to avoid the experience of those calamities.

And after this manner have the kings of David's race ended their lives, being in number twenty-one, until the last king, who all together reigned five hundred and fourteen years, and six months, and ten days; of whom Saul, who was their first king, retained the government twenty years, though he was not of the same tribe with the rest.

And now it was that the king of Babylon sent Nebuzaradan, the general of his army, to Jerusalem, to pillage the temple, who had it also in command to burn it and the royal palace, and to lay the city even with the ground, and to transplant the people into Babylon. Accordingly, he came to Jerusalem in the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, and pillaged the temple, and carried out the vessels of God, both gold and silver, and particularly that large laver which Solomon dedicated, as also the pillars of brass, and their chapiters, with the golden tables and the candlesticks; and when he had carried these off, he set fire to the temple in the fifth month, the first day of the month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, and in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar: he also burnt the palace, and overthrew the city. Now the temple was burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days after it was built. It was then one thousand and sixty-two years, six months, and ten days from

the departure out of Egypt; and from the deluge to the destruction of the temple, the whole interval was one thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven years, six months, and ten days; but from the generation of Adam, until this befell the temple, there were three thousand five hundred and thirteen years, six months, and ten days; so great was the number of years hereto belonging. And what actions were done during these years we have particularly related. But the general of the Babylonian king now overthrew the city to the very foundations, and removed all the people, and took for prisoners the high priest Seraiah, and Zephaniah the priest that was next to him, and the rulers that guarded the temple, who were three in number, and the eunuch who was over the armed men, and seven friends of Zedekiah, and his scribe, and sixty other rulers; all which, together with the vessels which they had pillaged, he carried to the king of Babylon to Riblah, a city of Syria. So the king commanded the heads of the high priest and of the rulers to be cut off there; but he himself led all the captives and Zedekiah to Babylon. He also led Josedek the high priest away bound. He was the son of Seraiah the high priest, whom the king of Babylon had slain in Riblah, a city of Syria, as we just now related.

And now, because we have enumerated the succession of the kings, and who they were, and how long they reigned, I think it necessary to set down the names of the high priests, and who they were that succeeded one another in the high priesthood under the Kings. The first high priest then at the temple which Solomon built was Zadok; after him his son Achimas received that dignity;

after Achimas was Azarias; his son was Joram, and Joram's son was Isus; after him was Axioramus; his son was Phidens, and Phideas's son was Sudeas, and Sudeas's son was Juelus, and Juelus's son was Jotham, and Jotham's son was Urias, and Urias's son was Nerias, and Nerias's son was Odeas, and his son was Sallumus, and Sallumus's son was Elcias, and his son [was Azarias, and his son] was Sareas, and his son was Josedec, who was carried captive to Babylon. All these received the high priesthood by succession, the sons from their father.

When the king was come to Babylon, he kept Zedekiah in prison until he died, and buried him magnificently, and dedicated the vessels he had pillaged out of the temple of Jerusalem to his own gods, and planted the people in the country of Babylon, but freed the high priest from his bonds.

## CHAPTER NINE

HOW NEBUZARADAN SET GEDALIAH OVER THE JEWS THAT WERE LEFT IN JUDEA WHICH GEDALIAH WAS A LITTLE AFTERWARD SLAIN BY ISHMAEL; AND HOW JOHANAN AFTER ISHMAEL WAS DRIVEN AWAY WENT DOWN INTO EGYPT WITH THE PEOPLE WHICH PEOPLE NEBUCHADNEZZAR WHEN HE MADE AN EXPEDITION AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS TOOK CAPTIVE AND BROUGHT THEM AWAY TO BABYLON.

NOW the general of the army, Nebuzaradan, when he had carried the people of the Jews into captivity, left the poor, and those that had deserted, in the country, and made one, whose name was Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, a person of a noble family, their governor; which Gedaliah was of a gentle and

righteous disposition. He also commanded them that they should cultivate the ground, and pay an appointed tribute to the king. He also took Jeremiah the prophet out of prison, and would have persuaded him to go along with him to Babylon, for that he had been enjoined by the king to supply him with whatsoever he wanted; and if he did not like to do so, he desired him to inform him where he resolved to dwell, that he might signify the same to the king. But the prophet had no mind to follow him, nor to dwell any where else, but would gladly live in the ruins of his country, and in the miserable remains of it. When the general understood what his purpose was, he enjoined Gedaliah, whom he left behind, to take all possible care of him, and to supply him with whatsoever he wanted. So when he had given him rich presents, he dismissed him. Accordingly, Jeremiah abode in a city of that country, which was called Mispah; and desired of Nebuzaradan that he would set at liberty his disciple Baruch, the son of Neriah, one of a very eminent family, and exceeding skillful in the language of his country.

