

*The Most High
God rules over
the kingdoms of
the world and
appoints anyone
he desires to
rule over them.*

(Dan 5:21b NLT)

Introduction to the Book of Daniel

The Core Message

- “In spite of present appearances, God is in control.”
- That is the core message of the book of Daniel.
- What an appropriate message this must have been for Daniel’s *original* readers.
- And what an appropriate message it is for us *today*.
- When we look at our society and find overwhelming evidences of cultural decay and the loss of a moral center, you may be tempted to ask: Is God really in control?
- Daniel says in his book – and would say if he were with us today – Yes! In spite of how bad things look out there, God is *still* in control.

Challenges From Modern Liberal Scholars

- In the introduction to his commentary on the book of Daniel, Sam Storms makes the following observation:
 - *No book in the Old Testament, or for that matter in the New Testament, has been subjected to critical examination as thoroughly and often as unfairly as has the book of Daniel. The questions of authorship, date, structure, language, and especially literary genre simply cannot be ignored. The book of Daniel has for too long now been in the “critic’s den” and the mouths of these liberal lions must be firmly and finally shut.*

When Was the Book of Daniel Written?

- The book of Daniel was written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C.
- It records the events of his life and the visions that he saw from the time of his exile in 605 B.C. (Daniel 1:1) until the third year of King Cyrus in 536 B.C. (Daniel 10:1).
- But because the book of Daniel makes a number of ***very accurate detailed prophecies***, most modern liberal scholars believe the book must have been written sometime in the second century (during the Maccabean revolt around 165 BC).
- This, of course, would be ***after*** many of the events prophesied in Daniel had already taken place.
- The Word of God clearly tells us that the Lord ***often*** announces his plans ***ahead of time*** through his prophets as a means of ***vindicating*** his sovereignty and ***encouraging*** his people (see Isaiah 41:21-24; 44:6-7)
- So, we should not be surprised to see detailed accurate prophecies in the book of Daniel given ***far in advance*** of the actual events.

When Was the Book of Daniel Written?

- It's worth noting that the book of Daniel was accepted as canonical by the community of Qumran (who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls).
- The Qumran community emerged as a separate party in Judaism between 171 and 167 B.C., *before* the late date that some liberal scholars propose for the writing of the book of Daniel (165 B.C).
- The Qumran community would *not* have accepted the book of Daniel if it had appeared *after* they split off from mainline Judaism.

Other Problems Cited by Liberal Scholars

- Liberal modern scholars will cite other problems with the book of Daniel which, if true, would raise questions about its credibility.
- For example, they will say that Daniel 1:1 contradicts Jer. 25:1, 9; 46:2
- In Jeremiah we read that the “*first year*” of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, occurred during the “*fourth year*” of Jehoiakim, king of Judah.
- But then in Dan. 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar is said to have invaded Palestine as king of Babylon in the “*third year*” of the reign of Jehoiakim.
- It turns out this is not a problem if we understand that in the book of Daniel the king’s years are reckoned according to the Babylonian system whereas in Jeremiah they are reckoned according to the system used in Palestine.
- In Babylon only the first *full* year of a king’s rule was called his “first” year. The year in which a king ascended the throne was not called his “first” year as king, but instead was referred to as the “year of the king’s accession.”

Other Problems Cited by Liberal Scholars

- Consequently, when Daniel (1:1) speaks of Jehoiakim's “*third*” year he is referring to the same year as Jeremiah does when he mentions the “*fourth*” year:

Babylonian System	Palestinian System
Year of Accession	First year
First year	Second year
Second year	Third year
Third year	Fourth year

Other Problems Cited by Liberal Scholars

- For an extensive list of solutions to other problems raised by modern liberal scholars concerning the book of Daniel, see Sam Storm's introduction to the book of Daniel in his 2016 commentary.
- There is one other thing we should keep in mind when liberal scholars give seemingly scholarly reasons for calling into question the authority and authenticity of the book of Daniel as a legitimate part of the biblical canon:
 - Jesus, in effect, ***affirms*** the canonicity of Daniel when he references Daniel 7:13 as scripture in Mat 24:15 when he references, "***the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel***".

