

Daniel 1:1-7, 21

Introduction

We know that the Bible is the record of God's redeeming work; it's the unfolding of his saving plan in *real history*. But sometimes it can feel to us like the history of the Bible is somehow different from "normal" history. I believe one reason for this is simply because what the Bible gives us is God's own inspired "interpretation" or explanation of history. In other words, the history is all the same (whether it's the history in a textbook or the history in the Bible), but in the Bible we're given the amazing privilege of seeing history not just as a story developing randomly or a story developing according to various "natural laws," but a story developing according to the sovereign purposes and plans of God. The focus of the Bible is the glory of God revealed in the redemption of sinners like you and me, and so the focus of the Bible is also redemptive history – in other words, all of that history that pertains most directly to the seed of the woman from Seth to Jesus in its mortal conflict with the seed of the serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15). It's all of *this* history that the Bible is most concerned with. And yet at the same time, this history is no different from the history that we might read about in any reliable textbook today. This is what makes the reality of the Bible's inspired *interpretation* and *explanation* of history—not just past history, but even "future history"—so amazing and so powerfully faith-building. This is what helps us to truly love the first couple of verses in Daniel chapter one. We begin in verse one:

I. Daniel 1:1 — In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

These are words that could sound right at home in any modern-day textbook of history. So let's just take a few minutes to give these words a little more historical context – a context that Daniel could assume his original readers were already very familiar with. [For the following historical survey see the corresponding maps on pp. 10-12.]

David was anointed the king of Judah in 1010 BC and the Davidic dynasty endured for over four centuries – about 425 years. It was 370 years into this dynasty that Josiah became king, and he reigned for thirty-one years. In the days of Josiah (640 to 609 BC), there were big changes stirring on the world stage. To the north and east of Israel, the Assyrian empire was being challenged by the rising power of the Babylonians. Fourteen years into Josiah's reign (626 BC), Nabopolassar—a Chaldean prince—conquered the Assyrian controlled city of Babylon and declared himself the king of Babylon. What this meant for everyone else was that they had to decide who they aligned with, or at the very least, who they wanted to come out on top – the Assyrians or the Babylonians. To the south and west of Judah were the Egyptians, another major power in Josiah's day, and the Egyptians had decided that it was in their best interests to join with their former enemy, the Assyrians, to try and halt the rising power of the Babylonians. It was during this time that Daniel was born into a family of the nobility in Judah, probably about five years after Nabopolassar had declared himself the king of Babylon (620 BC).

Twenty-four years into Josiah's reign (when Daniel was about five years old), the combined armies of Assyria and Egypt successfully repelled attacks by the Babylonian armies of Nabopolassar (616 and 615 BC). However, only a year later, the Medes captured the Assyrian capital of Asshur (614 BC), and only two years after that, the major Assyrian city of Nineveh was also conquered by the Babylonians and the Medes (612 BC). Then, two years after the fall of Nineveh, the Assyrians were driven out of Haran and forced to retreat to the west, across the Euphrates River (610 BC). Daniel, living in Judah, was now about ten years old, and Josiah was in his thirtieth year as king in Jerusalem.

You can see from all this that there are three major players – the Babylonians and the Assyrians to the north and west, and the Egyptians to the south and east. The Egyptians have decided to join with the Assyrians against Babylon. But what about everyone else? What about all the “little” nations—the more insignificant players (including Judah)—that are caught in the middle on that little land bridge that connects Egypt with Mesopotamia? These nations, too, have to decide which political alliances will be best. Should they be pro-Egyptian and therefore pro-Assyrian, or should they just try to stay out of everything – which could amount in the end, to just being pro-Babylonian? There were some in Judah who were pro-Egyptian, but King Josiah disagreed. Apparently, Josiah was worried that if Egypt and the Assyrians came out on top, their power now greatly increased and totally uncontested to the north and to the south of Judah would be worse for Judah than any potential Babylonian threat. One year after the Assyrians were forced to retreat west across the Euphrates River, Pharaoh Neco set out from Egypt with an army and marched north in the hopes of helping the Assyrians to retake Haran. But Josiah doesn't want an Assyrian victory, and so as Pharaoh Neco marched north with his army (certainly not the full might of his entire army, much of which was already joined with the Assyrian armies to the north), Josiah marched out to intercept him. We read about this in 2 Kings chapter 23:

□ **2 Kings 23:29–30** — In [Josiah's] days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him, and Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo, as soon as he saw him. And his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

When Josiah died and Jehoahaz his son was anointed the new king in Jerusalem, Daniel was about eleven years old.

