

Daniel 01 - Exile to Babylon; Daniel's Three Friends; Nebuchadnezzar's Re-Education Program; Daniel's Blessings

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I. Historical section (Dan 1:1—7:28)

(1) Introductory material (1:1-21)

(A) Captivity (1:1-2)

(a) Nebuchadnezzar's conquest (1:1)

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

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- The book opens with a synopsis of the first Jewish deportation in 605 BC (Cf. 2 Kings 24:1-2; 2 Chr 36:6)

- "...third year of the reign of Jehoiakim" - 605 BC (2 Kings 24:1)

— The timing in this passage versus different dates/years in other passages (fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Jer 25:1; Cf. 46:2) is simply due to the differences between the conventions of how the Jews and Babylonians record when Jehoiakim began his reign. Daniel reckoned the time from a Babylonian perspective; Jeremiah wrote from a Jewish perspective (Cf. 2:1).

— The Babylonians considered the first year of their kings' reign as the accession year, the year they acceded to the throne. This "year" sometimes lasted only a few months. The first full year of their reign began with the first day of the new civil year (for Babylonians, the 1st of Nisan, late March/early April). The Jews began their civil year on the 1st of Tishri (late Sept/early Oct).

- "...Nebuchadnezzar" - the ruler of neo-Babylonia, the world power of that time

— He had no regard for God whatsoever; he was a godless pagan king who thought he was all-powerful, ruled the world, and no one could touch him. He finds out shortly that he is not in control of anything.

— The only reason he's in the position he's in is because God put him there, and everyone but Nebuchadnezzar knows it

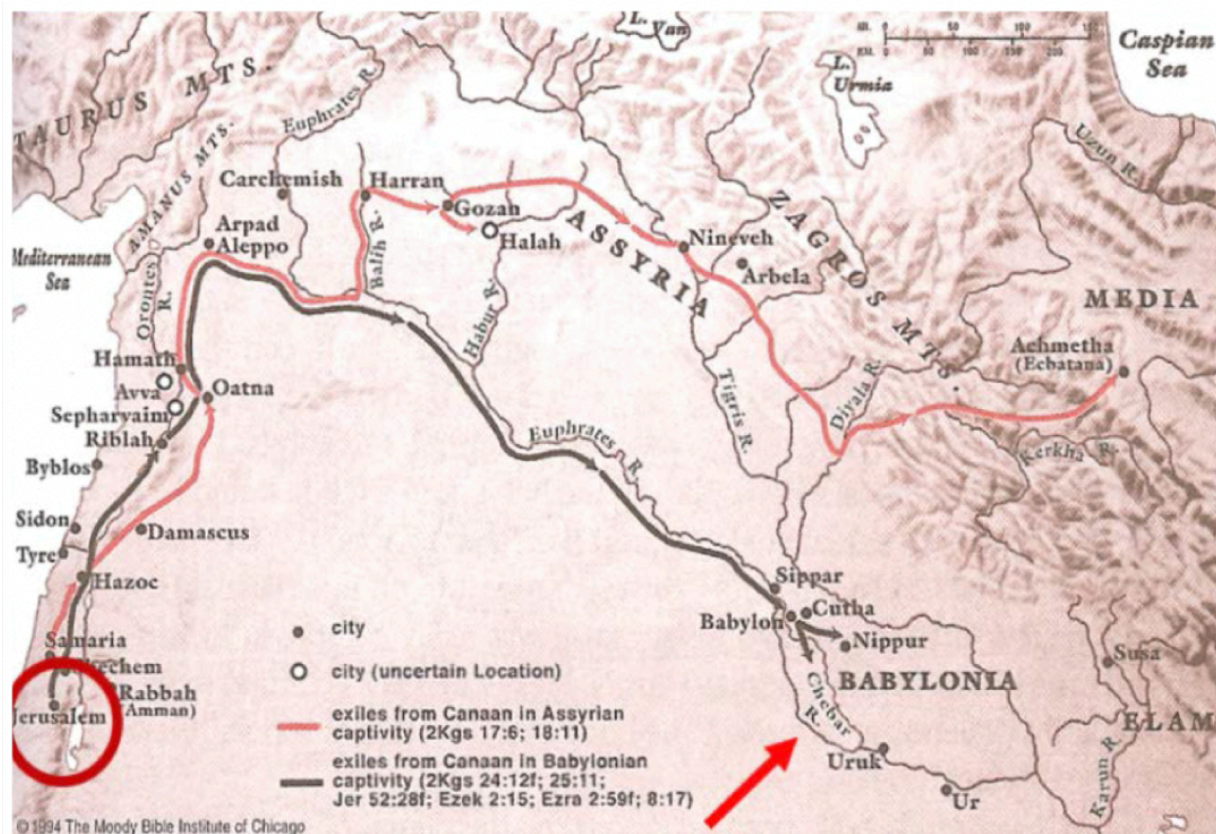
— He becomes the antagonist in the first four chapters of Daniel; the story is how his heart softens (Dan 4), so much so that we may see him in heaven

