
A Bible Survey



A Three Year Course of Study for Adults

Section Eight: Captivity, Restoration
Year 2, Quarter 4

Compiled by Gene Taylor

Preface

These lessons were first compiled over a three year period from April 1988 through March 1991. The then Westside church of Christ in Tallahassee, Florida (Now the Centerville Road church relocated to 4015 Centerville Road in Tallahassee) determined to place all their Sunday morning Bible classes on the *Amplified Bible Curriculum* (Hereafter referred to as *ABC*) developed by JoLinda Crump and Cathy Valdes.

While their curriculum recommended materials from preschool through senior high, we desired to place our college, young adult, and adult classes on the same schedule. The volume of material in L.A. Mott's studies, recommended in the *ABC* for source material and lesson development, did not easily lend itself to a once a week study since he designed his lessons to be studied twice each week.

Considering these factors, I took it upon myself to compile these lessons. We used them successfully while cycling through the curriculum twice in our senior high, college, young adult, and adult classes from April 1988 through March 1994. They were edited and revised prior to the second study of them. They have been revised a second time and reformatted in 1997.

I have tried to parallel the *ABC* as much as possible so that adults and children would be studying the same lesson at the same time only on different levels. But this series, or any one of its twelve study guides, may be used independently.

Each lesson contains a schedule for daily Bible reading. It can be used as a format for family devotionals in the home even if the whole family is not on the curriculum.

I hope you enjoy your study.

Gene Taylor
July 1997

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Lesson One: The Babylonian Empire

Lesson Text

2 Chronicles 35 -36

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Jeremiah 50:35-46

Tuesday

Jeremiah 52:4-16

Thursday

Jeremiah 52:17-30

Friday

2 Chronicles 35

Saturday

2 Chronicles 36

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE

Receiving punishment
as prophesied

I. Geographically

A. Babylonia.

1. It was “a plain...which is bounded on the north by Assyria and Mesopotamia; on the east by Elam, separated by the mountains of Elam; on the south by the sea marshes, and the country Kaldu (Chaldea); and on the west by the Syrian desert.” (*I.S.B.E.*, Vol. I, p. 358)
2. It derived its name from the capital city of Babylon.
 - a. It was also called “Shinar.” (Gen. 10:10; 11:2; Isa. 11:11)
 - b. It was later called “the land of the Chaldeans.” (Jer. 24:4; Ezek. 12:13)
3. It was thought to be the “cradle of civilization.”
 - a. Watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, it was the probable site of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:14) and of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11).
 - b. During the time in which the Babylonian empire flourished, it sustained a dense population.
4. This area was covered with a network of canals.
 - a. They had been skillfully planned and regulated.
 - b. They had brought prosperity due to their enhancing of the fertility of the soil.

B. Babylon.

1. It was established by Nimrod not long after the flood. (Gen. 10:8-10)
2. It was located by the Euphrates River within easy reach of the Persian Gulf.
3. It was an important city throughout its history.
 - a. Many battles were fought for control of it.
 - b. It was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times.
4. During the time of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C) it:
 - a. Was the chief city of the world.
 - b. Covered an area of about 200 square miles on both sides of the Euphrates River.
 - c. Had broad streets which had been laid out so that they intersected one another at right angles.
 - d. Had three imposing walls which surrounded it which were wide enough to allow chariots to pass on top of them.
 - e. Was “beautiful.” For example, Nebuchadnezzar’s “Hanging Gardens” which he built for his Median wife, Amytis, became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. (See Dan. 4:28-30)

5. In later history Babylon:
 - a. Declined but may still have existed in New Testament times if 1 Peter 5:13 is to be taken literally.
 - b. Came to symbolize in the book of Revelation the world and its wickedness.
 - 1) “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.” (Rev. 14:8; 18:2)
 - 2) The scarlet woman has written on her forehead, “Babylon the Great.” (Rev. 17:5)
 - c. Is now in total desolation thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 13:17-22.

II. Historically

A. The Ancient Babylonian Empire.

1. Since Babylonia is regarded as the cradle of the human race, it is, therefore, one of the most ancient of empires.
2. In about 2000 B.C., Babylon was the dominating power of the world. Hammurabi (ca. 1707-1622 B.C.) ruled a great empire from the Persian Gulf to the middle Euphrates and upper Tigris.
3. There followed a 1000 year period of struggle which saw no dominant power in the area. Babylon was variously controlled by the Hittites, Kassites, Elamites and Assyrians during this time.
4. This period was culminated by 300 years of Assyrian supremacy (885-607 B.C.).
 - a. Various Babylonian rulers tried to assert their independence without much success.
 - b. Merodach-baladan (2 Kings 20:12ff) tried to revolt from Assyria and made Babylon independent twice for brief periods (722-710 B.C.; 703-702 B.C.).
 - 1) He visited Hezekiah, king of Judah (716-687 B.C.) probably around 712 B.C.
 - 2) Sargon II of Assyria (721-705 B.C.) crushed this rebellion and his son Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) devastated Babylon in 689 B.C.
 - 3) Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), son of Sennacherib, rebuilt Babylon and took Manasseh of Judah (687-643 B.C.) captive to Babylon. (2 Chron. 33:11)

Rulers of the Babylonian Empire	
Nabopolassar	625-605 B.C.
Nebuchadnezzar	604-562 B.C.
Evil-Merodoch	561-560 B.C.
Neriglissar	559-556 B.C.
Laborosoardoch	556 B.C.
Nabonidus	555-539 B.C.
Belshazzar	553-539 B.C.

B. The Neo-Babylonian Empire (606-536 B.C.).

1. Nabopolassar (625-605 B.C.), who was the viceroy of Babylon, rebelled against Assyria in 625 B.C.
 - a. He established the independence of Babylon.
 - b. Along with Cyaxares the Mede, he conquered and destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 612 B.C.
 - c. He defeated the remnants of the Assyrian army at Haran in 610 B.C.
 - d. In 605 B.C., he and his son Nebuchadnezzar, defeated an alliance of the Egyptians and what was left of the Assyrians at Carchemish forever ending Assyrian domination.

2. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.) succeeded his father and was the empire's greatest king.
 - a. He was a great conqueror and great builder.
 - b. He captured all the territory that had once been held by the king of Egypt from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River (2 Kings 24:7).
 - c. He invaded Judah in 605 B.C. (Dan. 1:1), again in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:1) and for the third time in 586 B.C. when he destroyed Jerusalem.
 - d. He besieged Tyre for 13 years (598-585 B.C.).
 - e. After him, ineffective kings ruled and the empire was quickly brought to its demise.

III. Religiously

- A. The gods of Babylon were basically the same as those of Assyria.
 1. Both nations were very superstitious.
 2. Marduk was their "creator" and Ea was the "Spirit of the Water."
- B. The gods of the Babylonians were viewed as threats to them.
 1. They believed their gods always wanted to harm people.
 2. Ea was the only exception since the sea brought trade and helped to make them rich.
 3. Of the evil gods they said, "door cannot shut them out, nor bolt prevent them from entering; they glide like serpents beneath the door, and creep through the joints of hinges like a puff of wind." (Dorothy Mills, *The Book of the Ancient World*, p. 105)
- C. They believed in witches and demons and put hideous images to the right and left of the doors of their houses to scare them away.
- D. They believed in the power of the stars.
 1. Astrology had its birth in ancient Babylon.
 2. They thought they could tell the future from the stars.
- E. They built temples called "ziggurats" to their gods.
 1. They had inherited the idea for them from the ancient Sumerians.
 2. These consisted of towers with a number of stages, each one a little smaller than the one below.
 3. The most famous one was in the city of Babylon.
 - a. It had seven stages each of which was a different color: black, orange, red, gold, pale yellow, deep blue and silver.
 - b. Each stage was dedicated to a different heavenly body: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury and the moon.
- F. Constant services were held at the temples.
 1. Many festivals were staged highlighted by the New Year Festival which lasted two weeks and included, among other things, a procession of gods to Marduk's temple, the humiliation and restoration of the king who later "took the hand of Bel" to lead him in procession outside the city where a re-enactment of the assembly of the gods and the fixing of the fates for the ensuing year took place.
 2. The seventh day was kept as a day of rest.
- G. They believed in life after death.
 1. It was thought to be gloomy and dismal.
 2. They referred to the place they believed souls went to after death as "The Land of No Return."
- H. Their religion seemed to have little influence on their conduct.

