



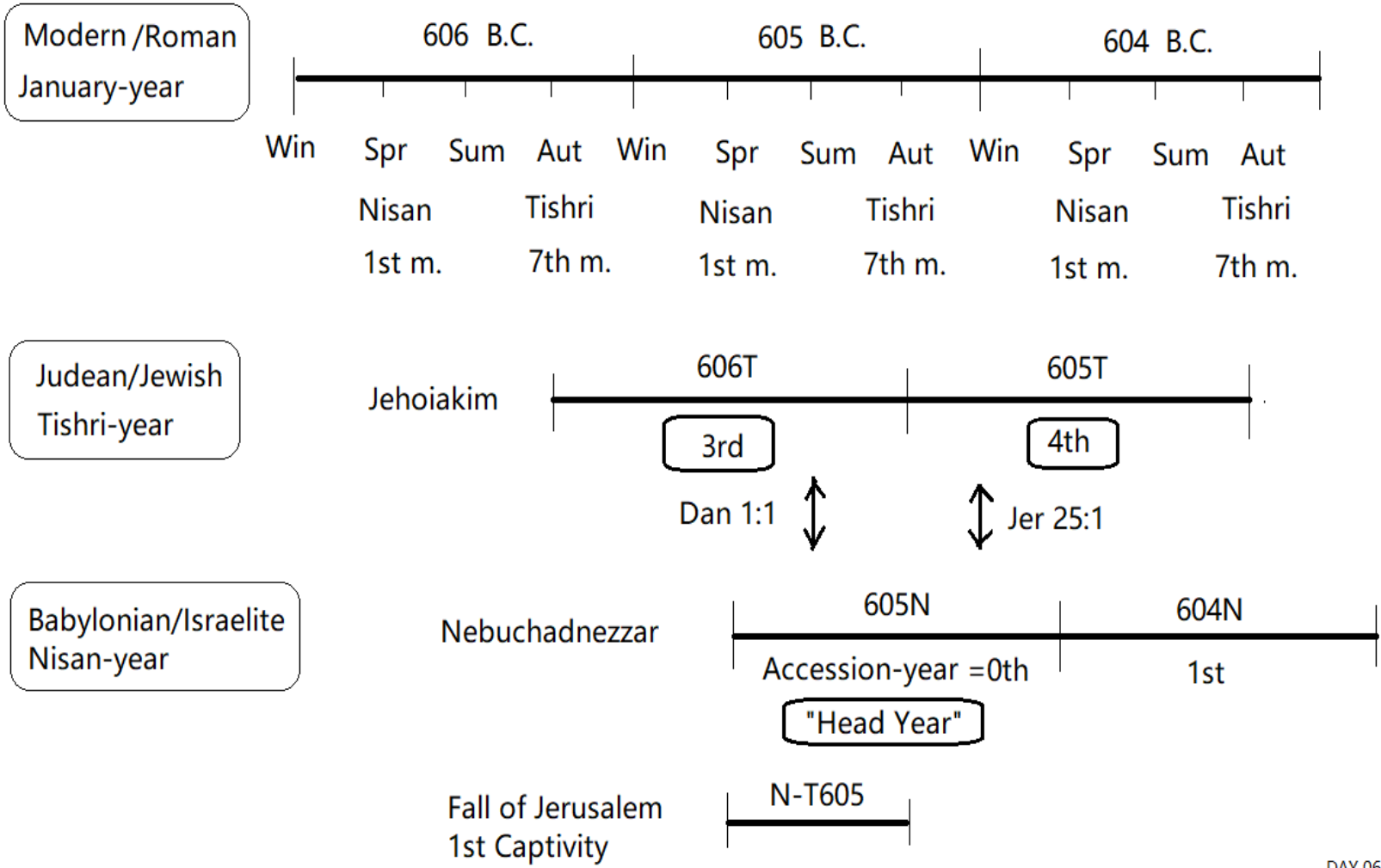
How to Live When the Kingdom of God Seemed to Have Fallen?: Accepting the First Captivity

DANIEL 1

What Year?

- ▶ **Daniel 1:1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand (Dan. 1:1-2a NAU)
- ▶ **Jeremiah 25:1** The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first (head) year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), ² which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, (Jer. 25:1-2 NAU) => 70 years of Captivity (v.11-12)

The Chronology of 605 B.C.



What Happened?

- ▶ ² The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar (=Babylon), to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god. (Dan. 1:2 NAU)
- ▶ The Laws of War of Ancient Near East: The Winning Nation Owns the Land, People, Assets, and Gods/Idols of the Losing Nation. They Collect the Idols in the Store House of the Winner's God.
- ▶ Since Judah Did Not Have Idols of its God, the Babylonians Took the Vessels of the Temple to Remember that Marduk > Yahweh.
- ▶ **The Kingdom of God Seemed to Have Fallen!**

Why It Happened?

