

Daniel 02 – Why Daniel Went to Babylon

Dr. Leon L. Sanders
Daniel 1:1-7

Prologue: Early Iron Age 1200-800 BC: Struggling with Change

- During Bronze Age, iron difficult to find and hard to work; however, during the latter years of the LBA Dark Ages plentiful sources of iron were located and smelting technology developed
 - Iron treated with carbon was stronger and more durable than bronze
 - Iron weapons did not require large central governments to import and make
 - Small bands, tribes and governments could easily make their own weapons; it is probable the Sea Peoples had iron weapons
 - From 800-200 BC new nations began emerging from the disarray of LBA empires
 - Israel was absorbed by a re-strengthened Assyria due to idolatry (722 BC)
 - Judah was led into captivity by Neo Babylonian kingdom; also for idolatry but temporarily due to God's Davidic Covenant (598 to 587-526 BC) (Isa 7:12-13)

Prologue: Punished and Protected: Judah's Blessing of Captivity

- As the Iron Age began, Gentiles were again forming strong nations, God both protected and punished His people
 - Israel and Judah were punished for their idolatry, rejection of God, which removed them as political entities and thus prey for these new kingdoms
 - Israel never regained her political identity; but Judah returned as a political entity but always under a Gentile government, this protected but infuriated her
- Judah sandwiched between the retiring Bronze Age and early Iron Age
 - Jews had been a political, religious entity for a millennium, influencing many
 - God allows Satan to develop world powers, He will raise the Seed in humility; Satan's plan will come to naught, Christ's Gospel survives eternally (Jn 9:1-5, Mt 21:1-4)
 - Daniel would write of those coming changes; both near and far views

Prologue: Daniel: Faithfulness in Midst of Unfaithfulness

- Iron Age coincided with the Axial Age, development of religions based less on societal membership and more on personal responsibility
 - God's Moral Law influenced nations that encountered the Jews, such as the Queen of Sheba (1K 10:1-10; 2Ch 1:10-16; 12:9-42)
 - During this period God begins revealing His Messiah who will come to save with His New Covenant, a personal relationship with God hitherto unknown: Isaiah
- Daniel was taken from his home, his nation and his Temple and thrust into the very heart of unfaithfulness
 - Daniel consistently demonstrated faithfulness in the face of faithlessness
 - His testimony condemns both the Jews of his day who embraced Babylonian culture and those who returned but turned Judaism into a business of greed
 - Daniel's message: Satan's faithless NWO **defeated** by Christ's faithful Gospel

Jews Disobeyed Despite God's Warning of Diaspora

- God warned the Jews multiple times of their impending doom **when** they proved themselves unfaithful (De 27:26; 28:47-52)
 - God warned them not to return to Egypt for horses and LBA military technology (chariots): Solomon ignored, becoming an arms dealer (De 17:16; 1K 10:24; 2K 23:29; 1Ch 17:15)
 - God warned them not to go to Egypt for wives: Solomon ignored (De 17:17)
 - God told them not to amass too many riches: Solomon ignored (De 17:17)
 - God told them not to return to Egypt ever: Solomon ignored (De 17:18)
- Solomon led Judah into disobedience despite gift of wisdom (1K 11:1-8)
 - Solomon had many foreign treaty wives, including Egyptian (1K 11:1-4)
 - Solomon had great wealth, great wisdom and great pride (1K 10:23-25; 21)
 - Solomon's heart turned from God to idolatry legitimizing sins in Israel (1K 11:4-13)

Hebrews the Least of Peoples: Vied to be the Greatest

- God deliberately chose the Hebrews as they were the fewest of all peoples in order for them to rest in His grace rather than in works-pride (De 7:7; 10:1; 12:1-29)
 - Israel/Judah became confused thinking they were able to compete with Satan's strong forces rather than rest in the Lord; lesson still not learned (Jer 1:10-13)
 - God had shown them through their history that His glory was manifested through their weaknesses; their strength led to pride and sin (Jer 1:10-13; 10:1-13)
 - Example: Gideon was he was the least of all men to lead the people but chosen of God; then he became prideful leading them into sin (Jud 7:8-24; 25)
 - Example: David was a small teen facing giant Goliath (splendid) yet God gave David victory; later in his pride he publicly sinned with Bathsheba (2Sa 11:1-12)
 - Example: Rejected humble Messiah, plotted His death; they sought Conquering Messiah to make **them** masters of the world; no New Covenant (Is 52:14; 14:32-44)

