



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 1

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- *Bible Translation Codes with Identification* -----



INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

Dan 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Daniel is unique in the Old Covenant Scriptures. It deals with matters transcendent to the Old Covenant itself, mentioning such things as the resurrection of the dead (12:2,3,12), the coming of Christ (7:13-14), and the day of judgment (7:9-10), as well as the displacement of world empires. Daniel was shown secrets that were "*written in heaven*" – things no other man had ever seen or heard before (Dan 10:21). He was also given to see the struggle of spiritual hosts that has rarely been expounded to prophets throughout history. That struggle, he was told, accounted for the shifting of political powers in the world.

WORLD EMPIRES

The great empires of the world, and their destinies, are unfolded in remarkable detail: Babylon, Persia,

Greece, and Rome. Unlike the manner of men, these kingdoms are presented according to their character, not their appearance or fame. At least two of these empires came into prominence long after Daniel had finished his course in this world.

ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

The prominence of Daniel began during a period fraught with adversity. The people of God were grievously chastened through the Divinely appointed Babylonian captivity. The holy city, where God had placed His name, was sacked and destroyed. The Temple, Divinely established as a place where special closeness and ministry to the Living God took place, was destroyed. The gifted and capable people were removed from the land, leaving only those who would pose

no threat to Babylon in the land. The king and his sons were taken captive. The holy vessels of the temple were removed and housed in a place devoted to idols. It is difficult to conceive of a period of time that could be more discouraging and conducive to despair.

Daniel was in a land that worshiped other gods, away from his parents and godly tutors. No prophets were in the land with him, and there was no respect for the Jews themselves, or the God they worshiped.

These circumstances were the environment in which Daniel rose to prominence. He became renown in that land for his wisdom, interpretation of dreams, and dependency upon God. The book contains several dreams and visions.

OUTLINE

- < INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHET DANIEL
- < JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH (1:1a)
- < INTRODUCTION TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR (1:1b)
- < INTRODUCTION TO THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY
- < NEBUCHADNEZZAR BESIEGES JERUSALEM (1:1c)
- < GOD GIVES THE KING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR (1:2a)
- < PART OF THE VESSELS TAKEN (1:2b)

Some of them were given to heathen kings, then interpreted by Daniel. Others were given directly to Daniel himself.

The book records intense Divine activity, even though the surroundings did not seem conducive to it.

AUTHENTICITY DENIED

As early as the third century, the authenticity of Daniel was aggressively denied. Although it was a clear departure from the unanimous acceptance of this book, a man named Porphyry boldly denounced Daniel as invalid. Living in the third century, this man was an aggressive opponent of the faith. He wrote fifteen books against Christianity, with the twelfth one being against the book of Daniel. He was a very learned man, and hence his writings were very disciplined and difficult to answer. It is as though Satan raised him up to challenge the authenticity of Daniel. Of his works, Dr. Lardner wrote, "Porphyry's work against the Christians was much labored, and that in his argument he displayed all of his learning, which was very considerable. Hence we can perceive the difficulty of undertaking an answer to him, for which very few were qualified; in which none of the apologists for Christianity seemed to have answered expectations." Lardner's Works, Volume 7, Page 401

All of Porphyry's books have been lost. Barnes Notes on Daniel This, it seems to me, is

a clear judgment from God.

I mention this bit of literary trivia for a reason. Porphyry was an opponent of Christianity, yet saw a clear connection between the book of Daniel and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why he opposed it. If a man of such marked depravity could see such an association, it ought to be exceedingly apparent to the disciples of Christ, who have embraced Him in faith.

PROPHESIED THE LONGEST PERIOD

The longest period of earth's history is prophesied by Daniel, covering significant details of several centuries. The time of Christ's death, which occurred approximately 600 years after Daniel's death, is declared with astounding precision, as well as the fall of great empires and even the day of judgment. Long prophetic periods are depicted by durations called "seventy weeks" (9:24), "seven weeks," "sixty-two weeks" (9:25), "two thousand and two hundred days" (8:14), "a time, times, and an half" (12:7), "a thousand two hundred and ninety days" (12:11), and "the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (12:12).

Daniel's prophecy of the coming Messiah was so remarkably precise that one Jewish Rabbi "who lived about fifty years before the coming of Christ, asserted that the time of Messiah, as signified by Daniel, could not be deferred longer than those fifty years." John Gill, quoting R. Nehemiah apud Grotium, de Ver. Relig. 1.5 Sect. 14.

A RECORD OF DOMINIONS

In this book, Daniel weaves history and prophecy together through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He refers to kings with whom he had to do:

- ▣ "Jehoiakim king of Judah" (1:1)
- ▣ "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (1:1)
- ▣ "Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans" (5:30)
- ▣ "Belshazzar king of Babylon" (7:1)
- ▣ "Cyrus king of Persia" (10:1)
- ▣ "Darius the Mede" (11:1)

Daniel also refers to evil spiritual rulers in the heavenly places who exercised dominion over nations.

- ▣ "The prince of Persia"

- ▣ "The prince of Grecian" (10:20).

There are also holy heavenly powers mentioned by Daniel – lofty angelic personages that impact the history of the world.

- ▣ *An angel* who delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace (3:28).
- ▣ *An angel* who delivered Daniel from the lion's den (6:22).
- ▣ *A heavenly messenger* who broke through wicked high powers to bring a message to Daniel (10:11-13).
- ▣ *Michael*, a chief heavenly prince. He assisted in casting down hindering powers, and is said to eventually stand up for the people of Israel (10:13,21; 12:1).
- ▣ *Gabriel*, a mighty angel, who personally, delivered a critical message to Daniel (8:16; 9:21).

Peering into the future, the prophet also mentioned coming rulers, speaking of their character and dominion. These include the following.

- ▣ "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences" (8:23)
- ▣ "The king of the South" (11:5)
- ▣ "The king of the North" (11:6).

He also speaks of powerful rulers in parabolic form.

- ▣ A "little horn" springing up amidst ten other powers (7:5)
- ▣ "A ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward" (8:4)
- ▣ A "he goat from the West" (8:5)
- ▣ "A little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land" (8:9)
- ▣ "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences" (8:23).

Daniel unveils the collapse of specific world powers: Babylonia, Medes and Persians, Greece, and Rome. All of this will be accomplished through a kingdom God Himself would set up (2:36-44). That kingdom is nothing less than the reign of "the Man Christ Jesus."

A Book About Authority

This book is about authority – the authority of God versus the authority of

men. The authority of Jehoiakim was cast down by God. Nebuchadnezzar was reduced to a grass-eating animal. Belshazzar lost his dominion in a single night. All of these were judgments from God. When the rule of these men clashed with the rule of the Living God, they were thrown down suddenly and decisively.

The most significant powers of the world are presented as temporal, and destined for failure. Their success is limited, and only for a time. Daniel is shown that ultimately the kingdom of God will fill *“the whole earth,”* standing forever (2:35,44).

The sovereignty of God is affirmed with remarkable consistency and power in this book. He is truly *“the Governor among the nations,”* and the kingdom, or dominion, belongs to Him (Psa 22:28). Nebuchadnezzar learned this the hard way. However, after he had been tutored in the field and deprived of his mind, he clearly saw the greatness of God.

A Temptation Men Will Face

Because of the uniqueness of Daniel’s prophecies, men often experience strong inclinations to approach them with an academic mind. Thus, their thinking becomes more historical than spiritual, and they miss the real message of this book. We must resist any temptation to so approach this record. Although there are historical matters to be seen in it, there is a canopy of truth that overshadows them.

Daniel confirms there is a spiritual struggle behind what appears on the earth. Above flesh and blood, and unseen to the human eye, God is governing the affairs of men. **No kingdom lasts longer than God intends, and it obtains its power apart from flesh and blood.** At the precise point the kingdoms of this world begin to extend beyond the will of God, their demise also commences.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The people of God are also prominent in the book of Daniel. According to appearance, it looked as though Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, and the likes, were most prominent. Their kingdoms appeared to be in control. Actually, however, Daniel had more control than those kings. God so

orchestrated circumstances that those very kings had to rely upon the wisdom and counsel of this man of God. Although, from one point of view, Daniel, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah appeared to be captives, yet they were exalted in the empires that thought to hold them.

It is written that Nebuchadnezzar *“worshiped Daniel”* (2:46), making him *“ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon”* (2:48). He also *“set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon”* (2:49), and *“promoted”* them in the province of Babylon (3:30). Belshazzar made Daniel *“the third ruler of the kingdom”* (5:29). Darius made him the

announces His determination that His people will possess His Kingdom.

☐ **TAKE THE KINGDOM.** *“But **the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.**”* (7:18)

☐ **POSSESS THE KINGDOM.** *“Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that **the saints possessed the kingdom.**”* (7:22)

☐ **GIVEN THE KINGDOM.** *“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people of the saints of the most***

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POWERS OF THE WORLD ARE PRESENTED AS TEMPORAL, AND DESTINED FOR FAILURE. THEIR SUCCESS IS LIMITED, AND ONLY FOR A TIME. DANIEL IS SHOWN THAT ULTIMATELY THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL FILL *“THE WHOLE EARTH,”* STANDING FOREVER

first *“president,”* placing him over all the princes of his empire (6:1-2). He also *“prospered in the reign of Cyrus the Persian”* (6:28).

