

Nebuchadnezzar

c. 630–562 BC



HOW HE AFFECTED THE REGION King Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the New Babylonian Empire from 605 to 562 BC. He is best known for conquering Jerusalem and for building the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon.



As you read the biography below, think about the strength Nebuchadnezzar must have had to accomplish all that he did.

There were four different kings of Babylon who were named Nebuchadnezzar. However, there was only one who made a major mark on history. Nebuchadnezzar, the second king known by that name, ruled Babylon from 605 to 562 BC. He was known for his power and strength, and his skills as a military leader. By fighting and defeating Assyria and Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar became the master of Western Asia for a time.

Nebuchadnezzar is remembered for the improvements he made to many temples and palaces in his kingdom. Under his rule many important buildings were built and renovated. One of these structures was the Ishtar Gate, a famous **procession** way decorated with ornate designs. Another well-known structure from Nebuchadnezzar's time was the ziggurat, a tall, pyramid-shaped tower.

The most famous structure from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar was the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, built at the Babylonian capital city near what is present day Baghdad in Iraq. According to legend, one of Nebuchadnezzar's wives had once lived in the mountains. She didn't like the dry plains of Babylon and missed the greenery of her



VOCABULARY

procession a parade

puppet king a leader who is controlled by an outside force

razed demolished

homeland. To please her Nebuchadnezzar ordered that thousands of brightly colored trees and flowers be planted on top of the terraces and roofs of the palace. From the ground, the gardens seemed to hang in the air. The ancient Greeks named the Hanging Gardens one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Nebuchadnezzar was also famous for capturing Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish kingdom. In 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and replaced their ruler with a **puppet king**. Nebuchadnezzar earned a reputation as a cruel and powerful monarch. When the Jewish people rebelled against his rule, Nebuchadnezzar **razed** the temple in Jerusalem and sent many of the Jews to Babylon as prisoners. He finally destroyed the city in 586 BC.

After the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon. He ruled the Babylonian Empire until his death in 562 BC.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Identify Who was Nebuchadnezzar?

2. Summarize Name and describe two of Nebuchadnezzar's accomplishments.

ACTIVITY

Use an encyclopedia or an online resource to do research on one of the structures that was built during Nebuchadnezzar's rule. Write a short summary about what you learn.