- "...besieged" - this was Nebuchadnezzar's first siege of Judah, when Daniel, his three friends, and some princes were exiled to Babylon

— The reason why Jerusalem and Judah are under attack by Nebuchadnezzar is due to their disobedience of the Mosaic Covenant

— One of the curses of the Mosaic Covenant was being taken into exile by a foreign power (Cf. Deut 28:49-50); Judah was now experiencing that curse

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S 3 SIEGES OF JUDAH			
	1	2	3
Year	605	597	586
Scripture	2 Kings 24:1; Dan 1:1	2 Kings 24:10-16; <u>Ezek 1:1-2</u>	2 Kings 25:1-2, <u>Ezek 33:21</u>
Judah's king	<u>Jehoiakim</u>	<u>Jehoiachin</u>	Zedekiah
Those taken	Daniel & some princes	Ezekiel & majority 10k	Remnant captured, Jerusalem & Temple destroyed



EXILE OF ISRAEL (721 B.C.) AND EXILE OF JUDAH (586 B.C.)

(b) Nebuchadnezzar's treasure (1:2)

2 And **the Lord handed** Jehoiakim king of Judah over to him, along with some of **the vessels of the house of God**; and he brought them to the land of **Shinar**, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

2 Within a week, the Lord handed King Jehoiakim of Judah over to him, along with valuable objects from the house of God. Nebuchadnezzar brought them to the temple of his god in the land of Shinar and stored them in its treasure house.

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.

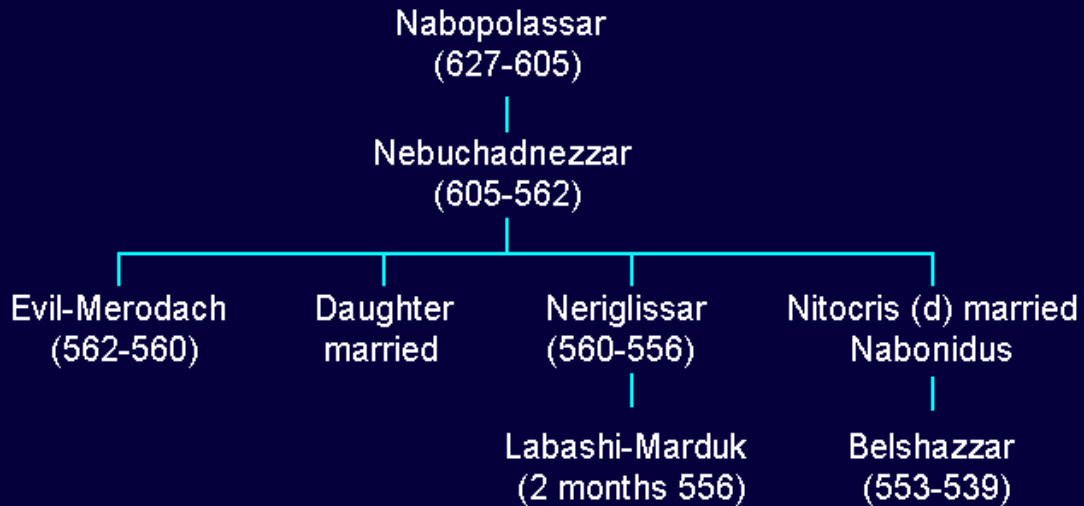
- "...the Lord handed" - Daniel wrote that the Lord was responsible for Nebuchadnezzar's success in defeating Jehoiakim

