

# Daniel Chapter 1

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## I. THE TIMES OF DANIEL

Little Israel was to be carried away to Babylon. God had made the decision based on His earlier warnings.

We can catch the flavor of the times by reading what Jeremiah wrote:

**He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah when they went to Babylon as King Zedekiah's ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar. This is what Jeremiah's letter said: This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives He has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:3-7 NLT)**

Those carried to Babylon are going to be there many years so they are to **build homes** and **plant gardens** because they will be there to pick the vegetables. They are to **marry, have children, find spouses** for them so they will have **grandchildren**. They are to work for the **peace and prosperity** of the Babylon, not be terrorists. They are to **pray for Babylon** while they live in it.

## II. DANIEL, THE MAN

### A. When Daniel lived

1. *Jeremiah* was alive and prophesying when Daniel was a young man.
2. *Ezekiel* was living and was a prophet to Judah.
3. *Jehoiakim* was king in Judah, followed by *Zedekiah*.

4. The seventy years of Judah's captivity in Babylon matches the length of Daniel's life.
5. Daniel was born in Judea, but taken to Babylon at a very young age. King Nebuchadnezzar took all of the elite from Jerusalem and this would have included Daniel.

**Nebuchadnezzar led King Jehoiachin away as a captive to Babylon, along with the queen mother, his wives and officials, and all Jerusalem's elite.** (2 Kings 24:15 NLT)

Later, King Nebuchadnezzar had some of them trained for government service:

**Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives.** (Daniel 1:3 NLT)

6. Daniel will have a different point of reference than the career prophets. Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah focused on what would be happening to either Judah or Israel and neighboring nations in their relation to Israel. Daniel left Jerusalem as a young man and became God's man in the service of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. Following the takeover by the Persians (today's Iran), Daniel became an official in that government as well.

Daniel makes little reference to his own people in his writings. Because of Daniel's high rank in government, his predictions about the future were highly figurative, much like John in writing Revelation. Therefore we have much imagery and symbolism in Daniel. This imagery served to keep his critics befuddled, yet allowing Daniel to reveal the future.

7. Israel had been warned much earlier about a coming conqueror but failed to listen to God's man Isaiah:

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the LORD: The time is coming when everything in your palace -- all the treasures stored up by your ancestors until now -- will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. Some of your very own sons will be taken away into exile. They will become eunuchs who will serve in the palace of Babylon's king." (2 Kings 20:16-18 NLT)

The term **eunuch** sometimes is used figuratively rather than an actual castrate. The prophet Ezekiel *implies* that Daniel had children:

**As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were there, they wouldn't be able to save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved by their righteousness.**

(Ezekiel 14:20 NLT)

### III. INSPIRATION OF THE BOOK

1. Daniel claimed inspiration. 9:21 - 22.

**As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. He explained to me, "Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding."** (Daniel 9:21-22 NLT)

2. Jesus endorsed Daniel's writings, calling him a prophet.

**"The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about -- the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the Holy Place." (Reader, pay attention!)** (Matthew 24:15 NLT)

We don't need to carry the discussion of Daniel's inspiration any further if the Lord Jesus accepted it. Commentator **Albert Barnes** uses 78 pages in his

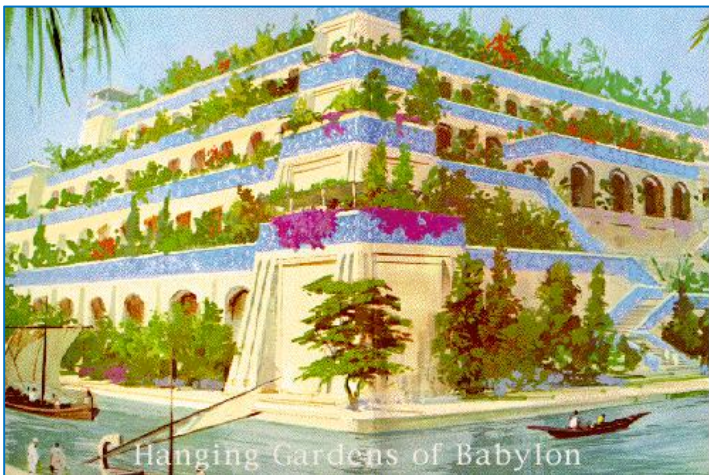
*Notes on Daniel* to discuss evidence of the authenticity of Daniel.