All of this confirms that God’s people have been destined to ultimately rule. Daniel and his three Hebrew colleagues lived that out in a heathen empire. Corroborating that this is not intended to be limited to the time of Daniel, the Lord revealed to him a coming time when the kingdom under the whole heavens would be given to the saints of the Most High God.

Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom was **given** to him by God (2:37). God also **gave** Belshazzar’s kingdom to the Medes (5:28). That, however, was only a very small picture of what God has determined for the future. Under the reign of Jesus, and in spite of a fierce war waged against the saints, the kingdom is going to be given to them. Three times God

High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (7:25)

All of this is in harmony with the words of the Psalmist. *“. . . those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace . . . For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth”* (Psa 37:9,11,22). The Lord Jesus Himself confirmed these things. *“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”* (Matt 5:5).

Let no child of God imagine opposition and hardship is the end of the story! The saints will no more be left in oppression forever than Joseph was forever in the pit, or in the prison! **Those who, through faith, side with God, will be exalted.** That is the message you must receive from this book! Jesus confirmed this is the case: *“And he that*

overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev 2:26-27). Again He promised, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev 3:21). Paul declared the same: “If we suffer, we shall also reign

unsatisfied. Those who take this book to heart will certainly not be bored. It will provide us with insights into the triumphant nature of the Kingdom of our God and His Christ.

JESUS REFERRED TO DANIEL

In His Olivet discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem, His coming, and the end of the world (Matt 24:3), Jesus referred to the writings of Daniel. His words are couched in a prophecy that

shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

At the every earliest, this would have referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 AD. That puts Daniel’s prophecy approximately 700 years before God’s judgment on Jerusalem. However, Daniel’s prophecy does not end with the “*abomination of desolation,*” but speaks of succeeding events.

YET, DANIEL’S PROPHECY IS MOST UNIQUE, CONFIRMING THE UNUSUAL BREADTH IN REVELATION FROM GOD. GOD DOES NOT SPEAK IN MONOTONES, NOR DOES HE LEAVE THE MIND UNCHALLENGED AND THE HEART UNSATISFIED. THOSE WHO TAKE THIS BOOK TO HEART WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE BORED.

with him” (2 Tim 2:12).

Aside from the many other advantages found in a study of Daniel, the fact of the saints possessing the kingdom should be enough to provoke an intense interest in this book.

CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

It is of interest to note other prophets whose prophecies were given within the time frame of Daniel. They include Habakkuk (606 BC), Ezekiel (593-571 BC), and Joel (592 BC). Prophets living after him, who no doubt profited from his wisdom, include Haggai and Zechariah (520 BC), Ezra (536-458 BC), Malachi (450 BC), and Nehemiah (444-430 BC).

Yet, Daniel’s prophecy is most unique, confirming the unusual breadth in revelation from God. God does not speak in monotones, nor does He leave the mind unchallenged and the heart

speaks of “*the love of many*” waxing cold, the Gospel being preached “*in all the world for a witness unto all nations,*” and “*the end*” (Matt 24:12-14). Although they have been variously interpreted, no thinking person questions their sobriety or significance. “*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains*” (Matt 24:15-16). The text to which Jesus referred is Daniel 9:27: “*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*” There is also an allusion to Daniel 12:11: “*And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there*

- ☐ The people who know their God will do great exploits (11:32).
- ☐ Those who understand will instruct many (11:33).
- ☐ Those who fall will be helped a little (11:34).
- ☐ Some with understanding will be tried, purged, and made white, even to the time of the end (11:35).
- ☐ The one bringing the abomination will himself be overthrown (11:40).
- ☐ A king from the North will enter into “*the glorious land, and many countries will be overthrown*” (11:41).
- ☐ Michael will stand up for the people of God (Israel), and a time of unparalleled trouble will ensue (12:1).

I only give these samples to confirm the contemporary relevance of the book of Daniel. It certainly is not a book of mere proverbial wisdom, like the book of Proverbs, or a book of observations “*under the sun*” like Ecclesiastes. Nor, indeed, is it basically historical, like the book of Numbers. Neither is it a book of Divinely instituted procedures, like Leviticus, or an historical record like Esther. Rather, it has to do with the glorious triumph of the Kingdom of God. It particularly relates to the reign of the Lord Jesus, and the Divinely determined overthrow of all powers aligned against Him. It is the only Old Testament book in which the word “*Messiah*” appears (9:25,26). Although the references are few, the implications of them are magnificently large.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHET DANIEL

WHO DANIEL IS NOT

There are two other men named

“*Daniel*” in Scripture. Allow me to first dispense with the notion that they are the

Daniel mentioned in this book. David had a son through Abigail that was named

the different rulers, for God was with him. He impacted the history of the world by altering the manner in which world rulers thought.

- ▣ Nebuchadnezzar “made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon” (2:48).
- ▣ Belshazzar “clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom” (5:29).
- ▣ Darius established three presidents in the land “of whom Daniel was first:

and none of us knows how long this will be” (Psa 74:9). Yet here, in Daniel, we find a man with continuous influence with very few interruptions. This is a most remarkable situation.

Some of his ministry includes the following.

- ▣ Interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great image (2:31-45).
- ▣ Interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great tree in the midst of the earth that was hewn down (4:10-228).
- ▣ Interpreted handwriting that appeared on the wall during an evil feast hosted by Belshazzar (5:25-28).
- ▣ Had the dream and vision of four great

- ▣ Received an interpretation of the vision from the angel Gabriel. It involved the kingdoms the Medes and Persia, and Greece (8:16-26).
- ▣ Prophesied of the exact time of Christ’s death, the removal of sin, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness (9:24-27).
- ▣ Was given to understand the profound spiritual battle behind the scenes that brought the fall of Persia and the rise of Greece (10:12-21).
- ▣ The acetifies of certain Persian kings, a king of the North, and a king of the South, Greece, and remarkable complexities regarding their role in Divinely appointed history. Political supremacy continues until God’s land and people are reproached (11:1-45).
- ▣ Given to see a time when Michael the archangel would stand up for Israel, he being their guardian (12:1).
- ▣ The resurrection of the dead, and the shining forth of the righteous (12:2-3).
- ▣ A time close to “the end” when knowledge would be greatly increased, with extensive movement among the people (12:4).
- ▣ The duration of a “time, times, and half” is specified, also made known in the Revelation (Rev 12:14) – a time in which Divine intentions would be fulfilled.

JOSEPH INFLUENCED ONE PHARAOH. DANIEL INFLUENCES FOUR WORLD MONARCHS, AND THREE POLITICAL DYNASTIES. ALL OF THIS WAS DONE WHILE IN THE MIDST OF THE ENVIRONMENT HE IMPACTED. THE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT THIS WAS THAT HE WAS IN THE LAND OF CAPTIVITY – BABYLON.

that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage” (6:2).

- ▣ After the fall of the Babylonian empire, it is said of Daniel, “So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (6:28).

Joseph influenced one Pharaoh. Daniel influences four world monarchs, and three political dynasties. All of this was done while in the midst of the environment he impacted. The remarkable thing about this was that he was in the land of captivity – Babylon. So far as we know, no prophets arose when Israel was in Egyptian bondage. When Samuel was born, there was a long period during which little, if any, revelation was received from God. It is said, “And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision” 1 Sam 3:1). David spoke of a time when the Israelites lamented, “no prophets are left,

beasts rising out of the sea, depicting great world empires (7:1-8).

- ▣ Had a vision of the day of judgment and the opening of the books (7:9-10).
- ▣ Saw a night vision of one like the Son of man, who came with the clouds of heaven, and was given “dominion, glory, and a kingdom” – an everlasting dominion that would never pass away (7:13).
- ▣ Was told the saints of the Most High God would be given the kingdom of God (7:22,25,27).
- ▣ Saw a vision of a ram and a he goat, depicting violent and competitive kingdoms (8:1-8).
- ▣ God revealed to him the rise of a political power depicted as a little horn, rising out of fallen empires (8:9-11).
- ▣ Heard two saints speaking about the duration of the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the cleansing of the sanctuary (8:13-14).

The details and manner of speech relating to these prophecies are still a source of challenge to the people of God. We will find that much of what Daniel saw has, in remarkable detail, been fulfilled in history.

A Lesson to be Learned

The point to be seen at this juncture is how much God is willing to make known to those living close to Him. Let none imagine there are no restraints in this revelation. Some things that were revealed to Daniel in a broad sense, were actually hidden from him as well. Thus the Lord declared of his closing vision, “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (12:9). And again he was told, “But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days” (12:13).

Thus we behold one of the Lord’s manners. **He reveals enough so that His people can be assured of His**

meticulous ordering of all things.

Yet, lest their curiosity overtake their thinking, they are told they must wait until the appropriate time before their understanding can be full.

OF THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH

“Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel . . . ” (1:6). Daniel was from the tribe and kingdom of Judah – of the *“children of Judah.”* The numbering of these people began after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt (Num 1:26). Their standard, or ensign, was *“in the first place”* among their armies (Num 10:14). They were also the first tribe to receive an inheritance in the promised land (Josh 15:1-12). Later, during the kings, they dwelt in Jerusalem (1 Chron 9:3).

