

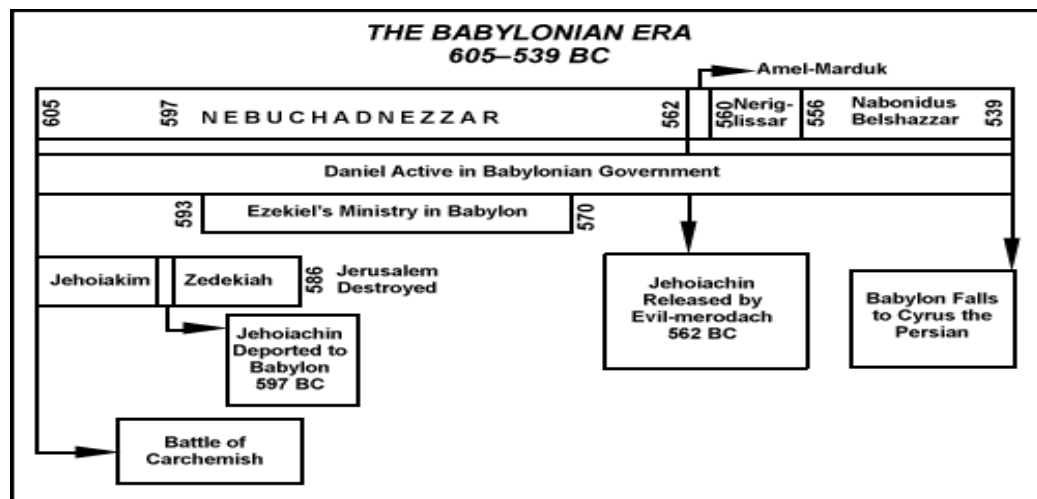
# The Great Story

## Week 18 – The Exile and Daniel

### Bible Study

#### I. Introduction

- a. Because of the sins of Manasseh, God promised that Judah would be attacked and overrun. This is in spite of the efforts of Hezekiah and Josiah to turn the nation back to God.
- b. Isaiah prophesied from 739-686 BC, 100 years before the Babylonian captivity.
  - i. Isaiah 39:5-7, “<sup>5</sup> Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: <sup>6</sup> Days are coming when all that is in your house, and that which your ancestors have stored up until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> Some of your own sons who are born to you shall be taken away; they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”
- c. Why 70 years of Captivity?
  - i. Leviticus 25:1-7
  - ii. Jeremiah prophesied 70 years of captivity in order to fulfill the requirement for a Sabbath for the land on every 7<sup>th</sup> year. Because this command of God had not been followed for 490 years ( $490 / 7 = 70$ ), when God judged Judah, He extracted the Sabbath rest at that time. The captivity lasted from 605 BC – 536 BC.
- d. The Captivity would make certain that the Israelites were never idolatrous again, even to today.
- e. The Babylonians exerted control of Judah in 605BC. Babylon attacked in 597BC, and 587BC. Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC.



## II. Daniel and His Friends

- a. Daniel and his friends were given different names. This was a form of brainwashing meant to make them forget about God and serve the Babylonian gods.
- b. Daniel Means – “God is my Judge”
  - i. Belteshazzar means – “Bel (likely another name for Marduk) Protect the King”
- c. Hananiah means – “Yahweh is gracious”
  - i. Shadrach means – “Command of Aku (moon god)”
- d. Mishael means – “Who is what God is”
  - i. Meshach means “Who is like Aku”
- e. Azariah means – “Yahweh has helped (or will help)”
  - i. Abednego means “Servant of Nebo (son of Bel, god of vegetation)”
- f. Daniel 1:8-13
  - i. Daniel was about 15 years old at this time.
  - ii. The Babylonian diet was not the same as a Jewish diet. The food would have likely included pork, an unclean animal that the Jews were not allowed to eat.
  - iii. Further, the food in Babylon was offered to idols, so Daniel and his friends could not have eaten it without sinning against God.
  - iv. Daniel and his friends remained on a diet of vegetables and water, while the other captives ate Babylonian food. The sudden change in diet drastically affected the other captives, making them sick and weak.
- g. When they were presented to the king, Daniel and his friends were found to be 10 times better than any other wise man in the land. – Daniel 1:18-21.
- h. Daniel was a man who saw visions from God and was able to interpret them. The book of Daniel is filled with prophecies that pertain to the end days.

## III. The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

- a. Daniel 2:2-6
  - i. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and wanted it interpreted. He wouldn't tell anyone what the dream was, but instead wanted his wise men to tell him both the dream and the interpretation.
  - ii. If the wise men could not interpret the dream, their houses were to be turned into dunghills.
    1. The King James' translation of “Dunghill” was exactly that. It was common practice when disgracing someone in this fashion, for the house to be destroyed and the associated property to be made into a public outhouse area. Literally, a dunghill.
  - iii. The King was likely upset because his wise men, who were supposed to be in communion with the gods, obviously were not since they could not tell him his dream, which he thought the gods had sent him.

- iv. The king ordered all the wise men killed when they couldn't tell him about the dream.
- b. Arioch was the King's chief executioner and was sent to kill the wise men.
  - i. Despite the King's order to gather Daniel and his friends to be executed, Arioch instead took the time to explain what was going on to Daniel.
- c. Daniel and his friends spent the night praying and God revealed both the dream and the interpretation to Daniel.
- d. He revealed the dream to Nebuchadnezzar and told him it was a vision of the future kingdoms of the world (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, "Possibly a revived Roman Empire").