When Nebuzaradan had done thus, he made haste to Babylon. But as to those that fled away during the siege of Jerusalem, and had been scattered over the country, when they heard that the Babylonians were gone away, and had left a remnant in the land of Jerusalem, and those such as were to cultivate the same, they came together from all parts to Gedaliah to Mispah. Now the rulers that were over them were Johanan, the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, and Seraiah, and others beside them. Now there was of the royal family one Ishmael, a wicked man, and very crafty, who, during the siege

of Jerusalem, fled to Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, and abode with him during that time; and Gedaliah persuaded them, now they were there, to stay with him, and to have no fear of the Babylonians, for that if they would cultivate the country, they should suffer no harm. This he assured them of by oath; and said that they should have him for their patron, and that if any disturbance should arise, they should find him ready to defend them. He also advised them to dwell in any city, as every one of them pleased; and that they would send men along with his own servants, and rebuild their houses upon the old foundations, and dwell there; and he admonished them beforehand, that they should make preparation, while the season lasted, of corn, and wine, and oil, that they might have whereon to feed during the winter. When he had thus discoursed to them, he dismissed them, that every one might dwell in what place of the country he pleased.

Now when this report was spread abroad as far as the nations that bordered on Judea, that Gedaliah kindly entertained those that came to him, after they had fled away, upon this [only] condition, that they should pay tribute to the king of Babylon, they also came readily to Gedaliah, and inhabited the country. And when Johanan, and the rulers that were with him, observed the country, and the humanity of Gedaliah, they were exceedingly in love with him, and told him that Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, had sent Ishmael to kill him by treachery, and secretly, that he might have the dominion over the Israelites, as being of the royal family; and they



said that he might deliver himself from this treacherous design, if he would give them leave to slay Ishmael, and nobody should know it, for they told him they were afraid that, when he was killed by the other, the entire ruin of the remaining strength of the Israelites would ensue. But he professed that he did not believe what they said, when they told him of such a treacherous design, in a man that had been well treated by him; because it was not probable that one who, under such a want of all things, had failed of nothing that was necessary for him, should be found so wicked and ungrateful towards his benefactor, that when it would be an instance of wickedness in him not to save him, had he been treacherously assaulted by others, to endeavor, and that earnestly, to kill him with his own hands: that, however, if he ought to suppose this information to be true, it was better for himself to be slain by the other, than to destroy a man who fled to him for refuge, and intrusted his own safety to him, and committed himself to his disposal.

So Johanan, and the rulers that were with him, not being able to persuade Gedaliah, went away. But after the interval of thirty days was over, Ishmael came again to Gedaliah, to the city Mispah, and ten men with him; and when he had feasted Ishmael, and those that were with him, in a splendid manner at his table, and had given them presents, he became disordered in drink, while he endeavored to be very merry with them; and when Ishmael saw him in that case, and that he was drowned in his cups to the degree of insensibility, and fallen asleep, he rose up on a sudden, with his ten friends, and slew Gedaliah,

and those that were with him at the feast; and when he had slain them, he went out by night, and slew all the Jews that were in the city, and those soldiers also which were left therein by the Babylonians. But the next day fourscore men came out of the country with presents to Gedaliah, none of them knowing what had befallen him; when Ishmael saw them, he invited them in to Gedaliah, and when they were come in, he shut up the court, and slew them, and cast their dead bodies down into a certain deep pit, that they might not be seen; but of these fourscore men Ishmael spared those that entreated him not to kill them, till they had delivered up to him what riches they had concealed in the fields, consisting of their furniture, and garments, and corn: but he took captive the people that were in Mispah, with their wives and children; among whom were the daughters of king Zedekiah, whom Nebuzaradan, the general of the army of Babylon, had left with Gedaliah. And when he had done this, he came to the king of the Ammonites.

But when Johanan and the rulers with him heard of what was done at Mispah by Ishmael, and of the death of Gedaliah, they had indignation at it, and every one of them took his own armed men, and came suddenly to fight with Ishmael, and overtook him at the fountain in Hebron. And when those that were carried away captives by Ishmael saw Johanan and the rulers, they were very glad, and looked upon them as coming to their assistance; so they left him that had carried them captives, and came over to Johanan: then Ishmael, with eight men, fled to the king of the Ammonites; but Johanan took those whom he had rescued out of the hands of

Ishmael, and the eunuchs, and their wives and children, and came to a certain place called Mandra, and there they abode that day, for they had determined to remove from thence and go into Egypt, out of fear, lest the Babylonians should slay them, in case they continued in the country, and that out of anger at the slaughter of Gedaliah, who had been by them set over it for governor.

