



Chapter 1

**By: Michael Fronczak
Bible Study Resource Center
564 Schaeffer Dr.
Coldwater, Michigan 49036**

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Daniel Chapter 1

There are many books and commentators who say that the Book of Daniel could not have been written by Daniel. They can't seem to believe that Daniel wrote this book at the time of the Babylonian captivity. They have a lot of reasons for believing that this book was written after Antiochus Epiphanes who conquered Jerusalem and desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig in it. They say that whoever wrote it had to have lived after that time because Daniel predicts in great detail all of the nations of the world from Babylon forward to Antiochus Epiphanes.

Daniel told of Medo-Persia before it existed. He talked about Greece before it came into being. He explained the break-up of the empire of Alexander the Great and the four generals who followed him, as well as the coming of the Roman Empire. He described the battles of the Ptolemies and Seleucids over Israel in the break-up of Alexander's Grecian Empire. He gives it blow by blow and king by king. The historical accuracy of Daniel, chapter 11, is unquestioned. Therefore, some people say there is no way he could have written this book before it happened. If you believe Daniel wrote it, you have to believe in the divine revelation of Scripture.

There is hardly a book in the Bible that so continually identifies the author. God anticipated the criticism that would be given this book.

(Daniel 7:2) *Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.*

(Daniel 7:15) *I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.*

(Daniel 7:28) *Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.*

(Daniel 8:1) *In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.*

(Daniel 8:15) *And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.*

(Daniel 8:27) *And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.*

(Daniel 9:2) *In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*

(Daniel 9:22) *And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.*

(Daniel 10:2) *In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.*

(Daniel 10:7) *And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.*

(Daniel 10:11) *And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.*

(Daniel 10:12) *Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.*

(Daniel 12:5) *Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.*

Introduction From Believers Study Bible

AUTHOR: Daniel

A contemporary of Jeremiah and his fellow exile Ezekiel, Daniel (lit. “God is my Judge”) is unquestionably the author of the book which bears his name. Ezekiel refers to Daniel (cf. Ezek 14:14, 20; 28:3; attempts to identify the Daniel referred to in Ezekiel with an Ugaritic “Δνιλ” have been unconvincing), establishing Daniel’s historicity. Furthermore, Jesus quotes Daniel, calling him a prophet and clearly demonstrating His knowledge that this prophecy came from Daniel (cf. Matt 24:15). Those who have represented the prophecy as a second-century B.C. forgery have been guided by their own presuppositions rather than by fact. Daniel and his three compatriots, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were forced into exile in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar descended for the first time upon Jehoiakim’s kingdom of Judah. Daniel was of the royal seed, and there is some evidence that he, together with his friends, was made a eunuch at the time of his deportation (cf. 2 Kin 20:18). This may be gleaned from the following: (1) the mention of the master of the eunuchs (1:3) and the chief of the eunuchs (1:7-11, 18), to whom the four Hebrews were committed for preparation for service in the courts; (2) the absence of any mention of family life or offspring for Daniel; and (3) the prophecy of Isa 39:6, 7 (admitting, however, that the term here translated “eunuch,” σαρισ, Heb., may sometimes mean simply “official,” as in Gen 37:36; 39:1; 40:2, 7; 1 Kin 22:9; 1 Chr 28:1; Jer 52:25). Conceivably Daniel was in his late teens or early twenties when this calamity befell him. The Jewish canon listed Daniel in the Hagiographa (i.e., “the holy writings”) rather than among the prophets (although Josephus considered him a prophet).

Daniel's principal role as statesman rather than prophet is thereby acknowledged. This in no way reduces the importance of his prophetic utterances, but it does bear testimony to the mixture in Daniel's book of biography, history, and prophecy. Since Daniel survived the demise of the Babylonian Empire, his prophecy also encompasses segments of the Persian period of dominance. Consequently, the statesman-prophet Daniel must have lived from 90 to 100 years.

DATE: c. 530 B.C.

The events which culminated in the fall of Jerusalem and Judah in 586 B.C. were neither sudden nor unannounced. Judah was threatened repeatedly by the Assyrians, and escaped these oppressors only to fall to the burgeoning Babylonian Empire. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, descended upon Jerusalem. Daniel and a few others of noble extraction were taken to Babylon to serve in the king's court. In 597 B.C., King Jehoiachin, the royal family, and the young priest Ezekiel, together with the treasures of the temple, were deported. Finally, 586 B.C. marked the awesome destruction of the temple and nation. Events contained in Daniel's prophecy span the time period from 605 B.C. to the third year of the reign of Cyrus, 536 B.C. While portions of the book may have been committed to writing at earlier times, Daniel's final writing of the treatise was probably done about 530 B.C.

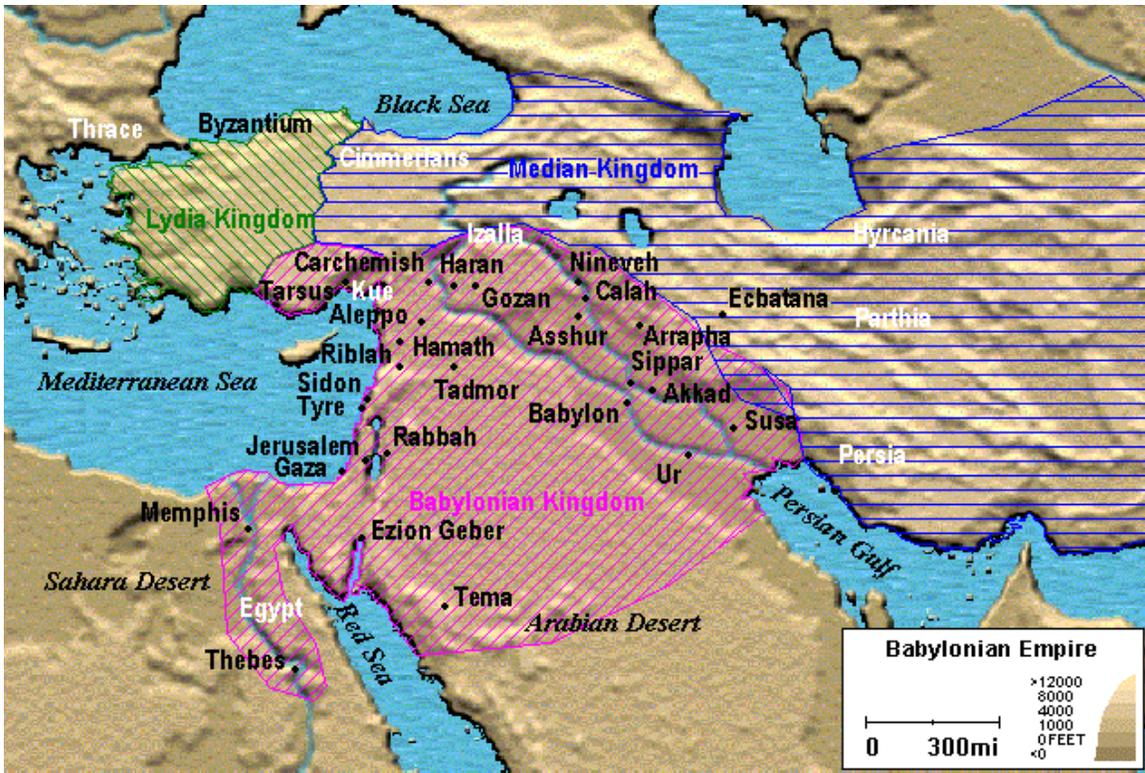
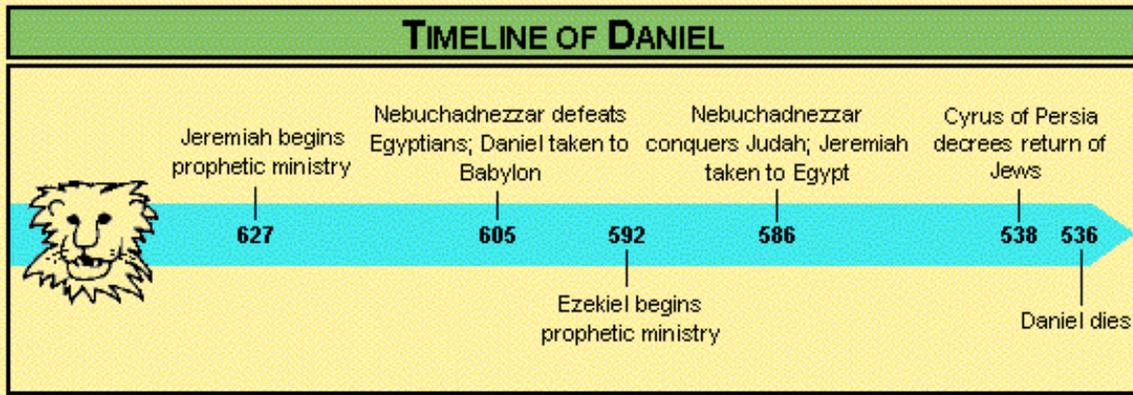
THEME: The Providence of God and the Last Days

The book features the providence of God among His faithful people, even in exile. It also contains a series of apocalyptic (prophetic) visions, through which future events are revealed to the statesman-prophet. The theme of God's providence is shown in Daniel's rise to prominence in Nebuchadnezzar's court (cf. ch. 2), in the dramatic intervention of one "like the Son of God" in the fiery-furnace trial (cf. 3:25), in Nebuchadnezzar's temporary insanity (cf. ch. 4), in Daniel's role as interpreter during Babylon's "last night of glory" (cf. ch. 5), and in the marvelous delivery of Daniel from the ravenous lions under Darius (cf. ch. 6). The apocalyptic segment is devoted to a series of visions concerning the four great empires of antiquity (cf. chs. 7; 8), the prophecy of Israel's Seventy Weeks (cf. ch. 9), more visions concerning world governments (cf. ch. 10), visions depicting the course of events in the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids (cf. ch. 11), and a prophecy of Israel's ultimate deliverance from tribulations (cf. ch. 12).

SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Together with Genesis, Daniel has been subject to greater critical attack than any other Old Testament book. Supposed anachronisms, historical inaccuracies, and prophetic impossibilities have been charged against the prophecy. However, subsequent archaeological discoveries have largely vindicated the assertions of Daniel. The critic's den has been more formidable than the lion's den in its a priori insistence that the Book of Daniel must have a late date (second century), since Daniel could not have predicted the historical events which unfolded later exactly as he described. The incredible discovery of the scrolls in the Qumran caves has demonstrated that the Book of Daniel is much older than many had thought. Although most of Daniel is written in Hebrew, a portion is in Aramaic (2:4b-7:28). Comparative analysis shows that the Aramaic is not the western Aramaic of the later Maccabean period, but the eastern Aramaic of the sixth century B.C. Those portions mainly concerned with Israel were penned in Hebrew, while those mainly concerned with the Gentile empires were written in Aramaic. Together with

the Book of Revelation, Daniel provides invaluable information for the last days of Israel and the earth.¹



¹ Believers Study Bible

Introduction by McGee:

The Book of Daniel is one of the most thrilling books in the Bible, and it is, of course, a book on prophecy. Because prophecy bulks large in the Bible, I would like to say a word about it before we look at the Book of Daniel specifically. One fourth of the books in the Bible are of prophetic nature; the subject and statement of the books are eschatological, that is, they deal with prophecy. One fifth of the content of Scripture was predictive at the time of its writing; a large segment of that has been fulfilled. Therefore, the prophecy in Scripture can be divided into fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. We will find a great deal of fulfilled prophecy in Daniel.

There are certain great subjects of prophecy. They are like planes flying into an airport from all sections of the world, and you can go to the Book of Revelation and see all these great subjects brought to a final fruition. The main subject of prophecy is the Lord Jesus Christ. Other topics include Israel, the gentile nations, evil, Satan, the Man of Sin, the Great Tribulation Period, and how this age will end. The church is also a subject of prophecy; however, the church is never mentioned in the Old Testament, and therefore there will be no reference to it in the Book of Daniel. Then, of course, there are the subjects of the kingdom, the Millennium, and eternity future. These are the great subjects of prophecy.

I do not believe that one can have a full-orbed view of the Bible or be a well-rounded student of Scripture without a knowledge of eschatology, or prophecy. The neglect of the study of prophecy has produced certain harmful results which I think are quite evident today. Many of the cults have gone off the track in prophetic areas. This is largely because the teaching of prophecy has been neglected by the great denominations. For example, Dr. Charles Hodge, a great theologian at Princeton in the past, made this statement: "The subject [prophecy] cannot be adequately discussed without taking a survey of all the prophetic teachings of Scripture both of the Old Testament and of the New. This task cannot be satisfactorily accomplished by anyone who has not made a study of the prophecies a specialty. The author [that is, Dr. Hodge], knowing that he has not such qualifications for the work, purposes to confine himself in a great measure to an historical survey of the different schemes of interpreting the Scriptures prophetically." That certainly was a startling and sad admission on the part of Dr. Hodge. As a result, we find men in a great many of our denominations today who are ill-equipped to speak on prophecy. They dismiss it with a wave of the hand as being unimportant. And those who do go into the study of prophecy often come up with that which is sensational and fanatical. The Book of Daniel, particularly, is the subject of many such sensational writers on prophecy.

The Book of Daniel is a very important one, and it has therefore been the object of special attack by Satan in the same way that the Book, of Isaiah has been. Isaiah has been called the prince of the prophets, and I would like to say that Daniel, then, is the king of the prophets. Both of these prophecies are very important in Scripture and have been especially attacked by unbelievers.

The Book of Daniel has been a battlefield between conservative and liberal scholars for years, and much of the controversy has had to do with the dating of the writing of the book. Porphyry, a heretic in the third century A.D., declared that the Book of Daniel was a forgery written during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees. That would place its writing around 170 B.C., almost four hundred years *after* Daniel lived. The

German critics seized upon this hypothesis and, along with Dr. S. R. Driver, developed this type of criticism of the book. These critics, as well as present-day unbelievers, assume the premise that the supernatural does not exist. Since foreknowledge is supernatural, there can, therefore, be no foretelling, no prophesying.

However, the very interesting thing is that the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, was translated before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and it contains the Book of Daniel! The liberal scholars have ignored similar very clear testimony from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Those scrolls confirm the fact that there was only one author of the Book of Isaiah. The liberal has wanted to argue that there was a duet or even a trio of “Isaihs” who wrote that book. The Dead Sea Scrolls are very much alive, and they refute the liberal critic on that point.

It is interesting how these questions which are raised concerning the Bible are always answered in time. The heretic, the critic, and the cultist always move in an area of the Bible where we do not have full knowledge at the time. Everyone can speculate, and you can speculate any way you want to—generally the speculation goes the wrong way. However, in time, the Word of God is proven accurate.

Flavius Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Vol. 1, p. 388) also records an incident during the time of Alexander the Great which supports the early authorship of Daniel. When Alexander’s invasion reached the Near East, Jaddua, the high priest, went out to meet him and showed him a copy of the Book of Daniel in which Alexander was clearly mentioned. Alexander was so impressed by this that, instead of destroying Jerusalem, he entered the city peaceably and worshiped at the temple.

These arguments clearly contradict the liberal critics; yet there are those who blindly ignore them. It is not in the purview of these brief comments to enter into useless argument and fight again about that which has already been settled. I simply want to say that I accept the findings of conservative scholarship that the man Daniel was not a deceiver and that his book was not a forgery. I feel the statement of Pusey is apropos here: “The rest which has been said is mostly mere insolent assumptions against Scripture, grounded on unbelief.” Sir Isaac Newton declared, “To reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion.”

Furthermore, our Lord Jesus called the Pharisees “hypocrites,” but He called Daniel “the prophet” (see Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). Very frankly, I go along with the Lord Jesus who, by the way, never reversed His statement. The endorsement of the Lord Jesus Christ is valid and sufficient for every believer, whether or not he has examined the arguments of the critics, and it satisfies the sincere saint without his having to study the answers of conservative scholarship.

We know more about Daniel the man than we do of any other prophet. He gives us a personal account of his life from the time he was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (about 606 B.C.) until the first year of King Cyrus (about 536 B.C.). Daniel’s life and ministry bridge the entire seventy years of captivity. At the beginning of the book he is a boy in his teens. At the end he is an old man of fourscore and more years.

Here is God’s estimate of the man Daniel: “O Daniel, a man greatly beloved” (Dan. 10:11). I would not want to be one of those critics who have called the Book of Daniel a forgery. Someday I am going to face Daniel in heaven and find that he has a pretty good reputation—“a man greatly beloved.”

There are three words which characterize Daniel's life: purpose, prayer, and prophecy.

1. Daniel was a man of *purpose* (Dan. 1:8; 6:10). When the king made a decree that everyone had to eat the same thing, Daniel and his friends decided they would abide by the law of Moses—and they did. Daniel was a man of purpose, and we can see this all the way through his book. Here was a man who stood on his own two feet and had the intestinal fortitude to speak God's Word.

God have pity today on men who claim to be His messengers to the world but haven't got the courage to declare the Word of God. I also thank God that there are many who are declaring the whole Word of God, including prophecy, in our day. You see, the proper study of prophecy will not lead us to sensationalism and fanaticism, but it will lead us to a life of holiness and fear of God. John said in 1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The study of prophecy will purify our lives, my friend.

2. Daniel was a man of *prayer* (Dan. 2:17–23; 6:10; 9:3–19; 10). There are several incidents recorded in this book about Daniel's prayer life. By the way, prayer got Daniel into the lion's den. How about that for answered prayer? Well, God also miraculously saved him from the lions. Daniel was a man of prayer.

