

Verse 1. Ninth year . . . tenth month. Agrees with 2 Kings 25. 1, and Jer. 52. 4.

2. Eleventh . . . fourth . . . ninth. Agrees with 2 Kings 25. 2, 3, and Jer. 52. 5, 6.

3. Middle gate. Some well known gate in the interior of the city, probably one which separated the two principal sections of Jerusalem, which Josephus calls the upper and lower city. The occupation of this central position was a formal taking possession of the city. **Nergal-sharezer.** There is obviously some textual confusion in the record of these names, arising probably from misapprehension of the titles of certain officers, and confounding names and titles. A comparison of this verse with verse 13 enables us to make a plausible emendation. We take the words "sar-sechim," "rab-saris," and "rag-mag" to be titles, and substitute "Nebushasban," who is called "rab-saris" in verse 13, for "Nergal-sharezer," who is twice named in this verse. Since, however, two titles, "sar-sechim" and "rab-saris," come together here without an intervening name, we should place the name "Nebushasban" before "rab-saris," as is done in verse 13. Then we obtain the reading which we have given above and avoid the obvious confusion which appears in the common text and versions. The name **Samgar-nebo** does not as yet appear on the monuments, but the word "Nebo," which forms a part of it, is a most familiar name of a Babylonian idol, and appears again in the names Nebuzaradan and Nebushasban in verse 13. The word **sar-sechim** seems clearly to designate the office of this Samgar-nebo, but its meaning is not certainly known. Some think it may mean "eunuchs," and be equivalent to "saris," but it is not likely that two different words for the same office would occur in such proximity. We have translated it swordsmen above, but only as a conjectural and tentative rendering suggested by the fact that the word "sachin" in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic means a "knife." **Rab-saris.** This is allowed by all scholars to be the title of the chief eunuch. As the name of Nergal-sharezer comes last in verse 13, it seems best to give it that position here and omit it altogether in the first part of the verse. The name appears in the cuneiform inscriptions, and means, "Nergal will protect the king." This officer bore the title of **Rab-mag**, or "chief-magician," and is identified with the Neriglissor, son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, who assassinated Evil-merodach and succeeded him on the throne of Babylon (Josephus, *Apion* i, 20).

4. Saw them. Not necessarily meaning that he beheld them with his own eyes, or appeared in their presence when they sat in the gate. He may have seen them from some tower or eminence when they entered the city, but the thought is, rather, when he observed that they had entered into, and were masters of, the city. **King's garden.**

This was near the Pool of Siloam on the south of the city (Neh. 3. 15). **Gate betwixt the two walls.** Probably the same as the "gate of the fountain," mentioned in Neh. 3. 15. The exact position and purpose of the two walls is uncertain. Comp. Isa. 22. 11. **Way of the plain.** The road to the Arabah, the common designation of the Jordan valley, especially the great depression and desert tract both to the north and south of the Dead Sea.

5. Riblah. This was at the place of the modern village of the same name, on the east bank of the Orontes River, about thirty-five miles north-east of Baalbek. **Gave judgment upon him.** Literally, "spoke with him judgments." A striking phrase, found also in Jer. 1. 16; 4. 12; 12. 1. It implies that the judgments rendered were not in word only, but also in deed.

7. Chains. Hebrew, "with double brass," probably in allusion to a double chain and fetters that connected both hands and feet.

9. Captain of the guard. Our translators, to have been consistent, should have written this "Rab-tabbahim." But like "Rab-saris" and "Rab-mag" in verse 3, this also is a title, and means "chief executioner," or chief of the body-guard of the king. **Those that fell away.** The deserters who forsook the Jewish people and went over to the Babylonians. Comp. 2 Kings 25. 11; Jer. 52. 15.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *Wherein was the captivity in Babylon a blessing to the Jewish people?*

This captivity was the means of overthrowing the monarchy, restoring the theocracy, and destroying idolatry. Being deprived of the temple service, the Jews were led to worship God in the home and in local assemblies, and the worship became less ceremonial and more spiritual. After the captivity local worship in the synagogue became general, and this led to a better observance of the Sabbath and to a better knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. As a punishment for disobedience the captivity taught the Jews to respect the law of God. The discipline of affliction was a great blessing.—*Rev. Edward R. Perkins, Epping, N. H.*

It gave them, (1) in a sense, a new Bible; the canon was enlarged and rearranged, unfolding new doctrines. (2) A higher morality. (3) A simpler and more spiritual worship; the synagogue became an integral part of their religious system and necessarily modified the forms and spirit of worship. (4) It made possible the re-erection of the nation on a theocratic basis; never again, but for a short period, was political independence theirs. (5) It purged the nation of idolatry; it