After defeating Josiah, Pharaoh Neco continued his march north, joined his Assyrian allies at Carchemish and attacked the Babylonians, but the attempt to retake Haran failed, and Assyrian power was effectively ended (609 BC). So now it's just the Egyptians and the Babylonians.

The Bible says that “the people of the land” made Jehoahaz king after his father Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Neco. We don't know whether Jehoahaz was really next in line for the throne, but we do know that he was anti-Egyptian, just like his father. He reigned for only three months in Jerusalem before Pharaoh Neco somehow captured him (perhaps by luring him out of

Jerusalem?) and imprisoned him at Riblah. In place of Jehoahaz, Pharaoh Neco set up his brother Eliakim as king in Jerusalem, changed his name to Jehoiakim and required that he pay tribute. So Judah is now an Egyptian “vassal” being ruled by a pro-Egyptian puppet king. When Pharaoh Neco returned to Egypt after his failed attempt to help the Assyrians, he took Jehoahaz with him. We read about these things, too, in 2 Kings 23:

□ **2 Kings 23:31–34** — Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem... Pharaoh Neco put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and laid on the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. And Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away, and he came to Egypt and died there.

The Egyptians had failed to help the Assyrians retake Haran, but they still hoped to keep the Babylonians contained to the east side of the Euphrates River, so they kept a strong military presence at the city of Carchemish. Well, only four years into Jehoiakim’s reign in Jerusalem (when Daniel was about 15 years old), Nabopolassar’s son, Nebuchadnezzar the crown prince of Babylon, *crossed* the Euphrates River and defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish (605 BC). The Egyptian army retreated to Hamath where it was again attacked by Nebuchadnezzar and finally utterly crushed. After that, the Egyptians stayed in their own land, leaving all of the land between Egypt and the Euphrates River (Syria and Palestine) to the Babylonians (cf. 2 Kings 24:7).

So now what were all the smaller nations who lived in this land to do (including Judah)? Assyria was gone. Egypt wasn’t going to be sending any more help. It didn’t take Nebuchadnezzar long to subdue Syria and Palestine and establish his dominance throughout this whole region. When faced with the power and might of the Babylonian army, Jehoiakim was one of those kings who decided it would be best to voluntarily submit to Nebuchadnezzar and become his vassal, sending tribute now to Babylon instead of to Egypt. In this way the city of Jerusalem was spared, and the people of Judah were allowed to continue living in their own land. At least *most* of the people were allowed to continue living in the land. As part of the terms of Judah’s submission, Nebuchadnezzar required not just tribute money, but also that “*some* of the people of Israel, both *of the royal family* and *of the nobility, youths* without blemish... and competent to stand in the king’s palace” be brought to Babylon and instructed in “the literature and language of the Chaldeans” (Dan. 1:3-4). Among these youths whom Nebuchadnezzar carried off from Judah to Babylon (and no doubt from other nations as well) were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (otherwise known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) – all of them probably about fourteen or fifteen years old (Dan. 1:6).

So that’s where Daniel fits in history, and you can see how tiny and insignificant he appears against the backdrop of all these major world events. But now we need to trace the story just a little bit further in order to really get the full picture. It was after Nebuchadnezzar’s defeat of the Egyptians and while he was still campaigning in Syria and Palestine that news reached him of his father’s (Nabopolassar’s) death. So now Nebuchadnezzar had to leave his armies and quickly return to Babylon to take up the throne before returning again to rejoin his armies. Daniel says that it was “Nebuchadnezzar *king* of Babylon” who “came to Jerusalem and besieged it, but

that's likely just because it was that *same* year that Nebuchadnezzar did become the king – even though it was a few months *after* the siege of Jerusalem. We read in 2 Chronicles:

- **2 Chronicles 36:5–7** — Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign [as the puppet king of Pharaoh Neco], and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem... Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon.

