

BOOK OF DANIEL

Chapter One

Lesson 1

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of the book of Daniel. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction

1. As the book of Daniel opens, the northern kingdom of Israel (referred to in Scripture as consisting of Israel and Samaria) was already under the sixth cycle of discipline. It had been destroyed as a nation in 721 B.C. by the Assyrians.



2. At the same time the southern kingdom of Israel (known as Judah) went under the fourth cycle. For many years, the little kingdom of Judah was controlled first by the Egyptians and finally by the Babylonians. The fourth cycle is characterized by extreme economic adversities as well as strong influences by foreign powers and military invasions. The cycles of discipline are described in Leviticus chapter 26. The fourth cycle in particular is described in verses 23 through 26.

2.1 In Leviticus, Chapter 26, we find Israel was warned of a series of progressive national disciplines because of their negative volition to God’s word. Scofield has listed the cycles as follows: cycle one, Lev 26:14-17; cycle two, Lev 26:18-20, cycle three, Lev 26:21-22; cycle four, Lev 26:23-26; cycle five, Lev 26:27-31; and cycle six, Lev 26:32-39.



3. While some semblance of national sovereignty remained, the ever-widening influence of the invaders was felt in all areas of life. In 625 B.C. Nabopolassar, an interloper, not of royal blood, suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

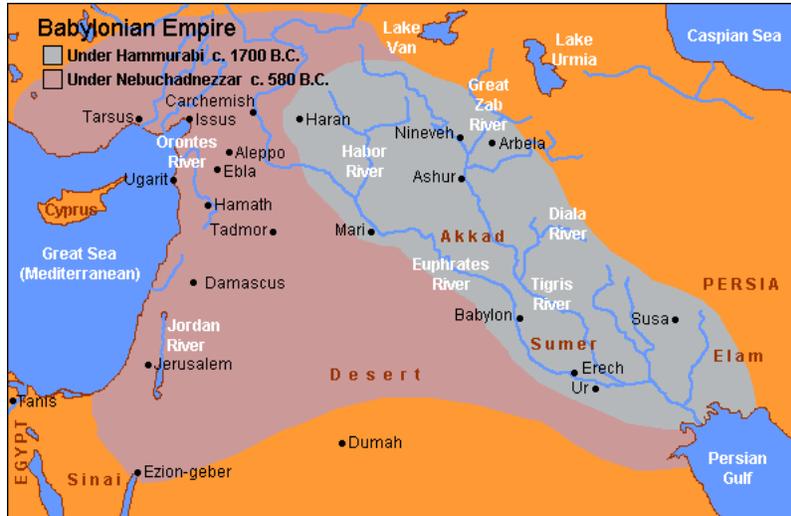
3.1 He organized his scattered forces and took over Babylonia, which was then under Assyrian rule. When Nabopolassar organized Babylon, the Assyrians declared war on him.

4. With the help of the Medes, Assyria was conquered in 612 B.C. The disappearance of the Assyrian people will always remain a unique and striking phenomenon in ancient history.

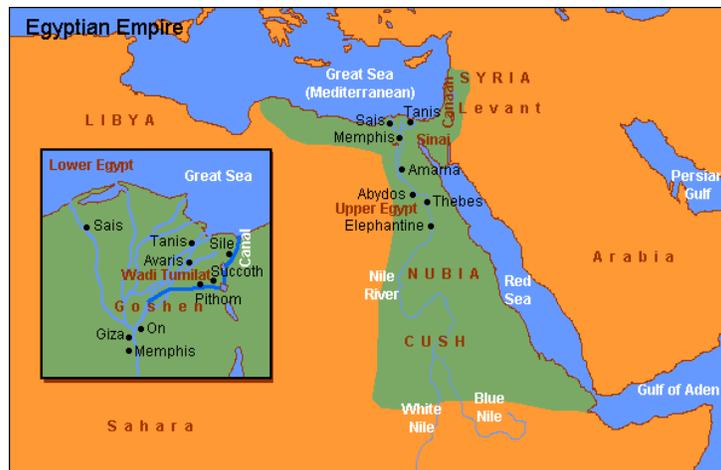
4.1 No other land seems to have been sacked, enslaved and pillaged as completely as Assyria, unless it is Israel. Assyria, a nation which had existed 2000 years, lost its independent character.

4.2 Assyria was the “nation” assigned to Jonah. As a result of Jonah’s work in Nineveh, Assyria was revived as a client nation to God, soon becoming a dominant empire ruling much of the known world.