- He viewed God as sovereignly controlling the past affairs of His chosen people (Cf. Eph 1:4). Make no mistake that this judgment happened with the permission of God.
- "...the vessels of the house of God" - part of the vessels from the Temple were taken in 1st siege...the remainder will be taken later
- These vessels become a huge deal in Dan 5 as they are involved in the fall of Babylon
- Taking vessels from a conquered people's temple was a way to express victorious sovereignty over that nation, particularly its gods (Cf. 5:3-4)
- "...Shinar" - means "between the rivers"; occurs 7x in OT, always refers to the area of Babylon
- "Shinar" is the Hebrew word for this area; "Mesopotamia" is the Greek word
- Babylon often connotes a place hostile to God and faith in Him (Cf. Gen 10:10; 11:2; 14:1; Is 11:11; Zech 5:11)

Kings of Babylon

- Nabopolassar was king of Babylon
- During first siege of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar found out his father had died
- He quickly returned to Babylon to take the throne
- He inherited a bunch of advisors from his father
 - He gave them a test in Dan 2
- Nebuchadnezzar had four children - 2 sons and 2 daughters
 - Evil-Merodach reigned for a couple years after Nebuchadnezzar's death
 - Neriglissar took over for a few years, then his son for two months
 - Nitocris (his other daughter) married Nabonidus
 - Nabonidus was not interested in being king - he had other intrigues in Arabia
 - Their son Belshazzar ruled from 553-539 BC

Kings of Babylonian Empire



(B) Selection of the three Hebrew youths (1:3-7)

(a) Basis of the selection (1:3-4a)

- (i) Physical
- (ii) Intelligence
- (iii) Relational

3 Then the king told Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of **Israel**, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,

3 Later, the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief officer, to bring in some Israelis of royal and noble descent.

3 And the king spake to 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;

- Nebuchadnezzar was no one's fool...he came in three sieges of Judah in order to normalize the Jewish people into the Babylonian culture

— In the first wave, he took Daniel along with the best and the brightest, the most articulate, with the most promise. His design was to alter their worldview through intense re-education program and once converted, he could have his way with the mass of Jews who would come in the second siege, as they would simply follow their leaders.

- "...Israel" - important to note that we're talking about the exile of the Southern Kingdom (Judah)

— The Northern Kingdom was invaded and overtaken 200 years earlier (aka "Israel" or Ephraim). Note here that talking specifically of the Southern Kingdom, Daniel uses the word "Israel" to describe them.

— Some make the case that Israel meant Northern Kingdom and Judah meant Southern Kingdom. It's true that the Northern Kingdom referred to themselves as "House of Israel" and Southern as "House of Judah"; but don't make the mistake that the kingdoms were specific to any specific tribes.

— The faithful in the Northern Kingdom went south to be faithful to the Temple; the idolaters in the Southern Kingdom went north to be with the idolaters (2 Chr 11:13-17)

— It's important to not confuse geography with tribal lineage

(b) Education in Chaldean literature (1:4b)

4 **youths** in whom there was **no impairment**, who were good-looking, suitable for instruction in every *kind of* expertise, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability to serve in the king's court; and *he ordered Ashpenaz to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.*

4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch of* wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.*

4 They were to be young men without physical defect, handsome in appearance, skilled in all wisdom, quick to learn, prudent in how they used knowledge, and capable of serving in the king's palace. They were to learn the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

4 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.

