

A Study of the Book of Daniel

"From Prophet to Prisoner"

Chapter 1

Introduction: Babylon was in a flat valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, near modern day Baghdad, Iraq. Daniel 1:2 notes that Babylon was built "*on the plain of Shinar,*" which is the same spot as the tower of Babel. (Genesis 11). Babylon mastered the Middle East by defeating the combined Assyrian and Egyptian armies in 605 BC at the battle of Carchemish, where the combined Egyptian and Assyrian forces were destroyed. Assyria ceased to exist as an independent power, and Egypt retreated and was no longer a significant force in the Ancient Near East. Then Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, turned his focus on Judah, making three different attacks on Jerusalem.

The first attack was in 605 BC when Jehoiakim reigned as king of Judah. Fulfilling the Scriptures (Jeremiah 25:4-12) In this attack Daniel, and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken captive, along with many others, and carried away to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the vessels from the Lord's Sanctuary, and brought them "*Into the treasure house of his god.*" Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiakim his servant and placed him in charge of Judah, in which he was loyal for about three years, and then began to rebel.

This led to **the second attack**, in the year 597 BC, in which Nebuchadnezzar marched against king Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim. This time Ezekiel was one of the many taken captive, along with more vessels from the temple. Nebuchadnezzar now made Zedekiah king of Judah after the surrender of Jerusalem and the removal of Jehoiachin. Nebuchadnezzar had deported most of the nobility and the remnant of the army of Judah to Babylon. What was left was a small group under Zedekiah, likened by the prophets to rotten figs. These were roughly split into two major groups, one pro-Babylonian and the other pro-Egyptian. In the year 595/594 an insurrection occurred in Babylon. It was against this background that Hananiah's speech occurred, dated to the fourth year of Zedekiah. He declared that God had broken the yoke of the King of Babylon, and the exiles were to be returned and Jehoiachin restored. Jeremiah 29 records the zeal of the false prophets in raising anti-Babylonian sentiment. Zedekiah was approached by Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon to rebel against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar summoned Zedekiah to Babylon in his fourth year (Jeremiah 51). This appears to be directly related to the insurrections. Probably because of the summons of Jeremiah and Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah did not openly join the rebellion but vacillated between the two parties in Judah. Finally, the pressure became too great and he rebelled against the king of Babylon (2Kings 24:20).

This ended up leading to **the third attack** in 586 BC. This time king Zedekiah was captured and made to watch as the army of Babylon killed his sons "*before his eyes.*" Then they put out king Zedekiah's eyes, bound him in chains, and put him in prison until his death. This fulfilled the Scriptures in Ezekiel 12:13 and Jeremiah 52:11. At this time both Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, with all the rest of the temple vessels and treasures taken back to Babylon and all the rest of the people, with the exception of some poor people, were taken back to Babylon.

This is the background setting for the first four chapters in the book of Daniel. Daniel was a faithful servant of God, and though a captive, he became a counselor to the king, not only through the Babylonian empire, but down into the Persian empire.

Interesting Note:

The book of Daniel is divided up into two groups, history and prophecy. The first group covers chapter's one through six, dealing with history, even though chapter two is both historical and

prophetic. The second group covering chapter's seven through twelve, deal with prophecy.

Daniel 1:1-2

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: 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.”

Notice that the Bible says that “*The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.*” God gave this Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar victory over Israel, just like He had prophesied through the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 25:9, 11

“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.” “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

The Lord chose not to protect His people because of their unfaithfulness to Him, and finally led them into captivity to Babylon to get their attention! This would lead me to ask the question: “What does God need to do to get our attention?”

Something else interesting to be noted here is how Satan works to attack God, when God withdraws His blessings and protection from His people. In the first two verses we find that Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem, shows us an example of how Satan attacks God. Not only then, but down through to the end of time.

Key Note: There are three vital parts to his attack.

- 1. An attack on God.** (Attacking God's truths of the Bible)
- 2. Against His people.** (Satan moves to destroy God's people)
- 3. Against His sanctuary.** (Satan's attack at the Sanctuary and True Worship)

Notice as we move ahead to another chapter in Daniel, that Satan's attacks are the same.

