

Old Testament History 128

but from the historical viewpoint the most interesting thing about Esarhaddon is that he was just as fond of the Babylonians as his father was opposed to them. It is seen that Esarhaddon was the youngest son. He was not the oldest son and he was one who was very much interested in Babylonian culture and Babylonian civilization. He was fond of all these things. The Babylonians looked on the Assyrians as barbarians but then most people who are looked upon that way turn around and consider the other one a barbarian but Esarhaddon--that's what Sennacherib did, but Esarhaddon didn't do it.. Esarhaddon tried to imitate the Babylonian culture and civilization and he lavished great amounts of money on Babylon to beautify the city and build the city of Babylon thinking that then the people would recognize them as their great patron and be true to Assyria but this didn't work either. Esarhaddon, however, had no great difficulty with Babylon during his life time. He died in 668 and at his death he left a very cumbersome arrangement. He said, "Ashurbanipal is to be the next king." His son Ashurbanipal--this name Ashurbanipal is referred to in Ezra 4:1 in the corrupt form of . That's the way the Arameans spoke of Ashurbanipal-- but Ashurbanipal, who reigned from 668 to 626, was quite a powerful conqueror and also a man of culture and in his pictures he also shows himself not as most the Assyrians do, simply with a big spear or sword, but on the other side he always had a stylus, the instrument the scribes used to write on a clay tablet, and this, they say, shows a king who is also a scribe, and Ashurbanipal reports in his inscriptions how skilled he was in wisdom and knowledge of the work of the scribes. He was evidently a man of more cultural training than his predecessors but this doesn't mean he was any less bloodthirsty or cruel. In a test one year some one spoke of him as different from his ancestors in that he had a quiet and peaceful disposition. Well, there is no evidence whatever for any such theory as that about him. For ever since I felt I shouldn't say too much about his cultural side without balancing it with the other lest people get a false impression of this cruel Assyrian king. Esarhaddon