Chronicles says that Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim in chains to take him to Babylon. Daniel also implies this same thing (cf. Dan. 1:2). But we also know that Jehoiakim continues to rule in Jerusalem for an additional seven years *after* he was bound in chains. So if Nebuchadnezzar did actually follow through and bring Jehoiakim to Babylon, then we know that he was also returned to Jerusalem to continue ruling no longer as Pharaoh Neco's puppet king but now as the puppet king of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Chron. 33:11-13; Jer. 51:59-64 & 2 Kings 25:3-7).

Jehoiakim continued in submission to Nebuchadnezzar—sending tribute to Babylon—for three years. But then, in 601 BC, Nebuchadnezzar attempted an invasion of Egypt. That invasion failed and he had to retreat back to Babylon in order to regroup. Jehoiakim was so encouraged and emboldened by Nebuchadnezzar's failure that he decided to stop sending tribute to Babylon and switch his allegiance back to Egypt (cf. 2 Kings 24:1). The result was disastrous. Busy with rebuilding his army, Nebuchadnezzar couldn't respond right away (but see 2 Kings 24:2), but a couple of years later (in 598 BC) he did finally set out from Babylon with the purpose of crushing Jehoiakim's rebellion. While Nebuchadnezzar was on his way to Jerusalem, Jehoiakim died and his son Jehoiachin became king. He reigned for only three months before the Babylonians arrived outside the walls of Jerusalem in 597 BC. We read about the siege of Jerusalem and Jehoiachin's surrender in 2 Kings 24:

- **2 Kings 24:10–16** — At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign and carried off all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the LORD, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the LORD had foretold. He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the metal workers, 1,000, all of them strong and fit for war.

For the second time, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were spared, but this time instead of just a few youths from the royal family and the nobility, there are 10,000 Jews taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. When they arrived in Babylon (with the prophet Ezekiel among them) Daniel had already been living in Babylon for about 7 or 8 years and was now about 23 years old.

In the place of Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Mattaniah—Jehoiachin’s uncle and another one of Josiah’s sons—to be his puppet king in Jerusalem and changed his name to Zedekiah. But Zedekiah, too, eventually rebelled against Babylon in league with some other small nation-states such as Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Sidon and Tyre. If the Babylonians came against them, their hope was that Egypt would send help, but in the end, no help ever came. And so we read in 2 Kings chapter twenty-five:

□ **2 Kings 25:1–11** — In the ninth year of [Zedekiah’s] reign [588 BC], in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah [586 BC]. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king’s garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon. In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. And he burned the house of the LORD and the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile.

When this second wave of exiles arrived in Babylon, carrying with them the news of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Daniel had been living in Babylon for about twenty years and was now about 35 years old.

Nebuchadnezzar left a man named Gedaliah to govern the few people that still remained in the land (Gedaliah was the son of an official who had served under the kings Josiah and Jehoiakim; cf Jer. 40:6; 26:22-24; 2 Kings 22:12, 14). But Gedaliah was murdered along with the Babylonian soldiers who were with him and then many of the people fled to Egypt, taking the prophet Jeremiah with them (Jer. 41-43). Five years later (in 581 BC) Nebuzaradan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar’s guard, carried off a third and final group of Jews into exile in Babylon (Jer.

52:28-30). When Daniel saw this last wave of exiles arriving, he was about forty years old and had now been living in Babylon already for nearly 25 years.

