

# Daniel 1 Commentary

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## INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

Introduction: These notes are somewhat different from other verse by verse notes on this website as they are not intended to be as in depth. Please refer to other resources for more commentary. Note that the approach in these notes is to interpret Daniel as literally as possible.

**Note:** This first section is primarily introduction and background information on the Book of Daniel. To go to notes verse by verse click [Daniel 1:1 Comments](#).

**Recommended Resource:** After you have read through Daniel (one sitting if possible) and then begun to study Daniel 1, I have an **Mp3** teaching tape by Calvary Chapel **Pastor Rob Salvato** which is highly recommended because of his excellent introductory remarks on the important historical background to Daniel and then his comments on the opening passages in Daniel 1:1-8. This Mp3 is about 64 minutes and is well worth a one hour investment as I think you will agree! [Link to the Mp3 - Click to listen or Right Click and Choose "Save Target As"](#) You can easily transfer the downloaded message to your **Ipod** and listen while you drive back and forth to work. This audio is **especially recommended** for all you dads (or dads to be) -- from yours truly, a 63yo dad with 4 grown children. I wish I had known these truths when my children were teenagers!

## TWO DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

	DANIEL 1-6	DANIEL 7-12
On Site	Historical	Prophetic
J Vernon McGee	The Historic Night with Prophetic Light	The Prophetic Light in the Historic Night,

Precept Ministries	<a href="#">Living Out a Biblical Worldview</a>	<a href="#">Gaining Understanding of the Time of the End</a>
John Phillips	Daniel and His Personal Friends	Daniel and His People's Future
Irving Jensen	Mainly Historical: 6 Historical Narratives	Mainly Predictive: 4 Apocalyptic Visions
Irving Jensen	Daniel Interprets Other's Dreams	Angel Interprets Daniel's Dreams
Rob Salvato	The Prophet - The Man	The Prophecy - The Message

There are some other important divisions that should be kept in mind as you study the Book of Daniel...

SOME OTHER DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL		
Daniel 1	Daniel 2-7	Daniel 8-12
Written in Hebrew	Written in Aramaic	Written in Hebrew
Daniel's "No Compromise" Stand*	God's Prophetic Plan for the Gentile Nations**	God's Prophetic Plan for the Jews and Israel*

### \*\*THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In view of the emphasis on the fate of **Gentiles** and **Jews** in Daniel 2-12, it is worth noting that many conservative commentators feel that these events mark the inception of the specific "times" which Jesus referred to in Luke 21 when He declared that...

they (the Jews in Jerusalem - fulfilled in 70AD when Titus sacked the Temple and destroyed Jerusalem) will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and **Jerusalem** will be trampled under foot **by the Gentiles** until (Time phrase) **the times of the Gentiles** be fulfilled (**Ed**: The time of Gentile domination will come to an end). 25 "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world (**Ed**: Referring to the incredible events of the Great Tribulation, described in detail in Revelation 6-19); for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see **THE SON OF MAN** (Messiah) COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory (Messiah's triumphant Second Coming at the end of the 7 years of **Daniel's Seventieth Week** [Re 19:13-note, Re 19:14-note, Re 19:15-note, Re 19:16-note, Re 19:20-note, Re 19:21-note] and the last 3.5 years referred to as the **Great Tribulation** - Mt 24:21). 28 "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Lk 21:28)

The **times of the Gentiles** began with the Gentile nation of Babylon destroying the Temple and initiating Gentile domination over Jerusalem in 605, 597 and 586 BC. In fact, the essential area of Jerusalem--the sacred site of its ancient temple, **Temple Mount**--is still under the control of the Muslim Arabs. Thus, the "**times of the Gentiles**" have not yet been fulfilled, nor will they be until Christ returns (Lk 21:27) to restore Jerusalem, a restoration ("**redemption**") of which Jesus spoke in (Luke 21:28).

**Irving Jensen** feels the Key verse is Da 4:17 and the key words are "dream" and "vision".

The first 6 chapters are chronologically arranged (although it is difficult to specifically date chapters 3, 4, 5--see table below), with the prophecies of the last six chapters fitting into these chapters. The following table is from [Tony Garland's recommended free online commentary](#) on Daniel (see also his in depth verse by verse commentary on the book of the Revelation, one of the best evangelical commentaries available - [A Testimony of Jesus Christ A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#)). Note that Dr Garland chooses Daniel's "starting age" as 14yo but the range in various reputable sources is from 14-21yo.

#### Some unusual aspects of the Book of Daniel...

God never speaks directly

Written in two languages Hebrew and Aramaic (Aramaic from Da 2:4-Da 7:28)

Contains one of the most direct OT references to resurrection (Da 12:1, 2, 3)

Lays out the history of the world culminating in the return of the Messiah ("The Stone" in Daniel 2:34, 35, 45, "The Son of Man" in Daniel 7:13, 14, et al)

Accurately predicts the time of Messiah's first coming and crucifixion in Daniel 9:24, 25, 26, 27, a section I feel is rightly referred to as "the backbone of all Biblical prophecy". (See notes on Daniel 9:24, Daniel 9:25, Daniel 9:26, Daniel 9:27)

<b>Chronological Structure of the Book of Daniel</b>					
<b>Year (B.C.)</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Chronological Indicator</b>	<b>Related Events</b>	<b>Israel Ruled By</b>	<b>Daniel's Age (est.)</b>
606	Daniel 1:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of King Jehoiakim.	Daniel taken captive to Babylon.	Babylon	14
604	Daniel 2:1	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of King Nebuchadnezzar.	Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great image of four metals.	Babylon	16
604-562	Daniel 3:1ff	-	Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, the fiery furnace.	Babylon	16-58
604-562	Daniel. 4:1-27	-	Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great tree chopped down.	Babylon	16-58
604-562	Daniel 4:28-37	-	Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation as a beast.	Babylon	17-58
553	Daniel 7:1	1 <sup>st</sup> year of King Belshazzar.	Daniel's vision of the four beasts.	Babylon	67
551	Daniel 8:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of reign of King Belshazzar.	Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat.	Babylon	69
539	Daniel 5:1	Last year of King Belshazzar.	Abuse of temple vessels at party, handwriting on the wall.	Babylon	81
539	Daniel 5:31	1 <sup>st</sup> year of Darius the Mede.	Fall of Babylon to Medo-Persia, Darius strengthened by Angelic messenger (Da 11:1).	Medo-Persia	81
539	Daniel 9:1,2	1 <sup>st</sup> year of reign of Darius the Mede.	Daniel's intercession for Israel and Gabriel's answer of seventy sevens.	Medo-Persia	81
539	Daniel 1:21	1 <sup>st</sup> year of King Cyrus.	Cyrus subsequently issued the decree given allowing the Jews to return and rebuild.	Medo-Persia	81
539-537	Daniel 6:1-9, 10-23	-	Daniel in the lion's den.	Medo-Persia	81-83
537	Da 10:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of King Cyrus of Persia.	Daniel's vision by the Tigris river.	Medo-Persia	83

**Note:** Daniel himself received 4 visions which described in the second half of Daniel, chapters 7-12 (Da 7:1, 8:1, 9:1, 2, 10:1) but these visions actually occurred during the historical section of Daniel 1-6 - thus Daniel's **1st** and **2nd visions** (Da 7:1, Da 8:1) occurred between Daniel 4 (the last mention of Nebuchadnezzar) and Daniel 5 (the last day of the reign of Belshazzar). Daniel's **3rd vision** (Da 9:1,2) occurred in approximately 539BC the beginning of which is described in Da 5:31 and the **4th vision** in about 537BC

See also Tony Garland's [Chronology of Daniel](#)

**WHY STUDY PROPHECY?**

## WHY STUDY DANIEL?

It seems that many in the modern church have tended to minimize the preaching and teaching of Bible prophecy for reasons I cannot comprehend. Perhaps some think it is a topic which is too divisive. Others may consider prophecy too difficult to understand. Still others may eschew prophecy for fear of being labeled as adherents to a certain system of interpretation. There may be other reasons, but whatever the reason, the paucity of preaching on this subject in the modern "missional minded" church is surely a mistake. At the very least 2Timothy 3:16-17-note (where "All Scripture" in context refers primarily to the Old Testament) would strongly suggest that preaching "**apocalyptic literature**" is vital for the training of the man or woman of God, that they may be fully equipped for every good work. At the outset, it should be stated that these notes approach the book of Daniel as inspired by God's Spirit and that He, the Spirit of Truth, desires and is able to lead us into all truth, including the truth about the things to come (Read Jn 14:26, 16:13). While we may argue about the different systems of theology, it seems to me that the safest way to approach this book (and any book of the Bible for that matter) is to read the text prayerfully and **Literally**, and that is the approach taken by these notes. Remember that Daniel is a book written by a Jewish man to the Jewish people in captivity and a time of despair, a time in which they need to know that **Jehovah**, the covenant keeping God, was not finished with their nation, Israel. Sadly many today teach the sinister doctrine of **replacement theology** ([another source](#)), which says that God is finished with the nation of Israel and has replace her with the Church, who now inherits the promises to Israel! (See related topic **The Israel of God**)

The following thoughts are in not necessarily in order of importance and also overlap somewhat...

**1) It has been estimated that 20% of Scripture is prophesy and 80% of that prophecy has been fulfilled (estimated).** The book of Daniel contains the basic prophecies that form the background for God's Plan for the Ages. In fact, the book of Revelation is difficult to understand and interpret without knowledge of and comparison to parallel passages in the book of Daniel. **Even this first verse of Daniel** begins to fulfill a prophecy given by Isaiah (see 2Ki 20:1-2) which fulfills his prophecy in 2Kings 20:16-18 (Read 2Kings 20 for context to see what mistake King Hezekiah made that provided the background for Isaiah's prophecy - 2Ki 20:12-18 {Repeated in Isaiah 39:1-8} - **Lesson? Be careful what you show other people in an act of pride!** They may lust for what you have and even try to take it from you! Note Hezekiah's self-centered response = 2Ki 20:19!). **Davis** commenting on Isaiah's prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem rightly observes that...

