

BOOK OF DANIEL

The Book of Daniel is regarded as the 'introduction' to New Testament prophecy, the major themes of which are:

- Apostasy of the Church
- The terrible Seven-year Tribulation
- Manifestation of the 'man of sin'
- Return of Jesus Christ to the earth
- Two resurrections
- Judgments

Daniel was a 'contemporary' of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, Joshua (the high priest of the restoration), and Zerubbabel. . . and he speaks of all the above mentioned prophecies except the first (the apostasy of the Church).

Note: It was a 'crucial time' for many of the smaller kingdoms of that area. Egypt had been the predominant world power. And because of that, Judah (as well as others) was forced to pay to them tribute money. Too, the king of Egypt (at this time, Pharaoh-necho) took it upon himself to dictate who would be Judah's king. And he appointed Jehoiakim to the throne of Judah in the place of his brother, Jehoahaz.

- 'In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon' (II Kings 24:1-4).

- In Jehoiakim's fourth year as king of Judah (which was Nebuchadnezzar's first year as king of Babylon) Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish on the river Euphrates. It was at that time that Judah, and others, were made subjects to Babylon.

- Before becoming king, Nebuchadnezzar was leader of the Babylonian army. His father, Nabopolassar, was king. In the third year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar determined to besiege Jerusalem, but was delayed a year due to war with Egypt. Then, Nabopolassar died (while Nebuchadnezzar was at Jerusalem), so Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon to become king, leaving his generals behind to transport the captives from Jerusalem to Babylon. Among them were Daniel, Daniel's Hebrew companions, and the Prophet Ezekiel.

- The question is raised: Why? Why didn't God fight for the people of Judah (His chosen) as He had done so many times before? The answer is: Because of sin. Judah had forsaken the Lord and turned to 'idol worship'.