Following the death of king Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel was divided into two groups. Only David and Solomon reigned over a united Kingdom. Ezekiel prophesied the two divisions would become one once more (Ezek 37:16-22). Jeremiah declared the New Covenant was to be made *“with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah”* (Jer 31:31). From the time of their division, and until the time of their union, contention existed between the two (1 Kgs 15:17; 2 Kgs 14:11-13).

The kingdom of Judah was known as the *“southern kingdom,”* and was comprised of two tribes, Judah and part of Benjamin, with Simeon being included later (1 Kgs 12:21-23). This was known as *“the kingdom of Judah”* (2 Chron 11:17). Kings of Judah included:

Kings of Judah

- ▶ Rehoboam, seventeen years (1 Kgs 14:21)
- ▶ Abijah, or Abijam, three years (2 Chron 13:1-2)
- ▶ Asa, forty-one years (2 Chron 16:13)
- ▶ Jehoshaphat, twenty-five years (1 Kgs 22:42)
- ▶ Jehoram, eight years (2 Chron 21:5)
- ▶ Ahaziah, one year (2 Kgs 8:26)
- ▶ Athaliah’s usurpation, six years (2 Kgs 11:2-3)
- ▶ Joash, or Jehoash, forty years (2 Kgs 12:1)
- ▶ Amaziah, twenty-nine years (2 Kgs 15:1-2)
- ▶ Uzziah, or Azariah, fifty-two years (2

- Chron 26:3)
- ▶ Jotham, sixteen years (2 Chron 27:1)
- ▶ Ahaz, sixteen years (2 Kgs 16:2)
- ▶ Hezekiah, twenty-nine years (2 Chron 29:1)
- ▶ Manasseh, fifty-five years (2 Kgs 21:1)

- ▶ Hoshea, nine years (2 Kgs 17:1)
- I have taken the time to list the divisions of the children of Israel, and the kings associated with those divisions. Some references will be made to these separate groups and kings in the book of

A KNOWLEDGE OF THESE THINGS WILL ALSO SERVE TO GIVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WORKINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE. IT WILL ALSO SERVE TO ACCENTUATE THE COMPLEXITIES UNDER WHICH GOD’S WILL WAS METICULOUSLY AND PATIENTLY WROUGHT.

- ▶ Amon, two years (2 Kgs 21:19)
- ▶ Josiah, thirty-one years (2 Kgs 22:1)
- ▶ Jehoahaz, Josiah’s son, three months (2 Chron 36:2)
- ▶ Jehoiakim, Josiah’s son, eleven years (2 Kgs 23:36)
- ▶ Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, Jehoiakim’s son, three months (2 Kgs 24:8)
- ▶ Zedekiah, or Mattaniah, Josiah’s son, eleven years (2 Kgs 24:18)

The other ten tribes comprised the kingdom of Israel, or *“northern kingdom.”* (1 Kgs 11:31). Their kings include:

Kings of Israel

- ▶ Jeroboam, twenty-two years (2 Kgs 14:20)
- ▶ Nadab, about two years (1 Kgs 15:25)
- ▶ Baasha, twenty-four years (1 Kgs 15:33)
- ▶ Elah, two years (1 Kgs 16:8)
- ▶ Zimri, seven days (1 Kgs 16:15)
- ▶ Omri, twelve years (1 Kgs 16:23)
- ▶ Ahab, twenty-two years (1 Kgs 16:29)
- ▶ Ahaziah, two years (1 Kgs 22:51)
- ▶ Jehoram, twelve years (2 Kgs 3:1)
- ▶ Jehu, twenty-eight years (2 Kgs 10:36)
- ▶ Jehoahaz, seventeen years (2 Kgs 13:1)
- ▶ Jehoash, sixteen years (2 Kgs 13:10)
- ▶ Jeroboam II, forty-one years (2 Kgs 14:23)
- ▶ Zachariah, six months (2 Kgs 15:8)
- ▶ Shallum, one month (2 Kgs 15:13)
- ▶ Menahem, ten years (2 Kgs 15:17)
- ▶ Pekahiah, two years (2 Kgs 15:23)
- ▶ Pekah, twenty years (2 Kgs 15:27)

Daniel. A knowledge of these things will also serve to give a better understanding of God’s workings with His people Israel. It will also serve to accentuate the complexities under which God’s will was meticulously and patiently wrought through them, in preparation for Christ.

Children of Israel AND Children of Judah

It might appear confusing that the group to which Daniel belonged is called *“children of Israel”* in verse three, and *“children of Judah”* in verse six. The term *“children of Israel”* refers to the offspring of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Gen 32:28). In this sense, the Jews are often referred to as *“the WHOLE HOUSE of Israel”* (Ezek 37:11; 39:25). Paul also refers to the whole nation as *“Israel”* (Rom 10:1) and *“all Israel”* (Rom 11:26). The Revelation also refers to them as *“the twelve tribes of Israel”* (Rev 21:12), even though politically Israel had ten tribes.

Daniel, then, refers to the offspring of Abraham when he says *“children of Israel.”* When using *“children of Judah,”* he is speaking of the particular division of that people who were being chastened in the Babylonian captivity.

The Significance of These Things

Both Israel and Judah were taken away in captivities – but not the same one. Over a period of one hundred and fifty years, Israel was carried captive into

Assyria. This occurred in two stages. The first occurred around 732 BC, during the reign of Pekah, when *“And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day”* (1 Chron 5:26). The inhabitants of Galilee were also included in this Assyrian captivity (2 Kgs 15:29). During the reign of Hosea, *“Shalmaneser king of Assyria”* twice invaded the land, carrying away additional captives.

The captivity of Judah was not all

the previous assaults Daniel had known experientially, but he certainly was raised during tumultuous times! We will see how God can bring good things during bad times. I have often heard people lament concerning our own days, saying that it is not wise to have and raise children during such times. What will such people say to Daniel, who was both conceived and reared in extremely trying times?

It appears from the narrative that Daniel and his three companions were all that were taken from the children of Judah. If this is so, it underscores the unusual qualities perceived in them.

This is the captivity around which

saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (Psa 137:1-4).

The Babylonian captivity took the singing out of the rank and file of the people. On the banks of those Babylonian rivers, they sat and wept when they remembered Zion, the dwelling place of God’s name. But Daniel did not sit down and weep. He rather rose to the occasion, kept the faith, and was used mightily of God. What a noble example he is for us.

It is possible for the time of chastening to be a time of recovery and spiritual advancement. Is it not written, *“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word”* (Psa 119:67). Take heart, child of God, and learn from your difficult times. They can make you more sensitive and more determined, as they did young Daniel.

OF ROYAL SEED

“And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes.” Other versions refer to this manager as *“Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials,”*^{NASB} *“Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials,”*^{NIV} *“his palace master Ashpenaz,”*^{NRSV} and *“his chief eunuch.”*^{RSV}

Among other things, we should learn from this text that excellent natural capacities come from God, and should be dedicated to God. In the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar, skilled and understanding young men should not be given over to mundane things, but should serve the king. If this was so with an earthly potentate, how much more is it true of the King of kings!

Eunuchs

Considerable speculation has been offered for the use of the word *“eunuch”* in Scripture. The literal meaning of the word involves emasculation, or rendering the man incapable of reproduction. The practice of some heathen countries was to so treat men who were in close proximity to the king and his wives, or those who had the charge of others. This, it is conjectured, was intended to neutralize the possibility of corruption breaking out in the king’s court. In whatever sense you choose to take the word, it denotes a devoted servant.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TOOK THE SINGING OUT OF THE RANK AND FILE OF THE PEOPLE. ON THE BANKS OF THOSE BABYLONIAN RIVERS, THEY SAT AND WEPT WHEN THEY REMEMBERED ZION, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD’S NAME. BUT DANIEL DID NOT SIT DOWN AND WEEP.

accomplished in a single besiegement. Around 701 BC, *“Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them”* (2 Kgs 18:13). Later, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Judah, and the city of Jerusalem, their capital. He accomplished three separate deportations. In the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign, he came against Judah, making Jehoiakim his vassal (2 Kgs 24:1). During the reign of Jehoiachin, he carried away 10,000 captives (2 Kgs 24:14-15). During the reign of Zedekiah, he also carried the rest of the people who were left in the city, as well as some fugitives (2 Kgs 25:11). An addition deportation took place during Zedekiah’s reign, in which 4,600 were removed (Jer 52:28-30).

CARRIED AWAY CAPTIVE

Daniel specifies that he was taken captive during the third year of the reign of king Jehoiakim. This was the second deportation, after that of Sennacherib, and before the final one during the reign of Zedekiah. I do not know how much of

Matthew reckons Christ’s genealogy. *“... and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of **the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel . . . Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ fourteen generations”*** (Matt 1:11-12,17).

A Lesson to be Learned

There is a lesson to be learned here. The very genealogy of our Lord was reckoned in relation to an unforgettable captivity. Israel surely lamented that captivity. As it is written, *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth,*

The majority of the times this word is used in Scripture, it is translated "officer" or "chamberlain." Isaiah used the word in a clear reference to sterility (Isa 56:3). One of the first Gentile converts was a "eunuch" who was the treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians (Acts 8:27).