This was a startling revelation, for **Assyria** was the great power of the day and seemingly unassailable. The visit was probably an attempt by Babylon to foment problems for Assyria in the west, thereby diverting attention from Babylon. The postexilic reader would have seen the roots of the destruction of Jerusalem in the foolish pride of Hezekiah and in the greed of Babylon. ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**2)** The cults and false teachers major in the misuse, abuse and perversion of prophecy, especially unfulfilled prophecy which makes it imperative for the believer to know what saith the Lord on this vital subject.

**3)** Study of prophecy (and all Scripture) increases our faith (Ro 10:17-note). If God has fulfilled prophecy in the past, He will surely fulfill those prophecies that pertain to the future. You can stake your life on this certainty!

**4)** Daniel demonstrates it is possible to live in Babylon and yet not succumb to the anti-god, worldly Babylonian influence, a truth which should encourage all believers that they can do likewise.

**5)** Daniel teaches that God is sovereign and able to sustain His children even in adverse circumstances. Years ago when I taught Daniel, one of the couples lost a 22 year old daughter to anorexia nervosa, and the truth they tenaciously clung to in this severe testing time was the truth that the Most High God reigns over all people, all time and all circumstances.

**6)** As we watch the America (and the world in general) rushing headlong into godless paganism and rank unrighteousness (cp Pr 14:34), we can take heart that the Most High God always preserves His remnant of believers.

**7)** Daniel teaches like no other book in Scripture, that history truly is "His Story"! In this sense, Daniel is distinct from other Old Testament prophets which call their the people to repent and lead a new life (prophet - used with the sense of "forth telling"). Daniel is a prophet more in the sense of "for telling" or predicting events before they come to pass (as do the other OT prophets who were "forth tellers"). If you want to understand history and what's happening in our world today, you need to understand Daniel.

**8)** Although God never speaks directly (no "thus saith the Lord's") in Daniel, clearly God's influence permeates the entire book and as we come to know Him better through this book, we will be enabled to stand firm and to take action in the midst of a godless society (see Da 11:32b).

**9)** Knowledge of the world's future (God's Plan for the Ages) should effect conduct in the present (cp 2Pe 3:11-note). The effect of studying prophecy is not to make us smarter sinners but to make us more like the Savior. The study of prophecy (and all of Scripture for that matter) is to transform our minds so that we conform more and more with the image of God's Son (cp 2Co 3:18, Ro 12:2-note, Ro 8:29-note, 1Pe 2:2-note, 2Pe 3:18-note) Daniel the believer models a life of consistent faithfulness, manifest by unerring obedience, demonstrating that such a godly life is still possible even during times of hardship. As we watch America become more and more "Babylonized", we as believers need to be importuning and pleading with the God of Heaven to empower Christian parents to train up young "Daniel's" and "Danielles" who will be strategically placed in the next generation. Amen

**10)** Future hope (Da 7:27-note) stimulates present purity (1Jn 3:2-note, 1Jn 3:3-note, cp Titus 2:11, 12, 13, 14-note). (**Note:** Remember that "hope" in the Bible rarely means "hope so" but usually refers to one's absolute assurance of future good or that God will do good to me in the future cp Da 7:18, 22, 27-note). Our hope isn't just theological; it's ethical -- it has behavioral consequences. If I believe Christ is coming again and that I will stand before His judgment seat, this truth will (or certainly should) transform me and make a difference in the way I conduct my life. **Related Resource:** The Blessed Hope = Definition; Blessed Hope = Source of; Blessed Hope = Stabilizing Effect; Blessed Hope = Sanctifying Effect).

**11)** Miracles and fulfilled prophecy clearly establish God as the only God. (see Is 42:9, Isa 44:7, Isa 45:21, Isa 46:9, 10, etc, cp similar teaching by Jesus in Jn 14:29)

**12)** Daniel begins with captivity of the chosen, blessed people, which finally exhausted the merciful patience of God, a fact which should serve as a examples warning all NT believers to not "play" around with sin! Remember that rebellious Israel in the OT is often an excellent picture of our **fallen flesh**, the old evil, anti-god tendency that still lurks in believers! Paul makes reference to sins of Israel in the OT writing...

Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved...Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Co 10:6, 11)

**13)** The apostle Paul also emphasizes the positive effect of studying Daniel writing that...

whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Ro 15:4-note)

**14)** Daniel's (and other OT) prophecy is like a lamp to which we do well to pay attention as we live our our lives in the darkness of this present evil age. The Young's Literal Translation of 2Peter 1:19-note reads...

And we have more firm (more firm than what? then even human experience - the apostle's witness of the transfiguration) **the prophetic word**, to which we do well giving heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, till day may dawn, and a morning star may arise -- in your hearts; (**Note:** Some interpret this passage to mean that the Transfiguration substantiated the OT prophecies. Young's Literal which is more true to the original Greek word order would support the idea that the Word was more sure than the experience. This original arrangement supports the interpretation that Peter is ranking Scripture over experience. The prophetic word [Scripture] is more complete, more permanent, and more authoritative than the experience of anyone.)

**15) Daniel** is the key to a full and accurate interpretation of the book of the **Revelation**. As Pastor Ray Stedman explains...

The book of Revelation explains the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel lays the basis for the book of Revelation. If you would like to know God's program for the future, it is essential that you understand this book of Daniel. ([Daniel - On the Way to the Future](#))

As **Pastor Ray Pritchard** says...

Daniel is one of the most popular Old Testament books. Since I was a child it has been one of my favorites. This book has it all: history ... prophecy ... politics ... prayer ... lions ... statues ... wild animals ... a fiery furnace ... dreams and visions ... a king who thought he was a cow ... incredible adventure ... amazing escapes ... angels ... demons ... detailed information about ancient history ... and amazing prophesies about the end times. I heartily recommend Daniel as one of the best Old Testament books for young people to read. Here we discover the difference godly teenagers can make in the world ([The Four Freshmen How the World Tries to Seduce the Church](#))

**Related Resources:** [Excellent Bible studies on Daniel](#) [6 weeks] geared to children ages 8-12 -

- [Daniel 1-6 - You're A Brave Man, Daniel! \(children's study\)](#)
- [Daniel 7-12 - Fast Forward to the Future](#)
- [Discovering What the Future Holds - 40 Minute Bible Study](#)

## DANIEL IN THE "CRITIC'S DEN"

Daniel has "suffered" more from the "Critic's Den" than he ever suffered in the Lion's Den! Liberal theologians largely discount Daniel as a "fake" or a "forgery" written by someone hundreds of years after Daniel lived (e.g., one popular date of its writing is around 166BC). Why is Daniel so attacked? Simply stated, Daniel speaks of and substantiates the truth of the supernatural, specifically pointing to the **Most High God** Who is over heaven and earth. Rational man (sinful man) does not want to be held accountable to such a great God, for he knows that such a God is also a Judge of right and wrong. If he can "manufacture" a God of his own vain imagination (aka an "idol", [read this sad "devolution" in Ro 1:18-25-**notes**] often appropriately referred to as a "vain" or "empty" thing in the Hebrew OT, eg, 2Ki 17:15 "followed vanity" = Hebrew word **hebel** = vapor, emptiness, first use in Dt 32:21 = "idols"), such a "god" will not put constraints on his behavior and he can do whatever is right in his own eyes (cp Jdg 21:25-**note**). In other words, he does what he desires and it is "right" because he has no absolute standard of what is right (righteous) or wrong (unrighteous, sin, transgression, evil). Daniel abolishes this specious, selfish thinking when interpreted literally!

**How does a believer counter erudite, intricate arguments against the authenticity of Daniel?** My simplistic answer is to listen to our Lord Jesus Christ's affirmation of the veracity of Daniel in His famous "Olivet Discourse", in which He warns the disciples...

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through **Daniel the prophet**, standing in the holy place (**let the reader understand** [verb **anaginosko** = to know well, exactly or accurately, to distinguish between, to recognize, most often used of public reading of something as in Lk 4:16])... (Mt 24:15)

**Matthew Poole comments:** (By this) quotation our Saviour does both give His testimony to that book (Daniel) as a part of holy writ, and also lets His disciples know, that what He told them was but what was prophesied of, and so must have its accomplishment...

**Ray Stedman comments on the phrase "let the reader understand":** That is, don't read through Daniel superficially. Think it through. Give yourself to thought on this. You have to understand what he is talking about before you will be able to recognize the desolating sacrilege, or **abomination of desolation**, when it comes. This is why the Lord went on to say that the world in its superficial approach to truth will not understand when it cries, "Peace, peace, peace," for there will be no peace; sudden destruction will come upon them and they will be swept away just as the people of Noah's day were swept away when the flood came. ([Overview of Daniel- On the Way to the Future](#))

If Jesus believed Daniel was a true prophet (fulfilling Moses' prophecy in Dt 18:15), all of men's "rational" arguments against Daniel, regardless of their degree of erudition, are in effect obliterated by the testimony of our Lord! Period! No room for arguments! That is unless one does not accept Jesus' Words as Truth (cp Jn 1:14, Jn 14:6)!