- "youths" - Daniel and friends were likely 12-14 years old at time of exile

- "...no impairment" - they were taken from good homes...they were in the royal line, well-to-do

- "...teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans" - this three-year (v5) study program that Daniel and his three companions underwent involved studying the literature

and language of the Chaldeans

— Nebuchadnezzar would take on the best, youngest and brightest “hostages” into exile, then send them to Babylonian graduate school. They would later serve in his court. His goal was to turn foreigners into Babylonians.

— Nebuchadnezzar didn't want them reading Hebrew Bible, he wanted them to study Babylonian literature, methodology, system, and religion

— Learning the language of a people is one of the best ways to absorb the worldview of its people. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar was seeking to make them thoroughly Babylonian.

— Nebuchadnezzar may have stated his goal as, I want to make you more open-minded, more tolerant of other lifestyles or worldviews, expand your minds and broaden your understanding, because I'm going to use you as a propaganda tool for your fellow Jews.

(c) Provision (1:5a)

(d) Three-year course of study (1:5b)

5 The king also **allotted for them** a daily ration from the **king's choice food** and from the wine which he drank, and *ordered* that they be educated for three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.

5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.

5 The king assigned them fine food and choice wine on a daily basis, ordering them to be trained for three years, at the end of which time they would enter the king's service.

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.

- "...allotted for them" - state-sponsored tuition

- "...king's choice food" - this was the best food available that was given to the hostages

Nebuchadnezzar's enlightened policy was to employ the best minds in his kingdom in government service, regardless of their national or ethnic origin.

(e) Name change (1:6-7)

(i) From Hebrew names (1:6)

6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah**.

6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

6 Included among the people of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

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

- "...Daniel" - "God is my judge"
 - "...Hananiah" - "Yahweh is gracious"
 - "...Mishael" - "Who is what God is?"
 - "...Azariah" - "Yahweh has helped"
- All of their original names honored God; this shows that they came from godly Jewish homes because each of their names reflected something about the character of God.

(ii) To Babylonian names (1:7)

7 Then the commander of the officials **assigned new names** to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* **Belteshazzar**, to Hananiah **Shadrach**, to Mishael **Meshach**, and to Azariah **Abed-nego**.

7 Then the commander of the officials assigned *new* names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

7 The chief officer assigned the name "Belteshazzar" to Daniel, the name "Shadrach" to Hananiah, the name "Meshach" to Mishael, and the name "Abednego" to Azariah.

7 Unto whom the price 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.

- "...assigned *new* names" - in the Bible when you name something, you have authority over what you name (Cf. Gen 1:26; 2:19-20)

— When Nebuchadnezzar renames them from a Hebrew name to a Babylonian name, from a God-honoring name to a God-detesting name, he's asserting his own authority and sovereignty over God.

— Another reason why you're not in charge God is that I went into your temple and took the vessels out of your house and brought them into my house

— The new names would have also encouraged them to think of themselves as part of the culture in which they were living, rather than the culture from which they had come

— So the stage is set...Nebuchadnezzar has challenged the authority of God. And the rest of Daniel is a refutation of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance and a demonstration that God is in charge and sovereign over all the nations. God will vindicate His sovereignty and authority over and over again throughout Daniel.

