

## Week 23: God's People Exiled in Babylon (Lamentations; Several Psalms; Ezekiel; Daniel)

After Judah was destroyed by Babylon, the Jews were scattered throughout the nations, perhaps to be testimonies of the LORD'S ways. By building synagogues to preserve their identity, Jews (who only started using that term to describe themselves) were the starting point for proclaiming the message of the promised Messiah. The biblical key for understanding this era in *God's Story* is Daniel's interpretation of the four-metal image in Daniel 2 and the corresponding interpretation of the four beasts in Daniel 7. Four world superpowers arose during this time: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

The "head of gold" as described in Daniel 2 is Babylon. Only a few incidents from the time of the captivity in Babylon are written about in the Bible. We are limited to 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36; Jer. 40-44; and parts of Daniel and Ezekiel. The earliest exiles of Jerusalem had been sent to Babylon during the rule of Jehoiakim in 605 (including Daniel). The second group was deported at the time of Jehoiachin in 597 (including Ezekiel). The final and largest group had gone into captivity after Jerusalem was destroyed in 586.

Three Babylonian monarchs are mentioned in the Bible:

- **Nebuchadnezzar** (605-562) was the general who attacked Jerusalem three times,
- Evil-Merodach (562-560) released Jehoiachin from prison (Jer. 52:31),

• **Belshazzar** (552-539) who saw the writing on the wall. The empire that Nebuchadnezzar built was destroyed just 23 years after his death.

The Babylonians practiced massive relocation of rebellious people in order to curb future rebellions. For the Jews, many assimilated to Babylonian culture, but others finally paid heed to the prophets' message and began to follow Yahweh.

**Daniel** demonstrated remarkable trust in God and revealed God's plans for the future, not only for his own day but

also for the Maccabean period and on through the time that God's kingdom being established by the Son of Man.

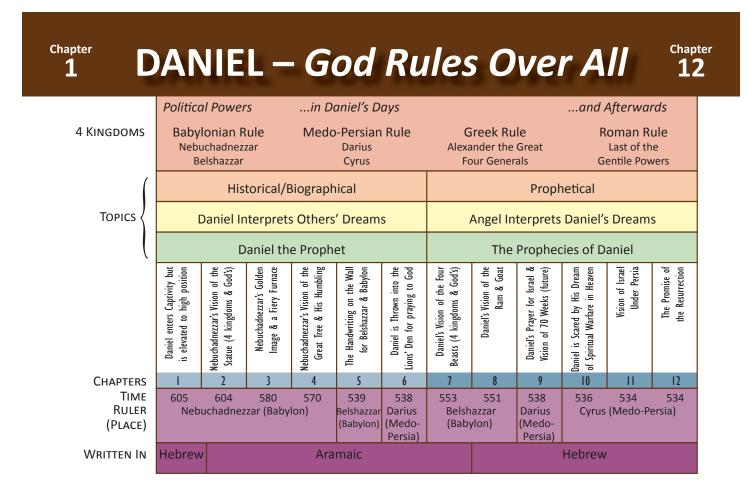
**Ezekiel** foresaw the fall of Jerusalem, emphasizing its sins. The book includes lots of unusual symbols. After Jerusalem's fall, Ezekiel prophesied the restoration and future of God's people. God used Ezekiel as a major factor to encourage the exiles to stay true to the "faith of their fathers."

## Timeline of the Babylonian Captivity/Exile

- 612 Babylonians and Medes conquer Assyria
- 609 Josiah killed by Egyptian army, Jehoahaz is king Jehoiakim becomes king after 3 months
- 605 Nebuchadnezzar becomes king of Babylon The Babylonians invade Judah First wave of deportation of Jews to Babylon Daniel is taken captive and begins to prophesy
- 601 Babylonians battle Egypt, both sides suffer losses Judah decides to realign itself with Egypt
- 597 Jehoiachin becomes king of Judah Babylonians capture Jerusalem Second wave of deportation to Babylon from Judah. Ezekiel is taken captive to Babylon Zedekiah becomes king of Judah
- 593 Ezekiel begins to prophesy
- 586 The Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the Temple Jerusalem's walls and gates are burned with fire Third wave of Jews deported to Babylon The end of the monarchy in Judah Babylonian Exile begins
- 539 The Fall of BabylonBeginning of the Persian Period to 332The Decree of Cyrus II allowing Jews to return
- 516 The Jews rebuild their Temple (70 years)

## Week Twenty-Three Reading Plan

Lamentations 1:1-22; 5:1-22 Choose two Psalms: 44; 74; 79;	Sorrow in Jerusalem; Prayer of Hope Psalms of a People in Exile
80; 85; 89; 102; 106; 123; 137 Ezekiel 36:1-38	The Hope of the New Covenant
Ezekiel 37:1-14	A Valley of Dry Bones
Daniel 4:1-37	Nebuchadnezzar's Temporary Insanity
Daniel 5:1-31	The Writing on the Wall
Daniel 6:1-28	Daniel in the Lions' Den



## <sup>Chapter</sup> **EZEKIEL** – God's Sovereignty

Chapter 48

Judgment Near	Judgment Now	Hope Ahead
Predicting Jerusalem's Fall	Announcing Jerusalem's Fall	Promising Restoration
Discus Debularia		

Place: Babylonia

Time: About 22 years (593-571BC)

1-3 COMMISSION OF EZEKIEL	4-24 JUDGMENT OF JUDAH	25-32 JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS	33-48 RESTORATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE
1 - Vision	4-6 Four symbols of coming judgment	25 - Amon, Moab, Edom, Philistia	33-36 Return to the Land, New Shepherd
2 - Call			
3 - Commission	7-14 God's glory departs because of Idolatry	26-28 - Phoenicians–Tyre (Fall of Satan)	37-39 New Life and Unity
			40-43 New Temple,
	15-24 Parables and Pronouncements	29-32 - Egypt, Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Edom,	God's glory returns
		Phoenicians–Sidon	44-48 New Worship