Another Scriptural support for the authenticity of the book of Daniel is the testimony of Ezekiel (taken to Babylon in 597BC about 8 years after Daniel which would have been time for Daniel's "reputation" to filter down to the Jewish exiles, among whom Ezekiel lived) to the godly character of the prophet Daniel (Eze 14:14, 16) As an aside, this simplistic "apologetic" ("defense" of the faith, cp 1Pe 3:15-note), is not given to disparage other legitimate evangelical arguments in support of Daniel, but is emphasized because it is one defense that is easy to recall and is "watertight"! (For more on the authorship and authenticity of Daniel see Tony Garland's works - [Daniel - Introduction Part 2](#) and [Daniel - Introduction Part 3](#))

Read the story recorded by Josephus in which Alexander the Great was shown Daniel's prophecy describing himself and he drew back from destroying Jerusalem. ([Alexander Reads About Himself in the Book of Daniel](#))

## AUTHORSHIP OF DANIEL

**According to the book of Daniel, who wrote Daniel?** "I, Daniel" (Da 8:15) is one of the most direct ascriptions by Daniel that he

was the author of this book.

## VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION

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

- 2Ki 24:1,2,13; 2Chr 36:5, 6, 7

**In the third year (605BC)** - Critics attack this as "inaccurate" because Jer 25:1 says "**the fourth year of Jehoiakim**" (see also Jer 45:1; 36:1; 46:2). The critics are correct about one thing -- God is not a God of confusion but of order and thus He never contradicts Himself! **So how can one give a defense for this apparent "contradiction"**? In Daniel 1:1 the author uses the Babylonian system for dating the reign of a king and not the Jewish system utilized by Jeremiah. In the Babylonian system of dating the reign of a king, the first year of ascendancy was not counted, whereas it was counted in the Jewish system. There is no contradiction.

**Recommendation:** [Print Out the Timeline on page 49 - use it to take notes as you study Daniel](#)

**Gleason Archer** after giving a detailed explanation of the "discrepancy" (between Da 1:1 and Je 25:1, 46:2) concludes...

Hence there is no discrepancy whatever between the two reckonings and the often-repeated argument (based on these reckonings) against the historical trustworthiness of Daniel is worthless. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

## THREE INVASIONS OF JUDAH BY BABYLON

Babylon attacked Judah and Jerusalem in 3 waves over a period 19 years. Keep this in mind as you read Daniel for he ascends to power in the first two years ...

**1) 605BC** - (Daniel 1:1) Daniel and the 3 friends taken captive

**605 BC May-June** (from D. J. Wiseman, Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings 626-556 B.C., page 25) – General Nebuchadnezzar (sent by his father [Nabopolassar](#), who was king of Babylon at this time) completed his conquest of the Assyrian empire at the famous [Battle of Carchemish](#) (located in modern day Syria). The rule of the known world literally changed hands at this great battle, because not only did Nebuchadnezzar defeat the once invincible Assyrian army but he also defeated their Egyptian allies and pursued them southward through Palestine.

**605 BC June-August** - Wiseman writes that at this time "The effect (of Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Assyria and Egypt) on Judah was that [King Jehoiakim](#), a vassal of Necho (Egyptian King), submitted voluntarily to Nebuchadnezzar, and some Jews, including the prophet Daniel, were taken as captives for hostages to Babylon" Around this time General Nebuchadnezzar learned of his father [Nabopolassar's](#) death, which prompted his return to Babylon to be crowned king.

**605 BC September 7** - Nebuchadnezzar was crowned King of Babylon

For context note that **Jeremiah** began his 53 year prophetic ministry to Judah and Jerusalem in about 627BC.

**2) 597BC** - (2Ki 24:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) Ezekiel and 10, 000 taken captive.

Regarding Ezekiel's deportation in 597BC here is an explanation **Silva and Tenney**

"The problem concerning the age of Ezekiel when he was taken into exile has been a matter of discussion, but it is most probable that he was twenty-five years old at the time. The opening statement of his prophecy, "In the thirtieth year ... as I was among the exiles," appears to be a reference to his age at the time of his call into the prophetic ministry, which in the following verse is dated in "the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin," who was also among the captives of the 597 B.C. deportation (Ezek. 1:1-2)." (Silva, M., & Tenney, M. C. The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible, Volume 2, D-G)

**MacArthur** adds - "This (Ezekiel 1:2) is 593 b.c. The king, Ezekiel, and 10,000 others (2Ki 24:14) had been deported to Babylon in 597 b.c., Ezekiel at the age of 25."

**Charles Dyer** - "The 30th year" probably referred to Ezekiel's age. As a priest (Ezek 1:3) this was the age he would normally have entered the Lord's service. Ezekiel had been taken into captivity with King Jehoiachin in March of 597."

**3) 586BC** - (2Ki 25:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) Judah was defeated, Jerusalem sacked, the Temple was burned and the walls of the city destroyed.

Before we discuss **King Jehoiakim**, let's take a brief look at **ISRAEL, BIRTH TO EXILE** (note the recurrence of words like *sin* [see appended Scriptures also] in God's chosen people)...

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ISRAEL</b> <b>BIRTH TO EXILE</b> (Most dates approximated)</p>						
<p><b>Called</b></p> <p><b>Abraham &amp; Cut Covenant</b> (Ge 12:1-3, 15:6 = Abe's salvation by grace thru faith, cp Ga 3:8)</p> <p><b>The covenant promises passed to Isaac &gt; Jacob &gt; 12 sons</b></p> <p>( See New Covenant in OT and Abrahamic vs Old vs New)</p>	<p><b>Exodus -- Israel comes out of bondage in Egypt</b></p> <p>Ps 78:13-17-<a href="#">note</a></p> <p style="background-color: blue; color: white; text-align: center;"><b>Nation of Israel Born</b></p> <p>Dt 7:6-9, Dt 4:25-30</p>	<p><b>Period of The Judges</b></p> <p><b>There was no king</b> Jdg 21:25-note</p> <p><b>Note - Almost 25% of Israel's history = dark days of the Judges!</b></p>	<p><b>Period of The Kings...</b></p> <p><b>1 Saul (no heart)</b></p> <p>1Sa 13:14, 15:11, 22, 27, 28</p> <p><b>2 David (whole heart)</b></p> <p>Acts 13:22</p> <p><b>3 Solomon (half a heart)</b></p> <p>1Ki 11:4, 9</p>	<p><b>Kingdom divided because of Solomon's sin</b></p> <p>1Ki 11:1-12</p>	<p><b>Northern 10 tribes = "Israel"</b> (All evil kings)</p> <p><b>Taken captive in 722BC by Assyria</b></p> <p>2Ki 17:5-18</p>	
					<p><b>Southern 2 tribes (Judah &amp; Benjamin) called "Judah"</b> (Some kings good, some evil)</p>	<p><b>Taken captive to Babylon in 3 "waves"</b></p> <p>605, 597, 586 (2Ch 36:16)</p>
<b>~2000BC</b>	<b>1440BC</b>	<b>1400BC</b>	<b>1050BC</b>	<b>931BC</b>	<b>722BC</b>	<p><b>605</b> - Daniel</p> <p><b>597</b> - Ezekiel</p> <p><b>586</b> - Temple razed</p>

**Jehoiakim king of Judah** - See the timeline of Israel above for an overview (cf [Chronology of History of Israel](#)). The best timeline I have found to summarize the events immediately preceding Daniel and extending through the time of his ministry in Babylon is found at the Precept Ministries International posting of [Daniel Lesson 1 Living Out a Biblical Worldview Recommendation: Print Out the Timeline from page 49 and use it to take notes as you read and study Daniel](#). If you have opportunity to attend this excellent 2 part course on the book of Daniel, please take advantage as it is highly recommended ([Click to check for classes in your area](#)).

**Related Resources: Timeline of Ezekiel - Prophet During Daniel's Ministry**

**Jehoiakim** - ("He whom **Jehovah** has set up") the second son of Josiah, and eighteenth king of Judah, which he ruled over for eleven years (B.C. 610-599). His original name was Eliakim (q.v.). On the death of his father his younger brother **Jehoahaz** (= [Shallum](#), Jer. 22:11), who favored the Chaldeans against the Egyptians, was made king by the people; but the king of Egypt, **Pharaoh Necho II** invaded the land and deposed Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:33, 34; Jer. 22:10-12), setting Eliakim on the throne in his stead, and changing his name to Jehoiakim. After this the king of Egypt took no part in Jewish politics, having been defeated by the Chaldeans at [Carchemish](#) (2 Kings 24:7; Jer. 46:2). Palestine was now invaded and conquered by **Nebuchadnezzar**. **Jehoiakim was taken prisoner and carried captive to Babylon** (2 Chr. 36:6, 7). **It was at this time that Daniel also and his three companions were taken captive to Babylon** (Dan. 1:1, 2). Nebuchadnezzar reinstated Jehoiakim on his throne, but treated him as a vassal king. In the year after this, Jeremiah caused his prophecies to be read by Baruch in the court of the temple. Jehoiakim, hearing of this, had them also read in the royal palace before himself. The words displeased him, and taking the roll from the hands



**Tony Garland** - In the record of Babel, as minimal as it is, we see the first human king and kingdom in direct rebellion to the commands of God resulting in judgment. In Babylon of the end, we will see the last human king and kingdom in ultimate rebellion to the commands of God resulting in the final judgment of all human kingdoms to be replaced by the Millennial Kingdom ruled by Messiah

**Following terms are synonyms - Babel, Babylon, Shinar, Chaldean/Chaldea**

#### Resources Related to Babylon:

- [Art and pictures](#) related to Babylon
- [Babylon](#) - History and Religion ([related article](#))
- [Babylonian Chronicle](#) - "The Babylon Chronicle for the years 605-595 BC, describes the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC, the so-called "second deportation," the first being in 605 B.C. when Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon (Da 1:1-5)."
- [Biblical Argument for the Rebuilding of Babylon - Dr Charles Dyer - 43 page treatise](#)
- [Babylon in Bible Prophecy - Thomas Ice \(Dispensational perspective\)](#)
- [What is the Identity of Babylon in Rev 17-18? - Andy Woods?](#) (Dispensational perspective)
- Who is the Great Harlot Babylon - Kay Arthur

**Besieged** (More literally "laid siege") ([06696](#)) (**tsûr/sur**) has the basic meaning to enclose or to confine. It conveys the ideas of to lay siege, to secure, to tie up or bind (2Ki 5:23, Ezek 5:3, Dt 14:25), to surround.