IV. Socially

- A. They could be as cruel as most of the conquering people of their day.
 - 1. They utterly burned and destroyed Jerusalem and many other walled cities.
 - 2. The example of King Zedekiah of Judah (597-586 B.C.). (2 Kings 25:4-7; Jer. 39:1-7)
 - a. He was captured and taken before Nebuchadnezzar where, before his eyes, his sons and officials of his government were put to death.
 - b. His eyes were then put out and he was imprisoned.
- B. They did not glory in cruelty, though, the way the Assyrians had.
 - 1. They tended to leave all people they conquered exactly where they found them as long as they accepted Babylonian rule.
 - 2. A submissive city would be left standing with only tribute to pay.
 - 3. Judah was defeated, her cities destroyed and her people moved because she kept rebelling.
- C. Captive people were treated generously.
 - 1. The example of Daniel and his companions. They were:
 - a. Trained to serve in the king's palace.
 - b. Given honored positions of power in the kingdom.
 - 2. The Jews, while in captivity, were allowed to establish prosperous, comfortable colonies.
 - a. These were located along the River Chebar, an irrigation canal which stretched from Babylon to Erech (Erech: NW of Ur on Euphrates River).
 - b. Jeremiah wrote a letter to the captives telling them to build houses, plant gardens, allow their sons to marry and to prosper. (Jer. 29)
 - c. Many Jews became rich during the period.

V. Politically

- A. Nabopolassar (626-605 B.C.) was founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.).
 - 1. The son of Nabopolassar, he was the empire's greatest king.
 - a. He captured vast territories and many peoples.
 - b. He built Babylon into the most glorious city on earth.
 - 2. He was the only king, to his time, that had ever destroyed the temple of God.
 - a. God would not allow him to think that he was greater than the "God of Israel."
 - b. Time and again he learned that "God rules in the kingdoms of men and sets up whomsoever He chooses." (Dan. 2:37-38, 47; 3:28-29; 4:17, 25-26, 32, 34-37)
- C. Evil-Merodach (Amel-Marduk - 2 Kings 25:27) (562-560 B.C.).
 - 1. He was the son of Nebuchadnezzar.
 - 2. He was assassinated by Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, Neriglissar.
- D. Neriglissar (Nergal-Sharezer - Jer. 39:13) (560-556 B.C.).
- E. Labashi-Marduk (556 B.C.).
 - 1. He was the son of Neriglissar.
 - 2. He was deposed by a popular uprising.
- F. Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.).
 - 1. He was a general under Nebuchadnezzar.
 - 2. He also was probably one of Nebuchadnezzar's sons-in-law.
- G. Belshazzar (553-539 B.C.).
 - 1. The son of Nabonidus, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, he was appointed as coregent with his father.
 - 2. Both he and his father ruled until Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.

Questions

1. Who founded Babylon?
2. By what river was Babylon located?
3. What man ruled a great empire from Babylon in the seventh century B.C.?
4. What Babylonian king visited Hezekiah, king of Judah?
5. Who started the Neo-Babylonian empire?
6. Who was the greatest king of the Neo-Babylonian empire?
7. What contact did the above king have with Judah and Jerusalem?
8. Who were the last two kings of the Babylonians? What was their blood relationship and their relationship as far as ruling the country was concerned?
9. How long did the world dominance of the Neo-Babylonian empire last?
10. What empire conquered the Babylonians? When did they defeat them? Who was the king of this conquering empire?

Lesson Two: Nebuchadnezzar

Lesson Text

Daniel 2:1-49; 4:1-37

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Daniel 2:1-30

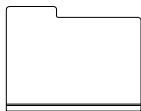
Tuesday
Daniel 2:31-49

Thursday
Daniel 4:1-18

Friday
Daniel 4:19-37

Saturday
Joel 2:28-32
James 1:2-12

Lesson Concept



**INSPIRED
SCRIPTURE**
Speaking through
prophets

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-49)

1. Had king Nebuchadnezzar forgotten his dream or was it only the interpretation that puzzled him? Explain.
2. What was Daniel's view of God as reflected in his prayer found in verses 17 through 24 of this chapter?
3. How was Daniel careful to avoid misunderstanding in verses 25 through 30?
4. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's dream found in verses 31 through 35.
5. Give the interpretation of the dream identifying the following aspects of it:
 - a. The characteristics of the fourth kingdom.
 - b. Reference of the stone striking the image. (vv. 34-35 with vv. 44-45).
 - c. The relation of Mark 1:14-15 and Luke 3:1ff. (With Matthew 3:1-2) to this prophecy.
 - d. The growth of the stone.
 - e. The relation of the parables of Matthew 13:31-33 to this prophecy.
6. List some consequences of Daniel's interpretation of the dream.

The Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar's Pride (4:1-37)

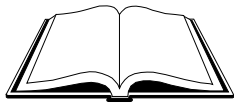
7. Briefly summarize the purpose of this chapter assigned to it by verses one through three.
8. Briefly summarize the main features of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that is found in this chapter.
9. What was the interpretation of the dream? What did God want to impress upon Nebuchadnezzar? How would God get him to see that point.
10. What in the character of Nebuchadnezzar explains why God brought him down to the level of a beast?
11. What evidence is given to show that God succeeded in his purpose?
12. What lessons stand out to you in this chapter?

Lesson Three: The Fiery Furnace

Lesson Text

Daniel 1:1-21; 3:1-30

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Daniel 1:1-14

Tuesday

Daniel 1:15-21

Thursday

Daniel 3:1-12

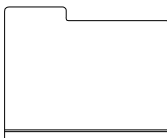
Friday

Daniel 3:13-23

Saturday

Daniel 3:24-30

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Knowing how to face persecution

Four Young Jews in Babylon (1:1-21)

1. Briefly describe the historical setting in which the events of this chapter take place.
2. Who were the four young Jews described in this chapter as being among the exiles in Babylon? Tell as much as you know of their background from chapter one.
3. What was the proposal of the Babylonian king?
4. Why did Daniel not want to partake of the king's food and drink? (Reference to the food laws of the Israelites might help explain.)
5. What divinely-given skills accounted for Daniel's rise in Babylon?
6. How long did Daniel's career last? (v. 21; cf. 10:1). (Note: The first year of Cyrus was 538 B.C.)

The Golden Image and the Fiery Furnace (3:1-30)

7. How was the faith of God's people sorely tested?
8. What is the difference between a religion of convenience and one of conviction? Which was it in the case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego? How do you know?
9. What kind of conditions put the nature and depth of one's commitment to the test and show what is really in him? How does that principle apply to the events recorded in this chapter?
10. How do the following terms apply to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego?
 - a. Conviction.
 - b. Unconditional surrender (to God's will). (Note vv. 17-18)
11. Since the men were protected from the furnace, what is revealed in verses 17 and 18 which show it to be a genuine test of their conviction?
12. Since skeptics object to this account by saying, "That furnace was not so hot," how would you answer them?