Now while they were under this deliberation, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and the rulers that were with him, came to Jeremiah the prophet, and desired that he would pray to God, that because they were at an utter loss about what they ought to do, he would discover it to them, and they swore that they would do whatsoever Jeremiah should say to them. And when the prophet said he would be their intercessor with God, it came to pass, that after ten days God appeared to him, and said that he should inform Johanan, and the other rulers, and all the people, that he would be with them while they continued in that country, and take care of them, and keep them from being hurt by the Babylonians, of whom they were afraid; but that he would desert them if they went into Egypt, and, out of this wrath against them, would inflict the same punishments upon them which they knew their brethren had already endured. So when the prophet had informed Johanan and the people that God had foretold these things, he was not believed, when he said that God commanded them to continue in the country; but they imagined that he said so to gratify Baruch, his own disciple, and belied God, and that he persuaded them to stay there, that they might be destroyed by the

Babylonians. Accordingly, both the people and Johanan disobeyed the counsel of God, which he gave them by the prophet, and removed into Egypt, and carried Jeremiah and Barnch along with him.

And when they were there, God signified to the prophet that the king of Babylon was about making an expedition against the Egyptians, and commanded him to foretell to the people that Egypt should be taken, and the king of Babylon should slay some of them and, should take others captive, and bring them to Babylon; which things came to pass accordingly; for on the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was the twenty-third of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, he made an expedition against Celesyria; and when he had possessed himself of it, he made war against the Ammonites and Moabites; and when he had brought all these nations under subjection, he fell upon Egypt, in order to overthrow it; and he slew the king that then reigned and set up another; and he took those Jews that were there captives, and led them away to Babylon. And such was the end of the nation of the Hebrews, as it hath been delivered down to us, it having twice gone beyond Euphrates; for the people of the ten tribes were carried out of Samaria by the Assyrians, in the days of king Hoshea; after which the people of the two tribes that remained after Jerusalem was taken [were carried away] by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon and Chaldea. Now as to Shalmanezar, he removed the Israelites out of their country, and placed therein the nation of the Cutheans, who had formerly belonged to the inner parts of Persia and Media, but were then called Samaritans, by taking the name of the country to which they were

removed; but the king of Babylon, who brought out the two tribes, placed no other nation in their country, by which means all Judea and Jerusalem, and the temple, continued to be a desert for seventy years; but the entire interval of time which passed from the captivity of the Israelites, to the carrying away of the two tribes, proved to be a hundred and thirty years, six months, and ten days.

## CHAPTER TEN

### CONCERNING DANIEL AND WHAT BEFELL HIM AT BABYLON,

BUT now Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took some of the most noble of the Jews that were children, and the kinsmen of Zedekiah their king, such as were remarkable for the beauty of their bodies, and the comeliness of their countenances, and delivered them into the hands of tutors, and to the improvement to be made by them. He also made some of them to be eunuchs; which course he took also with those of other nations whom he had taken in the flower of their age, and afforded them their diet from his own table, and had them instructed in the institutes of the country, and taught the learning of the Chaldeans; and they had now exercised themselves sufficiently in that wisdom which he had ordered they should apply themselves to. Now among these there were four of the family of Zedekiah, of most excellent dispositions, one of whom was called Daniel, another was called Ananias, another Misael, and the fourth Azarias; and the king of Babylon changed their names, and commanded that they should make use of other names. Daniel he called

Baltasar; Ananias, Shadrach; Misael, Meshach; and Azarias, Abednego. These the king had in esteem, and continued to love, because of the very excellent temper they were of, and because of their application to learning, and the profess they had made in wisdom.

Now Daniel and his kinsmen had resolved to use a severe diet, and to abstain from those kinds of food which came from the king's table, and entirely to forbear to eat of all living creatures. So he came to Ashpenaz, who was that eunuch to whom the care of them was committed, and desired him to take and spend what was brought for them from the king, but to give them pulse and dates for their food, and any thing else, besides the flesh of living creatures, that he pleased, for that their inclinations were to that sort of food, and that they despised the other. He replied, that he was ready to serve them in what they desired, but he suspected that they would be discovered by the king, from their meagre bodies, and the alteration of their countenances, because it could not be avoided but their bodies and colors must be changed with their diet, especially while they would be clearly discovered by the finer appearance of the other children, who would fare better, and thus they should bring him into danger, and occasion him to be punished; yet did they persuade Arioch, who was thus fearful, to give them what food they desired for ten days, by way of trial; and in case the habit of their bodies were not altered, to go on in the same way, as expecting that they should not be hurt thereby afterwards; but if he saw them look meagre, and worse than the rest, he should reduce them to

