

2

DANIEL TAKEN INTO BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

Daniel 1:1-7

Main Idea of the Text: The Lord is sovereign, even over calamity & desolation.

I. THE TEXT

a. Context

- i. The fall of the Southern Kingdom, Judah, into the hands of Babylon. The first half of Daniel will relate narratives from the Babylonian court, therefore the prologue (Dan 1:1-2) sets the stage for transition from a Jewish to a Babylonian context.
- ii. In the Hebrew canon, Daniel appears in the Writings. The book is a combination of court narratives, prophecies, and apocalypses helping exilic & postexilic Israelites trust in the sovereign will and power of God.

b. Outline

i. The Sacking of Jerusalem (Dan 1:1-2)

1. Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem (Dan 1:1)

- a. Nebuchadnezzar: “Nabu protects”
- b. Second king of the Babylonian empire, following his father, Nabopolassar, and ruled for 43 years (506-562 B.C.)
- c. Besieged Jerusalem in March of 597 B.C., placing Zedekiah (Jehoiachin’s uncle in control.)

2. King Jehoiakim Taken Captive (Dan 1:2)

- a. Reigned 608/9-598/7B.C.
- b. Given name was Eliakim “God raises up.
- c. After Josiah’s death in 609 B.C. (2 Kgs 23:29), the people selected his younger brother, Jehoahaz to succeed their father. Jehoahaz was deposed by Neco of Egypt who set Eliakim on the throne, giving him the throne-name Jehoakim. Jehoahaz deported to Egypt where he died. Jehoiakim was an Egyptian & Babylonian vassal.

- d. Nebuchadnezzar ascended in 605 B.C. after defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish. (Jer 46:2-12)
- e. Son, Jehoiachin and half-brother, Mattaniah (renamed Zedekiah) succeeded him as the last two kings of Judah.
- f. Jeremiah contrasts him against his father, Josiah, calling him a greedy oppressor. (Jer 22:15-17) 2 Kings 23:27 offers the epitaph: "And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."
- g. "And **the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand**, with some of the vessels of the house of God." (Dan 1:2a)

3. Temple Despoiled (1:2)

- a. People & temple vessels moved to Shinar
- b. Modern Iraq, south of Baghdad, Shinar is the biblical name for the region of Babylonia, first mentioned in Genesis 10:10. It was the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod. Main cities include Babel, Accad, Erech. This was also the place where people gathered to build the tower into the heavens known as Babel. (Gen 11:2) One of the four kings who battled Abraham (Gen 14:1) was "Amraphel king of Shinar." Lastly, the prophet, Isaiah foretold that God could recover the remnant of His people, "from Shinar." (Isa 11:11)
- c. Temple vessels (1 Kings 7:48-50) such as plates, dishes, firepans, lampstands taken "to the house of his god." (Dan 1:2) The "god" referenced is likely Marduk.

