THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

400 Years Of God’s Silence
THE OLD BABYLONIAN HISTORY

- The city of Babylon makes its first appearance in our sources after the fall of the Empire of the Third Dynasty of Ur, which had ruled the city states of the alluvial plain between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris for more than a century (2112-2004?).
- An agricultural crisis meant the end of this centralized state, and several more or less nomadic tribes settled in southern Mesopotamia.
- One of these was the nation of the Amorites ("westerners"), which took over Isin, Larsa, and Babylon.
  - Their kings are known as the First Dynasty of Babylon (1894-1595?).
The area was reunited by Hammurabi, a king of Babylon of Amorite descent (1792-1750?). From his reign on, the alluvial plain of southern Iraq was called, with a deliberate archaism, Māt Akkadī, "the country of Akkad", after the city that had united the region centuries before.

We call it Babylonia. It is one of the most fertile and rich parts of the ancient world.

First, Babylon and its ally Larsa fought a defensive war against Elam, the archenemy of Akkad. After this war had been brought to a successful end, Hammurabi turned against Larsa, and defeated its king Rim-Sin. This scenario was repeated.

Together with king Zimrilim of Mari, Hammurabi waged war against Aššur, and after success had been achieved, the Babylonians attacked their ally. Mari was sacked. Other wars were fought against Jamšad (Aleppo), Elam, Ešnunna, and the mountain tribes in the Zagros.

Babylon now was the capital of the entire region between Harran in the northwest and the Persian Gulf in the southeast.
The Old Babylonian History

Cities of Early Mesopotamia
Hammurabi's successes became the problems of his successors. After the annexation of Mari in the northwest and Ešnunna in the east, there was no buffer against the increasing power of the Hittite Empire (in Anatolia) and the Kassite tribes in the Zagros.

It was impossible for the successors of Hammurabi to fight against all these enemies at the same time, and they started to loose grip.

In the deep south, we find independent rulers (the Sea Land Dynasty).

The enemies sometimes invaded Babylonia, and in 1595 (?), the Hittite king Mursilis I advanced along the Euphrates, sacked Babylon, and even took away the statue of the supreme god of Babylonia, Marduk, from its temple, the Esagils.
THE OLD BABYLONIAN HISTORY
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The Empire of Hammurabi of Babylon
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THE PERIOD THAT FOLLOWED WAS THE KASSITE'S
THE OLD BABYLONIAN HISTORY

- After the decline of Mitanni, the Middle-Assyrian Empire became powerful, and in the thirteenth century, the Babylonian rulers had to respect the claims of Assyrian kings like Shalmaneser and Tikulti-Ninurta. The latter captured Babylon and took away the image of Marduk, but the occupation of Babylonia and the exile of the god did not last long.

- Another local power was Elam. In the twelfth century, its armies looted Babylon. Now it was their turn to capture the statue. (And a lot of other things: the famous stele with the laws of king Hammurabi was excavated in the Elamite capital Susa.)
The Kassite kings were replaced as rulers of southern Mesopotamia by the Second Dynasty of Isin.

Under Nebuchadnezzar I (1126-1104), the Babylonians advanced to Elam, and received back the statue of Marduk. However, this revival was brief.

In the eleventh century, Aramaeans infiltrated Babylonia, and the central government disappeared for some time. The cities were independent again.

There are few sources, which suggests that the country was unable to pay for scribes. This is not unlike the situation in Assyria, which suffered from decline after the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076), or the more western parts of the ancient world, where the centuries between 1100 and 800 are often called "the dark ages".
THE MIDDLE BABYLONIAN HISTORY

- What is certain, however, is that southwest of Babylonia, a new group of people settled, the Chaldaeans, who were related to the Aramaeans.
- The relations between the Babylonians, who had already assimilated the Amorites and Kassites, and the new intruders were at first hostile, but the Chaldaeans increasingly babylonized.
- Assyrian Period
- The Assyrians were the first to recover from the recession. Under king Aššurnasirpal II (883-859), their empire started to grow again, and this expansion continued during the reigns of his successors. One of the great challenges was the integration of Babylonia, which was Assyria's twin-culture and too highly esteemed to be reduced to the status of province. Tiglath-pileser III (744-727) sought a solution in a "double monarchy": he united the two countries in a personal union.
Soon, new measures had to be taken. Twice, the Babylonians claimed their independence under king Marduk-apla-iddin (721-710 and 703; the Biblical Merodach Baladan).