their former diet. Now when it appeared that they were so far from becoming worse by the use of this food, that they grew plumper and fuller in body than the rest, insomuch that he thought those who fed on what came from the king's table seemed less plump and full, while those that were with Daniel looked as if they had lived in plenty, and in all sorts of luxury. Arioch, from that time, securely took himself what the king sent every day from his supper, according to custom, to the children, but gave them the forementioned diet, while they had their souls in some measure more pure, and less burdened, and so fitter for learning, and had their bodies in better tune for hard labor; for they neither had the former oppressed and heavy with variety of meats, nor were the other effeminate on the same account; so they readily understood all the learning that was among the Hebrews, and among the Chaldeans, as especially did Daniel, who being already sufficiently skillful in wisdom, was very busy about the interpretation of dreams; and God manifested himself to him.

Now two years after the destruction of Egypt, king Nebuchadnezzar saw a wonderful dream, the accomplishment of which God showed him in his sleep; but when he arose out of his bed, he forgot the accomplishment. So he sent for the Chaldeans and magicians, and the prophets, and told them that he had seen a dream, and informed them that he had forgotten the accomplishment of what he had seen, and he enjoined them to tell him both what the dream was, and what was its signification; and they said that this was a thing impossible to be discovered by men; but they promised him, that if

he would explain to them what dream he had seen, they would tell him its signification. Hereupon he threatened to put them to death, unless they told him his dream; and he gave command to have them all put to death, since they confessed they could not do what they were commanded to do. Now when Daniel heard that the king had given a command, that all the wise men should be put to death, and that among them himself and his three kinsmen were in danger, he went to Arioch, who was captain of the king's guards, and desired to know of him what was the reason why the king had given command that all the wise men, and Chaldeans, and magicians should be slain. So when he had learned that the king had had a dream, and had forgotten it, and that when they were enjoined to inform the king of it, they had said they could not do it, and had thereby provoked him to anger, he desired of Arioch that he would go in to the king, and desire respite for the magicians for one night, and to put off their slaughter so long, for that he hoped within that time to obtain, by prayer to God, the knowledge of the dream. Accordingly, Arioch informed the king of what Daniel desired. So the king bid them delay the slaughter of the magicians till he knew what Daniel's promise would come to; but the young man retired to his own house, with his kinsmen, and besought God that whole night to discover the dream, and thereby deliver the magicians and Chaldeans, with whom they were themselves to perish, from the king's anger, by enabling him to declare his vision, and to make manifest what the king had seen the night before in his sleep, but had forgotten it. Accordingly, God, out of pity to those that were in danger, and out of regard to the wisdom of Daniel, made known



to him the dream and its interpretation, that so the king might understand by him its signification also. When Daniel had obtained this knowledge from God, he arose very joyful, and told it his brethren, and made them glad, and to hope well that they should now preserve their lives, of which they despaired before, and had their minds full of nothing but the thoughts of dying. So when he had with them returned thanks to God, who had commiserated their youth, when it was day he came to Arioch, and desired him to bring him to the king, because he would discover to him that dream which he had seen the night before.

When Daniel was come in to the king, he excused himself first, that he did not pretend to be wiser than the other Chaldeans and magicians, when, upon their entire inability to discover his dream, he was undertaking to inform him of it; for this was not by his own skill, or on account of his having better cultivated his understanding than the rest; but he said, "God hath had pity upon us, when we were in danger of death, and when I prayed for the life of myself, and of those of my own nation, hath made manifest to me both the dream, and the interpretation thereof; for I was not less concerned for thy glory than for the sorrow that we were by thee condemned to die, while thou didst so unjustly command men, both good and excellent in themselves, to be put to death, when thou enjoinedst them to do what was entirely above the reach of human wisdom, and requiredst of them what was only the work of God. Wherefore, as thou in thy sleep wast solicitous concerning those that should succeed thee in the government of the whole world, God was desirous to show thee all those

that should reign after thee, and to that end exhibited to thee the following dream: Thou seemedst to see a great image standing before thee, the head of which proved to be of gold, the shoulders and arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass, but the legs and the feet of iron; after which thou sawest a stone broken off from a mountain, which fell upon the image, and threw it down, and brake it to pieces, and did not permit any part of it to remain whole; but the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron, became smaller than meal, which, upon the blast of a violent wind, was by force carried away, and scattered abroad, but the stone did increase to such a degree, that the whole earth beneath it seemed to be filled therewith. This is the dream which thou sawest, and its interpretation is as follows: The head of gold denotes thee, and the kings of Babylon that have been before thee; but the two hands and arms signify this, that your government shall be dissolved by two kings; but another king that shall come from the west, armed with brass, shall destroy that government; and another government, that shall be like unto iron, shall put an end to the power of the former, and shall have dominion over all the earth, on account of the nature of iron, which is stronger than that of gold, of silver, and of brass." Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king but I do not think proper to relate it, since I have only undertaken to describe things past or things present, but not things that are future; yet if any one be so very desirous of knowing truth, as not to wave such points of curiosity, and cannot curb his inclination for understanding the uncertainties of futurity, and whether they will

