

From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Daniel)

ch.1:1-1:8

by Zac Poonen

The book of Daniel is a book that has particular relevance to the time of the end and contains spiritual messages for each one of us individually, emphasizing the sovereignty of God and the theme of overcomers.

Duration: 1:01:05

Scripture: Genesis 18:32, Leviticus 25:1-7, Leviticus 25:18-19, Jeremiah 5:1, Jeremiah 25:11-12, Daniel 12:4, Matthew 5:28

Topics: "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the book of Daniel and its relevance to the end times. The book is divided into two parts: the first six chapters are historical and the last six chapters are prophetic. The main theme throughout the book is the absolute sovereignty of God over everything. The speaker emphasizes the importance of learning from the mistakes of others and highlights the significance of studying the Old Testament for our instruction.

Transcript

We'll turn now to the book of Daniel in the Old Testament and there is a particular reason why of all the Old Testament books we have chosen the book of Daniel to begin with and that is because I don't know whether you know this that in the entire Bible of 66 books there is only one book about which it is written that its inner meaning will not be understood until the last days and that's the book of Daniel. Daniel chapter 12 verse 9 after Daniel had completed writing this book we read here that he was told in verse 9 go your way Daniel for these words that you have just written in this book are concealed and sealed up until the end time and it is a fact that even through the many centuries of church history people have not really understood the book of Daniel until these last days particularly in the last century. Another verse in Daniel chapter 8 verses 17 and 19 in the last part of verse 17 he was told son of man understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.

There is no Old Testament book about which that statement is written other than the book of Daniel. Verse 19 the last part it pertains to the appointed time of the end. That's why we look at the book of Daniel because all these verses teach us that this is a book that has particular relevance to the time of the end.

We know that the book of Revelation has particular relevance to the time of the end but when we studied the book of Revelation we saw that it was written at the end of the book of Revelation that the book was not sealed but the book of Daniel was sealed. In other words you could understand the book of Revelation in the first century but you couldn't understand the book of Daniel in the first century. It's amazing but as we approach the days which immediately precede the coming of Christ we find that this book has particular relevance.

One more verse Matthew 24. Matthew 24 is the place where the disciples asked Jesus concerning the sign of his coming. Verse 3 and at the end of the age and Jesus answered and gave them a long discourse there but it's interesting to see there that the only Old Testament prophet and book that he quotes and mentions there in verse 15 is Daniel the prophet.

He quotes Daniel and something that Daniel has written as referring to the sign of the end and so all these verses teach us that as we live in these days it's important for us to have an understanding of this book not just in its prophetic aspect but also the spiritual message that Daniel has for each one of us individually as people who have this tremendous privilege of living in the days immediately preceding the coming of Jesus Christ to earth. Now the book of Daniel is we can say basically divided into two halves. It's got 12 chapters and the first six chapters are history and the last six chapters are prophecy.

A very simple division the book of Daniel the first six chapters are history which has a tremendous lesson for us and the last six chapters of prophecy which also has a tremendous message for us and the theme of the book of Daniel is basically twofold it's got a twofold theme and remember that all this has got relevance to the end time to the times in which we live and the first thing that we see in the book of Daniel which runs right through the book is this theme of the absolute sovereignty of God over everything we shall see that as we go through the book the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to everything on this earth and in the heavens and this therefore is a particular truth that we must be gripped by in the last days that's why this is one of the main themes of the book of Daniel and you notice that theme comes out in the very first two verses of the book in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it and notice the next phrase it does not say Nebuchadnezzar overcame Jehoiakim and conquered him and took away the vessels of the house of God that would be how a secular historian would have written it but the Holy Spirit writes it like this the Lord gave Jehoiakim into his hands there you see the sovereignty of God that it was Almighty God who decided that this backsliding king of Judah has to go into Babylon and as a punishment for his people God gave all the vessels of the house of God also into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.