The most common meaning of **tsûr** is to lay siege, usually to a city, by surrounding it and cutting off its supplies. To "encircle and enclose a fortified area as an aggressive military strategy to defeat a city or nation." The word does not necessarily denote an actual battle but emphasizes taking control of a city. For example, David's men besieged Rabbah (2Sa 11:1; 1Chr. 20:1); Nadab laid siege to Gibbethon (1Ki. 15:27) Omri to Tirzah (1Ki. 16:17). Saul attempted to surround David at Keilah (1Sa 23:8). The Assyrians under Ben-Hadad besieged Samaria (1Ki. 20:1; 2Ki. 6:24f). Shalmaneser V laid siege against Samaria (725BC 2Ki 18:9) which fell after three years (722BC). Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 597BC (2 Ki. 24:11) and 588BC (Jer. 32:2; 37:5). Instructions to Israel regarding siege tactics appear in Dt. 20:12, 19. 2Sa 20:15 describes the strategy of building ramps to overtake a walled city.

**Ezekiel** built a "siege model" to illustrate the fate of a besieged Jerusalem (Ezek 4:3). In a stunning indictment of God's people, the Lord Himself prophetically foretold He would lay siege to Jerusalem/Ariel (Isa. 29:3).

**Tsûr** is used in a metaphorical sense of enclosing or surrounding (Song 8:9), where Shulamite's brothers announce their resolve to garrison or encircle ("barricade") their little sister. In Ps 139:5, the psalmist acknowledges that the Lord has " enclosed me behind and before," which is a picture of the Lord's continual presence and protection.

**Besiege** - Webster says it means to To lay siege to; to beleague; to beset, or surround with armed forces, for the purpose of compelling to surrender, either by famine or by violent attacks; as, to besiege a castle or city. To surround (a fortified area, esp. a city) with military forces to bring about its surrender.

**TWOT** - This root means to make secure a valuable object, such as money (2Ki 5:23)... Applied to military action it means to relentlessly attack an opponent's stronghold. Every effort was made to shut off supplies (especially water, cf. II Sam 12:27) from the city and to prevent the people from escaping. The tactics included building a mound to reach the wall and using battering rams and towers to breach it (cf. II Sam 20:15; Ezk 26:8f.). The inhabitants of a besieged city were threatened by both sword and famine; therefore, some surrendered to the enemy in order to preserve their lives (Jer 21:9). Without great discipline, tension inside the city mounted as prices for anything resembling food soared (II Kgs 6:25). It took the Assyrians three years to capture Samaria (II Kgs 17:5). Sometimes armies lacked the capacity to move from victories on the battlefield to take a stronghold (II Kgs 16:5). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament- R Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke](#))

**Tsûr** - 38x in KJV -

Ex 23:22; 32:4; Deut 2:9, 19; 14:25 (= put in a bag, take, i.e., place an object into a bag, as an extension of laying siege to a city); Dt 20:12, 19; Judg 9:31; 1 Sam 23:8; 2 Sam 11:1; 20:15; 1 Kgs 7:15; 15:27; 16:17; 20:1; 2 Kgs 5:23; 6:24f; 12:10; 16:5; 17:5; 18:9; 24:11; 1Chr 20:1; 2Chr 28:20; Esth 8:11; Ps 139:5; Song 8:9; Isa 21:2; 29:3; Jer 21:4, 9; 32:2; 37:5; 39:1; Ezek 4:3; 5:3; Dan 1:1.

**KJV** renders **tsûr** - besiege 21, lay siege 3, distress 3, bind 2, adversaries 1, assault 1, bags 1, beset 1, cast 1, fashioned 1, fortify 1, inclose 1, bind up 1; 38.

**NAS** renders **tsûr** - barricade(1), besiege(3), besiege\*(1), besieged(1), besieged\*(10), besieging\*(5), bind(2), bound(1), enclosed(1),

laid siege(1), lay siege(1), laying siege(1), set(1), stirring(1), tied(1).

Note that **NAS** uses a different Strong's number for Ex 23:22; Deut 2:9, 19; Esther 8:11 [rendered adversary(1), attack(1), harass(2)] and **Baker** says **tsûr** in these contexts signifies "A verb meaning to attack, to harass, to be an adversary. It refers to attacking persons, putting them under duress, opposing them. God would serve as an adversary against the enemies of His people (Ex. 23:22 where Lxx = antikeimai = to be set over against, to be opposed to someone, to be hostile toward). It refers to harassing or oppressing a people or nation (Deut. 2:9, 19 where Lxx - echthraino = be at enmity with in both verses); or even to attacking them (Esther 8:11 where Lxx = antikeimai), in context with God's approval." ([Complete Word Study Dictionary- Old Testament](#))

**Daniel 1:2 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.**

- **Lord gave** - Da 2:37,38; 5:18; Dt 28:49, 50, 51, 52; 32:30; Jdg 2:14; 3:8; 4:2; Ps 106:41,42; Isa 42:24
- **Along with some of** - Da 5:2; 2Chr 36:7; Jer 27:19,20
- **Shinar** - Ge 10:10; 11:2; Isa 11:11; Zech 5:11 -- Synonyms = Babel, Babylon, Shinar, Chaldean/Chaldea
- **He brought the vessels** - Da 5:2,3; Jdg 16:23,24; 1Sa 5:2; 31:9,10; Ezra 1:7; Jer 51:44; Hab 1:16)

## THE ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

**Lord (Adonai)** (Septuagint = **kurios [word study]**) is the name for God indicating that He is the supreme Master. The use of this name in this verse indicates that He is in complete control of removing kings (and kingdoms) and establishing kings (and kingdoms) (Da 2:21-note). The fact that the Lord is in control is emphasized throughout the book of Daniel (eg, see Da 2:37,38; 5:18). But God is a God of great compassion and in the midst of His righteous wrath (the defeat and exile of Judah), remembering mercy (cp Hab 3:2-note), "granting favor and compassion" (Da 1:9) as well as "knowledge and intelligence" (Da 1:17) to His chosen servants.

### Related Resources:

- **Adonai - My Lord, My Master**
- **Study of Sovereignty - note verb reign! God reigns!**

### Proverbs 21:1 ([Note by Charles Bridges](#))

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

We see the **Sovereign Hand of God** in the disciplinary action on Judah in a parallel passage...

**He (Jehovah)** brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans (Nebuchadnezzar) who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; **He gave** them all into his hand. (2Chr 36:17,18, 19, 20, 21)

### Gleason Archer...

the theme of God's absolute sovereignty is here implied. It continues to dominate the entire Book of Daniel, along with the accompanying theme of God's unwavering purpose to bring his people back to repentance through disciplinary suffering, so equipping them spiritually for restoration to the Land of Promise. The divine motive behind all this dreadful humiliation, suffering, and loss was redemptive and altogether in harmony with God's promises given to the generation of Moses (Lev 26; Dt 28; cf. also 2Chr 36: 14-21). (Ibid)

Nebuchadnezzar thought he conquered Judah with his military campaign and siege (Da 1:1), but Daniel records that the victory was **given by the Lord**, a truth all believers must continually keep in mind as they fight the good fight of faith. As David wrote...

Some boast in chariots, and some in horses (King Nebuchadnezzar trusted in his power), but we will boast in the name of the LORD (Ps 124:8), our God (by faith we lay hold of His supernatural power). (Ps 20:7-note, cp Pr 21:31, Ps 33:17, 18, 19, 20-note, Ec 9:11, Is 31:1, 2Chr 16:7, 8, 9, King Jehoshaphat = 2Chr 20:15, 16, 17, 18, 19-22, David against Goliath = 1Sa 17:45, 46, 47, Hezekiah = 2Chr 32:7, 8)

Judah refused to heed the warnings of her prophets or the fate of her idolatrous sister Israel and continued to practice idolatry. Finally, God gave Judah into the hands of the land of idolatry! **If you continually pursue idols, beware, for God may just give you**

## what you want!

Daniel 1:1,2 is not only a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah (alluded to above [see note](#)) - 2Ki 20:16, 17, 18) but is also a fulfillment of a prophecy recorded by Moses (Dt 28:49, 50, 51, 52).

## WHY WAS JUDAH TAKEN INTO EXILE?

Through Jeremiah, **Jehovah** summarized Judah's sin declaring that...

My people have committed two evils: (#1) (the sin of "omission") They have forsaken Me , the fountain of living waters, (#2) (the sin of "commission") to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. (Jer 2:13)

**Comment:** In ancient Israel there were two major sources of water, running streams of fresh, clear and cool water and large pits called [cisterns](#). The landowners would dig cisterns to collect rainwater adding a coat of lime plaster in an attempt to insure the cistern would hold water. However frequently cracks would develop and the water would leak out, not to mention that this water was brackish. How sad that in a similar foolish way Israel abandoned **Jehovah**, the "fountain of living waters" (Ps 36:9; Pr 16:22; Isa 55:1; Jn 7:37, 38, 39) to make for themselves powerless "gods" (cp Lev 26:1 where Hebrew word for "idols" = literally "something worthless", cp Ps 96:5; Is 2:8; Hab. 2:18-note)!