3. Jesus also quoted Daniel 7:13 in Matthew 26:

**Jesus replied, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

(Matthew 26:64 NLT)

Legend has it that King Nebuchadnezzar built the *Hanging Gardens of Babylon* for his wife, who missed the greenery of her childhood home. Here is an artist's conception:





## Daniel 1: NLT

**(1) During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.**

- **Nebuchadnezzar** means “Nebo, protect the crown!” He was a *warrior*. That's “who he was.”

**(2.) The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god.**

- The **Lord** was active in the affairs of nations and **Nebuchadnezzar** served His purposes. The Lord's intent was to punish Israel by deporting them.
- Not every vessel was taken from the Temple at Jerusalem. To **Nebuchadnezzar**, acquiring these vessels shows that his god was superior. These vessels were actually returned years later during the reign of King Cyrus in about B.C. 636.

**King Cyrus himself brought out the articles that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his own gods.** (Ezra 1:7 NLT)

**(3.) Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives.**

- Leadership ability may be born into some people, and the king wanted to train some of these exiled royal teens to lead among their own Hebrew people. These young men from Israel needed to learn the culture of Babylon.
- It was important for them to be good looking as well as skilled (vs. 4). They already had a measure of wisdom (vs. 4).

- These Hebrew lads also had to learn the language of the rulers. This was not just speech *recognition*, they had to *speak it perfectly*.
- Having high ranking members of Israel in captivity in Babylon was also a strong deterrent against rebellion by those who were *not* carried to Babylon.

**(4.) "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon. "**

- Like the Greeks of later times, **Nebuchadnezzar** believed that his system was superior, including his diet. The Jewish diet was restricted and **Nebuchadnezzar's** chefs probably served glazed baked ham or some ancient equivalent that was not kosher (K). Or perhaps it had been offered to a god before being baked.
- **Paul Butler** comments on Babylonian math:  
 "The Babylonians inherited the sexagesimal (base 60) system from the ancient Sumerians. This system of numbering by sixties is still in use. We reckon sixty seconds to the minute, and sixty minutes to the hour. The system is also used in the division of the circle into three hundred and sixty degrees. Clay tablets have been found showing common familiarity with measurement of the area of rectangles and of right and isosceles triangles. An amazing knowledge of algebra is also shown in the Babylonian literature - tablets of squares, square roots, cubes, and cube roots. The Pythagorean theorem was known by the Babylonians more than a thousand years before Pythagoras!"

Daniel and his friends will be trained, not only in mathematics, but ancient literature, astronomy and other sciences.

**(5.) The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. (6.) Daniel, Hananiah,**

**Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah.**

- God's strategy of having His selected person raised to leading role in a key nation is about to be repeated. The Lord moved *Joseph*, among the youngest in Jacob's family, to being second in command of Egypt. He moved *Moses*, a baby abandoned in the river, to a high-ranking place in the household of Pharaoh in Egypt. He moved *David*, probably the youngest son and out caring for sheep, to be king of Israel. Now He will move *Daniel* to a top post in the government of Nebuchadnezzar and later He will move an orphan girl, *Esther*, to the leading place of influence in the ruling Persian kingdom of Ahasuerus. Watch the story of Daniel unfold.

**(7.) The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names:**

**Daniel** (God is my judge) **was called Belteshazzar.**

**Hananiah** (Beloved by the Lord) **was called Shadrach.**

**Mishael** (Who is as God) **was called Meshach.**

**Azariah** (The Lord is my help) **was called Abednego.**

- Each of the four men reflected the Lord in their name. For ease, we placed the black definitions in the blue text.
- The *assigned* names reflect the local Babylonian deities.
  - **Belteshazzar** means "protect his life;"
  - **Shadrach** means "command of Aku (the moon god) "
  - **Meshach** means "who is what Aku (the moon god) is?"
  - **Abednego** means "servant of Nebo."

