

# INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

## DESTINATION: *Daniel 1-12*

The book of Daniel was written by Daniel between 536-530 B.C. It has been placed under both the Prophetic and Historic sections of Scripture. Chronologically, it links the period between the kings in II Chronicles and the restoration of Jerusalem in Ezra. According to the Jewish definition of 'prophet' the book of Daniel is considered writings of prophecy about future events, not intended to be proclaimed but to be written down for future generations. The beginning of the book is written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the language of the day, then reverts back to Hebrew as Daniel records his visions in the first-person. It begins with the first of the deportations of the Israelites to Babylon and ends with Daniel's vision of 70 weeks.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

606 B.C.

The fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim

605-585 B.C.

Daniel's exile in Babylon

586 B.C.

Fall of Jerusalem

598-597 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, defeats Egypt

October 16, 539 B.C.

City of Babylon captured by Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great

539 B.C.

Daniel in the lion's Den

538 B.C.

Edict of Cyrus permits the Jews to return to Jerusalem, ending the time of exile

## TRIP PLANNER:

The book of Daniel can be divided into two sections:

1. Daniel the prophet – Biographical section written as seven historical narratives dealing with prophetic history as related primarily to the Gentiles.
2. Daniel's dreams – Four prophetic visions, written in the first-person in Hebrew, interpreted by the angel of the Lord and relating primarily to the Hebrews.

## PLACES OF INTEREST:

**Land of Shinar (Babylonia)** – Nimrod was the first monarch in this region over four cities: Babel (Babylon), Erech, Accad, and Calneh, which later included all of the Assyrian Empire. After the flood, it was to this plain that the descendents of Ham (Noah's son) drifted and where the tower of Babel was built. Here God thwarted their building plan and confused the one-language world, and here the beginning of multiple languages began, scattering the people across the earth.

**Babylonian Empire** – Under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, fully conquered the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. They devastated the city of Jerusalem, looted and burned the original Temple of God built by Solomon, and took captive the people into exile in Babylon.

## PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

**Jehoiakim** – King of Judah at the time Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, laid siege to and conquered Jerusalem.

**Daniel (Beltshazzar)** – Beltshazzar means 'prince of Bel,' or 'Bel protect the king.' Taken to Babylon as a teen and groomed for the King's service, he served in the court of four kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian. Daniel was a man of integrity and great wisdom, and had the gift of interpreting dreams. Probably heard and observed much of Jeremiah's exhortations and forewarnings as a child.

**Ashpenaz** – The chief official in the court of Nebuchadnezzar who selected and trained the magicians and wise men for his personal service.

**Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), Azariah (Abednigo)** - Along with Daniel, three young Israelites of noble birth chosen from the young men in the empire who met the qualifications to serve in the King's court. These included without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, and quick to understand. All four opted out of the king's diet and regimen, and after 10 days were found to be healthier than all the others. God gave them knowledge and intelligence in very branch of literature and wisdom so that after three years of training were found to be "10 times better than all the magicians and wise men in the kingdom."

**Nebuchadnezzar** - Nebuchadnezzar was the oldest son and successor of Nabopolassar, who delivered Babylon from its dependence on Assyria and laid Nineveh in ruins. Sources claim he married the daughter of Cyaxares, and thus the Median and Babylonian dynasties were united.

**Belshazzar** - It was to Belshazzar that the handwriting on the wall appeared. Daniel interpreted the handwriting, and "in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" by his own sons, who later fled. He was succeeded by Darius the Mede.

**Chaldeans** - Members of the class of the magi: astrologers, sorcerers, enchanters and magicians who constituted the ranks of the advisors to the Babylonian court. Daniel and his three Jewish companions were evaluated and chosen for their intellect and beauty, to be trained and indoctrinated as Chaldeans.

**Darius the Mede** -The son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans. He was 62 when he took over the kingdom (5:31). The Medes are credited with the foundation of Iran as a nation and empire, and established the first Iranian empire, the largest of its day until Cyrus the Great established a unified empire of the Medes and Persians. Under Darius, Daniel became commissioner over 'satraps,' who governed the vast empire.

**Cyrus, king of Persia** - Great-grandson of Cyaxares (great ruler of Persia formed the original alliance with Babylon) who, through marriage to Mandane of Media, unified the two separate Iranian kingdoms. Cyrus himself entered the city of Babylon and arrested Nabonidus. He then assumed the titles of "king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four sides of the world." It was Cyrus who issued the decree that ended the exile of the Jews and allowed them to return to Jerusalem.



## FUN FACTS:

**Medes and Persians** - Cyrus the Persian reigned subordinate to Darius the Mede as to dignity, though exercising more real power. After Darius' death, the order is "the Persians and Medes."

**Decree, that it be not changed** - This immutability of the king's commands was unique to the Medes and Persians; it was due to their regarding him to be infallible as the representative of the god Ormuzd. It was not so among the Babylonians.

**Fiery Furnace** - A Babylonian form of capital punishment for anyone caught disobeying the king's command.

**Den of Lions** - An underground cave or pit, covered with a stone. This was the preferred means of punishment for the Persians, as they were fire-worshippers, which the Babylonians were not.