The point to be seen here is that the king directed one of his most trusted servants to do his will. This was no mere formality. The sensitivity of the passage is driven by the suggestion that Daniel and his three Hebrew colleagues were also made eunuchs (1:7-18). They were selected for choice service to the king, and within the vast Babylonian empire.

Nebuchadnezzar knew how to identify and capitalize on unusual resources. While some might imagine this was purely a natural endowment, it rather appears that this was the working of the Lord, even though the king himself was not aware of it. **God is going to use Daniel in a most significant way. Therefore, he moves the king to provide the opportunity for that purpose to be fulfilled.**

The King's Seed

"... that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes" (Dan 1:3). Other versions read, "the king's descendants and some of the nobles,"^{NKJV} "some of the royal family and of the nobles,"^{NASB} and "from the royal family and the nobility."^{NIV}

These were children of high ranking Israelites, often related to the king himself. These were the most promising prospects among the children, who had greater potential and capacities. The most talent and ability would, in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, reside in this generation. Scripture affirms these qualities did, in fact, exist in Daniel.

How marvelous that a young believer could surface when the most talented, those with the greatest potential, and with the most capacity to learn and be profitable, were sought. For king Nebuchadnezzar, it was not a time of crisis, like the time young Joseph was discovered (Gen 41). It was, however, a time of need, like when Moses rose to the surface through the call of God

(Ex 3). At the time of our text, in Babylon, the interest of that impressive kingdom was sought – not among the Babylonian youth, but among those taken captive from Israel. **This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.**

We will see Daniel called into spiritual prominence while young, captive in a heathen kingdom, and away from his family and country. As you must know, God is not a slave to particular procedures. He does not always work in the same way.

- ☐ **Noah** was found by God alone, without any human intervention (Gen 6:8,13).
- ☐ **Abraham** was also called of God without any human intervention (Gen 12:1).
- ☐ **Joseph** was called to his Divinely appointed role through a Pharaoh (Gen 41).
- ☐ **Moses** was called by an Angel speaking through a burning bush (Ex 3).
- ☐ **Elisha** was called to the prophetic office when Elijah cast his mantle upon him (1 Kgs 19:19-20).
- ☐ **David** was called to be king by the prophet Samuel while caring for sheepfolds (1 Sam 16:1; Psa 78:70).
- ☐ **Amos** was called while among the herdmen of Tekoa (Amos 1:1).
- ☐ **Ezekiel** was called by God while a

- ☐ **Paul** was called to the office of Apostle by the resurrected and glorified Christ (Acts 9:4-5).
- ☐ **Timothy** was brought into the Lord's work by the choice of Paul (Acts 16:3).
- ☐ **Barnabas and Saul** were called to a work by the Holy Spirit directing certain prophets at Antioch (Acts 13:1-2).

Some Timely Lessons

There are some timely lessons to be learned from the record of Daniel.

- ☐ While young, he had to conduct himself honorably and with spiritual integrity away from home.
- ☐ He had to be alert to his surroundings, thus enabling him to capitalize on opportunities, and avoid demeaning the name of the living God.
- ☐ When young, he had to communicate effectively with those over him, explaining the reason for his conduct.
- ☐ He had to be bold enough to take a stand against the edict of a king, and wise enough to explain his choice well.
- ☐ When captive, he formed holy alliances – other young men with whom he could discuss challenges and pray to the God of all the earth.

WROTE THE BOOK HIMSELF

Some sophists say that Daniel did not write the book bearing his name. While their arguments are wholly

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captive in Babylon by the river Chebar (Ezek 1:1).

- ☐ **The twelve Apostles** were called by the Lord Jesus Himself, prior to His death (Lk 6:13-16).
- ☐ **Matthias** was chosen to take Judas' bishopric through prayer and the casting of lots (Acts 1:20-26).

unworthy of mention, the manner in which the book speaks clearly affirms Daniel was its writer. *"Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream . . . I saw in my vision by night . . . As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart*

... a vision appeared **unto me, even unto me Daniel**, after that which appeared **unto me** at the first . . . And it came to pass, when **I, even I Daniel**, had seen the vision . . . And **I Daniel** fainted, and was sick certain days . . . reign **I Daniel** understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet . . . In those days **I Daniel** was mourning three full weeks . . . Then **I Daniel** looked” (Dan 7:1,2,28; 8:1,15,27; 9:2;

were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by **their righteousness**, saith the Lord GOD . . . Though Noah, **Daniel**, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by **their righteousness**” (Ezek 13:14,20). Here the Lord denounces those of His people who dared to set up idols in their houses. He declared He would stretch out His hand against such

devil himself. The Lord chides him for his overestimation of himself. “Behold, thou art wiser than **Daniel**; there is no secret that they can hide from thee” (Ezek. 28:30). He had also set his heart “as the heart of God,” like the devil, seeking to exalt himself above the Most High. At the peak of his pretentious wisdom, God would bring him down “to the sides of the pit” (vs 6-11). He was NOT wiser than Daniel!

The Lord Jesus

In one of His most controversial teachings, the Olivet discourse, Jesus referred to a prophecy of Daniel. Both Matthew and Mark record the statement. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains . . . “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14). Please refer to the earlier comments I have made on these references (*Jesus Refers to Daniel, Page 4*).

Thus, we are introduced to the prophet Daniel, one of the great spiritual nobles in God’s working of salvation in the midst of the earth. He was faithful when he was young, and when he was old as well. He an appointed example for young, middle-ages, and older men!

EZEKIEL, WHO PROPHESIED IN THE LATTER PART OF DANIEL’S MINISTRY, WAS THRICE MOVED BY THE SPIRIT TO SPEAK OF DANIEL. HIS STATEMENTS ARE MOST ARRESTING, AND REVEAL MUCH ABOUT THE PROPHET DANIEL.

10:2; 12:5).

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES TO HIM

There are other references to Daniel in Scripture that confirm his role in the Divine economy. Ezekiel, who prophesied in the latter part of Daniel’s ministry, was thrice moved by the Spirit to speak of Daniel. His statements are most arresting, and reveal much about the prophet Daniel.

Ezekiel

☐ **RIGHTEOUSNESS.** “Though these three men, Noah, **Daniel**, and Job,

people. Then He postulates the presence of three notable men in such a place. He calls for a man before the flood – **Noah**. He calls for a man after the flood, and before the Law – **Job**. And he calls for a man after the Law, and after the judgment of the Babylonian captivity – **Daniel**. Each of these men are noted for their “righteousness,” which would have delivered them from Divine judgment.

☐ **WISDOM.** He third mentioning of Daniel is one of Divine sarcasm. Through Ezekiel, God rebukes the king of Tyre, who bore the traits of the

JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH

“ Dan 1:1a **In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah . . .**” Jehoiakim was an evil man, and the eighteenth king of Judah. He was the son of a good king, Josiah, but did not follow in the steps of his father. He is described as one “that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kgs 24:19), and committing many “abominations” (2 Chron 36:8).

JEHOIAKIM IS MADE KING

He did not ascend to the throne by the normal means of succession.

Following the death of his father Josiah, his younger brother Jehoahaz was made king by the people of the land (2 Kgs 23:30). That brother was also called “Shallum” (Jer 22:11). He also did “that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Kgs 23:32). Thus, the godly king Josiah had at least two evil sons, something for which many would criticize him. The God of Josiah, however, did not speak against him for this grievous circumstance.

During the brief three month reign of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim’s brother,

(2 Kgs 23:31), “Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold” (2 Kgs 23:33). That tax levy, according to our measures, would have been 375 tons of silver and 3-3/4 tons of gold (a “talent” being 3-3/4 tons).

It was at this point that the reigning monarch of Egypt made Jehoiakim king in the place of his father Josiah. This involved a change of name for the older

son of Josiah. Previous his name was Eliakim. The Pharaoh changed it to Jehoiakim. As it is written, “*And Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away and brought him to Egypt, and he died there*”^{NKJV} (2 Kgs 23:34).

In order to pay the Egyptian Pharaoh the tax he had levied on the land of Judah, Jehoiakim “*exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh.*” All of this began when Jehoiakim was twenty-five years of age. His reign lasted eleven years (2 Kgs 23:35-36).

During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar came up against the people of Judah. This resulted in Jehoiakim becoming a servant to Nebuchadnezzar for three years. After those three years, he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:1). During his days it is written, “*And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets*” (2 Kgs 24:2).

JEREMIAH SPEAKS AGAINST HIM

The prophet Jeremiah was raised up by God during the reign of this king. “*It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah . . . Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*” (Jer 1:3-5). It was at that time, during the reign of Jehoiakim, that God appointed Jeremiah to be “*over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant*” (1:10). This circumstance accentuated the wickedness of Jehoiakim who, though the king, was not used of God as was Jeremiah. God found another man He could use during Jehoiakim’s reign.