Lesson Four: Belshazzar

Lesson Text

Daniel 5:1-31

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Daniel 5:1-9

Tuesday

Daniel 5:10-16

Thursday

Daniel 5:17-24

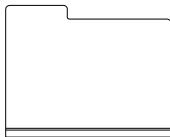
Friday

Daniel 5:25-30

Saturday

Daniel 5
(Review)

Lesson Concept



INSPIRED SCRIPTURE

Speaking through
prophets

1. When, in relation to the events of the previous chapters in the book of Daniel, do the events in this chapter occur?
2. Who was Belshazzar?
3. Briefly summarize the events of this chapter.
4. What characteristics of Belshazzar are reflected in this chapter?
5. What implications are there, if any, of verse 23 for mankind today? Explain.
6. What seems to have been the problem with the words which were written on the wall? Was it their translation, their meaning or making some sense of them which troubled Belshazzar? Explain.
7. What explanations were given to each of the following words which appeared on the wall?
 - a. Mene.
 - b. Tekel.
 - c. Peres. (ASV: "Upharsin")
8. Upon hearing Daniel's interpretation, what did Belshazzar proclaim? Why is it, in reality, an empty edict?
9. What happened to Belshazzar that very night? By whom was he succeeded?

Lesson Five: Daniel and Darius

Lesson Text

Daniel 6:1-28; 9:1-27

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Daniel 6:1-15

Tuesday

Daniel 6:16-28

Thursday

Daniel 9:1-19

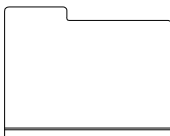
Friday

Daniel 9:20-27

Saturday

Matthew 13:3-9

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Facing persecution

Daniel in the Lion's Den (6:1-28)

1. Who plotted against Daniel? Why?
2. Describe the plot against Daniel.
3. What decree was issued by Darius? Why did he issue such a decree?
4. What was Daniel's reaction to the decree? What were the consequences of his actions?
5. What dilemma did Daniel's actions pose for Darius?
6. How was Daniel's faith shown in this chapter? How would you describe his faith?
7. Does Hebrews 11:33-34 refer to anyone in the book of Daniel? If so, who and why?
8. What happened to Daniel's accusers?
9. Can you trace a growth in the faith of Darius?
10. In your thinking, what is the main lesson to be learned from this chapter?

Daniel's Prayer and the Prophecy of 70 Weeks (9:1-27)

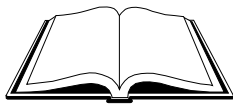
11. What is it that Daniel discovered in the first year of the reign of Darius? What was his reaction?
12. Briefly summarize Daniel's prayer that is found in this chapter.
13. Who appeared to Daniel when he was praying? Why was he sent? What was his purpose in coming?
14. What was the basic message of the prophecy spoken to Daniel in verses 24 through 27?
15. Does the prophecy found in this chapter have any application today? Explain.

Lesson Six: Ezra

Lesson Text

Ezra 1:1 - 10:44

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Ezra 1-2

Tuesday
Ezra 3-4

Thursday
Ezra 5-6

Friday
Ezra 7-8

Saturday
Ezra 9-10

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE
Fulfilling prophecy

The Decree of Cyrus (1:1 - 2:70)

1. Who was Cyrus? List the steps set forth in this chapter which he took in behalf of the Jews.
2. How was Cyrus' decree related to the prophecy of Jeremiah? (v. 1; Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10)
3. What explanation is given as to why Cyrus issued this decree?
4. While not all the Jews returned to their land, which of them did? How did the captivity have a purging or separating effect upon the nation?
5. Describe the basic content of chapter two. Why were some "put from the priesthood?" (vv. 61-63)

The Beginning of Restoration (3:1-13)

6. What was the first thing built?
7. What reason is suggested by verse three as to why the Jews were anxious to offer sacrifices?
8. What feast did they keep? Why that one? (cf. Leviticus 23:33ff; Numbers 29:12-30)
9. According to verse seven, what preparations and arrangements were made for building?
10. What beginning was made with regard to the temple?
11. What explanation of the weeping of verses 11 through 13 is suggested by Haggai 2:1-3?

Trouble and Opposition (4:1-24)

12. Who were "the adversaries" of the Jews? (v. 1, cf. 2 Kings 17:24ff)
13. What offer did these adversaries make to the Jews? Why was it refused?
14. Upon the rejection of their offer, what did the adversaries then do? How long did these efforts continue?
15. What was the effect on the Jews of the opposition to their work?

The Building of the Temple (5:1 - 6:22)

16. Who were the following individuals and what was their part in the work?
- Haggai.
 - Zechariah.
 - Zerubbabel.
 - Jeshua.
17. According to 5:6-17, why did some royal officials write to king Darius? What did they want to know? What was Darius' response to their inquiry?
18. How long after the work was resumed did it take to finish the temple?

The Coming of Ezra and His Work in Jerusalem (7:1 - 8:36)

19. What two things are known about the position of Ezra? (7:1-6,11)
20. Seeing that another company of Jews returns to the land with Ezra (v. 7), approximately how much time had passed since the first company returned? (1:1)
21. What was the purpose of the letter given to Ezra by Artaxerxes?
22. What does Ezra see in the king's arrangements? What effect does the king's provisions have on Ezra?
23. What was the purpose of the fast observed at the River Ahava by Ezra and the Jews while on their journey to their land?
24. Name three things done upon Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem.

The Problem of Intermarriage with Foreign Women (9:1 - 10:44)

25. Why did God prohibit intermarriage with foreigners? (cf. Deuteronomy 7:3-4)
26. What is meant by "the holy seed" in 9:2? (cf Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:1-2)
27. How serious did Ezra consider the matter of foreign wives to be?
28. What is meant by the description "every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel?" (9:4)
29. For what does Ezra pray? What was the effort of his prayer on behalf of the people?
30. What steps were taken in dealing with the problem of foreign wives?
31. In what way is chapter ten an illustration of repentance?

Lesson Seven: Nehemiah

Lesson Text

Nehemiah 1:1 - 13:31

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Nehemiah 1-2

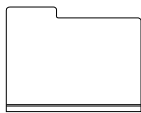
Tuesday
Nehemiah 3-4

Thursday
Nehemiah 5-6

Friday
Nehemiah 7-10

Saturday
Nehemiah 11-13

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE
Fulfilling prophecy

A Report from Jerusalem (1:1-3)

1. On what date was this report received? What was the report?

Nehemiah's Prayer (1:4-11)

2. For what did Nehemiah pray? What can we learn about prayer from his example?

Nehemiah to Jerusalem (2:1-20)

3. What was Nehemiah's official position? What would have been his duty.? What sort of person would a king want in that position?
4. What attracted the attention of the king as Nehemiah carried out his duties?
5. How does the last line of verse four relate to this situation?
6. What was the purpose of Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem?
7. What was the purpose of the letters requested by Nehemiah?
8. What conditions did Nehemiah find when he arrived in Jerusalem?
9. What did Nehemiah propose? What were the two reactions to his proposal?

The Workers and Their Work on the Wall (3:1-32)

10. Where does this listing of workers begin and end? (vv. 1,32) What does that let us know about this listing?
11. Of what historical importance is this chapter to us today?

Opposition to the Work (4:1 - 6:19)

12. What tactics were employed by those who were opposed to the rebuilding?. Are similar methods used by the enemies of the church today? Explain.