Original Jewish Name

Daniel - "God is my judge"
 Hananiah - "Yahweh is gracious"
 Mishel - "Who is like God?"
 Azariah - "Yahweh is my Helper"

Babylonian Name

Belteshazzar - "Bel (chief Babylonian god) protects"
 Shadrach - "command of Aku, the mood god"
 Meshach - "Who is what Aku is?"
 Abed-nego - "Servant of Nebo, the god of wisdom"

- * The whole idea was to change their identity, then change their destiny
- * Don't confuse Daniel's new name (Belteshazzar) with Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (Belshazzar).
- * See [Daniel 02 The Blessings of Overcoming the World - Part 1 \(Dan 1:1-7\)](#) for examples how our humanistic government is indoctrinating our children into pagan culture today through education

(C) Daniel's resolve (1:8-16)

(a) First round (1:8-10)

(i) Daniel's request (1:8)

8 But Daniel **made up his mind** that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not **defile himself**.

8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

8 Daniel determined within himself not to become defiled by the king's menu of rich foods or by the king's wine, so he requested permission from the chief officer not to defile himself.

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.

- Here is where Daniel and his friends' godly upbringing in their homes began to pay dividends...at the age of 15

— Notice how Nebuchadnezzar (and by association, Satan) attacks the young and impressionable

- "...made up his mind" - Daniel had control of the cockpit! (Cf. notes at end of [Daniel 02 The Blessings of Overcoming the World - Part 1 \(Dan 1:1-7\)](#)); before the crisis hit, he already had an action plan

— We don't have control over the thoughts that enter our minds, but we do have control over the thoughts that we entertain. "You can't keep a bird from flying over your head, but you can control whether they make a nest in your hair." We can control whether we allow thoughts into the arena of our mind, whether we dwell on or entertain thoughts. If that is happening, the battle is already lost...you've allowed the hijacker into the cockpit.

— Phil 4:8 gives us a perfect screening test on what to allow into our minds and what to keep out: Finally, brothers *and sisters*, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is

right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

— Daniel wins because he controlled his mind and had a plan to combat the Satanic strategy when (not "if") it arrived. If you have a godly plan on how to protect your mind, I guarantee the Lord will bless you, help you. But many times we act as victims, hit with the same issue over and over again, until we're completely neutralized.

— Daniel didn't just have a plan when confronted by an attack on his beliefs...he went into action, which was to "seek permission" to not eat the food. Daniel's resolve turned into a request.

- "...defile himself" - Jews were forbidden by the Law of Moses to eat food sacrificed to idols; eating Nebuchadnezzar's choice food would have contradicted what God Himself decreed in Ex 34:15

— His decision was not to remain morally pure but to remain ceremonially pure. Ceremonial purity was something that concerned only the most faithful Jews. Jews who were careful to remain ceremonially pure would have been equally careful to preserve their moral and ethical purity.

— Not eating food sacrificed to idols was such a big deal to the Jews that even in the Church Age, when they discovered that they were no longer under the Law but under grace, many Jews continued to avoid food sacrificed to idols, even though they didn't have to. This was the context of Paul's teachings in Rom 14; 1 Cor 8-9.

These young men faced a situation common to every modern Christian youth. They could be a part of the crowd and submit to peer pressure to get ahead, or they could do what they knew would please their God though it might involve persecution and cost them advancement opportunities.

It has well been said that faith is not believing in spite of evidence—that's superstition—but obeying in spite of consequences. [Wiersbe]

Dan 1 emphasizes the godliness of Daniel's decisions. These choices formed the basis for his character, and his character and abilities accounted for the unusually long and successful career that he enjoyed in the service of several monarchs. His godly character also provides a key concerning God's choice of him to receive and transmit the remarkable revelations of the future that this book contains. God's choice of Daniel was sovereign, but Daniel's choices qualified him to serve as God intended (Cf. 1 Tim 1:12).

(ii) Commander's response (1:9-10)

9 Now God granted Daniel **favor** and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials.

9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials,

9 God granted to Daniel grace and compassion on the part of the chief officer.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

- "...favor" - *hesed*, God's loyal love

— God was with Daniel because the type of life God blesses is the sanctified life

— God wants to bless us more than we want to be blessed; God wants to use us more than we want to be used. If you start taking a few steps toward God you'll be surprised about how God will move heaven and earth to help us in the midst of difficulty.

