



Daniel 1

7337-7348 Daniel Chapter 1

The book of Daniel is one of the most exciting books of the Old Testament to me. I love the book of Daniel. We are going to go slow. We are just going to take one chapter at a time so you can fully absorb the marvelous prophecies of this book of Daniel. Like me, I trust that you will fall in love with this man of God who lived such a beautiful and exemplary life. I have come to just love Daniel as a person. He is one of those that I am looking forward to meeting when I get to heaven. I want to know what his feelings were when he was in the lion's den. He is just an exciting, exciting man of God.

Now the book of Daniel has given tremendous fits to the critics of the Bible, those who seek to deny that the Bible is divinely inspired of God. Probably one of the books that is really the thorn in their side more than any other is the book of Daniel, because Daniel predicted events that were going to transpire during the time of the Greeks, Salutes, the Talamies and all. They were so exact, speaking of Cleopatra and others, and he was so exact in his prophecies, so precise that critics of the Bible and those who do not believe that the Bible is the inspired of God, have had great difficulty with Daniel and they finally found the solution that Daniel was not written by Daniel. They believe that some fellow later on, after the events took place, wrote the book of Daniel and signed it as Daniel, but that he was really a forger, because it would be impossible to write with such exactness of the events of the future unless you were there after they had taken place. So, to discredit the book of Daniel, they have the late date authorship theory. By this way they have sought to discredit it. But, there are so many holes in that theory it is not even worthwhile looking at it. But, if you say nothing else, this should suffice, but with those kind of people nothing suffices.

Jesus made reference to the book of Daniel and He ascribed the authorship to Daniel. That should be sufficient to answer any criticism or any kind of a late date fraud kind of a thing that could have been going on, because Jesus would not have endorsed a fraud.

I am not going to go into the argument. It is not even worth it. I think that too many times people try to fight the darkness. They are always trying to drive off darkness. That can be just a tremendous expenditure of energy and time. Rather than drive out darkness, just turn on the light, and the light will dispel the darkness. I do not like to major in the minors, or into the negative things, but to just rejoice in the glorious light that God has given to us.

Now Daniel begins the book,

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

Now, in the third year of Jehoiakim, it is thought that Jehoiakim began to reign in about 607 B.C. So, the third year of his reign would be about 604 B.C. There is no direct record in history of Babylon attacking Jerusalem in 604 B.C., and thus the dating has been brought into question. But, if you turn to II Kings 24, where we read of the reign of Jehoiakim, it says:

In his days Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years.

Now Jehoiakim was more or less set on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. He was a vassal to Babylon. Actually, he was set on the throne by Pharaoh Necho, but the Pharaoh was conquered by Babylon. Now, in the third year he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

And the Lord set against him bands of the Chaldees (or the Babylonians), and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon.

This would be the third year after. But notice:

And he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servants the prophets. Surely the commandment of the Lord came upon Judah to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did.

Thus in the third year, they came against Jerusalem. It was probably at this time that they took certain of the vessels from the house of God and these captives of the kings descendants back to Babylon.

Daniel 1:2:

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into the hand, with part of the vessels (not all of them at this time) 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. And the king spoke to Ashpenaz the master of the eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

They brought some of the choice young men. Again, let us go back to II Kings 20:18. We have a prophecy here of Isaiah that he is giving to Hezekiah the king. And the occasion was that Hezekiah almost died, but recovered from his illness. You remember the story that the prophet came to him and said set your house in order because you are going to die and not live. And Hezekiah prayed all night long and begged God. So, the Lord gave him another ten years. So, in recovering from this illness certain emissaries came from Babylon to congratulate him on the recovery from this illness. And as a gracious host, Hezekiah took them through all of the treasures that were in the house of the Lord and he showed them everything that he had. So, when they left, the prophet Isaiah came to him and he asked if the fellows came from Babylon, and Hezekiah answered yes. Then he asked him what he showed them. And Hezekiah said that he showed them everything, all the treasures and all that are here. So Isaiah said unto him, verse 16:

Hear the word of the Lord, behold the days will come when all that is in your house and that which your fathers have laid up in store (all of the treasures) shall be carried into Babylon; and nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons (that is the kings sons, his descendants) that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, they shall take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Now this is a prophecy one hundred years before. Now this prophecy is being fulfilled when Daniel and other of the princes were taken to Babylon.

Daniel 1:4:

Children (and notice it says children) in whom was no blemish, but well favored (or good looking), 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, whom they might teach the learning and the language of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat.

So, these young men were taken as captives. They were descendants of Hezekiah and thus they were of the royal seed. Daniel was of the royal seed from the tribe of Judah, a descendent of David.

