

Babylon
Message 04 in the series, "Journey to Bethlehem"

A. 365 years after King David's reign, the Israelites were conquered and taken away from the Promised Land (605 BC).

"During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The LORD gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god." Daniel 1:1-2 (NLT)

B. God still had a plan.

1. Daniel remained faithful to God and didn't allow Babylon's culture to influence him.

"But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods."

Daniel 1:8 (NLT)

"But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God." Daniel 6:10 (NLT)

2. Because Daniel was faithful, God used Daniel to influence Babylon's kings and rulers.

"In your vision, Your Majesty, you saw standing before you a huge, shining statue of a man. It was a frightening sight. The head of the statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its feet were a combination of iron and baked clay. As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits. The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth." Daniel 2:31-35 (NLT)

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself down before Daniel and worshiped him, and he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him. The king said to Daniel, 'Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the LORD over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret.' Then **the king appointed Daniel to a high position** and gave him many valuable gifts. **He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men.**" Daniel 2:46-48 (NLT)

"King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: 'Peace and prosperity to you! I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how powerful his wonders! His kingdom will last forever, his rule through all generations.'"

Daniel 4:1-3 (NLT)

C. While in exile, God reaffirmed the establishing of an everlasting kingdom and a coming Messiah through:

1. Nebuchadnezzar's dream

"During the reigns of those kings, **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered.** It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever. That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain."

Daniel 2:44-45 (NLT)

2. Daniel's vision

"As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a **son of man** coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation

and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT)

3. Gabriel's message to Daniel

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. So you are to know and understand *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince, *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks...” Daniel 9:24-25 (NASB)

Note: In Biblical prophecy, one week represents 7 years.

- Approx. 444 B.C: King Artaxerxes decrees the rebuilding of Jerusalem may begin (Nehemiah 2)
- Ancient Jewish calendars used 360-day years:
(Example: 483 years x 360 days = 173,880 days > 173,880 days = 476 years roughly)
- 476 years from 444 B.C. lands us around 32 A.D — One of two most widely held dates for the crucifixion of Jesus.

“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.” Matthew 5:17 (NLT)

“So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.”

Hebrews 9:11-12 (NLT)

D. It wasn't by accident that Daniel became the chief of the wise men in Babylon.

“Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men.” Daniel 2:48 (NLT)

“...About that time some wise men **from eastern lands** arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.’”

Matthew 2:1-2 (NLT)

Note: It is reasonable to assume that Daniel is the reason the three wisemen knew about the coming Messiah.

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you **One will come forth for Me to be ruler in Israel**. His times of coming forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2 (NASB)

“I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel. It will crush the heads of Moab’s people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth.” Numbers 24:17 (NLT)

Note: WE CAN TRUST GOD'S PLAN!

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