

The Ancient Book of Jasher

In Search of King Nimrod

The book of Jasher among many other subjects, deals with the history of King Nimrod, but, before getting into history, I will introduce the book of Jasher. The introduction and history are taken from the book of Jasher. Ken Johnson is the copyright holder, and I will have minor modifications made, like bold characters and underlining. I believe that, if, for some readers, this history of Nimrod may look more like mythology, but, there may be some truth behind this royal character that is Nimrod. An analysis by Isaac Asimov is presented at the end of this article.

What is the book of Jasher? (Jasher is a Hebrew word meaning **Upright**)

The book of Jasher is one of 13 ancient history books that are recommended reading by the Bible. It is referenced in Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18 and 2 Timothy 3:8, of the King James Version.

Out of these 13 only Jasher is still in existence. If we are to believe the text itself, this history book was written **over** 3500 years ago. It is approximately the same age as the biblical book of Genesis. It covers about the same time period as Genesis and Exodus but has about twice as much information in it than Genesis. It answers a lot of questions raised in Genesis.

(Over 3500 years ago is about over 1500 BC, and coincides with the reign of the Assyrian King Ashur Nirari I, meaning Ashur is my help.)

Now, The Book of Jasher

The Generations of Noah:

Japhet, Ham and Shem

Shem's descendants:

Elam, **Ashur**, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram.

Ham's descendants:

Cush, Mitzraim, Phut and Canaan.

Cush the son of Ham, the son of Noah, took a wife in those days in his old age, and she bare a son, and they called his name **Nimrod**.

And the garments of skin which God made for Adam and his wife, when they went out of the garden, were given to Cush.

When Cush had **Nimrod**, he gave him those garments through his love for him, and **Nimrod** grew up, and when he was twenty years old, he put on those garments.

And **Nimrod became** strong when he put on the garments, and God gave him might and strength, and he was a mighty hunter in the earth, yea, he was a mighty hunter in the field, and he hunted the animals and he built altars, and he offered upon them the animals before the Lord.

And **Nimrod** strengthened himself, and he rose up from among his brethren, and he fought the battles of his brethren against all their enemies round about.

And the Lord delivered all the enemies of his brethren in his hands, and God prospered him from time to time in his battles, and he reigned upon earth.

And when **Nimrod** was forty years old, at that time there was a war between his brethren and the children of Japhet, so that they were in the power of their enemies.

And **Nimrod** went forth at that time, and he assembled all the sons of Cush and their families about four hundred and sixty men, and he hired also from some of his friends and acquaintances about eighty men, and he gave them their hire, and he went with them to battle, and when he was on the road, **Nimrod** strengthened the hearts of the people that went with him. And he said to them, do not fear, neither be alarmed, for all our enemies will be delivered into our hands, and you may do with them as you please. And all the men that went were about five hundred, and they fought against their enemies, and they destroyed them, and **Nimrod** placed standing officers over them in their respective places.

And he took some of their children as security, and they were all servants to **Nimrod** and to his brethren, and **Nimrod** and all the people that were with him turned homeward.

And when **Nimrod** had joyfully returned from battle, after having conquered his enemies, all his brethren, together with those who knew him before, assembled to make him king over them, and they placed the regal crown upon his head. And he set over his subjects and peoples, princes and judges, and rulers, as is the custom amongst kings. And he placed Terah the son of Nahor the prince of his host, and he dignified him and elevated him above all his princes. And whilst he was reigning according to his heart's desire, after having conquered all his enemies around, he advised with his counselors to build a city for his palace, and they did so. And they found a large valley opposite to the east, and they built him a large and extensive city, and **Nimrod** called the name of the city that he built **Shinar** (Historians believe that Shinar is Sumer,

see Genesis 11:2-3), for the Lord had vehemently shaken his enemies and destroyed them. And **Nimrod** dwelt in Shinar, and he reigned securely, and he fought with his enemies and subdued them, and he prospered in his battles, and his kingdom became very great. And all nations and tongues heard of his fame, and they gathered themselves to him, and they bowed down to the earth, and they brought him offerings, and they all dwelt with him in the city of **Shinar**, and **Nimrod** reigned in the earth over all the sons of **Noah**, and they were all under his power and counsel. And all the earth was of one tongue and words of union, but **Nimrod** did not go in the ways of the Lord, and he was more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days. And he made gods of wood and stone, and he bowed to them, and he rebelled against the Lord, and taught all his subjects and the people of the earth his wicked ways; and **Mardon** his son was more wicked than his father. And every one that heard of the acts of **Mardon** the son of **Nimrod** would say, concerning him, from the wicked goeth forth wickedness; therefore it became a proverb in the whole earth, saying, from the wicked goeth forth wickedness, and it was current in the words of men from that time to this.

