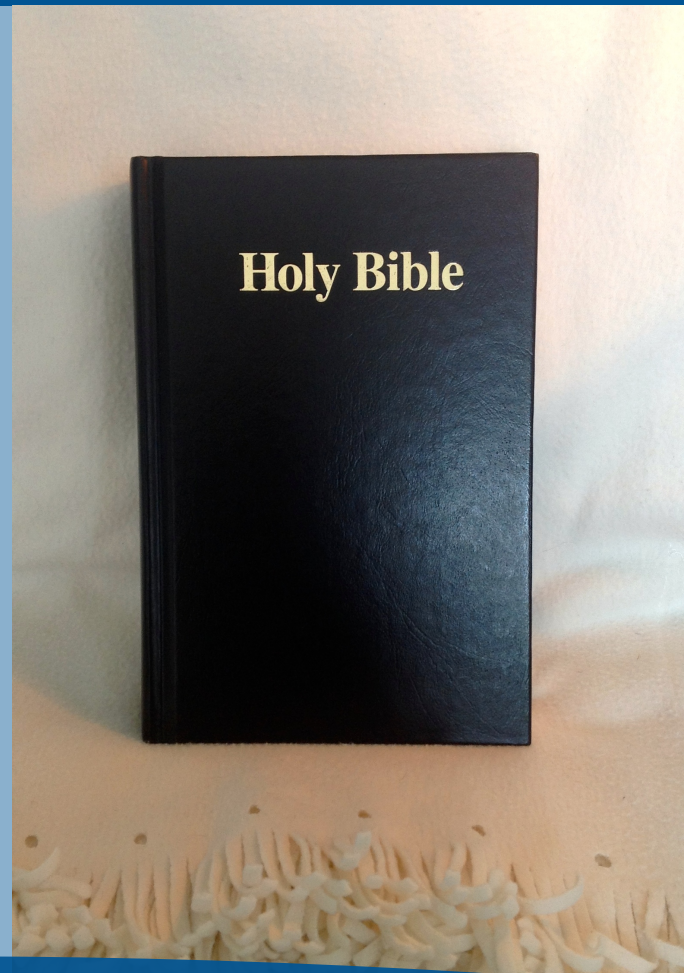


Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself

Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

Exploring Historical Context



Page 1

We begin today, by referring to the land promised to Abraham, because in him and his descendants we have a significant Historical Context.

Genesis 15:

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Explanation of **Genesis 15:13-16**

verse **13** speaks of Abram's descendants through the line of Jacob- whose name was changed to Israel- becoming slaves in Egypt.

verse **14** speaks of God sending 10 plagues upon Egypt to effect the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt.

verse **15** shows Abram that all this will occur after his death.

verse **16** assured Abram that his descendants would settle in the land of the Amorites (known as Canaan-and later Israel).

When they came out of Egypt, the following map shows how the 12 tribes of Israel were distributed in the land of promise. At this point the land of promise was named Israel.

450 years after the 12 tribes of Israel first settled in the Promised Land, the God of Israel chose Judah as the royal tribe, and the house of king David as the royal house. In those days God also chose mount Zion in Jerusalem, as the place where His temple would be, and from where his laws - known as the law of Moses - would be administered, by His chosen Priesthood of the tribe of Levi. In view of God's involvement in all these arrangements, David, through the spirit, calls his kingdom "the kingdom of the Lord" ie. the kingdom of God; for near the end of his life, King David appointed Solomon to succeed him, in the following terms:

1 Chronicles 28:5 And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of **the kingdom of the LORD** over Israel.

David was also made aware of the significance of his kingdom, earlier In his reign, when God made profound promises to him, as recorded in 2Samuel 7 as follows:

2 Samuel 7:12-16

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom **for ever**.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever **before thee**: thy throne shall be established **for ever**.

If we consider the above promises, we observe the following:

FIRST verses 12,13:

That David would have a final Messianic descendant who would establish and rule his kingdom ("the kingdom of the LORD" 1 Chronicles 28:5) "for ever"

SECOND verse 14,15:

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son." That is; although being, (through his mother), a descendant of king David, the Messiah would also be the son of God. ("If he commit iniquity" is better rendered "in his suffering for iniquity").

THIRD verse 16:

"thy kingdom shall be established for ever **before thee**". This signifies '**in his presence**', which means David will be raised from the dead when the time comes for this Messianic promise to be fulfilled 'in his presence'. And that it shall be so "for ever".

In Hebrews 1:5 Paul says Christ is greater than the angels in the following terms:

Hebrews 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?** And again, **I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?**

Here Paul quotes 2 Samuel 7:14 as proof that Christ is greater than the angels with the words: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son". Also here Paul quotes from the second Psalm in the words: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee". Regarding Christ, Paul further quotes from the second Psalm in **Hebrews 5:**

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, **Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.**

Paul quotes this again in:

Acts 13:

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in **the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.**

So Paul shows that the promises to King David (1,000 BC) in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2, are Messianic prophecies, of the end times.