— This is how God intends to work during the Times of the Gentiles...He's going to bless and work through sanctified vessels and sanctified lives

— Daniel's formula: put God as top priority and trust God with the circumstances of your life

10 The commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has allotted your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking gaunt in comparison to the youths who are your own age? **Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.**"

10 and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."

10 The chief officer told Daniel, "I fear his majesty the king, who has determined what you eat and drink. If he notices that your faces are more pale than the other young men in your group, I will forfeit my head to the king."

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 looking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

- Now the commander had a crisis of faith...if Daniel's altered diet left him weaker and haggard compared to the others, his was the head that was on the line

— This commander is asking a question that we ask all the time...do God's ways really work? God is telling me to do one thing, the world is telling me to do something else.

— We have these crises where we have to make a decision all the time. The question in our minds is, Are God's ways right? Daniel is showing us that they do, every time. "Godliness is cheaper."

- "...Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king" - this isn't a disagreement about dietary preferences, this is a life and death situation for this commander

— But it was *Yahweh* who moved the overseer's heart (Cf. 1 Kings 8:50; Ps 106:46), another indication of God's sovereignty

Loose Cannon

Nebuchadnezzar was known to...

- Put out eyes (after killing their children) (Jer 39:6-7)
- Make houses into dung hills (Dan 2)
- Roast officers over a fire (Jer 29:22)
- Fiery Furnace (Dan 3)
- Lion's Den (Dan 6)

(b) Second round (1:11-16)

(i) Daniel's request (1:11-13)

11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,

11 But Daniel told the guard whom the chief officer had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

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

12 "Please put your servants to the test for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

12 "Please test your servants for ten days and let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.

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

- Daniel did not rebel against the restrictions placed on him, but instead courteously requested permission to abstain. After receiving a positive response, he offered a positive alternative course of action.

— Daniel is persistent, he doesn't hit resistance then decide this must not be God's will

— Every time you pursue God there will be resistance; Satan doesn't want us to pursue God, so he's going to throw up every single roadblock he can find to discourage you

— Both Daniel's and the commander's lives are on the line...Nebuchadnezzar was a bit of a crazy man. Both Daniel and the commander are questioning if God's way is best, and

Daniel has complete confidence in the ways of God. No wavering, not double-minded. His mantra: God said it, I believe it, that settles it.

13 Then let our appearance be examined in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

13 Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

13 Then compare how we look with the young men who ate the king's rich food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you observe."

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.

- So Daniel proposes a test...give the rest of the exiles the king's meat and give him and friends veggies/seeds, for 10 days

— 10 is always a measure of test or testimony

— Omitting meat and wine from one's diet does not normally result in obviously better health. Daniel was relying on God to cause him and his friends to look better at the end of the test period, miraculously

(ii) Commander's response (1:14)

14 So he listened to them in this matter, and put them to the test for ten days.

14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

14 So he listened to what Daniel said and tested them for ten days.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

- Why would the commander listen to Daniel, a 15-year-old? Because God was with Daniel.

— God's favor was upon Daniel (v9), so the commander put his own life on the line when he didn't have to

(iii) Results (1:15-16)

15 And at the end of ten days their appearance seemed better, and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.

15 At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.

15 At the end of ten days their appearance was better and their faces were well-nourished compared to the young men who ate the king's rich food.

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.

- 10-day free trial of God's ways...and they worked

— God's commandments are there to bless us (Deut 10:13)

— How many terrible circumstances will Daniel avoid in his life because at the age of 15, he made the decision to obey the Lord? (Cf. Prov 13:15)

— God blessed the young men because they were in obedience, not because they ate vegetables instead of meat

— This passage cannot be used to argue for the superiority of vegetarian diets (Cf. Gen 9:3; 1 Tim 4:3-5)

Deut 10:13: *and* to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?

