

MATTHEW

Interlude

The Gospel of the Kingdom

In Matthew both John the Baptist and Jesus preach the *Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven*, the “good news” of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:1-2)

“¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee [...] ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4, 12, 17)

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” (Matthew 4:23)

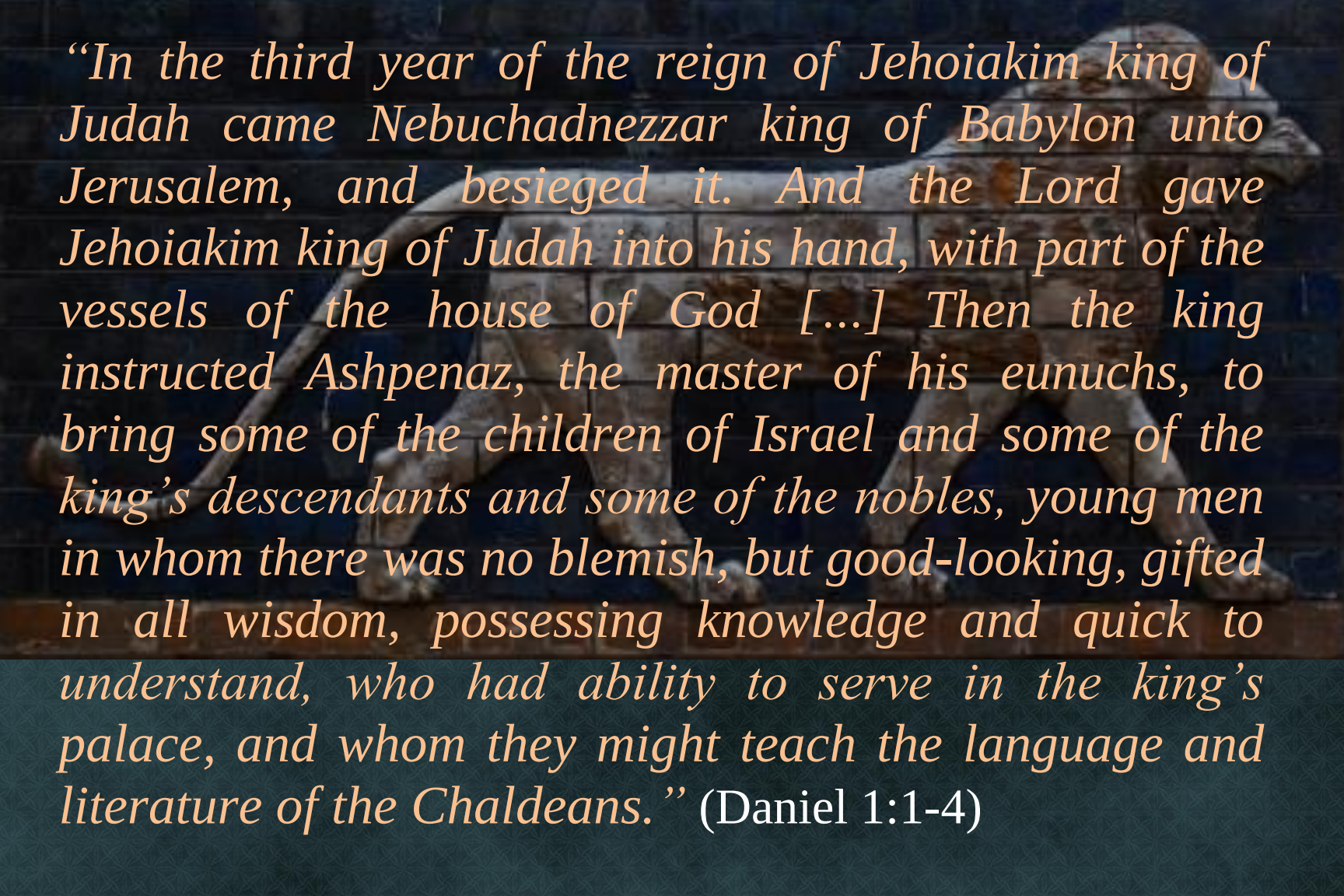
The message of the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand perfectly matched the expectations of the people of the time when Jesus walked on this planet. They were due to the prophecies found in Daniel 2. It is no coincidence that among the Dead Sea Scrolls the book of Daniel was one the most popular.

The Kingdom of Heaven is mentioned in Daniel chapter 2, called the backbone of Bible end-time prophecies. There **THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES** are described.

“And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:24)

In 586 BC Babylon destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was the end of the kingdom of Judah and an independent state of Israel till 1948 AD.



A background image showing a lion and a lamb resting together in a peaceful scene, symbolizing harmony. The lion is on the left, and the lamb is on the right, both looking towards the camera.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God [...] Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.” (Daniel 1:1-4)

“Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.” (Daniel 2:1)

Nobody could tell and interpret the dream. Only Daniel, one of the Jews brought to the Babylonian court could. He stood boldly before the king and declared:

“...there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.” (Daniel 2:28)



BABYLON.

Daniel says to the king: *“You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory... you are this head of gold.”*

PERSIANS.

GREEKS. *“which shall rule over all the earth.”*

ROME. *“And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.”*



“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.”

(Daniel 2:44-45)

Josephus, in *The Antiquities of the Jews* he mentions Daniel and his interpretation of the Babylonian king's dream.

“Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king; but I do not think proper to relate it, since I have only undertaken to describe things past or things present, but not things that are future.”

The Jewish historian could not openly disclose in his writings, addressed to the Gentiles, the non-Jewish, that the Romans would have been destroyed by God himself who was to finally establish His kingdom on earth.

We now see the connection between

DANIEL and MATTHEW

Many things will be clearer in light of this. Here are some:

- Why Peter rebuked Jesus and Jesus' answer in return — Matthew 16:21-23
- The mother of Zebedee's children's request — Matthew 20:20-23
- The lament of Jesus, because he was not received by his nation — Matthew 23:37-39 — which caused the manifestation of the kingdom of heaven to be delayed till his return, v. 39, Matthew 25:31.

At last Peter understood the Eternal Counsel of God:

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21)

What a change in the man who drew his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest – Mt. 26:51

Today the Kingdom of God is an inward, spiritual reality.
“...*behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*” (Luke 17:21).

Its future manifestation will take place when Jesus will come back – (Matthew 25:31, “*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*”)

The “*Son of Man*” is the Messianic title found in Daniel. But this is another Bible study entirely.