Opposed Jeremiah

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, Jeremiah soundly denounced the

king and the people for not giving heed to the words sent to them from God. He announced that God was going to bring Nebuchadnezzar, His servant, against the of land of Judah. The whole matter did not set well with Jehoiakim. It is written, “*And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death*” (Jer 26:21). When one of the prophets who was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Urijah, heard the prophesy, he was afraid, and fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim, displaying his obstinance, sent to Egypt, brought Urijah back, “*slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people*” (Jer 26:23).

Built Himself a House

Revealing his prideful heart, Jehoiakim built for himself expensive and ornate royal buildings. Jeremiah rebuked him because he did so by forcing his own people to do the work without giving them wages (Jer 22:13-17). Thus the Lord spoke

write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin” (Jer 36:2-3). The prophet called for his scribe, Baruch, “*who wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book*” (36:4).

Because Jeremiah was in prison (33:1), and could not go to the house of the Lord, he directed Baruch to read “*the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD’S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities*” (36:6). Faithfully, Baruch went to the house of the Lord, and read the words of the book “*in the Lord’s*

REVEALING HIS PRIDEFUL HEART, JEHOIAKIM BUILT FOR HIMSELF EXPENSIVE AND ORNATE ROYAL BUILDINGS. JEREMIAH REBUKED HIM BECAUSE HE DID SO BY FORCING HIS OWN PEOPLE TO DO THE WORK WITHOUT GIVING THEM WAGES

to this wicked king through Jeremiah, “*Therefore thus says the LORD in regard to Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, They will not lament for him: ‘Alas, my brother!’ or, ‘Alas, sister!’ They will not lament for him: ‘Alas for the master!’ or, ‘Alas for his splendor!’ He will be buried with a donkey’s burial, Dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem*”^{NASB} (Jer 22:18-19).

Burns Jeremiah’s Books

In my judgment, the most prideful and despicable act of Jehoiakim was when he burned the books of the prophet Jeremiah. The event took place in the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim. One year prior to the event, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, God had directed Jeremiah, “*Take thee a roll of a book, and*

house” (36:8). Later, in ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, a “*fast before the Lord*” was declared. People then came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. As directed by Jeremiah previously, Baruch again read the prophecies that had been given to Jeremiah. He made sure all of the people heard the words, for Jeremiah had hoped they would be stirred to repentance when they heard them. “*Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD’S house, in the ears of all the people*” (36:10).

A man named Micaiah heard the reading, and went “*down into the king’s*

house, into the scribe's chamber." Finding "all of the princes" sitting there, he "declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people" (36:11-13). As a result, all of the princes sent "Jehudi, an officer in Jehoiakim's court, to Baruch, "saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come" (36:14). Immediately, and in fulfillment of the directive of Jeremiah, Baruch took the manuscript in his hand and went to them. After hearing the prophetic words of Jeremiah, the princes were afraid and said, "We will surely tell the king of all these words." Before telling the king, they asked Baruch, "Tell us please, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?" Then Baruch said to them, "He dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them with ink on the book."^{NASB}

While the prophetic words were being read, a point is made of the time and place: "Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him" (36:22). After Jehudi had read three or four "leaves" of the scroll, in an act of defiance, the king took the scribe's knife ("penknife"), cut the leaves from the scroll, and threw them in the fire. He continued to do this "until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth." Prior to this, everyone who had heard the words of Jeremiah's prophecies were afraid. At this occasion, however, when the writings were burned in an act of rebellion, it is written, "Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words." Yet, three princes of the court "made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear

thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus saith **the LORD of Jehoiakim** king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not" (36:29-31).

Thus, Daniel records the precise fulfillment of the judgment spoken against Jehoiakim, insolent king of Judah, who dared to burn the prophecies of Jeremiah.

I have taken the time to briefly elaborate on Jehoiakim for a reason. The Word of God is not a series of unrelated writings and isolated events. It is a record that reflects the "eternal purpose" of the Lord. Therefore, no part of Scripture is obsolete. Things that took place have been "written for our learning" (Rom 15:4). But there is more to it than that. **These events have actually been orchestrated by God in order to teach us of His ways.** As it is written, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come"^{NASB} (1 Cor 10:11).

If we fail to see this pivotal reality, we will lose the benefit of the Word of God. **Believers must free themselves from the shackles of academia when reading the Bible. That is why it cannot be approached with a merely hypothetical mind set.** It must be read in faith, and with a mind to see the ways of the Lord as He works among men. This is the manner in which I will be addressing this marvelous book.

THUS, DANIEL RECORDS THE PRECISE FULFILLMENT OF THE JUDGMENT SPOKEN AGAINST JEHOIAKIM, INSOLENT KING OF JUDAH, WHO DARED TO BURN THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH.

Knowing these words would not set well with the king, they instructed Baruch to hide himself and Jeremiah, telling no man where they were (36:17-19).

At this point, they went into the king's court to give the report. However, "they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe," before telling all of the words to the king. Upon hearing the report, Jehoiakim sent Jehudi to get the scroll, bring it to his house, and read it before himself and all the princes. Jehudi promptly did as he was commanded.

them." Instead of listening to them, Jehoiakim commanded them "to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them" (36:24-26).

Following this event, the word of the Lord came again to Jeremiah. "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned." The Lord then commanded Jeremiah to deliver an stunning word to Jehoiakim. "Thus saith the LORD; **Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast**

INTRODUCTION TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

"^{1b} . . . **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon . . .**" Nebuchadnezzar is not only a key figure in the book of Daniel, he

is prominent in God's dealings with the children of Israel. This king is mentioned ninety-one times in the Scriptures: sixty

as "Nebuchadnezzar," and thirty-one, in the KJV, as *Nebuchadrezzar*." It is thought that the latter form

(“Nebuchadrezzar”) is the Babylonian form of his name, while the former, and most common form, is the Aramaic translation of his name. ^{Intl Std Encyclopedia} Like Pharaoh, he was raised up to bring glory to God Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17). His name is mentioned in Second Kings, First Chronicles, Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Thirty-nine times, in Second Kings, Second Chronicles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, he is called “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.” **That is because Babylon figures prominently in God’s dealings with Israel.** That prominence was achieved during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

Showing his employment by the living God, the Scriptures refer to “*the hand of Nebuchadnezzar*” (1 Chron 6:15; Ezra 5:12; Jer 21:7; 22:25; 29:21; 32:28; 44:30; 46:26; 27:6; Ezek 30:10). This expression denotes God using Nebuchadnezzar to fulfill His own will. The Lord did things “*by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.*” Thus, his role in history is owing strictly to the purpose of God. The Lord therefore refers to him no less than three times as “*My servant*” (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10).

TOKEN OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

Nebuchadnezzar’s extensive rule was given to him by God Almighty. He did not rise up by human strength, or according to the wisdom of this world. “*The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof*” (Psa 24:1), and that includes all of its kings and princes. Thus it is written, “*And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him*” (Jer 27:6). And again, “*I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also*” (Jer 28:14). Daniel boldly declared to Nebuchadnezzar, “*for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*” (Dan 2:37). He proclaimed to Belshazzar, “*the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor*” (Dan 5:18).

Jeremiah was told how

Nebuchadnezzar would come and “*smite the land of Egypt*” (Jer 46:13; 43:11). Ezekiel further defined that event by saying God would “*give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.*” He went on to say Egypt was given to the king as “*wages for his army.*” What Nebuchadnezzar had done, God said, “*they wrought for me*” (Ezek 29:18-20). It was the Lord Himself who “*carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar*” (1 Chron 6:15).

Not only were all things given to Nebuchadnezzar, including worldly dominions, the duration of his dominion was also determined by God. “*And all the nations shall serve him, and his son, and his grandson, until the time of his own*

Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. There are also about 500 tablets dating back to his reign, inscriptions on around thirty buildings from his time, , and fragments from Erosus, Meander, Megasthenes, Abydenus, and Alexander Polyhistor, who are cited by Josephus and Eusebius. ^{Intl Std Bible Encyclopedia}

From these sources we learn that he succeeded his father, a Chaldean prince named Nabopolassar. His reign extended from 604 BC until 561 BC. He headed up the army that defeated Pharaoh-Neco, the head of Egypt (Jer 46:2). He made shrines to Marduk, Nebo, Zarpinet, Shamash, Sin, Gula, Ramman, Mah, and other heathen gods. He laid out and paved a great street

THE EMPIRE OF BABYLON, THAT REACHED ITS VERTEX IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S TIME, THEN BEGAN TO DIMINISH, ACCORDING TO THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL. THIS WAS NOT A MERE COINCIDENCE.

land comes; then many nations and great kings will make him their servant” ^{NASB} (Jer 27:6-7).

This Must Be Seen

Here is an aspect of this book that must be seen: that “*The kingdom is the Lord’s, and He is the Governor among the nations*” (Psa 22:28). He is, in truth, “*the King of all the earth,*” and reigns “*over the heathen*” (Psa 47:7-80). This is why God is called “*Most High*” (Gen 14:18; Deut 32:8; Dan 4:17) and “*Almighty*” (Rev 11:17). It is not that God merely has the capacity to rule, He DOES rule: “*His kingdom ruleth over all*” (Psa 103:19). Daniel revealed that God rules “*IN the kingdom of men*” (Dan 4:17,25). **Ultimately,** it is His will that is being carried out.