16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

16 So the guard took away their rich food and wine, giving them vegetables.

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

- The commander saw results...he saw that the principles of God work

— When we walk with God and do things God's way, people notice

(D) God's blessing upon Hebrew youths (1:17-21)

(a) Divine knowledge (1:17)

17 And as for these four youths, **God gave them knowledge** and intelligence in every *kind of literature and expertise*; **Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.**

17 As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of literature and wisdom*; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge, aptitude for learning, and wisdom. Daniel also could understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

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.

- Daniel and his friends experienced the law of sowing and reaping...

— Sometimes we're blessed immediately (as was Daniel and his friends); sometimes our blessing comes down the road...we plant that good seed and it takes weeks, months, or maybe even years to sprout up in a blessing.

- The law of sowing and reaping is a neutral principle, it's neither good nor bad; unfortunately it's often taught negatively in that if you do something bad, you're going to reap something bad. That's true, but it also works the other way around.
- "...God gave them knowledge" - notice that God didn't give them knowledge in Hebrew Bible or the customs of Judaism...
- "knowledge" - the acquisition of information and the ability to understand it
- God knows all truth and He wants to bless us with the knowledge of all truth, not just about the Bible, but in every area of life
- God took what was already in them naturally (from their upbringing) and taught to them, and began to maximize that knowledge and understanding
- Once we consecrate ourselves to God, God can take the little knowledge or understanding or talents that we have and maximize it as we use it to serve Him. It is astounding what God can do with basic individuals with standard aptitudes when they devote themselves and their talents to Him.
- "...every *kind of* literature" - in addition to favor with the overseers, God gave Daniel and his three friends the ability to master the subjects they studied and wisdom in these matters
- They were already endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and were taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans (v4)...God just accelerated it.
- "...expertise" - wisdom (Cf. Solomon, 1 Kings 4:29-34); wisdom is the application of knowledge to daily life
- God has revealed Himself in two ways: general revelation (creation) and special revelation (the Bible). In your chosen vocation, whether it be medicine, legal, business, finance, etc. if you understand and acknowledge the God who created everything, along with the laws for each, you will have more wisdom in that area than an unbeliever who doesn't even acknowledge God.
- If we will take our God-given gifts and education and stop using it to promote ourselves and instead use it to promote God Himself, God will take those gifts and amplify them
- What makes us wise is knowledge and understanding of God's Word (Ps 119:99-100). Simply because I'm a student of what God has said in His Word, I'm smarter than the most acclaimed university professor.
- "...Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams" - key to the rest of the book!
- Visions and dreams were the primary means God used to communicate His revelations to prophets in the OT (Num 12:6)
- Daniel qualified for the blessing of receiving this special gift by choosing to remain loyal to God's will. His similarity to Joseph is again obvious.
- Dan 2; 4-5; 7-12 validate this statement

God did not simply make the best of Daniel's captivity as a matter of circumstance. He strategically placed Daniel in Babylon to accomplish His purposes.

(b) Their successful interview before Nebuchadnezzar (1:18-20)

18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.

18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.

18 Then at the end of the training period that the king had established, the chief officer brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

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 didn't take a written exam to see if they passed their 3-year course...their final exam was face-to-face oral exam with the king, Nebuchadnezzar

19 And the king talked with them, and **out of them all** not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service.

19 The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service.

19 When the king spoke to them, none of them compared to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah as they stood before the king.

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.

- "...out of them all" - out of all of the Jewish youths who went through the indoctrination course, Daniel and his friends stood out among the rest

— God blessed their knowledge, not because they weren't gifted to begin with, but because God took their natural aptitudes as He saw a heart that was submissive to Him, and He blessed and opened up whatever avenues of wisdom they needed and dramatically expanded them.

20 As for every matter of expertise and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the **soothsayer priests and conjurers** who *were* in all his realm.

20 As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* conjurers who *were* in all his realm.

20 In every matter of wisdom or understanding that the king discussed with them, he found them ten times superior to all the astrologers and enchanters in his entire palace.

20 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.