The first verse of Daniel is the kind of thing we might read in any textbook of history: “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.” This simple statement is loaded with an assumed much larger historical context. Nebuchadnezzar has just defeated not only the Assyrians, ending their power once and for all, but also the Egyptians. The Babylonians are now an emerging world power. And what is Judah? A vassal state ruled by a puppet king who owed his position as king to the now humiliated Egyptians. Can there really be any doubt about the outcome of Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem? When Jehoiakim surrenders and submits to Nebuchadnezzar—as he certainly must—we could easily attribute this to all the natural laws of politics and military strategy. It was “inevitable.” It was just the result of a series of political and military alliances, of political intrigue and changing allegiances, of strategic battles being fought, of three major world powers competing for dominance and all the rest of the nation-states caught in the middle plotting and fighting for their survival. That’s the history of the textbooks. But in the Scriptures, we have the amazing privilege of seeing *this same history* not just as a story developing randomly or a story developing according to certain “natural laws,” but a story developing according to the sovereign purposes and plans of God. That’s going to be one of the main themes in Daniel – and what a wonderful and comforting theme this is. After this opening statement in verse one—“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it”—we read in verse two:

II. Daniel 1:2a — And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...

“And *the Lord gave* Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...” On the one hand, this assumes that the Lord could have worked a miracle and kept Jehoiakim from having to submit to the Babylonians and pay tribute. On the other hand, this also assumes that in all the affairs of the world powers—of Assyria, of Egypt, of Babylon—and of all the smaller nations surrounding Judah, it was God who was behind *everything* and guiding *everything*, working *all things* according to His purpose and will. Therefore, it was not ultimately because of Nebuchadnezzar’s far superior military might that Jehoiakim was forced to become his puppet king (as a textbook history might imply), but rather because “*the Lord gave* Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.”

Daniel doesn’t say that *Yahweh* gave Jehoiakim into his hand, but rather that “the Lord (*Adonai*) gave Jehoiakim... into his hand.” *Yahweh* is the personal covenant name of the God of Israel, but *Adonai* is a title emphasizing God’s sovereign ownership and control of *all the nations of the earth*. It was not ultimately because of the overwhelming power of the Babylonian armies that Jehoiakim was forced to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, but rather because “the Lord [*Adonai*, the one who is sovereign over all the affairs of men and nations] *gave him*” into his hands.

When we think of Israel’s exile, we usually think of punishment and wrath coming upon Israel because of their sin – and it’s right for us to think of this. That exile is the result of Israel’s sin is always *assumed* in Daniel (cf. Dan. 9:1-19). And yet, in the book of Daniel, it’s not exile as punishment for sin that’s being emphasized, but rather exile as a divinely *intended* prelude to

redemption. When we truly understand the sovereignty of God, we will have to see that exile, as horrible as it is and as connected as it is with human depravity and sin is actually just another step in the progress of God's wonderful, saving, redeeming work.

When Daniel says that “the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand,” there's a huge tension here, because this is really the same thing as to say that the Lord sent Daniel into exile to Babylon – or even that the Lord gave Daniel into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. But Daniel's exile wasn't the result of his own personal sin or because he himself had been unfaithful to the covenant. Daniel was one of those people living in Judah who even as a very young man was faithful to the Lord, keeping his covenant. So how was Daniel to explain his own participation in the exile of his people? How was he to make sense of this? The solution was not to be found in his own rebellion, but rather—in the end—in God's continuing promises to him of salvation and redemption. Daniel is still a sinner. He still needs God's salvation. And this exile, he believes and knows, is just a further step in God's plan to bring to him—and to bring to all of God's people—that salvation. The meaning of exile was not just God's wrath poured out upon his rebellious people. Even as death, in the Bible, becomes the prelude to resurrection, so also exile, in the Bible, becomes the prelude to a restoration that ushers in a future far greater and far more glorious than the past. It's in this light that we're meant to read and truly understand these words: “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...”

Daniel continues in the second half of verse two:

III. Daniel 1:2b — ...with some of the vessels of the house of (the) God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

What we see here, again, is that the emphasis is not on exile as punishment for sin, but rather on exile as the promise and the guarantee of God's salvation. Daniel does something unique here: he adds the Hebrew article “*the*” before the word for God, *Elohim* – “*the* God.” Daniel uses this particular word for God (*Elohim*) only five times (3x's in chapter one and 2x's in chapter nine) and every time he adds the article – “*the* God.” Why does Daniel do this? “*The* God” is Daniel's way of identifying *which* God – namely, the only true God, the only Lord who is sovereign over all the nations and their so-called “gods.” So notice the contrast in verse two between “*the* God” and “*his* god.”

