

Nebuccadnezar (605 – 562 BC)

The Babylonians invaded Judah during the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605BC). 10,000 Jews were taken into captivity.



Jews being taken as prisoners to Babylon

Babylon

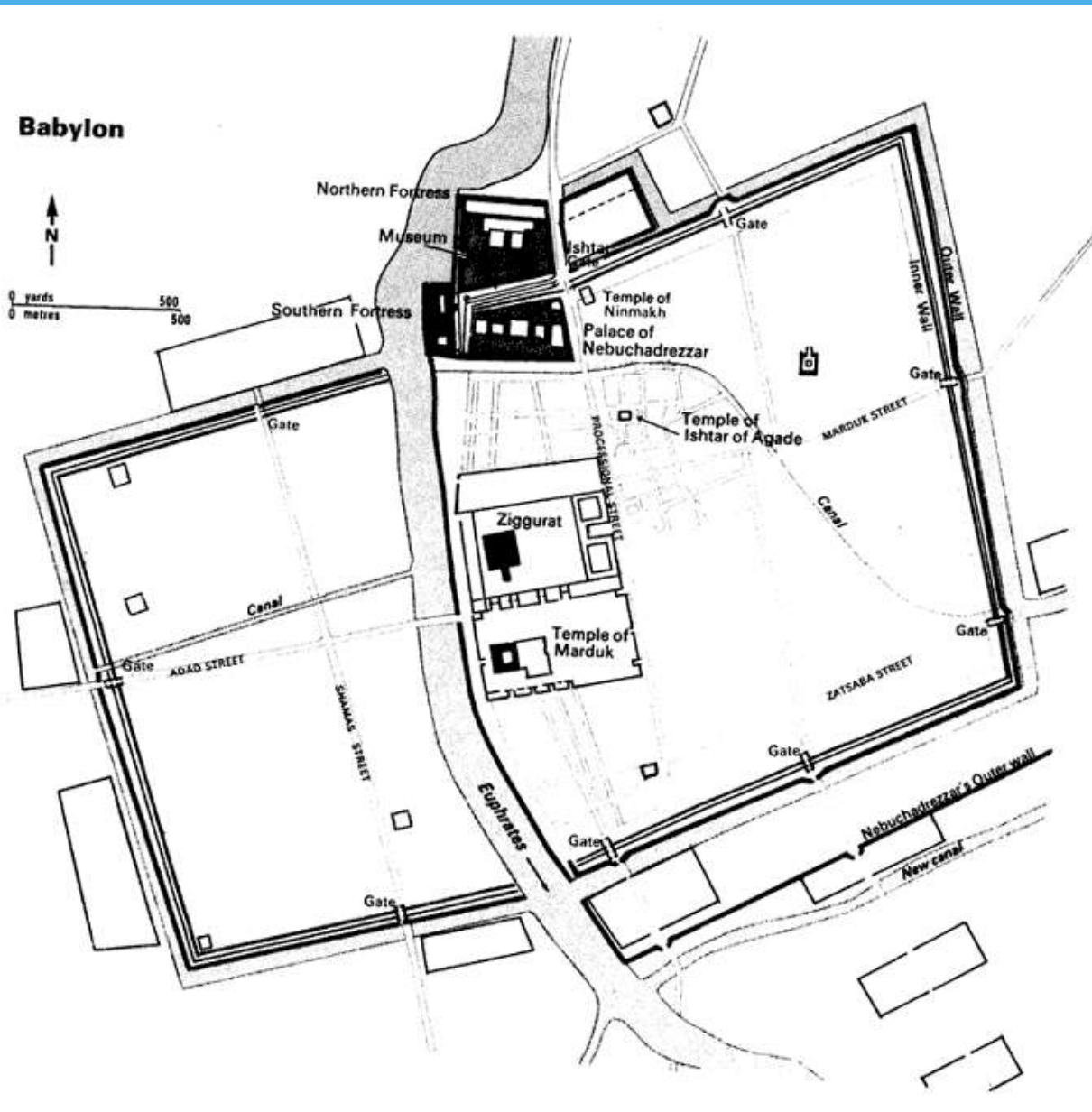
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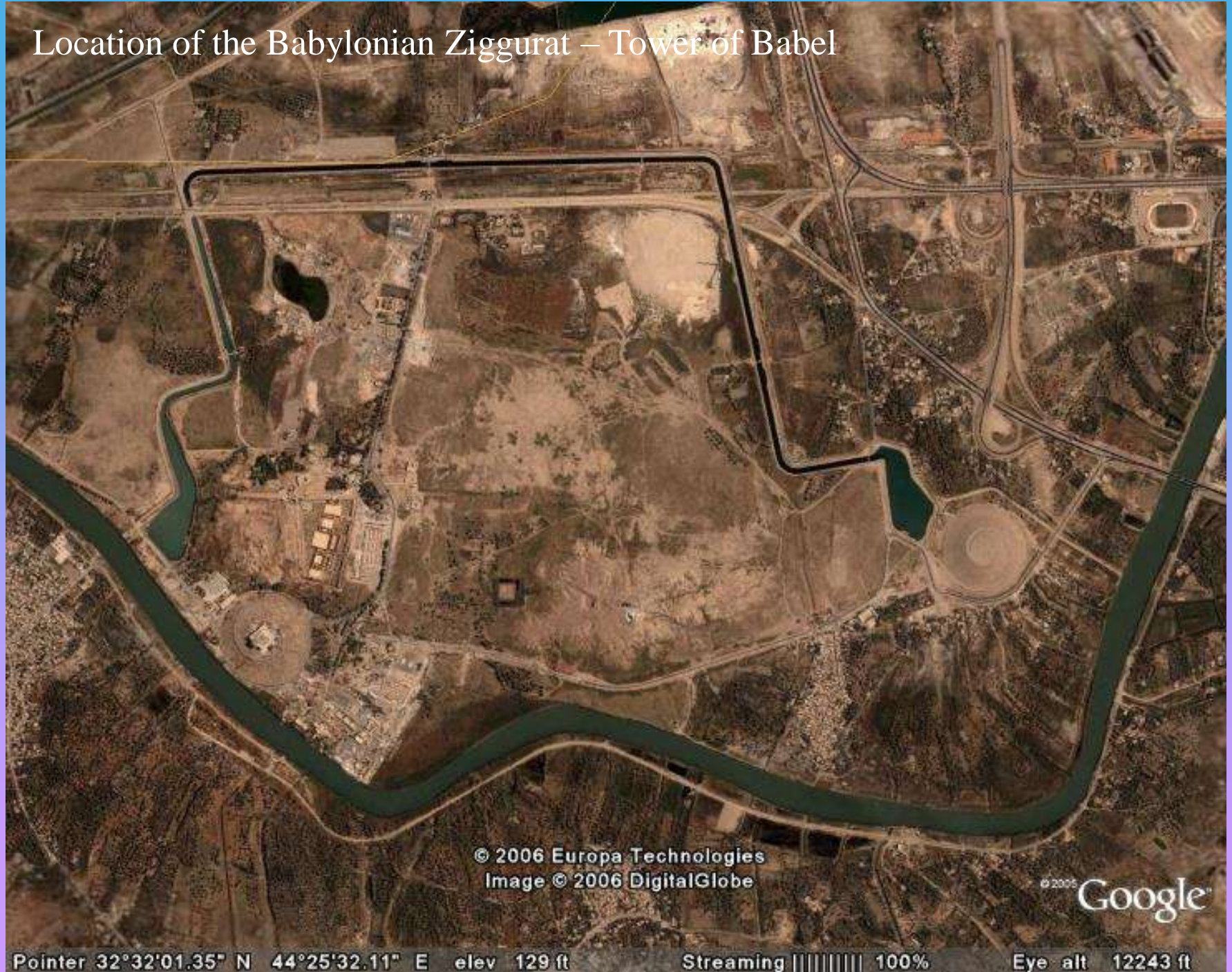
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The hanging gardens built by Nebuchadnezzar in 580 BC for his wife, Amytis.

