

1. Last week I continued the introduction to the book of Daniel.

2. When time ran out I was teaching how the destruction of Judah was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar in three stages. Before continuing this study let's do a short review.

3. The Historical Background of Chaldea

3.1 In 625 B.C. Nabopolassar, suddenly appeared out of nowhere. He organized scattered forces and took over Babylonia, which was then under Assyrian rule.

3.1.1 Before the arrival of Nabopolassar the Chaldeans were divided into five main clans with their own clan chieftains.

3.3. Nabopolassar pulled the Chaldean clans together into what would become a "world empire."

3.4 During the struggles with Assyria, Nabopolassar united with Cyaxares, King of Media, and the Scythians for a final assault on Nineveh in 612 B.C. The Scythians according to Wycliffe were:

"...horse-riding nomadic tribes, first traced in Central Asia near the border of Siberia and Outer Mongolia. Frozen burial-chambers ... built in about 500 to 300 B.C.; reveal their characteristic art, customs, and possessions. The Scythians are first mentioned in the Old Testament as "Ashkenaz," they descended through Japheth. When they tried to move south of the Caspian Sea they were checked by the Assyrians. The Scythians were strongly influenced by the culture of Iran (ancient Persia) and it is now generally agreed that the Scythian language was an Iranian dialect. According to Herodotus the Scythians swept down on Mesopotamia ... in about 611 B.C. ... They subsequently remained in west Asia for 28 years. It has been argued that during this period they sacked the temple of Venus at Ashdod and settled in Beth-shean, a fortress city guarding a Jordan crossing; it is called Scythopolis in Jdg 1:27, the LXX; and 2Ma 12:29 and was located just east of Mount Gilboa.

"It is thus assumed by some that it is this Scythian foe which is described by Zephaniah and Jeremiah. The warlike Scythians are described as barbarians in 2Ma 4:47. By 110 B.C. these nomadic horsemen had settled in the Crimea, a Black Sea Peninsula, and traded with the Russian steppes in grain, horses, and slaves, intermarrying with Greeks. In Col 3:11 Paul either cites the Scythians as typical barbarians or refers to them as a well-known group of nomadic freemen. Several years later (most likely around 610 B.C.), Egypt wanted to become the dominate force in the mid-east; so they challenged the Chaldeans. At the battle of Carchemish the Egyptians were thoroughly defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar."

3.5 The Cambridge Ancient History has this to say of Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar:

"Nebuchadnezzar a son of Nabopolassar ... succeeded his father as the ruler of the Chaldean Empire ... Nebuchadnezzar was a vigorous and mentally strong man ... He was to become the greatest man of his time ... a statesman, architect and soldier ... He married a Median princess, Amyhia, daughter of Cyaxares, ... it was for his wife the famous hanging gardens ... were constructed ... His reign of some forty-three years was one of the most glorious in the history of Babylon . . ."

3.6 To avoid confusion one must be aware there were three invasions of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. I have earlier mentioned these but let's review again:

3.7 In 606 B.C., after Nebuchadnezzar's stunning victory over Assyrian/Egypt coalition, he besieged Jerusalem for the first time; on this occasion, Daniel was taken into captivity.

3.8 In 597 B.C. there was a second invasion and siege of Jerusalem. At that time, the Prophet Ezekiel and Jehoiachin (Coniah), the king, were numbered among the captives taken to Babylon.

3.9 Following the deportation of Daniel and the other hostages, Jehoiakim's allegiance to the Chaldean Empire continued until B.C. 597. With the backing of a pro-Egyptian religious leadership cadre, Jehoiakim revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, this despite various warnings from men like Jeremiah and Isaiah. Nebuchadnezzar returned a second time to Jerusalem in 597 B.C. where Jehoiakim died during that siege.

3.9.1 Nebuchadnezzar had Jehoiakim's body cut into pieces and strewed outside the wall of the city, just as Jeremiah had prophesied in Jer 22:18-19.

