

**The Book of Daniel**  
**Introduction Homework/ Selected Scriptures**  
**Establishing Historical Context**

Introduction:

As we begin our study of Daniel this year, it will be important to keep in mind one of the first rules of Biblical interpretation: when studying the Bible one must always keep the text in its proper historical context. What this means is that conscientious students of the Scriptures must understand the cultural background and circumstances that were at play when a book was written. *“God’s words are never isolated from the stream of history,”* as one author says, and this guiding principle must certainly be at the forefront of our minds if we are going to draw sound biblical conclusions.

To help us get started, this fascinating book of the Bible was written in the 6th century BC, over the course of about 70 years by the prophet Daniel. The book opens with the infamous Babylonian ruler, King Nebuchadnezzar, besieging Jerusalem and taking captive a large segment of prominent Jews. Daniel, likely about 15 years old at the time, was one of these captives- a young man sovereignly chosen by God to represent Him in this tumultuous setting.

Yet, what had led to the Babylonian captivity? Why were the Jews being exiled? What had God promised to them? Were His promises now null and void because the Jews were being driven from their land, or was the fulfillment still to come? And finally, how does this apply to us? These questions, along with many others will be answered in our study this year, but for this week’s homework special attention will be given to understanding why the exile happened, and what God’s ultimate purpose for Israel has been. Pray for the Lord to guide you through the lesson so that you would behold wondrous things from His Word. (Psalm 119:18)

1. Read Exodus 19:5-6. What was God’s great desire for the nation of Israel?

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2. Read Leviticus 26:1-45.

Who is the original audience? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this important to keep in mind? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe some of the blessings that would come if Israel obeyed. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe some of the curses that would come if Israel disobeyed. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Read Deut. 31:24-27. What were Moses' thoughts about Israel's ability to obey the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Read Deut. 31:16-18. What were God's thoughts about Israel's ability to obey the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

5. From the time Moses wrote Deuteronomy (1405 BC) to the time of the Babylonian captivity (605 BC) was about 800 years. Using the following passages write down the general pattern of Israel's relationship with God. (Psalm 78:55-72, Ezekiel 36:16-21, Acts 7:35-53, Rom. 10:2-4) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Some theologians believe that Israel was permanently cast aside by God, because of their persistent rebellion and ultimate rejection of their King, Jesus Christ. Yet the Bible gives overwhelming evidence that God's redemptive plan for Israel has many glorious aspects yet to be fulfilled. Using the following Scriptures, write down reasons why God's promises to Israel could never ultimately fail.

Genesis 12:2-3, 22:15-18 \_\_\_\_\_

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Romans 11:1, 28-29 \_\_\_\_\_

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Isaiah 49:14-26 \_\_\_\_\_

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Jeremiah 31:31-37 \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you think of any other reasons? Use Scripture to support your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. One critical component of understanding the biblical narrative is to grasp how the church fits into God's redemptive plan. Some theologians believe the church has replaced Israel, yet Scripture makes clear that the church and Israel each have distinct roles in God's story. In Daniel we will delve into this more, but using Romans 11:11-29 write down what you observe about the church's place in history and how it relates to Israel. (Additional passages: Deut. 32:19-21, Isaiah 65:1-2, Acts 15:14-18, Gal.3:6-9, 13-14)

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8. Does the fact that Israel and the church have distinct roles in the biblical narrative mean one is superior to the other? Why or why not?( Eph. 2:11-3:6, Rom. 11:28-36)\_\_\_\_

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9. Returning to the historical context of Daniel, what had God revealed was His purpose for the Babylonian captivity? Was it purely punitive or did it have a redemptive element to it?( Ezekiel 36:16-38, Isaiah 54:7-8) \_\_\_\_\_

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10. It likely was tempting for Daniel to question why he had to be God's chosen representative in the midst of Israel's judgment. Yet as we will see, Daniel's whole life was oriented around trusting that God was still on His throne, regardless of the difficult circumstances he was in. How have you found God's sovereignty to be "*the pillow you rest your head on,*" as Spurgeon says?

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Key idea: "God's words are never isolated from the stream of history." Roy B. Zuck