#### **IV. The Fiery Furnace**

- a. Nebuchadnezzar made an idol that was 90 feet tall. It was likely a statue built as a tribute to his dream.
  - i. While the statue was not solid gold, it probably had a wooden frame, covered with some other material, then overlaid in gold.
- b. At the sound of the musical ensemble playing, everyone was to bow down and worship the idol.
  - i. Worshipping the idol was meant to show loyalty to the King.
- c. The penalty for disobeying was to be thrown in the fiery furnace.
  - i. This was likely the kiln that was onsite, used to build the statue. It could have reached temperatures of around 1800 degrees.
- d. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down and instead replied to the king: Daniel 3:16-18
- e. The Three were bound and thrown into the furnace.
  - i. The temperature was so high that it killed the guards that threw them in.
  - ii. Daniel 3:24-25
  - iii. "son of the gods" – Nebuchadnezzar was not referring to this being Christ, because he had no concept of who Christ was. Rather, he just thought the person in the fire had the appearance of one of his gods.
  - iv. This is likely, however, a preincarnate Christophany.
- f. The king called in to the fire and asked if the men were ok.
- g. They came out of the fire and didn't even smell of smoke.
- h. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were promoted in Babylon

#### **V. The Fall of Babylon**

- a. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC
- b. In 556, Nabonidus was made king, though was not part of the kingly line. He adopted Belshazzar for legitimacy, and reigned as coregents.
  - i. It is unclear whether Belshazzar was the son or grandson of Nebuchadnezzar because there is no word for "grandfather" in Hebrew, only "father"
- c. By 539 BC, Nabonidus was captured (in the Arabia desert) by the Persians and the Persians began a 2-4 month siege of Babylon.
- d. Belshazzar threw a feast for all the rulers in the city.

- e. Daniel 5:3-4, “So they brought in the vessels of gold and silver that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. <sup>4</sup>They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.”
- f. Immediately, the fingers of human hand appeared and wrote a message on the wall that no one could read.
  - i. Daniel 5:7, “The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners; and the king said to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever can read this writing and tell me its interpretation shall be clothed in purple, have a chain of gold around his neck, and rank third in the kingdom.”
  - ii. No one could read it.
  - iii. The Queen remembered Daniel, though he was likely retired at this time.
- g. Daniel tells the king to keep his gifts.
  - i. Daniel couldn’t be bought
- h. The words inscribed were: MENE MENE TEKEL PARSIN
  - i. Mene – Your days are numbered. This is repeated twice
  - ii. Tekel – “weighed and found too light”
  - iii. Parsin and Peres – same root word, just different forms. It means “to divide” – Parsin, being the plural, could have signified the dividing of the Babylonian Kingdom by the Persians. Another interpretation is that the kingdom would be destroyed and broken into countless parts.
- i. Daniel was made third in rank of the nation as promised.
- j. Babylon was taken over by the Persians in October of 539.

## **VI. The Den of Lions**

- a. Daniel 6:1-3
- b. The satraps didn’t like Daniel and wished to have him killed, but they could find no corruption to charge him with.
- c. They met with Darius (the ruler of Babylon) and told him that he should enact a law that everyone should pray only to him for the next 30 days.
  - i. It is not a foreign idea for rulers in this age to assert that they were gods and be worshipped as such. The pagan gods of this era were viewed as being fallible, just like man. Recall that the Romans worshipped the Caesars as gods.
- d. Daniel 6:10, “Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously.”
- e. The satraps reported Daniel’s crime to the king.
  - i. Even though the king did not want to condemn Daniel, the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed once it was enacted, so he was forced to punish him.
- f. Daniel was thrown into a den of lions
  - i. This is different than a lion’s den, as a lion’s den may not be full of lions.

- g. Daniel 6:16b, “The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!”
- h. Daniel 6:18, “<sup>18</sup> Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.”
- i. The King hastily returned the next morning to check on Daniel. According to law, if a prisoner survived the night, he was set free.
- j. Daniel 6:22, “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.”
  - i. Not only had the angel shut up the mouth of the lions, but the lions must have been made completely docile as Daniel did not have a scratch on him.
- k. Those who had accused Daniel were thrown into the den of lions along with their family.
  - i. The lions killed them all.
- l. Daniel 6:26-27

## **VII. The Pattern for Prayer**

- a. Daniel 9:4-19
  - i. Daniel prayed for his people to be returned to the Promised Land after their 70 years of captivity.
    - 1. Exaltation – Giving God praise and honor for who He is.
    - 2. Repentance/Confession – Humbling yourself and confessing your sins.
    - 3. Request – Asking the Lord for what you need.
- b. The Lord’s Prayer follows the same pattern.
  - i. Exaltation – Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.
  - ii. Repentance/Confession – Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.
  - iii. Request – Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## **VIII. Lessons learned from the Story**

- a. God uses those who are loyal and subservient to Him.
- b. Some circumstances in life seem like they will bring great pleasure or power. If this is obtained through sinful means, a Christian should deny the opportunity outright.

## **IX. Sources**

- a. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. Edited by MacArthur, John, Jr. electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997