

# Daniel

## **AUTHOR**

Daniel is the author of this book, which bears his name (Daniel 12:4). His life and ministry spanned the entire seventy years of Judah's captivity in Babylon. According to Daniel 1:3, he was born into a noble or royal Judean family; little else is known about his background. Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel's, wrote of his righteousness and wisdom (Ezekiel 14:14, 28:3). Jesus called Daniel a prophet (Matthew 24:15).

## **THE TIME OF DANIEL**

This book covers the period of 605-536 B.C.

## **BACKGROUND**

A succession of kings ruled over God's people in Israel beginning about 1050 B.C. King David, the second and greatest king of Israel, ruled from 1011-971 B.C. With infamous lapses, he was a godly leader, both spiritually and militarily, and God called him *a man after My own heart* (Acts 13:22).

Solomon, King David's son, reigned after his father from 971-931 B.C. The Lord gave Solomon a wise and understanding heart, but he made many unwise decisions throughout his lifetime. Because of Solomon's foolishness and sin, rebellion ensued. In 930 B.C., the kingdom became divided into two separate nations.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had its capital in Samaria; Jerusalem was the capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Both kingdoms were fraught with idolatry and wickedness. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had twenty kings and all were evil. The Assyrians captured and destroyed Israel in 721 B.C. Twenty kings also ruled the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Although a few of these kings were godly, the majority of them were not. Judah fell captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. At this time, Nebuchadnezzar took the temple treasures and many young men (including Daniel) to Babylon.

Of special note: The book of Daniel contains more fulfilled prophecies than those from any other Old Testament book, and these prophecies are referred to more times in the New Testament.

## **BABYLON**

At the time Daniel was captured and taken to Babylon, the city was the capital of the Babylonian Empire, the most powerful empire that had existed up to that time. Halley's Bible Handbook says that Babylon was "the wonder city of the ancient world." The city was one of wealth, splendor and pagan religion. According to The New Open Bible Study Edition:

*Babylon, the ancient walled capital of the Babylonian Empire, was located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southern Mesopotamia...While Babylon was an old city, it reached the height of its splendor under King Nebuchadnezzar II (ruled 605-562 B.C.). He enlarged the city to an area of about six square miles, and beautified it with magnificent buildings. In Nebuchadnezzar's time, eight major gates led into the city, whose double walls spanned both sides of the Euphrates River. The main gate, known as the Ishtar Gate, opened to a sacred processional way, which led to the temple of the pagan god, Marduk...The city also contained a palace complex, or residence for the king. The famous hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, were located near these buildings.*