Nebuchadnezzar didn't realize that but it was God who gave it so we find the theme of the sovereignty of God that God was in control Nebuchadnezzar at that time was the king of the mightiest nation in the world today there are two superpowers in those days there was only one superpower and that was Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar was the head of the one superpower in the world but there was a power above that superpower that was the Lord God Almighty who decided what Nebuchadnezzar is going to get what he's not going to get and this is one of the great themes of the book of Daniel and a theme that we need to be tremendously gripped by in these days in which we live otherwise we shall not be able to endure until the end as the Lord wants us to.

The second theme of the book of Daniel is the theme of over comers that we seen verse 8 of the first chapter it says here Daniel who was the main overcomer in this book made up his mind that he would not defile himself he determined in his heart that he would not compromise that's the mark of an overcomer

that he would not defile his conscience that he would not disobey God in the smallest thing that he would not compromise or bow down in any little thing even to the mightiest king of the mightiest superpower on earth at that time that's the mark of an overcomer a man who stands up for God in the face of all opposition even if he's got nobody standing with him this is the message of God for the time of the end basically twofold and he who has ears to hear can hear it first the total

sovereignty of God and the second God's looking and seeking for those who will uncompromisingly stand for him in these last days as overcomers standing true to him and then I want to say one more thing before we actually go into the study of this book and that is the key word there is a key word a word that occurs 32 times in the book of Daniel 32 times and that is the word vision vision or vision spiritual vision and that's the great need of the times in which we live not human cleverness but spiritual vision that's given only by the Holy Spirit we can never get it any other way to have a vision given by the Holy Spirit concerning eternal realities concerning the things that we cannot see with our human eyes that we cannot hear with our human ears that we cannot understand with our mind

unaided by the Holy Spirit the great need of the last days spiritual vision and understanding of the sovereignty of God it is thus that we shall fulfill God's purpose in these last days as uncompromising overcomers that's the message of the book of Daniel for those who have ears to hear now we look at verses 1 & 2 in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand along with some of the vessels of the house of God and he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his God and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his God now I want to take quite a bit of time now in giving you some background of the history of Israel that led to this particular

situation where God had to judge them by sending them into captivity into Babylon because the whole book of Daniel is written in Babylon Daniel was in Babylon which was the world power of those days and so it's very important for us to get a understanding of the history of Israel that led to this point so that we can learn some spiritual lessons from it now many people neglect the Old Testament but never forget that three-quarters of your Bible is the Old Testament and God did not make a mistake in putting three-quarters of the Bible as the Old Testament the history of Israel has got tremendous lessons for us who are Christians in the church today because it's usually the same mistakes that we make today and so we can learn from their mistakes and that's one thing which many people are

very slow at doing learning from the mistakes of other people if we learn from the mistakes of other people we don't have to make the same mistakes ourselves that's why it's very profitable to study the Old Testament now even though the Old Testament begins with the history of creation and the creation of man by the time you come to chapter 12 you read about Abraham Genesis 12 and from that point onwards right through to the end of the Old Testament the Old Testament is no longer the history of the world even though it may be in the first 11 chapters from chapter 12 onwards is the history basically of one nation so we can say that the Old Testament is basically a history a record of one nation and the messages that God sent to that one nation Israel and through that we have something to

learn we are told in Romans 15 that everything written in the Old Testament was for our instruction I want to give you a brief summary now in a few minutes of that Old Testament so that you get a bird's-eye view it's like going up into a plane and look an airplane and looking at the whole city of Bangalore say together and looking at the Old Testament together the Old Testament is basically the history of Israel in two parts one their journey from Egypt into Canaan that's basically the first half of the Old Testament and the

second is the history of their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem and that's the second part of the Old Testament the prophecies mostly deal with that many of them anyway now the first part Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan relates to our personal life deliverance