The second revolt was punished harshly by the Assyrian leader Sennacherib, who sacked the city and deported its inhabitants to Nineveh. This new policy was soon regretted. Sennacherib's successor Esarhaddon allowed the people to return. Yet, the relation between Assyria and the Babylonians remained tense. Aššurbanipal (668-631) thought he solved the problem by making his brother Šamaš-šuma-ukin viceroy of the southern part of Mesopotamia, but this turned out to be the wrong idea too: while the king of Assyria was involved in other wars, the Babylonian king revolted, and it took Aššurbanipal several years before he had restored order (648; ABC 15). It has been assumed that the man who is called the successor of Šamaš-šuma-ukin, Kandalanu, is in fact the same as the Assyrian king, although it is certain that the viceroy was still alive in 627, whereas no documents of Aššurbanipal are known after 631.
The Babylonian Empire

Timeline for Babylonian Empire

612 BC  Nabopolassar defeats Assyria and establishes Neo-Babylonian Empire

607 BC  Nabopolassar dies and his son Nebuchadnezzar begins to rule

605 BC  Nebuchadnezzar defeats Ramses the Great at Carchemish

588 BC  Peace treaty between Nebuchadnezzar and Ramses

585 BC  Babylon conquers Jerusalem and carries Jews off to captivity

539 BC  Babylon is conquered by the Persians
THE NEO BABYLONIAN PERIOD

- 625 - 605 – Nabopolassar - Viceroy of Babylon, threw off the yoke of Assyria and established the independence of Babylon. Destroyed Nineveh with Cyaxeres the Mede in 612 B.C. (Nahum, Isaiah 13-14).
- 605 – 562 – Nebuchadnezzar - Greatest of all Babylonian Kings, he extends the power of Babylon over the then known world. Jerusalem falls at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. He captures Judah's King Jehoiachin, who as prisoner, is taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar sets up Zedekiah as new King of Judah. The Jews, including the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel, are taken into captivity. King Zedekiah sits on the throne for eleven years before Nebuchadnezzar returns to destroy both the city of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 B.C.
  - 2Kings 24-25 and book of Daniel. Daniel became one of chief advisers. His influence probably eased the lot of Jewish captives.
Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried away the Jewish people to Babylon in 585 BC.

His dynasty was to last only another 50 years until in the days of the Babylonian king Belshazzar the Persians conquered the seemingly impregnable city of Babylon.

- Isaiah made this prophecy about Babylon, "It will never be inhabited or dwelt in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there" (Isa.13:20-21).

Unlike the ruins of Nineveh where sheep now graze local shepherds completely avoid the ruins of Babylon believing the place to be demon-infested.

Today the ruined city of Babylon is being restored by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities.
THE NEO BABYLONIAN PERIOD

- 561 - 560 - Evil-Merodach - (Amel-Marduk)

- 559 – 556 - Nergal-shar-usur - (Nergalsharezer) -

- 555 – 539 – Nabonidus - Babylon fell and world supremacy passed on to the Persians. The king probably lived in retirement outside of Babylon.

- 538 – 536 – Belshazzar - Son of Nabonidus and co-regent with his father. He was in control of army and the government, and surrendered to Cyrus. Saw God's handwriting on the wall during a feast (Daniel 5). Daniel had been in Babylon for 70 years and was third in command (Daniel 5:16, 29).

