

Lessons from Daniel Bible Study

Lesson 2 - December 9, 2020

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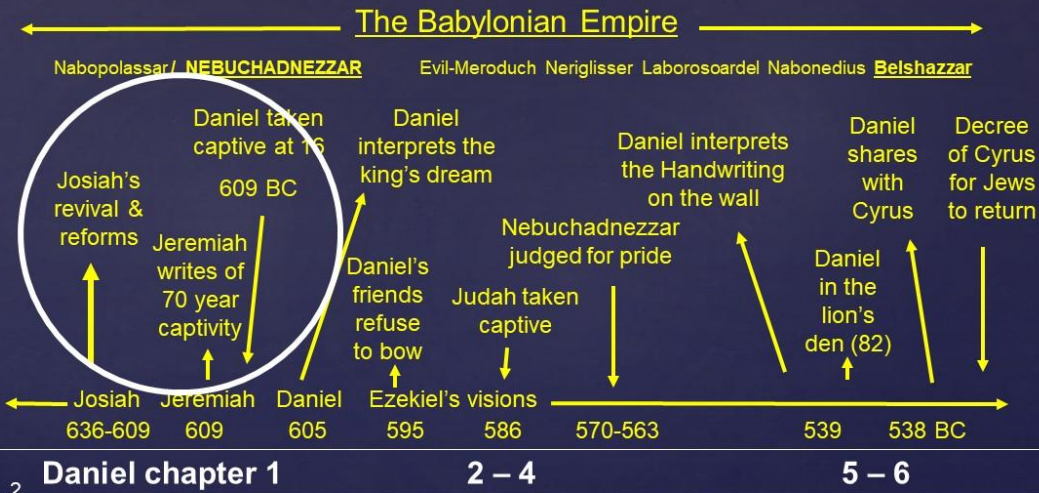
Lessons from Daniel *Influence is greater than Power*



Lesson Two – December 9, 2020

1

The Babylonian Empire “An Empire of Pride”



2

Jeremiah's Letter to the Captives – chp. 29

- ⌘ *Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.*
- ⌘ *Settle down; learn the language of your captors*
- ⌘ *Build a family legacy... beget sons and daughters*
- ⌘ *Seek the peace of the city (invest and serve in it)*
- ⌘ *Pray to the Lord for it; in its peace you will have peace*
- ⌘ *Rehearse God's Promise... After seventy years are completed, (in His time) I will visit you...*

3

Review of Lesson One (Daniel 1)

- ⌘ Daniel (at 14-16) – followed Jeremiah's advice; understanding that *God's judgment is redemptive...*
- ⌘ He and his friends purposed not to defile themselves...
- ⌘ They offered a creative alternative to protect the life of their captor as an act of *submissive disobedience*
- ⌘ 1:19-20 – *Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.*
- ⌘ We are praying for God's intervention in our nation today, but what if He allows His people to go through Judgment?

4



v. 12-13 - *Please test your servants for ten days and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies...*

Daniel 1:9

- *...he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*
- *Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.*
- They offered an alternative to save the life of their captor!

Biblical Attitudes held by Daniel

- ⌘ God sends His people into captivity to humble them, shine as lights in a dark culture, and prepare them to birth a new liberty model in coming generations! (Proverbs 29:23)
- ⌘ God's people are to influence their culture rather than isolate from it or assimilate with it... (John 17:15-18)
- ⌘ We must understand the difference between associating with an evil government and participating in its evil actions and behavior... (Ephesians 5:1-14)
- ⌘ Believers don't have to have freedom to be faithful; but they must uphold both grace and truth so that love and humility is the primary motive... (Colossians 4:5-6)

Tim Keller on being “exiles in a foreign land”
Living in a Pluralistic Society, 2006

Christians should be humbled before the new pagan pluralistic situation. Just as with the exiles, the situation is due in large part to our own failings. The Church did not lose its position of privilege simply because of evil enemies of the faith. We lost our position as part of God’s judgment on our pride, our hypocrisy, our love of power, our prejudice, our bigotry and failure to hold onto the truth. This is the way in which God gets people’s attention... We must be far harder on ourselves in gracious, humble repentance, than we are on the unbelieving culture around us.