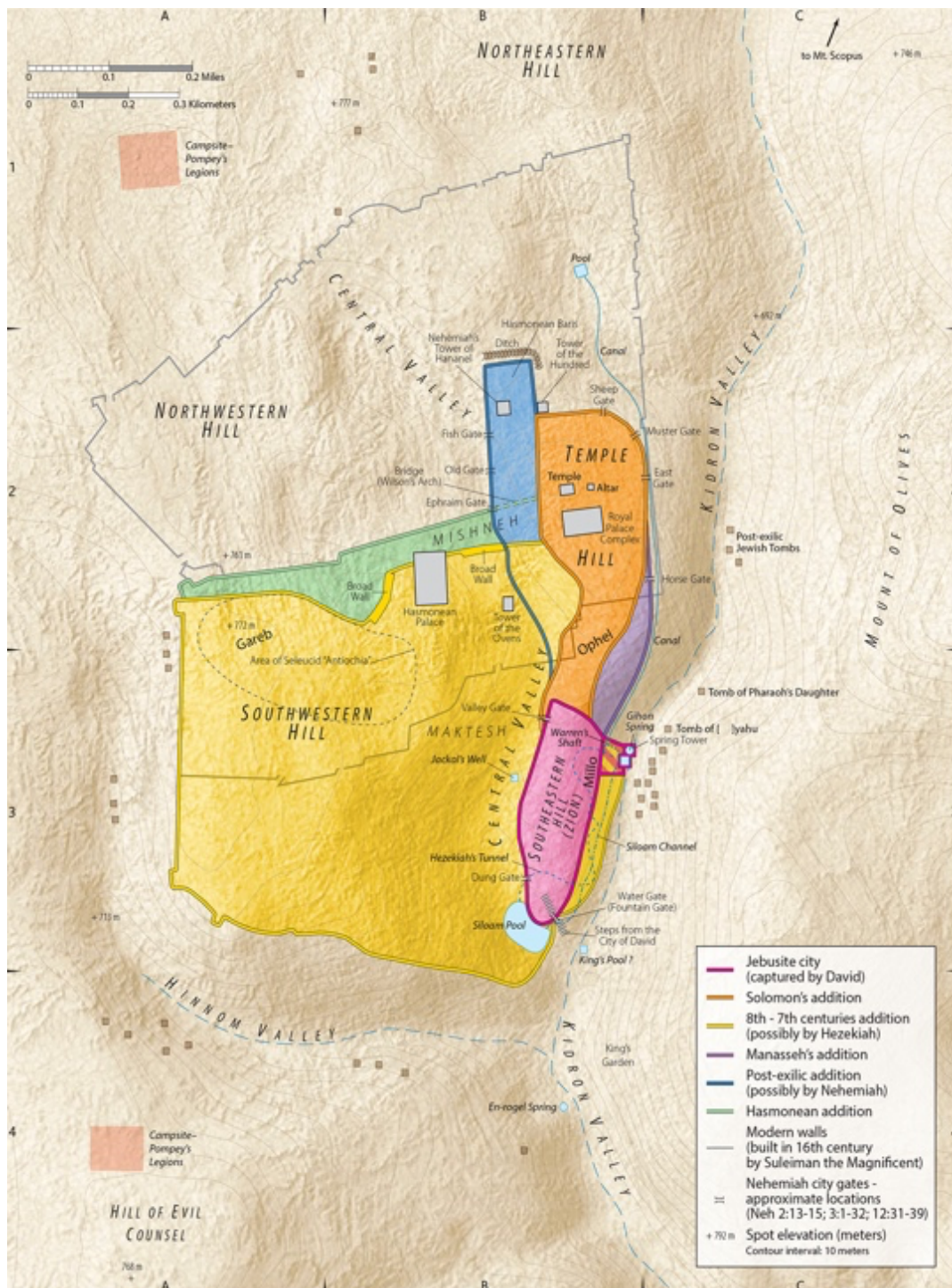
ii. The Deportation of Hebrew Youth (Dan 1:3-7)

- 1. Nebuchadnezzar Commands the Deportation & Indoctrination of Hebrew Youth. (Dan 1:3-5)
 - a. What will happen to them? They will be reprogrammed, given new names, a new language, new clothes, new literature, new food. After three years, they will go back and serve as vassals of Babylon.
 - b. Religious beliefs in Babylon trace back to Sumerian inscriptions in 3,500 BC. Early records in Mesopotamia show animistic beliefs that every living thing had a spirit.

- c. Over the centuries, local deities and city-gods arose, were gradually absorbed and combined with the rise of political powers, and eventually the number of gods decreased into a small pantheon of 10-15 deities.
- d. By the time of Daniel, Babylonian worship revolved around rightly relating to the deities in order to succeed and to combat demons. Worship practices included hymns and prayers, magic, along with telling of myths and epics.

