

St. Matthew's Church
Thursday Night Bible Study
Daniel
Bp. Stephen Scarlett and Fr. Hayden Butler

Session I | 7 February 2019 | Introduction to Daniel; Chapter 1

I. Historical Background

- A. Abraham was around 2000 B.C. The story of the Patriarchs of Israel culminates in the story of Joseph bringing his family (including his aged father Israel) to Egypt to live in the land that he had won for them through his service in Pharaoh's court around 1800 B.C.
- B. The story of the Exodus and Moses takes place around 1440 B.C. The wilderness wanderings center around the Covenant sealed at Mt. Sinai which gave Israel the "Law" that would govern what it meant to be faithful to the covenant. This progresses into Israel's entrance into the Promised Land under Joshua, inaugurating the time of the Judges.
- C. The period of the Judges prior to the first king of Israel takes place from about 1400B.C. to 1030 B.C. It culminates in the last judge/prophet Samuel anointing the first king, Saul.
- D. The united kingdom of Israel continues from 1030B.C. to about 931B.C. when there is a division of the kingdom under the reign of the son of King Solomon. It is important to note that the covenant blessings promised to Israel persisted through the rule of Kings David and Solomon, but departed through the unfaithfulness to the Covenant begun under Solomon and brought to fruition under his sons.
- E. The divided kingdom of Israel and Judah split between the Northern Kingdom of Israel centered at Samaria under King Jeroboam and the Southern Kingdom of Judah centered at Jerusalem under King Rehoboam. The condition of the rule over both kingdoms is a story of deteriorating faithfulness to the Covenant, which brings upon both kingdoms a summary judgment and destruction known through the language of the prophets who warned of it as "the Day of the Lord."
- F. The "Days of the Lord" came for the Northern and Southern Kingdom at the hands of two neighboring Empires. First, the Northern Kingdom falls to the Assyrian Empire in 722B.C. Second, the Southern Kingdom falls to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- G. This second "Day of the Lord" is the setting for the book of Daniel. When King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon sweeps in and sacks Jerusalem he scatters the citizenry throughout the empire as exiles. Daniel is one of these exiles.

- H. **Consider the words of the Lord to Jeremiah concerning how the people are to regard their exile:** *“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord. “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.*
- I. By the time the exile/captivity ends and there is a return to the Land (around the 400s), there is never a return to the Golden Age of Israel and there is a silencing of prophecy in the Land until the time of John the Baptist.