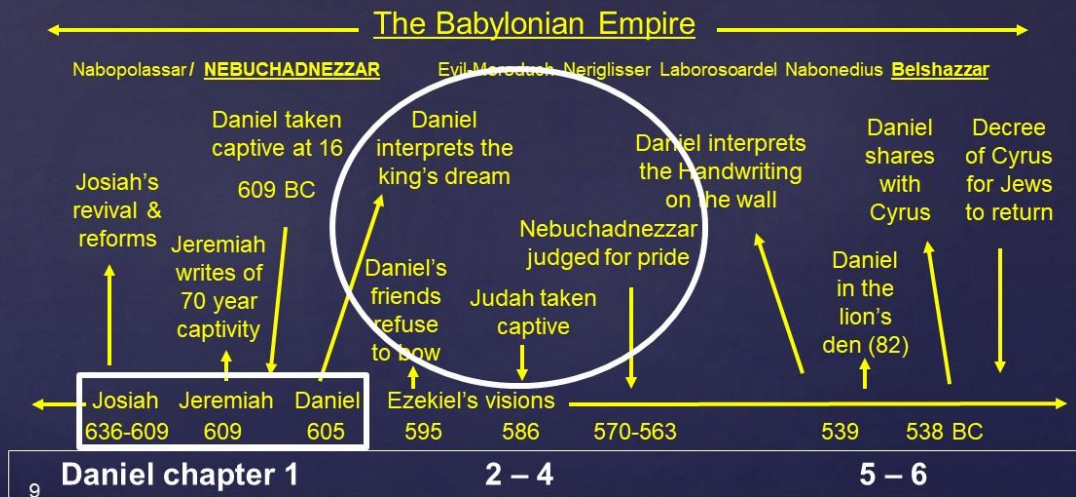
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Keller continues... That was a major lesson for the exiles and for us. Our first response should be repentance. We should be very understanding toward people who have failed to believe in Christ because of the weakness of the Church’s testimony. A lot of what is happening in our culture today may be more our fault than we are willing to admit.

Erwin Lutzer comments... Is this not God’s agenda for the church today? Everything that has been nailed down is being torn up. Every day on the news, some new domino falls. The question is, what do we do? Perhaps God is saying, “I am humbling you. I am letting you be defeated so that you might have the opportunity for ultimate triumph.”

8

The Babylonian Empire "An Empire of Pride"



How could Daniel have interpreted the King's dreams?

- ⌘ Dreams and visions combine *hearing God through His Word*
- ⌘ Daniel walked with God (in prayer) *and* understood His Word
- ⌘ Ancient history has a climax – the Messiah is born!
- ⌘ Daniel also understood the patterns of tyranny (Babylon)
 - ⌘ God's liberty model is decentralized – the individual
 - ⌘ Tyranny is centralized power – the State is god
 - ⌘ Centralized tyranny decreases with time
 - ⌘ Ancient history has a climax – the Messiah is born

Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

(at 15) *Future Kingdoms preceding Christ* – Daniel 2



11



(1) Head of Gold – *Babylon 627-539*



(2) Chest of Silver – *Medo-Persian 539-331*



(3) Belly of Brass – *Greek Empire / Alexander 331-168*



(4) Legs of Iron – *Roman Empire 168 BC – 467 AD*



(5) Toes of Iron/Clay – *divided...*

You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. – Daniel 2:34

The stone was Christ, cut out without hands (virgin birth)

The Kingdom of God will fill the whole earth
Revelation 11:15 *“the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*



12

The Kingdom of God is built from the bottom (individual) up

And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

DANIEL 2:35

Daniel 3:1 (19 years later; at 34)
*Nebuchadnezzar the king
made an image of gold...
The State (dictator) was god
All are to worship the State!
Daniel 3:12 (99.9% bowed?)
There are certain Jews whom
you have set over the affairs of
the province of Babylon;
Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abed-Nego; these men, O
king, have not paid due regard
to you. They do not serve your
gods or worship the gold
image which you have set up*

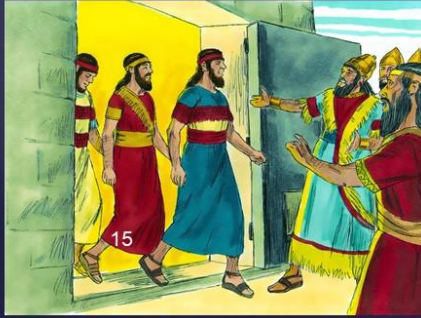


Dan. 3:14-15 - *Is it true... that you do not
serve my gods or worship the gold image
which I have set up? ...And who is the god
who will deliver you from my hands?*
3:16-17 - *Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need
to answer you in this matter. If that is the
case, our God whom we serve is able to
deliver us from the burning fiery furnace,*