They were located in the NE corner of his palace near to the Ishtar Gate.

Location of the Babylonian Ziggurat – Tower of Babel



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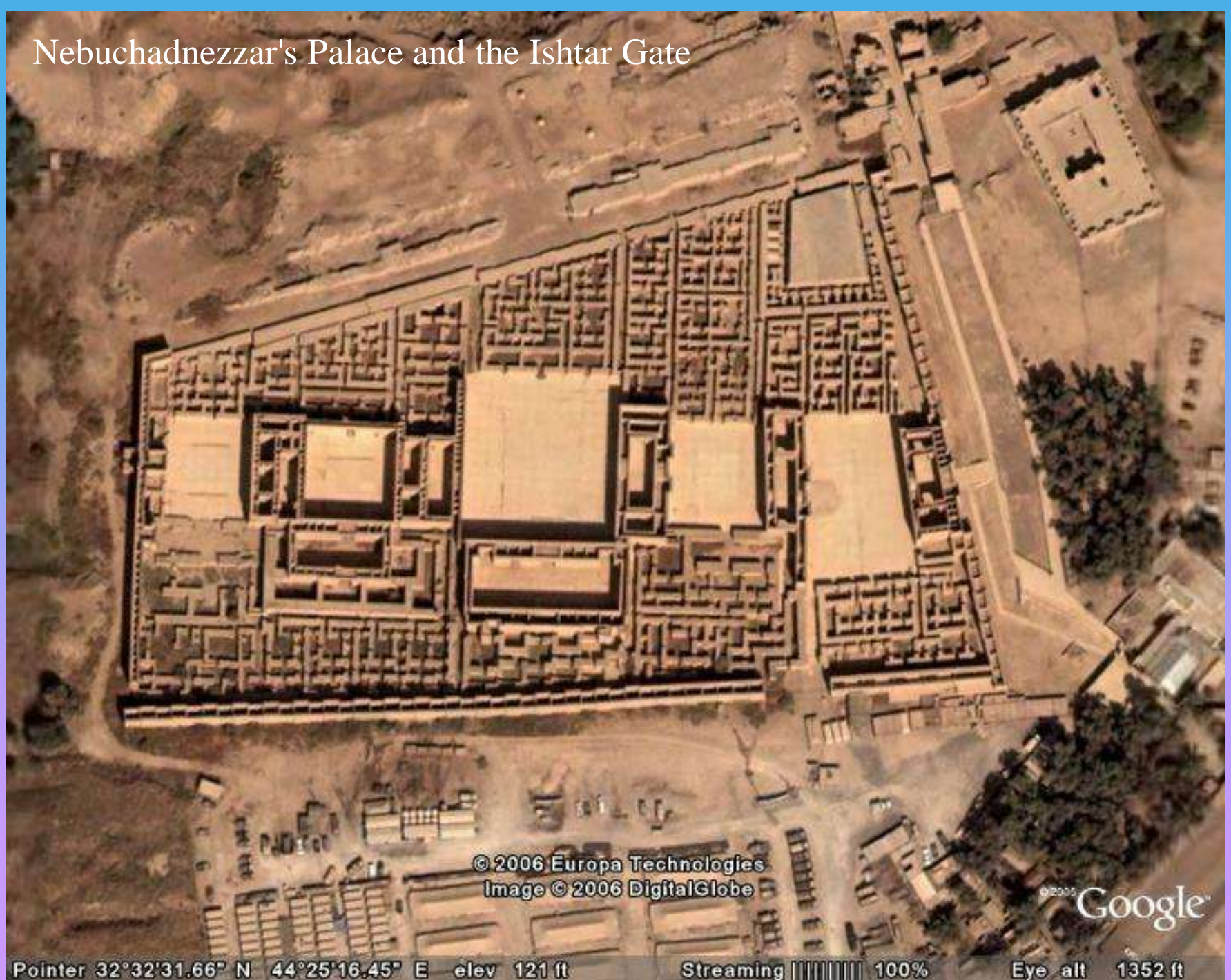
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Nebuchadnezzar's Palace and the Ishtar Gate



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Aerial view of the Ishtar Gate



The Ishtar Gate in Babylon

The Ishtar Gate was reconstructed
in Berlin.



Pieces from the reconstructed
Ishtar Gate.



Jehoiachin (597 BC)

Jehoiachin was 18 years old and he reigned 3 months in Jerusalem.

Then in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (597 BC) Jerusalem was besieged.

