

Daniel in the lion's den is a story most people, at least in the western world are familiar with. Likewise, Daniel's three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah have been popular figures in history, better known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They weren't thrown to the lions, but into a fiery furnace. But that is about the extent of most people's knowledge of the book of Daniel. There is so much more. Over the next several weeks we are going to look chapter by chapter (there are 12) and verse by verse at this *indispensable* prophetic book that holds in its pages divine and infallible predictions concerning this earth and its future.

Daniel was a man of purpose, prayer, prophecy, and integrity. Through a study of his book, we find the Bible is the infallible word of God, and it helps us to not be duped by lying inventions or delusive theories. All the present evil, denial of faith, worldliness, etc. are the results of ignoring Prophecy.

Arno C. Gaebelein wrote: "Prophecy is the lamp, which shineth in a dark place till the Day dawn. Never before is there such need of this lamp as now." The interesting thing about that quote is that it was written over 100 years ago. And although the Lord may tarry even another 100 years, or 200, we can still say, even more confidently in 2022, *Never before is there such a need of this lamp as now.*

Verse 1—

**Jehoiakim...Nebuchadnezzar...Babylon...besieged.** Believe it or not, this is the only verse we will look at today for it is key to understand the context of what we will study.

Jehoiakim: Eighteenth king of the Kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 23:34-24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:4-7).

Nebuchadnezzar: King of Babylon from B.C. 605-562. Conqueror of Egypt at Carchemish.

Babylon: Located in *Mesopotamia* between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; modern day Iraq. Also called Chaldea.

Besieged: Surrounded.

How did Jerusalem (Located in Judaea) come to be surrounded by Nebuchadnezzar and his armies? The concise answer is, *God made a covenant with Israel and they broke it.* What was the *Land Covenant*<sup>1</sup> (agreement or promise) God gave to Israel? This covenant is mentioned in several places in Scripture; one clear passage is found in Genesis 15:18. The full covenant known as the Abrahamic Covenant contained a promise about the Land of Israel, the seed of Abraham, and the Blessing that would be given to his seed. It was an *unconditional covenant* meaning God would not break it. The nations of the world, including many godless left-wing radicals today in the U.S. government hate Israel and their desire would be to destroy them and wipe them off the face of the earth. While judgment would come to Israel as we will see, God promised there would always be *the seed of Israel* (Jeremiah 31:35-37).

And while God promised to never break His covenant, Israel turned their backs on God and would face judgment for disobeying Him and forsaking His promise to them.

### The Judgments of Israel.

One of the first judgments Israel faced was the dividing of the kingdom in B.C. 931. The kingdom of Israel was made up of the 12 Tribes of Jacob, or Israel. The first king of Israel was King Saul, followed by King David, and then his son, King Solomon. After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam became king. But because of Rehoboam's heavy hand, the northern kingdom consisting of ten tribes rebelled against him and became the kingdom of Israel, while the southern kingdom of Judah was made up of just two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Each kingdom, the northern and the southern had their own king, Rehoboam in the south, and Jeroboam in the north.

The second judgment came two hundred years later in B.C. 722 when the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom and took all of the people into captivity.

The third judgment was in B.C. 586 when Babylon came into to Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple. This was the third of three sieges of Babylon. In B.C. 607, B.C. 597, and B.C. 586. Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in the first siege, the one mentioned in our passage today (Daniel 1:1).

The focus of the book of Daniel is on the first siege of Jerusalem in B.C. 607.

This event was prophesied 844 years earlier in the book of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 28:1 God gave Israel<sup>2</sup> a wonderful promise of blessing if they would "do all his commandments." But if they would not listen to the LORD their God many *curses* would come upon them, like a nation coming against them to destroy them (Deuteronomy 28:49,50; also, Joel 1:6). This was the first of three sieges: B.C. 607, 597, 588-586.

### Thoughts for today.

Does the Lord pronounce curses on believers today? Hebrews 12:6 says "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Because this verse is found in the N.T. many believe this is what God does to us when we disobey. The word *scourge* means to whip. Does God *whip* those who are "Complete in him" (Colossians 2:10)? Is chastening and scourging part of Grace? Absolutely not. In the dispensation of Grace there is "therefore now no condemnation" (Romans 8:1). But what about the Hebrews passage? Well, it is written to the *Hebrews and was directed to Jews still living in another dispensation.* While we are now in the *dispensation of grace*, there will come a time (in the Tribulation) that we will see later on in Daniel, when Israel will be judged again; and will be chastened and scourged. Until we are taken out of this world (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17) we live by grace. To be certain, there are natural consequences for sin that are in effect, but the ultimate consequences for sin were taken care of at the cross! (2 Corinthians 5:19).

<sup>1</sup> This Land Covenant is often erroneously called The Palestinian Covenant. The term Palestine or Palestinian is derived from the name Philistine. It was a name given to Judaea by the Romans to disenfranchise the Jewish people. It was a word given to mock them. Philistines were the arch enemies of Israel. The term Palestine in reference to Israel should never be used by Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Although Daniel concerns the southern kingdom of Judah, I will use the term *Israel* from now on since the Land covenant was for all of Israel—or all of the Jews.