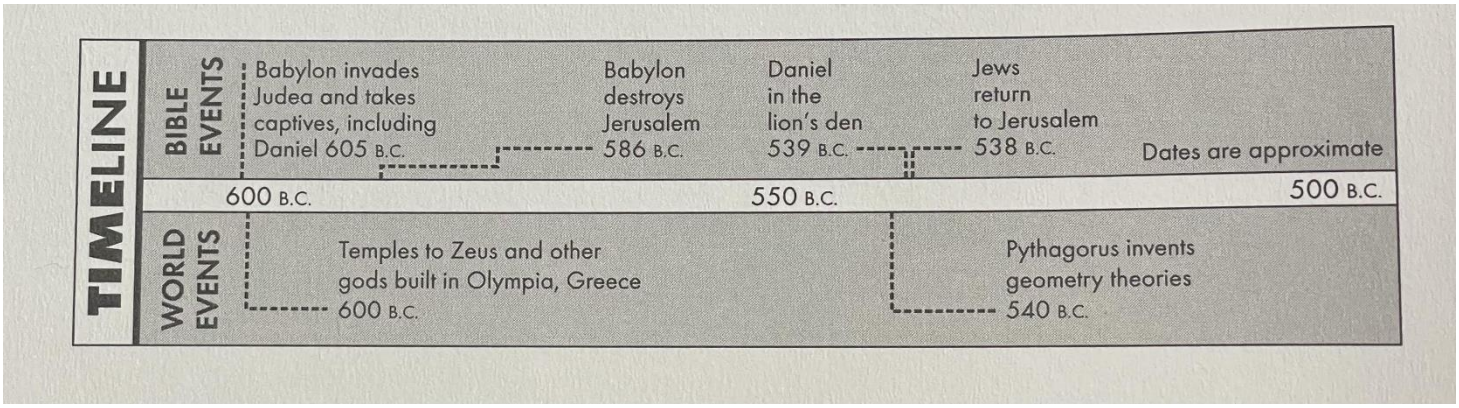
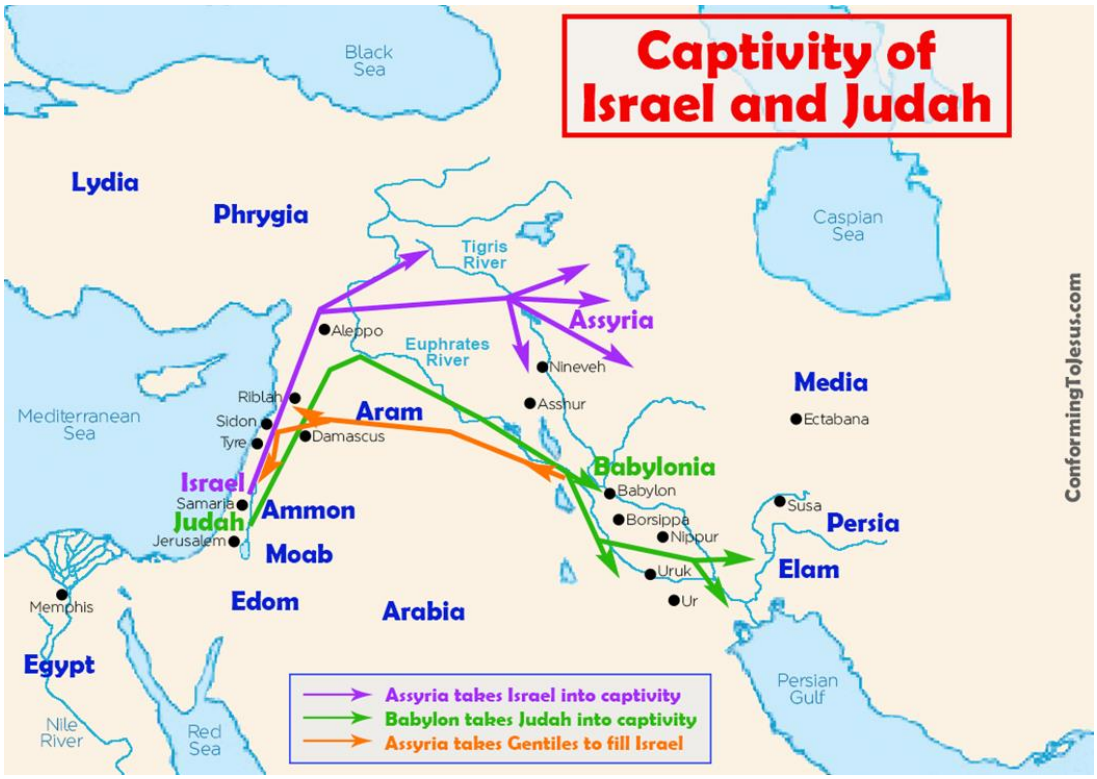
Thursday Bible Class 19th January 2023