**A W Tozer** was correct when he said that...

Nothing twists and deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy conception of God.

The sins of Judah which eventually resulted in the final destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC were...

(1) **Idol Worship in place of Worship of the One True Living God**- cp Dt 32:15, 16, 17 where "Jeshurun" is another name for Israel.

(2) **Failure to observe the Sabbaths for the Land for 490 years** - Every seventh year the Jews were to keep the Sabbath year and allow the land to rest (cf Lv 25:4). Judah was reaping the harvest of conforming to the mold of the pagan world, rather than obeying God's clear instructions!

## COUNTDOWN TO CAPTIVITY

**Tony Garland** summarizes the countdown as follows...

**#5 - Josiah (note)** - Josiah begin his reign while a boy of only eight (2Ki 22:1) and reigned for 31 years. His reign was patterned after the godly king [Hezekiah](#). He initiated repairs to the temple whereupon the high priest [Hilkiah](#) rediscovered the **Book of the Law** which had been neglected for many years (2Ki 22:8 -**Ed note:** Where was the Book of the Law was lost? In the very place it should have had preeminence. Beloved, is this not what we see in pulpits across America where there is a veritable dearth of delivered doctrine that is fully "sound" = Greek in 2Ti 4:3-note). Upon reading the Law, it became apparent just how far Israel had neglected her duties causing Josiah to repent of the ungodliness of the nation. But it was "too little too late"—God confirmed through the prophetess [Huldah](#) that judgment would not be averted (2Ki 22:16, 17). (This could also be known from the prophecy previously given to Hezekiah that Babylon would eventually cart off Israel's treasures and some from among her people: 2Ki 20:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) Nevertheless Josiah continued following closely in the footsteps of his great-grandfather Hezekiah by instituting religious reforms.

**Observe** (1) All of the last 4 kings after Josiah were evil. (2) Three of those kings were sons of Josiah, the godly king. One cannot help but wonder why they were not positively impacted by the "revival" that occurred during their father Josiah's reign! Another young man named Daniel seems to have been at least in part the fruit from that last great revival in Josiah's day. Daniel would have been very young, but his parents would certainly have experienced the revival associated with finding the Book of the Law. However, where Scripture is silent we must tread lightly and not speculate too far a field! It's just good "food for thought".

**#4 - Jehoahaz (note) (Shallum-note)** - After the death of king Josiah, his son Jehoahaz reigned. He proved to be an ungodly king who reigned for only three months before being deposed by Pharaoh Necho and taken to Egypt where he eventually died (2Ki 23:31, 32, 33, 34; 2Chr 36:1, 2, 3, 4; 22:1-12).

## 605BC

### 1st Deportation from Judah

(Daniel 1:1, 2Ki 24:1,2,13; 2Chr 36:5, 6, 7)

**#3 - Jehoiakim (note) (Eliakim-note)** - After deposing of his father Jehoahaz, Eliakim was appointed as a vassal king by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt and renamed Jehoiakim. Like his father before him, he was an evil king (2Ki 23:37). He reigned 11 years. It was during his reign that Daniel was taken captive to Babylon. In his 4th year (Jewish mode of dating, the 3rd year from the Babylonian mode of dating a regal reign), the [Battle of Carchemish](#) ([Carchemish - Wikipedia](#)) also took place at which time Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho of Egypt which marked the beginning of Babylon's ascendancy over Egypt in the region of Palestine (Jer 25:1; 45:1; 36:1; 46:2 = the 4th year of Jehoiakim = the Jewish mode of dating the regal reign. Contrast the phrase in Da 1:1 - the 3rd year of Jehoiakim = the Babylonian mode of dating the regal reign). **The other notable result of the battle of Carchemish was the final defeat of Assyria which made Babylon the leading world empire at that time.** Thereafter, Jehoiakim was made vassal king of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar until late 601bc when Nebuchadnezzar suffered defeat while advancing on Egypt whereupon Jehoiakim switched allegiance to Egypt (2Ki 24:1). This proved to be a fatal mistake when in 598bc Babylon attacked Jerusalem and Jehoiakim was killed.

As an aside **John Whitcomb** notes that...

It was once a commonplace of negative criticism to deny that Nebuchadnezzar could have besieged Jerusalem in 605 B.C. In 1956, however, a cuneiform tablet was published that revealed that Nebuchadnezzar "conquered the whole area of the Hatti-country after the Battle of Carchemish in May-June 605. The term Hatti-country covers all of Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine." (Whitcomb, J. Daniel-Everyman's Bible Commentary)

## 597BC

### 2nd Deportation from Judah

#### Ezekiel and 10,000

(2Ki 24:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, Ezek 1:1-2)

**#2 - Jehoiachin (note - includes some nice art work) (Jeconiah-note, Coniah-note)** - Upon the death of his father Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin (also known as Jeconiah or Coniah) reigned for a period of three months before he surrendered to Babylon. After surrendering to Babylon, he was deported and his uncle, Mattaniah was installed as vassal king and renamed Zedekiah (2Ki 24:12, 13, 14, 15, 16). Treasures were carried out from the king's house and the temple (2Ki 24:13) in fulfillment of the Word of the Lord given to Hezekiah by Isaiah (2Ki 20:16, 17, 18, 19). **Ten thousand captives** were taken to Babylon (2Ki 24:14), including **Ezekiel** (Eze 1:2) and Mordecai's great-grandfather Kish (Esther 2:5, 6). Jehoiachin was imprisoned in Babylon until the reign of Evil Merodach (who reigned after the death of Nebuchadnezzar). He remained in Babylon and was provided for by the king (2Ki 25:30).

## 586BC

### 3rd Deportation from Judah

#### Razing of Jerusalem and the Temple

(2Ki 25:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

**#1 - Zedekiah (note) (Mattaniah-note)** - The final king to reign over Judah was Zedekiah, who reigned for 11 years as a vassal king subject to Babylon. Like all the kings following Josiah's reign, he was evil. When a new Egyptian Pharaoh (Hophra) came to the throne in 588 B.C., Zedekiah took the occasion to rebel against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar responded by the siege which led to the final downfall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the city and temple, and the deportation of the majority who were left. In fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecies that Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon but never see it, his sons were killed before him, his eyes were put out, and he was taken to Babylon where he died (Jer 39:6, 7; 52:9, 10, 11; 2Ki 25:6, 7 cf. Eze 12:13; 17:16). After capturing Jerusalem, the Babylonians burned the leader's houses and the temple and broke down the city walls. ([Daniel - Introduction Part 7](#) - with slight modification)

**Land of Shinar** - In southern Mesopotamia (Ge 10:10), site of the Tower of Babel (Ge 11:2) and continued in Scripture to have "the nuance of a place hostile to faith...the place to which wickedness is banished" (Zech 5:11).

**Babylon = Babel = Shinar = Chaldea**

**Brought the vessels into the house of his god** - Symbolic gesture demonstrating Babylon's pantheon of gods was great than Judah's God.

**His god** - Some translate gods plural which would certainly be appropriate as by some accounts there were more than 100 Babylonian gods (polytheism = literally "many gods"). The chief Babylonian god was **Marduk** (or Bel, related to Baal = lord, master) along with **Nebo** (incorporated in Nebuchadnezzar's name). It is little surprise that God inspired Daniel to specifically use His Name Adonai or Master. Not only had Isaiah predicted the sacking of Jerusalem (predicted about 702BC), but he also prophesied the fall of Bel (Isa 46:1) at the hands of Cyrus the Persian in 539BC, in a sense then describing the beginning and the end of the Babylonian empire (although the final end will not occur until Rev 18:21).

As a typical polytheist and clever diplomat, Nebuchadnezzar took no chances with Israel's God, **Jehovah**, and carefully enshrined His sacred vessels in Marduk's temple in Babylon. Contrast the treatment accorded these vessels sixty-six years later by Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1-4). After the fall of Babylon, King Cyrus (Ezra 1:7) and King Darius (Ezra 6:5) encouraged the Jews to carry these vessels back to their Temple in Jerusalem.

**Whitcomb** observes that "Nebuchadnezzar shrewdly took enough of the sacred vessels to demonstrate the superiority of his god over the God of the Jews but left enough in the Temple so the Jews would be able to carry on their ceremonies unhindered and thus be less likely to rebel against their new overlord. In 586 B.C., however, totally exasperated by the disloyalty of the Jewish kings and rulers, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the sacred vessels to be destroyed or carried off to Babylon (2Chr 36:18). (Whitcomb, J. Daniel Everyman's Bible Commentary).

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** Daniel 1:1-2; Jeremiah 25:1-14 - During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land. - 2 Kings 24:1

New Year's Eve, 1999, saw the Y2K worriers stocking up on bottled water and canned goods; the turn-of-the-millennium enthusiasts planning extravagant celebrations to usher in the year 2000; and the history purists insisting there was no reason to get excited. These mathematically precise folks argued that the third millennium wouldn't begin until the two-thousandth year had ended and 2001 had begun. In other words, the year 2000 could be the turn of the millennium only if there had been a year zero.

A look at the accounts in Daniel 1 and Jeremiah 25 presents a similar conundrum. Did Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign (Jer. 25:1) or the third (Dan. 1:1)? Some scholars believe that the Babylonians didn't begin numbering a king's reign until the year after he took the throne. The ascension year would essentially be that king's "year zero," while Hebrew writers would have referred to it as year number one. Other reasonable explanations exist, but it does make sense that Daniel was trained to use a Babylonian numbering style.

Daniel didn't blindly accept everything about the Babylonian culture, most notably their pagan religion. He was caught in a peculiar situation, as the prophecy of Jeremiah describes. After the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, Daniel's native nation of Judah had been unwilling to listen to the Word of the Lord—and judgment for their sins was sure. Daniel was taken to Babylon after the first of three major attacks on Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's forces. He had been forcibly taken to live in exile.

