



Daniel & Esther

The Third Way

Session 27

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Summarize the theology of Daniel in a few sentences.
- Summarize the theology of Esther in 1-2 sentences.
- Describe 5 characteristics of apocalyptic literature from Daniel 7-12.
- Apply the “Third Way” from Daniel and Esther to a modern-day context.

DANIEL

Although the book of Daniel comes after Esther in both English and Hebrew Bibles, its events occur chronologically before those of Esther. The events of the book take place from 605 (1:1) to 536 (10:1), about 70 years—the entire duration of the exile. Daniel was among Nebuchadnezzar’s first wave of deportees from Jerusalem in 605 BC. When he was hauled off to Babylon, he was taken directly to the service in the Babylonian government. Daniel would have been a contemporary of Ezekiel, who mentions him in Ezek. 14:14, 14:20, and 28:3. This book is written in two languages: Hebrew (1:1-2:4a; 8:1-12:13) and Aramaic, the national language of the Neo-Babylonian and the later Persian empires (2:4b-7:28), which conquered Babylon and was the ruling nation for chs. 6-12.

LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS, OH MY! (DAN. 1-6)

Daniel 1-6 is a narrative which chronicles how Daniel and his friends lived out their faith while in exile. Don’t let the lullaby effect dull your appreciation for and understanding of these stories!

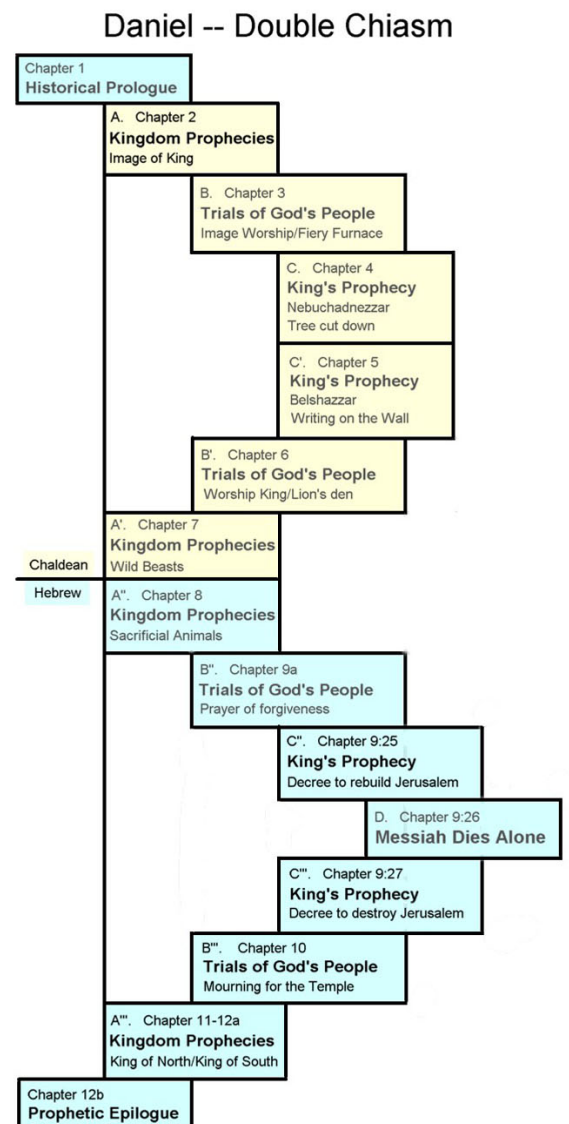
What do the stories in Dan. 1-6 tell us about God?

VISIONS OF BEASTS (DAN. 7-12)

The second half of Daniel is a compilation of visions in which Daniel sees beasts, angelic warfare, and prophecies about the future. This section of the book switches genres from narrative to *apocalyptic literature*. **How can apocalyptic literature be characterized?**

- The use of _____
- The periodization of _____
- An emphasis on _____
- The use of _____ to reveal the future
- The _____ of God and God's people over the forces of evil

Daniel's prophecies in these chapters primarily come to pass in the intertestamental period. The visions he has of beasts and animals refer to nations and leaders that rise and fall after Babylon (very similar to the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in 2:31-35), including the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. It's actually quite amazing to consider the accuracy of his prophecies! **What bigger ideas can we take from Daniel 7-12?**



Major Theological Themes from Daniel:

- (1) God's _____ of the exiles
- (2) God's _____ of the future
- (3) God's _____ over human history

ESTHER

The book of Esther addresses many of the same themes: How can exiles remain faithful in foreign lands, and what future does God have for His people beyond exile? The events in this book occur about 100 years after the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, around 487-465. The setting of Esther is in Susa, the capital of the Persian empire. How does Esther use irony, coincidence, and literary twists to teach us about the sovereignty of God?