from the power of sin into a life of victory but the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem described in the second half of the New of the Old Testament describes the coming out of a system of a religious system called Babylon into the true Church of God called Jerusalem this is a picture there are many who understand what it means to move out of Egypt into Canaan but who have not understood what it means to move out of Babylon into Jerusalem now the history of Israel basically right up to this point mentioned in Daniel 1 is like this God chose Abraham through him God chose one of his many sons called Isaac and of Isaac's two sons he chose one Jacob that's why God calls himself the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and God changed Jacob's name to Israel and Israel had 12 sons and those became the

heads of the 12 tribes of Israel and they went into Egypt in the time of Joseph that's the end of the book of Genesis and then we read that in Exodus God raised up Moses to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt and bring them into the land of Canaan and the Old Testament books Exodus Leviticus Numbers and Deuteronomy deal with the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years and then in the book of Joshua we read how God through Joshua brought the Israelites into the land of Canaan which is today called Israel or it was called Palestine in the earlier times then called the land of Canaan Palestine Israel the same land on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea and established them there in the days of Joshua but then after Joshua died we read God there were judges appointed in

Israel and Israel backslid and then finally they wanted a king and the first king was Saul appointed by Samuel he backslid and then God appointed David.

David's son was Solomon David was faithful throughout his lifetime but David's son Solomon was a backslider and therefore God said he was going to punish the nation of Israel by dividing the kingdom in Solomon's son's time.

Solomon had a son called Rehoboam and during his time God's judgment came upon Israel for all the backsliding of Solomon and the nation of Israel was split into two there was a division we can say Israel became two denominations ten tribes formed the northern kingdom they call themselves Israel and two tribes found the southern kingdom they call themselves Judah so after that there were two kingdoms Israel and Judah ten tribes and two tribes and that's what that happened around 900 years or so before Christ but very soon the northern kingdom fell into idolatry and in the year 721 BC the northern kingdom was judged by God by sending them into captivity into the hands of the superpower of those days which was Assyria and you read of that in second Kings chapter 17 we don't have time to look

at it now but I just want to tell you something because it has an application now and I'll come to that right now the northern kingdom fell into idolatry sooner than the southern kingdom and therefore God judged the northern kingdom by allowing the superpower of those days Assyria whose capital you remember was Nineveh where Jonah was sent to preach Assyria whose capital was Nineveh came against the northern ten tribes and took them captive and then that was 721 BC this thing that you read in Daniel chapter 1 verse 1 of Nebuchadnezzar coming against Jerusalem took place 115 years after the northern kingdom went into captivity and what did God speak to the southern kingdom during those 115 years do you want to hear this is what the prophets told the southern kingdom look at what happened

to your sister Israel in the north see how God judged them for that backsliding and learn a lesson you know who the prophets were who came and preached Jeremiah Zephaniah Micah these were the prophets who came and preached particularly in this time there was Jeremiah just before the nation of Israel went into captivity 40 years before Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah God raised up a young man in Israel his name was Jeremiah and God kept that one young man for 40 years as a prophet to that nation but they would not listen they did not listen to Zephaniah and they did not listen to Jeremiah but their basic message was don't think that you can sin and get away with it Jeremiah's message was a very hard message he kept on preaching for 75 years before him after the northern kingdom had gone

captive God had sent his prophets but Israel had not listened finally God sent one man Jeremiah for 40 years and they did not listen finally after 115 years the nation of Judah the southern kingdom also went into captivity by this time Assyria had lost its place as the superpower because Babylon had risen and defeated Assyria and Babylon had become the superpower during that 115 year period and now Babylon was the great nation of the earth and they came against the southern kingdom of Judah and it says here the Lord gave Judah into Babylon's hands now what can we learn from this for the church today God's Word comes to us and says see what God did to Israel he will do the same to you but most Christians don't believe that just like the southern kingdom did not believe that God would do to

them the same thing that he did to the northern kingdom in the same way today God sends his messengers and says see what God did to Israel he'll do the same to you if you don't repent but there are very few Christians who take that seriously they say oh no we are privileged but that's exactly what the southern kingdom of Judah said we are privileged but they fell and like the Lord gave them into the king of Babylon it's not without significance that in the New Testament the harlot church is called Babylon why is the harlot church in the book of Revelation called Babylon the same name as the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar because it is the same reasons why the church today ends up as Babylon the same reason why Israel went into Babylon most of today's Christendom is in Babylon spiritually