- ▶ Israelites/Judahites(=Jews) Were Chosen by the True God (Yahweh/Jehovah = the Eternal One) as His People for His Visible Kingdom on Earth. The Election Is Everlasting.
- ▶ The People of God Are Subject to the Laws of God. Israel Is under the Old Covenant, to Live under the Mosaic Law.
- ▶ They Must Be Faithful to God (Vertical Dimension) and Just/Righteous to Men (Horizontal Dimension).
- ▶ When the People of God Accumulated their Sins of (1) Unfaithfulness to God and (2) Injustice to Men, They Will Be Punished/Disciplined by God.

Why It Happened?

- ▶ From the Time of Gideon (1186-1146 B.C.), God Began to Count the Sins of Israel/Judah:
- ▶ The North (Israel) Majored in Religious Unfaithfulness, and God Gave Them 390 Years (Ezek 4:4-6) to Fall, Equal to the Time of the Rise of Israel (1400-1010 B.C.; Conquest-David).
- ▶ They Added the Sin of Social Injustice by Ahab & Jezebel Killing Naboth for His Vineyard (1 King 21). Their Sins Are Full.
- ▶ David and Solomon Did Not Commit the Collective Religious Sin during their Reign over Israel (33 + 40 = 73 Years).
- ▶ **1186 – 390 – 73 = 723 B.C.**, When Samaria Fell to Assyria.

Why It Happened?

- ▶ The South (Judah) Majored in Social Injustice (David's Sin against Uriah & Bathsheba, Solomon's High Taxation; Rehoboam's Refusal to Lower Taxes; Not Observing 70 Sabbatical/Release Years) for 490 Years.
- ▶ David and Solomon Observed the Sabbatical Years during their Reign over Judah ($40 + 40 = 80$ Years).
- ▶ God Forgives Men's Debts/Sin in the Jubilee Years (Every 50 Years), in Which Men Are Required to Forgive Other's Debts to Them. There Were 11 Jubilees in $490 + 80 = 570$ Years.
- ▶ **$1186 - 490 - 80 - 11 = 605$ B.C.**, When Jerusalem Fell to Neo-Babylonia/Nebuchadnezzar.

Delaying the Judgment

- ▶ God Repeatedly Sent Prophets to Warn His People to Repent their Religious Sins (e.g. Hosea to Israel and Isaiah to Judah) and Social Sins (e.g. Amos to Israel and Micah to Judah).
- ▶ God Raised up a Godly King Josiah in the Last Days of Judah through the Preaching of Prophet Jeremiah:
- ▶ ³ "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, these twenty-three years the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. (Jer. 25:3 NAU)
- ▶ But the Heart of the People Had Been Hardened. So Josiah Had an Untimely Death; Revival Died; and Judgment Was Sealed.

Accepting the Judgment

- ▶ God Promised that after the Designated Time of Judgment (70 Years), the Remnant Will Be Restored, and God Will Punish His Rod of Discipline (Babylon) for Excessive Cruelty.
- ▶ ¹² "Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.'" (Jer. 25:12 NAU)
- ▶ If the People of God Recognize that the Judgment Is due to their Accumulated Collective Sin, They Will Accept the Judgment, and It Could Have Been as Gentle as Possible.

Accepting the Judgment

- ▶ ² thus says the LORD to me-- "Make for yourself bonds and yokes and put them on your neck, ³ and send word to the king of Edom, to the king of Moab, to the king of the sons of Ammon, to the king of Tyre and to the king of Sidon by the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. (Jer. 27:2-3 NAU)
- ▶ ¹¹ "But the nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let remain on its land," declares the LORD, "and they will till it and dwell in it." (Jer. 27:11 NAU)

Refusing the Judgment

- ▶ ⁸ "It will be, *that* the nation or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine and with pestilence," declares the LORD, "until I have destroyed it by his hand. (Jer. 27:8 NAU)
- ▶ False Prophet Hananiah Tried to Please the People, Saying the God Will Break the Yoke of the Babylonians in 2 Years (Jer 28:2). But God Said that He Did Not Send Him, and He Will Die in 1 Year (Jer 28:15-17).
- ▶ Thus the Wooden Yoke (Staying on Land) Was Changed into the Iron Yoke (Total Captivity) (Jer 28:13).

Ancient Multi-Culturalism

- ▶ ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, ⁴ youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch* of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.* (Dan. 1:3-4 NAU)
- ▶ Ancient "Great Kings" (esp. Babylonian, Roman, Ottoman) Train the Youths of the Conquered People (**Trans-Cultured People w/o Roots**) to Be the Servants of the Conqueror King, and Governors of the Conquered People. They Have **High Loyalty and Low Empathy**.

