

O. T. History 121

Alexander the Great a few minutes ago. Alexander the Great had various Greek companions with him on his conquest, naturally, and there was a story which was written, supposed to be by his friend and historian ~~Plutarch~~, but later proven not to be by him. We don't know who it is by, so we call it the Pseudo ~~Plutarch~~ gives the names of Alexander's ten companions. The book has been translated in early days into Syriac and the Greek copy was copied and copied and copied, the Syriac was copied and copied and copied; now we compare the two and we cannot recognize in the case of any of the names in the Greek and in the Syriac that there are the same name. They've so changed that we don't know what the names of his companions originally were though, in general the two manuscripts preserve substantially the same story, the Syriac and the Greek. It simply shows how difficult it is to preserve proper names in copying and recopying of manuscripts and particularly of a language unfamiliar to that of the scribes who are copying it or of the original scribes, but in the case of this Assyrian period you have case after case where the names have been preserved with remarkable accuracy. I want to call your attention to one such case in the Babylonian period. It is a similar case to this in the Assyrian but it happens to come from the Babylonian period. It is Jeremiah 39:3. In Jeremiah 39:3 we have a list of the men who came into Jerusalem when it was conquered. If you would turn to that passage, Jeremiah 39:3 you would find some names that were queer, outlandish names to the Israelites. We read after the Babylonians conquered that the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. Well now you can imagine what those names sounded like to the Hebrew scribes, about the same as they sound to you, and consequently as you look at the names there you wonder just what they correspond to, whether they represent any actual thing. It is interesting that this name Nergal-sharezer occurs twice in the list. That would seem rather strange,