

## MAILBOX BIBLE COURSE

### WELCOME PAGE

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We suggest that you try to do one lesson each week. This will keep your interest in them active. We send all lessons in plain text, or PDF which is much better to print. If you cannot receive them in this format then write me and I will mail it to you

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### THE PROPHET DANIEL

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### INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

The prophet Daniel was born in the royal family in Judea about the year 620 Before Christ. His name means God is my Judge. The word judge in the Old Testament often means the one who will prove that a man is right when others say he is wrong. In this way God was Daniel's Friend.

Daniel was a captive in Babylon and still a young man when he became famous for his wisdom and his good life. Ezekiel was another prophet of God living in Babylon about the same time and by the Holy Spirit he spoke of Daniel as being very wise; and he named Daniel along with Noah and Job as three righteous men, Ezekiel 14.14,20; 28.3.

Daniel also was a servant of God, and the LORD, the God of heaven, gave him great revelations of things future. Daniel learned many details about kings who were not yet born, and empires to be built in the future. Many men today do not believe that anyone could know the future, so they say that someone wrote the book of Daniel *after* these things happened. But the Lord Jesus Christ called Daniel the prophet, Matthew 24.15; Mark 13.14. This proves that Daniel was real and that God really showed him all these things in advance. After all, God knows all things, past, present and future, Isaiah 46.10.

The Holy Spirit led men of God to write the New Testament in the Greek language, and the Old Testament in the Hebrew language. However Daniel wrote part of his book in the Aramaic language, which is very much like Hebrew. In fact, the Jews spoke Aramaic in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no doubt the Lord Himself used this language when He spoke to the people. Daniel used Aramaic because it was well known in Babylon, for most of chapters 2 to 7.

The first half of the book of Daniel contains the record of six great events in the city of Babylon. The second half tells us about the revelations which God gave to His faithful servant.

- 1 Daniel in Babylon
- 2 Nebuchadnezzar's dream
- 3 The image and the furnace
- 4 Nebuchadnezzar turned to God.
- 5 Belshazzar's feast
- 6 Daniel and the lions
  
- 7 The four wild animals
- 8 The ram and the goat
- 9 The seventy weeks
- 10,11 The great struggle
- 12 The time of the end

### LESSON 1

### DANIEL IN BABYLON

This chapter starts with the great king Nebuchadnezzar and tells how Daniel came to be near him.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's purpose, vs. 1-7
2. Daniel's purpose, vs.8-21

#### 1. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PURPOSE, 1.1-7

The Holy Spirit teaches us one great lesson in this book: that God has a great purpose and He will surely fulfill it. Here Nebuchadnezzar was doing God's will while he thought that he was working out his own purposes.

**1** Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his great armies. Jehoiakim was a

son of the last good king of Judah, Josiah, but he was like his two brothers and his son who ruled after Josiah, they were all wicked men.

**2** Nebuchadnezzar was able to defeat Jehoiakim and conquer the city which God long before chose as the place for His temple. Nebuchadnezzar took some of the holy objects, silver and gold, from the temple. This was an insult to the God of Israel, still more so when Nebuchadnezzar gave these things as a gift to his own god in Babylon.

Why did the God of heaven allow him to do this? The LORD promised to watch over Jerusalem, to honor the temple with His name and His presence, and to keep David's descendants on the throne forever, 2 Samuel 7.16; 2 chronicles 6.6; Psalm 87.2. But He warned the people hundreds of times that He would punish them if they did not obey His laws and His prophets.

It is remarkable that three of God's greatest prophets all lived about this time:

**Jeremiah** lived in Jerusalem and gave God's last messages to the sinful people and kings;

**Ezekiel** was a captive of Nebuchadnezzar living in Babylon, who also sent messages to those Jews still in Jerusalem, and received God's warnings of great trouble ahead and His promises for Israel's wonderful future;

**Daniel** who gives us many more details of Israel's trouble and the glory yet to come.

From this chart you will see that Daniel went to Babylon with the first captivity, Ezekiel with the second. Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem even at the time of the third and final captivity, but Nebuchadnezzar allowed him to stay there, Jeremiah 39.11,12; 40.4.

