

~MERODACH-BALADAN (129)

(Mer'o-dach-bal'a-dan) [from Babylonian, meaning, Marduk Has Given a Son]

- .. Sends Delegation To Hezekiah
- .. Defeated By Assyria

- **The son of Baladan** and king of Babylon who sent letters and a gift to King Hezekiah of Judah following that king's recovery from illness.
- At that time **Merodach-baladan** the son of Baladan the king of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, after he heard that he had been sick but was strong again. (**Isaiah 39:1**)
- He is called, **Berodach-baladan** at;
- At that time **Berodach-baladan** the son of Baladan the king of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. (**2 Kings 20:12**)
- But this difference is generally considered to be the result of a scribal error, or else to represent an attempt at transliterating an Akkadian consonant with a sound somewhere between that of *m* and *b*.
- The name of **Merodach-baladan** occurs in Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions as, *Marduk-apla-iddina*. He there appears as the ruler of a Chaldean district known as Bit-Yakin, situated in the marshlands above the head of the Persian Gulf and South of Babylon.
- He claims royal descent, giving the name of King Eriba-Marduk of Babylon considered as of the early part of the **Eighth Century B.C.E**, as his forefather. [*Iraq, London, 1953, Vol. XV, p. 124*]
- Tiglath-pileser III, whose rule extended into the reign of King Ahaz of Judah, **761-746 B.C.E**, refers to **Merodach-baladan** as ruler of a Chaldean tribe rendering homage to him when the Assyrians made a campaign into Babylonia.

- .. Sends Delegation To Hezekiah

- **Merodach-baladan** is stated to have entered Babylon and proclaimed himself king at the time of the accession of Sargon II to the Assyrian throne. **Merodach-baladan** had the support of the Elamites in this action, and although Sargon soon endeavored to dislodge him from Babylon, the Chaldean was able to maintain his position there for a period of about 12 years, according to the Babylonian King List.
- It may have been during this time that he sent his embassy to King Hezekiah, either in the 14th year of the Judean king, **732 B.C.E.**, or shortly thereafter.
- It is suggested by some, including Jewish historian Josephus, that **Merodach-baladan's** expressions of interest in Hezekiah's health involved more than a formality and that his ulterior motive was to attempt to gain the support of the kingdom of Judah, along with that of Elam, in a coalition against Assyria. At any rate, Hezekiah's foolhardy action in showing the royal treasure-house and his armory,
- And Hezekiah proceeded to listen to them and show them all his treasure-house, the silver and the gold and the balsam oil and the good oil and his armory and all that was to be found in his treasures. There proved to be nothing that Hezekiah did not show them in his own house and in all his dominion. (**2 Kings 20:13**)
- To the Chaldeans messengers was roundly condemned by the prophet Isaiah as presaging eventual conquest of Judah by Babylon.
- So Hezekiah began to rejoice over them and proceeded to show them his treasure-house, the silver and the gold and the balsam oil and the good oil and all his armory and all that was to be found in his treasures. There proved to be nothing that Hezekiah did not show them in his own house and in all his dominion. (**Isaiah 39:2**)
- After that Isaiah the prophet came in to King Hezekiah and said to him; What did these men say, and from where did they proceed to come to you? So Hezekiah said; From a distant land they came to me, from Babylon. (**Isaiah 39:3**)
- And he went on to say; What did they see in your house? To this Hezekiah said; Everything that is in my house they saw. There proved to be nothing that I did not show them in my treasures. (**Isaiah 39:4**)

- Isaiah now said to Hezekiah; Hear the word of Yehowah of armies. (**Isaiah 39:5**)
- Look! Days are coming, and all that is in your own house and that your forefathers have stored up down to this day will actually be carried to Babylon. Nothing will be left, Yehowah has said. (**Isaiah 39:6**)
- And some of your own sons that will come forth from you, to whom you will become father, will themselves be taken and actually become court officials in the palace of the king of Babylon. (**Isaiah 39:7**)

·· Defeated By Assyria

- Toward the close of his rule of approximately 12 years over Babylon, **Merodach-baladan** saw his main support from Elam cut off by an Assyrian victory over that kingdom, and thereafter he was attacked and forced to flee from Babylon. Despite losing Babylon to the Assyrians, **Merodach-baladan** appears to have been able to retain his position as ruler over Bit-Yakin.
- The Babylonian King List shows a second reign of nine months, Polyhistor says six months, by **Mardukaplaiddin** as king of Babylon during the second year after Sargon's death.
- This is generally accepted as referring to the same king making a second effort to establish himself on the throne of Babylon. It is to be noted, however, that the Babylonian inscriptions in this case refer to him as **Mardukaplaiddin, a native of Habi, in contrast with Mardukaplaiddin, [of the] dynasty of the Sea Country, in the case of the earlier reign.** [**Ancient Near Eastern Texts, edited by J. Pritchard, 1974, p. 272**]
- This second reign was very short, as Assyrian King Sennacherib quickly occupied Babylon, and **Merodach-baladan** had to seek refuge in Elam, where he seems to have ended his ambitious career. Despite **Merodach-baladan's** failures, in later times the Chaldeans did become the dominant ethnic group in the Babylonian Empire.