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 that they might stand before the king.

So, they were being groomed. They were being taught in all of the learning of Babylon. Taught the Chaldean language. The provision of the kings fare, the king's meat and so forth was set before them. And, they were to be prepared to stand before the king as a counselor in the foreign affairs department, especially dealing with the nation of Judah.

Now, the interesting thing is that Daniel and his three friends were probably around fourteen years old at this time.

So many times I think that our Sunday School papers give us a false impression with ages. For instances, when Abraham was commanded of the Lord to offer his son, Isaac, his son, his only son as a sacrifice to the Lord on the mount on which God would show him, we so often see the pictures of Abraham leading this little boy maybe eight to twelve years old. But, Isaac at the time could have been as much as thirty years old. So, we get false impressions.

Here, Daniel is usually pictured as a very mature young fellow, but he was probably only about fourteen years old, because he was taken in the third year of Jehoiakim as a captive and he lived through the seventy years of captivity in Babylon that was predicted by Jeremiah. And, he lived on into the reign of the Medo-Persian kings, actually unto Darius. When he was thrown into the lion's den, no longer a young man, he was in his ninety's. It could be that he was such a tough old critter by that time the lion's did not have any desire for him.

It's like listening to the radio, somehow you get a picture in your mind of what they must look like and then when you meet them it is always a shock. It is sort of fun. I will be in a restaurant some place and when I order my dinner the waiter or waitress will often take a double take. And they will say, "You're not...could you be...oh, no...are you Chuck Smith?" And I'll say, "Yes." And, oh my, you can see the shock on their face. You sort of want to say what Jesus said concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see?" What were you expecting to see?

So, it is interesting how we conjure in our minds pictures like Daniel in the lion's den. You think of him still as a kid, but he was a old man in his ninety's by that time. So, he was probably about fourteen to seventeen years old when he was taken with his friends as captives to Babylon.

Among those that were taken of the children of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Now, you remember that they were taken during a time of spiritual decadence in Israel. Josiah, the good king, had died. Jehoiakim, a wicked king, was reigning in his stead. The spiritual atmosphere in Jerusalem was not good. The prophet Jeremiah was speaking out against these things that were going on, but it is very probable that Daniel as a very young boy was impressed by this prophet Jeremiah, the man of God. His heart was open to the message of Jeremiah, and sympathetic too, though the whole political scene was that of corruption. Yet, there were these four young men who were really committed to the Lord at an early age.

Now the name Daniel means God is my judge. Hananiah means beloved of the Lord. Mishael means who is as God, and Azariah means the Lord is my help. These are beautiful names that signify the depth of spirituality, perhaps of their parents, as the boys were given these names that relate to the Lord.

Now these young men were placed under the charge of the prince of the eunuchs, and he gave them Babylonian names. To Daniel, he gave the name of Belteshazzar, which is the same as Belshazzar, and the name means Bel's princes or servant. To Hananiah, whose name meant beloved of the Lord, he gave the name Shadrach, which means illumine by Rach, who was the sun god of the Babylonians. To Mishael, whose names means who is as God, he gave the name of Meshach, which means who is as Shach. So, who is as God was changed to who is as Shach, who was thought to be the goddess Venus, or the Babylonian equivalent of the Greek god Venus. And to Azariah, whose name meant the Lord is my help, they gave the name Abed-Nego, which is servant of Nego, another of the Babylonian gods. And, so they were given by the Babylonians these pagan names.

Daniel 1:8:

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

He purposed in his heart not to defile himself. I think it is so important for people to establish in their hearts that kind of commitment and purpose that I am not going to defile my body.

Another one of my favorite characters in the Old Testament is Joseph, and he at a tender young age had a very bitter experience. His brothers turned on him and sold him to slave traders who were going to Egypt. In Egypt he was sold to a man by the name of Potiphar who was one of the chief guards to the Pharaoh. Potiphar's wife took a liking to him and sought to seduce him into a sexual relationship. But it said that Joseph said unto her, "How can I do this great sin against god?" So, though a teenager, though in a strange country where the influences of the home are gone, the opportunity is there, yet because of that purpose in his heart he remained true to the Lord.

A lot of times people when they are away from the influences and the environment of their home get into evil. They do things there that they would not do at home, because they think that nobody knows them there. And, that is when a lot of times people get tripped up and get into mischief when they get away from the environment of home. But, here were these young fellows, and they had purposed in their hearts to be pure, not to defile themselves. How important it is for us to make that kind of purpose and determination not to defile ourselves, but to live a pure and holy life before God. To not pollute our minds or defile our bodies.