| <b>3 PROPHETS</b>      | <b>3 CAPTIVITY</b> | <b>5 KINGS OF JUDAH</b>              | <b>4 KINGS IN BABYLON</b>   |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Jeremiah, 626-587<br>J | Josiah 640-609     | Jehoahaz, 609                        |   |
| Daniel, 605-539        | first              | Jehoiakim, 609-597                   | Nebuchadnezzar,<br>605-562  |
| Ezekiel 592-570        | second<br>third    | Jehoiachin, 597<br>Zedekiah, 597-587 | Belshazzar, 562-539<br>Darius the Mede<br>Cyrus <b>the Persian</b> ,<br>539-530 |

We shall see that Daniel continued to live to the third year of King Cyrus, and to prosper, v.21; 6.28; 10.1.

**3** Nebuchadnezzar had another plan: he wanted to get the benefit of the smart young men among his captives. So he ordered one of his officers to bring some of the Israelite young men who were members of the king's family. These were not children, although Jeremiah called himself a child when the LORD called him, Jeremiah 1.6. The word child may mean young man.

**4** Ashpenaz was to choose those who were handsome and able to learn quickly. They would come right into the palace of the king and learn the language and the science of the Babylonians. Moses long ago learned the wisdom of Egypt, Acts 7.22. He was also an Israelite who came to be very important in a foreign land. Like Moses, Daniel did not accept the religion of the land in which he lived, he continued to follow the Lord GOD of Israel.

**5** Nebuchadnezzar wanted these young men to spend their time serving him, so he provided their food and drink. He gave them three years to learn the language and science of Babylon.

**6,7** Four of the young men were Jewish. The officers gave them Babylonian names:

| <b>HEBREW NAME</b> | <b>MEANING</b> | <b>NEW NAME</b> | <b>BABYLONIAN MEANING</b> |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|

|          |                      |             |                                   |
|----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Daniel   | God is my Judge.     | Beltshazzar | May the goddess protect the king. |
| Hananiah | Jehovah is gracious. | Shadrach    | ?                                 |
| Mishael  | Who is what God is?  | Meshach     | I have become weak.               |
| Azariah  | Jehovah is strong.   | Abednego    | Servant of the shining one        |

Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel his new name containing the name of his god, Bel, 4.8, or his wife. He wanted the other names also to show that these young men should no longer trust in Jehovah. Shining one is a name of Satan, Isaiah 14.12. These new names are used:

for Daniel, 2.26; 4.8,9,18,19 (3 times), 5.12; 10.1;  
for the other three, 2.49; and 13 times in chapter 3.

## **2. DANIEL'S PURPOSE, 1.8-21**

- a) Daniel's request, vs.8-10
- b) Melzar agreed, vs.11-16
- c) The wisdom of the four young men from Judah, vs.17-21

### **a) Daniel's request, 1.8-10**

**8** We do not know the names of Daniel's parents but they taught him to obey the law of Jehovah while he was still

young, before he became a captive in Babylon. Many people in Jerusalem gave their sacrifices to false gods, and all four kings after Josiah allowed them to keep on in their sins. Daniel knew that the wicked priests in Babylon offered sacrifices to Bel and other false gods, then the king's cooks prepared this meat for all who lived in his palace. This included the young captives, most of whom were happy to eat the same kind of food as Nebuchadnezzar did.

Not Daniel. He was not happy with his name containing the name of a heathen god. He would not make himself unclean before the LORD by eating meat which was offered to idols. God's prophets taught that murder and all kinds of sin would make a person unclean, Isaiah 59.3; Zephaniah 3.1.

So Daniel made a great decision. He asked Ashpenaz, the chief officer, v.3, to allow him not to eat the food or drink the wine which the king provided. This decision took real courage but Daniel was never sorry he took this step.

Others have made a right decision:

**Joseph**, that he would not sin against the LORD, Genesis 39.9; **Moses**, that Christ was better than all the money in Egypt, Hebrews 11.25,26;

**Joshua**, that he and his family would serve the LORD, Joshua 24.15;

**Ruth**, that God would be her God, Ruth 1.16;

**Josiah**, that he would follow the God of David, 2 Chronicles 34.3;

**Isaiah**, that he would go and obey the LORD, Isaiah 6.8; the younger son, that he would rise and go to his father, Luke 15.18.