13. To whom did the workers carry their problem? What resemblance is there between 4:4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2?
14. What reason is given for the progress made on the wall? (4:6)
15. What provisions were made for the defense of the workers?
16. What encouragement was given to the people? (4:14, 20)
17. What problem threatened the unity of God's people? What action was taken to solve this problem? (5:1-13)
18. From chapter six, list four ways in which enemies attempted to undermine the work.
19. List as many things as you can which help to explain Nehemiah's success.
20. How long did it take to finish the walls? What effect did the completion of the walls have on the enemies?

The Reading of the Law (7:73b - 9:18)

21. What were the positions of Ezra and Nehemiah respectively among the people?
22. As you read the eighth chapter, list as many indications of attitude toward the law as you can noting the importance of attitude toward the law in any age.

Israel's Confession of Guilt (9:1-38)

23. What is the main theme of the review of Israel's history given in 9:7-31?
24. Since this historical review led to two things, petition (v. 32) and action (v. 38), what is their petition? What action is taken?

The Covenant Entered into by Israel (10:1-39)

25. What is the covenant entered into by the people?
26. What two points of the law were singled out for special mention in Israel's commitment?
27. What else did Israel agree to do according to verses 32 through 39?

Lesson Eight: Esther Becomes Queen

Lesson Text

Esther 1:1 - 2:23

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Esther 1:1-9

Tuesday

Esther 1:10-22

Thursday

Esther 2:1-7

Friday

Esther 2:8-15

Saturday

Esther 2:16-23

Lesson Concept



FAITH

Knowing the importance of commitment

Queen Vashti Deposed (1:1-22)

1. When do the events of this book take place? How does its time relate to the main events of Ezra and Nehemiah?
2. Where do these events take place?
3. Who was Vashti? What can be said of her character?
4. What did Vashti refuse to do? Was her refusal justified? Explain.
5. What shows how seriously the king's advisors regarded Vashti's refusal? What effect did they foresee? What action was decided upon?

Esther the Queen (2:1-23)

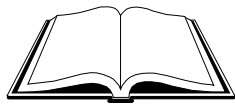
6. Describe how Esther came to be queen.
7. What is the implication of verse ten?
8. Since verses 13 and 15 provide insight into the character of Esther and how she hoped to gain favor and since verse 13 says a maiden could have whatever she desired (evidently meaning in the way of ornamentation and dress), what is said of Esther in verse 15? What is the implication? Does 1 Peter 3:3f provide any commentary? Explain.
9. Since verses 19 through 23 relate a conspiracy which is of great significance to the events which followed, describe the conspiracy and how it was uncovered.

Lesson Nine: Esther's Influence

Lesson Text

Esther 3:1 - 10:3

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Esther 3

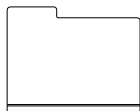
Tuesday
Esther 4-5

Thursday
Esther 6-7

Friday
Esther 8

Saturday
Esther 9-10

Lesson Concept



FAITH
Knowing the importance
of commitment

The Elevation of Haman and the Decree for the Destruction of the Jews (3:1-15)

1. Who was Haman? Why did he want to destroy the Jews?
2. What reason did Mordecai give for not bowing down to Haman?
3. What has verse 7 to do with the plan to destroy the Jews? (cf. v. 13 and 9:24)
4. Describe the charge that Haman made against the Jews in his petition to the king.
5. Why did the king give his ring to Haman? Seeing that he agreed with Haman, what action did the king take?

Mordecai's Appeal to Esther (4:1-17)

6. What two points did Mordecai use to persuade Esther to act?
7. Why was Mordecai so sure that the Jews would not perish? (v. 14; cf. Jeremiah 31:35-37; 33:23-36)
8. Do you see a parallel between Esther and Joseph? (cf. Genesis 45:4-8) Explain.

Esther's Banquet (5:1-8)

9. What risk was Esther taking? (cf. 4:11,16) How was she received?
10. Why, though she seems to begin her request then hesitate, does Esther put it off until later?

Haman's Wrath Against Mordecai (5:9-14)

11. What was Haman's attitude as he left the banquet Esther had prepared? Why? Who did he see that caused his countenance to change? Why?
12. Who was Zeresh? What was her advice to Haman? Why?

The Elevation of Mordecai and the Mortification of Haman (6:1-14)

13. Explain how and why Mordecai came to be honored by the king.
14. On what ground did Haman's wife and the wise men foresee Mordecai's ultimate triumph and Haman's complete defeat?

The Second Banquet: Haman's Complete Ruin (7:1-10)

15. What was Esther's petition of the king? Why? What was the king's response?
16. What happened to Haman? How is his fate ironic? How is he a classic example of Galatians 6:7?

The Elevation of Mordecai (8:1-7)

17. Describe the elevation of Mordecai especially noting the significance of:
 - a. The ring given to him.
 - b. The garb of verse 15.
18. Why was Haman's decree not simply revoked? (v. 8b; cf. 1:19; Dan. 6:8,12,15) What measure was taken to nullify the force of that decree? List two consequences of the measures taken.

The Victory of the Jews (9:1-16)

19. Describe how the tables were completely turned on the enemies of the Jews.
20. Distinguish the two phases of the war. (vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-16)
21. What in the text helps to explain the victory of the Jews?

The Festival of Purim (9:17-32)

22. Explain the meaning or significance of the festival of Purim. Why was it called "Purim?" Why was it decided to celebrate both the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar?
23. Explain why the "days of Purim" came to include two contrasting observances based on verses 17-22 and verses 29-32.

The Greatness of Mordecai (10:1-3)

24. What was Mordecai's position? Describe his activities in behalf of the people.
25. What did Mordecai have in common with Joseph, Moses, Daniel and Nehemiah?

Lesson Ten: Haggai and Zechariah

Lesson Text

Haggai 1:1 - 2:23
Zechariah 1:1 - 14:21

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Haggai 1
Zechariah 1:1-6

Tuesday

Zechariah 6

Thursday

Zechariah 9-10

Friday

Zechariah 11-12

Saturday

Zechariah 13-14

Lesson Concept



INSPIRED SCRIPTURE

Speaking through prophets

I. The Man

A. Haggai.

1. His name means “festival” or “festive.”
2. Knowledge of him is limited to his book and to Ezra 5:1-2 and 6:14-16.
3. He returned to Judea from Babylon with Zerubbabel in 536 B.C.

B. Zechariah.

1. His name means “Jehovah remembers.”
2. He was a priest as well as a prophet. (Nehemiah 12:16)
3. He was the grandson of Iddo, a priest. (Nehemiah 12:1-4)
4. He was a contemporary of Haggai. (Ezra 5-1; 6:14)

II. The Date

A. Haggai.

1. The date of writing is a four month period, August through December, 520 B.C.
2. The book was written in the second year of Darius, who reigned from 521 to 486 B.C.

B. Zechariah.

1. He prophesied from 520 to 518 B.C.
 - a. He began his work two months after Haggai had started his ministry.
 - b. He continued to be active as a prophet for two years or to the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius’ reign.
2. Three specific dates can be applied to the book.
 - a. The call to repentance, November 520 B.C. (1:1-6)
 - b. The night visions, February 519 B.C. (1:7 - 6:8)
 - c. The response to the questions about fasting, December 518 B.C. (ch. 7-8)

III. The Setting

A. After the seventy year captivity in Babylon, Zerubbabel led a group of approximately 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem in 536 B.C.

1. His purpose was to rebuild the temple.
2. The work began quickly but enemies of the Jews got a decree that stopped it.

B. God sent two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to revive the effort after it had laid dormant for 16 years.

1. About three weeks after Haggai started prophesying, the work resumed.
2. Two months later, Zechariah came along to further encourage the same thing.

