

## Lesson # 35

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read Daniel, chapters 1 – 6.****BACKGROUND**

**Author:** Daniel; contemporary of Jeremiah, Obadiah and Ezekiel; in his youth, he knew Habakkuk

**Date and Place of Ministry:** he lived and worked some 72<sup>+</sup> years in Babylon and the palace from 605 - 534 BC.

**Theme:** Yahweh is God alone; He is in control.

**Purposes:** To convince Babylon and Persia that only Yahweh is God.

To reveal future world events in relation to Israel.

**OUTLINE** History 1 - 6 Chapters 2-7 tell how Gentile nations will affect the Middle East; written in Aramaic for Gentiles.  
Prophecy 7 - 12 Chapters 1, 8-12 deal with Jewish issues so are written in Hebrew.

**HISTORICAL SETTING IN THE MIDDLE EAST 605 - 536 BC****Politically**

**612 BC** The Assyrian empire is conquered by Babylon.

Both Babylon and Egypt want to build their own empire. Judah is caught in the middle.

**605 BC** Nebuchadnezzar creates the Babylonian empire.

**586 BC** Nebuchadnezzar destroys the nation of Judah and sends the Jews into exile.

Babylon rules the Middle East for 68 years.

**536 BC** Medo-Persia comes to power under Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian

**Spiritually**

The **Jews** as a nation have rejected God so He allows the consequences

There is economic and political uncertainty, chaos, violence and crime.

After King Josiah, leaders of Judah have no leadership abilities.

National decisions are based on popular opinion.

God sends Babylon to destroy their nation and take the people into exile.

The **Babylonians** and **Medo-Persians** worship pagan gods

Because the Babylonians conquered the Jews, they believed their gods were greater than Yahweh, the Jewish God.

God wants them to know that altho His people could be conquered, He, Yahweh could never be conquered.

Daniel is God's man in the Babylonian and Persian empires.

His life demonstrates the power of Yahweh God.

His book shows the evidence thru history and prophecy that God is in control.

**EXPLANATIONS**

**Chapter 1** Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are trained for government service. **God is in control**

Their names are changed to: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego - to honor the Babylonian gods

Their diet is supposed to be changed to guarantee their health and well being.

Food from the king's table would give them blessing, protection and success from the Babylonian gods.

Their education is a 3-year university course in:

astronomy, linguistics, mathematics, agronomy, law, meteorology and Babylonian religion.

Chapter 2 Covered in the following lesson

**Chapter 3** Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are delivered from the fiery furnace. **God is in control**

Daniel's absence - Daniel is now prime minister.

At this time in history, Nebuchadnezzar sends an ambassador to make peace between two warring nations.

Daniel would be the logical one sent – which means he is out of town on government business.

The young men's faith comes from the writings of Isaiah 43:2.

Nebuchadnezzar's 1<sup>st</sup> step of faith 3:28-29 (95-96) *Yahweh is greater than other gods.*

**Chapter 4** Nebuchadnezzar dreams, suffers mental illness, recovers and knows that ..... **God is in control**

His city is the largest of that time, 4 square miles. There were double and triple walls around the city, 300 feet high, 12-25 feet thick with 24 feet in-between. There was a moat around the city 262 feet wide. The Euphrates River went thru the city. He built 15 to 20 temples. Twenty tons of gold were used in just one temple. His palace was covered with gold. Ishtar gate led into the city from the north, down Processional Way and ½ mile to the main temple. Ishtar gate and the walls leading to it, were finished with blue enameled brick and decorated with raised carvings of yellow dragons, horses and lions.



**EXPLANATIONS****Chapter 4** Nebuchadnezzar *continued*

His illness: boanthropy, a rare, but diagnosed mental illness.

His final step of faith: *Yahweh God is the only God; Yahweh God has conquered me.* 4:34-37 (4:31-34)

**Chapter 5** Handwriting on the wall: *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.***God is in control**

Leaders: King Nabonidus

Just before leaving Babylon for a 10-year absence, he names his eldest son, Belshazzar as joint-king.

King Cyrus, in his writings, says of Belshazzar's appointment,

*A weakling has been installed as the ruler of his country.*

The queen mother is Nebuchadnezzar's daughter.

Words: *Mene* - numbered Belshazzar's hours are numbered; he dies within 8 hours.

*Tekel* - weighed Belshazzar's life has been weighed by God's standards and does not measure up.

*Upharsin* - divided; and Persians the Babylonian kingdom will be divided between the Medes and Persians.

**Chapter 6** Daniel in the lion's den; he is in his mid-80's**God is in control**

Darius - a Persian title meaning *The Royal One*; Darius the Mede is Gubaru or Gobryas of secular history.

Daniel is a picture of Jesus.

1. faithful; no fault found in him 6:4 (5)
2. humbled from the highest position to the death of a criminal 6:3, 16 (17)
3. falsely accused because of his enemy's envy and hate
4. unjustly condemned because of his relationship with God 6:5 (6)
5. a stone was set in place and sealed 6:17 (18)
6. miraculously delivered from death 6:21 (22)
7. given an exalted position 6:28: (29) cf. 6:3 (4)

**APPLICATION****God controls history**

Nations and leaders rise and fall. When they make wise choices, God uses them for good. But as Nebuchadnezzar said, *Those who walk in pride He is able to humble.* In our eyes, the world around us is spinning out of control. But from God's point of view, everything is right on schedule, to accomplish His plans. **He is in control.**

**The importance of faith**

**Faith to obey** when it will make us unpopular, bring rejection or even endanger our life.

It may involve the truth we teach in our churches, ethics in the work-place, relationships we develop or pull away from, where we choose to go and what we choose to watch. God wants us to use wisdom to avoid confrontation. But if we are pressured to deny God's truth or disobey God's commands, we have to make a choice. In faith, we know God could intervene and defend us. But even if He does not, are we still willing to obey? Are we willing to suffer for His sake?

**Faith on different levels**

One level of faith is to believe God will answer our prayers and miraculously change our situation. Another level of faith is to accept God's answer, *even if it is not* the miracle we prayed for.

Hebrews 11:33 describes our idea of faith.

*...who shut the mouths of lions; quenched the fury of flames and escaped the edge of the sword...*

But verses 35-36 continue,

*others were tortured... some faced jeers and flogging while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword.... Verse 39. These were ALL commended or approved for their faith.*

It is one level to have faith God **can** deliver; it is quite another level to let Him choose **how** He will deliver. We get the first level by learning about God and what He can **do**. We get the next level of faith by going deeper into Scripture and understanding God's **ways**.

Yes, God **can** deliver us from sickness, death, divorce, financial disaster, broken relationships, loss of job, the spiritual rebellion of a family member. But sometimes He chooses not to. Sometimes His deliverance is to let these things happen. Are we willing to believe that even thru loss, He is bringing another form of deliverance for our lives?

Can we say, *Our God is able to rescue us, but even if He does not, our faith is still grounded in Him?*