FUN FACT ABOUT ESTHER

Haman was an *Agagite*. Where have we heard that name before? From Agag, king of the Amalekites, whom Saul left alive in his disobedience of God's command to eliminate the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15). What Saul left unfinished centuries before has come back to haunt God's people. However, Mordecai is a descendant of Saul (Esth. 2:5). With brilliant literary closure, the anonymous author of Esther shows the triumph of God's people over their enemies.

Major Theological Themes from Esther

- (1) God's _____ of the exiles
- (2) God's _____ over human affairs

CONCLUSION: THE THIRD WAY

What do the books of Daniel and Esther teach us about how to live in exile? What do they teach us about the “third way”?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

Consider these thoughts this week:

- What lessons can you take away from these books about how to live faithfully as an exile?
What are your “arenas,” and what does it look like to
- How should the truth that God rules and directs history give us courage and faith?

HOMEWORK

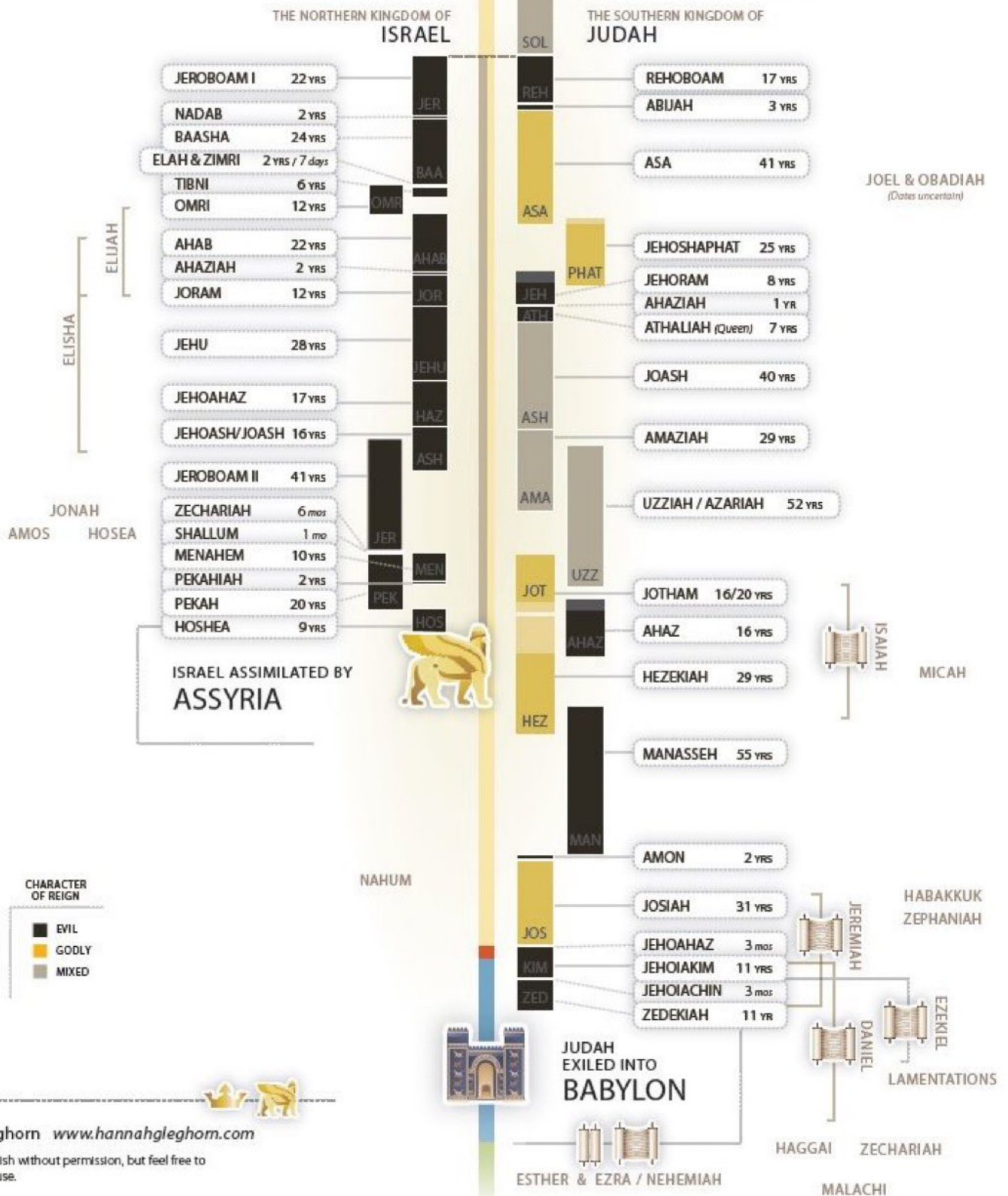
- Read pp.490-511 in *Old Testament Theology* by Paul House
- Watch The Bible Project’s video [The Way of the Exile](#)
- Read Esther & Daniel

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THE KINGS & PROPHETS



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Dating from *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin R. Thiele, with corrections by later scholars including Mr. Rodger C. Young.