Daniel Chapter 1 - His Captivity

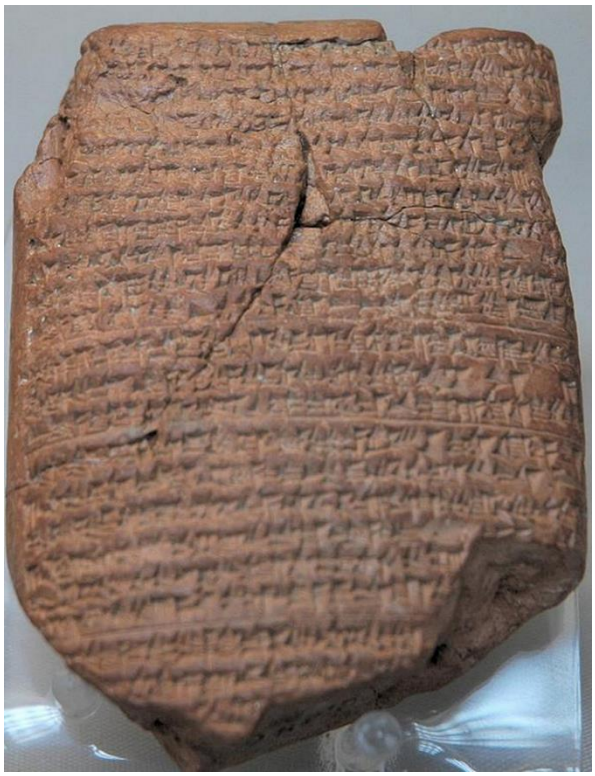
Thanks to Brother Russel who has introduced this subject, and shown us when Daniel was taken to Babylon in history – maybe this little chart below will also assist:





The distances captives were made to travel must not be underestimated. It was a long way from home. The journey itself would have been long dusty, and traumatic. The prison guards on the epic trudge through the desert would not have been gentle.

There are many aspects written in this small book of 12 chapters, that Daniel relates which are very accurate. The details he submits are all in line with modern discoveries through archaeology that show that Daniel was not writing from the figments of his own imagination, but relating actual history… The accuracy of historical chronology and specific details later on in the book, become superb examples of the historicity of the Bible and how it is Divinely inspired.



This clay tablet has been discovered which relates the capture of Jerusalem in 597BC Known as the Chronicles of Babylon. Found after the history described in the book of Daniel was scoffed at, yet this proves it of course to be true.

Daniel explains that he was amongst the captives that were taken to Babylon from Judah. The Babylonians quickly realise how intelligent and thoughtful Daniel is. Along with his three friends. This attitude of mind which made them so useful to the authorities, was such that it made them stand out somewhat among the other noblemen and women who had been taken captive along with him. This attitude was not by accident, but because Daniel was a man of faith. He was not only familiar with the law and Psalms, but also had in his possession the writings of the early prophets. The Word of God was of the utmost importance to him. He was entirely focussed upon the will of God, and trusted in the Almighty God that His will would be done. He did not seek to be a rebel for the sake of it, or attempt to run away, or grumble or complain about what had happened. He knew that Judah

had been warned repeatedly that their rebellion and sin would be punished by being taken captive, and so here he was! Why should he argue with that? Paul the Apostle delivers a powerful lesson: Romans 13:1-3: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and you shalt have praise of the same:*