IV. The Message

A. Haggai.

1. A singular theme: Rebuild the temple. It is stated in four oracles.
 - a. Oracle one (1:2-11), dated August 29, 520 B.C., stated that the time for rebuilding is long overdue.
 - d. Oracle two (2:1-9), uttered at the feast of the tabernacles, October, 520 B.C., was to encourage those who tended to compare the second temple with the first.
 - c. Oracle three (2:10-19), spoken on the 24th day of the ninth month, December, 520 B.C., some two months after the second oracle, was perhaps a reply to those who felt that God's blessings were slow in coming.
 - d. Oracle four (2:20-23), given the same day as oracle three, promised divine protection by Zerubbabel.
2. A revival of the Messianic hope.
 - a. The house of God would be filled with glory that would surpass anything previously seen.
 - b. Zerubbabel was to be God's "signet" in that the hope would be realized in him. (The Messianic line is traced through him [Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27])

B. Zechariah.

1. To rebuild the temple of God.
2. No other book of prophecy is as difficult to interpret as far as a few specific prophecies are concerned.
 - a. It is written in apocalyptic language and symbolism.
 - b. It emphasizes visions as a means of divine communication.
 - c. Angelic mediation occupies an important place in its message.

V. The Lessons

A. Haggai.

1. We must speak "the word of the Lord." (This phrase is used 26 times by Haggai.)
2. We must rightly order our priorities. (1:2-4)
3. Everyone must work, not just leaders. (1:12-15)
4. We should get to work now. (2 Corinthians 6:2; John 4:35)
5. The glory of the church is revealed. (2:6-9)
6. Is the seed still in the barn? (2:19)
7. Discouragement is not an adequate reason for neglecting duty.
8. When a good work is waiting for its accomplishment, the time to do it is now.

B. Zechariah.

1. We should learn from the lessons of history. (1:2-6)
2. Demons do not exist today. (13:2)
3. We are cleansed by the blood of Christ. His blood is the fountain for sin and uncleanness. (13:1)
4. Many specific prophecies about Christ. (3:8; 6:12; 8:16; 9:9-10; 11:2f; 12:10; 13:1, 7)

Questions

1. Is there any relevance to his work and/or message to the fact that Haggai was one of the Jews who had returned from Babylon? Explain.

2. What do you know of the personal life of Zechariah?
3. Compare the dates of the messages and writings of Haggai and Zechariah.
4. What was the condition of the Jews during the time of Haggai and Zechariah in reference to the following areas:
 - a. Political.
 - b. Moral.
 - c. Spiritual.
5. What was Haggai's message? Did the message of Zechariah differ from that of Haggai? If so, in what way?
6. Why do you think that so much emphasis is placed on the "word of the Lord" in Haggai?
7. When Haggai spoke of the house of God being filled with a glory that would surpass any previously seen (2:7-9), of what was he speaking?
8. What are some unique features of the book of Zechariah?
9. Why do you think the book of Zechariah is so difficult to understand?
10. What does Zechariah reveal about angels and their roles in relation to mankind?

Lesson Eleven: Malachi

Lesson Text

Malachi 1:1 - 4:6

Daily Bible Reading



Monday
Malachi 1

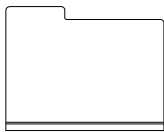
Tuesday
Malachi 2

Thursday
Malachi 3:1-7

Friday
Malachi 3:8-16

Saturday
Malachi 4

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE
Fulfilling prophecy

I. The Man

- A. His name means “messenger of Jehovah or “my messenger.”
1. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, treats his name as a common noun.
 2. “The name ‘Malachi’ means ‘My Messenger.’ Although some have considered it a title rather than a name, this is unlikely since such a usage would be unique among the prophets.” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, p. 284)
 3. “This name means ‘The Messenger of Jehovah.’ It carries the thought that this prophet brought a message from Jehovah to His people. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets and is thus the connecting link between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment in historical reality.” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, p. 233)
- B. Nothing more is known of him other than that which is revealed in the book.
- “As to his origin, we know little of Malachi. He is assumed to have come from somewhere in Judah, since he prophesied around Jerusalem, where he later wrote his famous book. Of his last days and burial, tradition has left no certain word.” (Deal)

II. The Date

- A. The book was written sometime during the period of 445 to 432 B.C.
- B. The time frame for this book is probably about the same as that of the book of Nehemiah.
- C. “Malachi probably wrote his book around the time of Nehemiah’s visit to Babylon in 433 B.C. (Neh. 13:6)...In support of this view are these facts: a) The Temple project had already been completed, and Mosaic sacrifices were being offered (Mal. 1:7-10; 3:1,8). b) A Persian governor, not Nehemiah, was ruling the Jews at the time. Read 1:8. c) The sins denounced by Malachi were the same sins that Nehemiah dealt with during his second term. For example: laxity and corruption of priests (Mal. 1:6-2:9; Neh. 13:1-9), mixed marriages (Mal. 2:10-16; Neh. 13:23-28), neglect of tithes (Mal. 3:7-12; Neh. 13:10-13).” (Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen’s Survey of the Old Testament*, pp. 467-468)

III. The Setting

A. Some pertinent dates.

1. 536 B.C. Zerubbabel had led a group of about 50,000 Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem after the decree of Cyrus, Medo-Persian king, which had freed them (Ezra 2).
2. 520-516 B.C.
 - a. The prophetic work of Haggai, who prophesied from August through December, and Zechariah, whose prophetic ministry in relation to the building of the Temple lasted two years, began in 520 B.C. encouraging the people to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - b. The Temple was completed and dedicated in 516 B.C.
3. 458 B.C. Ezra, 79 years after the first group of exiled Jews had returned, led back a second group composed of about 2,058 persons (Ezra 8:1-34).
4. 445 B.C. Thirteen years after Ezra's return, Nehemiah returned with a third group. (Neh. 2)
 - a. Nehemiah had been cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, king of the Medo-Persian empire. (464-424 B.C.)
 - b. Artaxerxes had permitted Nehemiah to return so that he could rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

B. Religiously.

1. In the nearly 100 years since the people had returned from the Babylonian captivity, their religious condition had worsened. Indifference to both the moral and ceremonial aspects of the Law characterized the people.
 - a. They had grown weary of observing its demanding sacrifices.
 - b. They were sacrificing, thus the priests were accepting as offerings, animals which were sick, lame and defiled instead of the best.
 - c. They were marrying non-Jews (2:11-12), divorcing their wives to do it.
2. "All was not well in the nation of Israel. Pagan and other questionable practices were common in the land. There was religious unconcern, greed, corruption in governmental circles, and marriages to foreign women (which meant introducing foreign gods back into the land). The priesthood especially was a problem. Religious matters had become routine, lacking any real significance, either for the priests or for the people of the land. The lack of concern here was called nothing less than robbery of God." (*The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 250)
3. "The people of Israel had become disillusioned and doubtful. Internally they wondered if God's messianic promises would ever be fulfilled and whether it was worth serving God after all. Externally, these attitudes were manifested in empty ritual, cheating on tithes and offerings, and indifference to the moral and ceremonial law." (*Nelson's*, 286)

- #### C.
- "Many changes had occurred since the times of Haggai and Zechariah. The people had grown indifferent to their spiritual obligations, had neglected the temple and were worldly, restless and in danger from their enemies about them. Crops were poor, the priests were corrupt and the people refused to pay their tithes and offerings. Worship had degenerated, social abuses were widespread and home and family life were decaying. Nehemiah had come back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and to help his brethren in their plight but he needed the support of a prophet. Malachi was called to serve in this crisis." (H.I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History*, p. 294)

