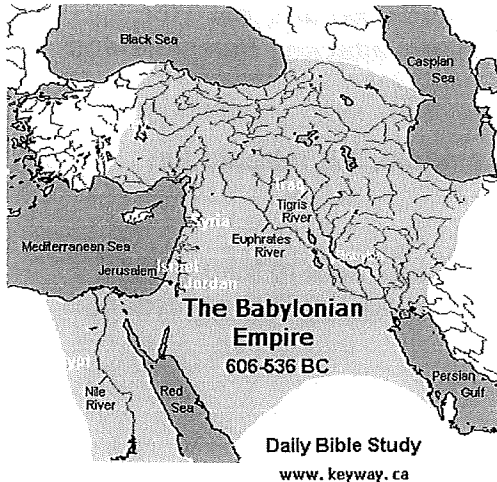
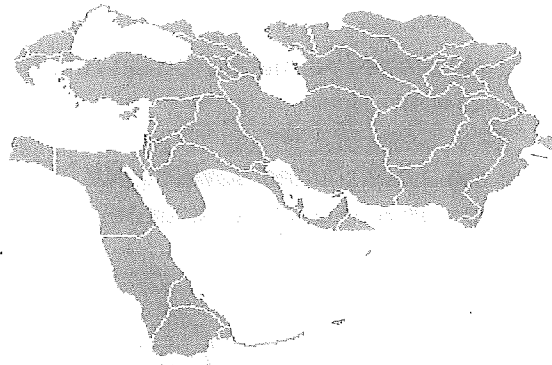


Homily Notes  
Fr. James Flynn  
Epiphany Sunday, 2012

Babylonian Empire before being conquered by Darius the Great of the Persian Empire in 536BC



**Babylonian Empire**



**Persian Empire**

King Darius and the Achaemenid Empire...(also known as the Persian Empire)...at the time of Daniel the Prophet. King Darius (Darius the Great) conquered the Babylonian Empire and freed the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

It was in the time of Darius the Great that the Jewish Prophet Daniel (The one thrown into the Lion's Den) was made "Rab-Mag" or head of the Magi. (Daniel 4:9; 5: 11.) and it was Daniel who was the principal administrator of both the Babylonian and subsequent Persian Empires.



**Alexander the Great**

The Persian Empire (Achaemenid Empire) was conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BC. After Alexander's death the Macedonian Empire was divided up and ruled by Alexander's different generals. The Persian Empire and the Jerusalem became part of the Seleucid region.

Both the Jews and the Persians regained independence from the Seleucid. The Jews under Maccabean leadership (hence the books of Maccabees) and the Persians by being the dominant group within the Parthian Empire.

It was at the time of the Parthian Empire that the Magi became both the chief priests and also head of the upper house of the council (where the name "Magistrates" come from.) One of their duties included the absolute choice and election of the King of the Parthian Empire.

It was therefore a group of Persian-Parthian "King Makers" that entered into King Herod's realm. One can see how this would make Herod nervous.

The Jews had their independence from 164BC until they were conquered by the Roman Empire in 63BC.

The Roman Empire also attacked Parthia, but the Romans were soundly defeated and lost over 30,000 troops including their general, And to add insult to injury the Parthians attacked Palestine and took Jerusalem away from the Roman Empire.

Herod's Father, Antipater, established nominal Roman rule in Jerusalem again, but retreated in anticipation of a Parthian Invasion.

With Parthian collaboration the Jews gained sovereignty until finally Herod was able to take control as "King of the Jews." and was able to occupy Jerusalem after a three year siege by Roman Troops.



**Antipater (Herod's Father)**



**Herod ("King of the Jews")**

In Jerusalem, the sudden appearance of the Magi, probably traveling in force with all imaginable oriental pomp and circumstance, and accompanied by an adequate cavalry escort to insure their safe penetration of Roman territory, certainly alarmed Herod and the populace of Jerusalem.

It would seem as if these Magi were attempting to perpetrate a border incident which could bring swift reprisal from Parthian armies. Their request of Herod regarding the one who "has been born King of the Jews" was a calculated insult to him, a non--Jew, who had contrived and bribed his way into that office.

Consulting his scribes, Herod discovered from the prophecies in the Tanach (the Old Testament) that the Promised One, the Messiah, would be born in Bethlehem. Hiding his concern and expressing sincere interest, Herod requested them to keep him informed.

After finding the babe and presenting their prophetic gifts, the Magi "being warned in a dream" (a form of communication most acceptable to them) departed to their own country, ignoring Herod's request.