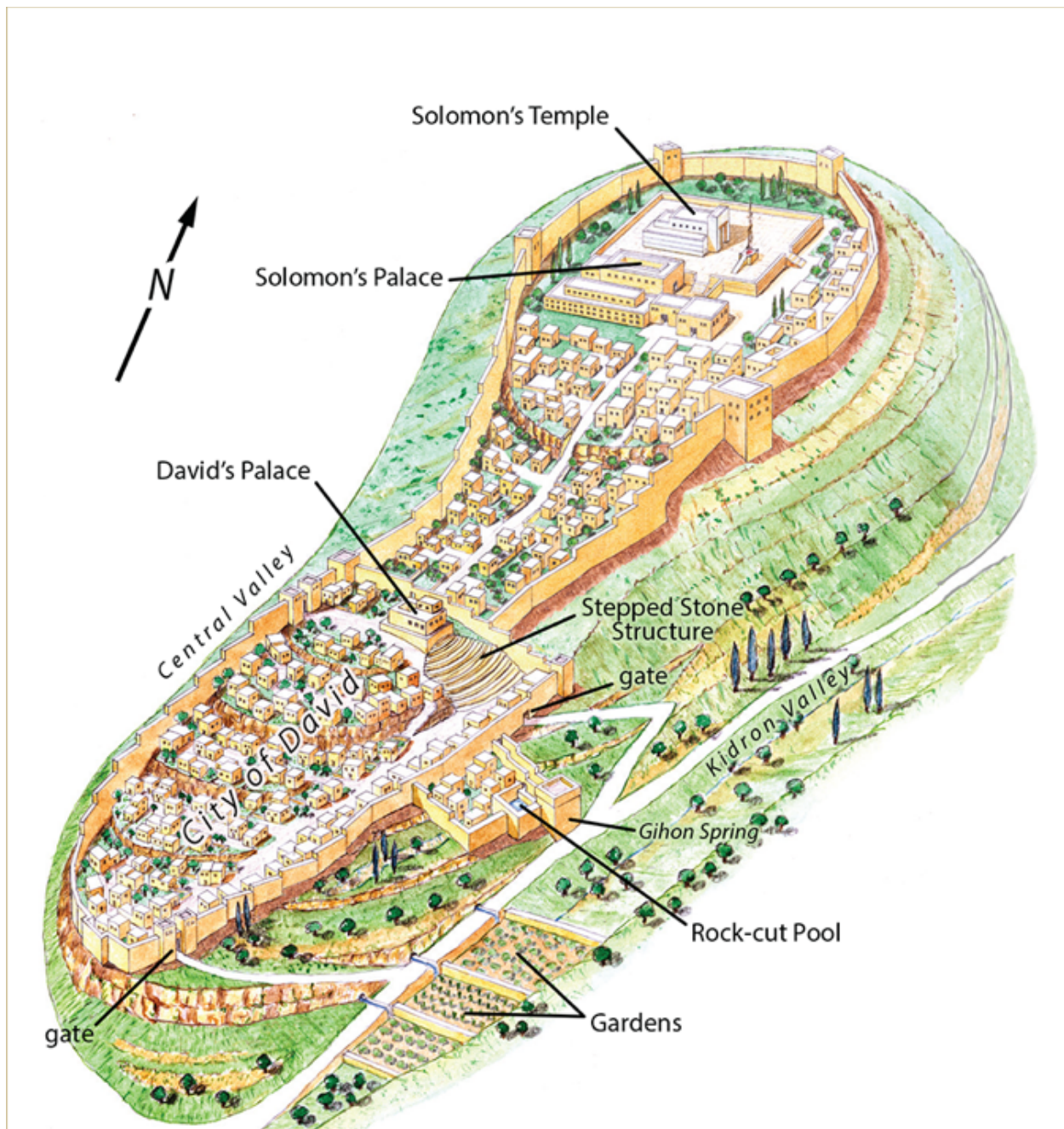
2. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah Introduced. (Dan 1:6-7)

- a. Daniel (God is my Judge) is renamed Belteshazzar (Protect the King)
- b. Hananiah (Yahweh is Gracious), renamed Shadrach (Command of Aku)
- c. Mishael (Who is what God is?), renamed Meshach (Who is what Aku is?)
- d. Azariah (Yahweh has helped), renamed Abednego (Nebo has helped)



*Jerusalem in the Old Testament*¹⁴

¹⁴ Barry J Beitzel, Nicholas Rowland, and Moody Publishers, *The Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers, 2009), 241.