4.3 The evangelization of Assyria by Jonah took place in c. 800 B.C. Assyria remained a client entity until it was defeated by Babylon. Assyria as a client nation to God was used to discipline the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. It was a devastating military defeat for Israel.



5. Several years later, Egypt, as the hopeful heir to the Assyrian Empire challenged Babylon. At the battle of Carchemish, a coalition of Assyrians and Egyptians were thoroughly defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar. Babylon, fresh off their defeat of the Assyrian–Egyptian coalition, decided to attack Judah. After routing the Egyptians they pursued them as far as Israel. Following a demonic sign Nebuchadnezzar elected to halt his pursuit and attack Judah. His eye was particularly set on the beautiful city of Jerusalem.



6. This would be the first of three major attacks on Jerusalem and the first of three major deportations. In 606 B.C. the holy city would be besieged for the first time. On this occasion Daniel and some 69 other young boys were taken into captivity.

6.1 The city, however, was not demolished, and King Jehoiakim was left on the throne, only part of Judah's wealth was confiscated. Daniel and his cohorts were taken to Babylon as hostages.

7. In 597 B.C. there was a second invasion and siege of Jerusalem. At that time the prophet Ezekiel and King Jehoiakim (also called in Scripture Coniah) were numbered among the captives taken to Babylon.

8. Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem a third time in 586 B.C. After a siege of 18 months, the city and Temple of Solomon were completely destroyed. A third deportation took place. This was the beginning of the last cycle of discipline for Judah. The cycle falling on God's people because of their failure to heed His word. This last cycle would last for 70 years.

8.1 The 70 year captivity was predicted, both as to nature and duration by the prophet Jeremiah in Jer 25:11-12.

Jer 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

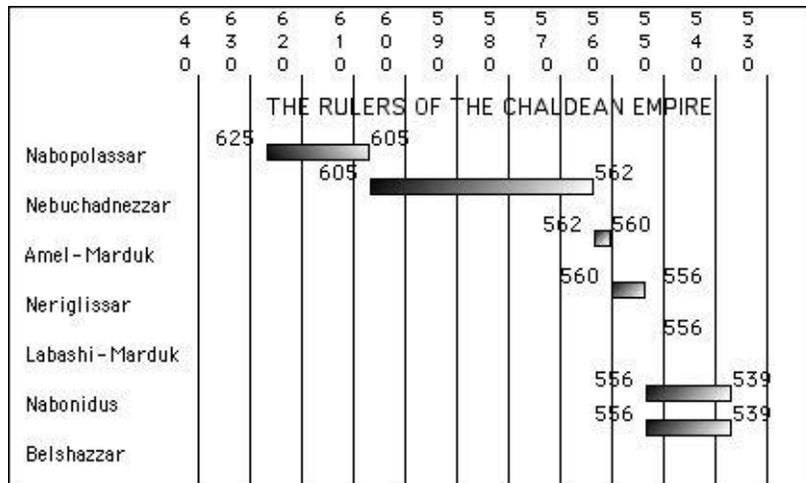
Jer 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

9. Nebuchadnezzar took the cream of the crop from Judah in 606 B.C.; the four most prominent (from a biblical perspective) were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. In 597 the very prominent prophet Ezekiel and many others were taken and in 586 only the least of the least were left in a desolate land.

10. In Scripture three Babylonian kings are mentioned; so how did they rise to the throne, and were there interlopers in between?

11. The three mentioned in the Old Testament are Nebuchadnezzar, Amel-Marduk (called Evilmarodoch in 1Ki 52:31) and Belshazzar. Babylon will suffer defeat at the hands of the Medo-Persians just after Daniel interprets the writing on the wall (a preview of coming attraction).

12. Our story begins in Judah where a prophet by the name of Jeremiah has been warning all who would listen of God's discipline to come. The discipline said the prophet was to be a direct result of Judah's idolatry. Daniel is a book about a teenage boy who was carried away to Babylon, where he would spend the rest of his life. He would live an exemplary life of service to God. Let's review a chart of the rulers of ancient Babylon.



13. In Eze 14:13-20 Daniel is recognized in Scripture as one of God's three most respected men.

Eze 14:13 Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

Eze 14:14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Eze 14:15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:

Eze 14:16 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

Eze 14:17 Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

Eze 14:18 Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

Eze 14:19 Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:

Eze 14:20 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.

14. With such a testimony, how could anyone not want to know more about this prophet named Daniel?