speaking now I want you to turn to the Old Testament and 2nd Chronicles where we are told about this captivity which we just read in Daniel chapter 1 and as we understand this background we'll be able to appreciate the book of Daniel a little more 2nd Chronicles and the last chapter chapter 36 and verse 5 Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem and he did evil in the sight of the Lord in spite of the fact that during all those 11 years Jeremiah was prophesying he couldn't care less for Jeremiah the prophet he did evil in the sight of the Lord Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him that's what we read in Daniel here's the history of it bound him with bronze chains took him to Babylon Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of

the house of the Lord to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon and we read there further down the reasons why they God's people went into Babylon and I want to give you now seven reasons why God's people went into Babylon why the Israelites they came into the land in the year 1451 BC in 606 BC they had gone into captivity why it's very important for us to know because that is what has taken the church into Babylon even today 2nd Chronicles 36 and verse 14 to 16 the very important passage 14 to 21 sorry 2nd Chronicles 36 14 to 21 it's a very important passage in this connection furthermore here is the number one reason all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the heathen notice first the leaders and then the people this

is the number one reason they became like the heathen people around them they professed to follow the true God but their life was just like the heathen people around them that was the number one reason and

when it speaks about the heathen people around them I just want to mention to you that one of the prominent sins one of the prominent sins of the heathen people of those days like today was sexual sin as you read in Leviticus chapter 18 it's an amazing chapter sometime when you have time read through Leviticus 18 and see some of the abominable relationships mentioned there homosexuality sodomy lying with animals all these things are mentioned there and it says finally in verse 24 of Leviticus 18 don't you Israelites defile yourselves by these things because all the heathen people have

become defiled by these sexual sins and it's quite an abominable list there in Leviticus 18 if you read through it it's really abominable and it says in 2nd Chronicles 36 14 that the leaders and the people had polluted themselves now this is true even today that the leaders of Christendom and the people have become like the heathen not only in relation to sexual sin but in many areas there is fundamentally no difference between the person who calls himself a Christian and the person who is a heathen that is one reason for the Babylonian captivity and secondly back to 2nd Chronicles 36 14 in the middle of the verse it says they defiled the house of the Lord which he had sanctified in Jerusalem and the way they defiled the house of God was by idolatry and I want to show you another passage

that tells us about the idolatry of the Israelites at that particular time Ezekiel chapter 8 Ezekiel and chapter 8 and verses 7 to 16 the Lord told Ezekiel to dig through a wall and he said to him in verse 9 of Ezekiel 8 go and see the wicked abominations they are doing there and when he entered and looked verse 10 he saw every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things which the idols of the house of Israel are carved on the wall around just like the temples that we see in Bangalore we don't realize what a tremendous abomination it is to God idolatry to give people the impression that he that almighty God is like some of those animals it's a tremendous insult to God we don't that's why Paul was stirred it says in Acts 17 when he saw the idols in Athens how would you feel if

somebody put a picture of a monkey on a wall and put your name underneath that saying that's a picture of you or an elephant or something like that well you wouldn't feel particularly honored by something like that well that's exactly how it is it's worse when God is symbolized by all these things we need to see that and our spirit needs to be stirred by the idolatry around us they were not stirred and you see later on in the very next chapter we don't have time to go into that Ezekiel 9 God said put a mark on the forehead of those who are concerned about these things Ezekiel 9 verse 4 mark out the people who are concerned whose spirits are stirred when they see all these abominations and notice something further about the abominations there is Ezekiel 8 when you have time you can read