- Here he is not talking about the exiled Jewish youths out of the indoctrination camp...he's talking about all of the spiritual leaders and wise men in pagan Babylon

— As he questioned these youths, Nebuchadnezzar didn't find Daniel and his friends just better than the other Jewish youths, he found them "10 times better" than anyone else in the kingdom of Neo-Babylonia.

— These young men knew so much because they were connected to the Creator. This is what gives you insight, and puts believers a step above everyone else. However, this blessing is only reserved for those who demonstrate a heart of submission. They set their lives at risk and honored God with everything, including diet, and the blessings followed. They passed the test.

- God tests our faith everyday in various ways...via sickness, circumstances, minor irritations, various trials...and He wants to help us pass His test with flying colors.

- "...soothsayer priests *and* conjurers" - there are five job descriptions that we'll talk about in Dan 2

— These are basically staff advisors for the king. They were heavily involved in the occult (sacred scribes, astrologers, etc.).

— These four young Jewish boys overshadowed them all

(c) Length of Daniel's term of service (1:21)

21 And Daniel continued until the **first year of Cyrus the king**.

21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

21 So Daniel remained there in service until the first year of King Cyrus.

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

- "...first year of Cyrus the king" - this is a predictive verse; this doesn't come about until Dan 10; the first year of Cyrus was 65-70 years away

— It was 603 BC when Daniel took the test before Nebuchadnezzar. God extended their lifespans and the longevity of their service until 536 BC (Dan 10:1)...a period of 67 years.

— Daniel continued to serve the Lord until his mid-80s, yet we're deluded into thinking that the choices we make today have nothing to do with the rest of our lives

— Daniel served through two Gentile empires and four successive Gentile administrations. The kings under which Daniel served recognized and continued to employ his divinely bestowed talents.

The key to Daniel's remarkable career was that he purposed to remain faithful to God's will even in relatively minor matters. God blessed that commitment and gave this already gifted

and diligent young man additional talents and opportunities with which to serve Him. The chapter introduces the rest of the book, which contains such amazing revelations that the reader might question their validity, without this introduction to the prophet himself.

Daniel and his three friends became models of how Jews were to remain faithful to God while under gentile dominion.

Elements of Moral Heroism

- Discernment (Deut 6:4-9)
 - They had discernment to not eat the king's meat
 - They would have learned this in their home
- Resistance to evil (Matt 10:26-28; James 4:7; Heb 12:9-13; Prov 3:11-12; 13:24; Cf. Eli's sons, 1 Sam 2:12-30)
 - Just because they were hostages in a foreign land, far away from home, didn't weaken their resolve to be distant from evil
- Power to voice disagreement
 - As youngsters, they had the courage to voice disagreement with the king of the world while in a foreign land
- Physical courage (Dan 2:5)
- Perseverance
- Determination
 - They purposed in their heart
 - The heart...our most important stewardship
- Meekness
 - No mock heroics
 - He respectfully requested what he wanted
- Good sense (Ezek 28:3; Prov 2:11)

Daniel's Career

Destined to...

- Rise to prominence in Babylonian Empire
- Rise to prominence in the subsequent Persian Empire
- Personally receive the most astonishing prophecies in the entire Bible (Dan 9-12)
- Authenticated by Jesus Himself (Matt 24:15)
- Classed with Noah and Job (Ezek 14:14)
- Dan 1 shows us how Daniel committed himself to maintain his faithfulness to his heritage and background, and most importantly, God's Law

Who is in Charge?

Dan 1:2 - *God* gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar

Dan 1:9 - *God* caused the official to show favor

Dan 1:17 - *God* gave them skill and understanding

- At the critical junctures in Daniel's life, God is pulling the strings

Application from Daniel 1

- The Mosaic Law taught Israel how to live inside the land; the examples of Daniel and his three friends taught them how to live outside the land, under Gentile authority
- Consecrate yourself to God
- Live by faith from crisis to crisis, entrusting the results to God