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT

The sources of information concerning Nebuchadnezzar are numerous. Concerning his role in the fulfillment of God’s purpose, we have the books of Second Kings, First Chronicles,

for the procession of Marduk, and built a great number of walls and moats. He also dug several deep canals and made dams for flooding the country to the North and South of Babylon, thereby protecting it from their enemies. He also made large bronze bulls and serpents, adorning many temples with elaborate cedar and gold.

His refined construction projects seemed to reach their apex in the hanging gardens of Babylon, which are considered the second of the seven wonders of the world. According to historical records, they were built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his wife, who was a Mede; to remind her of her mountainous homeland. Groliers Encyclopedia refers to him as “*the most important of the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, kings.*”

WHY MENTION THESE THINGS?

The empire of Babylon, that reached its vertex in Nebuchadnezzar’s time, then began to diminish, according to the prophecy of Daniel. This was not a mere coincidence. The purpose for the preeminence of Babylon was served when Nebuchadnezzar had finished the work

God used him to accomplish. Everything else about Nebuchadnezzar was merely incidental. That is why the Scriptures make nothing of what history chooses to accentuate. No mention is made of the hanging gardens, or the numerous temples and structures he built – even though they have been uncovered through various excavations. This is because they had no bearing on what God was doing.

Some might question the value of mentioning these various historical matters. It is certainly not that they have a value of their own. **Rather, they serve to confirm to our hearts the worthlessness of things unrelated to the purpose of God.** It is the manner of God to elaborate only on matters that bear directly upon the execution of His

purpose. The world, and all that is associated with it, has no other reason for existing. **Kings and empires are but pawns on the trestle board of Divine purpose.**

Whether we are considering the tower of Babel, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, or Darius, they are placed within the setting of Divine purpose. It may be heads of nations like Cain, Nimrod, Ishmael, and Esau – they only have significance within the purpose of God! Such political leaders as Caesar Augustus, Herod, Pilate, Felix, and Agrippa, are only as prominent as their role in the fulfillment of the will of the Lord. **This is an underlying premise that can be seen throughout the Scriptures, and it fairly glows**

with celestial glory in the book of Daniel.

Thus, throughout our journey through the book of Daniel, we will behold Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument in the hand of the Lord. **His only glory is found in the fulfillment of God's purpose.** We will not stand and marvel at his architectural achievements, or the great image of solid gold that he made, ninety feet high and ten feet wide (Dan 3:1). Instead, we will glory in the precise and effective workings of the Lord God Almighty, unto whom we have been reconciled by the death of Christ Jesus.

We will focus on the hand of the Lord in the book of Daniel – His great working!

INTRODUCTION TO THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

The Babylonian captivity is of great significance in Scripture. It was

*and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and **he shall carry***

was announced by Moses when delivering the Law to the children of Israel. The law requiring the land sabbath is given in Leviticus 25:2-3. *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, **then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.** Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.”*

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY WAS A PARTICULAR JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL. IT WAS INCURRED BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL TO HONOR THE LAND SABBATHS REQUIRED BY THE LORD. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PROFIT TO BE REALIZED FROM A KNOWLEDGE OF THIS JUDGMENT.

prophesied by Moses (Deut 28:49), Isaiah (Isa 39:6), Jeremiah (Jer 13:19; 20:4-5; 32:28), and Habakkuk (Hab 1:6). Isaiah prophesied this captivity to king Hezekiah. *“And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, **shall be carried into Babylon:** nothing shall be left, saith the LORD”* (1 Kgs 20:16-17). Jeremiah foretold it to Pashur, the chief governor of the house of God. *“For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it:*

them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword” (Jer 20:4). As already mentioned, it was a point of reference included in the genealogy of our blessed Lord – *“the carrying away into Babylon”* (Matt 1:17).

A JUDGMENT FROM GOD

The Babylonian captivity was a particular judgment against Israel. It was incurred because of their refusal to honor the land sabbaths required by the Lord. There is considerable profit to be realized from a knowledge of this judgment.

Declared by Moses

The possibility of this judgment

If Israel refused to fulfill this requirement, God was quite specific about the results that would ensue. *“And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it”* (Lev 26:33-35). Those who imagine God has no regard for details, or for precise obedience, do well to consider this Divine commitment.

The Commandment Disobeyed

From the reign of king Saul until the captivity was four hundred and ninety years. During that nearly five century long period, Israel did not honor the seventh year sabbath for the land. Many entire generations passed, supposing that all was well, and it was really of no consequence to do what God had commanded. Thus, with no apparent twinge of conscience, Israel lived just as though a commandment concerning the land had not even been uttered.

To be particular, four hundred and ninety years passed without a single sabbath year being honored. That means seventy land sabbath years were ignored.

However, the actions of men are never overlooked by the Lord – particularly when they are rebellious against Him. Those who imagine that can escape the judgment of God by pretending He has said nothing to them are treading on a most dangerous road.

The Time of Noah

God tolerated the world of Noah for a long time. But the time came when He could no longer abide their insolence. The striving of His Holy Spirit was brought to an abrupt end, and He sent a flood to “destroy all flesh” (Gen 6:12-17).

The Tower of Babel

The united people in the plain of Shinar thought to ignore God by making a name for themselves. Their activities, however, eventually passed beyond the border of Divine longsuffering, and He brought their work to a grinding halt, and scattered them throughout the world (Gen 11:7-8).

Sodom and Gomorrah

The people in Sodom and Gomorrah lived in sinful indulgence until their manners could no longer be tolerated by God. In a single day they reaped the whirlwind for their iniquity, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Gen 19:24-26; Jude 1:7).

In the Babylonian captivity, we have a similar situation. The people have grown comfortable ignoring the commandment of the Lord. Generations have passed without it being obeyed. Perhaps it seemed too inconsequential to

them. Beside that, nearly five hundred years had passed with no apparent consequence for their disobedient manners. **How foolish, indeed, to imagine God does not take note of all who ignore His Word!**

Jeremiah Sounds the Word

TO BE PARTICULAR, FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY YEARS PASSED WITHOUT A SINGLE SABBATH YEAR BEING HONORED. THAT MEANS SEVENTY LAND SABBATH YEARS WERE IGNORED.

The prophet Jeremiah was raised up by God to announce the Babylonian captivity, and the reason for it. The book of Second Chronicles declares the circumstance. “*And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years*” (2 Chron 36:20-21).

The duration of the captivity was confirmed by Jeremiah in his book. “*And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations*” (Jer 25:11-12). And again, “*For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place*” (Jer 29:10).

The manner in which Jeremiah repeatedly referred to this captivity underscores the fact that it was a Divine

judgment. Through him, the Lord saw to it that Israel did not begin to think of this seventy year period as mere happenstance, or the result of a weak king or inferior military powers. Here is a fair sampling of some of his words.

▣ ***“I will give all Judah into the hand of***

the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon” (20:4).

▣ ***“Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labors thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon*”** (20:5).

▣ ***“Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city*”** (Jer 21:4).

▣ ***“And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath*”** (21:5).

▣ ***“I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon*”** (21:7).

▣ ***“For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire*”** (21:10).

▣ ***“And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the***

hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans" (22:25).

- ▶ "Behold, **I will send and take all the families of the north**, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, **and will**

give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it" (32:3).

- ▶ "Behold, **I will give this city** into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it" (32:28).

him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon" (Jer 27:12-13). If they resisted the Chaldeans, or fought against them, Jeremiah declared "ye shall not prosper" (Jer 32:5).

THE LESSON TO BE LEARNED

If ever there was a generation that needed to learn from this account, it is our generation. Daniel testifies loudly to all men, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). A generation with a penchant for self-gratification will do well to ponder the Babylonian captivity. The Holy Spirit has said much about it, and that for a reason. The Queen of the South will rise up against those who had access to superior wisdom, yet did not avail themselves of it (Matt 12:42). The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment against those who were told of repentance, yet continued in their stubborn ways (Matty 12:41). How much more will those carried away in the Babylonian captivity rise up to condemn a generation who heard of their experience, yet chose to ignore the Word of the Lord! **God plays no games with mortals!** Men do well to take His word seriously.

ALL OF THIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE WORD GIVEN TO JEREMIAH CONCERNING HOW THE PEOPLE WERE TO REACT TO THE INVASION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE CHALDEANS. THEY WERE NOT TO RESIST OR FIGHT BACK! THEY WERE TO SUBMIT, YIELDING TO THE YOKE OF BABYLON.

bring them against this land" (25:9).

- ▶ "And now have **I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar** the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field **have I given him** also to serve him" (27:6).
- ▶ "Behold, **I will deliver them** into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon" (29:21).
- ▶ "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, **I will**

They Were Not to Resist

It was a hard message to give, and more difficult still for the Israelites to receive. All of this was compounded by the word given to Jeremiah concerning how the people were to react to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans. **They were not to resist or fight back!** They were to submit, yielding to the yoke of Babylon. Solemnly Jeremiah told Zedekiah, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve

NEBUCHADNEZZAR BESIEGES JERUSALEM

"^{1c} . . . came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it." In identifying the time of his deportation to Babylon, Daniel mentions when "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" ^{came} unto Jerusalem, and besieged it."

