

Daniel

According to the contents of the Book of Daniel, it was written in the sixth century B.C. by Daniel who lived during its events. Daniel is referred to many times as the recipient of God's revelation. And he took part in, many of the historical events recorded in the book. The Lord, Himself, attributed the authorship of the book to Daniel (Matthew 24:15). Daniel's familiarity with the individuals spoken of in the book and with the historical events and customs mentioned in the book necessitates a sixth-century date for the book.

Nineveh, the Assyrian capital fell before the assault of the forces of Babylon and Media in 612 B. C. Under the leadership of Ashur-uballit some Assyrians fled westward to Haran, from which they claimed authority over all of Assyria. Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, moved in 611 B.C. against the Assyrian forces in Haran. The next year, 610 B.C., Babylon, allied with Media, attacked the Assyrians in Haran. Assyria withdrew from Haran westward beyond the Euphrates River and left Haran to the Babylonians.

In 609 B.C. the Assyrians sought the help of Egypt, and Pharaoh Neco II led an army from Egypt to join Assyria. Josiah, the king of Judah, hoping to incur favor with the Babylonians, sought to prevent the Egyptians from joining Assyria and met the Egyptian army at Megiddo. Josiah's army was defeated and he was killed in this attempt (2 Kings 23:28-30; 2 Chronicles 35:24).

Pharaoh Neco proceeded to join the Assyrians and together they assaulted Babylon at Haran but were unsuccessful. Assyria seems to have passed from the scene at that time, but conflict continued between Egypt and Babylon.

In 605 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar led Babylon against Egypt in the Battle of Carchemish. Egypt was defeated and Carchemish was destroyed by the Babylonians in May - June of that year. While pursuing the defeated Egyptians Nebuchadnezzar returned from Riblah to Babylon in August, 605 to receive the crown. Then he returned to Palestine and attacked Jerusalem in September, 605. It was on this occasion that Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon as captives. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar considered them hostages to warn the people in "Judah" against rebellion. Or the young men may have been taken to Babylon to prepare them for positions of administrative leadership there if Nebuchadnezzar should have to return to subjugate Judah. Returning to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar reigned for 43 years (605-562).

Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah a second time in 597 B.C. in response to Jehoiachin's rebellion. In this incursion Jerusalem was brought in subjection to Babylon, and 10,000 captives were taken to Babylon, among whom was the Prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-3; 2 Kings 24:8-20; 2 Chronicles 36:6-10).

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The restoration of the Jews back to their land was made possible when in 539 B.C., Cyrus overthrew Babylon and established the Medo-Persian Empire. Having a policy to restore displaced peoples to their lands, Cyrus issued a decree in 538 that permitted the Jews who so desired to return to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). About 50,000 Jewish exiles returned to the land and began to rebuild the temple. This was in keeping with Daniel's prayer (Daniel 9:4-19). The temple was completed in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15).

From the first subjugation of Jerusalem (605B. C.) until the Jews returned and rebuilt the temple foundation (536) was approximately 60 years. From the destruction of the temple (586) until the temple was rebuilt (515) was also about 70 years. So Jeremiah's prophecy about the 70-year duration of the Babylon Exile was literally fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:11-12).