through right from verse 7 to verse 16 the women were involved in the idolatry verse 14 and it says here verse 16 they their backs were to the temple of the Lord that there were 25 priests verse 16 he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house Ezekiel 8 16 and in the middle of that verse it says there were about 25 men with their backs to the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east do you know that there are so-called Christians today who feel that the only way to pray properly is by turning towards the east well this is not a new thing it was there in the idolatry of Israel and the reason for it is they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the Sun turning east to pray to God had its origin in idolatrous worship of the Sun which arose in the East that's

happening in many so-called Christian churches today and there are Christian church buildings so-called Christian church buildings which are built facing towards the east a continuation of this idolatry of turning to the east and praying otherwise God won't hear you you're worshiping the Sun this is what's going on right then we read further another reason for the captivity in Israel of Israel in Babylon is given us in 2nd

Kings 24 verses 1 to 4 2nd Kings 24 and verses 1 to 4 it says here that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up and Jehoiachin became a servant for three years and the reason is given in verse 3 and 4 surely at the command of the Lord it came upon Judah to remove them from his sight because of the sins of Manasseh who was one of the kings of Judah according to all that

he had done and the innocent blood which he shed for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood and the Lord would not forgive now I want you to turn to 2nd Chronicles chapter 33 2nd Chronicles chapter 33 and verse 6 to see something of what this man Manasseh did 2nd Chronicles chapter 33 and verse 6 it says he made his sons this is referring to Manasseh in verse 1 Manasseh was the king verse 6 he made his sons pass through the fire as an offering to some idol and he practiced witchcraft used divination practiced sorcery dealt with mediums and spirits each spiritist he did much evil in the sight of the Lord provoking him to anger that was the number three reason shedding innocent blood and turning to evil spirits and to witchcraft now turn to 2nd Chronicles 36 and verse 16 now so far we've

said well perhaps we're not so bad compared to some of these things we've heard as we come down we see in verse 16 number four reason let's read verse 15 to get the background the Lord the God of their fathers sent word to them again and again by his messengers because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place that means for a hundred and fifteen years after Israel went into captivity in Assyria God sent his messengers to the southern kingdom of Judah again and again and it's an amazing word used here again and again the Lord the God of their fathers sent his messengers but they would not listen verse 16 number four reason they mocked the messengers of God when God sends you a messenger and you mock him you touch God's anointed speak against him at home criticize his

message you're on the way to Babylon God may delay it he may delay it for a number of years but finally his judgment falls it's a serious thing to mock and despise the anointed messengers of God number five in verse 16 they despised God's words they despised the word of God they did not take seriously God's word that's how it is with Christians today for example the Lord has said that if a man lusts after a woman with his eyes he deserves to go to hell Matthew 5 but there are very few Christians who take that seriously do you know what the Lord told Jeremiah now Jeremiah was the prophet during the last 40 years remember that always keep it in mind during the last 40 years before Israel went into captivity there was one prophet Jeremiah and whenever you read the book of Jeremiah remember

that was a prophecy that was God's message to save a nation from going into captivity but they did not listen I want to show you one verse in the book of Jeremiah Jeremiah 5 verse 1 the Lord told Jeremiah Jeremiah chapter 5 verse 1 roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and look and take note and seek in our open squares if you can find one man one man in all the city of Jerusalem among all these religious people see if you can find one man who does justice who seeks truth faithfulness and I will pardon the whole city you know the Lord told Abraham that if he found ten people in Sodom he would pardon the city but the Lord told Jeremiah if I find one man in Jerusalem I'll pardon the city because Jeremiah was not included he was God's messenger but he said can you find show me one

man in that city who's upright God knew what a state of affairs they were religious they were going regularly to what they call their church they gave their tithes they read their Bibles but they were not upright in their inner life they were not God-fearing they were compromisers down to the last one of them there were a bunch of compromisers there was not one person do you think God was looking for a great multitude in Jerusalem no he was looking for one man Daniel wasn't born then he couldn't find one person there what a sad state of affairs that's because they despised God's Word finally God sent them to