NO ORDINARY CITY

Jerusalem was no ordinary city! It is the city called "holy" (Isa 4:3), destined to be called "a city of truth" (Zech 8:3). It is called "the city of the great King" (Psa 48:2), "The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth" (Lam 2:15), "the throne of the Lord" (Jer 3:17), "the holy city" (Neh 11:1; Matt 4:5), and the city where God chose to "put" His "name" (1 Kgs 11:36). This is the city in which kings reigned, including David and Solomon. The child Jesus was dedicated in this city

(Lk 2:22). This is where young Jesus was first perceived as exceedingly wise, though but twelve years of age (Lk 2:41-45). It is where He was betrayed and tried (Lk 9:51; John 12:12). Here is where the Gospel was first preached (Acts 2).

For the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to be destroyed is one thing. It is quite another for Jerusalem to be besieged. It is one thing for Tyre and Sidon to be overthrown. It is something else for Jerusalem to be besieged. When we read of Jericho being conquered, we are not surprised. But we are deeply effected when we read of Jerusalem being besieged!

This city is mentioned in Scripture more than any other city in all the world:

eight hundred and eleven times! Nineveh was a "great city," yet is only mentioned eighteen times in the Word of God. Babylon, even including all of the parabolic references to it, is only mentioned two hundred and eighty-six times. The "eternal city" of Rome is only mentioned nine times. Bethlehem, of such prominence in Christ's entrance into the world, is only mentioned thirty nine times in the Bible.

Jerusalem is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. After that it is cited in Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah,

Zechariah, and Malachi. The New Testament Scriptures mention “Jerusalem” one hundred and forty-four times. It is difficult to imagine a city being any more prominent – and it is ALWAYS related to what the Lord is doing.

Why Mention This?

All of this may seem to be only an academic bypath, but that is far from what I intend. Here is a city of great significance in the Divine economy. It is a place with which God associated Himself, and it is related with unparalleled blessing and promise. **If such things automatically protect a city or a person, surely nothing evil will ever come upon Jerusalem!** At least, that is what some theology would lead us to believe.

The besiegement of Jerusalem

and the Babylonian captivity strike a decisive blow against a strain of theology that has plagued the church for centuries. Here is a chosen city, a blessed city, a city where God placed His name. Yet, the judgment of God was leveled against that city when it failed to take Him seriously! It stands as a memorial to the truth, “*judgment must begin at the house of God*” (1 Pet 4:17). It ought to shout loudly to a lethargic and slumbering church, that if it does not repent, judgment is on the horizon! When Jeremiah announced the overthrow of the holy city, there were some who simply thought it could not happen – not to the holy city! Instead they said, “*Sword and famine shall not be in this land*” (Jer 14:15).

Nebuchadnezzar’s besiegement of Jerusalem is frequently mentioned. It is a

judgment the Lord did not want His people to forget. It also took place in several stages. “*At that time (during the reign of Jehoiakim’s son Jehoiachin) the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it*” (2 Kgs 24:10-11). “*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, (during the reign of Zedekiah) and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about*” (2 Kgs 25:1).

The besiegement to which Daniel alludes is referenced in 2 Kings 24:1-2. During this time, Daniel was brought to Babylon. It is also the first time we hear about him.

GOD GIVES THE KING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

“ ^{2a} . . . **And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand . . .**” Other versions read, “*And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand,*” ^{NIV} “*The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power,*” ^{NRSV} and “*The Lord handed over to him Jehoiakim.*” ^{NAB} What appeared to be military superiority was actually Divine sovereignty in action. Like Pilate, Nebuchadnezzar had no power but that which was given to him by the Lord. **Daniel is not writing an autobiography or a history book, for this bit of knowledge is not available on those levels.** His writing is inspired by God, and therefore is filled with Divine assessments, judgments, and explanations.

THE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY

The Lord “*gave*” king Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand. Daniel often mentions this aspect of Divine government.

- ▣ He told Nebuchadnezzar God had “**given**” him his kingdom (2:37-38).
- ▣ When the king was chastened, God is said to have “**given**” him a “*beast’s heart*” (4:16).
- ▣ Belshazzar’s kingdom was “**given to**

the Medes” (5:28).

- ▣ One of the great governments shown to Daniel was described as being like a lion with eagles wings, “*and a man’s heart was given unto it*” (7:4).
- ▣ Another kingdom is described as a leopard, “*and dominion was given to it*” (7:6).
- ▣ The Messiah is described as coming in

the most High” (7:27).

- ▣ A “*host*” is said to be “**given**” to one who cast down the truth to the ground (8:12).
- ▣ A personality identified as the “*king of the South*” would have a great multitude “**given into his hand**” (11:11).
- ▣ God “**gave knowledge and skill in all**

DANIEL IS NOT WRITING AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OR A HISTORY BOOK, FOR THIS BIT OF KNOWLEDGE IS NOT AVAILABLE ON THOSE LEVELS. HIS WRITING IS INSPIRED BY GOD, AND THEREFORE IS FILLED WITH DIVINE ASSESSMENTS, JUDGMENTS, AND EXPLANATIONS.

the clouds of heaven, being “**given**” dominion, glory, and a kingdom (7:14).

- ▣ Judgment was “**given to the saints of the most High**” (7:22).
- ▣ An opponent of the saints was “**given**” to wear out the saints for a determined period of time (7:25).
- ▣ The kingdom in all of its greatness will be “**given to the people of the saints of**

learning and wisdom” to Daniel and his three colleagues (1:17).

- ▣ He “**gave**” Nebuchadnezzar “*majesty*” (5:19).

Great works and changes among man are traced to what the Lord has done. As the “*Governor among the nations,*” He gives things men are powerless to implement.

- ▶ He gave Israel favor in the eyes of the Egyptians (Ex 11:3; 12:36).
- ▶ He gave a populated land to Israel (Josh 21:43).
- ▶ He gave Israel rest from their enemies (Josh 21:44).
- ▶ The Lord gave conception to Ruth (Ruth 4:13).
- ▶ He gave Solomon wisdom (1 Kgs 5:12).
- ▶ He gave Job twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10).
- ▶ God gave Saul another heart (1 Sam 10:9).
- ▶ He gave fourteen sons and three daughters to Heman (1 Chron 25:5).

It should startle no person, therefore, that *“the Lord gave*

Nebuchadnezzar from conquering him. He could burn the books of Jeremiah, but he could not avoid being given to king of Babylon. Like all worldly powers, he was impotent before the God of heaven.

Thus it is written, *“In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years”* (2 Kgs 24:1). Again it is written, *“Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to*

aspect of the Divine nature, Jesus taught us to rely upon it. *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: **For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen**”* (Matt 6:13). If God can deliver men INTO the hands of others, He can also deliver them FROM their oppressors. However, if these things are not known, deliverance will not be sought.

The book of Daniel begins, therefore, with a solemn assertion of how God changed the circumstances of His people – and it was not pleasant. It involved the besieging of their holy city, the killing of some of their citizens, the destruction of the temple, the devastation of the walls about the city, and the binding and servitude of their kings. All of that is involved in Jehoiakim being *“given”* into the hands of a heathen despot!

The Working of the Lord

I want to again emphasize that **this book is a commentary on the working of the Lord**. It is more than a foretelling of the rise and fall of nations, the coming of moral tyrants, and the overcoming of God’s people. It is not mere history in advance.

In this volume we will be given to see HOW the Lord works – the manner in which He fulfills His will. We will behold how He deals with those who refuse to obey Him, and how exactly and precisely He carries out his desires for His people, as well as those who are against them. **Daniel records Divine activity!**

IF GOD CAN DELIVER MEN INTO THE HANDS OF OTHERS, HE CAN ALSO DELIVER THEM FROM THEIR OPPRESSORS. HOWEVER, IF THESE THINGS ARE NOT KNOWN, DELIVERANCE WILL NOT BE SOUGHT.

Jehoiakim king of Judah” into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. By that, the Scripture means Jehoiakim had no choice in the matter. He could not alter the Divine decision, or avoid becoming subject to Nebuchadnezzar. All of his resources and authority could not change the Divine edict. His wisdom was of no avail. He may have been a king, but the Almighty God was King over him! He could send for Urijah in Egypt and slay him with the sword, but he could not stop

Babylon” (2 Chron 36:5). Jeremiah told Jehoiakim of this coming disaster. *“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof”* (2 Kgs 25:1,9).

A MUCH NEGLECTED TEACHING

Although this is a much neglected

PART OF THE VESSELS TAKEN

“^{2b} . . . with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.” It is tragic to hear of Jehoiakim being given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, together with the people over whom he ruled. It is more tragic to hear of the desecration of the sacred artifacts of the temple. However, even in this matter, we will behold Divine control.

The Lord not only ordained this plunder, He determined its degree!

PART OF THE VESSELS

“ . . . with part of the vessels . . .” Emphasizing that all of the vessels were not taken simultaneously, other versions read *“some of vessels,”* or *“articles.”* ^{NKJV/NASB} Even in the plundering of the holy city, God remained in control.

