

and in Syria, and took over the Akkadian language for their official documents. It is a difficult period to understand fully, because of the great variety of people, languages, and customs. We have already mentioned the tablets from Nuzi, a place that was conquered by Assyria about 1400 B.C., and remained buried and forgotten until its discovery in 1926. These Hurrian peoples in northern Mesopotamia seem to have been closely related to the peoples among whom Jacob visited when he was with his uncle Laban. Consequently there are interesting contacts between these tablets and the customs and culture reflected in the story of the patriarchs in Genesis (see article on TERAPHIM).

6. The Assyrian Empire,

We now come to a period that has many specific contacts with Biblical history. The Assyrian kings carried on a constant policy of aggression that made them a menace to Israel for a long time. In 721 B.C. they conquered the northern kingdom, and remained a constant danger to Judah, until 604 B.C., when the Assyrian empire itself was conquered by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. For details of the history of the Assyrian kings, see the article on ASSYRIA. The book of Nahum vividly portrays the downfall of the Assyrian empire.

7. The Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Although Babylon had been politically of secondary importance for many centuries, it had continued to have great importance as a cultural, religious, and commercial center. After the downfall of the Assyrian Empire Babylon experienced a brilliant period of glory, that lasted for about 70 years. Its great king, Nebuchadnezzar, extended his conquests as far as Egypt. He changed the face of his capital city of Babylon, erecting many great buildings there and in other parts of Mesopotamia. The extensiveness of his building operations, and his pride in them, is illustrated