Who Wrote the Book of Daniel?

- I believe that the book of Daniel was written by Daniel himself, for the following reasons:
 - In the second portion of the book Daniel is named as the one who received the revelations and he also speaks in the first person (cf. 7:2, 4, 6ff., 28; 8:1ff., 15ff.; 9:2ff., 10:2ff.; 12:5–8).
 - Daniel is commanded to preserve the book in which the words are found (12:4).
 - The entire book is obviously the work of one writer, and if Daniel is named as the one who receives *certain* of the revelations, it follows that he must be the author of the *entire book*.
 - And, as we have already seen, the Lord attributes the prophecy Dan 7:13 to “*the prophet Daniel*” (Matt. 24:15).

The Language of Daniel

- Daniel, like Ezra, was written in both Hebrew (1:1–2:4a; 8:1–12:13) and Aramaic (2:4b–7:28).
- We don't know the reason for this, but the traditional explanation is as follows:
 - *Those portions of Daniel's prophecy which deal generally with Gentile affairs (the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the humiliation of that king in the episode of the fiery furnace and by his seven years of insanity, and also the experiences of Belshazzar and Darius the Mede) were put into a linguistic medium all the public could appreciate whether Jew or Gentile [i.e. Aramaic].*
 - *But those portions which were of particularly Jewish interest (chaps. 1, 8–12) were put into Hebrew in order that they might be understood by the Jews alone (Archer, 378).*