Now the king's meat most generally was first of all sacrificed to their gods in pagan worship. After the meat was sacrificed to the gods it was then roasted and served at the king's table. In Paul's day, he writes concerning this practice and how that when you go to the butcher shop to buy meat he said, "Do not ask the butcher was this meat offered as a sacrifice?" Because, if the butcher says yes, then if you buy it and eat it your conscience is going to be troubled. So just do not ask. Just buy it take it home and enjoy it, and do not ask questions for your conscience sake. And, when you are invited to a friend's house to eat who is an unbeliever, just eat what is set before you asking no questions. This is the same idea. Do not say, "Did you take this down and sacrifice it to the gods before you brought it home to serve me?" Just do not ask questions. Eat what is set before you asking no questions for your conscience sake.

Now there was no doubt that the meat that was upon the king's table was offered first unto the gods of the Babylonians. And, because of the law of God to eat that meat would be to pollute yourself. So, Daniel purposed in his heart that he was not going to defile his body, himself, with the king's meat or with the king's wine. And so he requested from the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. He was a good looking, model kind of a young man. And, the man who was in charge of grooming him loved him. He was just that kind of a person. There was this special relationship. He liked Daniel very much. So, he said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king," and well might he. Nebuchadnezzar was a man who did not take no for an answer. He was a man who would order you executed for an trivial offense. So this fellow like any one else served in great fear. And so he declares:

I fear my lord the king who has appointed your meat and your drink.

The king is the one that has ordered this stuff for Daniel.

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.

He'll chop off my head if you guys come in looking sickly and all, because I am in charge of you, feeding you and getting you strong and healthy and training you and all. You are putting my life in jeopardy.

Then Daniel said to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel,

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove your servants, I beseech thee, ten days.

Certain numbers have spiritual implications. The study of Biblical numerology is interesting, and numbers are symbolic in the scriptures. And, the number ten is symbolic of testing and trial.

Now, you remember when Jacob was serving his uncle Laban for his wives. Jacob said unto him, "You have changed my wages ten times (testing and trial)." When Job addressed those fellows who had come to commiserate with him in his physical afflictions. He said, "You have actually castigated me these ten

times(number of testing).” You remember when Jesus wrote to the church at Smyrna in the book of Revelation. He said, “You shall be tested ten days (the number of testing and trial).”

So, Daniel said:

Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; (Give us a ten day test.) and let them give us vegetables to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee and the countenance of the children that eat of the king's meat; and as you see, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of the ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children that 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 vegetables.(a vegetarian type of a diet). As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all of the learning and wisdom.

So the knowledge came from God. They were gifted by God. Now, to me it is just fascinating to see how certain people are gifted in certain areas. Gifted musicians. You could practice the piano all their life, eight hours a day, but they will never be able to play like Mark Zeeman. It is a gift. There are people who are just gifted musically. People are gifted in linguistics. People are gifted in mathematics. There is just something in the genes. But, it is God who places it in the genes. So, these gifts actually come from God. These abilities come from God. And it is a wise person who recognizes that this is a gift from God, this capacity, this ability, and he then gives it back to God to glorify God with that gift that he has.

You see our gifts always find their highest use and expression when they are used for the glory of God, then the purposes are being fulfilled. It is a tragic thing when people prostitute those gifts and use them for their own glory or for their own enrichment rather than for the glory of God. That is always a very sad and tragic thing, but it is such a common thing. People will take those natural abilities, capacities that God has given to them and then use them for themselves.

Daniel 1:17

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

His went beyond just the knowledge and understanding of the sciences and things of this nature. God gave to Daniel the spiritual dimension. I believe it is a direct correlation between these spiritual capacities with that commitment that Daniel had made and purposed in his heart that he was not going to defile himself. I am going to keep my body pure. I am going to keep my life pure. I am not going to defile myself. And, I believe there is a direct relationship between that commitment towards purity and the gifts of the spirit and the discerning and the understanding of dreams and visions, that they are tied together with that kind of a commitment unto the Lord.

Now at the end of the days (that would be the three years) the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs had brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

Now Nebuchadnezzar is an interesting person and if you go back to Jeremiah 27 beginning with verse 4, you find Jeremiah prophesying concerning Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the god of Israel; Thus shall you say to your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and I have given it unto whom it seemed fit unto me. And now have I given all of these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; (God says)and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son .