If we consider Psalm 2 we shall see it is Messianic:

Psalm 2:

:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

:8 Ask of me, and I shall give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession.

:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Explanation:

verse 6; "Zion" at Jerusalem is where Davids throne was.

Verse 7; "Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee." is applied to Christ by Paul.

Verse 9; "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Are applied by Jesus to himself, and his followers, in The Book of Revelation 2:27, as follows:

Revelation 2

: 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

: 28 And I will give him the morning star.

: 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

So we find that the promises, made by God to King David, form part of the historical context for the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, and we see that these Messianic promises were repeated in part, in the New Testament, for example:-

Luke 1

:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS

:32 He shall be great, and shall be called **the Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**:

:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end**

By the time of Christ's birth, the Davidic throne had been out of existence for 600 years. So let us briefly, from the bible, consider the history of the kingdom of Israel up to the time of Christ.

Daniel 1:

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto 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.

3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

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

This occurred around 600 BC. 19 years later, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Abolished the Davidic throne, destroyed the Temple, and carried all the people captive to Babylon, where they remained for 70 years until the Babylonian empire was overthrown. Throughout this period, Daniel (verse 6) was influential as a prophet and an official in the Babylonian court. He interprets a prophetic dream in:

Daniel 2:

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

Here Daniel is required to interpret a prophetic dream which God had given to the king of Babylon, which involved a symbolic image like we have here.



By this time the Babylonians had rebelled against the Assyrian empire, and taken it over. The Assyrio-Babylonian empire ruled over all the civilised parts of the earth, and is counted by Historians as the first of the such world empires.

Daniel here foretells the coming of the world empires that were to follow the Babylonian, (all of which in turn would rule over the land Israel). The Persian empire succeeded the Babylonian; and then there followed the “third kingdom of brass, which... bear rule over all the earth.” (verse 39) whose armies were known as the ‘brazen coated Greeks’(brass-copper being the predominant metal of their armaments and civilisation). After the death of Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persian empire, the Greek empire fragmented, giving rise, in time, to the the Roman empire, which predominated at the time of Christ; so of Rome it says:

Daniel 2:

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

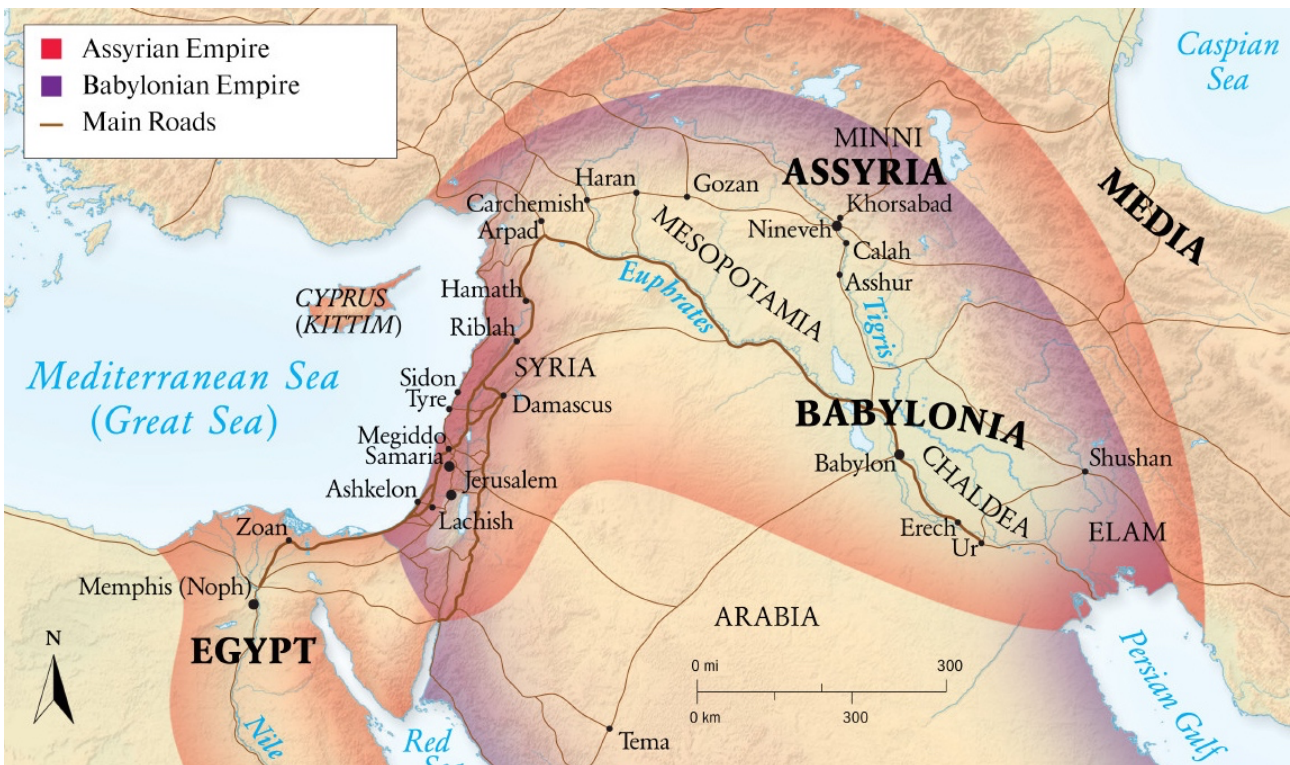
42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