IV. The Message

A. The character of the book.

1. The book is an appeal to God as the source of its message (1:2). The phrase, “says the LORD,” is used 25 times.
2. The book makes extensive use of the didactic-dialectic, question and answer, method. This method became the universal style of teaching in the Jewish schools and synagogues.
 - a. The method defined.
 - 1) An assertion or charge is made.
 - 2) A fancied objection is raised by the hearers.
 - 3) A refutation of the objection is presented by the speaker.
 - b. Examples of the use of this method in the book.
 - 1) I have loved you. (1:2,3)
 - 2) You have despised my name. (1:6-7)
 - 3) Judah has been faithless. (2:10-16)
 - 4) You have wearied the Lord with your words. (2:17)
 - 5) From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes. (3:7)
 - 6) You have robbed me. (3:8)
 - 7) Your words have been stout against me. (3:13)

B. “The book consists of two sections. The first deals with the sins of Israel and the second with promised blessings and judgments. It is set up as a series of questions and answers, much like a courtroom scene, with Israel asking rhetorical (and often self-justifying) questions and God answering.” (*Shaw’s*, 250)

C. A summary.

1. The book opens with an affirmation of God’s love for Israel and His specific choice of them to be His people. (1:1-5)
2. God utters oracles to two different groups.
 - a. He first addresses the priesthood. (1:6 - 2:9)
 - 1) They had profaned the temple worship by offering polluted sacrifices. (1:6-8)
 - 2) They had become weary of the ritual of worship. (1:13-14)
 - 3) They had caused many people to stumble. (2:7-8)
 - 4) Therefore, He would curse them. (2:1-2)
 - b. He then rebukes the people because of their indifference toward Him and their breaking of His covenant with them. (2:10 - 4:3)
 - 1) They had been unfaithful to God’s marriage laws by divorcing their Jewish wives and marrying heathen wives. (2:10-16)
 - 2) They had come to doubt whether or not there was a God of justice, therefore, God announces His coming judgment in the Messiah. (2:17 - 3:7)
 - 3) They had robbed God by hoarding their tithes which were supposed to be offered to care for God’s house. (3:8-12)
 - 4) They complained of the vanity of serving God because the wicked were prospering and they were not. In reply, God showed them that He kept an account of what the righteous and unrighteous did and that there would be a day of reckoning. (3:13 - 4:3)

3. The book concludes with an exhortation to keep the Law and to look for the prophet Elijah who would be Israel's final messenger before God's great day of reckoning (4:4-6). Of course, Jesus said John the Baptist was the one prophesied by Malachi. (cf. Matt. 11:7-15; 17:11-12)
- D. "What more could God do for Israel than what He did do? Does this not give some idea as to why the Bible is silent for the four hundred years between Malachi and Christ? There was nothing more to be said. The only thing God had left to offer them was the Messiah. Every other promise had been fulfilled." (Homer Hailey, *Hailey's Comments*, Vol. I, p. 65)

V. The Purpose

- A. The book is designed to encourage zeal and enthusiasm for God in the hearts of the Jews.
 1. It relates that God still loves Israel but that her sins have delayed her salvation.
 2. It seeks to restore an understanding of the value of serving the Lord faithfully.
- B. "The apparent purpose was to set before Israel a picture of her ingratitude in the manner in which she was living as a nation. One can see that Malachi desired to produce repentance in the heart-life of Israel and a return to true righteousness." (Deal, 233)
- C. "The prophet insists that God's acceptance of men's offerings and service is conditioned upon the sincerity and purity of the life of those who make them. The people had robbed God not only in tithes and offerings, but they had withheld from Him their loyalty and their love. If the people gave to God what rightfully belonged to Him, abundant blessings should follow..." (Hester, 294-295)
- D. "The book of Malachi contains the Lord's last recorded words of Old Testament times. In many respects it is a sad book, because it reveals what little progress—if any—Israel had made since the nation was born fifteen hundred years earlier...Malachi is both a conclusion and a connecting link. It concludes the story of Israel for the span of 2000-400 B.C., and it is the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament. The book connects the Old Testament with the New Testament in its prophecies of John the Baptist and Christ's first advent." (Jensen, 467, 469)

VI. The Lessons

- A. God hates indifference to Him and His law. (1:13; cf. Rev. 3:14-16)
- B. God hates divorce. (2:16; cf. Matt. 19:3-8)
- C. Man will rob God. (3:8)

VII. Malachi in the New Testament

- A. "The last two chapters of the last book of the Old Testament contain dramatic prophecies of the coming of the Lord and of John the Baptist. Israel flocked to the Jordan River four hundred years later when 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD'' (Matt. 3:3; cf. Mal. 3:1) appeared, thus breaking the long period of prophetic silence." (*Nelson's*, 286)
- B. "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated." (1:2-3; Rom. 9:13)
- C. The messenger to come. (3:1; Matt. 11:10)
- D. Elijah the prophet. (4:5; Matt. 11:14)

Questions

1. What is the meaning of the name “Malachi?” How does it relate to the content and purpose of the book?
2. When was the book of Malachi written? What other Old Testament book dates to that same time period?
3. Describe the religious condition of the Judeans during the ministry of Malachi especially noting the changes which had occurred since the time of Haggai and Zechariah.
4. What is the message of the book of Malachi to:
 - a. The priesthood.
 - b. The Jews in general.
5. What is the “didactic-dialectic” method? What role did it have in Jewish education?
6. Cite some examples (at least 3) of the didactic-dialectic method in the book of Malachi.
7. What do you think is the purpose of the book of Malachi?
8. Why do you think a 400 year silence from God followed the book of Malachi?
9. According to Malachi, what is God’s attitude toward divorce? What application, if any, can be made of that fact today?
10. According to Malachi, how can one “rob God?” What application, if any, can be made of this principle today?

Lesson Twelve: The Greek Empire

Lesson Text

Daniel 8:1-26

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Acts 17:16-34

Tuesday

Daniel 2:31-45

Thursday

Daniel 8:1-14

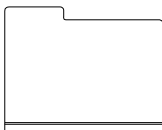
Friday

Daniel 8:15-19

Saturday

Daniel 8:20-26

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE

Fulfilling prophecy

I. The Rise of the Greek Empire

- A. The beginnings of Greek history are veiled in myth.
 - 1. Greece is thought to have begun at about the time of the Biblical judges in the 12th century B.C.
 - 2. Included in this history were the Trojan War and Homer, c. 1000 B.C., the age of David (c. 1000-970 B.C.) and Solomon (970-931 B.C.).
- B. The beginning of the authentic Greek history is usually reckoned from the first Olympiad in 776 B.C.
 - 1. The formation of the Hellenic states took place between 776 and 500 B.C.
 - 2. The Persian wars were from 500 to 331 B.C. with famous battles taking place at Marathon (490 B.C.), Thermopylae and Salamis (480 B.C.).
- C. The formation of an empire was begun by Philip of Macedon, king of Macedonia (359-336 B.C.).
 - 1. He laid the foundation of the Greek empire by uniting the Greek city states under a single ruler.
 - 2. Though not a Greek, strictly speaking, he wanted to lead a united Greece against Persia.
 - 3. He trained his son, Alexander, to carry out his ambition.

II. Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.)

- A. In 343 B.C., at the age of thirteen, Alexander was tutored under Aristotle.
- B. Philip appointed him regent of Greece when he was only sixteen years old.
- C. At age twenty, upon his father's death, he assumed command of the Greek army.
- D. In the spring of 334 B.C., he crossed the Hellespont River with 35,000 men and began the conquest of the Persian Empire.
 - 1. He defeated the Persians at the Granicus River in Asia Minor.
 - 2. He cut the "Gordian knot" at Gordium in the Temple of Zeus.
 - 3. He defeated the Persians at Issus at the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea.
 - a. The conquered Persians numbered 600,000 including the wife and children of Darius III, their ruler.
 - b. Darius III ran away to Susa to raise another army.
 - 4. Alexander turned his attention south to Tyre on Phoenician coast.