Jer 22:18 Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: "They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!' They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!'"

Jer 22:19 He will have the burial of a donkey-- dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem."

3.10 After the death of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin (also called Coniah in Jer 22:24, 28; and Jer 37:1 and Jeconiah in 1Ch 3:16; and Jer 24:1; and Mat 1:12), his son, was placed on the throne for about 100 days.

Jer 22:24 "As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "even if you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off.

Jer 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

Jer 37:1 And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah.

1Ch 3:16 And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.

Jer 23:40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Jer 24:1 The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

Mat 1:12 After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel ...

Mat 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

3.11 When Nebuchadnezzar took the city, he removed Jehoiachin from the throne and replaced him with Mattaniah (another son of Josiah and changed his name to Zedekiah (2Ki 24:17)).

2Ki 24:17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

3.12 Coniah, together with his mother, his wives, servants, and princes, were taken to Babylon as a captive. There he remained in prison for 36 years until the death of Nebuchadnezzar.

3.13 Jeremiah 22:30 records the curse of Coniah. This was based on the evil he did. God promised that his seed would never reign on the throne of Judah.

Jer 22:28 Is this man Jehoiachin a despised, broken pot, an object no one wants? Why will he and his children be hurled out, cast into a land they do not know?

Jer 22:29 O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD!

Jer 22:30 This is what the LORD says: "Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah."

2Ki 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and †he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

2Ki 24:9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

3.14 This explains why Joseph (who was of Coniah's seed - Mat 1:12) could not be the natural father of Jesus (although he was the legal father, descended from David).

3.15 Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem a third time. After a siege of eighteen months, the city was completely devastated in 586 BC; and the third deportation took place. That was the beginning of the fifth cycle of discipline for the southern kingdom of Judah.

3.15.1 Zedekiah was talked into rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar bringing upon the city its absolute destruction.

4. The horrific exiles just listed were a product of divine discipline. Israel repeatedly worshiped false gods and failed just as often to heed the warnings of God's prophet.

4.1 It is beyond our study to detail the many warnings to Israel to return to the worship of Jehovah and avoid the perils of idolatry.

4.2 There were serious warnings of the discipline to come by prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others.

4.3 Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel who at the time of Daniel's deportation in 606 B.C. remained in the land.

4.4 As he faithfully taught Judah, he too warned of events to come.

Eze 14:1 Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me.

Eze 14:2 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

Eze 14:3 "Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all?

Eze 14:4 Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the LORD will answer him myself in keeping with his great idolatry.

Eze 14:5 I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.'

Eze 14:6 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!

Eze 14:7 "When any Israelite or any alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, I the LORD will answer him myself.

Eze 14:8 I will set my face against that man and make him an example and a byword. I will cut him off from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

Eze 14:9 "And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the LORD have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel.

Eze 14:10 They will bear their guilt--the prophet will be as guilty as the one who consults him.

Eze 14:11 Then the people of Israel will no longer stray from me, nor will they defile themselves anymore with all their sins. They will be my people, and I will be their God, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Eze 14:12 The word of the LORD came to me:

Eze 14:13 "Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals,

Eze 14:14 even if these three men--Noah, Daniel and Job--were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.

4.5 Later Ezekiel will be taken captive in the second assault on the city by Nebuchadnezzar and even from Babylon he will continue to warn those still living in the land.

4.6 Often men of genius do not receive public recognition until a few generations lapse, but the people of Daniel's day recognized his greatness. Four great races of people considered Daniel an outstanding hero while still alive - the Jews, the Chaldeans, the Medes, and the Persians.

4.7 He was a born again believer, and unlike the majority of national leaders, both then and now, he did not compromise any of his principles.

4.8 Daniel was a great man of God and as a result of his faithfulness thousands upon thousands have received blessings as a result of his adherence to the principles of God.

End Lesson Taught 7-2-2000