Babylon that was number five reason number six we read in 2nd Chronicle 36 again we saw that they mocked God's messengers they despised God's Word and it says here they scoffed or

ill-treated misused it says in the King James Version his prophets they ill-treated his prophets and I want to give you an example from Jeremiah 37 again to show you how they treated Jeremiah because he was such a uncompromising prophet Jeremiah 37 and verse 15 Jeremiah 37 verse 15 and the officials were angry at Jeremiah and beat him and they put him in jail in the house of Jonathan the scribe which they had made into the prison for Jeremiah had come into the dungeon that is the vaulted stele and Jeremiah stayed there many days and I want to tell you the prisons of those days were just a deep pit a deep unused well was converted into a prison in those days they didn't have any other type of prison and they dumped Jeremiah into this deep unused well what was his crime he was an

uncompromising prophet who spoke the truth they mistreated his prophets God allowed it God was watching and finally judgment came and you know that in those days there were other prophets in Israel false prophets who made money in the name of religion I want to show you an example of some of them in the book of Micah Micah is one of the last twelve books of the Old Testament Micah chapter 3 here is what the Lord says concerning the false prophets now the reason I'm going into the history of Israel at that time is to help us to understand the situation that led them into Babylon because it's exactly the same today today God's messengers are mocked and backbitten against today God's Word is despised today God's prophets are ill-treated perhaps not by putting them into a dungeon perhaps in

more civilized ways but still ill-treated and today also there are the false prophets who make money in the name of religion Micah chapter 3 verse 5 thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray these are the false prophets when they get something to eat they say peace but if you don't give them something to eat they declare a holy war against you have you met preachers like that or only after your meals they come and visit you for something to eat for food this is not just in those days two thousand years of church history has seen plenty of such people and further down in verse 11 her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe her priests will give instruction if you pay them a salary the prophets will give you a prophecy if you give them money yet they lean on the

Lord saying the Lord is in our midst we can never be lost we are eternally secure for we are the children of God therefore on account of you who these preachers who preach for money Zion will be plowed up as a field and Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins and the mountain of the temple will become a high places of a forest that's what happened when Babylon came so you see that the false prophets flourished the people who did not preach the hard truth who did not preach against sin who did not preach holiness who did not preach total obedience who preached the things that would tickle the ears of people please them please the rich people because they wanted their money those who serve God for a salary who say they are serving God and collect a salary fall in the category described in

Micah chapter 3 and there are plenty of such people today in churches in Christian organizations all over they will not serve unless you pay them going to all the Christian organizations in this country today and ask the people who are working there how many of you will continue to work here if you don't get a salary hundred percent of them will drop out they get a salary and they're interested in that in their increment they're not serving God they are in the category described in Micah chapter 3 and so Christendom even those who call themselves believers in many of these cases are in Babylon the false prophets flourish the true prophets are ill-treated number seven and here is a very important reason we've seen six reasons first they became like the heathen second they polluted God's

house third they shed innocent blood fourth they mocked God's messengers fifth they despised God's word sixth they ill-treated God's prophets and number seven 2nd Chronicles 36 verse 21 they did not keep the Sabbath they did not keep the Sabbath and this is not the seventh day Sabbath that we are referring to many people are familiar with only the seventh day Sabbath but in the Old Testament there was also a seventh year Sabbath God had given a law through Moses that you must cultivate your land only for six years and the seventh year you must not cultivate it but you must give the land a rest for seven year for one year and then you can cultivate it again the eighth year there must always be a six-year period of cultivation and one year you can leave the land at rest and the people will

think then what shall we eat in that seventh year if we don't cultivate God promised them in the sixth year I will supernaturally bless your harvest so that in the sixth year you get three times what you normally get so that you can eat the sixth year and the seventh year and the eighth year you're going to get three times so you can afford to leave the land at rest for the seventh year but they did not listen it says in verse 21 they were taken verse 20 they were carried to Babylon verse 21 to fulfill the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land had enjoyed its Sabbath notice that phrase until the land not the people the land had enjoyed its Sabbath all the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until 70 years were complete I want you to notice this I'll come back to this