E. The capture of Tyre.

1. Isaiah, in 740 B.C., had prophesied of the destruction of Tyre by the Chaldeans. (Isa. 23:13-15)
 - a. It came to pass just before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar, as prophesied by Ezekiel (Ezek. 26:7-11,14), was its destroyer.
 - c. A new city of Tyre was built on an island offshore but Zechariah prophesied that this stronghold would be smitten “in the sea” and “devoured with fire.” (Zech. 9:3,4)
2. In fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy, in 332 B.C. Alexander destroyed Tyre by building a causeway from the mainland to the island. (cf. Ezek. 27:32)
 - a. After a siege of seven months, 8,000 inhabitants were slain and 30,000 were sold into slavery.
 - b. The destruction of Tyre is considered the greatest military achievement of Alexander.

F. The capture of Jerusalem.

1. After the destruction of Tyre, Alexander entered the land of Israel.
2. Sanballat, the probable successor of the Sanballat who opposed Nehemiah (Neh. 4) a hundred years before, had a daughter Nicaso, who was married to a priest named Manasseh, brother of the High Priest, Jaddua. While Alexander was at Tyre:
 - a. Sanballat, along with 7,000 soldiers, went there to help him.
 - b. He wrote a letter to Jerusalem demanding that the High Priest send provisions for his army. The high priest refused.
3. After the victory at Tyre, Alexander hastened to Jerusalem.
 - a. He was met by Jaddua, the High Priest, at the head of a long procession of people dressed in white while the Priest was dressed in purple and scarlet with a mitre on his head. God had warned him in a dream the previous night to do this.
 - b. Alexander approached Jaddua alone and saluted him indicating that he had seen this very person, Jaddua, in a dream at Dios, in Macedonia, thus believing that his army was under Divine conduct.
 - c. Alexander refused to allow his soldiers to harm the Jews and accompanied them back to Jerusalem. He went up to the Temple and was shown the Book of Daniel “wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended.” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI, 8,5)
4. Alexander allowed the Jews to continue in their laws and religion and to pay no tribute each seventh year. When the Samaritans saw his treatment of the Jews, they claimed to be Jews also.

G. Egypt and the East.

1. From Jerusalem, Alexander went to Egypt where he founded the city of Alexandria to help accomplish his goal of exporting the Greek culture into every country he conquered.
2. From Egypt he marched toward the Persian capital.
 - a. Upon the plain of Arbela, not far from the site of ancient Nineveh, his army soundly defeated the Persians.
 - b. Darius III, ruler of Persian Empire, fled but was murdered by one of his own generals, Bessus. Alexander avenged his death and gave him a grand funeral.

- c. He then took Babylon, Susa and Persepolis capturing much gold and silver (Approximated at \$170 million—GT) in Susa and Persepolis.
 - d. He massacred many Persians and burned the palaces of their kings.
 - 3. He marched eastward to Indus River conquering and building cities. His plans included conquests in Arabia, Carthage and Western Europe and the Hellenizing of the world, but these goals were never realized.
 - 4. He returned to Babylon in 323 B.C.
 - a. He had plans to make it the capital of a new commercial empire but it was never to be inhabited (Isaiah 13:20-22; Jeremiah 51:26).
 - b. He died there of a fever at age thirty-two.
- H. He thought the Greek or “Hellenistic” culture was the greatest the world had ever seen and he was determined to share it with all the people he conquered.
 - 1. He established model Greek cities, such as Alexandria in Egypt, as he conquered a region.
 - 2. The influence of Greek culture, arts and language was felt by the entire world.

III. The Empire After Alexander

- A. Upon Alexander’s death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals.
- B. The four generals and their territories.
 - 1. Ptolemy.
 - a. The Ptolemaic empire was centered in Egypt with Alexandria as its capital.
 - b. Its rulers, called Ptolemies, included Ptolemy I (323-285 B.C.), Ptolemy II (285-247 B.C.), Ptolemy III (247-222 B.C.), Ptolemy IV (222-205 B.C.), Ptolemy V (205-182 B.C.), Ptolemy VI (182-146 B.C.), Ptolemy VII (146-117 B.C.). Cleopatra was the last ruler, dying in 30 B.C.
 - 2. Seleucus.
 - a. The Seleucid empire was centered in Syria with Antioch as its capital.
 - b. Several rulers were named Seleucus while others were named Antiochus. Included were Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.), Antiochus I (280-261 B.C.), Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.), Seleucus II (246-226 B.C.), Seleucus III (226-223 B.C.), Antiochus III (222-187 B.C.), Seleucus IV (187-175 B.C.), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), Antiochus V (163-161 B.C.), Alexander Balas (161-146 B.C.), Antiochus VI (146-143 B.C.), Tryphon (143-139 B.C.), and Antiochus VII (139-130 B.C.)
 - 3. Lysimachus. He ruled Thrace and Bythynia.
 - 4. Cassander. He ruled Macedonia.

Questions

1. What marks the beginning of authentic Greek history (that which is not mythic)?
2. Of what Importance is Philip of Macedon in relation to Greek history?
3. Who was Alexander the Great? Describe his impact on the Greek empire.

4. What happened to the Greek empire following the death of Alexander?
5. What is Hellenism? What caused it to have so much influence on the world?
6. How did the Jews come to be influenced by the Greek empire? List some of the consequences of the influence of Hellenism on them.
7. Who were the Hasidim?
8. Who was Antiochus Epiphanes? What did he do in relation to the Jews?
9. Who was Mattathias? What was his place in Jewish history?
10. Who was Judas the Maccabee? Summarize his life as it relates to Jewish history.

Lesson Thirteen: The Roman Empire

Lesson Text

Daniel 2:31-45

Daily Bible Reading



Monday

Daniel 2:31-45

Tuesday

Daniel 2:1-8

Thursday

Acts 22:25-30

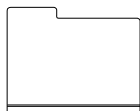
Friday

Acts 25:8-27

Saturday

Acts 28:17-22

Lesson Concept



OBEDIENCE

Fulfilling prophecy

I. The Romans in Palestine

- A. Rome, according to tradition, was founded by two brothers, Romulus and Remus, in 753 B.C.
 1. Its founding took place during the last years of struggle before the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians.
 2. It began as an insignificant city-state but gradually grew into a world power.
- B. Rome first began moving out of Italy in 264 B.C.
 1. She had no single military genius such as Alexander or Cyrus.
 2. Her first major conflicts were with Carthage in northwestern Africa.
 - a. These were known as the Punic Wars.
 - b. In 200 B.C., Carthage was defeated.
- C. Rome gained control over the western Mediterranean in 146 B.C.
 1. Roman rule soon extended over Macedonia, Corinth and all Achaia.
 2. Rome defeated the king of Macedonia in 197 B.C.
 3. Antiochus III, the Seleucid ruler of Syria (222-187 B.C.), attacked the Roman army in Greece and was soundly defeated thus causing Rome to demand a very heavy tax from Syria.
 - a. Antiochus IV ("Epiphanes, 175-164 B.C.) inherited the Syrian throne in 175 B.C. but his kingdom was debt-ridden.
 - b. Asia Minor was falling under Roman control.
 4. "In 133 B.C., Attalus, king of Pergamum, bequeathed his territory to the Romans. The territory was annexed to another Roman province." (Charles Pfeiffer, *Between the Testaments*, p. 104)
 5. By 64 B.C., the Roman general Pompey ended the Seleucid dominion in Syria.
- D. Pompey intervened in the civil dispute between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus.
 1. He took the side of Hyrcanus who was appointed high priest and ethnarch of Judea.
 2. Hyrcanus ruled Judea, Galilee, Idumea and Perea, paying annual tribute to Rome.
 3. "In 63 B.C., then, the Jews lost their independence when Pompey once again brought them 'under the yoke of the heathen.' From that time forward the spirit of Jewish nationalism sprang into revolt and continued right down to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state in A.D. 70." (D.S. Russell, *Between the Testaments*, p. 35)
 4. Aristobulus was taken prisoner to Rome.