Jehoiachin and all his family and his entourage were taken to Babylon. Jehoiachin lived with his family in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and everything was provided for him.

'...there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion, until the day of his death, all the days of his life.'
Jeremiah 52:34

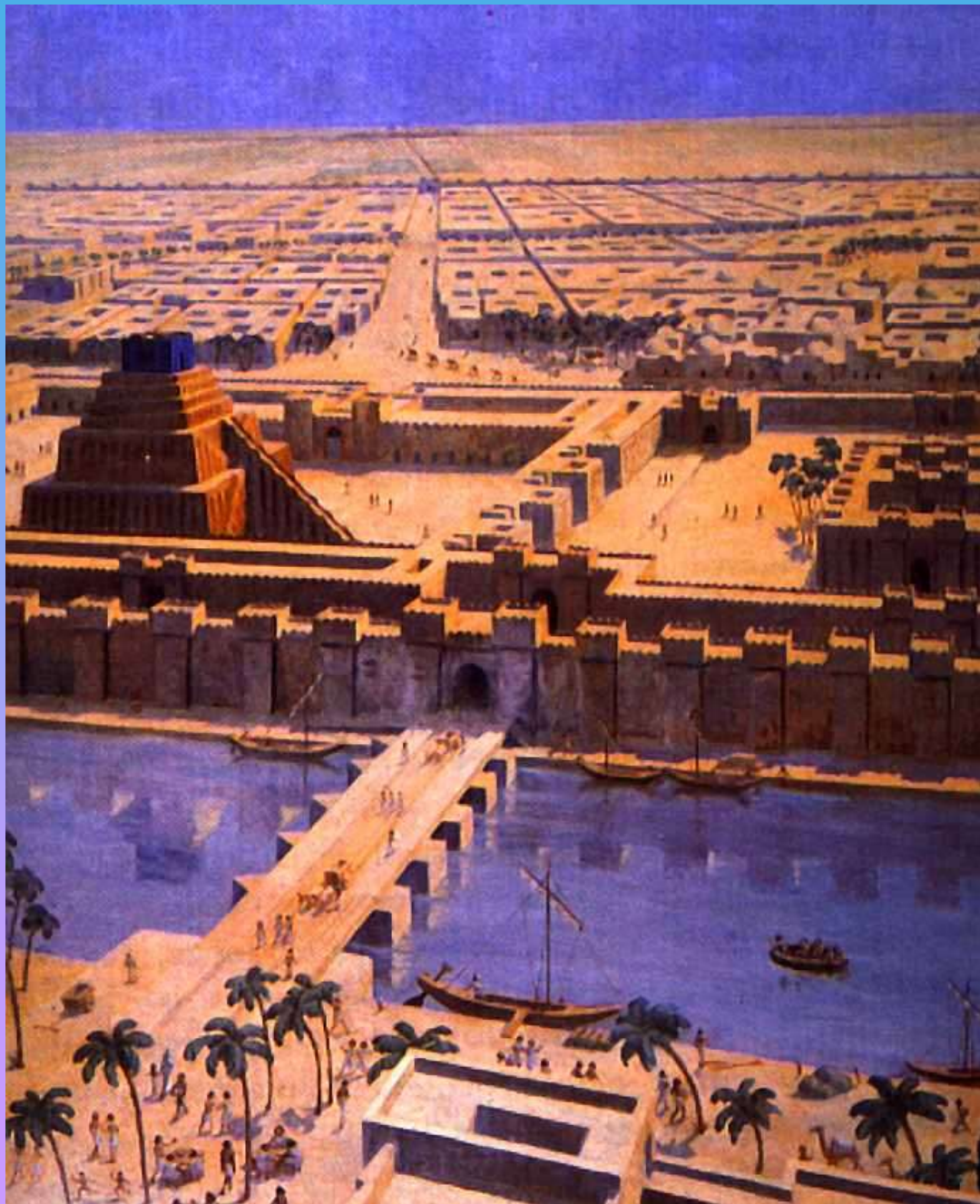
Four tablets in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin mention Jehoiachin, the King of Judah.