Daniel's World

- Regional conflicts reshaped Daniel's world
- Medes-Babylonians ally to destroy Assyria
- Egypt reasserts hegemony in the Levant
- Judah intrudes without any guidance from God
- Babylon battles Egypt: to win Levant hegemony
- Judah enters captivity



God Finishes With Assyria: Brings in the Chaldeans – Babylonians

- Medes-Babylonians besiege and eventually sack Nineveh, chief city of Assyria; king of Assyria dies in flames of palace; Babylon annexes Assyrian territory (To victor go the spoils adage) ^(Isaiah)
 - However, a remnant of the army escapes to Karan and asks Egypt for help when pursued by Nebuchadnezzar, Crown Prince, two years later; defeated and forced to flee to Carchemish
 - Assyrian force again begs Egypt for help; with a new pharaoh, Necho II, Egypt agrees to help to gain the Levant as payment
 - Necho II defeats Nebuchadnezzar at First Battle of Carchemish ^(Jeremiah)
 - Necho II and Nebuchadnezzar war of Carchemish three years later; Necho loses
 - After being crowned king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar seeks to secure Levant; Judah aligns with Egypt despite Jeremiah's warning to accept captivity; Why?

Hezekiah: Good King Gone Prideful

- Hezekiah was a relatively good king of Judah, 715-686 BC, when Assyria and Egypt were both asserting hegemony over Levant and threatening minor kingdoms with destruction for tribute and allegiance
 - Sennacherib (705-681 BC) threatened Jerusalem's destruction ^(Isaiah)
 - Hezekiah turns to Isaiah for God's guidance; Isaiah said Jerusalem will not be touched but Sennacherib would return to Nineveh and die; occurred ^(Isaiah)
 - Later, Isaiah told Hezekiah of his coming death due to infection; Hezekiah prays for life and God answers him; Isaiah heals through a poultice (Medicine) ^(Isaiah)
 - Meredach-baladan, king of Babylon, sends an envoy with gifts celebrating the recovery of Hezekiah (Beware of Greeks bearing gifts) ^(Isaiah)
 - Hezekiah shows envoys Judah's treasures which they will remember when they control the region; Isaiah chastens him, Hezekiah blasé as he will have peace

Manasseh: Bad King Got Saved {For Sins of...}

- Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, caused Judah to sin greatly though he repented and was saved before his death when carried captive to Babylon by the Assyrians; later returned as vassal (2K 21:1-18; 2Ch 33:1-18)
 - People worshipped Baal, hosts of heavens including sun and moon, on heights
 - Asherah within the Temple
 - Male cult prostitution also within the Temple though God specifically forbade sons and daughters to practice cult prostitution (2K 23:17)
 - Sacrificed his son which was forbidden (2K 18:21)
 - Consulted mediums and necromancers which was forbidden (2K 18:21)
 - Killed many who spoke against these practices
 - His repentance displayed God's grace but did not reverse Judah's fate

Josiah: Good King Gone Stupid

- Josiah (640-609 BC) instituted Deuteronomistic reforms even having the Law read to him as required (2K 17:16-22; 2K 22:1-2)
 - Josiah restored the Passover, not fully performed since the days of the judges to include days of David and Solomon (Jubilee and Tabernacles) (2K 23:21-23)
 - His reforms were coupled with zeal but not good hermeneutics
 - As Necho II was going to Carchemish the first time, Josiah went to meet him in battle at Megiddo for NO apparent reason (2K 23:29-32)
 - When Necho II was returning to Egypt in victory he took tribute of Jerusalem and placed his vassal on the throne: Jehoiakim, son of Josiah; he was evil (2K 23:33-35)
 - Perhaps Josiah saw himself as the righter of wrongs and believed it was his duty to wage war against God's enemy, Egypt; He had no direction from God and thus no support no matter how well intended (Food for Thought) (2Ch 35:20-47)