The Vessels Themselves

These are vessels used in the temple service, and were originally instituted by the Lord for the accomplishment of the sacred service and worship of God. They were not common, were not used for common purposes, and were used only by the sanctified servants of God for purposes ordained by Him. There were several kinds of vessels, each of profound craftsmanship and materials.

- ▶ There were various vessels related to

the table of showbread. They included dishes, spoons, covers, and bowls (Ex 25:29).

- ▣ There was the golden candlestick, which had bowls for oil, snuffers, and trays (Ex 25:31-39).
- ▣ The massive altar of sacrifice also had vessels. They included pans, shovels, basins, fleshhooks, and fire pans (Ex 27:3).

All of these were originally called “the vessels of the tabernacle” (Ex 27:19), and were anointed, being consecrated to the Lord. Primary articles of furniture were referred to as “And the table **and all his vessels**, and the candlestick **and his vessels**, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering **with all his vessels**, and the laver and his foot” (Ex 30:27-30).

Solomon Adds to Them

Later, when Solomon built the temple, he also had vessels made which were wholly given to the Lord. Some of them are described as “the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels.” We are told they were “*exceeding many*,” made of brightly shined brass (1 Kgs 7:47). Revealing the magnitude and value of the vessels pertaining to the house of God, it is also written of Solomon: “And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the showbread was, and the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and **the tongs of gold, and the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple**” (1 Kgs 7:48-50). All of these things were placed into “the treasures of the house of the LORD” (1 Kgs 7:51). In addition, “all the holy vessels” that were originally in the tabernacle were added to the treasures (1 Kgs 8:4).

Often Removed

Although they were sacred, these “vessels” were removed from the temple several times. When Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem, “he took away the treasures of the house of the

LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made” (1 Kgs 14:25-26).

When Joash, king of Israel, captured Amaziah, King of Judah, he broke down part of the wall of Jerusalem and “took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obbedom, and the treasures of the king’s house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria” (2 Chron 25:24).

Wicked king Ahaz “gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem” (2 Chron 28:24). These vessels were prepared, sanctified, and restored during the reign of Hezekiah, which accounts for Nebuchadnezzar again having access to

vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon” (2 Chron 36:7). Additional references include 2 Chronicles 36:10,18; Ezra 1:7; Jeremiah 27:21-22. Some further details are provided in Jeremiah 52:18-19. “The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the basins, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away.”

This event will be of significance later in the book. Belshazzar will further desecrate these vessels by calling for them to be brought to a drunken feast, in order that his nobles might drink wine from them. That event will be very significant.

THE LAND OF SHINAR

THIS EVENT WILL BE OF SIGNIFICANCE LATER IN THE BOOK. BELSHAZZAR WILL FURTHER DESECRATE THESE VESSELS BY CALLING FOR THEM TO BE BROUGHT TO A DRUNKEN FEAST, IN ORDER THAT HIS NOBLES MIGHT DRINK WINE FROM THEM. THAT EVENT WILL BE VERY SIGNIFICANT.

them (2 Chron 29:18-19).

Now Nebuchadnezzar again takes these sacred vessels. This theft is also mentioned frequently. “And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD” (2 Kgs 24:13). The mentioning of “all of the treasures” does not conflict with our text, which says “part of the vessels.” The plundering of the temple took place in phases. The phase of the above passage took place after Jehoiakim, during the reign of his son, and was the final “sweep” of the temple for its treasures.

Again it is written, “Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the

“ . . . into the land of Shinar.” Those who are familiar with Scripture will immediately recognize this land. It is first mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis. It was here that Nimrod, “the mighty hunter before the Lord,” established his kingdom. There he established “Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh” (Gen 10:9-10). Asshur went out of that country and later built the now infamous Nineveh (Gen 10:11).

The land is best known as the place where certain nomads settled, saying “‘Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over

the face of the whole earth”^{NKJV} (Gen 11:3-40). Because their efforts excluded the living God, He aborted their work, confounding their language, and scattered them throughout the earth (Gen 11:5-9).

Now, in Daniel’s time, the land was again teeming with activity under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. I have often wondered if they had ever pondered the ancient scattering, or if they even knew about it. **As though the territory**

heathen, lifeless, and dumb idol!

It is generally understood that this god was Bel, mentioned by Isaiah and Jeremiah. Isaiah points to the impotency of Bel. *“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; **they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone***

The point of these brief observations is that Bel could not keep Nebuchadnezzar from his Divinely appointed demise, or his son from being murdered. It may be said of Nebuchadnezzar’s god, as of all other false gods, *“Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion”* (Isa 41:29). How true the Psalmist was when he wrote, *“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them”* (Psa 115:4-8).

AS THOUGH THE TERRITORY ITSELF WAS A CITADEL OF THE WICKED ONE, NO ONE HAD PROFITABLY LEARNED FROM THE DISPERSION OF BABEL. THE PEOPLE WERE ONCE AGAIN ARROGANT, WORSHIPPING OTHER GODS, AND EVEN DESECRATING THE HOLY VESSELS OF THE LORD.

itself was a citadel of the wicked one, no one had profitably learned from the dispersion of Babel. The people were once again arrogant, worshiping other gods, and even desecrating the holy vessels of the Lord. Yet, these were the people God would use to chasten Israel.

THE HOUSE OF HIS GOD

“ . . . to the house of his god.”

The ultimate insult is dealt to the people of God when the sacred vessels of the temple are transported to the house, or temple, of a heathen god – *“the treasure house of his god.”* Our verse mentions this blasphemous deed twice: *“which he carried into the land of Shinar to **the house of his god**; and he brought the vessels into **the treasure house of his god.**”* If a jewel in a swine’s snout is uncomely (Prov 11:22), you can imagine the reproach associated with holy vessels of God being found in the house of a

into captivity” (Isa 46:1). Jeremiah affirms that when Babylon was taken, Bel would be *“confounded”* (Jer 50:2). God also said through him, *“I will punish Bel in Babylon”* (Jer 51:44).

Bel was a sun god, to whom great reviving power was attributed. He was also known as Merodach (Jer 50:2), and, in history, as Marduk.

Nebuchadnezzar’s son, who reigned for two years immediately after him, was named *“Evilmerodach,”* or *“Evil-Merodach* – meaning, “a man of Marduk,” or follower of the god Bel (2 Kgs 25:27; Jer 52:31). He is the king who liberated Jehoiachin (Jehoiakim’s son) from a thirty-seven year confinement in prison, giving him a seat of honor above all the other kings that were with him in Babylon. Notwithstanding, history confirms he was slain by his sister’s brother, who was named Nergalshar-ucur.

Not Their Final Place

The house of Nebuchadnezzar’s god would not be the ultimate resting place for the vessels dedicated to the living God! Later, in Ezra’s day, every single one of those vessels would be returned to their proper place. Thus it is written, *“And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God”* (Ezra 6:5).

A few years after this mandate, Nehemiah, governor of Judah, found ordinary household items belonging to Tobiah in the temple chamber. Of that occasion he wrote, *“Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense”* (Neh 13:9). The Lord was behind this restoration.

CONCLUSION

The stage is now set for the unfolding of Daniel’s remarkably long and insightful ministry. It took place during a period of captivity, and in a heathen land.

His work as a prophet unfolded amidst trials and tests. Daniel bears some resemblance to John the Revelator, who received profound insight while in exile on

Patmos. Daniel also received remarkable visions and explanations of Divine workings while he was in exile. **Men may move the saints from the peaceful**

habitations, but they cannot move them where they cannot hear from God! Those who maintain their faith will continue to have access to God!

Chastening Does Not Remove Hope

We learn from this book that the chastening of the Lord does not close the doors of heaven, or induct a rime of hopelessness. Those who continue to believe God will be given to see the things of God, even during Divine judgments – perhaps even in an unusual way.

The Innocent Sometimes Suffer

We also learn from this book that faithful people are sometimes caught in the punishment that is being administered to others. Daniel, Hananiah,

Mishael, and Azariah were young, yet faithful. Yet they were carried away in the Babylonian captivity. Sometimes believers do suffer because of the sins of others.

Favor in the Eyes of the Enemy

Additionally, we will see that God can grant His faithful servants favor in the eyes of those who have no personal regard for the true God, in whose hands their lives are held. All four of the young men introduced in the first chapter of Daniel obtained remarkable favor in the eyes of the king. They were promoted to political prominence, as Jews, in a strange and hostile land.

A Challenging Book

This is a book that will challenge the most disciplined and sanctified intellect. Things are unfolded concerning nations and kings that are by no means simplistic. For those who seek a challenge for the mind, the book of Daniel will rise to the occasion. Your ransomed powers are well employed in this sacred volume.

Blessing for the Faithful

Finally, it will again be seen that those who keep the faith under duress will be granted unusual and profitable insight and understanding. Trouble does not separate us from God! The book will give you a strong reason to cleave to the Lord.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/25/2002. Continuing in our overview of Daniel, we will cover 1:3-8. The lesson title is **“THE FIRST GREAT TEST OF FAITH.”** The very best children of the captivity are selected by the king of Babylon for special tutelage and care. The difficulty is that this honor requires conduct that violates the conscience of the young men. Their faith not only moves them to refuse unlawful things, but to wisely present their case. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Bergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah/Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

**WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>
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