Cultural Assimilation

- ▶ ⁵ The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. (Dan. 1:5 NAU)
- ▶ The Re-education of the Captives Include Changing their Language, Culture, even the Basic Patterns of Life, including Food and Wine.
- ▶ The Choice Food Were Meat that Have Been Sacrificed to the Babylonian Gods (Marduk, Nabu etc.)

Identity Reformation

- ▶ ⁶ Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ Then the commander of the officials assigned *new names* to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego. (Dan. 1:6-7 NAU)
- ▶ Names Carry Meanings that Form the Identity of the Person:
 - ▶ Daniel = "God Is My Judge"; Belteshazzar = "Bel Protects His Life".
 - ▶ Hananiah="Yahweh Shows Grace"; Shadrach="Command of *Aku*".
 - ▶ Mishael = "Who Is What God Is?"; Meshach = "Who Is What *Aku* Is?".
 - ▶ Azariah = "Yahweh Helps"; Abed-nego = "Servant of *Nabu*".
- ▶ They May Have Been Changed into Eunuchs, too.

Set the Bottom Line

- ▶ ⁸ But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. (Dan. 1:8 NAU)
- ▶ Freedom May Be Lost; External Identity (Language, Name, even the Body) Can Be Changed. But the Internal Identity (Faith in the True God, Yahweh) Will Remain.
- ▶ Eating the "Choice Food" (Meat Sacrificed to Idols) Meant Compromising Faith (Defilement) to Daniel. He Would Hold that as the Bottom Line.

Divine and Human Favors

- ▶ ⁹ Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, ¹⁰ and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." (Dan. 1:9-10 NAU)
- ▶ Loyalty to God Results in God's Favor.
- ▶ God Can Change the Heart of Men to Give Favor.
- ▶ We Must Consider that All Have Their Fears and Concerns.

Reasonable Request

- ▶ ¹¹ But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ "Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see." (Dan. 1:11-13 NAU)
- ▶ A Ten Day Test of Eating Vegetables and Drinking Water Only Was Not an Ideological Vegetarianism, but a Reasonable Request. Open to Acceptance.

Leaving the Result to God

- ▶ ¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. ¹⁶ So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. (Dan. 1:14-16 NAU)
- ▶ God Will Grant His People's Requests that Honor Him and Respect His Ordained Human Leaders.
- ▶ Those Who Honor God Will Be Honored by God.

Additional Divine Favors

- ▶ ¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams. ¹⁸ Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 1:17-18 NAU)
- ▶ They Became Not Only Servants of Human Kings, but also the Servants of the King of Kings.

Additional Human Favors

- ▶ ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. ²⁰ As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and conjurers who were in all his realm.* (Dan. 1:19-20 NAU)
- ▶ God's People Seek for Excellence in Everything They Do.
- ▶ Those Who Seek the Favor of God First Will Get Favors of God, Resulting in Excellence that Can Serve Men.
- ▶ Even under the Most Unfavorable Condition, the People of God Can Still Be Faithful to God and Just/Righteous to Men.

Long Lasting Impact

- ▶ ²¹ And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king. (Dan. 1:21 NAU)
- ▶ Cyrus the Persian Was the Crown Prince of Media when He Conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., and Gave the Throne to His Uncle and Father-in-Law “Darius the Mede” (Cyaxares II, King of Media) (Dan 5:30).
- ▶ Cyrus Inherited the Throne of Media, and Turned it into the Dual Nation of Medo-Persia in 537 B.C.
- ▶ The First Year of Cyrus Was 536 B.C., When He Gave the Jews the Edict to Return and Rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:1-4), Likely through the Word of Daniel, Who Might Have Pointed to Him Isaiah 44:28 – 45:1.

Message to Us Today

- ▶ God's Visible Kingdom May Seem to Fall, but It Is due to God's Disciplining of His Own People.
- ▶ Recognition and Repentance of Sins Can Delay the Judgment.
- ▶ Godly Preachers and Godly Leaders Are Tools of God for Reviving His People, and Remain in God's Favor.
- ▶ When the Heart of People Are Hardened, and Sins Never Recognized and Repented, Judgment Is Inevitable.
- ▶ God Gives as Soft Judgment as He Can according to His People's Attitude.

Messages to Us Today

- ▶ Refusal to Accept Responsibility and Judgment Only Results in Harsher Penalties.
- ▶ When under Judgment, the External Identity Can Be Changed. But the Internal Faith Can Remain.
- ▶ If God's People Honor Him under Difficult Situations, and Give Reasonable Requests to Men, God Will Honor Their Requests, and Give Them Favor, Layered Favor.
- ▶ The People of God Can Be Faithful to God and Righteous to Men under Any Hard Situation.

Messages to Us Today

- ▶ Those Who Honor God Will Be Honored by God.
- ▶ Honor God and Seek for Excellence, then We Can Be Servants of God and Men at the Same Time.