3. Daniel was a man of *prophecy*. The Book of Daniel divides itself equally: the first half is history, and the last half is prophecy. Daniel gives us the skeleton of prophecy on which all prophecy is placed. The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) and the beasts (Dan. 7) are the backbone of prophecy; the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9) are the ribs which fit into their proper place.

The key verse to the Book of Daniel is Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan gave this theme for the Book of Daniel: "Persistent Government of God in the Government of the World." This is the book of the universal sovereignty of God. Prophecy is here interwoven with history to show that God is overruling the idolatry, blasphemy, self-will, and intolerance of the Gentiles.

More specially, Daniel 12:4 brings together "... the times of the Gentiles ..." (Luke 21:24) and "the time of the end" (see also Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40) for the nation Israel in the Great Tribulation Period. This coming crisis eventuates in Christ's setting up the millennial kingdom. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4).

The Book of Daniel deals with political issues apart from ecclesiastical matters, giving the final outcome of events and issues which are at work in the world today. He answers the question—Who will rule the world?—not, How will the world be converted?

The Book of Daniel is the key to understanding other Scriptures. Our Lord, in the Olivet Discourse, quoted only from the Book of Daniel. The Book of Revelation is largely an enigma without the Book of Daniel. Paul's revelation concerning the "... man of sin ..." (2 Thess. 2:3) needs Daniel's account for amplification and clarification.²

²McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:524). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Why Daniel?

1. Discovery: The Bible is a highly sophisticated, integrated message system; tightly engineered in theme, structure, details; interdependence. Thus, 66 books, written by 40 authors over thousands of years, yet evidences integrity of design and demonstrates a proven origin from outside the domain of time. It is an extraterrestrial book.
2. One of the few books that describes Gentile history, in advance. It is as timely as tomorrow's newspaper.
3. It contains the most amazing passages in the entire Bible.

When Written?

About 6 centuries before Christ. For proof of test it doesn't really matter. It's in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament (LXX): 285-270 B.C. (Latin: *septuaginta*, "70.") 72 elders of Israel, 6 from each tribe, during the reign of Ptolemy II, Philadelphus (285-244 B.C.) in Alexandria (Letter of Aristeas). Many NT quotes from LXX; including in the Letter to Hebrews. Thus, in widespread use three centuries before Christ was born. The mathematical precision yields undeniable proof of His Deity.

Daniel in the Critics Den

No other book is as vindicated by history. Too specific to yield to attempts to discredit it.

Josephus: During Alexander's conquest of Jerusalem, 332 B.C., Priest Jaddua showed him references to himself in Daniel; city spared.

R. Kodewey, 1899-1917: excavations of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, etc. Banquet hall found, 173' x 56'. (Rebuilt by Saddam Hussein.) Daniel had to be an eyewitness.

Ultimate authentication: Jesus quotes Daniel 3X; "Daniel the Prophet."

Other Observations: Quoted 3X in Ezekiel (Ezek 14:14, 20; 28:3); classed with Noah, Job, etc.

Nothing evil spoken of him. (Only two: Joseph and Daniel: both executives); vs. David, et al.

Foreign words: 15 Persian words; 3 Greek words. This would be expected from Daniel's position. As a teenager, deported; served at court; survived into Persian Empire.³

Chapters:

2-7: in Chaldean (Gentile focus).

4: written by a Gentile King!

8-12: focus on Israel.

Organization:

1-6 Narrative; history.

7-12 Visions.

³ Chuck Missler's Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler's Commentary

Sabbath Year concept: Lev 25, 26; 490 years: Israel failed to keep the Sabbath Year; Israel owed God 70 years:
 2 Chr 36:21-22. 70 x 7: Four such periods in Israel's history.

The "Seventy Sevens" of Israel (Missler)

1) Abraham to the Exodus

Promise (Gen 12:4)	75 years
Gal 3:17	<u>+ 430</u>
	505

Ishmael, usurper (Gen 16:16; 21:5) -15 = **490**

2) Exodus to the Temple

Begun: 1 Kgs 6 - 8	594
Completed: 1 Kgs 6:38	<u>+ 7</u>
	601

Servitudes: Judges

Mesopotamia 3:8	8
Moabites 3:12-14	18
Canaanites 4:2,3	20
Midianites 6:1	7
Ammonites 10:7,8	18
Philistines 13:1	<u>40</u>
	-111 = 490

3) The Temple to the Edict of Artaxerxes

1 Kgs 8:1-66	1005 B.C.	
Neh 2:1	445 B.C.	
		560
Babylonian Captivity		-70 = 490

4) Artaxerxes to the Second Coming

Artaxerxes to the 1st Advent
 "The Sixty Nine Weeks" (69 x 7) = 483
 [Church parenthesis] ?
 The "Seventieth Week" +7 = **490**
 Isa 39:5-7; Jer 25:8-12; 27:6-8; 29:10.

1st Siege of Nebuchadnezzar: “Servitude of Nation”

Battle of Carchemesh: 606 B.C.; Nebuchadnezzar vs Pharaoh Necco W bank of Euphrates; Jer 46:1-6. Jehoikim fettered (2 Chr 36:5-8). Jehoikim released as a vassal; Temple plundered (for museum); hostages (Daniel et al.) taken. (Daniel of Royal line? Ch 1:4). Begins “Servitude of the Nation”; 70 years *to the day*.

2nd Seige of Nebuchadnezzar

Jehoikim ignores Jeremiah’s counsel, rebels. 5 year battle; Jehoikim dies; Jer 22:17-19. Jehiachin (“Jeconiah”) son reigns until siege over. Jer 22:24-30. (Blood curse avoided by Christ’s virgin birth.) His son captured; 10,000 captives; 1000 skilled artisans; etc. 2 Kgs 24:1-4. His uncle, Zedekiah, installed as vassal. Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy; but false prophets again prevail. Ego trip leads to:

3rd Siege of Nebuchadnezzar

“Desolations of Jerusalem” 587 B.C.; (also 70 years; but not coterminous with “Servitude.”) Contradictory prophecies: Jer 32:5, 39:7; Ezek 12:13; 2 Kgs 25:6,7. God does not deal in approximations. City and Temple *destroyed* 2 Kgs 24:17-20; 25:1-21.⁴

A Provocative Conjecture

Ezekiel 4:1-8: 430 years of judgment predicted. 430 - 70 years captivity = 360 unaccounted for? Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28:

Multiply by seven? $360 \times 7 = 2520$ years. 360 day years: Genesis 7:24, 8:3,4, etc.; 42 months; 3 1/2 years; 1260 days; being equivalent in Revelation, etc.

$2520 \text{ years} \times 360 = 907,200 \text{ days}$. $2483 \text{ years} \times 365 = 906,295 \text{ days}$, + ?

What about leap years?

The Julian year is 11 minutes 10.46 seconds longer than the mean solar year. Therefore the Julian calendar contains 3 leap years too many every 4 centuries. An error of 11 days occurred as of 1752 A.D. and was corrected by the Gregorian reform, which declared September 3 to be September 14, 1752, and reckoning 1700, 1800, and 1900 as common years and 2000 as a leap year. Dividing 2483 by 4 = 621, with 18 too many (3 excess every 4 centuries); 11 have already been corrected for by the Gregorian reform: $18 - 11 = 7$; $621 - 7 = 614$.

2483 years	$365 = 906,295$ days
plus, for leap years	614 days
9 months	270 days
21 days	<u>21 days</u>
2520 years (360 days)	907,200 days

Don’t confuse the “Servitude of the Nation” with the “Desolations of Jerusalem.” The “Desolations of Jerusalem” was punishment for not yielding to the “servitude”: Jeremiah 27:6, 8, 11; 38:17-21. Cf. Jeremiah 29:10; Daniel 9:2.

Both the “Servitude of the Nation” and the “Desolations of Jerusalem” were predicted to last 70 years, but these were also 360-day years: $70 \text{ years} \times 360 = 25,200 \text{ days} = 69 \text{ years} \times 365 \text{ less } 2 \text{ days}$.

⁴ Chuck Missler’s Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler’s Commentary

Servitude of the Nation:

606 B.C. + 69 years = 537 B.C.

If July 23, 537 B.C. was the release from the *Servitude of the Nation*,

then - 537y 7m 23d

(no “year 0”): 1

2483y 9m 21d

1948 5 14

which is **May 14, 1948**. It was on this date that David Ben Gurion declared on international radio, and using Ezekiel as his authority, the re-establishment of **Israel** as the new Jewish homeland.

