

"THE BOOK OF DANIEL"

Introduction To Daniel:

1. One of the more fascinating books of the Bible is the book of Daniel...

a. The first six chapters contain accounts of faith that inspire both young and old.

b. The last six chapters are filled with apocalyptic visions that challenge even the most advanced Bible students and scholars.

2. It is a book that has often been attacked and abused...

a. Attacked by liberals who deny its inspiration.

b. Abused by many who have taken its visions out of context to support all kinds of wild theories concerning the second coming of Christ.

3. But when properly read and understood, the book of Daniel can...

a. Inspire us to greater faithfulness in our service to God...

b. Strengthen our faith in the inspiration of the Bible.

[In this lesson, we shall introduce the book and look at it as whole, beginning with what we know of ...]

I. DANIEL AND HIS TIMES

A. The Man...

1. The name "Daniel" means "God is my judge"

2. He was a person of deep and abiding faith.

a. As a youth, he purposed not to defile himself - Daniel 1:8

Daniel 1:8 “But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.” (ESV)

b. When old, he persisted in serving God despite threats against his life - Daniel 6:10

Daniel 6:10 “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.” (ESV)

3. God blessed Daniel because of his faith
a. He rose to great heights in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia - Daniel 2:48; 6:1-3.

Daniel 2:48 “Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.”

Daniel 6:1-3 “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.” (ESV)

b. He served as a statesman, a counselor to kings, and a prophet of God.

4. Daniel was contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

a. Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem before and during the Babylonian exile (626-528 B.C.)

b. Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon among the exiles (592-570 B.C.)

c. Daniel prophesied in the capital of Babylon (605-586 B.C.)

5. Nothing is known of his personal life outside of the book.

a. He descended from one of Judah's prominent families, if not from royal blood - Daniel 1:3

Daniel 1:3 “Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility,”

b. At an early age (12-18) he was taken from his family to be trained in the courts of Babylon - Daniel 1:3-4

Daniel 1:3-4 “Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.”

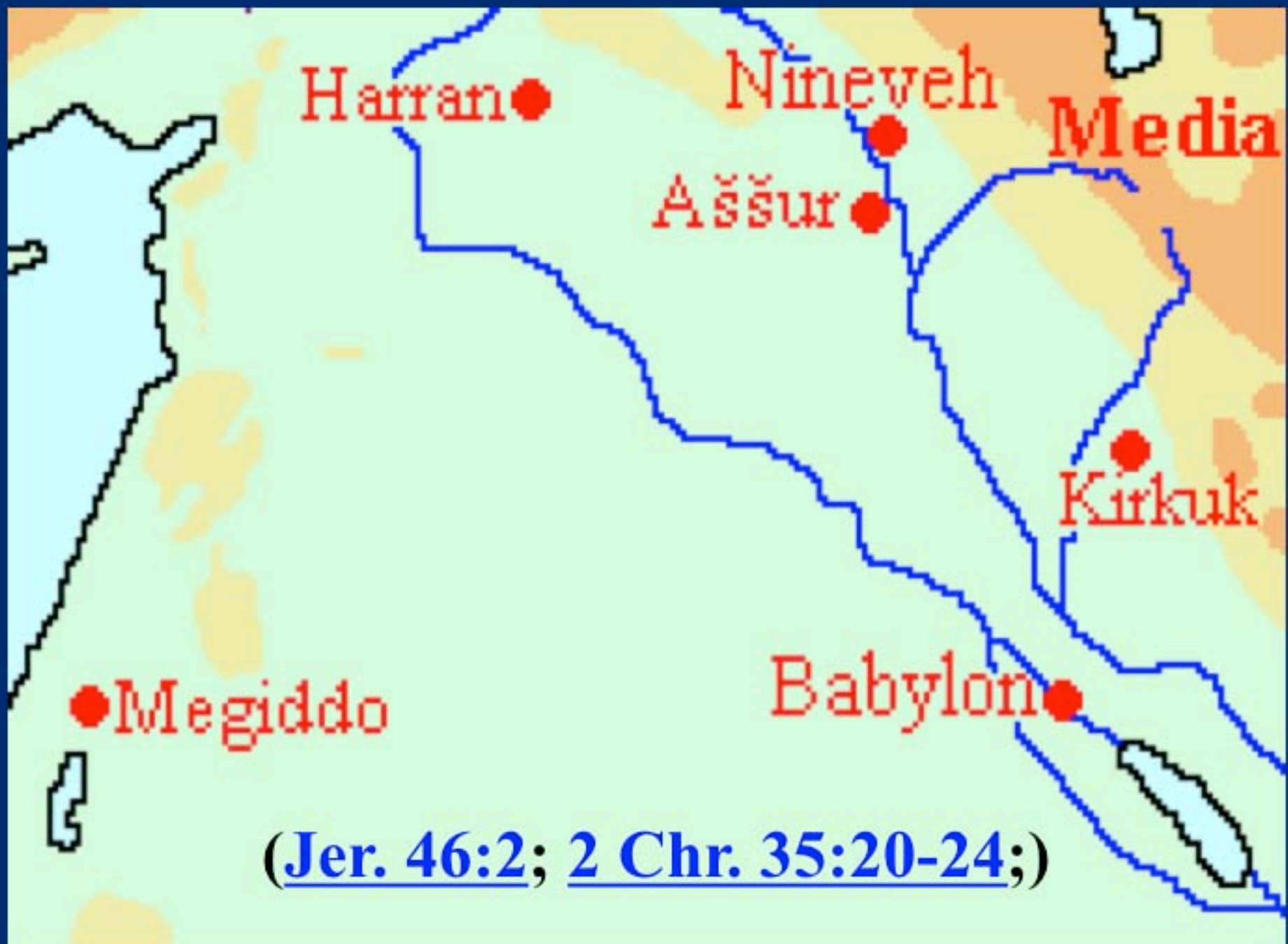
c. Whether he ever married is uncertain.

