

Daniel Chapter 1

The book of Daniel was written by the prophet Daniel. Daniel prophesied after he was taken to Babylon with the first captives. He was taken on the first of three steps to overthrow Jerusalem which happened (in 605 B.C., then in 597 B.C., then finally in 586 B.C.).

He was chosen out to learn the language, and to work in the king's palace. He was chosen, along with other young men from prominent families, to serve in the Babylonian court.

Some believe that Daniel was a eunuch which was a procedure that was required for those serving in the king's court. According to what I've found I do not know of a passage of scripture that specifically states that Daniel was a eunuch, there is strong evidence to believe so. The prophesy of Isaiah concerning the fall to Babylon (chapter 39:7 in particular), speaks of the young men of Judah being taken away and made "eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon".

This prophesy took place during the younger years of Daniels life. (Daniel 1:1 and following), state that Daniel was among those brought to Babylon (verse 6 in particular). Also, we see that Daniel was placed under the charge of Ashpenaz, master of the eunuchs. The fact that Daniel rose to such a high position of authority under the rules of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, almost certainly confirms that Daniel was made a eunuch, common practice in biblical days to prevent any offspring being born to anyone who might challenge the throne.

Daniel's prophecies were different from Isaiah's, and Jeremiah's. Their prophecies were usually begun by saying, "Thus saith the Lord". Daniel did not use that expression when giving his. His ministry was involved in interpreting dreams and riddles. The most prominent of ministries, possibly, were the visions he had himself of events future to even our day. The book of Revelation and Daniel have much in common. Some future events are mentioned in both. Daniel had three friends who were fellow captives. We will see all four of these young men, standing up for God under great stress.

The book of Daniel must be understood through the spirit, if we are to understand anything it says. As with many prophecies, this covers the time they lived in, and covers times future to us, as well. The sovereignty of God is revealed in this book.

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 began to reign after Josiah. Josiah did right in the sight of God, but Jehoiakim was evil. This is a setting of the time on the attack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Eliakim and Jehoiakim is the same person.

“In the third year”: This occurred (in 606-605 B.C.). It was the third year by Babylonian dating, which did not count a king's initial accession year, but began with the following year. So the “third year” is in harmony with the same year labeled as “fourth” by the Judean system of dating. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah.

2 Chronicles 36:5 "Jehoiakim [was] twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD his God."

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."

"Lord", in the verse above, means Adonai. LORD, means Jehovah. This is not speaking of the time later on, when Jerusalem is destroyed. This is speaking of the overthrow of Jehoiakim. At this time, the temple is not completely ravaged, but some of the vessels of the house of God are taken. The land of Shinar was a portion of Babylon. The god, spoken of here, is the false god of Nebuchadnezzar which was called Bel or Marduk which is known as Merodach.

As a side note, to conquer another nation's deities was thought to prove the superiority of the victor's god.

2 Chronicles 36:6-7 "Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon." "Nebuchadnezzar also carried off the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon."

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;"

We see from this, that those young men, who were taken, were princes and seed of the king, and Israelites who were very prominent. Nebuchadnezzar wanted eunuchs for the court.

2 Kings 20:18 "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."

Daniel 1:4 "Children in whom [was] no blemish, but well favored, 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."

These young men, that were chosen to take back to Babylon to work in the court, had to be the well educated. They had to be intelligent enough to learn the language, and to conduct themselves with good manners. The Chaldeans and the Babylonians are the same. The young men needed to be nice looking to represent the king well. He wanted only the best in the court of the king.

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."

They were sent to training school for 3 years to prepare them for work in the court of the king. They were fed and housed as part of their training. In fact, they were fed the same food and wine as the king. This was a time of preparation.

The king was having them schooled in the ways of Babylon. He also, wanted them to know what was required of them in their duties. He might even use them as interpreters to communicate with the captured Hebrews.

These young men after their training, would easily serve as liaisons between Babylon and Judah, or even as hostages to keep Judah's kings submissive.

Daniel 1:6 "Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:"

The name "Daniel" means judge of God. "Hananiah" means Jah has favored. "Mishael" means who is what God is. "Azariah" means Jah has strengthened. It appears from this verse, these 4 were of the tribe of Judah.

Daniel 1:7 "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 Abed-nego."

When they are called into service of the king, they must take on Babylonian names. Daniel's new name, Belteshazzar, is very similar to the name of a later king of these Babylonians, Belshazzar.

Sometimes, names were given to cut connection with old lives. Sometimes, they were named for the false gods of their captors.

This name changing was a key factor in the "brainwashing" process of the Babylonian training. This was to link the inductees to local gods rather than to support their former religious loyalty.

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."

This meat no doubt included food prohibited to the Jews. The pagan food and drink was devoted to idols. To indulge was to be understood as honoring those deities. Daniel made up his mind not to engage in compromise by being untrue to God's call of commitment. To partake entailed direct compromise.

We see from this, that Daniel's faith in God made him know that God would protect him. He remembered the dietary laws that were given in Leviticus. Daniel did not want to anger God by eating unclean food. This defilement would have been because of the law in Leviticus.

Leviticus 11:47 "To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."

Daniel would rather die than break the Levitical law. This is not true now, since Jesus fulfilled the law. Food is cleansed by prayer.

1 Timothy 4:5 - "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

The prince of eunuchs was over Daniel. This is a bold request of Daniel. It might even cost him his life.

Daniel 1:9 "Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs."