- E. Antipater, the Idumean, paved the way for Herod.
 - 1. “An Idumean by birth, he was gifted with wealth, craftiness, and power.” (Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times*, p. 47)
 - 2. The Idumeans were descendants of the ancient Edomites.
 - a. They had been pushed out of their territory southeast of the Dead Sea by the Nabatean Arabs.
 - b. They now lived in the area around Hebron.
 - c. John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.) had compelled them to be a part of Judea.
 - 3. In the strife between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, he persuaded Hyrcanus to ally himself with Aretas, king of the Nabateans, in order to regain his kingdom. His plan did not succeed because of Rome’s intervention.
 - 4. The influence of Antipater continued to grow.
 - a. He supported Pompey until his death in 47 B.C.
 - b. He then switched allegiance to Julius Caesar, Pompey’s rival.
 - c. Caesar granted many favors to the Jews both in Palestine and in the Dispersion.
 - d. Antipater was made governor of Judea and Roman citizenship was conferred on him.
 - e. He was hated by the Jews because he was an Idumean.
 - 5. He had two sons: Phasael and Herod.
 - 6. Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and Antipater was poisoned by his enemies in 43 B.C.
 - 7. Cassius now ruled over Syria and Palestine.
- F. Cassius and Brutus were defeated by Antony and Octavian at Philippi in 42 B.C.
 - 1. Antony assumed control of the eastern provinces.
 - 2. Antony made Herod and Phasael tetrarchs of Judea under the ethnarch Hyrcanus II.
 - 3. Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, gained support of the Parthians to regain the throne.
 - a. Phasael and Hyrcanus were taken prisoners.
 - b. Herod escaped and fled to Rome.
 - 4. Antony and Octavian declared Herod as king of Judea and with Roman help he defeated Antigonus and took possession of Galilee and Judea.
- G. The reign of Herod the Great began in 37 B.C. and lasted until his death in 4 B.C.
- H. Antony was defeated at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.
 - 1. Herod informed Octavian that he would serve him with the same loyalty he had shown Antony.
 - 2. Herod assisted Octavian in his invasion of Egypt. In return, he received the cities of Jericho, Gadara and Samaria and the territories of Gaza, Joppa and Caesarea.
- J. “Although Palestine remained nominally independent until his (Herod’s) death, its real sovereignty lay in the hands of the Roman legate of Syria, and later in the command of the procurators. Throughout the period of the New Testament the shadow of Rome fell over the land, and under its oppression and protection Christianity was born and flourished.” (Tenney, 50-51)

II. The Roman Procurators

- A. Pontius Pilate, A.D. 26 to 36.
 - 1. Tiberius Caesar, who succeeded Augustus in 14 A.D., appointed Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea in 26 A.D.
 - a. He arrived and made his official residence in Caesarea Maritima, the Roman capital of Judea.
 - b. Pilate was the 5th procurator of Judea.

2. According to history Pilate made an immediate impression upon the Jews when he moved his army headquarters from Caesarea to Jerusalem.
 - a. They marched into the city with their Roman standards, bearing the image of the “divine emperor” and set up their headquarters right in the corner of the Temple in a palace-fortress called “Antonia,” which outraged the Jews.
 - b. Pilate quickly learned their zealous nature and political power within the province and, according to Josephus, ordered the standards to be returned to Caesarea. (Josephus Ant. 18.3.1-2; Wars 2.9.2-4)
 3. Josephus (Ant, XVIII, iv, 1, 2) gives an account of what really happened to Pontius Pilate and his removal from office.
 - a. A religious fanatic arose in Samaria who promised the Samaritans that if they would assemble on Mt. Gerizim, he would show them the sacred vessels which Moses had hidden there.
 - b. A great multitude of people came to the “sacred mountain” of the Samaritans ready to ascend the mountain, but before they could they were attacked by Pilate’s cavalry, and many of them were slaughtered.
 - c. The Samaritans therefore sent an embassy to Vitellius, the legate of Syria, to accuse Pilate of murdering innocent people.
 - d. Vitellius, who wanted to maintain friendship with the Jews, removed Pilate from office and appointed Marcellus in his place.
 - e. Pilate was ordered to go to Rome and answer the charges made against him before the emperor.
 - f. Pilate set out for Rome, but, before he could reach it, Tiberius had died.
- B. M. Antonius Felix, A.D. 52 to 59.
1. Roman procurator of Judaea, Samaria, Galilee, and Peraea, he was a freedman of Claudius I.
 2. He was judge of the apostle Paul.
 3. He married Drusilla, a Herodian princess.
 4. He was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and when recalled to Rome, he escaped being sentenced to death by Nero only through the intercession of his brother, Pallas.
 5. His oppressive rule caused deep resentment among the Jews and strengthened the anti-Roman party.
- C. Porcius Festus, A.D. 59 to 61.
1. The successor of Felix as procurator of Judea. (Acts 24:27)
 2. A few weeks after he had entered on his office the case of Paul, then a prisoner at Caesarea, was reported to him.
 3. He was just in his administration of the province.
 4. The “next day,” after he had gone down to Caesarea, he heard Paul defend himself in the presence of Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice, and not finding in him anything worthy of death or of bonds, would have set him free had he not appealed unto Caesar. (Acts 25:11, 12) In consequence of this appeal Paul was sent to Rome.
 5. Festus, after being in office less than two years, died in Judea.
- D. Florus, A.D. 66 to 73.
1. Gessius Florus was the Roman procurator of Judea from 66-73.
 2. Florus behaved like an executioner and a robber rather than a governor—he despoiled whole cities.
 3. When Gessius became procurator, injustice, oppression, and tyranny reached a climax and the people at large “threw caution to the winds,” being openly defiant.
 4. Florus boasted openly of his misdeeds.

5. He plundered entire cities, and many communities were totally ruined.
6. When Florus dared to appropriate 17 talents from the Temple treasury, the people's patience was at an end.
 - a. A riot broke out, and baskets were passed around that the charitable might drop in coins for poor Florus who was in so much in need of funds.
 - b. With the confidence that God would in some way come to their rescue and vindicate their cause, they came out in the year 66 in open rebellion against Rome and the Jewish war had begun.

Questions

1. According to tradition:
 - a. Who founded Rome?
 - b. When was Rome founded?
2. Briefly describe the expansion of Rome into Judea including the significant military victories.
3. Who were the Idumeans? How do they figure into the political history of Judea?
4. Summarize the role of the following persons in relation to the history of Palestine and the Jews.
 - a. Pompey.
 - b. Antipater.
 - c. Cassius.
 - d. Antony.
5. Who declared Herod to be king of Judea? How did Herod also take possession of Galilee and Samaria?
6. When did the reign of Herod the Great begin? How long did he reign?
7. What kind of character did Herod the Great possess?
8. Briefly summarize what you know about the following Herods.
 - a. Archelaus.
 - b. Philip.
 - c. Antipas.
 - d. Agrippa I.
9. Briefly summarize what you know about the following Roman governors.
 - a. Pontius Pilate.
 - b. Felix.
 - c. Festus.
10. What did the Romans do to Judea and the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Why?

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