“The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand with some of the vessels of the house of **(the) God** [not “his God”]. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of **his god**, and placed the vessels in the treasury of **his god**.”

And why does Nebuchadnezzar bring the vessels of the house of “the God” into the house of “his god”? This was a way of asserting the superiority of his god over all of the gods of his conquered enemies. This is a recognition that even as the Lord (*Adonai*) was giving Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, Nebuchadnezzar was arrogantly declaring his own superiority and the superiority of “his god” over “the God” – the only true and living God.

Notice that Daniel doesn't say that Nebuchadnezzar brought the vessels to *Babylon*. This would have been the most natural and the most "textbook" thing to say. Instead, we read that Nebuchadnezzar brought the vessels to "the land of Shinar." Once again, this isn't just a historical fact; it's the inspired interpretation of a real, historical fact. The place-name "Shinar" appears only seven other times in the Old Testament. We read in Genesis chapter eleven:

- **Genesis 11:1–4** — Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

Shinar was originally the place where man in his arrogance sought to make a name for himself as the one who could even manipulate and control the gods who lived in the heavens. Shinar was originally the place of man's united rebellion against the one true God. And so the word "Shinar" came to be synonymous with wicked mankind gathered together against God—the seed of the serpent at war with the seed of the woman. Zechariah was a prophet who ministered twenty years after the death of Daniel. Listen to him describe a vision that he saw in Zechariah chapter five:

- **Zechariah 5:5–11** — Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, "Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out." And I said, "What is it?" He said, "This is the basket that is going out." And he said, "This is their iniquity in all the land." And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket! And he said, "This is Wickedness." And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening. Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward! The wind was in their wings. They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they taking the basket?" He said to me, "To the land of Shinar, to build a house for it."

When Daniel writes about the exile, he describes it as an arrogant assault of wicked men upon the only true and living God, the Lord of heaven and earth. At the same time, when Daniel writes about the exile he says that it is the Lord (*Adonai*) Himself who *gave* Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. "**The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand** with some of the vessels of the house of (*the*) God. And he brought them to the land of *Shinar*, to the house of *his god*, and *placed the vessels in the treasury of his god*." Do you feel inside you what this must mean? Let's skip ahead now to the very last verse of chapter one:

IV. Daniel 1:21 — And Daniel was there [in Babylon] until the first year of King Cyrus.

We know from chapter ten that Daniel was actually living in Babylon until at least the *third* year of Cyrus king of Persia (10:1). So why does chapter one conclude by saying that he was there until the *first* year of King Cyrus? We read in 2 Chronicles chapter 36:

- **2 Chronicles 36:22–23** — Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”

The introduction to the book of Daniel begins with the third year of Jehoiakim (exile and death) and ends with the first year of King Cyrus (restoration and resurrection; cf. the conclusion of Daniel with the promise of an eschatological resurrection and the final, ultimate end of exile [Dan. 12:1-3, 13]). What does this mean? It means that Daniel sees even in the exile—even in *his own* exile—a sovereign God *actively, faithfully* working out His plan for the salvation of his people. It means that with eyes of faith, Daniel was able to see that even death itself is only the prelude to resurrection – to a future far greater and far more glorious than the past. It means that Daniel was able to see the truth of what the Apostle Paul would say 600 years later when God had already begun the work of gathering and restoring His people:

- **Romans 8:28** — And *we know* that for those who love God *all things* work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

All things work together in the end – even exile, even all the affairs of men and nations gathered together in rebellion against God, even death – for our final salvation. Brothers and sisters, I pray that you will be comforted in this knowledge today and every day. I pray that even as it did Daniel, this knowledge will encourage us to remain steadfast and faithful to the Lord all our days – until our exile is finally, ultimately ended in everlasting, resurrection life (cf. Dan. 12:1-3, 13).