happen or not, let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard this, and recollected his dream, he was astonished at the nature of Daniel, and fell upon his knee; and saluted Daniel in the manner that men worship God, and gave command that he should be sacrificed to as a god. And this was not all, for he also imposed the name, of his own god upon him, [Baltasar,] and made him and his kinsmen rulers of his whole kingdom; which kinsmen of his happened to fall into great danger by the envy and malice [of their enemies]; for they offended the king upon the occasion following: he made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits, and its breadth six cubits, and set it in the great plain of Babylon; and when he was going to dedicate the image, he invited the principal men out of all the earth that was under his dominions, and commanded them, in the first place, that when they should hear the sound of the trumpet, they should then fall down and worship the image; and he threatened, that those who did not so, should be cast into a fiery furnace. When therefore all the rest, upon the hearing of the sound of the trumpet, worshipped the image, they relate that Daniel's kinsmen did not do it, because they would not transgress the laws of their country. So these men were convicted, and cast immediately into the fire, but were saved by Divine Providence, and after a surprising manner escaped death, for the fire did not touch them; and I suppose that it touched them not, as if it reasoned with itself, that they were cast into it without any fault of theirs, and that

therefore it was too weak to burn the young men when they were in it. This was done by the power of God, who made their bodies so far superior to the fire, that it could not consume them. This it was which recommended them to the king as righteous men, and men beloved of God, on which account they continued in great esteem with him.

A little after this the king saw in his sleep again another vision; how he should fall from his dominion, and feed among the wild beasts, and that when he halt lived in this manner in the desert for seven years, he should recover his dominion again. When he had seen this dream, he called the magicians together again, and inquired of them about it, and desired them to tell him what it signified; but when none of them could find out the meaning of the dream, nor discover it to the king, Daniel was the only person that explained it; and as he foretold, so it came to pass; for after he had continued in the wilderness the forementioned interval of time, while no one durst attempt to seize his kingdom during those seven years, he prayed to God that he might recover his kingdom, and he returned to it. But let no one blame me for writing down every thing of this nature, as I find it in our ancient books; for as to that matter, I have plainly assured those that think me defective in any such point, or complain of my management, and have told them in the beginning of this history, that I intended to do no more than translate the Hebrew books into the Greek language, and promised them to explain those facts, without adding any thing to them of my own, or taking any thing away from there.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCERNING NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND HIS SUCCESSORS AND HOW THEIR GOVERNMENT WAS DISSOLVED BY THE PERSIANS; AND WHAT THINGS BEFELL DANIEL IN MEDIA; AND WHAT PROPHECIES HE DELIVERED THERE.

NOW when king Nebuchadnezzar had reigned forty-three years, he ended his life. He was an active man, and more fortunate than the kings that were before him. Now Berosus makes mention of his actions in the third book of his Chaldaic History, where he says thus: "When his father Nebuchodonosor [Nabopolassar] heard that the governor whom he had set over Egypt, and the places about Coelesyria and Phoenicia, had revolted from him, while he was not himself able any longer to undergo the hardships [of war], he committed to his son Nebuchadnezzar, who was still but a youth, some parts of his army, and sent them against him. So when Nebuchadnezzar had given battle, and fought with the rebel, he beat him, and reduced the country from under his subjection, and made it a branch of his own kingdom; but about that time it happened that his father Nebuchodonosor [Nabopolassar] fell ill, and ended his life in the city Babylon, when he had reigned twenty-one years; and when he was made sensible, as he was in a little time, that his father Nebuchodonosor [Nabopolassar] was dead, and having settled the affairs of Egypt, and the other countries, as also those that concerned the captive Jews, and Phoenicians, and Syrians, and those of the Egyptian nations; and having committed the conveyance of them to Babylon to certain of his friends, together with the gross of