Nebuchadnezzar Pursues Necho II from Carchemish victory

- Nebuchadnezzar defeats Necho II at the Second Battle of Carchemish, wins and pursues him to Egypt but hears of Nabopolassar's death (605), his father; he hurries home to receive the crown and prevent rebellions (2K 46:1-17)
 - To present himself as a strong king he stops at Jerusalem to plunder the city since the Babylonians remember the riches Hezekiah showed them (Grand Procession)
 - Jehoiakim died and his son, Jehoiachin, reigns agreeing to become Babylon's vassal (2K 24:1-17)
 - Nebuchadnezzar carries off: Temple treasures, Jehoiachin with his officials and family, military forces stationed in Jerusalem and many of the nobles and craftsmen; this includes Daniel (2K 24:15-16)
 - Jehoiachin's uncle was made king and his name was changed from Mattaniah to Zedekiah (2K 24:17)

Israel Warned of Captivity by Nation with Strange Tongue (Isa 26:47-52; Ac 23-25)

- Tongues were a sign of coming judgment of God on the Jews
 - When Solomon dedicated the Temple, he asked God to hear His people when they were carried into captivity if they repented; then God would hear their plea bringing them back again to Jerusalem, to His Temple (1 Ki 8:46-52; 1 Ki 9)
 - God warned Solomon that if he and his future descendants sinned then God would throw away the Temple; all would know it occurred because the Jews rejected God (1 Ki 9:7-9)
 - God fulfilled His promise that He would cast off Jerusalem in response to their continual embracing the world: Mt Ebal (De 27:13-26; Jos 23:26-27)
 - Good or Evil, Judah's kings and her people brought this punishment on themselves: Proving the need for a Messiah from God as people refused to fail

Daniel: Life in Shinar (Country of Two Rivers)

- The book of Daniel opens with an implied indignity though tactfully given
 - Common practice of the day to bring foreign talent into the court strengthening one's monarchy
 - However, to prevent any dreams of dynastic usurpation, the men were made eunuchs which made them more docile and less inclined to produce heirs
 - Daniel and the other captives were placed under the control of Ashpenaz, chief of the Eunuchs, it is probable that the boys/men were also made the same
 - Daniel was probably among the sons of the nobles since there is no hint that he was of the line of David
 - Ashpenaz was to ensure these young men were trained in Babylonian language and learning as Nebuchadnezzar would inspect and select them for duties he believed they were fit to perform

Daniel's Friends: What Were Their Names?

- Most people do not know the Jewish names of Daniel's faithful friends but all were from tribe of Judah (Hence comes the label: Jews)
 - Daniel (God is my judge) - Belshazzar (Lord of the narrow treasure) (Je 1:13-14)
 - Hananiah (God has favored) - Shadrach (Great scribe)
 - Michael (Who is like God) - Meshach (Guest of the king)
 - Azariah (Jehovah has helped) - Abednego (Slave of Nebo/Nabu (God of writing and denounced by Isaiah)) (Is 46:1)
- These are probably titles, denoting difference between their Jewish lives and current lives in Babylon
 - Why were these four young men compliant?
 - Why did they not seek vengeance as their descendants under Rome?