Desolations of Jerusalem:

587 B.C. + 69 years = 518 B.C.

If August 16, 518 B.C. was the completion of the *Desolations of Jerusalem*,

then -518y 8m 16d

(no “year 0” 1 B.C. to 1 A.D.) 1

2483y 9m 21d

1967 6 7

which is **June 7, 1967**, when, as a result of the “Six Day War,” Israel regained control of the Old City of Jerusalem for the first time since the time of Christ.

Nebuchadnezzar began the period known as the “times of the Gentiles.” Cf. Luke 21:24. Jer 25:9; Nebuchadnezzar is “my servant”! Dan 2:21. No king from the line of David has ruled over Israel since the Babylonian captivity.⁵

Contemporary prophets Jeremiah (627-586)
Habakkuk (612-588)
Ezekiel (593-571)

Setting the time: The prophet Daniel lived in the sixth century before the birth of Jesus. During this approximate period:

- Mayan civilization flourished in Mexico
- Aesop wrote his fables
- Confucius and Buddha lived
- Greek art began to truly excel
- The Phoenicians made the first known sea journey around Africa
- The Greeks introduced the olive tree to Italy⁶

⁵ Chuck Missler’s Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler’s Commentary

⁶ Guzik Introduction to Daniel

Daniel 1:1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

[Jehoiakim] *Y^ehowyaqiyim*, (H-3079, *yeh-ho-yaw-keem'*; from Hebrew 3068 (Y^chovah) abbreviation and Hebrew 6965 (quwm); *Jehovah will raise; Jehojakim*, a Jewish king :- Jehoiakim. Compare Hebrew 3113 (Yowyaqiyim).

Jehoiakim was raised to the throne of Judah in the place of his brother Jehoahaz by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt (2 Kings 23:34-36; 2 Chron. 36:1-4). He continued tributary to Egypt for 3 years. In the 4th year, which was the 1st year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 25:1-3), who defeated Egypt at Carchemish on the River Euphrates, Judah, Syria and other countries were made subject to Babylon (Jeremiah 46:1-2). The 70 years captivity to Babylon began here (Jeremiah 25:1-11). Daniel was taken captive at this time.

Jehoiakim served Babylon 3 years and then rebelled (2 Kings 24:1-7). Nebuchadnezzar, being occupied in wars, did not proceed against Judah for about 3 or 4 years. Then in the 11th year of Jehoiakim Babylon again conquered Judah (2 Kings 23:36-24:7). Jehoiachin was made king but reigned only 3 months, for Nebuchadnezzar then carried him captive to Babylon and made Zedekiah king over Judah. He reigned 11 years and then rebelled. Babylon again came against Judah and destroyed the nation and the city Jerusalem, taking almost all the Jews captive (2 Chron. 36:11-21).⁷

[came] Hebrew: *bow'* (H935), to go in the sense of set out. When he was not yet king, Nebuchadnezzar set out toward Jerusalem with his father's army, in the third year of Jehoiakim, but he was delayed in the war with Egypt until the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the time when he was made king (Jeremiah 46:1-3; 2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chron. 36:6-7). By the time Daniel wrote of this invasion Nebuchadnezzar had become king. Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar and the king of Babylon, died while Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem. He had to return quickly to Babylon, leaving his generals to conduct the Jewish captives to Babylon, among whom were Daniel and his companions (Daniel 1:1-2; 2 Kings 24:1-16).⁸

[third year]—compare Jeremiah 25:1, "the *fourth* year; Jehoiakim came to the throne at the *end* of the year, which Jeremiah reckons as the *first* year, but which Daniel leaves out of count, being an incomplete year: thus, in Jeremiah, it is "the *fourth* year"; in Daniel, "the *third*" [JAHN]. However, Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:1; Jeremiah 46:2) merely says, the fourth year of Jehoiakim coincided with the first of Nebuchadnezzar, when the latter *conquered the Egyptians at Carchemish*; not that the *deportation of captives from Jerusalem* was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim: this probably took place in the end of the third year of Jehoiakim, shortly *before* the battle of Carchemish [FAIRBAIRN].

Nebuchadnezzar took away the captives as hostages for the submission of the Hebrews. *Historical* Scripture gives no positive account of this first deportation, with which the Babylonian captivity, that is, Judah's subjection to Babylon for seventy years (Jeremiah

⁷ Dake's Study Notes, Dakes Study Bible

⁸ Dake's Study Notes, Dakes Study Bible

29:10), begins. But 2 Chron. 36:6-7, states that Nebuchadnezzar had intended "to carry Jehoiakim to Babylon," and that he "carried off the vessels of the house of the Lord" thither. But Jehoiakim died at Jerusalem, before the conqueror's intention as to him was carried into effect (Jeremiah 22:18-19; Jeremiah 36:30), and his dead body, as was foretold, was dragged out of the gates by the Chaldean besiegers, and left unburied. The second deportation under Jehoiachin was eight years later.⁹

Born during the middle of Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22-23), Daniel grew up during the king's reforms. During this time, Daniel probably heard Jeremiah, a prophet he quoted in Daniel 9:2. In 609 B.C., Josiah was killed in a battle against Egypt, and within four years, the southern kingdom of Judah had returned to its evil ways.

In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylonia. In September of that year, he swept into Palestine and surrounded Jerusalem, making Judah his vassal state. To demonstrate his dominance, Nebuchadnezzar took many of Jerusalem's wisest men and most beautiful women to Babylon as captives. Daniel was among this group.¹⁰

These initial verses of prophecy designate the setting of the story. Jehoiakim came to the throne of Judah in 608 B.C. The third year of his reign would be 605 B.C. Jeremiah asserts that the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.; see chart, "Kings of Babylon") occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (cf. Jer 25:1; 46:2). This is no contradiction since Daniel follows the accession-year system of Babylon, which designated the portion of a year from accession to New Year's as the accession year; the first year of the reign counted as the first full year following New Year's Day. Jeremiah, on the other hand, followed the nonaccession-year system of Judah, which counted the year of accession as both the last year of the previous king and the first year of the new king. According to Daniel's reckoning, Jehoiakim's third year ran from September, 606 B.C. to October, 605 B.C. During this year, Prince Nebuchadnezzar, commander of the Babylonian army of his father Nabopolassar, captured the last Assyrian stronghold at Carchemish, defeating a combined Assyrian-Egyptian army. He drove Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians all the way to Egypt and conquered Palestine (called "Hatti land" in the Babylonian Chronicle), seizing tribute and Necho's captives from the puppet-king Jehoiakim. When his father Nabopolassar died, he was forced to break off his campaign and return to Babylon, to take the throne on September 7, 605 B.C. "Shinar" (v. 2) refers to Mesopotamia, which at the time was part of the Babylonian Empire (cf. Gen 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9).¹¹

McGee: Jehoiakim was placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Necho to succeed his brother, Jehoahaz. Both of these evil men were sons of Josiah, the godly king who led in the last revival in Judah (see 2 Kings 23:31-37). Jehoiakim's name was actually Eliakim. During his reign Nebuchadnezzar first came against Jerusalem. The year was about 606 B.C.; he took the city in about 604 B.C. The city was not destroyed, but the first group of captives was taken to Babylon. Among these were Daniel, his three friends, and literally thousands of others.

⁹ JFB Commentary

¹⁰ Life Application Notes

¹¹ Believers Study Bible

When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin came to the throne. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar who, in 598 B.C., again besieged Jerusalem. Once more Jerusalem was not destroyed, but the king, his mother, and all the vessels of the house of the Lord were taken away to Babylon, along with an even larger group of captives. Evidently among this latter group was Ezekiel (see 2 Kings 24:6–16).

Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, was subsequently made king and also rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. This time Nebuchadnezzar came against the city, destroyed the temple, and burned Jerusalem. The sons of Zedekiah were slain in his presence, and then his own eyes were put out. He, along with the final deportation, went into captivity about 588 or 587 B.C. All this, by the way, was in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 25:8–13. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had told the people that the false prophets were wrong and that Jerusalem would be destroyed. These two men just happened to have been right.¹²

Daniel 1:2

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

The Lord gave them into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.
Shinar = Babylon (used 7 times).

[gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand] See Isaiah 39:6-7; Jeremiah 25; Ezekiel 21:26-27.

[the LORD gave]: The Book of Daniel emphasizes the sovereignty of God in the affairs of nations. Jerusalem did not fall merely because Nebuchadnezzar was strong, but because God had judged the people of Judah for their disobedience and idolatry. **some of the articles:** The remainder of the articles were removed later when Jehoiakim surrendered (see 2 Kin. 24:13; 2 Chr. 36:18). **Shinar**—that is, Babylon—was located on the Euphrates River fifty miles south of present-day Baghdad in Iraq. **into the treasure house:** The articles taken from the house of God appear later, on the night of Belshazzar's feast (ch. 5). Eventually they were returned to Zerubbabel who brought them back to Israel (see Ezra 1:7).¹³

[part of the vessels of the house of God] The rest of the vessels were taken to Babylon later (2 Kings 24:13; 2 Chron. 36:10).

[the land of Shinar to the house of his god] See Genesis 10:10; Genesis 11:2; Genesis 14:1,9.

¹²McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:528). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³Nelson Study Bible Notes

[house of his god] This was the great temple of Bel, the chief god of the Babylonians.

[Shinar]—the old name of Babylonia (Genesis 11:2; Genesis 14:1; Isaiah 11:11; Zech. 5:11). Nebuchadnezzar took only "part of the vessels," as he did not intend wholly to overthrow the state, but to make it tributary, and to leave such vessels as were absolutely needed for the public worship of Jehovah. Subsequently all were taken away and were restored under Cyrus (Ezra 1:7).¹⁴

At certain times God allows his work to suffer. In this instance, the Babylonians raided the temple of God, and took the worship articles to the temple of a god in Babylon. This god may have been Bel, also called Marduk, the chief god of the Babylonians. Those who loved the Lord must have felt disheartened and discouraged. We feel greatly disappointed when our churches suffer physical damage, split, close down for financial reasons, or are wracked by scandals. We do not know why God allows his church to experience these calamities. But like the people who witnessed the plundering of the temple by the Babylonians, we must trust that God is in control and that he is watching over all who trust in him.¹⁵

McGee: Only some of the vessels were taken to Babylon at this time; the remainder were removed when Jehoiachin surrendered (see 2 Kings 24:13). Nebuchadnezzar took these vessels and carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god. We want to keep this in mind, because later on King Belshazzar (probably a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar) will bring them out for his banquet.¹⁶

Guzik Commentary:

a. **Jehoiakim king of Judah:** This was a Judean king placed on the throne by the Pharaoh of Egypt. His name means "Yahweh raises up," but the LORD did not raise him up at all - Pharaoh did.

b. **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon:** This was the mighty ruler of the Babylonian Empire. The name **Nebuchadnezzar** is a Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name *Nebu-kudduri-utzur*, which means "Nebu protects the crown."

c. **Came to Jerusalem and besieged it:** Why did Nebuchadnezzar come against Jerusalem? Because the Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. In response the young prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Charchemish, then he pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai. Along the way (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem, who had been loyal to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

i. This happened in 605 B.C. and it was the first, but not the last encounter between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim. There would be two later invasions (597 and 587 B.C.).

¹⁴ JFB Commentary

¹⁵ Life Application Notes

¹⁶ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:528). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

d. Is this a historical blunder? This invasion in 605 B.C. is not mentioned in the book of Kings, but Josephus' quotation of the Babylonian historian Berossus shows that the Biblical account of three separate Babylonian attacks on Judah is accurate (*Against Apion*, I 19; *Antiquities*, X 11, 1).

i. The Babylonian chronicles are a collection of tablets discovered as early as 1887, and are held in the British Museum. In them, Nebuchadnezzar's 605 B.C. presence in Judah is documented and clarified.

ii. When the Babylonian chronicles were finally published in 1956, they gave us first-rate, detailed political and military information about the first 10 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. L.W. King prepared these tablets in 1919; he then died, and they were neglected for four decades.

iii. Excavations also document the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over the Egyptians at Carchemish in May or June of 605 B.C. Archaeologists found evidences of battle, vast quantities of arrowheads, layers of ash, and a shield of a Greek mercenary fighting for the Egyptians.

iv. This campaign was interrupted suddenly when Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death and raced back to Babylon to secure his succession to the throne. He traveled about 500 miles in two weeks - remarkable speed.

v. The siege of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. was cut short by Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon. This is not specifically detailed in the Babylonian Chronicles, but it is entirely consistent with the record.

e. **In the third year of the reign:** There is also no contradiction between Daniel, who says this happened in the **third year of** Jehoiakim, and Jeremiah 46:2, which says it was *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim*. Daniel reckoned a king's years after the Babylonian method: the first year of a king's reign begins at the start of the calendar year *after* he takes the throne. Jeremiah uses the Jewish method.

i. "It was customary for the Babylonians to consider the first year of a king's reign as the year of accession and to call the next year the first year . . . Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology." (Walvoord)

f. **And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand:** In this 597 B.C. deportation, **Jehoiakim**, Ezekiel and others were taken away. This deportation is described in 2 Kings 24:14-16.

i. Though Judah is conquered, God's hand is obvious; He is in command. This was prophesied in Isaiah 39:7: *And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon*. This prophecy leads some to think Daniel and his companions were made eunuchs. Certainly, the Hebrew term *saris* was used of literal eunuchs; but the word derives from a phrase that simply means to be a servant of the king. It wasn't exclusively applied to literal eunuchs.

ii. Why did the LORD give Judah into the hands of the Babylonians? The two main reasons for the captivity were Israel's idolatry, and their failure to observe the sabbaths for the land (Leviticus 25:1-7 and 26:2-35). This shows that God always settles accounts with those who refuse to respond to His warnings. In the 587 B.C. invasion, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (2 Kings 25:9-10).

g. **Some of the articles of the house of God:** Nebuchadnezzar did not take *all* the furnishings of the temple, only **some**. The rest were either hidden before Nebuchadnezzar came or brought to Babylon later.

i. The confiscation of these items and their deposit in a Babylonian temple was a dramatic declaration by Nebuchadnezzar saying, "my god is better than your God." Was the God of Israel able to vindicate Himself?

ii. This was a low time for Judah and God's people. It seemed that the God of Israel lost out to the gods of Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. The Book of Daniel shows God vindicating Himself at a time when the conquest of Israel might have brought His reputation into disrepute.¹⁷

Daniel 1:3

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

Eunuchs = Officer. Potiphar was "Eunuch"; Master of Palace Servants; Gen 37:36.

Master of his eunuchs—This word eunuchs signifies officers about or in the palace whether literally eunuchs or not.

[king spake unto Ashpenaz] This was after Nebuchadnezzar was back in Babylon and made king in the room of his father Nabopolassar.

[of the king's seed] Daniel and his companions were chosen to fulfill Isaiah 39:1-8 (Daniel 1:3-6).

[princes] Eight qualifications demanded by the king:

1. They must be princes (Daniel 1:3).
2. They must be youths (children, Daniel 1:4).
3. They must be without blemish physically (Daniel 1:4).
4. They must be handsome; good in appearance (Daniel 1:4).
5. They must be well educated—skillful in wisdom.
6. They must be skillful in knowledge (Daniel 1:4).
7. They must be proficient in the sciences (Daniel 1:4).
8. They must be refined and polished so as to be able to stand before kings (Daniel 1:4).

¹⁷ Guzik Commentary

McGee: Nebuchadnezzar always took for himself the cream of the crop of the captives from any nation. I think they were given tests to determine their IQ's, and those selected were trained to be wise men to advise the king of Babylon. We will find that Daniel was included in this group and that the king did consult them.

“And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his *eunuchs*.” Verse 9 of this chapter also says: “Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the *eunuchs*.” Daniel and his three friends were made eunuchs in fulfillment of Isaiah 39:7, “*And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*”

Most conservative scholars agree that Daniel was taken captive when he was about seventeen years old. He was made a eunuch, and so you can understand why Daniel never married or had any children. Some people wonder what kind of an oddball Daniel was. Actually, he was no oddball—this was something the king did, and it did not destroy the mental development of these young men. It served the purpose of making them more docile toward the king, and it also enabled them to give all their time to the studies which were given to them. I am sure that it is true today as it was when I was in college: I spent half of my time taking a “course” that was known as dating. I had a lot of good times—I did a great deal of studying, but I could have done lots more! But, you see, the king wanted these boys to spend their time studying, and his way of doing that was to make them eunuchs. Daniel was in this group.¹⁸

Daniel 1:4

Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

No blemish; top grade; teachable; 3 yr post-Graduate school. Babylon: sciences and astronomy were profound in nature; 360 degrees; 60 secs/ min; 60 minutes/hour; etc. 360-day year all come from Babylon.¹⁹

[**science**] History records 2 main periods of science: the Greek period from 600 B.C. to 200 A.D., and the modern period from 1450 A.D. to our day. Science began in Egypt and Babylon with the birth of mathematics, metallurgy, anatomy, and astronomy. To the Babylonians we owe the exact measurements of the lunar and solar cycles, the tracing of the paths of the planets, the division of the circle into 360 degrees, and the designation of constellations, notably those of the zodiac. Daniel was no doubt trained in all these sciences. The inscriptions show that there was a special palace school with elaborate arrangements for special education.²⁰

¹⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:528). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁹ Chuck Missler's Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler's Commentary

²⁰ Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

[stand in the king's palace] This was a special department in the palace school for courtiers.

[learning] Hebrew: *cepher* (HSN-5612), book; literature (Daniel 1:4,17). History records the existence of huge libraries in Babylon with books classified on all subjects which could be secured from the librarian as in our day.

[tongue of the Chaldeans] They were a distinct class from Babylonians and other learned classes and belonged to South Babylonia (Daniel 2:2,4,5,10; Daniel 3:8; Daniel 4:7; Daniel 5:7,11; Ezekiel 23:23). In a wider sense, the word is used of a nationality (Daniel 5:30; Genesis 11:28-31; Genesis 15:7; 2 Kings 24:2; 2 Kings 25:4-26; Job 1:17; Habakkuk 1:6).

[teach . . . tongue of . . . Chaldeans] —their language and literature, the Aramaic-Babylonian. That the heathen lore was not altogether valueless appears from the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses; the Eastern Magi who sought Jesus, and who may have drawn the tradition as to the "King of the Jews" from Daniel 9:24, &c., written in the East. As Moses was trained in the learning of the Egyptian sages, so Daniel in that of the Chaldeans, to familiarize his mind with mysterious lore, and so develop his heaven-bestowed gift of understanding in visions (Daniel 1:4-5, 17).²¹

The common language of Babylonia was Aramaic, while the language of scholarship included the ancient and complicated Babylonian language. The academic program would have included mathematics, astronomy, history, science, and magic. These young men demonstrated not only aptitude, but also discipline. This character trait, combined with integrity, served them well in their new culture.

McGee: I want to submit to you that the Bible was not written by a bunch of ninnies—it wasn't written by men who were ignorant. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt. The Egyptians were quite advanced; they knew the distance to the sun, and they knew that the earth was round. It was a few Greeks who came along later and flattened out the earth. They were the "scientists" in that day, you see. Science taught that the earth was flat. The Bible never did teach that; in fact, it said it was a circle (see Isa. 40:22). Daniel, too, as a young man was outstanding. He must have rated high on the list of these young men who were given tests in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. The apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, was up in that bracket intellectually also. All these were brilliant young men who were exposed to the learning of their day. I get weary of these so-called eggheads who act as if the Bible was written by a group of ignoramuses. If you feel that way about it, you are mistaken. Daniel was nobody's fool. He was a brilliant young man, and he was taught as few men have been taught. Don't despise the learning of that day. There were many men who were well advanced in knowledge, in science, and in many other areas. Daniel is going to be exposed to all that.²²

²¹ JFB Commentary

²² McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:529). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Daniel 1:5

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Daniel 1:6

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

Children of Judah

Hebrew names:

Daniel;	“God is my Judge”
Hananiah:	“Beloved of the Lord”
Mishel:	“Who is as God”
Azariah:	“The Lord is My Help”

[**wine**] Hebrew: *yayin* (H3196), to ferment. Used of every sort of wine (Genesis 9:21; Genesis 14:18; 1 Samuel 25:36-37; Isaiah 28:1; Jeremiah 23:9).

[**three years**] This was the length of the special training course for courtiers.

Names Defined (Dake)

Among the courtiers being trained were the four Jewish youths just brought from conquered Judah (Daniel 1:6; 2 Kings 24:1-16):

1. Daniel, meaning "God is judge," renamed Belteshazzar, "preserve thou (O Bel) his life," or "prince of Bel"—the chief deity of Babylon (6-7; Isaiah 46:1; Jeremiah 50:2; Jeremiah 51:44). It is explained 6 times in 12 chapters that Daniel's name was changed (Daniel 1:7; Daniel 2:26; Daniel 4:8-9,18-19; Daniel 5:12; Daniel 10:1). This indicates that Daniel did not like his new name. He uses his own name 75 times in his book. It is used 5 other times in Scripture (Ezekiel 14:14,20; Ezekiel 28:3; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).
2. Hananiah, meaning "gift of the Lord," renamed Shadrach, "command of Aku," the moon god
3. Mishael, meaning "who is what God is," renamed Meshach, "who is as Aku" (Daniel 1:6-7)
4. Azariah, meaning "whom Jehovah helps," renamed Abed-nego, "servant of Nego," or Nebo, the god of science and literature (Daniel 1:6-7; Isaiah 46:1)²³

Now among these—There were no doubt several noble youths from other provinces: but the four mentioned here were Jews, and are supposed to have all been of royal extraction.

²³ Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

[children of Judah] the most noble tribe, being that to which the "king's seed" belonged (compare Daniel 1:3).

According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, all four of these young men were members of Zedekiah's royal family.²⁴

Daniel 1:7

Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Beltshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

Babylonian names:

Beltshazzar:	“Prince of Bel”
Shadrach:	“Illumined by the Sun God”
Mishech:	“Who is like unto the Moon God”
Abednego:	“Servant of Nego, a shining fire”

[gave names] Giving names to captives or foreign slaves was a sign of their being put under subjection (Genesis 41:45; 2 Kings 23:34; 2 Kings 24:17).

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

[that he might not defile himself] Evidently, there were certain things of the king's table that had been forbidden by the law of Moses, hence he did not want to break the law and be defiled. It could be that the meat was not butchered properly (Leviticus 3:17; Leviticus 7:26; Leviticus 17:10-14; Leviticus 19:26) and that it was offered to idols (Exodus 34:15; 1 Cor. 10:20).²⁵

But Daniel—would not defile himself—I have spoken of this resolution in the introduction. The chief reasons why Daniel would not eat meat from the royal table were probably these three:—

1. Because they ate unclean beasts, which were forbidden by the Jewish law.
2. Because they ate, as did the heathens in general, beasts which had been strangled, or not properly bled.
3. Because the animals that were eaten were first offered as victims to their gods. It is on this account that Athenaeus calls the beasts which here served up at the tables of the Persian kings.²⁶

²⁴ Nelson Study Bible Notes

²⁵ Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

²⁶ Adam Clarke's Commentary

His Decision Was Made in His Heart:

Daniel's mom and dad didn't push him into this decision. It wasn't his Jewish friends that carried him along. Daniel made this decision in his heart.

(Luke 9:23) *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

It is only in our hearts that we can determine to follow the Lord.

Resolve is a strong word that means to be devoted to principle and to be committed to a course of action. When Daniel resolved not to defile himself, he was being true to a lifelong determination to do what was right and not to give in to the pressures around him. We too are often assaulted by pressures to compromise our standards and live more like the world around us. Merely wanting or preferring God's will and way is not enough to stand against the onslaught of temptation. Like Daniel, we must resolve to obey God.²⁷ It is easier to resist temptation if you have thought through your convictions well before the temptation arrives. Daniel and his friends made their decision to be faithful to the laws of God before they were faced with the king's delicacies, so they did not hesitate to stick with their convictions. We will get into trouble if we have not previously decided where to draw the line. Before such situations arise, decide on your commitments. Then when temptation comes, you will be ready to say no.

McGee: This boy takes a real stand for God, and he does it in a heathen court. Under normal circumstances, this would have been fatal. Obviously, Daniel was not trying to win a popularity contest. He wasn't attempting to please Nebuchadnezzar. His decision did not reflect the modern softness of compromise which we find all around us today; nor was it dictated by the false philosophies of "How to Win Friends and Influence People" and "The Power of Positive Thinking." Daniel knew nothing of the opportunist's policy of "When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do." Daniel was not conformed to this world, but he was transformed by the renewing of his mind, and the will of God was the all-absorbing purpose of his life.

Daniel and his friends represented in their day that Jewish remnant which God has had in all ages. This is the remnant of which Paul spoke in Romans 11:5—"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Now these boys don't want to eat the king's food; they are going to rebel against a Babylonian diet. Actually, an attempt will be made to brainwash these young men, to make them Babylonians inwardly and outwardly. They were supposed to eat like Babylonians, dress like Babylonians, and think like Babylonians.

However, Daniel and his friends were under the Mosaic system, and God made what they were to eat very clear to His people in the Old Testament. We read in Leviticus 11:44-47: "For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: To make a difference between the

²⁷ Life Application Notes

unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.” Certain meats were specifically forbidden, and they are listed in the Book of Leviticus; also, meats offered to heathen idols were repulsive to godly Israelites.

Perhaps Daniel and these other Hebrew children were Nazarites to whom even wine was forbidden: “He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried” (Num. 6:3).

These young men were following the injunction of Isaiah: “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD” (Isa. 52:11).

However, believers today have not been given a diet chart or menu. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:25–27: “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [that is, out yonder in the meat market], that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.” Then again, in 1 Corinthians 8:8, he says, “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.”

These Hebrew young men were taking a stand under the Mosaic Law, and they were taking a stand for God.²⁸

Daniel 1:9

Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

[Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs] Daniel's case is similar to that of Joseph in some respects:

1. In being a captive from his own people (Genesis 37)
2. In receiving favor from his captors (Genesis 39:21 with Daniel 1:9)
3. In interpreting dreams (Daniel 1:17 with Genesis 37:5-11; Genesis 41:1-45)
4. In being exalted by rulers (Daniel 2:46-49; Daniel 5:29; Daniel 6:26 with Genesis 41)
5. In holy living (Daniel 1:8 with Genesis 39:12)

Daniel 1:10

And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

Officer’s fear was justified. Nebuchadnezzar known to put out eyes (after killing progeny); Jer 39:6,7; make their houses into dung hills; roasted officers over a fire, etc. Jer 29:22.) Relation to Saddam and what he was doing, he wanted to be like Nebuchadnezzar – one of the only rulers to defeat Israel.

²⁸McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:529). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Daniel 1:11

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Daniel 1:12

Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

10 days: 10 always a test, measurement, testimony.

Not “vegetarian”: not violating dietary laws; sacrificed to idols. King’s food.

Not prisoner’s ration. Elite corps; His diet; wine, etc. Lev 11:1-47 (44); 17:10-14; 1 Cor 8:11-13; Acts 10:12-15. Withdrawal; not confrontational.

“Knelt about the time of evening oblation.” Temple in ruin 200 miles away; demonstrates Daniel’s *heart*. In the most pagan of empires: kept himself blameless before the Lord.²⁹

[Prove thy servants] This test was a challenge to Daniel's faith in God. There must have been an element of the miraculous in the result, for ten days is not long to be able to tell a difference because of eating certain foods (Daniel 1:15).

[pulse] Hebrew: *zeroa'* (H2235), seed; that which is sown. It consisted of vegetables and grains—wheat, barley, rye, peas, beans, lentiles (Daniel 1:12,16; 2 Samuel 17:28). This does not mean that Jews were strict vegetarians, but that they could not legally eat the meat of animals that had not been properly killed and dedicated (note, *Daniel 1:8).³⁰

The Babylonians were trying to change the *thinking* of these Jews by giving them a Babylonian education, their *loyalty* by changing their names, and their *life-style* by changing their diet. Without compromising, Daniel found a way to live by God’s standards in a culture that did not honor God. Wisely choosing to negotiate rather than to rebel, Daniel suggested an experimental ten-day diet of vegetables and water, instead of the royal foods and wine the king offered. Without compromising, Daniel quickly thought of a practical, creative solution that saved his life and the lives of his companions. As God’s people, we may adjust to our culture as long as we do not compromise God’s laws.³¹

²⁹ Chuck Missler’s Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler’s Commentary

³⁰ Dake’s Study Bible, Dake’s Study Bible

³¹ Life Application Notes

Daniel 1:13

Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

[**Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee**] Daniel knew that even without the special blessing of God they would not look any worse with legal and proper food than others who did not observe the strict dietary and health laws of Moses.

McGee: In other words: “Test us out, and put us on this diet for a few days to see if we are not in as good condition as the other fellows are.” Well, God had brought favor from this man Melzar to Daniel, and so Melzar is going to make the test.

The Bible tells us that Daniel's decision to refuse the Babylonian diet was something he “purposed in his heart.” I want to comment for a moment on this issue of making Christian living and separation from the world a matter of a few little rules that have to do with eating and with conduct. There is always a tendency in this area to be dogmatic and forbid certain questionable things, things which are actually debatable.

I received a letter once from a lady who joined a small group shortly after she had become a Christian, and they told her there were certain things she couldn't do and certain things she could do. In the letter which she wrote to me she said, “I have followed all these rules, and yet I am still miserable.”

In the history of the church we can see times when people set up a system of doing things and not doing things—systems that actually were *good* at first. For example, the monasteries which began in the Roman Empire were actually a protest against the licentiousness of their day. But before long it was worse on the inside of the monastery than on the outside.

Remember that Christ said to the Pharisees, “... Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness” (Luke 11:39). In other words, “You make the outside of the cup clean, but inside it's dirty. It is just like whitewashing a tomb.” Today it is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). In order to live a life of holiness, we must first receive new life from God—we must be born from above.

“Daniel purposed in his heart” (v. 8)—it all began in the heart of Daniel. He was not a papier-mâché; he had a heart, and his convictions came from his heart. That should be our experience also. We are captives in this world in which we live; gravitation holds all of us by the seat of our pants, and we cannot jump off this earth. The Lord Jesus said that we are in the world, but not of the world. And He said, “... Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24). However, we cannot serve God by following a set of rules; we must have a purpose in our hearts. Jesus said that it was out of the heart that the issues of life proceed; the things which we put into our bodies are not the most important. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would obey God's law given to God's people Israel—this was to be his testimony.³²

³²McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:530). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Daniel 1:14

So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

Daniel 1:15

And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

McGee: Daniel's diet worked in their behalf. This ought to tell us something. God wanted His people Israel to be different from the surrounding nations, but He did not give them a special diet just to make them different—there was also a health factor involved. I firmly believe that if we followed the diet outlined in Leviticus, we would be healthier than our neighbor who eats just anything. But we *can* eat anything we want; we are not under the law. I have found, though, that it is a matter of health. I have had a number of physical problems and have discovered, among other things, that pork just isn't the best thing for us. Israel's God-given diet was very meaningful healthwise, and it had more than just a ceremonial basis for it.³³

Daniel 1:16

Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

[**Pulse**] *zeroa`*, (H-2235) *zay-ro'-ah*; or *zera`on*, *zay-raw-ohn'*; from Hebrew 2232 (*zara`*); something *sown* (only in the plural), i.e. a *vegetable* (as food) :- pulse.

Daniel 1:17

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

[**God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom**] This confirms the supernatural element in the training of these four youths. God blessed them physically when they took a stand for a proper diet (Daniel 1:8-16). He also blessed them mentally and spiritually for their stand regarding His law.

[**Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams**] Daniel had a special gift of God in understanding all visions and dreams—the gift of interpretation (similar in operation to the gift of interpretation of tongues of 1 Cor. 12:10,30; 1 Cor. 14:26-28). It was simply divine skill and understanding imparted by the Holy Spirit. Any gift of the Spirit is divine ability imparted by the Spirit of God dwelling in the one so blessed

³³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:531). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

(1 Cor. 12:4-11). Daniel was to use his gift many times for God's glory, as seen in Daniel 2; Daniel 4; Daniel 5; Daniel 7; Daniel 8; Daniel 9; and Daniel 10-12.³⁴

[visions] Four Hebrew words translated "vision" in Daniel:

1. Hebrew: *chazown* (H2377), mental sight; dream; revelation; oracle (Daniel 1:17; Daniel 8:1,2,13,15,17,26; Daniel 9:21,24; Daniel 10:14; Daniel 11:14). This could come in the form of divine utterance of words (Daniel 9:24; 1 Samuel 3:1; Jeremiah 14:14; Jeremiah 23:16), a dream (Isaiah 29:7), a writing (Isaiah 1:1; Nahum 1:1; Habakkuk 2:2-3), or a mental picture while one is awake (Daniel 8:1,2,13-17,26; Daniel 9:21-24; cp. Numbers 24:4,16)
2. Aramaic: *chezev* (H2376), sight; vision (Daniel 2:19,28; Daniel 4:5,9,10,13; Daniel 7:1,2,7,13,15). This word is used of visions while asleep, known as dreams, as seen in these passages
3. Hebrew: *mar'ah* (H4759), a vision as seeing something in a mirror; appearance (Daniel 10:7,8,16; Genesis 46:2; Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 3:15; Ezekiel 1:1; Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 40:2; Ezekiel 43:3)
4. Hebrew: *mar'eh* (H4758), sight; appearance (Daniel 8:16,26,27; Daniel 9:23; Daniel 10:1; Ezekiel 8:4; Ezekiel 11:24; Ezekiel 43:3)

[dreams] The 3 words translated "dream" in Daniel—*challowm* (H2472) (Daniel 2:1-3), *chelem* (H2493) (Daniel 2:4-9,26-28,36,45; Daniel 4:5-9,18-19; Daniel 5:12; Daniel 7:1), and *chalam* (H2492) (Daniel 2:1,3)—all have the meaning of something seen while asleep.

McGee: Just as God blessed Solomon, God is blessing these Hebrew children who were in a foreign court. Daniel will eventually become prime minister to two great world empires.

“Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” Daniel was still in the time of revelation, the time in which God used dreams and visions. Now don’t *you* say that God has spoken to you in a dream, because I must contradict you. I do not think that God is speaking to us that way—He speaks to us today in His Word.

For a great many people it is easier to *dream* about the Word than it is to *study* it. I used to have students in a Bible institute who would very piously pray the night before an exam. They didn’t study much, but they were very pious about it all. One student told me that he stuck his Bible under his pillow the night before an examination! I asked him, “Do you really think the names of the kings of Israel and Judah will come up through the duck feathers and get into your brain?” The Holy Spirit is not a help and a crutch for a lazy person. You are going to have to *study* the Word of God. God speaks to us through His written Word today.

³⁴ Dake’s Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

However, God is speaking audibly to Daniel, for he is now writing one of the books of the Bible. In spite of what the critics say, Daniel wrote it—it was not written three or four hundred years later.³⁵

Daniel 1:18

Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

[Now at the end of the days] At the end of the three years.

Daniel 1:19

And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

[communed with them] Questioned them (Daniel 1:20).

[them all] All the captives from all nations.

[therefore stood they before the king] All four Jews stood before the king to advise on state and other matters.

Daniel 1:20

And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

[ten times better] An idiom meaning many times better.

Nebuchadnezzar put Daniel and his friends on his staff of advisers. This staff included many “magicians and enchanters.” These were astrologers who claimed to be able to tell the future through occult practices. They were masters at communicating their message so that it sounded authoritative—as though it came directly from their gods. In addition to knowledge, Daniel and his three friends had wisdom and understanding, given to them by God. Thus the king was far more pleased with them than with his magicians and enchanters. As we serve others, we must not merely pretend to have God’s wisdom. Our wisdom will be genuine when we are rightly related to God.

How did the captives survive in a foreign culture? They learned about the culture, achieved excellence in their work, served the people, prayed for God’s help, and maintained their integrity. We may feel like foreigners whenever we experience change. Alien cultures come in many forms: a new job, a new school, a new neighborhood. We

³⁵McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:531). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

can use the same principles to help us adapt to our new surroundings without abandoning God.³⁶

Daniel 1:21

And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.

Forecast: Cyrus the Persian. Daniel endured beyond all present. Every episode also prophetic for you and I.³⁷

[continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus] He continued in office the rest of the 70 years captivity to the time of Cyrus (Daniel 9:2). It does not say that he did not continue longer, but this is when he wrote this book.³⁸

Daniel continued . . . unto . . . first year of Cyrus— (2 Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1). Not that he did not continue *beyond* that year, but the expression is designed to mark the fact that he who was one of the first captives taken to Babylon, lived to see the end of the captivity. In Daniel 10:1 he is mentioned as living "in the third year of Cyrus." (Psalm 110:1; Psalm 112:8).³⁹

Daniel was one of the first captives taken to Babylon, and he lived to see the first exiles return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. Throughout this time Daniel honored God, and God honored him. While serving as an adviser to the kings of Babylon, Daniel was God's spokesman to the Babylonian empire. Babylon was a wicked nation, but it would have been much worse without Daniel's influence.

³⁶ Life Application Notes

³⁷ Chuck Missler's Notes on the Study of Daniel, Chuck Missler's Commentary

³⁸ Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

³⁹ JFB Commentary

PROFILE: DANIEL

Daniel's early life demonstrates that there is more to being young than making mistakes. No characteristic wins the hearts of adults more quickly than wisdom in the words and actions of a young person. Daniel and his friends had been taken from their homes in Judah and exiled. Their futures were in doubt, but they all had personal traits that qualified them for jobs as servants in the king's palace. They took advantage of the opportunity without letting the opportunity take advantage of them.

Our first hint of Daniel's greatness comes in his quiet refusal to give up his convictions. He had applied God's will to his own life, and he resisted changing the good habits he had formed. Both his physical and spiritual diets were an important part of his relationship with God. He ate carefully and lived prayerfully. One of the benefits of being in training for royal service was eating food from the king's table. Daniel tactfully chose a simpler menu and proved it was a healthy choice. As with Daniel, mealtimes are obvious and regular tests of our efforts to control our appetites.

While Daniel limited his food intake, he indulged in prayer. He was able to communicate with God because he made it a habit. He put into practice his convictions, even when that meant being thrown into a den of hungry lions. His life proved he made the right choice.

Do you hold so strongly to your faith in God that whatever happens you will do what God says? Such conviction keeps you a step ahead of temptation; such conviction gives you wisdom and stability in changing circumstances. Prayerfully live out your convictions in everyday life and trust God for the results.

Strengths and accomplishments:

- Although young when deported, remained true to his faith
- Served as an adviser to two Babylonian kings and two Medo-Persian kings
- Was a man of prayer and a statesman with the gift of prophecy
- Survived the lions' den

Lessons from his life:

- Quiet convictions often earn long-term respect
- Don't wait until you are in a tough situation to learn about prayer
- God can use people wherever they are

Vital statistics:

- Where: Judah and the courts of both Babylon and Persia
- Occupation: A captive from Israel who became an adviser of kings
- Contemporaries: Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus

Key verse:

“This man Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means” (Daniel 5:12).

Daniel’s story is told in the book of Daniel. He is also mentioned in Matthew 24:15.⁴⁰

PROFILE: SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO

Friendships make life enjoyable and difficult times bearable. Friendships are tested and strengthened by hardships. Such was the relationship between three young Jewish men deported to Babylon along with Daniel. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego help us think about the real meaning of friendship. As much as these friends meant to each other, they never allowed their friendship to usurp God’s place in their lives—not even in the face of death.

Together they silently defied King Nebuchadnezzar’s order to fall down and worship the image of gold. They shared a courageous act, while others, eager to get rid of them, told the king that the three Jews were being disloyal. While this was not true, Nebuchadnezzar could not spare them without shaming himself.

This was the moment of truth. Death was about to end their friendship. A small compromise would have allowed them to live and go on enjoying each other, serving God, and serving their people while in this foreign land. But they were wise enough to see that compromise would have poisoned the very conviction that bound them so closely—each had a higher allegiance to God. So they did not hesitate to place their lives in the hands of God. The rest was victory!

When we leave God out of our most important relationships, we tend to expect those relationships to meet needs in us that only God can meet. Friends are helpful, but they cannot meet our deepest spiritual needs. Leaving God out of our relationships indicates how unimportant he really is in our own lives. Our relationship with God should be important enough to touch our other relationships—especially our closest friendships.

Strengths and accomplishments:

- Stood with Daniel against eating food from the king’s table
- Shared a friendship that stood the tests of hardship, success, wealth, and possible death
- Unwilling to compromise their convictions even in the face of death
- Survived the fiery furnace

⁴⁰ Life Application Notes

Lessons from their lives:

- There is great strength in real friendship
- It is important to stand with others with whom we share convictions
- God can be trusted even when we can't predict the outcome

Vital statistics:

- Where: Babylon
- Occupations: King's servants and advisers
- Contemporaries: Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar

Key verses:

“Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up’ ” (Daniel 3:16-18).

The story of Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abednego (Azariah) is told in the book of Daniel.⁴¹

Conclusion Disciples Study Bible**Theological Conclusions**

Amid its visions, symbols, and images the Book of Daniel makes strong theological statements about the nature of God, the nature of the Christian life, the nature of history, prayer, and the last things.

God, the God of the Hebrews, is a demanding God. He expects His people to remain faithful to Him and His way of life for them even in the darkest moments of history and under the most horrible threats. God is a dependable God. He will keep His promises to His people.

Perseverance is necessary. The central message of Daniel is the call for His people to keep on being faithful when human circumstances appear to hide all hope. Life with God does not guarantee good times always. God's people must persevere through the dark days. In a world filled with “voices” clamoring for allegiance, God's people are called to follow Him at all costs. The example of Daniel and his friends stands as a role model for each person who wants to be listed among God's people. Faith involves risk. Just as Daniel and his friends had to act in faith against immensely powerful opposition, so God's people must risk even their lives to remain faithful.

History involves God's judgment of His sinful people. God's people cannot complain of injustice when their own sins have brought judgment upon them. God mysteriously uses the forces of history, even arrogant rulers, to discipline and judge His people. The meaning of history is not crystal clear on the surface. Events may appear to contradict traditional theological interpretations and beliefs. God provides inspired speakers to

⁴¹ Life Application Notes

interpret His historical acts for His people. Only with such inspired interpreters can God's people understand God's ways with His world. History leads to God's victory. Present defeat must not hide God's march to victory for His people. Amid the shadows of persecution and sacrilege, God works to accomplish His ultimate purpose. History does not naturally lead to such victory through natural forces. God's activity alone brings final victory.

Prayer keeps God's people faithful. Only through constant communication with God can His people persevere and follow the life He sets out for them. Prayer is the highway to proper ethics for God's people. Prayer brings hope in the midst of travail and threat. When enemies surround God's people, prayer is the link that gives vision and hope. Through prayer God's people confess their sins and seek God's new directions for life. The leaders of God's people must confess the people's sins and intercede for them.

God has ultimate purpose for His people and His world. God knows the powers which oppose Him and knows they will be defeated. Evil rulers may hold sway momentarily, but God holds the ultimate key to victory. No human power or kingdom is superior to Yahweh and His kingdom. The kingdom of God is composed of those who believe and are faithful to the end. The persevering saints will see God's victory and experience the joy of His kingdom come. The faithful will inherit eternal life. This book provides the Old Testament's clearest teaching on resurrection. God will reward His faithful servants with eternal life, raising the dead from the grave.⁴²

⁴² Disciples Study Bible