

Daniel 1:1-8  
SA221120

**“Purpose of Heart”**

1. Today, we begin the book of Daniel and the main theme of the entire book is simply the sovereignty of God.
  - **It** is one of the most amazing books in all of the Bible, not only because of all the amazing prophecies but also because it proves the sovereignty of God over all of time, all mankind, and all kingdoms.
2. And because it is such a threat to Satan and so authoritatively from God, there are many among the world and academia who seek to disprove it.
  - Why?
  - **With** such authority and power, it leaves them only two choices:
    - **Either** repent and believe or try to discredit it.
3. Their struggle comes from the accuracy of Daniel's foretelling of the future. It is so detailed that it either HAS to be God or someone writing after the fact.

- **But** this simply shows they don't understand God or what prophecy is!
4. Some go so far to try to discredit Daniel that they date the book of Daniel as late as 50 AD!
- **But** these theories come with insurmountable problems.
  - **I'll** mention a few.
5. One argument is as follows: they say since it is written in Hebrew **AND** Chaldee (the Babylonian language) plus 3 Greek words, it proves Daniel "the Hebrew" didn't write it.
- **However**, this only proves all the more that Daniel was the author. He was in the royal line and hence was educated at the highest level in Israel. Additionally, his service to the Babylonian King would have made him not only an educated statesman, but also an educated scholar.
6. In addition, the Septuagint, a Hebrew translation into Greek written in the 200's BC, mentions Daniel
- This was **LONG** before 50 AD.
7. Josephus, a Jewish historian of Jesus' day, declares that the book of Daniel was shown to Alexander the Great in **322 BC** by the

High Priest Jeduthun as Alexander rode into Jerusalem to conquer it.

- **Josephus** records that Alexander was so impressed that he was written about in the Jewish Bible that he spared Jerusalem from destruction.

- **Which** we know happened historically.

3. In the Berlin Museum, they have multiple Babylonian artifacts. On one of the monuments, it lists Ashpenaz as the master of the Eunuchs under Nebuchadnezzar 600 BC which the Scriptures verify.

4. It is also interesting that when Daniel uses Aramaic in Chapter 7, which was the language of the Chaldeans, it is written in **6<sup>th</sup> century Aramaic**.

- **Why** is this so important in dating the book?

5. 6<sup>th</sup> Century always uses the pattern of subject, object, and verb.

- **However**, 250 years before Jesus, the Aramaic style changed to subject, verb, and object.

- **Proving** linguistically that the book of Daniel had to date earlier than 250 BC.

8. Additionally, Archeologists have now found a 5-sided cylinder in ancient Babylon where

they found written the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego once again corroborating the Bible.

5. But the most convincing proof that Daniel was written by Daniel himself is the validation by Jesus when He said in **Matthew 24:15,**

"Therefore when you see the `abomination of desolation,' **spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand).

6. This settles the two main issues.

- **First** of all, Jesus said Daniel was a prophet and second, that he was the author of the book of Daniel.

7. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were all contemporaries living around the same time.

- **Jeremiah** was first and started warning of the coming judgment of Babylon 40 years or so prior to their invasion. Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon about 8 years after they were taken captive, and Daniel then prophesied in Babylon once taken captive.

8. Which shows the love and care of God throughout the entire process. Even in the judgement, He gave them prophets and His Word to see them through and give them hope.

9. Now why WERE they judged?

- **There** were multiple reasons, but it could be summed up into continued rebellion against God.

10. And why 70 years in Babylon?

- **Due** to their refusal to observe the Sabbath Law for 490 years which the Bible says was a “sign” between God and the nation of Israel.

11. God had warned Israel through Moses that in order to keep the Sabbath law, they must take a year off from work every 7 years and let the land rest and recuperate.

- **And** they had ignored this for 490 years.
- **Hence** God said you owe me 70 years, one for every 7, so God sent them into captivity for 70 years into Babylon.

10. Jeremiah 25:11 says, “And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

- **Jeremiah 29:10 says,** “For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you and cause you to return to this place.”

12. What was the setting?

- **The** Babylonians had slowly risen to power after overtaking the Assyrians in 626 BC and continued to grow in strength until finally conquering the Egyptians as well in 606 BC; This made them the world power.

13. Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nebopolassar, had conquered the King of Assyria and Egypt.

- **And** now that he was older, Nebuchadnezzar was taking over.

12. They invaded and conquered Israel in 3 different sieges before they completely removed them.

- **The** first two times, they left servant kings of Israel in place with the promise of submission.
- **However,** they rebelled each time leading to their eventual destruction.

13. During the first invasion, Nebuchadnezzar got news his father Nebopolassar had died,

so he took his entire army and went back home, traveling 5 to 600 miles in 2 weeks!

- **Incredible** distance in 2 weeks with a full army.
- **It** was at this time that he took Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as well as others with them.

14. He also took some of the articles of the Temple back to his gods temples to try and show the superiority of HIS god as compared to Israel's God.

- **And** the best of the young men was good planning AND a sort of visual trophy to the surrounding nations.

15. Then on his 3<sup>rd</sup> and final invasion, after seeing they would never stop rebelling, he overthrew and totally conquered Jerusalem in 586 BC.

- **Those** he didn't kill he took captive back to Babylon.
- **And** Daniel then spent the entire 70 years of judgement in Babylon. He would likely have been in his late 80's or early 90's by the end of the book.

2. And this 3<sup>rd</sup> and final invasion was the fulfillment of Isaiah 39 when, 105 years

earlier, Hezekiah had shown the Babylonian visitors all of the treasures of the kingdom.

- **And** Isaiah declared prophetically in **Isaiah 39: 6-7,**

6 "Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.

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."

16. When Daniel was captured, he was somewhere around 16 or 17 years old and was chosen by the government officials as part of the "creme of the crop" to be trained up in Babylonian ways in order to be groomed and serve in the palace of the King.

- **What** did this mean?

17. Not only was he a captive and servant for life by the age of 17 or so, but he also had to be castrated in order to be the King's Eunuch.

- **Just** image how radically Daniel's life was changed overnight.



19. Something else that must be pointed out is that the book of Daniel is a key to unlocking the meaning of the book of Revelation.

- **Which** is why they go hand in hand.
- **Which** also means if we are ever going to fully understand the book of Revelation, we have to understand the book of Daniel as well.

20. Much of the book of Daniel has already been fulfilled, but in Daniel's day it was all still future.

- **We** have the advantage of looking back in time and seeing each prophecy in Daniel fulfilled 100% correctly to this point.

21. And now looking forward, we have no reason to doubt that the rest will be fulfilled just as accurately.

- **This** is why this is such an exciting book.

22. The book of Daniel also challenges and encourages us because of the life and commitment of Daniel.

- **In** the midst of the most evil and pagan city in the world, he stayed faithful to God as a teen, adult, and elderly man.

23. Which means WE can do that as well.
- **AND** at any age!
  - **So** we are left without excuse.
24. He is one of the few people in the Bible where no sin is recorded.
- **And** while he no doubt had sin, he lived so committed to God that the Scripture makes no mention of it.
25. Can you imagine what it must have been like for Daniel to grow up hearing Jeremiah warning the nation that the Babylonians were coming to destroy them and take them into captivity? **And** how it would have felt to actually watch it take place with no way to stop it?
26. Some facts about the actual city of Babylon.
- **Walls** 330 feet high and 15 miles long.
  - **Wall** so wide 6 chariots side by side could race on top!
  - **Archeologists Found** the foundation of a temple 18 miles in circumference!
  - **And** adding to its grandeur was the fact that the Euphrates River passed right through the middle.
27. Now imagine how this looked and seemed to Daniel and the others after living in

what would have been considered a small country town even compared to Jerusalem.

**v.1** This was 606 BC and the first of 3 sieges on Jerusalem that we talked about from Nebuchadnezzar.

**v.2** 1. Notice Who it was that gave the children of God into the hands of the Babylonians.

- **It** was God.
- **Why** do I bring this up?

2. Because God will still put His children into the hands of their enemies if we walk in rebellion and that's what it takes to get us to repent.

- **It** may be a person God moves on or even the demonic realm to impact our life, but He will do what is necessary to get our attention.

3. And if that is happening to you right now you need to wake up and pay attention.

- **Because** it won't stop until YOU do.