Nebucchadnezzar

Tablet found at Babylon

Tablet reads '...the 7th day, in the 20th year Nebucchadnezzar King of Babylon...' (585BC)





The Ziggurat of Marduk

Etemenanki (Sumerian) meaning "The Foundation of Heaven and Earth."

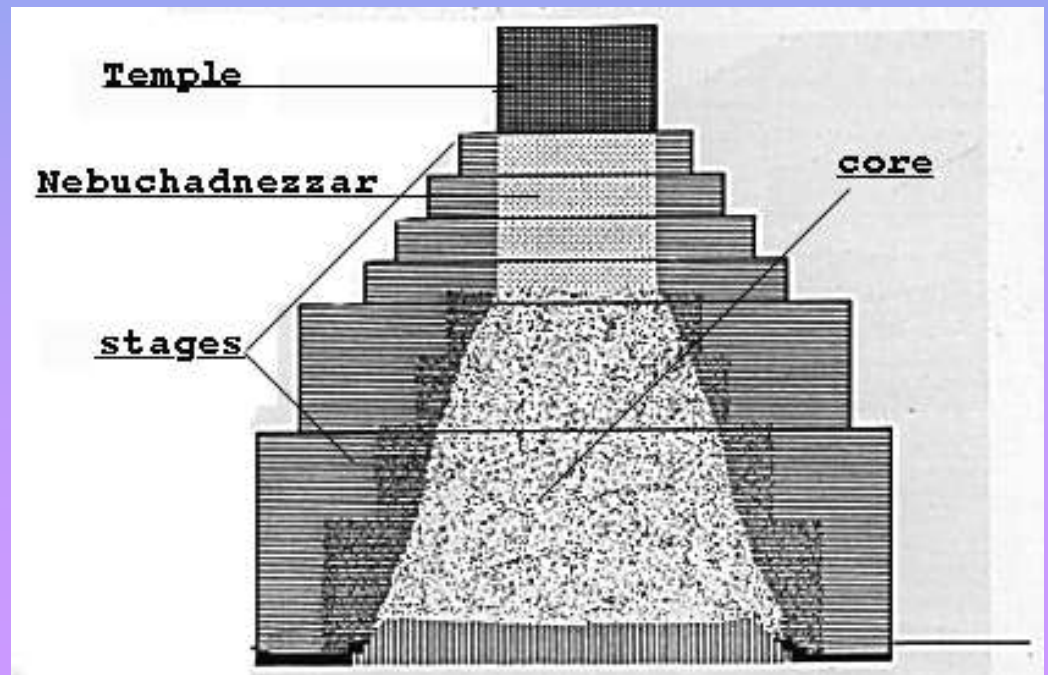
Hammurabi probably responsible for building the Ziggurat of Marduk.

Previous Ziggurats had been pulled down or enlarged many times on this spot.