We all must make decisions every day. Some of these decisions are very important. It is good to know God's Word and make every decision according to His will.

**9,10** Daniel showed the love of God to Ashpenaz and the LORD gave the Babylonian official real love for the young captive from Judah. However, the official was afraid to do as Daniel requested. He thought that Nebuchadnezzar would accuse his servant of eating or selling the food which he appointed for Daniel and his three friends. This man Nebuchadnezzar did kill people whenever he wanted to do so, 2.9; 3.19. Other ancient kings did the same; for example:

Darius, 6.9;

Herod, king of Judea, Matthew 2.16;

Herod, ruler of Galilee, Mark 6.27;

Herod Agrippa, Acts 12.2.

**b) Melzar agreed, 1.11-16**

**11-13** Daniel did not give up in his decision not to make himself unclean by eating and drinking what was offered to idols. He asked Melzar, the guard, to test Daniel and his friends for ten days. He would give these four young men vegetables to eat and water to drink, not meat and wine. After ten days Melzar the guard would look at their faces and decide if they looked better or worse than the other young men in training.

**14-16** Melzar agreed to this test and gave them nothing but vegetables and water. At the end of the ten days, the four young men from Judah looked better and healthier than all the rest. So Melzar the guard kept them on this simple diet. He could be sure that the king would not accuse him of doing any wrong.

The LORD honored these young men because they chose to obey Him, but it is still true that simple food is often better for any person's health than rich and fancy food and drink which many people use today.

**c) The wisdom of the four young men from Judah, 1.17-21**

God gave these young men favor with Ashpenaz and Melzar, but also with King Nebuchadnezzar. This was through the wisdom which God gave them.

**17** God gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah:

knowledge;

ability to learn from books;

wisdom.

In addition He gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams. Daniel needed this ability in chapters 2 and 4.

**18** Nebuchadnezzar gave Ashpenaz three years to educate the young captives, v.5, but they may have made such good progress that he brought them to the king after two years. Old books of history tell us that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem before he became king of Babylon, so it was his second year when he saw his dream, 2.1. God prepared Daniel so he was ready for that important event.

**19** Nebuchadnezzar talked with all these young men and found that the four from Judah were far better than any of the others. So he chose them to stand before him in a special way.

**20** Then the king found that the four young men from Judah were wiser than any of the priests whom he usually asked what to do and when to do it. These men are called magicians, fortunetellers, astrologers, or enchanters. The magicians in Egypt could not tell Pharaoh what his dream meant, Genesis 41.24, although at first they could do some miracles as Moses did, Exodus 7.11,12; 8.7,18; 9.11. Today we have astrologers who say they can tell from the stars and planets what will happen next in this world. Sometimes they are right but we should not listen to these false prophets. Others today can move their hands very quickly, and speak as though their voices came from some other person or thing. They are able to deceive some people. Most of them consult with evil spirits and never give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. We should not pay these people any money, or believe what they say.

**21** We read again about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in chapters 2 and 3 only, but Daniel continued for nearly 70 years, until the third year of Cyrus, 10.1.

God says that He will honor those who honor Him, 1 Samuel 2.20. He did this with Daniel and his three friends. He does the same today.

**TEST LESSON 1**

**DANIEL**

Place a T (True) or F(False) for your answer at the beginning or end of the question;

1. Daniel's name means "God is my helper."
2. Nebuchadnezzar gave the holy vessels to the Moabites
3. Daniel accepted the religion of Babylon.
4. The king gave Daniel a new name that he was happy with.
5. Daniel give us much details about the church to come.

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct word/s

6. Many \_\_\_ in \_\_\_ gave their \_\_\_ to false \_\_\_
7. Joseph vowed that \_\_\_ Not \_\_\_ against \_\_\_
8. Isaiah said \_\_\_ am I, \_\_\_ me
9. Daniel \_\_\_ and dreams
10. The magicians of \_\_\_ not \_\_\_ the king \_\_\_ his \_\_\_ was..

Name:

Questions & Comments:

If I have made corrections that you do not understand, please write me for an explanation

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