let's turn to the Old Testament and see the law which God had given and understand it Leviticus 25 Leviticus chapter 25 and verses 1 to 7 here we read in verse 3 of Leviticus 25 six years you must sow your field six years you prune your vineyard verse 4 but during the seventh year you the land must have a Sabbath rest a Sabbath to the Lord you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard during that year verse 6 all of you shall have the Sabbath products of the land for food the land verse 5 last part shall have a sabbatical year okay now we turn to verse 18 you shall observe my statutes verse 19 then the land will yield its produce verse 20 but if you say and this is the question that comes in our mind when we are unbelieving what are we going to eat in the seventh year if we do not

sow or gather in our crops then I will so order my blessing for you in the sixth year that the land will bring forth the crop for three years not just for one year not just for two years two years would have been enough but it's going to bring the crop for three years so that you won't have any shortage in fact that year you're going to have an abundance and when you are sowing in the eighth year verse 22 you can still eat the old things from the crop eating the old until the ninth year so you'll have no shortage so what do you think these crafty Jewish businessmen did business minded people know the Jews have a reputation for being business minded they said ah the sixth year we will get three times the seventh year also we'll sow and then we'll have four times and they sowed the seventh

year and no judgment came and they sowed the next six years God kept his word the sixth year they got three times they sowed the seventh year they made more money and they carried on like this for four hundred and ninety years and during those four hundred and ninety years how many years should the land have had a Sabbath how many 70 years God said all right now I'm going to square my accounts with you I'll send the whole lot of you to Babylon for 70 years and the land is not going to be cultivated for 70 years I'll tell you you can't cheat God he always squares up the account finally these people thought they could but they didn't that's what we read in 2nd Chronicles 36 turn to 2nd Chronicles 36 verse 21 to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land had enjoyed

its Sabbath all the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until 70 years were complete that was to make up for the 70 years of Sabbath lost during 490 years of disobedience in Israel I want to tell you this brothers

and sisters God keeps an exact account now it is possible that occasionally during that period they may have kept the Sabbath now listen to this in the year of 1451 BC the nation of Israel came into Canaan in 606 BC they went into Babylon that was a period of eight hundred and forty five years from the time of Joshua when they entered Canaan to the time when Nebuchadnezzar came against the land it was a period of 845 years and during those 845 years God was watching and he was picking up the number of years when they kept the Sabbath and the number of years they didn't and

during those 845 years not continuously but off and on God calculated that 490 years they didn't keep the Sabbath the other years they did so there was a time when they kept it but for 490 years they didn't keep it finally when God totaled up the accounts at the end of 845 years he said for 490 years you have not kept the Sabbath therefore you have to go to Babylon for 70 years so the period of 70 years in Babylon was not just an arbitrary figure God just decided on in heaven it was an exact keeping of accounts it was an exact keeping of an account I wonder whether we realize that even after 845 years God can square accounts with us don't think we've got away with it just because for two or three years the judgment didn't come we thought we escaped it because that happened 15 years ago it

hasn't we haven't escaped it brother if God can square accounts after 845 years we've still got a long way to go before God squares his accounts the judgment may not come immediately I want to show you another verse in the end of the Old Testament Malachi chapter 3 Malachi chapter 3 and verse 10 bring the whole tithe into the storehouse says the Lord so that there may be food in my house and test me now in this says the Lord of hosts if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need have you ever noticed the word he doesn't say bring the tithe what does it say bring the whole tithe why did he use the word whole because God was watching and he knew that some of these fellows here were cheating on their tithe yes we think God

doesn't watch God was watching all these Jews every one of them and he could see here a person is not really being straight he's not kept it exactly I want to tell you this brothers and sisters we can never cheat God you may think for many years that you have succeeded in cheating him you will discover maybe after 845 years or after a few years anyway that God always squares his accounts he hasn't closed the books yet that's why we still have an opportunity to set things right but the things that are not set right he will sort them out even after 845 years and it will be an exact figure won't be an arbitrary figure so much is what you owe so-and-so which you did not pay back down to the paisa and so much is what you promised to give to me when you were sick or when you were in some need