For Daniel, the hope of returning to his homeland wasn't good. Jeremiah foretold that the Babylonian exile would last for seventy years (Jer. 25:11). God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to take the people of Israel, the articles of the temple (Dan. 1:2), and something even more surprising: the role of God's servant (Jer. 25:9).

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - The authenticity of Daniel is disputed by people who refuse to accept the possibility of the supernatural elements of the book: miraculous rescue, inspired wisdom, and predictive prophecy. Although we may say with our mouths that we accept those truths, believers are sometimes reluctant to open our hearts to God's supernatural intervention. As you study this month, make room for the possibility that God will use you each day as He did Daniel, miraculously and boldly in a land of doubt.

**Daniel 1:3 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.**

- Foretold, 2Ki 20:17,18 Isa 39:7 Jer 41:1)

**BABYLONIAN  
BRAINWASHING  
(Daniel 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7)**

**Officials** (KJV, ESV = **eunuchs**) (05631) (**saris/caric**) means a court official and is sometimes rendered "eunuch" because of the practice of using men who had been castrated men (presumably to forgo any untoward action with the king's royal harem!) to function in key government roles (e.g. in the Persian empire where **sariys** is rendered eunuch even in the NAS in Esther 2:3, 14, 15, 21, 4:4, 5, 6:2, 14, 7:9).

While some commentators (as well as the ESV and KJV translation) feel that Daniel was physically a eunuch, the text does not make a definitive statement in that regard. Yes, there is no record of a wife or family which could support the premise that Daniel had been made into a eunuch. On the other hand, **Potiphar**, "Pharaoh's **officer** [saris]" (Ge 37:36; cp "an Egyptian officer [saris]" in Ge 39:1) is called a "sariys" and yet he clearly had a wife (Net Bible Note on Ge 40:2 = "*evidence from Akkadian texts shows that in early times the title [saris] was used of a court official in general. Only later did it become more specialized in its use*") And so where Scripture is not definitive we had best not speculate further.

**David Jeremiah** - "During the last quarter of a century, the name Ashpenaz has been found on the monuments of ancient Babylon, which are now in the Berlin Museum. It says, 'Ashpenaz, master of eunuchs in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.'" (For more discussion of this topic see [Daniel Defended](#))

**Alexander the Great** instituted a similar policy of enlisting the brightest, best looking young men (captives) into government service, reminiscent to our modern "think tanks" where ingenious, innovative products and policies are birthed.

**Sariys/Cariyc** is used 6 times in Daniel, only in chapter 1 ( Dan 1:3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18).

**Sariys/Cariyc** - 42v in OT -

Gen 37:36; 39:1; 40:2, 7; 1 Sam 8:15; 1 Kgs 22:9; 2 Kgs 8:6; 9:32; 20:18; 23:11; 24:12, 15; 25:19; 1 Chr 28:1; 2 Chr 18:8; Esth 1:10, 12, 15; 2:3, 14f, 21; 4:4f; 6:2, 14; 7:9; Isa 39:7; 56:3f; Jer 29:2; 34:19; 38:7; 41:16; 52:25; Dan 1:3, 7ff, 18.

NAS translates - court officers(1), court officials(1), eunuch(5), eunuchs(10), officer(5), officers(1), official(3), officials(16).

KJV translates - eunuch 17, chamberlain 13, officer 12; 42

## **HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN FROM BEING "BABYLONIZED"!**

**Some of the sons of Israel** - While we cannot be certain of the number of "sons of Israel" (some historians estimate the number at between 50-75), it appears that only four drew the line and refused to compromise their beliefs and core values. Apparently the Babylonian influence proved too much for most of the young men. **Most scholars place Daniel's age at around 15 which is certainly not a time when one would expect a young man to manifest the strength of character to resist the sophisticated Babylonian brainwashing. Furthermore, consider the risk associated with resisting the will of the most powerful pagan king in the world. And consider how taking a stand would surely jeopardize the chance for advancement in the Babylonian court.** And yet we see in Daniel 1:8 that these four took an uncompromising stand. Why? How would this have been possible? The answer is not directly stated but there were at least 3 things that could help understand their ability to resist indoctrination.

**(1) Godly parents taught the Word of God** - They named their children with God honoring names. They also knew (especially after the revival) Deut 6:4-8 which charge godly parents to "saturate" (the Hebrew word for "**teach...diligently**" in Dt 6:7 = engrave a stone tablet and figuratively = "teach incisively"! ) their children with the Word of God.

**(2) Revival of interest in the Word of God** - There was a "revival" under King Josiah when the "book of the law" which had been lost in the house of God (the temple) was discovered (2Ki 22:8-11, 23:3-4). If Daniel was 15 in 605BC, it mean roughly the first 10 years of his life would have been during this time when the Word of God was once again prized in Jerusalem.

**(3) Prophets spoke the Word of God** - Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk were prophesying the Word of God and it is likely Daniel was impacted by his ministry (Daniel later refers to Jeremiah's written word - Da 9:2).

In sum, these young men had a strong faith nourished by their exposure to the **Word of God** (cp Ro 10:17-note), and God's Word provided a grid through which they could filter the godless Babylonian curriculum. If our children attend "Babylon State University", they need to have been equipped so that their faith and commitment to the Word of God is strong, and they are able to filter out those teachings which are clearly anti-God by comparing them with the Word of God. As we watch America drift further into the darkness of godlessness, many Christian parents fear for the fate of their children. Be encouraged by this young man Daniel.

However it does behoove Christian parents to be diligent to practice the principles of Dt 6:6,7,8, for without the Word of Truth their children will be vulnerable to the lies and attractive deceptions of the fallen world system controlled by Satan (1Jn 5:19) (See related resource: **Memorizing His Word**)

**Whitcomb** - These young men from Jerusalem's court needed to be secure in their knowledge of Yahweh to be able to study this literature objectively without allowing it to undermine their faith. Evidently the work of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk had not been in vain. (Whitcomb, J. Daniel Everyman's Bible Commentary).

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** Daniel 1:3-7 - Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. - Romans 13:1 - Stella Ho lived in Venezuela for thirty years, running a shop with her unsaved husband. In January 2004, Stella was abducted by three thieves. God used her compassionate spirit and godly influence to change the hearts of her captors. In just eight days, Stella was freed, her captors' hearts were changed, and her husband accepted Christ after witnessing the outpouring of prayer and love from her fellow believers. Stella said, "Our time is short. We never know what may happen to us. We must strive to serve the Lord and discern what we can do for God."

If Daniel had been allowed to plot the course of his own life, he probably wouldn't have picked "abducted by Babylonians" as his first choice. He didn't get to choose his circumstances, but he served the Lord by accepting the position in which God had placed him. We usually remember Daniel for his courageous stands against compromise, but the first test of his allegiance to God was one of humble submission.

Some scholars conclude that Daniel was in his early teens at the time of his abduction, and the word for "young men" in verse 4 supports that theory. For Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, submitting to Babylonian rule could not have been easy. They had been the cream of Judah's crop, members of the nobility, and among the most promising young men in their nation. But their new captors erased their Jewish names and assigned them names that would identify them with pagan gods.

Daniel and his friends could have rebelled. Along with adopting pagan names, they were to eat from the king's menu, learn the Babylonian language, study their literature, and enter the service of the king. But of all those foreign practices, these four young men would refuse to obey only the dietary guidelines. Overall, Daniel and his friends showed maturity beyond their years. Daniel's right attitude toward divinely appointed leadership gives us our first glimpse of his extraordinary character.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - If you find yourself working for an unsavory boss or living in a town you wish you could flee, take heart. Although you may feel desperate to escape your circumstances, ask God to use you to brighten your surroundings with His glory. That can be done by standing up to people who urge you to do wrong, but it's just as likely God will ask you to perform menial or undesirable tasks as a display of obedience and humility. Making yourself subject to others is a powerful act of faith in God's sovereignty.

**Daniel 1:4 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.**

- **in whom** - Lev 21:18, 19, 20, 21 24:19,20 Jdg 8:18 2Sa 14:25 Ac 7:20 Eph 5:27
- **Intelligence** - Da 2:20,21, Da 5:11 Ec 7:19 Ac 7:22
- **Ability** - Da 1:17, 18, 19, 20 Pr 22:29

Eccl 7:19 Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

Pr 22:29 Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.

Dan 2:30 "But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man (Daniel acknowledges the supernatural Source), but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

Dan 5:11 "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, and diviners.

**Youths** (03206) is the word **yeled** (plural yeledim) means children but is frequently used for young men. (see Ge 21:8, 14, 15, 16).

The Septuagint uses the word **neaniskos** which in Greek refers to a relatively young man (eg, Mt 19:20, 22). No one knows Daniel's age for sure but most agree that it is in the range from 14-21 years.

**Endowed** (03045) (**yada**) means knowing, and in context implies they knew intimately and supernaturally (Da 1:17).

**To teach them the literature and language** - In other words he wanted to "brain wash" them!

**Ryrie** comments that this would entail study of "Various subjects such as agriculture, astrology, astronomy, mathematics, and the Akkadian language. ([The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation: 1995. Moody Publishers](#))

**Language of the Chaldeans** (cp Da 5:8, 9:1; see [Chaldean language](#)) - refers to the Babylonian language written in ancient cuneiform ([Cuneiform script](#)) ([Image of cuneiform](#)). Although [Aramaic was the language](#) of the empire, literature was still written in cuneiform.

**Chaldeans** (03778) (**kasdim**) is used in Daniel in (1) an ethnic sense (Da 5:30) and (2) in a religious sense to describe a special class of wise men (Da 2:2, 4, 5, 10; 4:7; 5:7, 11).