In Search of Historical King Nimrod

Based on the book: "Asimov's Guide to the Bible."

(I have italicized the Asimov's text.)

Isaac Asimov, in pages 52 and 53 of his book "Asimov's Guide to the Bible, two volumes in one, The Old and New Testaments, Wings Books, New York. Avenel. New Jersey," makes the following remarks about the person of King Nimrod:

"Despite occasional setbacks, Assyria grew stronger and stronger, displaced the Kassites, and established their rule over all of Babylonia, then spread far beyond. By the time the traditions of Genesis were being reduced to writing, Assyria was the most powerful nation the world had yet seen.

It would appear, then, that the verses of 10:8-12 are a brief résumé of 2500 years of the history of the Tigris-Euphrates region, from the period of the Sumerian city-states, through the Akkadian Empire, the Amorite Empire, and, finally, the Assyrian Empire.

I am briefly stopping the Asimov's account of the story of Nimrod, to reproduce the Genesis verses 10:8-12, from the Revised Standard Version, to show the "2500 years of history":

8 Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; 10 The beginning of his kingdom was Ba'bél, E'rech, and Ac'cad, all of them in the land of Shi'när' 11 From that land he went into Assyria,

and built Nin'é.véh, Re.hǒ'both-Ir, Ca'làh and 12 Rē; sén between Nin'é.véh and Cā'làh; that is the great city.

Now, back to Isaac Asimov's account of the history of King Nimrod:

And where in this long history are we to find Nimrod?

The Biblical passage concerning him seems to telescope the deeds of Lugal-Zaggisi, Sargon of Agade, Hammurabi, and Shalmaneser I (and perhaps even Gilgamesh) and to make his single person reflect the greatness of the Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, and Assyrians.

Now, to clarify the time spread of 2500 years, I am adding the following dates, from Saggs book "The Babylonians, Folio Society":

- Lugal-Zaggisi: ~ 2400 BC
- Sargon: 2371-2316 BC
- Hammurabi: 1790-1750
- Shalmaneser I: 1274-1245

And from Wikipedia:

Gilgamesh, 5th King of Uruk, reigned 26th century BC

Time range: 2600-1245=1355 Years, less than 2500 years.

From the "World History Encyclopedia:

"The Sumerians were the first people to [migrate](#) to Mesopotamia, they created a great civilization. Beginning around 5,500 years ago,"

After the Ubaid Period (c. 5000-4100 BCE) came the Uruk Period (4100-2900 BCE) in which cities began to emerge across the landscape and the city of Uruk rose in prominence

Based on this information, the time span becomes: 4100 BCE Uruk – 1245 Shalmaneser = 2855 years.

So, the above range, according to Isaac Asimov, was used by the authors of Genesis to explain the origin of the name of King Nimrod.

Back to Asimov:

And yet to the writers of Genesis, the Assyrians were the latest and greatest of the empires of the Tigris-Euphrates and their glory tended to dim the memory of what had gone before. To the first conquering king of Assyria might then go the credit not only for establishing Assyrian might, but of performing all the deeds of the preceding kingdoms as well. (It is as though a child receiving some garbled notice of America's early history but understanding full well that George

Washington was the first President of the United States would then write: "George Washington crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the Mayflower, discovered America, conquered Mexico, built Washington, D.C., and became first President of the United States.")

The first Assyrian conqueror of note was, as I have said, Tukulti-Ninurta I. It seems very likely that he served as the original inspiration for the Greek legend of Ninus. ("Ninurta" with a few letters dropped and the Greek final -s, almost invariably used in their own names, becomes "Ninus.") In the Greek legend, Ninus singlehandedly founds Nineveh, conquers all of Babylonia and Armenia (Urartu), and the nomadic regions to the east as well, founding the Assyrian Empire.

It seems quite possible that, "Ninurta" became "Nimrod" to the editors of Genesis. Indeed, the short picture of Nimrod in these few Biblical verses seems to point to an Assyrian monarch in particular. Assyrian art was powerful and cruel and one of the favorite objects of portrayal was that of the Assyrian kings in pursuit of big game. Hunting was undoubtedly a favorite and well-publicized sport of those monarchs and this is undoubtedly the reason for describing Nimrod as "a mighty hunter."

Then, too, the Assyrians succeeded the Kassites (Cush) as the dominant power in Babylonia, which makes it natural to have Nimrod described as the son of Cush."