We see this very same thing happened to Joseph, when he was captive in Egypt, in the following verse. God honored Daniel's trust and allegiance by sovereignly working favorably for him among the heathen leaders. In this instance, it prevented persecution and led to respect, whereas later on God permitted opposition against Daniel which also elevated him. One way or another, God honors those who honor Him.

Genesis 39:21 "But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

You see, God ultimately is in control of everyone. God made tender the heart of the prince of the eunuchs, so that he loves Daniel.

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."

The prince of the eunuchs is just sure that Daniel will look terrible, if he stops eating the food and wine the king has provided. When Daniel begins to look bad, the prince of the eunuchs will be in trouble with the king, and the king might have him killed.

The Hebrews, that were not in the palace, got very little to eat, and they were not very healthy looking. The king wanted his eunuchs to be the best looking people in the land.

Daniel 1:11 "Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,"

"Melzar" means butler, or steward. We see from this, there were several ranks even among the eunuchs.

Daniel 1:12 "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."

"Pulse" means a vegetable. We can easily see that Daniel was trying to avoid eating an unclean animal from the king's table. These 10 days symbolizes a time dealing with worldliness, since 10

means world government. This is not a total fast, but God will bless Daniel for taking this stand for Him.

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."

We see that Daniel gives Melzar a way out of this. He explains that, if he looks any different than the people eating and drinking the king's food and drink, the prince can punish him. Servants is plural here, so Daniel is, probably, speaking for himself and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Daniel 1:14 "So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days."

Since this will not get him in trouble, Melzar agrees to it.

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."

God intervenes and feeds Daniel and his friend's; food that the steward knows not of. This is food from God.

The success of Daniel's plan was due more to the sovereignty of God in blessing his spiritual commitment than it was to the diet. Certain kinds of meat were not prohibited to the Jews, but a vegetarian diet in this case may have been inherently superior to the king's table.

Exodus 23:25 "And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

Fatter indicates healthiness.

It is better to obey God, than to have a feast of unclean food. They are in great shape at the end of the 10 days. This is the first of the great manifestations of God in Daniel.

Daniel 1:16 "Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse."

When the steward saw they were no worse for their restricted diet, he allowed them to continue on that diet.

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."

Notice where their skill and knowledge had come from, God had given it to them as a gift. Their faithfulness to God was overwhelming. God gave them gifts to help them in this hostile place.

Daniel's gifts were even more. He received the gift of interpretations, along with the understanding and wisdom. God would also communicate with Daniel in dreams. The things these 4 received from God are very much like the gifts of the Spirit the Christians receive.

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;" "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;" "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:"

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."

They were to be trained and groomed, before they were brought before the king. It appears this time has elapsed here, and it is time to bring them to the king for his approval.

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."

From this, we see there were many more than these 4, but the king was the most impressed with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. He chose these 4 to serve close to him.

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."

Magicians and astrologers have a little power, but their power comes from another source other than God. Their wisdom and understanding does not measure up to the 4 headed up by Daniel. Daniel and his friends get their wisdom and understanding from God. We see the comparison in the Scripture above is 10 to 1.

Satan has a little power that God allows him to have. He does not have unlimited power. God's power is unlimited. God controls Satan. These men who had stood up for God were representing God to this court. God's power through them was unlimited.

Daniel 1:21 "And Daniel continued [even] unto the first year of king Cyrus."

While Babylon stands, Daniel continued. Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon (in 539 B.C.). His third year in (10:1), is the latest historical year that Daniel mentions.

Daniel 6:28 "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

(Verse 21 above), does not say Daniel stopped at the first year of Cyrus. It says he continued unto his reign. Daniel continued many years under several kings.

“Unto the first year of king Cyrus does not contradict (10:1), where a revelation was given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus. The purpose of (1:21), is to give a chronological overview of Daniel’s ministry: he served from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of Cyrus.

Daniel Chapter 1 Questions

1. When Daniel was captured, where did he go?
2. Why was he made a eunuch?
3. How did his prophecies differ from Ezekiel's and Isaiah's?
4. What was Daniel's ministry involved in?
5. What other book in the Bible has much in common with Daniel?
6. The book of Daniel must be understood through the _____.
7. What time did his prophecy cover?
8. The _____ of God is revealed in this book.
9. Who reigned before Jehoiakim?
10. How did they differ?
11. How old was Jehoiakim, when he began to reign?
12. How long did he reign?
13. Who gave Jehoiakim into the hands of the Babylonians?
14. Where were some of the temple vessels carried?
15. Where was Shinar?
16. What does "Lord" mean?
17. Who was master of the eunuchs?
18. Who were the young men who were taken for eunuchs?
19. What were some of the qualifications they must have to be a eunuch in the king's court?
20. How were they fed?
21. How long were they in training, before they were presented to the king?

22. What were they being trained in?
23. Who were three others, who were named, that were with Daniel?
24. What does "Daniel" mean?
25. "Hananiah" means _____ .
26. "Mishael" means what?
27. What does "Azariah" mean?
28. These 4 were of what tribe?
29. What was Daniel's new name?
30. What names were given to his 3 friends?
31. What was a reason for changing their names?
32. What did Daniel refuse to do?
33. Was Daniel allowed to do what he requested?
34. What is "pulse"?
35. What does the number 10 mean?
36. What special gifts did God give Daniel and his friends?
37. What is this similar to for a Christian?
38. Who did the king choose, of all the eunuchs, to serve him?
39. How much better were they than the magicians and astrologers?
40. How long did Daniel continue?