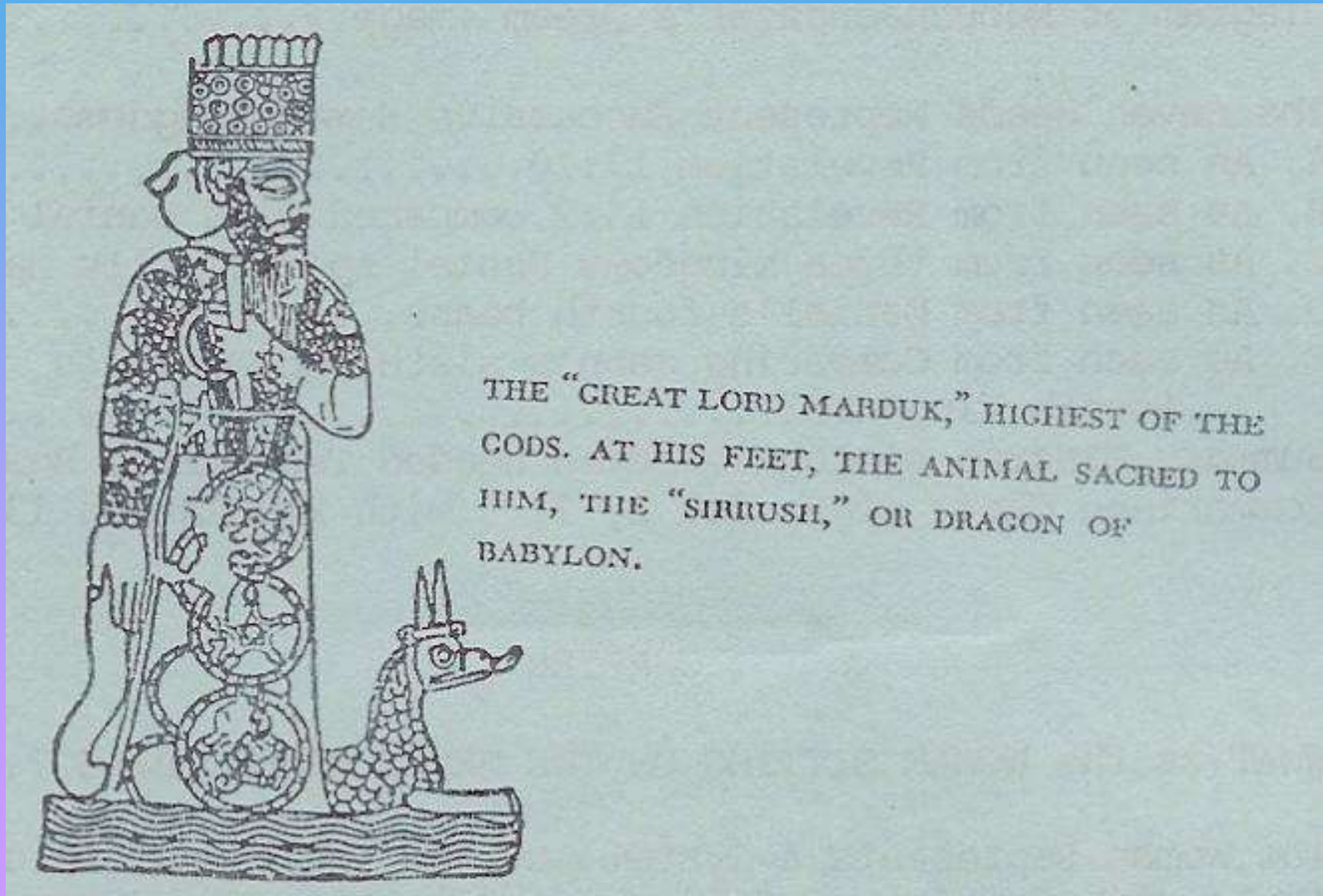
Nebuchadnezzar added a 15 meter cast of burnt brick.

The height of the Ziggurat was 91 meters.

Herodotus states that there were seven stages to the Babylon Ziggurat and the temple at its peak.



Marduk, the god of Babylon



The Hanging Gardens of Semiramis (c.600 BC)

A 16th century hand coloured engraving by Martin Heemskerck

The gardens are thought to have been on the roof of Nebuchadnezzars Palace. It is thought he built the gardens to comfort his Median wife who was homesick.



Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace

Picture from the catacombs in Rome

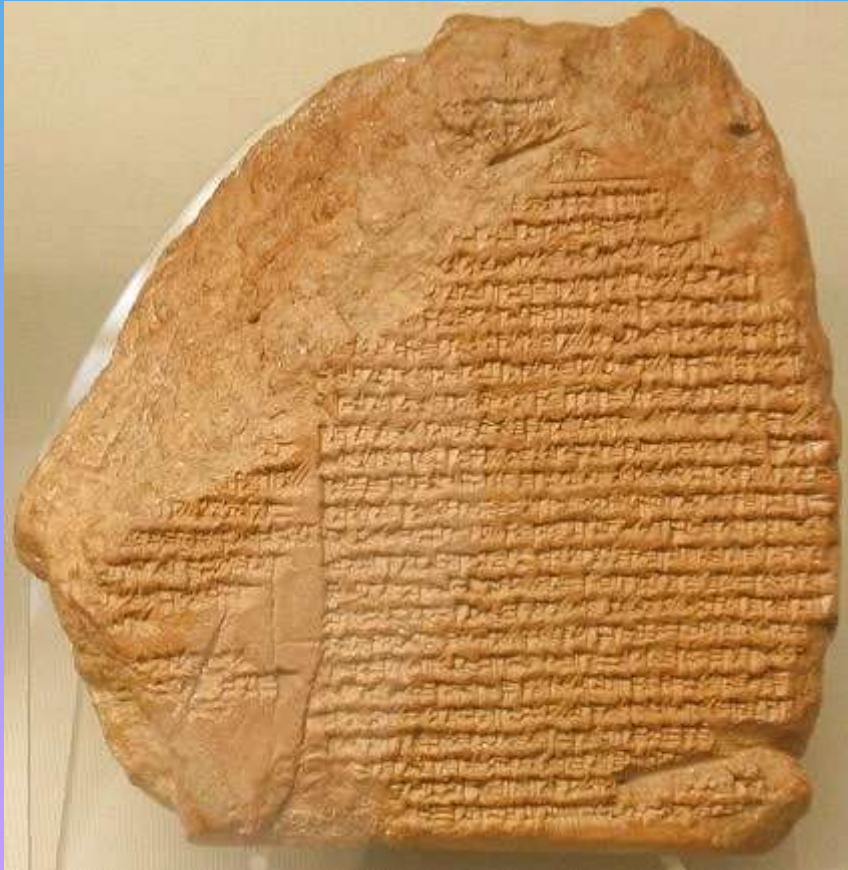


Nebuchadnezzer by William Blake



Nebuchadnezzar's madness (Daniel 4)

When Cyrus defeated Babylon the King of Babylon was Nabonidus (Reigned 556 –539 BC).



Nabonidus Chronicle

Tells us that in the third year of his reign (553 B.C.) Nabonidus...

Went on a far journey.

He spent much of his reign in Arabia.

The responsibility of ruling was given to his oldest son, Belshazzar.

Belshazzar was to be regarded as King.

Kept in the British
Museum

Nabonidus the father of Belshazzar

Before the Nabonidus Chronicle and the Nabonidus Cylinder were found there was no historical record of Belshazzar.

The historical accuracy of the Bible was confirmed by these finds.

Belshazzar offered to make Daniel the third ruler of the Kingdom. The two rulers were Belshazzar and His father Nabonidus.

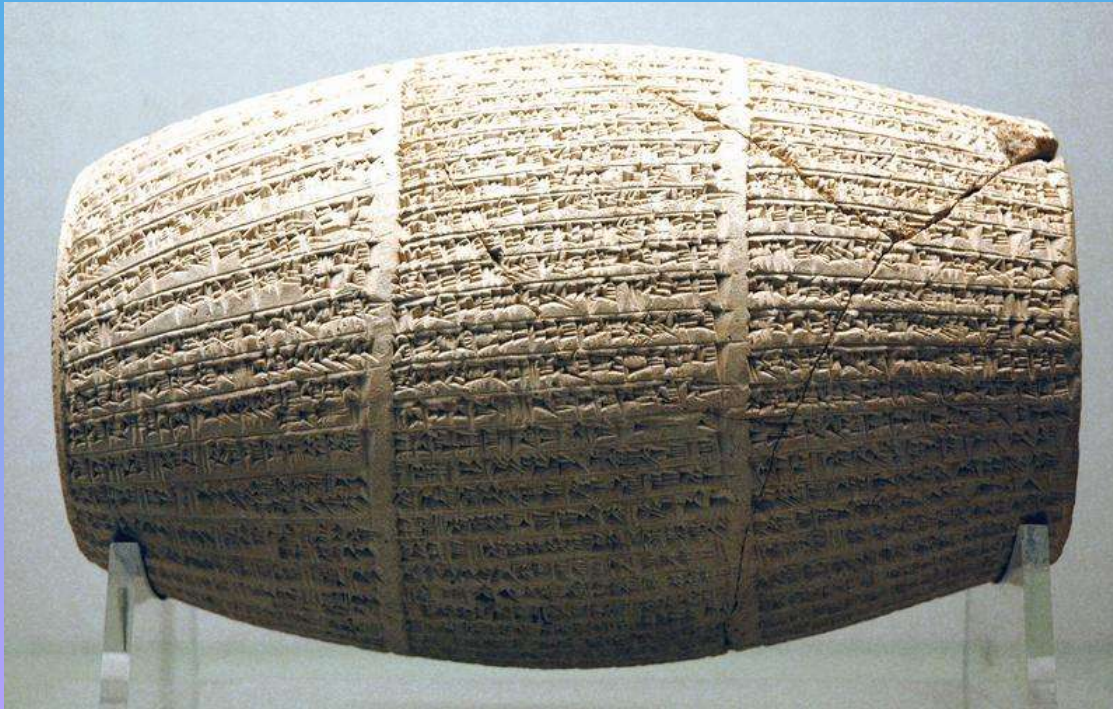
Nabonidus was not in Babylon the night Belshazzar was killed.

Nabonidus was captured when he returned to Babylon.

Uncertain when he died.

Probably 538 BC.

Nabonidus Cylinder



British Museum

'...Let their [the temples] foundations be established as the heavens. As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sin against your great divinity, and give me life until distant days. And as for Belshazzar my firstborn son, my own child, let the fear of your great divinity be in his heart, and may he commit no sin; may he enjoy happiness in life.'

Belshazzar's Feast by Rembrandt



October 539 BC

Mene Mene - numbered

Tekel - weighed

Upharsin (Peres) – divided

Numbered days ended

Weighed in the balances – judged and condemned

Divided the Kingdom of Babylon – Medes and Persians

In 323 BC Alexander the Great died in this same palace. His death was probably due to malaria but there were rumours he was poisoned.

Who was Darius the Mede?

Scripture refers to Darius the Mede taking the city of Babylon.

Daniel 5:31 'And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.'

Darius the Mede appears to have been Cyaxares the son of Astyages, and the uncle of Cyrus. (Mentioned by Xenophon).

He reigned with Cyrus for two years.

Cyrus the Great (c. 590/576 – 529 BC)



King of Iran (from 559 BC)

King over Medes (550 BC)

Founder of the Persian Empire

Cyrus was influenced by the teachings of Zoroaster
Zoroastrianism became the religion of Persia.

Cyrus took Babylon in October 539 BC.

Herodotus explains that the Persians entered Babylon by diverting the waters of the Euphrates into a canal. The water level dropped to the height of a man's thigh. The Persian army was then able to enter the city. Cyrus arrested Nabonidus and took the titles King of Babylon, Sumer, and Akkad.

Daniel 9:24

‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.’

70 weeks = 70 periods of 7 = $70 \times 7 = 490$ years

Determined for the Jews and Jerusalem

- Finish transgression
- Make an end of sins
- To make reconciliation for iniquity (Crucifixion c. AD 29)
- Everlasting righteousness
- Seal up vision and prophecy
- To anoint the most Holy (Holy Spirit came upon Jesus c AD 26)

Daniel 9:25

‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.’

Decree of Cyrus 538 BC

Decree of Darius the Great 519 BC

Decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra 458 BC (Ezra 7:11-26)

Decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

$7 \times 7 = 49$ years

$62 \times 7 = 434$ years

Command to restore Jerusalem 458 BC

Work completed 49 years later? = 409 BC?

$409 \text{ BC} + 434 = 26 \text{ AD}$ (No year 0: 1BC – 1AD)

Daniel 9:26

‘And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.’

‘After’ meaning during the next period of 7 years

Messiah cut off and not for Himself

Jesus crucified c. AD 29

Destruction of the city and the sanctuary - Jerusalem and the Temple .

Also prophesied by Jesus (Matthew 24)

Jesus associated the destruction of Jerusalem with Daniel’s prophecy.

Jerusalem destroyed AD 70

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniels' 70th week

Confirm the covenant with many

In the midst of the week sacrifice and oblation cease

Make desolate

Matthew 24:15-16

'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Times of the Gentiles

Luke 21:24

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Persian Empire

The first five kings of the Persian Empire after the fall of Babylon in 539 BC were:

Cyrus (539-529 BC) - Issued Decree allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem (538 BC)

Cambyses (529-522 BC) - son of Cyrus

Smerdis (522 BC)

Darius I Hystapsis (522-486 BC) – Issued Decree allowing work on the Temple to continue.

Xerxes I (485-465 BC) – Married Esther

Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464-424 BC) – Made decree to Ezra 458BC and allowed Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (445 BC)