- **Babylon, oppressor of God's Old Testament people. - Revelation 17**
Map 7b: BABYLONIAN EMPIRE (c. 600 B.C.)

- Exiles from Judah into Babylonian captivity (605, 597, 586 B.C.)
- Return of exiles under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (537 B.C.)
- Return of exiles under Ezra (458 B.C.) and Nehemiah (445 B.C.)
THE NEO BABYLONIAN PERIOD

- The Babylonian Empire was the most powerful state in the ancient world after the fall of the Assyrian empire (612 BCE).
- Its capital Babylon was beautifully adorned by king Nebuchadnezzar, who erected several famous buildings. Even after the Babylonian Empire had been overthrown by the Persian king Cyrus the Great (539), the city itself remained an important cultural center.
THE NEO BABYLONIAN PERIOD
THE NEO BABYLONIAN PERIOD
Can be Seen In The Berlin Museum in Germany Today
THE BABYLONIAN god’s

• **Anshar** - The Babylonian god Anshar is the son of Tiamat and Apsu, brother and husband of Kishar.

• **Anu (An)** - The son of Anshar and Kishar. He is the chief god of the Great Triad, with Ea and Enlil. In Sumerian mythology, he was the god of sky, husband of Nintu (Ki), and the father and ruler of all gods. One of four Sumerian creating gods.

• **Apsu** - The Babylonian god Apsu is Tiamat's husband, the ruler of gods and underworld oceans. Father of Lahmu, Lahamu, Anshar and Kishar. Ea killed him.

• **Damkina** - Damkina is the Babylonian earth mother goddess, the wife of Ea and mother of Marduk.
**Ea**
The Babylonian god Ea is the son of Anu and husband of Damkina, father of Marduk, god of wisdom, arts and crafts. Ea is the ruler of all gods after Apsu. In the Great Triad, Ea is the third with Anu and Enlil. In the Sumerian pantheon, Ea is the son of Nintu.

**Enlil**
Enlil is the Babylonian god of the air between earth and sky. In Sumerian mythology he was the son of An and Nintu, the god of air and agriculture, and eventually co-ruler of the gods along with Anu. One of four Sumerian creating gods.

**Ishtar (Inanna)**
Inanna is a great goddess, the goddess of love and war. She descended to the Underworld to try to regain her lover.
THE BABYLONIAN god’s

- **Kingu (Qingu)**
  Kingu is a dragon commander of Tiamat's forces against Marduk. Kingu is the counterpart of the sky god Anu on the side of darkness. He may have been Tiamat's second husband. Ea fashioned humans from his blood when Kingu was ordered to be sacrificed.

- **Kishar**
  The Babylonian goddess Kishar is the daughter of Tiamat and Apsu, sister and wife of Anshar.

- **Marduk**
THE BABYLONIAN god’s

- **Mummu (Mommu)**
  The Babylonian god Mummu is the son of Tiamat and Anu or their chamberlain/intermediary. He is the god of mist and a craftsman god.

- In one of the Babylonian creation stories, the original beings were Apsu, Mommu, and Tiamat. From them came the demons and the gods. The gods were Lakhmu, Lakhame, Ashar, Kishar, Anu, Ea, and others. Tiamat became a power of evil and Ea and followers, a power of good. This is the version on Ashurbaipal's library's Creation from about 650 B.C. There are other versions from Berosus (280 B.C.) and Damascius (6th century A.D.).

- **Nintu (Ki)**
  A great Sumerian goddess, wife of Anu and mother of all gods, she created humans from clay. One of four Sumerian creating gods.
THE BABYLONIAN god’s

- **Shamash**
  Son of Sin, god of the sun who protects the poor and travelers.

- **Sin**
  Moon god and the father of Shamash; counterpart of the Sumerian Nanna.

- **Tiamat**
  Tiamat is the Babylonian Great Goddess, counterpart of Sumerian Nintu. Primeval chaos. Destroyed by her children to create the world