Daniel 8:9-12

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.”

Do you see the same pattern? In verse ten, “*It cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.*” In Daniel 12, verse 3 says, “*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*” In the book of Daniel “Stars” are a symbol of God's people, so in Daniel 8, verse 10, we see a power that cast God's people to the ground and stamps upon them or persecutes them.

Next, we see that verse 11 says, “*He magnified himself even to the Prince of the host.*” This attack is against Jesus, as the Prince or Son of God that stands for His people. The third attack here is also in verse 11, “*And the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*” Here we once again see Satan’s attacks on God, His people, and His Sanctuary. Notice it also says in verse 12, “*And it cast down the truth to the ground;*” Obviously, this power was attempting to take the “Truth” away from God’s people. In our next passage we jump ahead to another chapter and see the same pattern of attacks that Satan uses.

Daniel 11:31-33

“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”

In verse 31 we see our first two attacks. “*They shall pollute the sanctuary...and shall take away the daily sacrifice,*” In the original Hebrew the word “*sacrifice*” is not there. It was supplied by the translators to give a better understanding. By doing this it leads people to believe it was talking about taking away the daily sacrifices of offering a lamb on the altar. But the word “*daily*” in the Hebrew means continual. This is referring to the continual ministry of our High Priest-Jesus Christ. The third attack we see is found in verse 33, “*Yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.*” Here we see the persecution of God’s people. So once again we see the elements of Satan’s attacks, against God, His sanctuary, and His people.

We see this example, not only in the book of Daniel, but also in the book of Revelation. Remember, that Daniel and Revelation, though written by different writers, in different centuries, and in different countries, were still inspired by the same Holy Spirit. They are brother books covering the journey of God’s people to the end of time. So let’s see this same example of how the devil attacks God, His people, and His Sanctuary in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 13:4-7

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

Notice that once again we see Satan’s attack on God, His people, and His Sanctuary. The first thing to note is “*He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*” The Bible describes blasphemies as, either claiming to be God or claiming to be able to forgive sins. Here we have a power that is trying to take the place of not only God here on this earth, but also His Sanctuary! We also see that he attacks God’s people, “*It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.*” As the Bible clearly depicts, Satan’s attacks against God will continue in the same manners, not only down to our day, but till Jesus comes! So, let us keep in our minds the understanding of how Satan attacks as we continue, not only with Daniel chapter one, but with

the rest of our study of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Now, let us go back and continue with Daniel chapter 1.

Daniel 1:3–7

“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; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skillful 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. 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. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.”

King Nebuchadnezzar appointed Ashpenaz, who was the master of the eunuchs, over the new captives. These new Hebrew captives were young men whom were smart, good looking, and able to be taught the language of the Babylonians, that they might stand before the king.

When they got to Babylon, the captives were not thrown into prison, or treated badly, but rather treated well. They were given places to live, put in school, and were fed with food and drink from the king's table. They were also given new Babylonian names.

Hebrew Name and Meaning

Daniel	God is my judge
Hananiah	Jehovah is Gracious
Mishael	Who is what God is
Azariah	Whom Jehovah Helps

Babylonian Name and Meaning

Belteshazzar	Bel protect my Life
Shadrach	Command of AKU
Meshach	Who is what AKU is
Abednego	Servant of Nego

Interesting Note: Why did they get new names?

Revelation 3:12

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

We are told that Jesus is going to write a new name upon us. A name that identifies us as His! These Hebrew young men had names that identified them as connected to the Hebrew's God-The Lord Jesus Christ. To help change their identity, focus and future they are now given new Babylonian names that are associated with Babylonian gods. Much like Satan is trying to get us to identify with the things of this world, while Jesus wants us to identify with Him.

Daniel 1:8-12

“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. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 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. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.”