**(8.) But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. (9.) Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. (10.) But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."**

- Daniel **was determined** (vs.8), so God intervened in the heart of **the chief of staff** (vs. 9). The Lord uses whom He chooses to use.



- Daniel was not a vegetarian (10:3), but he would not eat the pork-laden food. He made a clear decision to refuse the king’s dainties. The names of the four men were changed, but not their convictions. Daniel’s parents, as well as the parents of the other young men, had taught them well.

**Butler** observes:

The godly parents of this young Hebrew must have been of the same caliber as the parents of John the Baptist, “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6) : They had done a superb job of rearing their son in the admonition and nurture of the Lord. Daniel was possessed of the great principles of righteousness and holiness and faith.

- Notice Daniel’s courtesy towards the **chief of staff**. He asked permission. He spoke of **unacceptable food** and why it was **unacceptable**. He didn’t discredit those who *did* eat it. Daniel’s stand was not obnoxious. He had heavenly wisdom:

**But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.** (James 3:17 NLT)

- **The chief of staff** rightly feared for his own life (vs.10). Nebuchadnezzar had meted out terrible punishments at times:

**He made**

**Zedekiah watch**

**they slaughtered his sons and all the nobles of Judah.**

**Then they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him in**

**bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon.** (Jeremiah

39:6-7 NLT)

**Daniel - No Compromise**  
Daniel Chapter 1

- 1. Pick your battles** (v7)  
Mt 17:25-27, Rom 12:8, Jn 10:10
- 2. Choose your ground**
  - a) He asks permission (v8)  
1 Pet 3:15, Jn 3:16, 1 Cor 8:1-2
  - b) He offers a compromise (v9,15)

as

**(11.) Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (12.) "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. (13.) "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." (14.) The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.**

- **Daniel** offered a **10-day** test period to try out his restricted diet. **The attendant** himself could judge the outcome.
- The young Hebrew men faced three issues:
  - The forced education in heathen affairs, but they could believe whatever was the truth.
  - Their names were forcibly changed, but they could not control that.
  - The third issue was the eating of food not allowed for the people of God. This required that they express convictions and find a way out. This way out was provided by God *after* they took a stand.
- Some of the other Jewish lads (vs. 6) considered the food issue too trivial to bother with, but it was these four that God elevated because they did not consider obedience to be trivial.

**(15.) At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. (16.) So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others**

- The four Hebrew lads gained weight and had better skin appearance (vs.15). Daniel's stand won the day and **the attendant** was able to keep his head and be justified in modifying the diets of the four trainees (vs. 16).

**(17.) God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.**

- God can grant knowledge and wisdom directly if He chooses to do it.  
 . . . **for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!** (Luke 21:15 NLT)  
 He gave these lads that gift.
- **Daniel** received an added gift: the **ability** to **interpret visions and dreams**. In this he was like Joseph of old. Genesis 21:12.  
 This **ability** will be used in the next chapter.

**(18.) When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. (19.) The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. (20.) Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.**

- This marked the end of three years (vs. 5) of carefully managed diets and highly disciplined training (vs. 18).
- This was the royal oral exam. Daniel and his friends passed with honors and joined **Nebuchadnezzar's service** (vs. 19).
- Not only did they pass the exam, but they excelled and **King Nebuchadnezzar** could see it clearly (vs. 19). This probably generated some professional jealousy among the rest of the advisers.
- Ten (vs. 20) is a hyperbole. There was no objective way to quantify the superiority of the young men.

**(21.) Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.**

- **Daniel** wrote this book some years after the events that are described. He may have kept notes of the events and compiled them after he retired.

## SUMMARY

- We have met Nebuchadnezzar, emperor of the mighty Babylonian Empire who brought some Hebrew youths to Babylon to be trained for service in his court.
- Four of these young men, led by Daniel, refused to accept Nebuchadnezzar's special diet, but were still selected for government duty because of their superior appearance and wisdom.
- Now that wisdom and insight will be put to the test.

### **MUSIC BOX**

*Come, let us sing to the LORD! (Psalms 95:1 NLT)*

| <i>Verse</i> | Link:                      | Put in Browser:   |
|--------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1:8          | Take My Life and Let It Be | <a href="http://bitly.ws/oI7L">http://bitly.ws/oI7L</a> |