verses 41,42 foretell the eventual breakup of the Roman empire, and the emergence of the kingdoms of Europe, etc. Let us look at this in more detail:



This prophecy in Daniel, like many Old Testament prophecies, brings things up to the end times.

Here we have the territory of the 1st world empire the **Babylonian Empire**



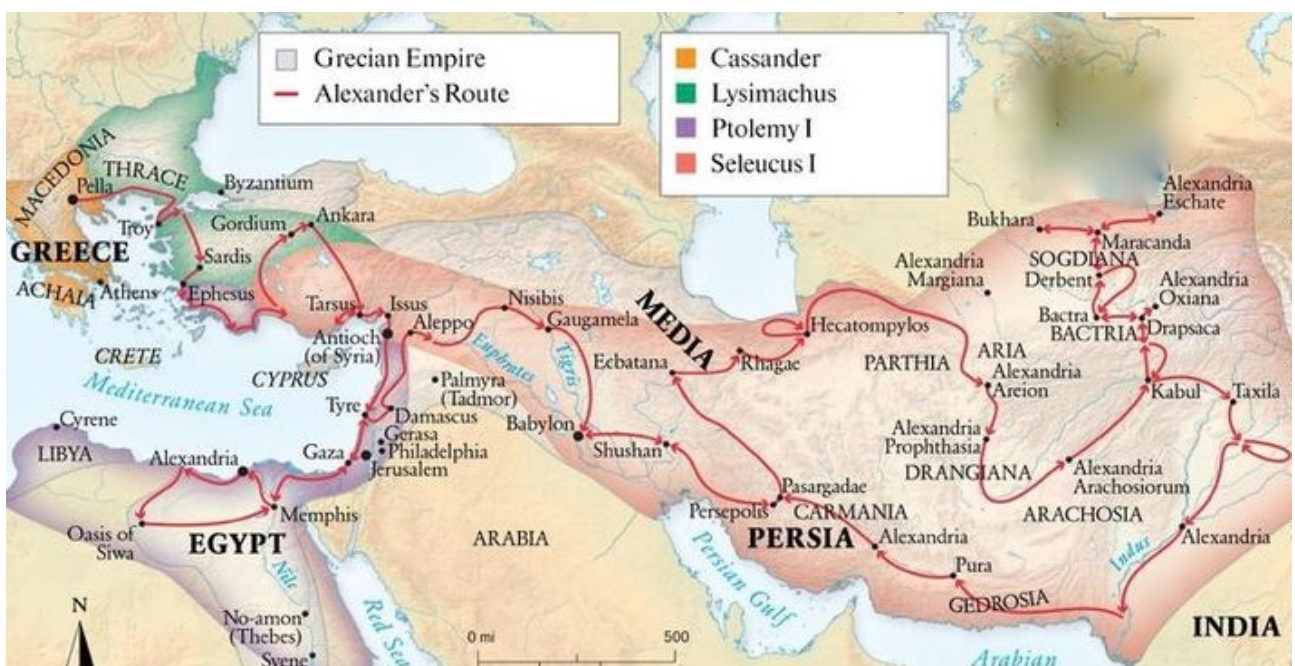
As time went on and civilisation expanded, so did the territories of the successive world empires, the Persian being the 2nd one 536 BC.

Medo Persian Empire



The 3rd one, Alexander's empire reached its peak around 330 BC. After his death, the empire eventually became 4 kingdoms ruled by four of his generals, as listed here. The land of Israel was continually fought over by the Ptolemies and the Selucides, and suffering as a consequence. Such wars between the divided Greek empire, gave rise to the Roman empire as the 4th world empire around 27 BC

Greek Empire



Roman Empire



The fall of the Roman empire gave rise a mixture of strong and weak kingdoms, especially in Europe. This was represented in Daniel's image as the feet and toes part of Iron and part of clay. What the king of Babylon then saw in his dream was a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, which struck the image on its feet, caused it to fall and break up- well, let Daniel take up the matter:

Daniel 2:

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand **for ever**.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

This links with the words of Jesus as we did read in Revelation chapter 2:26-29, and, to close with, what it further says in chapter 11

Revelation 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

So we see how the historical context links with New Testament doctrine.