his army, and the rest of their ammunition and provisions, he went himself hastily, accompanied with a few others, over the desert, and came to Babylon. So he took upon him the management of public affairs, and of the kingdom which had been kept for him by one that was the principal of the Chaldeans, and he received the entire dominions of his father, and appointed, that when the captives came, they should be placed as colonies, in the most proper places of Babylonia; but then he adorned the temple of Belus, and the rest of the temples, in a magnificent manner, with the spoils he had taken in the war. He also added another city to that which was there of old, and rebuilt it, that such as would besiege it hereafter might no more turn the course of the river, and thereby attack the city itself. He therefore built three walls round about the inner city, and three others about that which was the outer, and this he did with burnt brick. And after he had, after a becoming manner, walled the city, and adorned its gates gloriously, he built another palace before his father's palace, but so that they joined to it; to describe whose vast height and immense riches it would perhaps be too much for me to attempt; yet as large and lofty as they were, they were completed in fifteen days. He also erected elevated places for walking, of stone, and made it resemble mountains, and built it so that it might be planted with all sorts of trees. He also erected what was called a pensile paradise, because his wife was desirous to have things like her own country, she having been bred up in the palaces of Media." Megasthenes also, in his fourth book of his Accounts of India, makes mention. of these things, and thereby endeavors to show that

this king [Nebuchadnezzar] exceeded Hercules in fortitude, and in the greatness of his actions; for he saith that he conquered a great part of Libya and Iberia. Diocles also, in the second book of his Accounts of Persia, mentions this king; as does Philostrates in his Accounts both of India and of Phoenicia, say, that this king besieged Tyre thirteen years, while at the same time Ethbaal reigned at Tyre. These are all the histories that I have met with concerning this king.

But now, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach his son succeeded in the kingdom, who immediately set Jeconiah at liberty, and esteemed him among his most intimate friends. He also gave him many presents, and made him honorable above the rest of the kings that were in Babylon; for his father had not kept his faith with Jeconiah, when he voluntarily delivered up himself to him, with his wives and children, and his whole kindred, for the sake of his country, that it might not be taken by siege, and utterly destroyed, as we said before. When Evil-Merodach was dead, after a reign of eighteen years, Niglissar his son took the government, and retained it forty years, and then ended his life; and after him the succession in the kingdom came to his son Labosordacus, who continued in it in all but nine months; and when he was dead, it came to Baltasar, who by the Babylonians was called Naboandelus; against him did Cyrus, the king of Persia, and Darius, the king of Media, make war; and when he was besieged in Babylon, there happened a wonderful and prodigious vision. He was sat down at supper in a large room, and there were

a great many vessels of silver, such as were made for royal entertainments, and he had with him his concubines and his friends; whereupon he came to a resolution, and commanded that those vessels of God which Nebuchadnezzar had plundered out of Jerusalem, and had not made use of, but had put them into his own temple, should be brought out of that temple. He also grew so haughty as to proceed to use them in the midst of his cups, drinking out of them, and blaspheming against God. In the mean time, he saw a hand proceed out of the wall, and writing upon the wall certain syllables; at which sight, being disturbed, he called the magicians and Chaldeans together, and all that sort of men that are among these barbarians, and were able to interpret signs and dreams, that they might explain the writing to him. But when the magicians said they could discover nothing, nor did understand it, the king was in great disorder of mind, and under great trouble at this surprising accident; so he caused it to be proclaimed through all the country, and promised, that to him who could explain the writing, and give the signification couched therein, he would give him a golden chain for his neck, and leave to wear a purple garment, as did the kings of Chaldea, and would bestow on him the third part of his own dominions. When this proclamation was made, the magicians ran together more earnestly, and were very ambitious to find out the importance of the writing, but still hesitated about it as much as before. Now when the king's grandmother saw him cast down at this accident, she began to encourage him, and to say, that there was a certain captive who came from Judea, a Jew by birth, but brought away thence by Nebuchadnezzar when he had



destroyed Jerusalem, whose name was Daniel, a wise man, and one of great sagacity in finding out what was impossible for others to discover, and what was known to God alone, who brought to light and answered such questions to Nebuchadnezzar as no one else was able to answer when they were consulted. She therefore desired that he would send for him, and inquire of him concerning the writing, and to condemn the unskilfulness of those that could not find their meaning, and this, although what God signified thereby should be of a melancholy nature.

When Baltasar heard this, he called for Daniel; and when he had discoursed to him what he had learned concerning him and his wisdom, and how a Divine Spirit was with him, and that he alone was fully capable of finding out what others would never have thought of, he desired him to declare to him what this writing meant; that if he did so, he would give him leave to wear purple, and to put a chain of gold about his neck, and would bestow on him the third part of his dominion, as an honorary reward for his wisdom, that thereby he might become illustrious to those who saw him, and who inquired upon what occasion he obtained such honors. But Daniel desired that he would keep his gifts to himself; for what is the effect of wisdom and of Divine revelation admits of no gifts, and bestows its advantages on petitioners freely; but that still he would explain the writing to him; which denoted that he should soon die, and this because he had not learnt to honor God, and not to admit things above human nature, by what punishments his progenitor had undergone for the injuries he had offered to God; and because he had

