

# God's Story, Our Story

## Lesson 18: The Exile

### The Babylonian Captivity and the Book of Daniel



2 Ki 24:1; Dan 1:1-7

2 Ki 25

Dan 1:8-16

Dan 1:17-21

Dan 2

1. Destruction and Exile:
  - a. In 606 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem and takes away some of its people to Babylon. One of these men is Daniel.
  - b. In 586 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem and carries the rest of the Jews away into Babylonian captivity.
2. Daniel in Babylon:
  - a. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are faithful to God. They do not want to defile themselves eating Babylonian food and are given permission to eat only vegetables.
  - b. Daniel and his friends excel in all matters of wisdom and understanding in Babylon.
3. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, had a dream of a statue with parts representing different empires. A stone that crushes the statue represents the kingdom of God.

Part of Statue	Material	Empire
Head	Gold	Babylon
Chest and Arms	Silver	Medo-Persia
Belly and Thighs	Bronze	Greece
Legs	Iron	Rome
Feet	Iron and Clay	Ten Kingdoms

Dan 3

Dan 4:4-37

Dan 5:1-31

4. The Jews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refuse to worship idols as King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded. They are thrown into a fiery furnace but God protects them through one who is "like the Son of God." Nebuchadnezzar comes to praise the God of Israel.
5. Nebuchadnezzar has a second dream, of a high tree that is cut down. Daniel interprets the dream as Nebuchadnezzar's downfall due to the sin of Babylon. Daniel advises Nebuchadnezzar to repent, but he proudly refuses and goes mad.
6. Nebuchadnezzar dies in 562 BC. His son king Belshazzar has a feast where they drink from vessels from the Jerusalem Temple and praise their idols. A hand appears and writes on the wall: mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Daniel tells Belshazzar that his kingdom will be divided among the Medes and Persians. Belshazzar dies that night and the Medes take power in 539 BC.

<i>Dan 6:1-27</i>	7. In 538 BC, Darius the King of the Medes forbids worship of gods other than the king. Daniel is thrown into the lion's pit for worshipping the God of Israel. He is unharmed by the lions. Darius declares that throughout his kingdom all must fear and tremble before the God of Daniel.
<i>Dan 7:2-14</i>	8. Daniel had a vision of four great beasts. The fourth beast is slain by the Ancient of Days who is seated on his throne. The other three beasts have their dominion taken away, but their lives are prolonged for a determined period. Daniel sees the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven.
<i>Dan 7:18</i>	9. The four beasts are four kings that arise out of the earth: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome.
<i>Dan 8</i>	10. The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess it forever.
<i>Dan 8</i>	11. Daniel has another vision: a ram (kings of Persia and Media) is attacked and trampled by a goat (king of Greece).
<i>Dan 9:1-17</i>	12. Daniel understands that the 70 years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah is coming to an end. Daniel prays that Israel may return home. The angel Gabriel explains:
<i>Dan 9:24-27</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. That there will be 69 "weeks" of years (one "week" = 7 years) between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah, who will be "cut off" and the city destroyed.</li> <li>b. This decree to rebuild the city gates and wall was proclaimed by king Artaxerxes, in the month of Nisan of the year 445 BC.</li> <li>c. 69 "weeks" of 7 years = 483 Babylonian years of 360 days = 476 Julian years + 21 days.</li> <li>d. 445 BC + 476 years = 32 AD.</li> </ol>
<i>Dan 10-11</i>	13. Daniel has a vision of a man who fights against Israel's enemies. He describes the struggle between the Greek kings of the South (Ptolemies) and kings of the north (Seleucids). A vile person will seize the kingdom, take away the daily sacrifices, set up the abomination of desolation and speak blasphemies against God.
<i>Dan 12</i>	14. Daniel 12: a description of the resurrection and last judgment.
<i>Ez 1- 2; Ez 7; Neh 2</i>	15. In the first year his reign, Cyrus king of Persia permits the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the temple. The Jews return in 3 waves in 538, 458 and 445 BC.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What links are there between the exile and the covenant God made with Abraham, Moses and David? How did Israel break the covenant?
2. What was the significance of the exile for Israel?
3. What is the main purpose of Daniel's visions? How did they give hope to Israel?
4. What kind of future do the visions sketch out for Israel?
5. What do the visions say about the coming of Messiah and the war between good and evil?
6. How does the exile and Israel's return to Jerusalem manifest God's faithfulness?
7. Why did Israel have to go through the exile? How did God bring good out of it?