Habakkuk: Judgment is Coming – Live by Faith

- Habakkuk (Embrace) was contemporary with Jeremiah (Whom Jehovah has appointed) who inquired of God how He could bear Judah's sins (Hab 1)
- God informed Habakkuk that He was raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to chasten Judah
- Habakkuk horrified God would use more sinful people as judgment
- God was going to give the people what they wanted: Abrahamic idolatry (Hab 2:1-20, Ro 1:18-23)
- Habakkuk knew Babylonians would believe themselves responsible for victory
- Habakkuk waited on God to more fully instruct him: Just/Righteous shall live by faith regardless of their situation (Hab 2:1-4, Ro 1:17)
- God informed him the Chaldeans will answer for their sin and not submitting to God when they heard truth: Jeremiah and Daniel (Hab 2:4-20)

Jeremiah: Judgment is Coming – Do not Resist

- Jeremiah (Whom Jehovah has appointed) spent most of his prophetic ministry telling Judah to acquiesce to the coming judgment God has apportioned to them through Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 20-22)
- If Zedekiah had repented and followed God, there would have been no further deportations and future generations would have sat on David's throne including Joseph, step-father of Jesus, crown prince Messiah (Jer 1:1-17)
- Vision of Figs: Basket of bad figs are those who resist God's judgment; both those who resist Nebuchadnezzar and those who flee to Egypt: Basket of Good Figs are those who go into captivity and do not rebel, they will return (Jer 24)
- Jeremiah tells the coalition of rebellious vassal kings that Nebuchadnezzar is guided by God: do not heed lying prophets who speak of Egyptian victory (Jer 27)
- Many of Judah's wealthy flee to Egypt dragging Jeremiah with them against his will and against God's expressed command demonstrating their rebellion (Jer 43)

Epilogue: Daniel's World

- Regional conflicts reshaped Daniel's world
- Medes-Babylonians ally to destroy Assyria
- Egypt reasserts hegemony in the Levant
- Judah intrudes without any guidance from God
- Babylon battles Egypt; to win Levant hegemony
- Judah enters captivity



Epilogue: Jews Disobeyed Despite God's Warning of Diaspora

- God warned the Jews multiple times of their impending doom **when** they proved themselves unfaithful (De 27:26, 28:47-51)
 - God warned them **not** to return to Egypt for horses and LBA military technology (chariots): **Solomon ignored** becoming an arms dealer (De 17:16, 18:10-24, 28:29, 30:1, 28:15)
 - God warned them **not** to go to Egypt for wives: **Solomon ignored** (De 17:17)
 - God told them **not** to amass to many riches: **Solomon ignored** (De 17:17)
 - God told them **not** to return to Egypt ever: **Solomon ignored** (De 17:16)
- Solomon led Judah into disobedience despite gift of wisdom (1Ki 11:1-46)
 - Solomon had many foreign treaty wives, including Egyptian (1Ki 11:1-8)
 - Solomon had great wealth, great wisdom and great pride (1Ki 10:23-25, 27)
 - Solomon's heart turned from God to idolatry legitimizing sins in Israel (1Ki 11:4-18)

Epilogue: Israel Warned of Captivity by Nation with Strange Tongue

(De 28:47-52; Ac 23-25)

- Tongues were a sign of coming judgment of God on the Jews
 - When Solomon dedicated the Temple, he asked God to hear His people when they **were** carried into captivity if they repented; then God would hear their plea bringing them back again to Jerusalem, to His Temple (1Ki 8:44-53, 55)
 - God warned Solomon that if **he** and **his** future descendants sinned then God would throw away the Temple; all would know it occurred because the Jews rejected God (1Ki 9:1-5)
 - God fulfilled His promise that He would cast off Jerusalem in response to their continual embracing the world: Mt Ebal (De 27:13-26, 28:33-35, 37)
 - Good or Evil, Judah's kings **and** her people brought this punishment on themselves: Proving the need for a Messiah from God as people **always** fail

Christians Learned Little: Seek to be Powerful in the World

- Christian doctrine was hijacked early on by Christendom (Works-based churches) which commit the **same** errors as Judah
 - Seek to compete against major powers to control the world (for God)
 - Ignore biblical doctrine leading in favor of own understanding
 - Seek to impose Christian values, morality, by force which is **not** biblical
 - Christians enthralled with military despite its expense in treasure, blood and failure
 - America has been just as guilty of genocide in the 20th century as those it fought against; public education has buried this from most people
 - Christians need to adopt the same attitude as Jeremiah and Habakkuk told Judah: Trouble is coming; accept God's judgment and live by faith in Him alone