Brother Russel observes that Daniel and his three friends must have been castrated and made eunuchs, as they had been put in the charge of the Ashpenaz master of the eunuchs. Although it was sometimes the custom to mutilate captives in this way, it does not necessarily follow that such a violent assault was made upon these faithful men. Indeed, in the Hebrew the word used is exactly the same as the one describing Potiphar as an officer in Genesis 37:36, and Potiphar had a wife. It is possible that Daniel and his friends suffered such an indignity - but bearing in mind that they stood out from the rest of the Jewish court by their respectful and honourable stance, and that their outstanding faith was so consistent, it is equally as possible that they may have been spared this. It must be noted that many officials and priests returned from exile and were permitted to work within the temple. Under the law of Moses being a eunuch prevented such employment. Food for thought perhaps. However in the event that such eunuchs returned from exile and were despised in Jewish society, Isaiah the prophet had this to say; *Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto*

them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 56:3-5)

Arriving in Babylon, it would have been a cultural shock. The size of the place, the fashion, the architectural advancements would have



caused the four friends to be amazed. Even today tourists wonder at the reconstruction of the Ishtar gate: An entrance to Babylon dedicated to a fertility god.



On this gate can be seen bulls, and war horses – animals associated with the gods of Babyon. A third animal can be seen described as a snake dragon. The presence of the snake-dragon has been a matter of much debate among

researchers who pointed out that the mythical animal was out of place next to sculptures depicting known animals (lions and bulls) that were contemporary with the Babylonians. The creature, often referred to as sirrush or mušḫuššu (“splendour serpent”) can be described as having a slender body covered with scales, a long slender scaly tail, and a serpent's head with a long forked tongue.

Robert Koldewey, who discovered the Ishtar Gate, seriously considered the notion that the sirrush was a portrayal of a real animal. He argued that its depiction in Babylonian art was consistent over many centuries, while those of mythological creatures changed, sometimes drastically, over the years. In 1918, he proposed that Iguanodon (a dinosaur with birdlike hindfeet) was the closest match to the sirrush.

This admission is not publicised at all. Because of course it reveals evidence that dinosaurs and humans lived in this world at the same time, not as modern scientists are forced by their university institutions to spout out that they lived millions of years ago. There are many examples of dinosaurs being depicted in ancient art which are conveniently ignored.

Daniel and his three friends would have deplored the way their countrymen turned their backs of the reform of Josiah, and embraced all the gods of the surrounding nations. How they would have felt corrupted by the new and indecent worship, this idolatry. Yet how much more would they have been repulsed when they find themselves in a city of gods! Yet they purposed in their minds not to be defiled. It is in our minds that we are defile. Jesus taught this. It is not that which goes into a man which defiles him, but that which comes out of a man- how he speaks and how he behaves. This principle was understood by Daniel and his colleagues, when they were given new names.

Daniel – God is my Judge changed to Belteshazzar – May Bel (Marduk) protect his life

Hananiah The Lord shows Grace changed to Shadrach – Command of Aku (Moon god)

Azariah - The Lord helps changed to Abednego – Servant of Nabu (son of Marduk)

Mishael - Who is like God? Changed to Meshack Who is like Aku?

Their Jewish names were not to be used – as Brother Russel explained, the names and titles of God, in their names overwritten, and replaced with names giving honour to the gods of Babylon. But did this really affect their identity? This effort at social engineering and political correctness had little effect on the faith of the men of God as we shall see, and as a matter of historical fact, Daniel's name survived the Babylonian Empire by thousands of years, thanks to the book he has given us.

Babylon has become the by word for Apostacy. We recall that Babylon had its origins in Shinar, and came about because the founders wanted to make a NAME for themselves, in opposition to the Name of God – Genesis 11; 1-4: 4 *And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*. Verse 8-9: *the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth:*

Ever since Babylon the Great has attempted to pervert the name of God, and obliterate the truth.

But God is the Judge, The Lord shows grace, and the Lord helps those who are like God.

The Name of God will continue for Ever.

Brother Terry