Interestingly enough that is just how far it went, to his son and his son's son who was Belshazzar. And of course, it was Belshazzar who perished at the hands of the Medo-Persians when the Babylonian empire fell and the Medo-Persian empire took over. Interesting prophecy, because again the exactness of it, I gave it to him to his son and to his son's son, and that was it. That is how far she went.

until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

The many nations, of course, are the Medo-Persians and the kings Cyrus and Darius and so forth, they would then conquer which did happen. But, notice God said He gave it to Nebuchadnezzar, and God calls Nebuchadnezzar his servant because God used Nebuchadnezzar as his instrument of judgment. It is not because Nebuchadnezzar was a righteous man, but he became God's instrument of judgment against the nations. So, Ezekiel prophesies the destruction of Tyre as does Jeremiah and of the other nations which were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar because God had ordained that he would be the instrument of judgment. But, after he became the instrument of judgment then Babylon also was judged. So they were brought before Nebuchadnezzar in whom God had set in his position of power and authority.

Now as we move into the book of Daniel we will find where God teaches Nebuchadnezzar the fact that it was God who placed him in that position. He began to be lifted up with pride because of the glory of the Babylonian kingdom. He began to say, "Is this not the great Babylon that I have Made?" And God said he would teach him a lesson and He did.

You know there are important things for you to know, lessons that you need to learn. And, you can learn them the easy way or you can learn them the hard way. A lot of people are stubborn and thus they have to learn the hard way. It is painful to learn those lessons, but the lessons are so important, your life depends upon you learning these lessons.

Jonah needed to learn an important lesson that God's way is the best and the right way. That God knows best for your life. And Jonah, when God told him what he wanted him to do, thought that Jonah knew better than God. God said go to Ninevah. Jonah said I am going to Tarsus. But, he learned an important lesson the hard way. And, I have been as Jonah in certain lessons that God had to teach me.

It is not easy to learn lessons the hard way, but the lessons are so important that I must learn them. So, God in His love is going to teach me the lesson. If I am attentive and obedient I can learn lessons the easy way. And, that is great! But, if I think I know better God will teach me the lessons, but oh, it hurts. It is painful. But whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. You see if God did not love you he would just let you go. He would let you destroy yourself. He would let you mess yourself up completely, but He loves you, and whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. He will teach you. He will chasten you as a teaching method in order to teach you his ways.

Nebuchadnezzar learned the lesson that it was God who gave him his authority, his position. That God sets on the throne those whom He wills. He learned it, but what a hard way.

In all the matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them.

They came before him and it was sort of an inquisition. The king began to ask them questions, testing them. And, in all of the questions, that the king inquired of them,

he found them ten times better than all of the magicians and astrologers that were in all of his realm.

These guys were shining lights, just young boys. But, because of the spirit of God upon them, the anointing of God upon their lives, they were ten times better than all the rest.

Now, the Bible declares that the natural man does not understand the things of the spirit, neither does he know them for they are spiritually discerned. Thus, it is totally worthless to go to Orange Coast College or USC or any other university and take a Bible course from some Ph.D. who is not born again. Because the

natural man does not understand the things of the spirit and neither can he know them. Though he may understand the Hebrew and the Greek and may all of the grammar and the tenses and the whole bit, if he is not born again he is not capable of teaching the Word of God. You would be much better off to go and listen to just some simple minister of Jesus Christ who is filled with the Spirit and maybe only has a sixth grade education, and does not know Greek from hen scratches, but walks with the Spirit and lives in fellowship with God.

I use to have a lady in my church who had only a sixth grade education, but this lady lived close to the Lord and walked in the Spirit. She called me brother Smith and she would often times come up to me and she would say, "You know I was reading here in Galatians the other day and the Lord spoke to my heart and I saw this and it was just so beautiful." Well, it happened that I was studying Galatians and I had been using my Greek New Testament and looking at the whole Greek, and I got the same truth. It was great. I was able to get it by digging it out of the Greek. And, I thought you know it is great to have a working knowledge of the Greek language so you can get these things. And, here she comes up with the same truth. I said, "Lord, that is not fair." All of that miserable studying. I hated Greek. I labored through Greek. And here God brings to her the same truths, reveals them by His Spirit. I used to enjoy just talking to her, because God had given to her such beautiful spiritual insights because she just walked in close fellowship with the Lord.

So, Daniel and his friends had it all over these other guys. They were ten times wiser in the matters, because of God's Spirit, because of their hearts that were purposed that they were going to serve God. They were not going to defile themselves, but they were going to live a life of fellowship with God, pleasing unto God. A tremendous example and a lot to learn from these four young men who stood fast in the face of temptation in a foreign land, where living there they had all the opportunities to avail themselves of the glamour and favors that they could obtain by being there in the king's court, and yet their hearts were committed to the Lord completely. And, God blessed them for it, even as God will bless you as you commit your heart completely over to him.