

Introduction to the Book of Daniel

General Summary

- The Book of Daniel contains the history and prophecies of a Jewish captive in Babylon
- It lays out a prophetic timeline and descriptions of coming world empires and the end times

The Author - Daniel

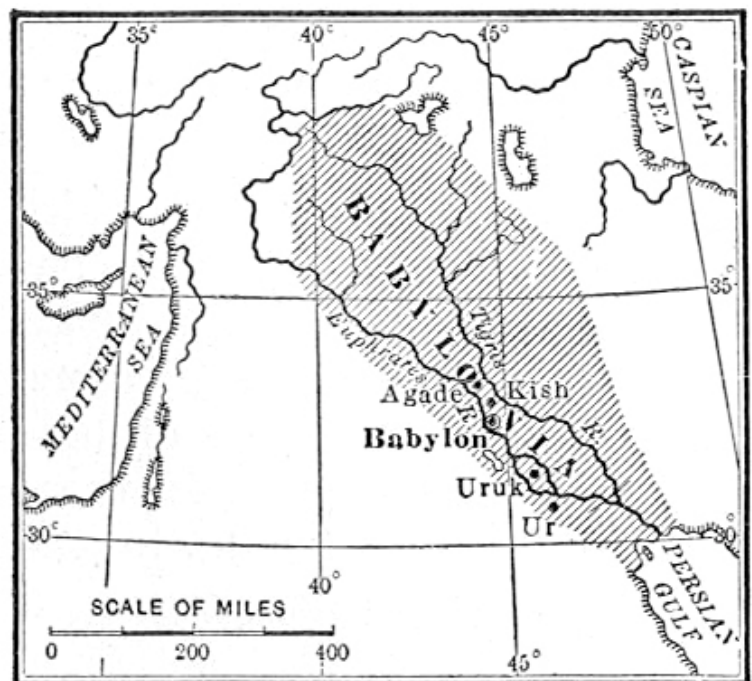
- Was taken captive as a teenager during Nebuchadnezzar's 1st siege of Jerusalem in 605 B.C.
- These captives, royal and talented, were to be trained and integrated into Babylonian society and government
- Daniel means "God is Judge"
- Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, refers to him twice - Ezekiel 14:14, 28:3
- Christ quotes from Daniel - Matthew 24:15

The Battle over Daniel

- The Book of Daniel may be the most hotly debated book in the Bible
- Modern "scholars" deny its authenticity and say it was written in the 1st or 2nd century B.C. as Jewish propaganda
- Many skeptics in the past have tried to find historical inaccuracies in the book, but archaeology has proven them wrong

Outline of Daniel

- Historical - Chapters 1-6
 - Daniel and Friends Tested - Chapter 1
 - The Great Image - Chapter 2
 - The Fiery Furnace - Chapter 3
 - The Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar - Chapter 4
 - The Handwriting on the Wall - Chapter 5
 - The Lion's Den - Chapter 6
- Prophetical - Chapters 7-12
 - The Four Beasts - Chapter 7
 - The Ram and the He-Goat - Chapter 8
 - The Seventy Weeks - Chapter 9
 - Daniel's Prayer - Chapter 10
 - The Little Horn - Chapter 11
 - The End Times - Chapter 12



The Babylonian Empire

- According to Genesis it was founded by Nimrod - Genesis 10:8-10
- Most ancient sources give varying dates between 2231 and 2286 B.C.
- Historical Divisions
 - Old Babylonian Period
 - Established by an Amorite chieftain named Sumu-Abum in 1894 B.C.
 - Hammurabi
 - Ruled from 1792-1750 B.C.
 - Codified the laws of Babylon into the "Code of Hammurabi"
 - Conquered at times by the Hittites, Kassites, Elamites, and Assyrians.
 - Assyrian Period
 - Controlled by the Assyrians from 911 to 608 B.C.
 - Revolted many times before the city is destroyed by the Assyrians in 689
 - Gained independence under Nabopolassar in 612
 - Neo-Babylonian Chaldean Empire (612-539 B.C.)
 - Daniel opens in this period
 - Key Rulers
 - Nabopolassar
 - Nebuchadnezzar
 - Son of Nabopolassar
 - Led in building the city, possibly including the Hanging Gardens
 - Nabonidus
 - Belshazzar
 - Son and regent of Belshazzar
 - Persian Period
 - Cyrus the Great of Persia conquers Babylon in 539 B.C.
 - City became the administrative center of the Persian empire
 - Some attempts at revolt were made but failed
 - Greek Period
 - Darius III is defeated by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.
 - Alexander died in Nebuchadnezzar Palace in 323 B.C.
 - The city fell into desolation as it was caught in the middle of warring factions after Alexander
- The province of Babylon continued on for centuries under Persia and Arabs

Babylon and Israel

- Israel was caught in the middle between Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon
 - Babylon started to conquer Assyria, Egypt moved in to aid Assyria
 - Josiah led Israel to defeat against Egypt's army as it moved north to Assyria in 609 B.C.
 - II Chronicles 35:20-24
 - Egypt and Assyria were beaten by Babylon, who moved into the Holy Land
 - Nebuchadnezzar pushed Egypt back to its home but could not defeat them in 601 B.C.
 - Under King Jehoiachin, Jerusalem falls to Babylon in 598 B.C.
 - Several thousand nobles are deported to Babylon - Jeremiah 29:2. Esther 2:6
 - Under Zedekiah, Judah rebels against Babylon in 589 and were quickly defeated
 - Jerusalem falls in 587 and a second deportation takes place
 - Jeremiah writes Lamentations after Jerusalem is conquered
- II Kings 24-25, II Chronicles 36
- The Jews would be captive to Babylon/Persia for 70 years
- Much of Jeremiah's ministry involves the Babylonian conquest and captivity