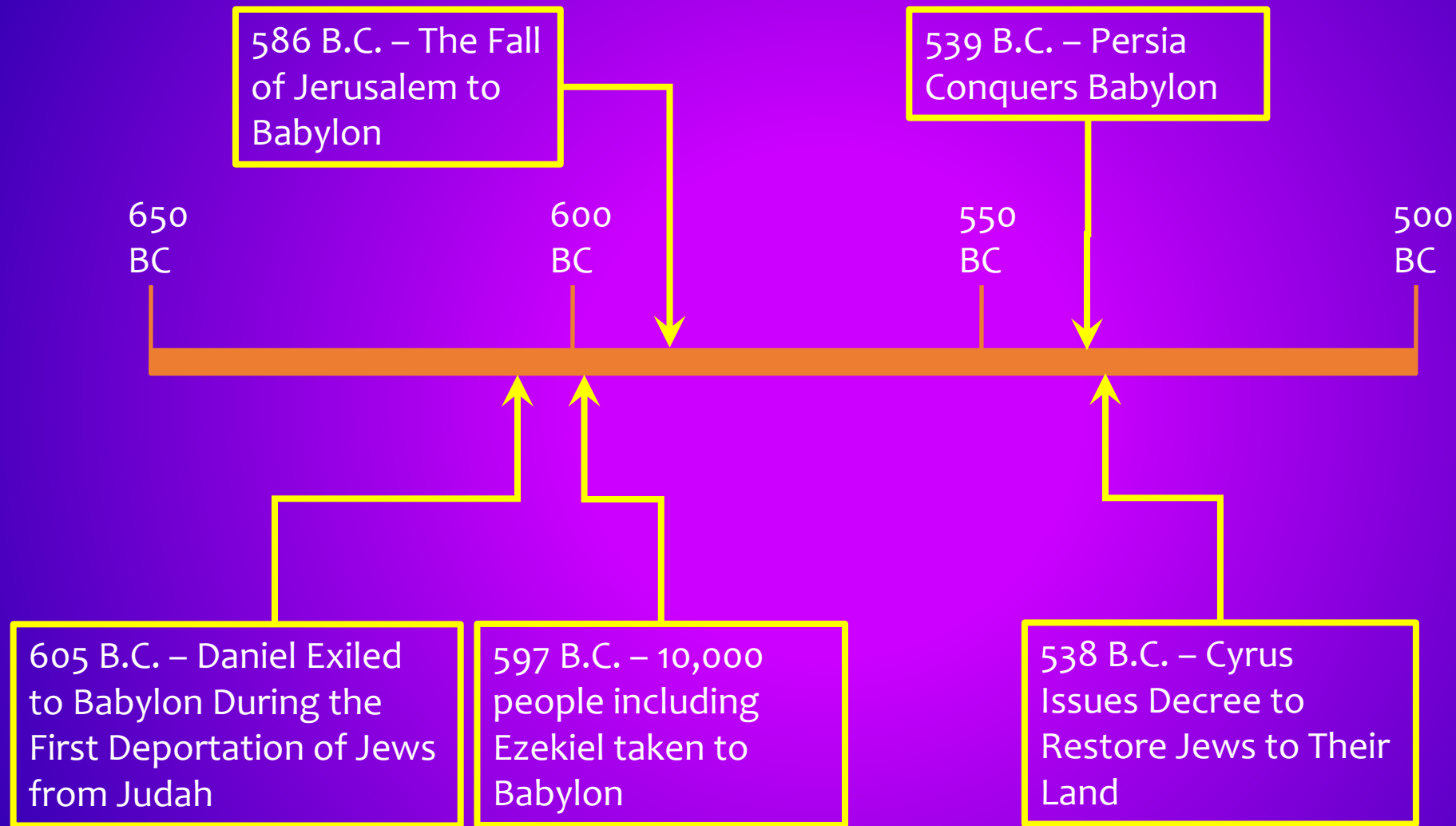
Structure of the Book of Daniel

- Daniel is clearly divided into ***two*** sections:
 - Chapters 1–6 which describe incidents in the lives of Daniel and his friends
 - Chapters 7–12 which contain the visions given to Daniel in his old age.

Outline of the Book of Daniel

- The Stories (Chapters 1-6)
 - Introduction: Daniel and his friends in Babylon (Chapter 1)
 - Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Chapter 2)
 - The story of the fiery furnace (Chapter 3)
 - Nebuchadnezzar's insanity (Chapter 4)
 - Belshazzar's feast and the handwriting on the wall (Chapter 5)
 - Daniel and the lion's den (Chapter 6)
- The Visions (Chapters 7-12)
 - The vision of the four sea beasts and the vision of the Son of Man (Chapter 7)
 - The vision of the ram and the male goat (Chapter 8)
 - Daniel's prayer and the prophecy of the 70 weeks (Chapter 9)
 - The vision of the angelic messenger (Chapter 10-12)

