"How Shall We Sing in a Foreign Land?" (Introduction to the Book of Daniel) Daniel 1: 1-4

We begin a new series . . . Why study the Book of Daniel?

- Evidence of God's sovereignty even when we lose
- Daniel as a "Moral Exemplar" (good example)
- Prophesies of the "End Times": the Second Coming of Christ and the end of history

A History of Middle-Eastern Empires: Backstory to the Book of Daniel



Nations in the Theatre of History

Israelites Egyptians Assyrians **Babylonians Medes-Persians** (Greeks) (Romans)

Chapter Thirtees

THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Introduction

be century from 600 to 500 s.c. brought tumultuous changes to the Near East. Four major powers dominated the political landscape at the beginning of the century. The Neo-Babylonian Empire extended across Mesopotamia and the Levant. Under Amasis (570-526 s.c.) Egypt prospered, while continuing to threaten Babylonian interests in the southern Levant. Increasingly, Amasis forged economic and an tary links with Greek traders and mercenaries who settled in a Delta.

Delta. The Medes occupied the territories north of Mean potamia, governing their empire from their capital at Echana Median kings extended their holdings westward into the centre Anatolian plateau (modern Turkey). Beyond the western las of the Median Empire lay the kingdom of Lydia, with its capital at Sardis. The Lydian kings Gyges and Croesus built Lydia into at Sardis. The Lydian kings Gyges and Croesus built Lydia into formidable force utilizing the gold retrieved from the Pattal formidable force utilizing the gold retrieved from the formation quered by a new force—the Persians—resulting in the formation of the largest empire the Near East ever produced: the Perse Empire. For the Jews these changes meant an end to the Enand restoration to their ancestral home.





are death of Tiglath-pileser III; he left very few remains. During death of Tiglath-pileser III; he left very few remains. During datameter Vs reign, Hoshea rebelled against Assyria with the statumeter Vs reign, Hoshea rebelled against Assyria with the operation of Egyptian aid (2 Kgs. 17:1-4). Perhaps Tefnakhte, operation of Egyptian aid (2 Kgs. 17:1-4). Perhaps Tefnakhte, is loader of the Twenty-fourth Egyptian Dynasty, stirred up at revoli in fear of Assyrian incursions further south. The reselion probably was more widespread and may have involved reselion and Philistine cities.

phoenicals Shalmaneser responded by besieging Samaria for three year until the city fell in 722 n.c. (2 Kgs. 17:5–6). Though Sargon II (722-705 n.c.), successor to Shalmaneser V, claims credit for

primarily responsible for the final destruction of the Northern Kingdom Israel (2 Kings 17:5).

During Sargon's early reign many Israelites were deported and resettled in the upper Habor Valley (Goran), near Nineveh at Halah, and as far away as Media (2 Kgs. 17:6; 1 Chr. 5:26). Sargon's inscriptions mention 27,290 captives taken from Israel. Captive peoples from the area of Babylon (Cutah) and Syria (Hamath and Sepharvaim) were resettled in Sanaria (2 Kgs. 17:24). Some Israelites fled southward, seeking refuge in Jerusalem, but most had to suffer the indignity of Assyrian occupation in the newly formed Assyriari province of Samaria.





for the city. Isaiah encouraged the king and gave assurance Hezekiah that Jerusalem would not fall. Subsequently, in a raculous intervention, the besieging Assyrian army lost 185, men, and the siege was lifted (2 Kgs. 19:35-36).

An interesting incident reported by the Greek histo

Herodotus recalls that the Assyrian army met defeat r statistic when a plague of mice stripped the weapons of

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

While besieging Librah and Lachish, Sennacherib sent a while besieging Libnah and Lachish, Sennaentri et al. the surrender of the city. The Assyrian forces surrounded the city balls an earthen embankment around it to prevent any eshigh a prisoner in

Jerusalem miraculously delivered: (2 Kings 19: 33-37)

- ³³ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."
- ³⁵ And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword





Megiddo . . . Armegeddon









The Community in Judah

Conditions in Judah must have been severe, for many Judean cities suffered during the Babylonian invasions. Arad, Lachish, Ramat Rahel, En-gedi, Timnah, Ekron, and Jerusalem Gedeliah, though not of royal lineage, nonetheless came from an important Jerusalemite family. His father, Ahiakim, and grandfather, Shaphan, both had served in Josiah's court (2 Kgs. 22:12–14).

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Author and Genres:

• Author: Daniel (6th century B.C.)(500s B.C.)

- Chapters 1-6: Historical narratives involving Daniel in captivity
- Chapters 7-12: Visionary and Apocalyptic literature

Literary Components: Setting

- Setting:
- --When: 605-539 B.C.
- --Where: see map



Literary Components: Protagonists

- Daniel (advisor to Babylonian and Persian kings) and Daniel's three friends
- Daniel ("God is my judge") is renamed Belteshazzar
- Hananiah ("Yah has been gracious") is renamed Shadrach
- Mishael ("Who is what God is?") is renamed Meshach
- Azariah ("Yah is my help") is renamed Abednego

Literary Components: Cast of Characters

- King of Judah: Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:5)
- Kings of Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar
- Kings/leaders of the Medes-Persians: Cyrus the Great, Darius

Literary Components: Plot

• Will Daniel and his friends remain faithful to God even though their country has been defeated and they have been carried off to a foreign land?

Take-Aways: God's Attributes

1. God's Sovereignty:

God is in control even when it doesn't appear that way

2. God's Power:

God far surpasses the power of even the most mighty human rulers

Take-Aways: The Human Condition

3. Human Choices: Humans are free to be faithful to God and obedient to His commandments and laws regardless of the circumstances ("We all have choices!")

4. Perseverance: God gives perseverance to believers who remain faithful to Him

Take-Aways: God's "Blessings and Curses"

5. God provides "curses"/punishments for disobedience --Johoiakim did "evil" and was defeated --Israel was punished for not keeping the Sabbaths

6. God provides "blessings"/rewards for obedience

--Daniel and his friends (as we will study in this series) receive the "blessings"

--And even thrive/prosper because of their obedience to God

In Upcoming Weeks . . .

 "Daniel himself was a man who felt the force of the kingdom of darkness and stood in the evil day, [yet] receiving rich blessings from his God. His book ... shows us what it means to stand for the Lord and to keep ourselves from idols of every kind."

--Lloyd J. Ogilvie

Let Us Pray