you never gave it you should not have you gave a promise to God you must keep it very important this is what you said you would do and you never did it there are many things like this where we learn from the history of Israel that God deals very exactly with his people we can't play the fool with God now under the new covenant you have heard in the church here we emphasize that there is no command to type for example in the New Testament but in the New Testament the command is to give and do you think God does not know who gives and who does not give I don't know and you don't know among all sitting here who gives and who does not but God knows and he always squares accounts finally that as a man has given it'll come back to him and I believe there are many people who are in perpetual

spiritual problems and in financial need because they've never learned to give to God and God's just squaring accounts with them that's all there are others whatever they do it prospers the blessing of God is upon them it's not just in the material realm but in many other realms if a man is not faithful with unrighteous mammon Jesus said in Luke 16 verse 11 God will not give to him the true riches so what is

the number seven reason why Israelites went why the Israelites went to Babylon covetousness covetousness they wanted to sow in the seventh year also like the businessman who wants to keep his shop open on the seventh day also no time for the meetings because work has to go on this is the time when there's plenty of business seventh year also make more money make more money and finally

God squared the accounts and they found they didn't really make more they lost everything yeah God can do that God can do that very easily if you're supposed to give something to God you don't give it well there are other ways God can take it through a pickpocket to a doctor to a hospital bill there are many ways of God reducing our income oh yes he can square the accounts very easily if we honor him he'll honor us covetousness is what sent the Israelites finally to Babylon and the period in Babylon was determined by the degree of their covetousness and covetousness is what builds spiritual Babylon today that's why you read in Revelation that Babylon is an economic system you read Revelation chapter 18 it's all dealing with mammon and money and a church in which money plays a big part is

sure to end up as Babylon because money replaces the power of the Holy Spirit let's turn back to Daniel now you've got something of the background very important and here in the midst of this situation there was a young there was a baby born Daniel when he was we don't know his exact age I think he was around 16 or 17 he was taken into Babylon just like Joseph when he was 16 or 17 was taken captive to Egypt like Joseph was faithful Daniel was faithful like Joseph rose to eminence in Egypt Daniel rose to eminence in Babylon's a lot of similarity between Joseph and Daniel we read here in the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem besieged it the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand along with some of the vessels of the

house of God and he brought them all into his idolatrous temple and then the king ordered Ashkenaz the chief of his officials to bring in some of the sons of Israel including some of the royal family and of the nobles youths in whom was no defect who were good-looking showing intelligence and every branch of wisdom endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge and who had ability for serving in the king's court and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans and the king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank and appointed that they should be educated three years at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel Hananiah Mishael and

Azariah this is how in the sovereignty of God God allowed Daniel and these three friends of his to come and be selected for service before the king they were young we read the commander of the officials assigned new names to them Daniel he gave them a heathen name Belteshazzar Daniel is means God is my judge Bell was the name of the heathen God they gave them a name connected to the heathen God Hananiah which was the Jewish name was converted to Shadrach Mishael the Jewish name was converted to Meshach Azariah was converted to Abednego they gave them heathen names but they could not change their heart because Daniel still determined in his heart in verse 8 that he would not defile himself one young man 17 years old stood for God alone in the midst of this covetousness and apostasy

despising God's Word and all that we saw that led Israel to Babylon God had one young man who stood for him and the movement back to Jerusalem began with that one man I want to say brothers and sisters this is the message for the time of the end this is a spiritual message primarily and in the midst of this Babylonian harlotry God is looking here and there for young people who will stand true to him who will not defile themselves who will honor him and glorify him and around such a man God will gather others as we see so that they became a church of the overcomers poor people small church but a church of

overcomers uncompromising who fulfilled God's purposes and stood true to him he who has years to hear
let him hear

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