Major Events During the Time of Daniel



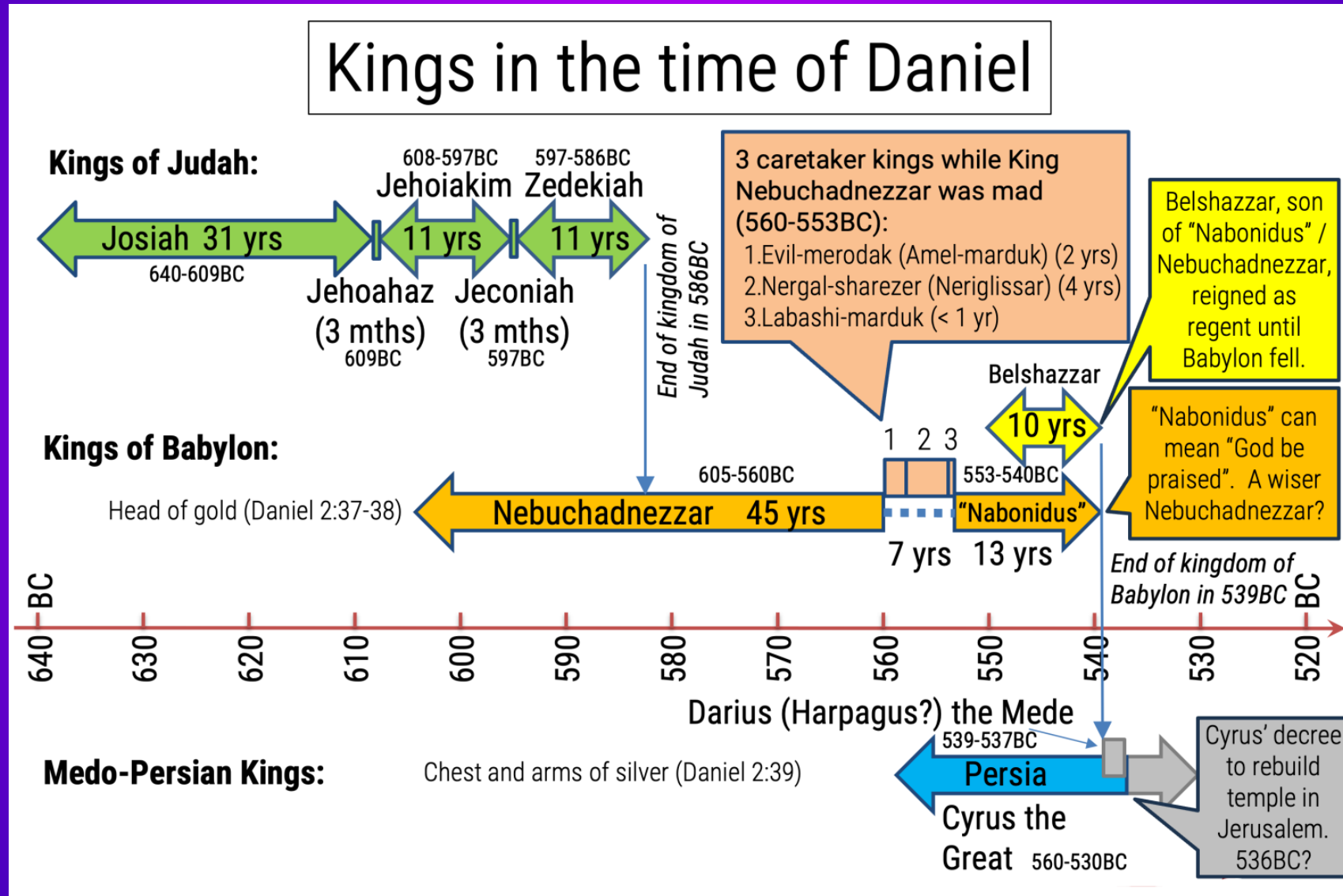
Babylonia Empire

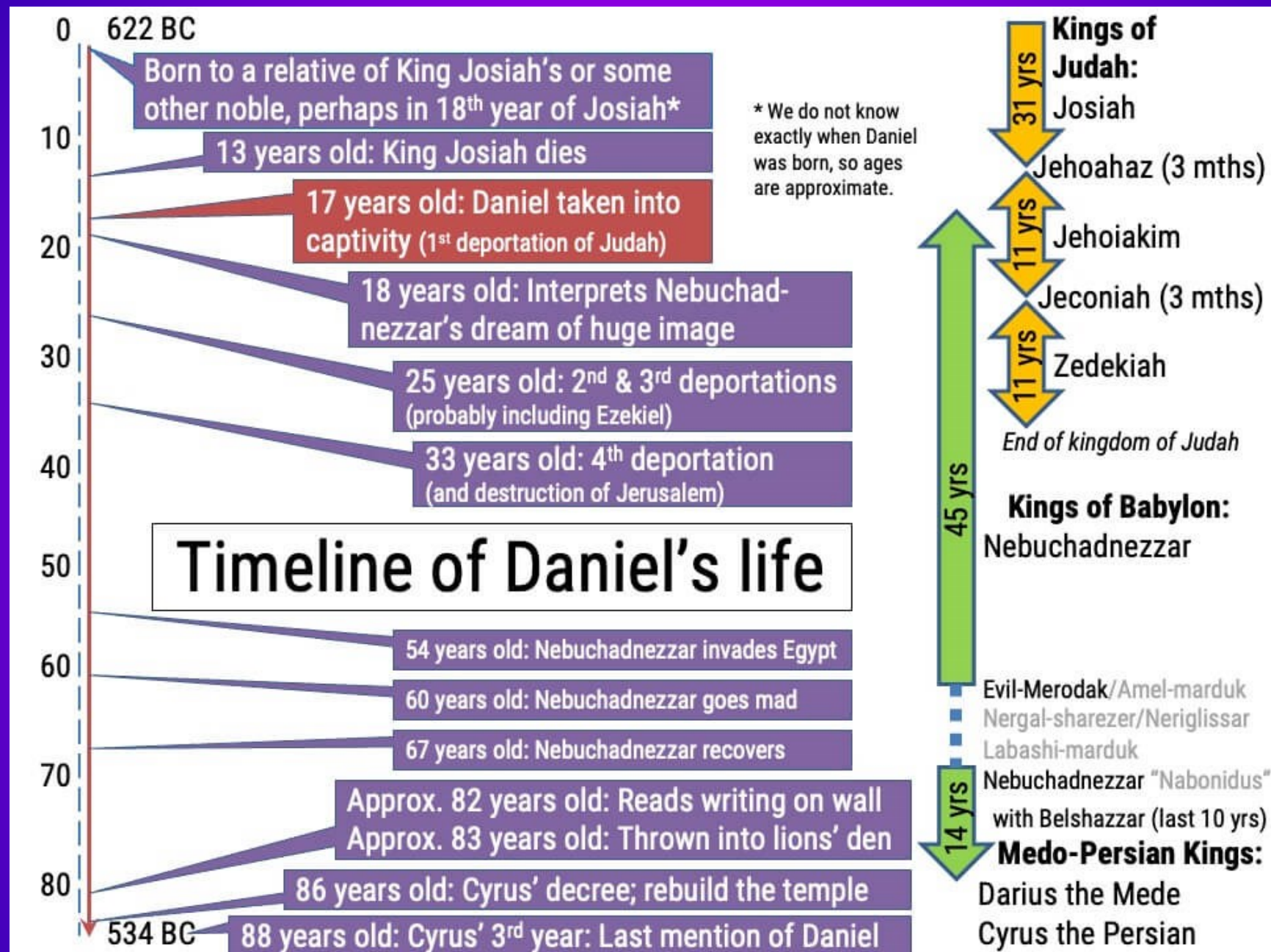


Persian Empire

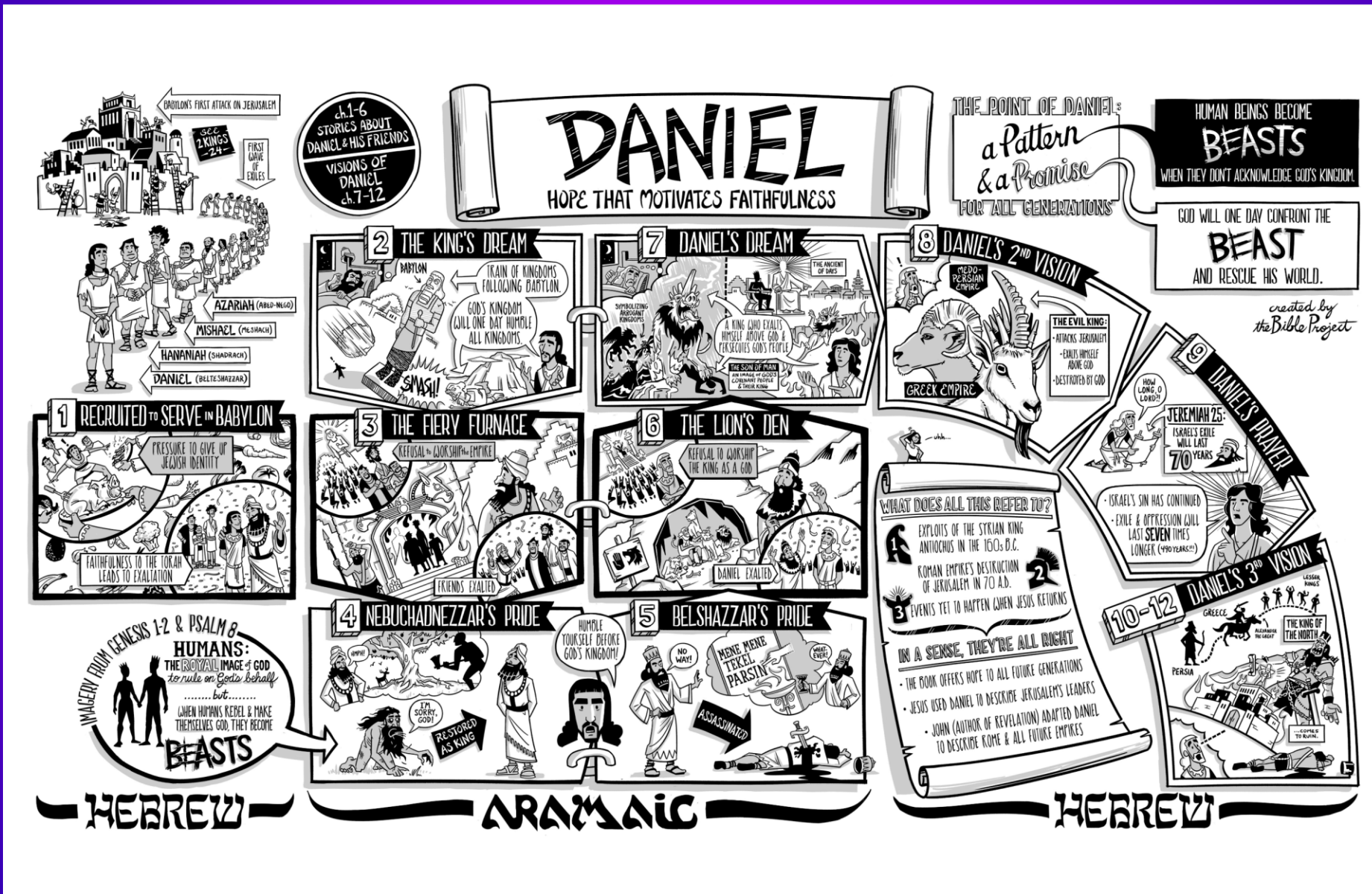


Kings During the Time of Daniel





A Quick High-Level Summary of the Book of Daniel



Class Discussion Time



Class Discussion Time

- Were you surprised to hear Sam Storms assert that modern scholars have raised more questions about the book of Daniel than perhaps any other book of the Old or New Testament?
- Assuming that is true, why do you think that is?
- Do you think it is important for Christians to be aware of arguments raised by biblical scholars that tend to undermine the authenticity of books of the Bible?
- Is it important for us to learn how to skillfully ***counter*** such arguments?

Class Discussion Time

- The book of Daniel takes place in a time when, on the surface, the evil world system (represented by Babylon) seemed to be winning as these ungodly Gentiles marched into Judah and took what they wanted.
- The people of God, on the other hand, (represented by Daniel and his friends – and then later Ezekiel) seemed to be losing as they were carried off as slaves to a foreign land.
- And yet we know that what was taking place “*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it*”, was only taking place because the sovereign hand of God had ordained it: “*And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God*”.
- Can you think of recent events in our day when the people of God seem to be losing, and yet we know the sovereign hand of God is at work?