So, according to Isaac Asimov, the Ninurta end of the name "Tukulti-Ninurta," was sublimated into Nimrod. Not impossible, very ingenious, but, a little farfetched. Firstly, Tukulti-Ninurta reigned from 1243 to 1207 BC, while, as we saw above, if we are to believe the text itself, this history book (meaning Jasher) was written over 3500 years ago. It is approximately the same age as the biblical book of Genesis, that is over 1500 BC, So, its editor or editors (Moses included), had no knowledge of the coming Tukulti-Ninurta I, in 1244 to 1208 (Saggs, The Babylonians, Folio Society , p 418). We can remember the past, even if garbled, but cannot see the future.

And how was this name of Nimrod invented? It is easier to go from Ninurta to Ninus (both have Ninu in common), but from Ninurta to Nimrod? And this makes all the stories about Nimrod, told in the book of Jasher, the work of imagination.

In western Syria, there is a stone fortress, built without mortar, each piece weighing up to 40 tons, and called "The Nimrod Fortress." This is not Mesopotamia, it is the western end of Syria, and Nimrod reappears there.

See: YouTube: "Fortress for Giants in Syria, the Nimrod Fortress (With polygonal stone work.)"

YouTube, also, has videos of a song, titled: “Kuando El Rey Nimrod, from Sephardic Journey.”

It starts with the sentence: “When King Nimrod...”

Sephardi refers to a tradition kept by the Jews of Spain and Portugal, from the 15th century AD.

A Note of Caution

With regard to the question of the age of the Bible (Old Testament), Genesis in particular, a word of caution is in order.

Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., in “HOW THE BIBLE CAME ABOUT” writes:

“Though the Bible may look like any other book on a desk or shelf, it is more like a library in itself than just another book. **It is a collection of many different writings by several authors and produced over hundreds of years.** “Bold characters by me.

In the book “Essentials of Bible History,” by Elmer W. K. Mould, page 95, we read: “The source book for our knowledge of this period is the biblical Book of Genesis. This period covers nearly eight centuries, from about 2000 to 1200 BC.”

In page 97 of the same book: “Among the pictorial representations valuable for an understanding of nomadic daily life is a wall painting in the tomb of Khnumhotep III at Beni Hasan dating from circa 1890 BC., very close to the time of Abraham.”

According to the Book of Jasher, Abraham was born during the reign of King Nimrod, so, this brings us close to 1890 BC., far upstream from 1244-1208 BC., when Tukulti-Ninurta I reigned.

If we consider the range of “2000 to 1200 BC” given above for the Book of Genesis and if we assume that the authors of Genesis wrote their story of Nimrod in the lower part of the above range, that is around ~ 1200 BC, then, and only then, the story of Isaac Asimov gains consistency.

There is an apparent difference, here, between the dates 1500 & 1890 BC., related to the Book of Jasher, but, emphasis is on “**over**” 1500 BC., which can bring us to 1890 BC., considering that the book of Genesis covers 2000 to 1200 BC.

My thoughts

It is conceivable to assume that a king by the name of Nimrod existed in the remote past history of that land, considering the “Assyrian King List” and the “List of Kings” given in Wikipedia (Printed 9/12/2008).

This list of kings begins with “Kings who lived in tents”, beginning with “Tudiya in 23rd century BC, and ending with “Didanu” the seventeenth tent dweller king.

It should be mentioned that, according to Wikipedia, “**Tudiya** or **Tudia** ([Akkadian](#): 𒌶𒌵𒌶, romanized: *Tu-di-ia*) was according to the [Assyrian King List](#) (AKL) the first Assyrian monarch, ruling in Assyria's [early period](#), though he is not attested in any known contemporary artefacts.^[1] He is listed among the “seventeen kings who lived in tents.”^{[2][3]} His existence is unconfirmed archaeologically and uncorroborated by any other source. According to the list, Tudiya was succeeded by [Adamu](#).^[4] “

So, we see that we have kings that are “Unconfirmed archaeologically” and “uncorroborated by any other source”, yet, somehow, their name exists.

Maybe King Nimrod falls in that category of “Unconfirmed” but, yet, existing, especially in the Bible.

In addition to verse 10:8-12, the Bible mentions Nimrod in “I Chronicles 1:10” as follows: “Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth.”

Also in verse “Micah 5:6”, as follows:

“They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nim’rod with the drawn sword; and they shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.”



Nimrod Castle in Syria. Notice the obvious megalithic elements and then reconstruction.

**Antique statues on Nemrut mountain,
Turkey. The UNESCO World Heritage Site at
Mount Nemrut where King Antiochus of
Commagene is reputedly entombed.**



www.shutterstock.com · 1788402788