quite forgotten how Nebuchadnezzar was removed to feed among wild beasts for his impieties, and did not recover his former life among men and his kingdom, but upon God's mercy to him, after many supplications and prayers; who did thereupon praise God all the days of his life, as one of almighty power, and who takes care of mankind. [He also put him in mind] how he had greatly blasphemed against God, and had made use of his vessels amongst his concubines; that therefore God saw this, and was angry with him, and declared by this writing beforehand what a sad conclusion of his life he should come to. And he explained the writing thus:" MANEH. This, if it be expounded in the Greek language, may signify a Number, because God hath numbered so long a time for thy life, and for thy government, and that there remains but a small portion. THEKEL This signifies a weight, and means that God hath weighed thy kingdom in a balance, and finds it going down already.--PHARES. This also, in the Greek tongue, denotes a fragment,. God will therefore break thy kingdom in pieces, and divide it among the Medes and Persians."

When Daniel had told the king that the writing upon the wall signified these events, Baltasar was in great sorrow and affliction, as was to be expected, when the interpretation was so heavy upon him. However, he did not refuse what he had promised Daniel, although he were become a foreteller of misfortunes to him, but bestowed it all upon him; as reasoning thus, that what he was to reward was peculiar to himself, and to fate, and did not belong to the prophet, but that it was the part of a good and a just man to give what he

had promised, although the events were of a melancholy nature. Accordingly, the king determined so to do. Now, after a little while, both himself and the city were taken by Cyrus, the king of Persia, who fought against him; for it was Baltasar, under whom Babylon was taken, when he had reigned seventeen years. And this is the end of the posterity of king Nebuchadnezzar, as history informs us; but when Babylon was taken by Darius, and when he, with his kinsman Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty-two years old. He was the son of Astyages, and had another name among the Greeks. Moreover, he took Daniel the prophet, and carried him with him into Media, and honored him very greatly, and kept him with him; for he was one of the three presidents whom he set over his three hundred and sixty provinces, for into so many did Darius part them.

However, while Daniel was in so great dignity, and in so great favor with Darius, and was alone intrusted with every thing by him, and having somewhat divine in him, he was envied by the rest; for those that see others in greater honor than themselves with kings envy them; and when those that were grieved at the great favor Daniel was in with Darius sought for an occasion against him, he afforded them no occasion at all, for he was above all the temptations of money, and despised bribery, and esteemed it a very base thing to take any thing by way of reward, even when it might be justly given him; he afforded those that envied him not the least handle for an accusation. So when they could find nothing for which they might calumniate him to the king, nothing that was

shameful or reproachful, and thereby deprive him of the honor he was in with him, they sought for some other method whereby they might destroy him. When therefore they saw that Daniel prayed to God three times a day, they thought they had gotten an occasion by which they might ruin him; so they came to Darius and told him that the princes and governors had thought proper to allow the multitude a relaxation for thirty days, that no one might offer a petition or prayer either to himself or to the gods, but that he who shall transgress this decree shall be east into the den of lions, and there perish."

Whereupon the king, not being acquainted with their wicked design, nor suspecting that it was a contrivance of theirs against Daniel, said he was pleased with this decree of theirs, and he promised to confirm what they desired; he also published an edict to promulgate to the people that decree which the princes had made. Accordingly, all the rest took care not to transgress those injunctions, and rested in quiet; but Daniel had no regard to them, but, as he was wont, he stood and prayed to God in the sight of them all; but the princes having met with the occasion they so earnestly sought to find against Daniel, came presently to the king, and accused him, that Daniel was the only person that transgressed the decree, while not one of the rest durst pray to their gods. This discovery they made, not because of his impiety, but because they had watched him, and observed him out of envy; for supposing that Darius did thus out of a greater kindness to him than they expected, and that he was ready to grant him pardon for this contempt of

his injunctions, and envying this very pardon to Daniel, they did not become more honorable to him, but desired he might be cast into the den of lions according to the law. So Darius, hoping that God would deliver him, and that he would undergo nothing that was terrible by the wild beasts, bid him bear this accident cheerfully. And when he was cast into the den, he put his seal to the stone that lay upon the mouth of the den, and went his way, but he passed all the night without food and without sleep, being in great distress for Daniel; but when it was day, he got up, and came to the den, and found the seal entire, which he had left the stone sealed withal; he also opened the seal, and cried out, and called to Daniel, and asked him if he were alive. And as soon as he heard the king's voice, and said that he had suffered no harm, the king gave order that he should be drawn up out of the den. Now when his enemies saw that Daniel had suffered nothing which was terrible, they would not own that he was preserved by God, and by his providence; but they said that the lions had been filled full with food, and on that account it was, as they supposed, that the lions would not touch Daniel, nor come to him; and this they alleged to the king. But the king, out of an abhorrence of their wickedness, gave order that they should throw in a great deal of flesh to the lions; and when they had filled themselves, he gave further order that Daniel's enemies should be cast into the den, that he might learn whether the lions, now they were full, would touch them or not. And it appeared plain to Darius, after the princes had been cast to the wild beasts, that it was God who preserved for the lions spared none of them, but tore them all to pieces, as if they had