**Whitcomb** - The only other known case of this specialized use of **Chaldean** is found in a statement by the Greek historian Herodotus (b. 484 B.C.), who traveled in Babylonia and told of "the Chaldeans, the priests of this god." (Ibid)

**Criswell** writes that **Chaldean** in an ethnic sense "was originally used of certain tribes living in southern Mesopotamia, who eventually gained control of Babylon (cf. Isa. 13:19; 23:13; 43:14; 47:1, 5; 48:14, 20). After losing control of Babylon for a while, they regained it in 627 B.C. under Nabopolassar, whose dynasty continued with his son Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, the term "**Chaldean**" in an ethnic sense is equivalent to "**Babylonian**." The other use of the term, which was probably spelled differently at first, refers to a class of astrologer-priests noted for their literary scholarship. In any case, the four Hebrew men were to be thoroughly trained for government service.

**Daniel 1:5 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.**

- daily ration: Atheneus says the kings of Persia were accustomed to order for their courtiers the food left at their tables. 1Ki 4:22,23 2Ki 25:30 Mt 6:11 Lk 11:3
- might enter: Da 1:19 Ge 41:46 1Sa 16:22 1Ki 10:8 2Ch 9:7 Jer 15:19 Lk 1:19, 21:36)

## **SPIRITUAL WARFARE INDOCTRINATION 101 (Aka "Operation Assimilation")**

These verses (Da 1:4, 5) introduces us to the beginning of the training (a euphemism for sophisticated brain washing) of these godly young men in the ways of the (fallen, anti-God) world system, one of the three mortal enemies of every believer in every age - **(1)** the fallen world system (see related study of the word **kosmos** = world ~ world system), **(2)** our **fallen flesh** and **(3)** a fallen angel, the Devil (**diabolos [word study]**). It therefore behooves us to study how Daniel was able not just to **survive**, but to **succeed**, in the face of such an overt assault on his Biblical worldview. Then we need to choose to dare to be like Daniel, a choice which will surely bring us in conflict with the "majority opinion".

Nebuchadnezzar was not interested only in **education** but **indoctrination**! Beloved, our children in America are being exposed to the same godless agenda, for the enemy of our souls knows that the future of a nation is not Wall Street or Washington as much as it is our children.

**Indoctrinate** - Webster says this means to imbue with a usually partisan or sectarian opinion, point of view, or principle. To cause to accept a set of beliefs uncritically through repeated instruction.

**Ray Stedman** - If you are working in a company surrounded by a godless crowd who are taking the name of God in vain every moment, who agree with the ideas and attitudes of the world and its ways, and who make fun of the things of God, showing little interest in what God says to mankind, then I suggest that you read carefully the book of Daniel. ( [Daniel - On the Way to the Future](#) )

**Daniel 1:6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.**

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**Tony Garland** - Daniel's name means either "God is judge" or "God is my judge." Like Cyrus, who Isaiah prophesied was named by God (Isaiah 45:3), I believe Daniel's name was specifically arranged by God in order to underscore a primary theme of the book: the judgment of the nations (both Jew and Gentile). ([Daniel - Introduction Part 2](#))

**Daniel** - The Hebrew name is found 28x in OT - 1Chr 3:1; Ezra 8:2; Neh 10:6; Ezek 14:14, 20; 28:3; Dan 1:6ff, 17, 19, 21; 8:1, 15, 27; 9:2, 22; 10:1f, 7, 11f; 12:4f, 9

**Daniel 1:7 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.**

- Daniel: Da 2:17 Eze 14:14,20 28:3 Mt 24:15 Mk 13:14

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT A NAME?

**Assigned new names - Why?** Clearly this was part of the process of "Babylonization" of the boys. By calling them by names that glorified the idolatrous gods of Babylon the captors sought in effect to obliterate from their memory their given Hebrew names all of which glorified the only true and living God.

There was no divine law prohibiting a name change, even a change to a pagan name! After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, the Pharaoh exalted Joseph to second in command in Egypt and changed his name to "Zaphenath-paneah [Note: Probably Egyptian for "God speaks; he lives"]; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt." (Ge 41:45)

- **Daniel** = "God is my judge" > **Belteshazzar** = "Bel Protect the King." (Isa 46:1; Jer 50:2; 51:44). Every time His name was called it was a good thing reminder that one day he would stand before a holy God (cp 2Co 5:10-note) . Most of don't possess the name "Daniel" but we need to conduct ourselves as if that were our name!
- **Hananiah** = "Jehovah is Gracious" > **Shadrach** = "Command of **Aku** (Babylonian idolatrous god)."
- **Mishael** = "Who is like God?" > **Meshach** = "Who is what **Aku** (Babylonian idolatrous god) Is?"
- **Azariah** = "Jehovah is my Helper" > **Abed-nego** = "Servant of **Nego** (Babylonian idolatrous god)" also called Nebo, a god of vegetation (cf. Isa 46:1).

Their Hebrew names indicate their relationship to the God of Israel, truth which their god fearing parents meant to convey.

**Tony Garland** - Although there can be little doubt that the young men disliked their assigned names, they realized that what they were called by other people would not change their devotion to the One True God. They wisely determined not to take a stand because it would not compromise their walk with God. Thus, the young men demonstrate great wisdom at an early age. Besides, they had precedent for accepting a foreign name—Joseph in Egypt.

The Jews seemed to accept as a matter of course the fact that they were required to have foreign names in addition to those in Hebrew. For example, Joseph was given an Egyptian name by Pharaoh (Ge 41:45), and Hadasseh is known by her foreign name, Esther (Est. 2:7)... Many Jews in New Testament times had Greek as well as Hebrew (or Aramaic) names. An example is Peter (Greek), who is called Cephas in Aramaic (cf. John 1:42). Saul is also better known by his Roman name, Paul.[206](#)

This is an important principle: believers are not called to take a stand on things where God has not specifically spoken, but to seek peace where no principle of God is directly violated (Rom. [12:18](#)) ("Sometimes Christians argue over the things where God hasn't spoken, while allowing the things He has spoken to slip under the rug."—Jeremiah, [The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel](#), 32.)

**Daniel 1:8 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.**

- made up = purposed in KJV: Ru 1:17,18 1Ki 5:5 Ps 119:106,115 Ac 11:23 1Co 7:37 2Co 9:7

- Defile - note this is repeated - Lev 11:44, 45, 46, 47 Dt 32:38 Ps 106:28 141:4 Eze 4:13,14 Ho 9:3,4 Ac 10:14, 15, 16 Ro 14:15, 16, 17 1Co 8:7, 8, 9, 10 10:18, 19, 20, 21,28, 29, 30, 31

## A CHOICE CHOICE! SETTING THE COURSE AND CHARACTER FOR DANIEL'S ENTIRE LIFE!

Have you ever heard the saying **'We make our decisions and our decisions turn around and make us'**? Certainly this proved true in Daniel's case, just as in Joseph's (Ge 39:9, cp Ge 38:21), Ruth's (Ru 1:16, 17), Moses (Heb 11:24, 25, 26, 27) and a host of other saints many nameless and unknown, except to God Who will cause them to shine forth like stars throughout eternity (cp Da 12:3). A choice in time yields a destiny in eternity. It is interesting that many of these "destiny changing" decisions are made when we are younger, like Daniel and his 3 friends. We are who we are today because of decisions and choices we made years ago. Two roads diverge in the woods. Which one will we follow?

**What's the big deal about the king's choice food?** For one thing, the fact that it was the "King's choice food" would be a constant reminder of the source of their daily bread. It is interesting that in the model prayer, one of the first requests is "Give us this day our daily bread." (Mt 6:11-note) The decision Daniel makes here radically changes his entire life. It's interesting that when we first read about it, it doesn't seem like such a big deal. But it turns out to be very big indeed as the "rest of the story" demonstrates.

**Elisabeth Eliot**, a very wise saint, once said "Does it make sense to pray for guidance about the future if we are not obeying in the thing that lies before us today? **How many momentous events in Scripture depended on one person's seemingly small act of obedience!** Rest assured: Do what God tells you to do now, and, depend upon it, you will be shown what to do next." Indeed, God blessed Daniel's obedience exceeding abundantly beyond all he could have ever asked or thought! Next time you come to a spiritual (ethical, moral) crossroads, ponder what Daniel's purposing in his heart on such a seemingly small matter. A moment of disobedience may seem small to us on earth, but it is huge to God and could have untold ramifications. Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey!

**Baldwin** has another thought on why Daniel may have refused the food noting that "by eastern standards to share a meal was to commit oneself to friendship; it was of covenant significance...The defilement he feared was not so much a ritual as a moral defilement, arising from the subtle flattery of gifts and favors which entailed hidden implications of loyal support, however dubious the king's future policies might prove to be. (**Ed Note:** One is reminded of Jesus in Re 3:20-note which clearly speaks of a spiritual intimacy associated with sharing a meal. Dining conveys the idea of intimate fellowship in Lk 19:5, 6, 7; John 13. See also **Covenant The Oneness of Covenant** which discusses how the sharing of a meal was a symbolic gesture in a covenant relationship)

It is a mistake to think that the "small choices" don't impact on our lives. What may seem small to us (the refusal to eat the king's food) proved to be a watershed event in that led to the good hand of the Lord upon Daniel's life for the next 60+ years! The impact of "small" bad choices is well illustrated by the giant redwood tree. Ray Pritchard tells the story of such a tree...