Jerusalem during Solomon's reign¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid., 242

c. Key Observations

i. This Introduction Immerses Us in the Exile

1. Imagine the Holy City surrounded, with no one to save. As the walls are bombarded and broken down, bloodthirsty soldiers ransack the city, running up the hill to the palace and temple mount. King Jehoiakim is marched out, bound hands and feet, followed by the golden temple vessels made by Solomon. Children, young boys, 12-15 years old are selected, torn from family, and transported 500 miles from Canaan, down the Euphrates to Babylon, where they will be brainwashed, and made to serve the false gods of the pagans.

ii. All of This is By God's Design

1. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand (Dan 1:2)
2. Daniel interprets the events of his life, especially the calamities and desolations in light of the truth of God's sovereignty.

d. Summary of the Passage

- i. Daniel 1:1-7 explains the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation of Daniel & his friends to Babylon as part of God's sovereign plan.

II. THE TRUTH

a. Central Theological Theme(s)

- i. God's absolute sovereignty over nations, kings, calamity, and the exile of His people.

b. Confession of Faith & Creeds

i. LCF (1689)

1. Chapter 2 – Of God & the Holy Trinity

- a. 2:1 "The Lord our God is... almighty... most free... working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will..."
- b. 2:2 "God... hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them, and upon them, whatsoever He pleaseth..."

2. Chapter 5 – Of Divine Providence

- a. 5:1 “God the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy.”
 - ii. Daniel 1:2 (“the Lord gave Jehoiakim...into his hand”) is a concrete historical demonstration of this confessional truth. Nebuchadnezzar’s siege as real human aggression, yet it occurred only because the Lord handed Judah over.
- c. Development from the Text
 - i. About God: He is the One who “gives” kings and kingdoms into the hands of others (Dan 1:2). His sovereignty is not abstract; it operates in concrete events in history, including judgment and exile.
 - ii. About Humanity/God’s People: Even covenant people are not exempt from the consequences of sin, yet they remain under the sovereign hand that disciplines them.
 - iii. Chair Passages: Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:35; Proverbs 21:1; Habakkuk 1:6; Romans 9:15-18.
- d. Redemptive-Historical & Christological Connections
 - i. Daniel is Presented as a New Joseph (Gen 37:1-50:26)—taken against his will into a pagan court, yet vindicated by his tormentor, given the ability to interpret dreams and described as “having the spirit of gods.” (Gen 41:38; Dan 4:4)
 - ii. Daniel also points forward to Christ, who voluntarily entered a kind of “exile,” came to a pagan land, was surrounded by idolaters, and lived faithfully under the sovereign hand of the Father. (Phil 2:5-11; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28)
- e. Key Theological Truth
 - i. The Lord remains absolutely sovereign over every calamity and desolation that befalls his people; nothing—including the rise of pagan empires and even the cross of Christ—falls outside of His decree.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION

APPLICATION PROMPTS	YOUR APPLICATION
1. Heart & Personal Life • <i>What idol or fear does this expose?</i> • <i>Where do I need deeper repentance or trust?</i> • <i>How does this comfort or confront me?</i>	
2. Family & Home • <i>How does this shape marriage?</i> • <i>Parenting or relating to parents?</i> • <i>What would change at home?</i>	
3. Church Community • <i>How should this shape LWBC?</i> • <i>Our unity, witness, or worship?</i> • <i>What corporate response is needed?</i>	
4. Work & Daily Calling • <i>How does this affect my work?</i> • <i>Integrity, excellence, or rest?</i> • <i>Witness in the workplace?</i>	
5. Witness to Unbelievers • <i>How does this speak to non-Christians?</i> • <i>What hope or warning does it give?</i> • <i>How can I share this truth?</i>	
6. Mind, Affections & Will • <i>What must I believe more deeply?</i> • <i>What affections need stirring?</i> • <i>What specific obedience is called for?</i>	