been very hungry, and wanted food. I suppose therefore it was not their hunger, which had been a little before satisfied with abundance of flesh, but the wickedness of these men, that provoked them [to destroy the princes]; for if it so please God, that wickedness might, by even those irrational creatures, be esteemed a plain foundation for their punishment.

When therefore those that had intended thus to destroy Daniel by treachery were themselves destroyed, king Darius sent [letters] over all the country, and praised that God whom Daniel worshipped, and said that he was the only true God, and had all power. He had also Daniel in very great esteem, and made him the principal of his friends. Now when Daniel was become so illustrious and famous, on account of the opinion men had that he was beloved of God, he built a tower at Ecbatana, in Media: it was a most elegant building, and wonderfully made, and it is still remaining, and preserved to this day; and to such as see it, it appears to have been lately built, and to have been no older than that very day when any one looks upon it, it is so fresh flourishing, and beautiful, and no way grown old in so long time; for buildings suffer the same as men do, they grow old as well as they, and by numbers of years their strength is dissolved, and their beauty withered. Now they bury the kings of Media, of Persia, and Parthia in this tower to this day, and he who was entrusted with the care of it was a Jewish priest; which thing is also observed to this day. But it is fit to give an account of what this man did, which is most admirable to hear, for he was so happy as to have strange revelations

made to him, and those as to one of the greatest of the prophets, insomuch, that while he was alive he had the esteem and applause both of the kings and of the multitude; and now he is dead, he retains a remembrance that will never fail, for the several books that he wrote and left behind him are still read by us till this time; and from them we believe that Daniel conversed with God; for he did not only prophesy of future events, as did the other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment. And while prophets used to foretell misfortunes, and on that account were disagreeable both to the kings and to the multitude, Daniel was to them a prophet of good things, and this to such a degree, that by the agreeable nature of his predictions, he procured the goodwill of all men; and by the accomplishment of them, he procured the belief of their truth, and the opinion of [a sort of] divinity for himself, among the multitude. He also wrote and left behind him what made manifest the accuracy and undeniable veracity of his predictions; for he saith, that when he was in Susa, the metropolis of Persia, and went out into the field with his companions, there was, on the sudden, a motion and concussion of the earth, and that he was left alone by himself, his friends fleeing away from him, and that he was disturbed, and fell on his face, and on his two hands, and that a certain person touched him, and, at the same time, bid him rise, and see what would befall his countrymen after many generations. He also related, that when he stood up, he was shown a great rain, with many horns growing out of his head, and that the last was higher than the rest: that after this he looked to the west, and saw a he-goat carried

through the air from that quarter; that he rushed upon the ram with violence, and smote him twice with his horns, and overthrew him to the ground, and trampled upon him: that afterward he saw a very great horn growing out of the head of the he-goat, and that when it was broken off, four horns grew up that were exposed to each of the four winds, and he wrote that out of them arose another lesser horn, which, as he said, waxed great; and that God showed to him that it should fight against his nation, and take their city by force, and bring the temple worship to confusion, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered for one thousand two hundred and ninety-six days. Daniel wrote that he saw these visions in the Plain of Susa; and he hath informed us that God interpreted the appearance of this vision after the following manner: He said that the ram signified the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians, and the horns those kings that were to reign in them; and that the last horn signified the last king, and that he should exceed all the kings in riches and glory: that the he-goat signified that one should come and reign from the Greeks, who should twice fight with the Persian, and overcome him in battle, and should receive his entire dominion: that by the great horn which sprang out of the forehead of the he-goat was meant the first king; and that the springing up of four horns upon its falling off, and the conversion of every one of them to the four quarters of the earth, signified the successors that should arise after the death of the first king, and the partition of the kingdom among them, and that they should be neither his children, nor of his kindred, that should reign over the habitable earth for many years; and that



from among them there should arise a certain king that should overcome our nation and their laws, and should take away their political government, and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered for three years' time. And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct it, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish, and come to nought. So that, by the forementioned predictions of Daniel, those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine that God exercises no providence over human affairs; for if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his

prophecy. Now as to myself, I have so described these matters as I have found them and read them; but if any one is inclined to another opinion about them, let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me.