B. THE TIME IN WHICH HE LIVED...

1. Some key dates to remember a. 612 B.C. - Fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria

a) Assyria had ruled the world since the days of Tiglath-Pileser (845 B.C.)

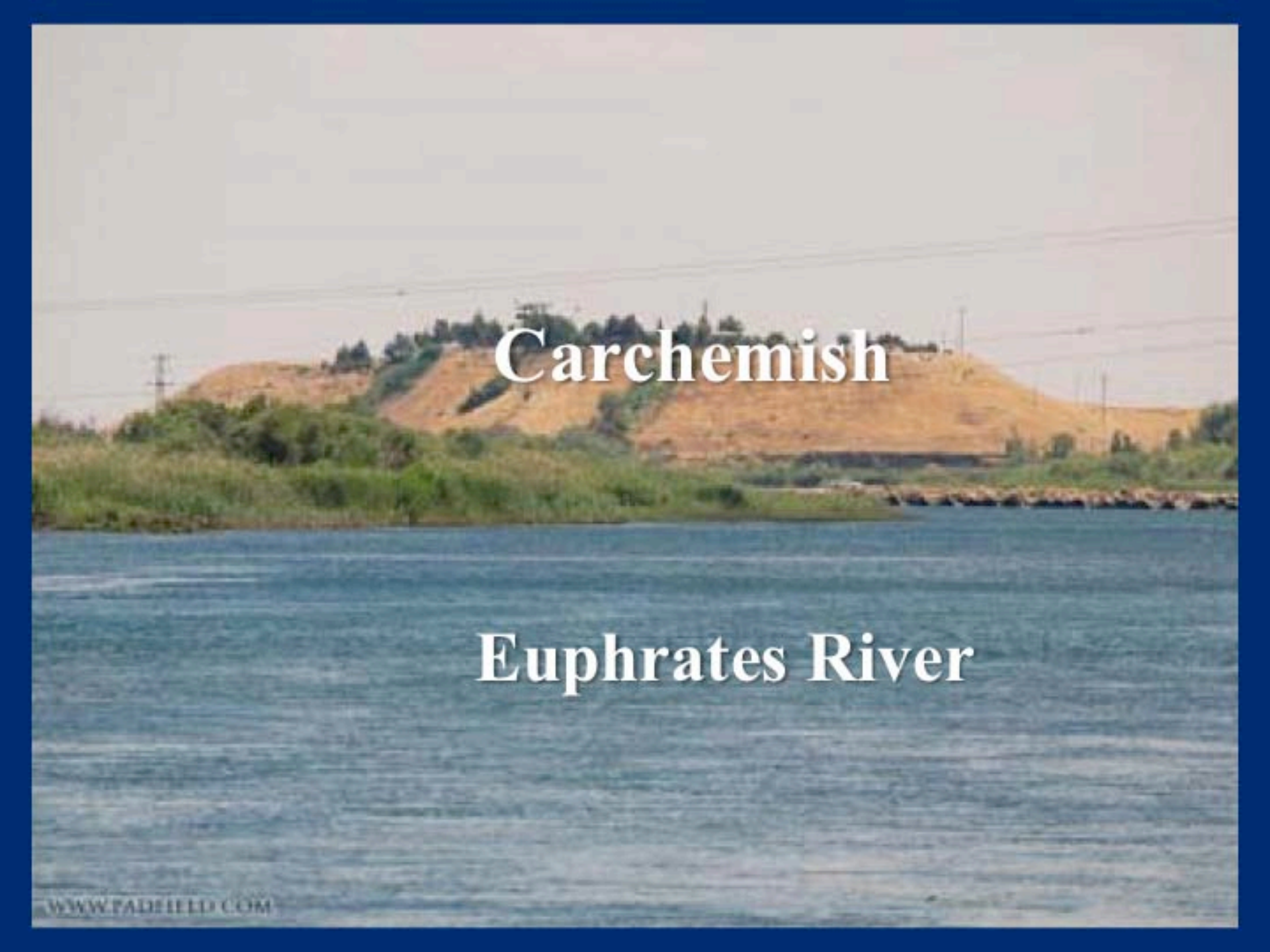
b) Nabopolassar came to the throne in Babylon and rebelled against the Assyrians in 625 B.C.



c) Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, was the general who led the Babylonian army against Nineveh, defeating it in 612 B.C.

b. 605 B.C. - Battle of Carchemish, establishing Babylonian domination

1) Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt came to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish



Carchemish

Euphrates River

This following prophecy was given in 586 BCE and was fulfilled beginning in 569 BCE.

Ezekiel 29:12 “And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. 13 Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: 14 And I will bring again the

captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. 15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.”

At the Battle of Carchemish Babylon became master of the Middle East for almost a century and began the fulfillment of Ezekiel's amazing forecast of Egyptian history..

Before the battle of Carchemish, Egypt had been for more than 1500 years the greatest power in North Africa and was the power in the Middle East. The Battle of Carchemish was the end of the Assyrian Empire, and Egypt was reduced to a second-rate power. Ezekiel prophesied, one year before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 585 BCE, that the main castes of Egypt would be taken captive by the Babylonians and then restored forty years later. But Egypt would be the "basest" of nations from that time. This was a result of the Battle of Carchemish. Egypt would lose sovereignty and self rule from circa 580 BCE to 1955 AD. They would be successively ruled over by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks and the British until the end of the mandate in 1955 when self rule was restored.

2) Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians, chasing them South through Judah

3) At Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death; he returned to assume the throne in Babylon

4) The first group of Jewish captives were taken, along with Daniel and his friends - Daniel 1:1-4

Daniel 1:1-4 “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of 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. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch,

to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.” (ESV)

c. 597 B.C. - A second remnant taken to Babylon

1) Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) followed the reign of his father, Jehoiakim.

2) He lasted just three months, when Nebuchadnezzar took him and 10,000 Jews to Babylon - 2Kings 24:8-16

2 Kings 24:8-16 "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His

mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 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.”

3) This second group of captives included Ezekiel – Ezekiel 1:1-3

Ezekiel 1:1-3 “In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin), the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Chebar canal, and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.”

d. 586 B.C. - Fall of Jerusalem and the temple destroyed

1) Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem, but was weak and vacillating

2) Eleven years later, Jerusalem was totally devastated by Babylonian forces - 2Kings 25:1-10

3) A third group was taken into Babylonian captivity, but Jeremiah was among those who stayed behind - 2Kings 25:11-12,22; Jeremiah 39:11-14; 40:1-6;

e. 536 B.C. - The first remnant returns to Jerusalem

1) Babylon falls in 539 B.C.

2) Cyrus, king of Persia, sends the first remnant back under the leadership of Zerubbabel - Ezra 1:1-5; 2:1-2

3) The foundation of the temple was soon started, but the temple was not completed until 516 B.C. - Ezra 3:8-13; 6:14-16;

f. 457 B.C. - A second remnant returns to Jerusalem

**1) Ezra the priest returns with this group
- Ezra 7:1-8:36**

**2) He leads a much-needed revival - Ezra
9:1-10:44**

g. 444 B.C. - A third remnant returns to Jerusalem

**1) This group is led by Nehemiah -
Nehemiah 1:1-2:20**

**2) Under his leadership, the walls of
Jerusalem are rebuilt - Nehemiah
3:1-7:73**

**3) Together with Ezra, they restore much
of the religion - Nehemiah 8:1-13:31**

2. Daniel lived through much of these times (605-534 B.C.)

a. He was among the first group of captives taken to Babylon - Daniel 1:1-4

b. He continued there over the entire 70 years of captivity - Daniel 1:21; 10:1; cf. Daniel 9:1-2; Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10

Daniel 1:21 “And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.”

Daniel was certainly a remarkable man. His greatness was recognized by his contemporary, Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14,20; 28:3).

Ezekiel 14:14 “even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD.”

Daniel is the one book in the Old Testament which repeatedly speaks of "the time of the end."

It is preeminently a book for the "latter days," as Christ recognized when He exhorted those watching for His coming to understand Daniel the prophet.

Matthew 24:15 “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),”

Mark 13:14 “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” **(ESV)**

Prayer Time