These verses are interesting because it shows Daniel’s determination, along with his three friends, to keep themselves pure and undefiled from the Babylonian food and customs. It says that Daniel “*Purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the kings meat, nor the wine which he drank.*” Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah must have had faithful parents. For the wise man Solomon tells us in Proverbs 22:6, “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*” Obviously these young men had been trained to be loyal to God! It all starts at home!

In foreign countries it was common for the meat and drink to have been offered to their idol gods, prior to eating or drinking it. The food and drink could also have been unclean, but, **either way Daniel and his three friends were determined to do what was right in God’s eyes** and asked for an alternative diet, consisting of pulse and water.

The Hebrew word “*Zeroa*” translated *Pulse*, (vs.13) is built on the same root as the word *Seed* in the record of Creation, where it mentions “*every herb bearing seed...the fruit of a tree yielding seed.*” Genesis 1:29. ***This makes it clear that Daniel’s request included grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables, a vegetarian diet of good variety, together with good clean water.*** Daniel and his three friends stood faithful to God through this trial, while others went along with the kings orders, not wanting to make a wave.

Key Note: **How many of us are unfaithful to God because we go along with others, not wanting to make a wave? God is calling us to be like Daniel and his friends, that we would love God more than life itself!**

Romans 12:1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Paul tells us in this verse to “*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.*” It is a proven fact that people are what they eat! We live in a world that is focused on living for yourself, and self-gratification. Yet the Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” And in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*” Even today God desires that we glorify God, through our temple (our body), which means we need to be careful what we put into or do to our bodies, so we can be strong, healthy and faithful to God like Daniel and his three friends were.

Daniel 1:13-16

“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. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 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. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.”

Have you ever gone on a diet? How much of a difference does ten days of dieting make? Not

very much, yet because of Daniel and his friend's faithfulness to God, He blessed them, body, mind and soul.

Daniel 1:17-20

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

Because Daniel and his three friends purposed in their hearts to be faithful to God no matter what, God not only blessed their health, but also gave them "Knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom." Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were the only young men, taken from Jerusalem, that the Bible says were faithful. Therefore, God blessed their choices and faithfulness. So much, that king Nebuchadnezzar found that "In all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." The magicians and astrologers were men paid to give the king counsel. Yet, Daniel and his friends were found to be "ten times better!" Only God can do that! God wants to bless His people today, just like He did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. If they would make a decision to purpose in their hearts not defile themselves with the ways of this world. So He can bless us, Mind, Body and Soul.

John 17:17

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

We are sanctified through the Truth. The Bible is our roadmap to discover what God's will is for our lives. Within the Bible we find principles that can guide every aspect of our life. Which means we need to study the Bible so that we can understand "Truth" from "Error" and decide to follow God's Truth!

Daniel 1:21

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

Because of his faithfulness, Daniel lived through the time that Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and the Persian. And worked in the courts of the kingdom when Cyrus, king of Persia, issue the decree to restore and build Jerusalem and the temple. Daniel is an example of what God's people must be at the end of time. They must be willing to be faithful to the truths of God's Word, regardless of life, position, or money!

Daniel 12:1-3 & 13

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

When Jesus comes in the clouds of Heaven there're will be two groups: those that are waiting for

Jesus to come and those full of shame and contempt! The choice is ours!

Summary of Daniel Chapter 1:

Nebuchadnezzar attacked God's city (Jerusalem), and His people (The Israelites), and His Sanctuary (Taking God's holy vessels out of the temple and placing them in a Babylonian temple). Even through this fierce attack, some stood faithful to God when put through these severe trials:

1. Taken captive
2. Their city was destroyed
3. Taken away from their families
4. Walked 500 plus miles to Babylon
5. Had their names changed
6. Commanded to eat the king's food and drink

Daniel and his friends stayed true to God, and God blessed them with wisdom and understanding of visions and dreams. Through the experience of Daniel, God gives an example for His people in the last days. We can understand the prophecies **only** as we surrender our wills to God in obedience to His Word, which leads to peace of heart and true happiness! God is asking us if we, like Daniel, will chose to be faithful to Him, regardless of our circumstances? What will your answer be?