18 - *And He will deliver us from your hand, O
king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king,
that we do not serve your gods, nor will we
worship the gold image which you have set up...*
20 - *And he commanded certain mighty men of
valor... to bind... and cast them into the furnace*



24-25 - *Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, 'did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?'... 'Look!' he answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God'*



27 - *...the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word...*

The only thing that burned
was what bound them!

Faithfulness is going in the
fire, not always coming out

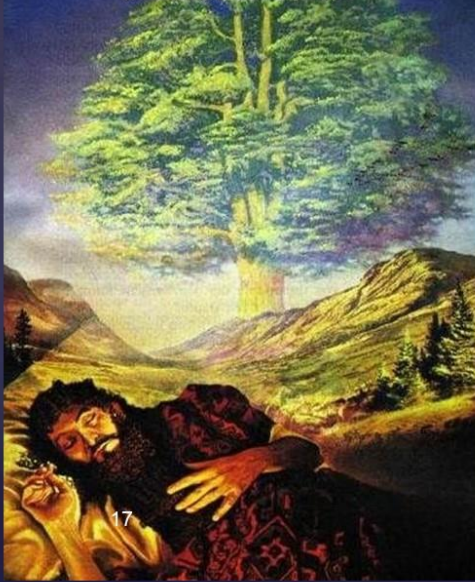
God's presence is the
reward for faithfulness!

They were promoted with
greater responsibility to
serve, not just exercise
power

¹⁶
Tyrants always move in
power, no religious liberty



10-15 years later,
Daniel is 44-49?



4:5 - *I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on bed and the visions of my head troubled me...*

4:8 – *but at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God)... 4:20 – the tree that you saw... is you, O king*

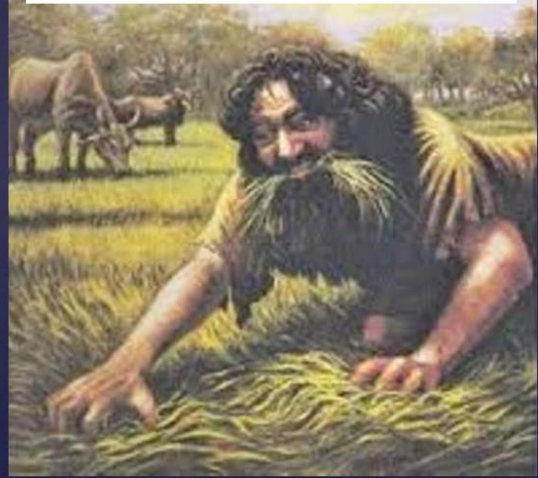
4:23 – *Chop down the tree... but leave its stump and roots in the earth... till seven times pass over him...*



4:24-25 – *this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High... they shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.*

4:27 – *let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.*

Clinical lycanthropy is a very rare condition and is largely considered to be an idiosyncratic expression of a psychotic episode caused by another condition such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or clinical depression.



4:29-31 - *At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, 'is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?' While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven; 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; the kingdom has departed from you! ... that very hour the word was fulfilled...*



4:34 – *And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned*
4:37 – *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.*

Lesson Two – *Godly Influence is better than Power*

- ⌘ Daniel, from age 14 to 57, served Nebuchadnezzar, co-ruler with his father Nabopolassar initially, reigning 44 years...
- ⌘ Daniel's wisdom was in *spirit and truth*, understanding God's Word and a knowledge of tyrannical rule to prepare a monarch to help advance God's Kingdom (of liberty)
- ⌘ Daniel and his friends served humbly for decades without any demonstration of God's power; quietly serving
- ⌘ Daniel's *influence* impacted a pagan ruler to advance God's purposes more than an opposing political or military power

Suggested “homework”

- ⌘ Read Daniel, chapters 2-4
- ⌘ Ask God to give each of us a focus of being faithful in the little things – devotion to God, our families, our spheres of influence – rejecting the idea that only political power can save a nation!