4. Notice also they took some of the articles and treasures of the temple.

- **This** will come into play when we get into chapter 5 and see Belshazzar having a drunken party with these very articles as he mocks the God of Israel.

- **Which** shows how damaging it is to God and our testimony when we fall in sin.

5. Nathan put it this way when confronting David about his sin with Bathsheba, “You’ve given the enemies of God opportunity to blaspheme.”

- **And** that is what unrepentant sin always does.

**v.3** 1. A Eunuch was one set apart for the service of the King.

- **And** they were literally castrated to keep them docile and non-threatening.
- **This** is what happened to David and his friends.

**v.4** 1. Notice they took the young men.

- **Again**, because they were the easiest to train and remold to the Babylonian culture.

3. And it’s always the children the enemy wants even today.

- **They** were going to be trained up in order to serve the King of Babylon in his royal palace.

v.5 1. Hey this is not so bad!

- **Living** in the palace and eating the same food the king eats! The best!

2. Yet there is one small problem as we will see next week: it would have “levitically” defiled Daniel.

- **Which** is why he will make his appeal to the master of the Eunuchs.

v.6 1. Daniel means “God is judge,” Hananiah means “Beloved of the Lord,” Mishael means “Who is as God,” and Azariah means “The Lord is my help.”

- **What’s** my point?

2. The Jews often gave their children names that represented something that they wanted their children to become.

- **We** did the same with our girls.

3. And this is why I believe Daniel and his friends were able to stay faithful to the Lord with all of this lifelong Bablylonian influence.

- **It** began in a home that was focused on God.
- **And** the same thing is true for us as parents today.

- **It** needs to begin in the home by spending time with your kids in the Word and prayer every day.

**v.7** 1. Notice the enemy couldn't let them keep names that honored the God of Israel but now gives them new names to honor the gods of Babylon.

2. Let's educate them in the way of the world and get this Jesus stuff out of them.

- **Isn't** that exactly what our culture and school system do today?
- **But** we will see they remain faithful through it all.

3. Daniel he called "Belteshazzar" which means 'Bel's Prince.'

- **Hananiah** he called "Shadrach" which means 'Illuminated by the sun god.'
- **Mishael** he called "Meshach" which means 'Guest of a King'.
- **And** Azariah he called Abed-Ego which means 'The servant of Nego.'

**v.8** 1. This is the key to the successful Christian walk and the theme of today's teaching.

- **If** we are going to honor God in a world such as this, we must do as Daniel did

and purpose in our heart not to defile ourselves with the king's delicacies.

2. Purposing in your heart to please the Lord means to settle the issue on the inside.
3. He "purposed" or "resolved" in his heart not to defile himself with the world.
  - **The** question is have WE "purposed" or "resolved" in OUR hearts to not defile ourselves with the world like Daniel.
  - **If** not, that is a commitment we need to make.
4. Because what **WE** purpose and resolve to do in our heart for the Lord will manifest in the direction and fruit of our lives from that point on.
5. The world has lots of delicacies to offer us, but the majority of them will defile us before our God, so we have a **choice to make**.
  - **The** Bible says we are free to do all things if it is not sin, yet not all things are profitable.
6. You see there was probably a lot of this food that Daniel was free to eat before the Lord.
  - **Yet** it would have singed his conscience and therefore would have been **spiritually** "unprofitable."

7. Obviously, no pork or unclean animals.

- **But** the steaks and other meats would have been fine.
- **Yet** because much of it would have no doubt been offered to idols, Daniel decided to have no part.

8. How seriously do we take keeping our conscience clean before the Lord?

- **Daniel** took it very seriously and most certainly would be called overly radical in our day and age. Yet look how God used him.

9. Notice what he did after purposing in his heart.

- **He** took action to make it happen practically.
- **He** made a request of the one in charge that he not eat of this food.

10. You see, after you purpose in your heart to live for the Lord and turn from the things of the world, you must then take some practical action to make it happen.

11. Maybe you are saying right now, “Well I could never follow God that way, it’s too hard in this day and age.”

- **I** can assure you it was harder in Daniel’s day, yet he did it.



- **And** he did it as a teen AND an adult.

1. How did he do it?

- **He** purposed in his heart.