

The striking similarities of this story to that of the tower of Babel are, outside of the site, the extremely ambitious nature of this Ziggurat of Borsippa which Nebuchadrezzar found in ruins, and the fact that after it had been raised to a great height the work was suddenly abandoned, leaving the building in such an incomplete condition that its ruin was inevitable.

As Nebuchadrezzar found it, the tower was little more than an enormous mass of ruins. He built it over entirely, and made it a seven-staged Ziggurat. It is the ruins of Nebuchadrezzar's Ziggurat which constitute the present Birs Nimrud, and the explorations which have been conducted there revealed the seven stages still existing.

Now Nebuchadrezzar gives no similar description of the ruined and incomplete condition of any other Ziggurat which he rebuilt. He rebuilt among other places the Ziggurat of Esaggil in Babylon, but he has nothing to tell us of its ruined condition. Evidently the ruined condition of the Ziggurat at Borsippa, in connection with its great size and ambitious design, made a strong impression upon his mind, or the mind of the writer of his inscription. This is not a positive proof that it made a similar impression on the world at large, yet the natural induction is that the ruined condition of this Ziggurat was notorious and impressed all beholders. How long before the time of Nebuchadrezzar it had fallen into such a condition it is impossible from our present information to say. Nebuchadrezzar says "long since," and does not mention the name of the original builder, calling him merely a "former king," as though its original construction were a thing of the remote past, the details of which were long since forgotten. But whatever the date, Nebuchadrezzar's account of the ruins of this Ziggurat corresponds so well with the story of the eleventh chapter of Genesis that one is inclined to attach that story at least tentatively to this ruin.

I need scarcely call attention to the fact that the story, as we know it in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, comes from the Yahwistic narrative, and was written down probably somewhere in the early part of the eighth century before Christ, two hundred years or so before Nebuchadrezzar. How much older the story itself may be it is difficult to say. It certainly, however, implies connection by travelers, merchants, and the like with Babylonia, from which place the story would seem to have been imported into Judæa.

**2. The Three Children in the Fiery Furnace** (Dan. iii.; Jer. xxix. 22).—It is a matter of great surprise to me that I have

never seen these passages brought into conjunction. Suppose we turn first to the passage in Jeremiah, which is much the older of the two. Jeremiah, we are told, addressed a letter to the captive Jews in Babylonia, bidding them to build houses and dwell in them; and to plant gardens and eat the fruits thereof; to take wives and beget sons and daughters; and to take wives and husbands for their sons and daughters, so that they also might have sons and daughters. He bids them to seek the peace of the land where they are, and not to listen to the prophets and diviners among them, and tells them, "After seventy years be accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." Then he mentions by name Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, who have evidently been stirring up the Jews in Babylonia to revolt against Nebuchadrezzar, saying that they are prophesying a lie, and that Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, shall slay them, and that they shall become a byword to all the captives of Judah who are there in Babylon, saying, "The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire."

What put into Jeremiah's head the idea that these men would be punished in such a manner? Presumably the fact that Nebuchadrezzar was known to have made use before of this form of punishment. Giesebrecht in his commentary on Jeremiah refers to "similar Persian customs," and I suppose it probable that this barbarous method of punishment by burning can be established as practised in that and surrounding countries at various times. But, however that may be, the fact that this statement in Jeremiah's letter was preserved and has been handed down to us may fairly be regarded as evidence that this was no idle wish of Jeremiah, but that this punishment was actually inflicted upon these two prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah.

Now it must be remembered that the position which these two men represented was the so-called patriotic position of that day, while that of Jeremiah was the so-called unpatriotic position. He was often in a minority of one or two in advocating the policy of submission. He was regarded by the bulk of his compatriots as a 'copperhead,' to use an expressive term of our civil war. The Babylonians seem on the other hand to have regarded him as a sort of secret ally, and after the capture of Jerusalem he was treated by them with marked honor.

The book of Daniel made over again for a special purpose traditions which had come down, sometimes in a very confused form, from an

earlier period. It seems to me that in the story contained in the third chapter of Daniel, of the three children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who were cast into the fiery furnace and miraculously saved, we have the legendary account of Nebuchadrezzar's treatment of Ahab and Zedekiah, or some of their compeers. It has come down to us through the medium of the popular, patriotic party, the party opposed by Jeremiah, but the party which was both the most numerous and the most influential in his time.

While it has no direct bearing on this subject of the burning of the prophets, nevertheless, since it is interesting as showing the cruel methods of punishment in Babylonia, and the disregard of human life there prevalent from time immemorial, I may add that Mr. Haynes in excavating the Ziggurat of the Temple of Bel at Nippur discovered a quantity of skulls built in with the bricks. They may have been 'striking' workmen who were thus summarily dealt with, or they may have been offenders of some other sort. The find was interesting merely as showing the barbarous disregard of life, and the cruelty of the punishments inflicted in Babylonia in those days.

**3. The Nebuchadrezzars of Daniel.** — History is strangely turned about and confused in the book of Daniel. A curious example of this confusion we find in the relation of the conquest of Belshazzar by Darius. According to the book of Daniel, Nebuchadrezzar was succeeded by his son Belshazzar, and Belshazzar was conquered and slain by "Darius the Mede." Now no Belshazzar son of Nebuchadrezzar ever reigned in Babylon, and the only Darius who can possibly be intended by the designation "Darius the Mede" is Darius Hystaspes, who was not an almost immediate successor of Nebuchadrezzar, but was separated from him by several reigns; neither was it he who overthrew the Babylonian empire and established the rule of the "Medes and Persians." Nebuchadrezzar was succeeded by Evil-Merodach, he by Neriglissar, he by Labashi-Marduk, and he by Nabonidus, who was overthrown by Cyrus. Cyrus was succeeded by Cambyses, he by Pseudo-Smerdis, and he by Darius. It is difficult, at first sight certainly, to understand how in the stories contained in the book of Daniel history can have become so confused as to bring Darius into such close proximity to Nebuchadrezzar, and to make him the conqueror of Babylon in the time of Nebuchadrezzar's son. It seems to me that some light is thrown upon this difficulty by the Behistun inscription. In this inscription (l. 31 ff.) we read this account of a revolt against Darius in Babylon: