

Chapter 3: Of the Assyrian Empire

Author: Isaac Newton

Source: *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* (London: 1728).

Published online: January 2007

<265>

CHAP. III.

Of the ASSYRIAN Empire.

AS the Gods or ancient Deified Kings and Princes of *Greece, Egypt, and Syria of Damascus*, have been made much ancients than the truth, so have those of *Chaldæa and Assyria*: for *Diodorus*^[1] tells us, that when *Alexander the great* was in *Asia*, the *Chaldæans* reckoned 473000 years since they first began to observe the Stars; and *Ctesias*, and the ancient *Greek and Latin* writers who copy from him, have made the *Assyrian Empire* as old as *Noah's flood* within 60 or 70 years, and tell us the names of all the Kings of *Assyria* downwards, from *Belus* and his feigned son *Ninus*, to *Sardanapalus* the last King of that Monarchy: but the names of his Kings, except two or three, have no affinity with the names of the *Assyrians* mentioned in Scripture; for the *Assyrians* were usually named after their Gods, *Bel* or *Pul*; *Chaddon*, *Hadon*, *Adon*, or *Adonis*; *Melech* or *Moloch*; *Atsur* or *Assur*; *Nebo*; *Nergal*; *Merodach*: as in these names, *Pul*, *Tiglath-Pul-Assur*, *Salman-* <266> *Assur*, *Adra-Melech*, *Shar-Assur*, *Assur-Hadon*, *Sardanapalus* or *Assur-Hadon-Pul*, *Nabonassar* or *Nebo-Adon-Assur*, *Bel Adon*, *Chiniladon* or *Chen-El-Adon*, *Nebo-Pul-Assur*, *Nebo-Chaddon-Assur*, *Nebuzaradon* or *Nebo-Assur-Adon*, *Nergal-Assur*, *Nergal-Shar-Assur*, *Labo-Assur-dach*, *Sheseb-Assur*, *Beltes-Assur*, *Evil-Merodach*, *Shamgar-Nebo*, *Rabsaris* or *Rab-Assur*, *Nebo-Shashban*, *Mardocempad* or *Merodach-Empad*. Such were the *Assyrian* names; but those in *Ctesias* are of another sort, except *Sardanapalus*, whose name he had met with in *Herodotus*. He makes *Semiramis* as old as the first *Belus*; but *Herodotus* tells us, that she was but five Generations older than the mother of *Labynetos*: he represents that the city *Ninus* was founded by a man of the same name, and *Babylon* by *Semiramis*; whereas either *Nimrod* or *Assur* founded those and other cities, without giving his own name to any of them: he makes the *Assyrian Empire* continue about 1360 years, whereas *Herodotus* tells us that it lasted only 500 years, and the numbers of *Herodotus* concerning those ancient times are all of them too long: he makes *Nineveh* destroyed by the *Medes* and *Babylonians*, three hundred years before the Reign of *Astibares* and *Nebuchadnezzar* who destroyed it, and sets down the names of seven or eight feigned Kings of *Media*, between the destruction <267> of *Nineveh* and the Reigns of *Astibares* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, as if the Empire of the *Medes*, erected upon the ruins of the *Assyrian Empire*, had lasted 300 years, whereas it lasted but 72: and the true Empire of the *Assyrians* described in Scripture, whose Kings were *Pul*, *Tiglath-pileser*, *Shalmaneser*, *Sennacherib*, *Asserhadon*, &c. he mentions not, tho' much nearer to his own times; which shews that he was ignorant of the antiquities of the *Assyrians*. Yet something of truth there is in the bottom of some of his stories, as there uses to be in Romances; as, that *Nineveh* was destroyed by the *Medes* and *Babylonians*; that *Sardanapalus* was the last King of the *Assyrian Empire*; and that *Astibares* and *Astyages* were Kings of the *Medes*: but he has made all things too ancient, and out of vainglory taken too great a liberty in feigning names and stories to please his reader.

When the *Jews* were newly returned from the *Babylonian* captivity, they confessed their Sins in this manner, *Now therefore our God, — let not all the trouble seem little before thee that hath come upon us, on our Kings, on our Princes, and on our Priests, and on our Prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people,*

since the time of the Kings of Assyria, unto this day; *Nehem.* ix. 32. that is, since the time of the Kingdom of As <268> syria, or since the rise of that Empire: and therefore the Assyrian Empire arose when the Kings of Assyria began to afflict the inhabitants of Palestine; which was in the days of Pul: he and his successors afflicted Israel, and conquered the nations round about them; and upon the ruin of many small and ancient Kingdoms erected their Empire, conquering the Medes as well as other nations: but of these conquests Ctesias knew not a word, no not so much as the names of the conquerors, or that there was an Assyrian Empire then standing; for he supposes that the Medes Reigned at that time, and that the Assyrian Empire was at an end above 250 years before it began.

However we must allow that Nimrod founded a Kingdom at Babylon, and perhaps extended it into Assyria: but this Kingdom was but of small extent, if compared with the Empires which rose up afterwards; being only within the fertile plains of Chaldaea, Chalonitis and Assyria, watered by the Tigris and Euphrates: and if it had been greater, yet it was but of short continuance, it being the custom in those early ages for every father to divide his territories amongst his sons. So Noah was King of all the world, and Cham was King of all Afric, and Japhet of all Europe and Asia minor; but they <269> left no standing Kingdoms. After the days of Nimrod, we hear no more of an Assyrian Empire 'till the days of Pul. The four Kings who in the days of Abraham invaded the southern coast of Canaan came from the countries where Nimrod had Reigned, and perhaps were some of his posterity who had shared his conquests. In the time of the Judges of Israel, Mesopotamia was under its own King, *Judg.* iii. 8. and the King of Zobah Reigned on both sides of the River Euphrates 'till David conquered him, *2 Sam.* viii. and x. The Kingdoms of Israel, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia, Zidon, Damascus, and Hamath the great, continued subject to other Lords than the Assyrians 'till the days of Pul and his successors; and so did the house of Eden, *Amos* i. 5. *2 Kings* xix. 12. and Haran or Carrhae, *Gen.* xii. *2 Kings* xix. 12. and Sepharvaim in Mesopotamia, and Calneh near Bagdad, *Gen.* x. 10, *Isa.* x. 9, *2 Kings* xvii. 31. Sesac and Memnon were great conquerors, and Reigned over Chaldaea, Assyria, and Persia, but in their histories there is not a word of any opposition made to them by an Assyrian Empire then standing: on the contrary, Susiana, Media, Persia, Bactria, Armenia, Cappadocia, &c. were conquered by them, and continued subject to the Kings of Egypt 'till after the long Reign of Ramesses the son of Memnon, as above. <270> Homer mentions Bacchus and Memnon Kings of Egypt and Persia, but knew nothing of an Assyrian Empire. Jonah prophesied when Israel was in affliction under the King of Syria, and this was in the latter part of the Reign of Jehoahaz, and first part of the Reign of Joash, Kings of Israel, and I think in the Reign of Mæris the successor of Ramesses King of Egypt, and about sixty years before the Reign of Pul; and Nineveh was then a city of large extent, but full of pastures for cattle, so that it contained but about 120000 persons. It was not yet grown so great and potent as not to be terrified at the preaching of Jonah, and to fear being invaded by its neighbours and ruined within forty days: it had some time before got free from the dominion of Egypt, and had got a King of its own; but its King was not yet called King of Assyria, but only King of Nineveh, *Jonah* iii. 6, 7. and his proclamation for a fast was not published in several nations, nor in all Assyria, but only in Nineveh, and perhaps in the villages thereof; but soon after, when the dominion of Nineveh was established at home, and exalted over all Assyria properly so called, and this Kingdom began to make war upon the neighbouring nations, its Kings were no longer called Kings of Nineveh, but began to be called Kings of Assyria.

<271>

Amos prophesied in the Reign of Jeroboam the Son of Joash King of Israel, soon after Jeroboam had subdued the Kingdoms of Damascus and Hamath, that is, about ten or twenty years before the Reign of Pul: and he [2] thus reproves Israel for being lifted up by those conquests; *Ye which rejoyce in a thing of nought, which say, have we not taken to us horns by our strength? But behold I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord the God of Hosts, and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness.* God here threatens to raise up a nation against Israel; but what nation he names not; that he conceals 'till the Assyrians should appear and discover it. In the prophesies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Zechariah, which were written after the Monarchy grew up, it is openly named upon all occasions; but in this of Amos not once, tho' the captivity of Israel and Syria be the subject of the prophesy, and that of Israel be often threatned: he only saith in general that Syria should go into captivity unto Kir, and that Israel, notwithstanding her present greatness, should go into captivity beyond Damascus; and that God would raise up a nation to afflict them: meaning that he would raise up above them from a lower condition, a nation <272> whom they yet feared not: for so the Hebrew word קרני signifies when applied to men, as in *Amos* v. 2. *1 Sam.* xii. 11. *Psal.* cxiii. 7. *Jer.* x. 20. l. 32. *Hab.* i. 6. *Zech.* xi. 16. As

Amos names not the Assyrians; at the writing of this prophecy they made no great figure in the world, but were to be raised up against *Israel*, and by consequence rose up in the days of *Pul* and his successors: for after *Jeroboam* had conquered *Damascus* and *Hamath*, his successor *Menahem* destroyed *Tiphsah* with its territories upon *Euphrates*, because they opened not to him: and therefore *Israel* continued in its greatness 'till *Pul*, probably grown formidable by some victories, caused *Menahem* to buy his peace. *Pul* therefore Reigning presently after the prophesy of *Amos*, and being the first upon record who began to fulfill it, may be justly reckoned the first conqueror and founder of this Empire. For *God stirred up the spirit of Pul, and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser King of Assyria*, 1 *Chron.* v. 20.

The same Prophet *Amos*, in prophesying against *Israel*, threatned them in this manner, with what had lately befallen other Kingdoms: *Pass ye, [3] saith he, unto Calneh and see, and from thence go ye to Hamath the great, then go down to Gath of the Philistims. Be they better <273> than these Kingdoms?* These Kingdoms were not yet conquered by the Assyrians, except that of *Calneh* or *Chalonitis* upon *Tigris*, between *Babylon* and *Nineveh*. *Gath* was newly vanquished [4] by *Uzziah* King of *Judah*, and *Hamath* [5] by *Jeroboam* King of *Israel*: and while the Prophet, in threatning *Israel* with the Assyrians, instances in desolations made by other nations, and mentions no other conquest of the Assyrians than that of *Chalonitis* near *Nineveh*; it argues that the King of *Nineveh* was now beginning his conquests, and had not yet made any great progress in that vast career of victories, which we read of a few years after.

For about seven years after the captivity of the ten Tribes, when *Sennacherib* warred in *Syria*, which was in the 16th Olympiad, he [6] sent this message to the King of *Judah*: *Behold, thou hast heard what the Kings of Assyria have done to all Lands by destroying them utterly, and shalt thou be delivered? Have the Gods of the nations delivered them which the Gods of my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan and Haran and Reseph, and the children of Eden which were in [the Kingdom of] Thelasar? Where is the King of Hamath, and the King of Arpad, and the King of the city of Sepharvaim, and of Hena and Ivah?* And *Isaiah* [7] thus introduceth the King of <274> *Assyria* boasting: *Are not my Princes altogether as Kings? Is not Calno [or Calneh] as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the Kingdoms of the Idols, and whose graven Images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her Idols, so do to Jerusalem and her Idols?* All this desolation is recited as fresh in memory to terrify the Jews, and these Kingdoms reach to the borders of *Assyria*, and to shew the largeness of the conquests they are called *all lands*, that is, all round about *Assyria*. It was the custom of the Kings of *Assyria*, for preventing the rebellion of people newly conquered, to captivate and transplant those of several countries into one another's lands, and intermix them variously: and thence it appears [8] that *Halah*, and *Habor*, and *Hara*, and *Gozan*, and the cities of the *Medes* into which *Galilee* and *Samaria* were transplanted; and *Kir* into which *Damascus* was transplanted; and *Babylon* and *Cuth* or the *Susanchites*, and *Hamath*, and *Ava*, and *Sepharvaim*, and the *Dinaites*, and the *Apharsachites*, and the *Tarpelites*, and the *Archevites*, and the *Dehavites*, and the *Elamites*, or *Persians*, part of all which nations were led captive by *Asserhadon* and his predecessors into *Samaria*; were all of them conquered by the Assyrians not long before.

<275>

In these conquests are involved on the west and south side of *Assyria*, the Kingdoms of *Mesopotamia*, whose royal seats were *Haran* or *Carrhæ*, and *Carchemish* or *Circutium*, and *Sepharvaim*, a city upon *Euphrates*, between *Babylon* and *Nineveh*, called *Sipparæ* by *Berosus*, *Abydenus*, and *Polyhistor*, and *Sipphara* by *Ptolomy*; and the Kingdoms of *Syria* seated at *Samaria*, *Damascus*, *Gath*, *Hamath*, *Arpad*, and *Reseph*, a city placed by *Ptolomy* near *Thapsacus*: on the south side and south-east side were *Babylon* and *Calneh*, or *Calno*, a city which was founded by *Nimrod*, where *Bagdad* now stands, and gave the name of *Chalonitis* to a large region under its government; and *Thelasar* or *Talatha*, a city of the children of *Eden*, placed by *Ptolomy* in *Babylonia*, upon the common stream of *Tigris* and *Euphrates*, which was therefore the river of Paradise; and the *Archevites* at *Areca* or *Erech*, a city built by *Nimrod* on the east side of *Pasitigris*, between *Apamia* and the *Persian Gulph*; and the *Susanchites* at *Cuth*, or *Susa*, the metropolis of *Susiana*: on the east were *Elymais*, and some cities of the *Medes*, and *Kir*, [9] a city and large region of *Media*, between *Elymais*, and *Assyria*, called *Kirene* by the *Chaldee* Paraphrast and *Latin* Interpreter, and *Carine* by *Ptolomy*: on the north-east were *Habor* or <276> *Chaboras*, a mountainous region between *Assyria* and *Media*; and the *Apharsachites*, or men of *Arrapachitis*, a region originally peopled by *Arphaxad*, and placed by *Ptolomy* at the bottom of the mountains next *Assyria*: and on the north between *Assyria* and the *Gordian* mountains was *Halah* or

Chalach, the metropolis of *Calachene*: and beyond these upon the *Caspian* sea was *Gozan*, called *Gauzania* by *Ptolomy*. Thus did these new conquests extend every way from the province of *Assyria* to considerable distances, and make up the great body of that Monarchy: so that well might the King of *Assyria* boast how his armies had destroyed all lands. All these nations ^[10] had 'till now their several Gods, and each accounted his God the God of his own land, and the defender thereof, against the Gods of the neighbouring countries, and particularly against the Gods of *Assyria*; and therefore they were never 'till now united under the *Assyrian* Monarchy, especially since the King of *Assyria* doth not boast of their being conquered by the *Assyrians* oftner than once: but these being small Kingdoms the King of *Assyria* easily overflowed them: *Know ye not*, saith ^[11] *Sennacherib* to the *Jews*, *what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? —for no God of <277> any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?* He and his fathers therefore, *Pul*, *Tiglath-pileser*, and *Shalmaneser*, were great conquerors, and with a current of victories had newly overflowed all nations round about *Assyria*, and thereby set up this Monarchy.

Between the Reigns of *Jeroboam* II, and his son *Zachariah*, there was an interregnum of about ten or twelve years in the Kingdom of *Israel*: and the prophet *Hosea* ^[12] in the time of that interregnum, or soon after, mentions the King of *Assyria* by the name of *Jareb*, and another conqueror by the name of *Shalman*; and perhaps *Shalman* might be the first part of the name of *Shalmaneser*, and *Iareb*, or *Irib*, for it may be read both ways, the last part of the name of his successor *Sennacherib*: but whoever these Princes were, it appears not that they Reigned before *Shalmaneser*. *Pul*, or *Belus*, seems to be the first who carried on his conquests beyond the province of *Assyria*: he conquered *Calneh* with its territories in the Reign of *Jerboam*, *Amos* i. 1. vi. 2. & *Isa.* x. 8, 9. and invaded *Israel* in the Reign of *Menahem*, *2 King.* xv. 19. but stayed not in the land, being bought off by *Menahem* for a thou <278> sand talents of silver: in his Reign therefore the Kingdom of *Assyria* was advanced on this side *Tigris*: for he was a great warrior, and seems to have conquered *Haran*, and *Carchemish*, and *Reseph*, and *Calneh*, and *Thelasar*, and might found or enlarge the city of *Babylon*, and build the old palace.

Herodotus tells us, that one of the gates of *Babylon* was ^[13] called the gate of *Semiramis*, and that she adorned the walls of the city, and the Temple of *Belus*, and that she ^[14] was five Generations older than *Nitocris* the mother of *Labynitus*, or *Nabonnedus*, the last King of *Babylon*; and therefore she flourished four Generations, or about 134 years, before *Nebuchadnezzar*, and by consequence in the Reign of *Tiglath-pileser* the successor of *Pul*: and the followers of *Ctesias* tell us, that she built *Babylon*, and was the widow of the son and successor of *Belus*, the founder of the *Assyrian* Empire; that is, the widow of one of the sons of *Pul*: but ^[15] *Berosus* a *Chaldæan* blames the *Greeks* for ascribing the building of *Babylon* to *Semiramis*; and other authors ascribe the building of this city to *Belus* himself, that is to *Pul*; so *Curtius* ^[16] tells us; *Semiramis Babylonem condiderat, vel ut plerique credidere Belus, cujus regia ostenditur*: and *Abydenus*, who had his history from the <279> ancient monuments of the *Chaldæans*, writes, ^[17] Λέγεται Βηλον Βαβυλωνα τείχει περιβαλιν· τωι χρόνω δὲ τωι ἰκνευμένω α' φανισθῆναι. τειχίσαι δὲ ἄυθις Ναβουχοδονόσορον, τὸ μέχρι της Μακεδονίων α' ρχης διαμειναν ἔδν χαλκόπυλον. 'Tis reported that *Belus* compassed *Babylon* with a wall, which in time was abolished: and that *Nebuchadnezzar* afterwards built a new wall with brazen gates, which stood 'till the time of the *Macedonian* Empire: and so *Dorotheus* ^[18] an ancient Poet of *Sidon*;

Αρχαίη Βαβυλων, Τυρίου Βήλοιο πόλισμα.
The ancient city *Babylon* built by the *Tyrian* *Belus*;

That is, by the *Syrian* or *Assyrian* *Belus*; the words *Tyrian*, *Syrian*, and *Assyrian*, being anciently used promiscuously for one another: *Herennius* ^[19] tells us, that it was built by the son of *Belus*; and this son might be *Nabonassar*. After the conquest of *Calneh*, *Thelasar*, and *Sippare*, *Belus* might seize *Chaldæa*, and begin to build *Babylon*, and leave it to his younger son: for all the Kings of *Babylon* in the Canon of *Ptolemy* are called *Assyrians*, and *Nabonassar* is the first of them: and *Nebuchadnezzar* ^[20] reckoned himself descended from *Belus*, that is, from the *Assyrian* *Pul*: and the building of <280> *Babylon* is ascribed to the *Assyrians* by ^[21] *Isaiah*: *Behold*, saith he, *the land of the Chaldeans: This people was not 'till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness*, [that is, for the *Arabians*.] *They set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof*. From all this it seems therefore that *Pul* founded the walls and the palaces of *Babylon*, and left the city with the province of *Chaldæa* to his younger son *Nabonassar*; and that

Nabonassar finished what his father began, and erected the Temple of *Jupiter Belus* to his father: and that *Semiramis* lived in those days, and was the Queen of *Nabonassar*, because one of the gates of *Babylon* was called the gate of *Semiramis*, as *Herodotus* affirms: but whether she continued to Reign there after her husband's death may be doubted.

Pul therefore was succeeded at *Nineveh* by his elder son *Tiglath-pileser*, at the same time that he left *Babylon* to his younger son *Nabonassar*. *Tiglath-pileser*, the second King of *Assyria*, warred in *Phœnicia*, and captivated *Galilee* with the two Tribes and an half, in the days of *Pekah* King of *Israel*, and placed them in *Halah*, and *Habor*, and *Hara*, and at the river *Gozan*, places lying on the western borders of *Media*, between *Assyria* and the *Caspian* sea, 2 *King*. xv. 29, & 1 *Chron*. v. 26. and about the fifth or sixth <281> year of *Nabonassar*, he came to the assistance of the King of *Judah* against the Kings of *Israel* and *Syria*, and overthrew the Kingdom of *Syria*, which had been seated at *Damascus* ever since the days of King *David*, and carried away the *Syrians* to *Kir* in *Media*, as *Amos* had prophesied, and placed other nations in the regions of *Damascus*, 2 *King*. xv. 37, & xvi. 5, 9. *Amos* i. 5. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 9. c. 13. whence it seems that the *Medes* were conquered before, and that the Empire of the *Assyrians* was now grown great: for the God of *Israel* stirred up the spirit of *Pul* King of *Assyria*, and the spirit of *Tiglath-pileser* King of *Assyria* to make war, 1 *Chron*. v. 26.

Shalmaneser or *Salmanasser*, called *Enemessar* by *Tobit*, invaded ^[22] all *Phœnicia*, took the city of *Samaria*, and captivated *Israel*, and placed them in *Chalach* and *Chabor*, by the river *Gozan*, and in the cities of the *Medes*; and *Hosea* ^[23] seems to say that he took *Arbela*: and his successor *Sennacherib* said that his fathers had conquered also *Gozan*, and *Haran* or *Carrhæ*, and *Reseph* or *Resen*, and the children of *Eden*, and *Arpad* or the *Aradii*, 2 *King*. xix. 12.

Sennacherib the son of *Shalmaneser* in the 14th year of *Hezekiah* invaded *Phœnicia*, and took several cities of *Judah*, and attempted <282> *Egypt*; and *Sethon* or *Sevechus* King of *Egypt* and *Tirhakah* King of *Ethiopia* coming against him, he lost in one night 185000 men, as some say by a plague, or perhaps by lightning, or a fiery wind which blows sometimes in the neighbouring deserts, or rather by being surprised by *Sethon* and *Tirhakah*: for the *Egyptians* in memory of this action erected a statue to *Sethon*, holding in his hand a mouse, the *Egyptian* symbol of destruction. Upon this defeat *Sennacherib* returned in haste to *Nineveh*, and ^[24] his Kingdom became troubled, so that *Tobit* could not go into *Media*, the *Medes* I think at this time revolting: and he was soon after slain by two of his sons who fled into *Armenia*, and his son *Asserhadon* succeeded him. At that time did *Merodach Baladan* or *Mardocempad* King of *Babylon* send an embassy to *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*.

Asserhadon, ^[25] called *Sarchedon* by *Tobit*, *Asordan* by the *LXX*, and *Assaradin* in *Ptolomy's Canon*, began his Reign at *Nineveh*, in the year of *Nabonassar* 42; and in the year 68 extended it over *Babylon*: then he carried the remainder of the *Samaritans* into captivity, and peopled *Samaria* with captives brought from several parts of his Kingdom, the *Dinaïtes*, the *Apharsachites*, the *Tarpelites*, the *Apharsites*, the <283> *Archevites*, the *Babylonians*, the *Susanchites*, the *Dehavites*, the *Elamites*, *Ezra* iv. 2, 9. and therefore he Reigned over all these nations. *Pekah* and *Rezin* Kings of *Samaria* and *Damascus*, invaded *Judæa* in the first year of *Ahaz*, and within 65 years after, that is in the 21st year of *Manasseh*, Anno *Nabonass*. 69, *Samaria* by this captivity ceased to be a people, *Isa*. vii. 8. Then *Asserhadon* invaded *Judæa*, took *Azoth*, carried *Manasseh* captive to *Babylon*, and ^[26] captivated also *Egypt*, *Thebais*, and *Ethiopia* above *Thebais*: and by this war he seems to have put an end to the Reign of the *Ethiopians* over *Egypt*, in the year of *Nabonassar* 77 or 78.

In the Reign of *Sennacherib* and *Asserhadon*, the *Assyrian* Empire seems arrived at its greatness, being united under one Monarch, and containing *Assyria*, *Media*, *Apolloniatis*, *Susiana*, *Chaldæa*, *Mesopotamia*, *Cilicia*, *Syria*, *Phœnicia*, *Egypt*, *Ethiopia*, and part of *Arabia*, and reaching eastward into *Elymais*, and *Parætacene*, a province of the *Medes*: and if *Chalach* and *Chabor* be *Colchis* and *Iberia*, as some think, and as may seem probable from the circumcision used by those nations 'till the days of *Herodotus*, we are also to add these two Provinces, with the two *Armenia's*, *Pontus* and *Cappadocia*, as far as to the river *Halys*: for ^[27] *Herodotus* tells us, that <284> the people of *Cappadocia* as far as to that river were called *Syrians* by the *Greeks*, both before and after the days of *Cyrus*, and that the *Assyrians* were also called *Syrians* by the *Greeks*.

Yet the *Medes* revolted from the *Assyrians* in the latter end of the Reign of *Sennacherib*, I think upon the slaughter of his army near *Egypt* and his flight to *Nineveh*: for at that time the estate of *Sennacherib* was troubled, so that *Tobit* could not go into *Media* as he had done before, *Tobit* i. 15. and some time after, *Tobit* advised his son to go into *Media* where he might expect peace, while *Nineveh*, according to the prophesy of *Jonah*, should be destroyed. *Ctesias* wrote that *Arbaces* a *Mede* being admitted to see *Sardanapalus* in his palace, and observing his voluptuous life amongst women, revolted with the *Medes*, and in conjunction with *Belesis* a *Babylonian* overcame him, and caused him to set fire to his palace and burn himself: but he is contradicted by other authors of better credit; for *Duris* and [28] many others wrote that *Arbaces* upon being admitted into the palace of *Sardanapalus*, and seeing his effeminate life, slew himself; and *Cleitarchus*, that *Sardanapalus* died of old age, after he had lost his dominion over *Syria*: he lost it by the revolt of the western nations; and *Herodotus* <285> [29] tells us, that the *Medes* revolted first, and defended their liberty by force of arms against the *Assyrians*, without conquering them; and at their first revolting had no King, but after some time set up *Dejoces* over them, and built *Ecbatane* for his residence; and that *Dejoces* Reigned only over *Media*, and had a peaceable Reign of 54 years, but his son and successor *Phraortes* made war upon his neighbours, and conquered *Persia*; and that the *Syrians* also, and other western nations, at length revolted from the *Assyrians*, being encouraged thereunto by the example of the *Medes*; and that after the revolt of the western nations, *Phraortes* invaded the *Assyrians*, but was slain by them in that war, after he had Reigned twenty and two years. He was succeeded by *Astyages*.

Now *Asserhadon* seems to be the *Sardanapalus* who died of old age after the revolt of *Syria*, the name *Sardanapalus* being derived from *Asserhadon-Pul*. *Sardanapalus* was the [30] son of *Anacyndaraxis*, *Cyndaraxis*, or *Anabaxaris*, King of *Assyria*; and this name seems to have been corruptly written for *Sennacherib* the father of *Asserhadon*. *Sardanapalus* built *Tarsus* and *Anchiale* in one day, and therefore Reigned over *Cilicia*, before the revolt of the western nations: and if he be the same King with *Asserhadon*, <286> he was succeeded by *Saosduchinus* in the year of *Nabonassar* 81; and by this revolution *Manasseh* was set at liberty to return home and fortify *Jerusalem*: and the *Egyptians* also, after the *Assyrians* had harrassed *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* three years, *Isa.* xx. 3, 4. were set at liberty, and continued under twelve contemporary Kings of their own nation, as above. The *Assyrians* invaded and conquered the *Egyptians* the first of the three years, and Reigned over them two years more: and these two years are the interregnum which *Africanus*, from *Manetho*, places next before the twelve Kings. The *Scythians* of *Touran* or *Turquestan* beyond the river *Oxus* began in those days to infest *Persia*, and by one of their inroads might give occasion to the revolt of the western nations.

In the year of *Nabonassar* 101, *Saosduchinus*, after a Reign of twenty years, was succeeded at *Babylon* by *Chyniladon*, and I think at *Nineveh* also, for I take *Chyniladon* to be that *Nabuchodonosor* who is mentioned in the book of *Judith*; for the history of that King suits best with these times: for there it is said that *Nabuchodonosor* King of the *Assyrians* who Reigned at *Nineveh*, that great city, in the twelfth year of his Reign made war upon *Arphaxad* King of the *Medes*, and was then left <287> alone by a defection of the auxiliary nations of *Cilicia*, *Damascus*, *Syria*, *Phœnicia*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Egypt*; and without their help routed the army of the *Medes*, and slew *Arphaxad*: and *Arphaxad* is there said to have built *Ecbatane* and therefore was either *Dejoces*, or his son *Phraortes*, who might finish the city founded by his father: and *Herodotus* [31] tells the same story of a King of *Assyria*, who routed the *Medes*, and slew their King *Phraortes*; and saith that in the time of this war the *Assyrians* were left alone by the defection of the auxiliary nations, being otherwise in good condition: *Arphaxad* was therefore the *Phraortes* of *Herodotus*, and by consequence was slain near the beginning of the Reign of *Josiah*: for this war was made after *Phœnicia*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Egypt* had been conquered and revolted, *Judith* i. 7, 8, 9. and by consequence after the Reign of *Asserhadon* who conquered them: it was made when the *Jews* were newly returned from captivity, and the *Vessels* and *Altar* and *Temple* were sanctified after the profanation, *Judith* iv. 3. that is soon after *Manasseh* their King had been carried captive to *Babylon* by *Asserhadon*; and upon the death of that King, or some other change in the *Assyrian* Empire, had been released with the *Jews* from that captivity, <288> and had repaired the *Altar*, and restored the sacrifices and worship of the *Temple*, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11, 16. In the *Greek* version of the book of *Judith*, chap. v. 18. it is said, that the *Temple of God* was cast to the ground; but this is not said in *Jerom's* version; and in the *Greek* version, chap. iv. 3, and chap. xvi. 20, it is said, that the *vessels*, and the *altar*, and the *house* were sanctified after the profanation, and in both versions, chap. iv. 11, the *Temple* is represented standing.

After this war *Nabuchodonosor* King of *Assyria*, in the 13th year of his Reign, according to the version of *Jerom*, sent his captain *Holofernes* with a great army to avenge himself on all the west country; because they had disobeyed his commandment: and *Holofernes* went forth with an army of 12000 horse, and 120000 foot of *Assyrians*, *Medes* and *Persians*, and reduced *Cilicia*, *Mesopotamia*, and *Syria*, and *Damascus*, and part of *Arabia*, and *Ammon*, and *Edom*, and *Madian*, and then came against *Judæa*: and this was done when the government was in the hands of the High-Priest and Antients of *Israel*, *Judith* iv. 8. and vii. 23. and by consequence not in the Reign of *Manasseh* or *Amon*, but when *Josiah* was a child. In times of prosperity the children of *Israel* were apt to <289> go after false Gods, and in times of affliction to repent and turn to the Lord. So *Manasseh* a very wicked King, being captivated by the *Assyrians*, repented; and being released from captivity restored the worship of the true God: So when we are told that *Josiah* in the eighth year of his Reign, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year of his Reign began to purge *Judah* and *Jerusalem* from Idolatry, and to destroy the High Places, and Groves, and Altars and Images of *Baalim*, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 3. we may understand that these acts of religion were occasioned by impending dangers, and escapes from danger. When *Holofernes* came against the western nations, and spoiled them, then were the *Jews* terrified, and they fortified *Judæa*, and cried unto God with great fervency, and humbled themselves in sackcloth, and put ashes on their heads, and cried unto the God of *Israel* that he would not give their wives and their children and cities for a prey, and the Temple for a profanation: and the High-priest, and all the Priests put on sackcloth and ashes, and offered daily burnt offerings with vows and free gifts of the people, *Judith* iv. and then began *Josiah* to seek after the God of his father *David*: and after *Judith* had slain *Holofernes*, and the *Assyrians* were fled, <290> and the *Jews* who pursued them were returned to *Jerusalem*, they worshipped the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and gifts, and continued feasting before the sanctuary for the space of three months, *Judith* xvi. 18, and then did *Josiah* purge *Judah* and *Jerusalem* from Idolatry. Whence it seems to me that the eighth year of *Josiah* fell in with the fourteenth or fifteenth of *Nabuchodonosor*, and that the twelfth year of *Nabuchodonosor*, in which *Phraortes* was slain, was the fifth or sixth of *Josiah*. *Phraortes* Reigned 22 years according to *Herodotus*, and therefore succeeded his father *Dejoces* about the 40th year of *Manasseh*, Anno *Nabonass.* 89, and was slain by the *Assyrians*, and succeeded by *Astyages*, Anno *Nabonass.* 111. *Dejoces* Reigned 53 years according to *Herodotus*, and these years began in the 16th year of *Hezekiah*; which makes it probable that the *Medes* dated them from the time of their revolt: and according to all this reckoning, the Reign of *Nabuchodonosor* fell in with that of *Chyniladon*; which makes it probable that they were but two names of one and the same King.

Soon after the death of *Phraortes* ^[32] the *Scythians* under *Madyes* or *Medus* invaded *Media*, and beat the *Medes* in battle, Anno *Nabonass.* 113, and went thence towards *Egypt*, but <291> were met in *Phænicia* by *Psammitichus* and bought off, and returning Reigned over a great part of *Asia*: but in the end of about 28 years were expelled; many of their Princes and commanders being slain in a feast by the *Medes* under the conduct of *Cyaxeres*, the successor of *Astyages*, just before the destruction of *Nineveh*, and the rest being soon after forced to retire.

In the year of *Nabonassar* 123, ^[33] *Nabopolassar* the commander of the forces of *Chyniladon* the King of *Assyria* in *Chaldæa* revolted from him, and became King of *Babylon*; and *Chyniladon* was either then, or soon after, succeeded at *Nineveh* by the last King of *Assyria*, called *Sarac* by *Polyhistor*: and at length *Nebuchadnezzar*, the son of *Nabopolassar*, married *Amyite* the daughter of *Astyages* and sister of *Cyaxeres*; and by this marriage the two families having contracted affinity, they conspired against the *Assyrians*; and *Nabopolassar* being now grown old, and *Astyages* being dead, their sons *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyaxeres* led the armies of the two nations against *Nineveh*, slew *Sarac*, destroyed the city, and shared the Kingdom of the *Assyrians*. This victory the *Jews* refer to the *Chaldæans*; the *Greeks* to the *Medes*; *Tobit*, *Polyhistor*, *Josephus*, and *Ctesias* to both. It gave a beginning to the great successes of *Nebuchad* <292> *nezzar* and *Cyaxeres*, and laid the foundation of the two collateral Empires of the *Babylonians* and *Medes*; these being branches of the *Assyrian* Empire: and thence the time of the fall of the *Assyrian* Empire is determined, the conquerors being then in their youth. In the Reign of *Josiah*, when *Zephaniah* prophesied, *Nineveh* and the Kingdom of *Assyria* were standing, and their fall was predicted by that Prophet, *Zeph.* i. 1, and ii. 13. and in the end of his Reign *Pharaoh Nechoh* King of *Egypt*, the successor of *Psammitichus*, went up against the King of *Assyria* to the river *Euphrates*, to fight against *Carchemish* or *Circutium*, and in his way thither slew *Josiah*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 20. and therefore the last King of *Assyria* was not yet slain. But in the third and fourth year of *Jehoiakim* the successor of *Josiah*, the two conquerors having taken *Nineveh* and finished their war in *Assyria*, prosecuted their conquests westward, and leading their forces against the King

of *Egypt*, as an invader of their right of conquest, they beat him at *Carchemish*, and [34] took from him whatever he had newly taken from the *Assyrians*: and therefore we cannot err above a year or two, if we refer the destruction of *Nineveh*, and fall of the *Assyrian Empire*, to the second year of *Jehoiakim*, *Anno Nabonass*. 140. <293> The name of the last King *Sarac* might perhaps be contracted from *Sarchedon*, as this name was from *Asserhadon*, *Asserhadon-Pul*, or *Sardanapalus*.

While the *Assyrians* Reigned at *Nineveh*, *Persia* was divided into several Kingdoms; and amongst others there was a Kingdom of *Elam*, which flourished in the days of *Hezekiah*, *Manasseh*, *Josiah*, and *Jehoiakim* Kings of *Judah*, and fell in the days of *Zedekiah*, *Jer.* xxv. 25, and xlix. 34, and *Ezek.* xxxii. 24. This Kingdom seems to have been potent, and to have had wars with the King of *Touran* or *Scythia* beyond the river *Oxus* with various success, and at length to have been subdued by the *Medes* and *Babylonians*, or one of them. For while *Nebuchadnezzar* warred in the west, *Cyaxeres* recovered the *Assyrian* provinces of *Armenia*, *Pontus*, and *Cappadocia*, and then they went eastward against the provinces of *Persia* and *Parthia*. Whether the *Pischdadians*, whom the *Persians* reckon to have been their oldest Kings, were Kings of the Kingdom of *Elam*, or of that of the *Assyrians*, and whether *Elam* was conquered by the *Assyrians* at the same time with *Babylonia* and *Susiana* in the Reign of *Asserhadon*, and soon after revolted, I leave to be examined.

[1] Diodor. l. 2, p. 83.

[2] Amos vi. 13, 14.

[3] Amos vi. 2.

[4] 2 Chron. xxvi. 6.

[5] 2 King. xiv. 25.

[6] 2 King. xix. 11.

[7] Isa. x. 8.

[8] 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 King. xvi. 9 & xvii. 6, 24. & Ezra iv. 9.

[9] Isa. xxii. 6.

[10] 2 King. xvii. 24, 30, 31. & xviii. 33, 34, 35. 2 Chron. xxxii. 15.

[11] 2 Chron. xxxii. 13, 15.

[12] Hosea v. 13. & x. 6, 14.

[13] Herod. l. iii. c. 155.

[14] Herod. l. i. c. 184.

[15] Beros. apud Josep. contr. Appion. l. 1.

[16] Curt. l. 5. c. 1.

[17] Apud Euseb. Præp. l. 9. c. 41.

[18] Doroth. apud Julium Firmicum.

[19] Heren. apud Steph. in Βαβ.

[20] Abyden apud Euseb. Præp. l. 9. c. 41.

- [21] Isa. xxiii. 13.
- [22] Tobit. i. 13. Annal. Tyr. apud Joseph. Ant l. 9. c. 14.
- [23] Hosea x. 14.
- [24] Tobit. i. 15.
- [25] Tobit. i. 21. 2 King. xix. 37. Ptol. Canon.
- [26] Isa. xx. 1, 3, 4.
- [27] Herod. l. 1. c. 72. & l. 7. c. 63.
- [28] Apud Athenæum l. xii. p. 528.
- [29] Herod. l. 1. c. 96. &c.
- [30] Athenæus l. 12. p. 529, 530.
- [31] Herod. l. 1. c. 102.
- [32] Herod. l. 1. c. 103. Steph. in Παρθυαίοι.
- [33] Alexander Polyhist. apud Euseb. in Chron. p. 46 & apud Syncellum. p. 210.
- [34] 2 Kings xxiv. 7. Jer. xlvi. 2. Eupolemus apud Euseb. Præp. l. 9. c. 35.
-