This week I read about a 400-year-old redwood that suddenly and without warning toppled to the forest floor. What caused the death of such a majestic giant? Was it fire? Lightning? A strong wind? A post-mortem examination revealed a startling cause. Tiny beetles had crawled under the bark and literally eaten the fibers away from the inside. Although it looked healthy on the outside, on the inside it was virtually hollow and one day finally collapsed. The same thing happens when we refuse to stand our ground for Christ. **Every time we compromise** something bad happens in our soul. Eventually the little decisions add up and we become hollow on the inside even though we may look great on the outside. Don't let that happen to you. Godly convictions yield God-given rewards. Here is the final lesson. What starts with Daniel ends with God. What starts with courage ends with a lifetime of blessing. Look what God did for this courageous teenager: God protected Daniel (when he proposed the test) God prospered Daniel (during the test and afterward) God promoted Daniel (in the eyes of the King) I cannot read this story without thinking of the words of God to Eli in 1Samuel 2:30b, "Those who honor me I will honor." I told you in the beginning that this was the crucial event of Daniel's life. It may not have seemed important at the time, but his decision not to eat the King's food shaped the next 60 years. We talk about Daniel 2500 years later precisely because of his decision. If he doesn't make the right choice, the rest of the book never gets written, and he becomes a forgotten Jew in Babylon who looked and acted just like everyone else. I know that in terms of scientific progress, the world has changed since Daniel's day, but God has not changed. God's Word has not changed. And the world still tries to seduce us. The good news from Daniel 1 is that it is possible to live for God in high school, in college, at work, and in your career. Daniel has shown us the way. ([Dare to be a Daniel - sermon by Dr. Ray Pritchard - November 1999](#))

## Some lasting principles (from Insight for Living)...

- (1) Inner conviction can overcome any outer pressure to compromise.
- (2) God-honoring convictions yield God-given rewards.

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**ANOTHER TREE ILLUSTRATION** - It started as a seedling on the slopes of the Colorado Rockies some 500 years ago. For centuries it had stood tall, enduring violent winds, lightning strikes, blizzards, even avalanches. Now, however, the once-towering tree is just a mound of decaying wood.

What caused its demise? A horde of beetles had attacked it, gnawing away until that skyscraper of nature surrendered to those tiny pests and toppled over.

That's also the tragic story of many Christians. For long years they stood tall for God. They resisted temptations, weathered crises, and were bold in the strength divinely provided. But little sins began to eat away at their lives--little lies, little compromises with greed or lust, sins that gradually eroded their character. And suddenly they fell.

Song 2:15 states, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." This colorful Old Testament verse should sound a loud alarm in our consciences. We must not tolerate the little evils that eat away at the roots of our lives. Otherwise, our once-strong witness for Christ will become a silenced casualty of sin. Let's confess those "tiny" evils to God now, before they lead to a big fall. --  
Vernon C Grounds

Nothing between, like worldly pleasure,  
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,  
Must not my heart from Him ever sever--  
He is my all! There's nothing between. --Tindley

### **A big fall begins with a little stumble.**

(I would add a blessed life can begin with what may seem like a little obedience!)

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## **Refusing The Easy Way**

Looking out the window of an airplane, you can see the winding paths of rivers below. Except for some man-made waterways, all rivers have one thing in common—they all are crooked. The reason is simple—they follow the path of least resistance. Rivers find their way around anything that blocks their flow because they take the easy way.

The same can be said for some people. Because they fail to resist the devil, they yield to temptation and deviate from the path God would have them follow. Unlike Daniel, who "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8), they bend to worldly pressures and compromise what they know is right.

Writing to followers of Christ, John said that we can be victorious in our struggle against evil, because "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Rather than being overcome, we can be overcomers. Nothing should deter us from the course God wants us to travel. We don't have to yield to any temptation or foe. The Holy Spirit who lives in us will strengthen us so that we can remain steadfast.

We won't become "crooked" if we refuse to follow the path of least resistance. — by Richard De Haan

We need a strength to keep us true  
And straight, in everything we do;  
We need a power to keep us strong  
When we are tempted to do wrong. —Anon.

You won't go astray on the straight and narrow way.

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**TAKING A STAND...  
NO MATTER THE COST!**

The OT has a number of examples of men and women who took a "Daniel-like" stand at a pivotal moment in their life circumstances,

none more dramatic than Ruth the Moabitess' reply to Naomi (who was trying to coerce Ruth into going back to "her people" the pagan Moabites)...

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me." When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her. (Ruth 1:16, 17, 18-note)

**But Daniel** - "But" always marks a contrast (see importance of analyzing this [term of contrast](#)), and in this case instead of "going with the flow" or "taking the easy road", Daniel and his 3 friends chose the "narrow road". Is it any surprise that "God granted Daniel favor"? From Genesis to Revelation the way to experience the "good hand of the LORD", the blessing of the LORD, is to conduct one's self in obedience to the revealed will of God. Jesus reaffirmed this basic Scriptural principle in Luke declaring...

On the contrary (to Lk 11:27), **blessed** are those who **hear** the word of God, and **observe** it. (Lk 11:27, cp Ezra 7:9, 10-note)

Reading the Word is not enough. We must heed (obey) what we read. And here is where the problems begin to arise as one "tries" to obey in their own power only to fall into the subtle trap of legalism and self-effort. Under the New Covenant, believers have the Holy Spirit to enable obedience to the revealed will of God in the Word of God, but we must learn to walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-note).

## **DANIEL SET HIS SAILS FOR ETERNITY: HE MADE UP HIS MIND!**

**Made up his mind** - NAS Marginal Note = set upon his heart. Literally "placed it on his heart". ESV = Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself"

**See articles on the importance of our spiritual heart - HEART.**

- [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)
- [Heart - Kardia \(Greek Word Study\)](#)
- [Heart - Leb, Lebab \(Hebrew Word Study\)](#)
- [Integrity - A Whole Heart](#) - especially as seen in the life of Daniel!
- [Proverbs 4:23 Commentary](#)

The word rendered "**mind**" in the NAS is the Hebrew word for **heart** (Hebrew = [leb](#); Septuagint = kardia [word study]), which in Hebrew thought was the center of reason and decision in Hebrew. The heart was the deepest seat of one's emotions and decisions. The heart in the OT often refers to one's thinking, feeling, choosing - mind, emotions and will. Think of the heart as the control center (like an "Air Traffic Controller") of one's thoughts and actions (conduct, behavior).

**Richison** - The word "purposed" carries the idea of decided resolution. Daniel's character was already formed for following God before the test came to him. The phrase "purposed in his heart" could be translated "laid upon his heart." Daniel put himself under the full commitment to follow his heart. PRINCIPLE: An all-consuming purpose to live for the glory of God will enable us to meet spiritual tests of life. ([Daniel 1:8 - Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Gleason Archer** - Rather than break faith with God, Daniel was willing to risk expulsion from the Royal Academy with the disgrace and danger that entailed. His priorities were firm. (Ibid)

Chapter 1 could well be entitled "**Daniel Uncompromising Man in a Pagan Land**"

**Jerry Bridges** - We need not only a commitment to holiness as a total way of life, but frequently a commitment regarding specific areas of temptation. Job made a personal covenant not to look lustfully at young women (Job 31:1). Daniel resolved not to defile himself with forbidden food, even though from the king's table (Da 1:8). These two Old Testament saints are commended by God Himself as among the most righteous who ever lived (Ezekiel 14:14); yet both found it necessary to make a commitment regarding some specific area of temptation. Job found his temptation in his own breast; Daniel found his in his particular circumstances. Both responded with a commitment to obey God. They lived up to their convictions.

**A W Tozer - The Set of Our Sails** - Daniel 1:8 - Though we do not hear much of it in this age of spineless religion, there is nevertheless much in the Bible about the place of moral determination in the service of the Lord. "Jacob vowed a vow," and it was the beginning of a very wonderful life with God....Daniel "purposed in his heart," and God honored his purpose. Jesus set His face like a flint and walked straight toward the cross. Paul "determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him

crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2)...These are only a few of the many men ... of the Bible who have left us a record of spiritual greatness born out of a will firmly set to do the will of God....Let us, then, set our sails in the will of God. If we do this we will certainly find ourselves moving in the right direction, no matter which way the wind blows.

**Dwight L Moody** - I CAN imagine men saying to Daniel, "Look here, young man, you are too puritanical. Don't be too particular; don't have too many religious scruples. Bear in mind you are not now in Jerusalem. You will have to get over these notions, now you are here in Babylon. You are not now surrounded by friends and relatives. You are not a Jerusalem prince now. You have been brought down from your high position. You are now a captive. And if the monarch hears about your refusing to eat the same kind of meat that he eats, and to drink the same kind of wine that he drinks, your head will soon roll from off your shoulders. You had better be a little politic." But this young man had piety and religion deep down in his heart; and that is the right place for it; where it will grow; where it will have power; where it will regulate the life. Daniel had not joined the company of the faithful few in Jerusalem because he wanted to get into "society," and attain a position: it was because of the love he had toward the Lord God of Israel.

**Wake Up Your Mind** - (Daniel 1:8) - Great people usually aren't smarter, richer or more talented—they're just more committed. Before you can make a real commitment to anything, you have to overcome three problems: First, the security trap. Insecure people don't take risks! They always have a "Plan B" in case God doesn't come through; they depend on things rather than on Him. Next, the success problem. When you've had some success, you want to guard it. You want people to continue thinking well of you, so you start living defensively. Then, there's the satisfaction problem. Listen, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:15). If your life is not touched by need, how can you be moved by the needs of others? Great commitments are made in dark hours. When the Battle of Britain began, Churchill rose and said, "Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bare ourselves that, if the British Empire lasts for a thousand years, men will say—this was their finest hour." Make your commitment because it's right—not because it's easy. It was after Daniel committed himself that. (Bob Gass - A Fresh Word for Today)

**So he sought permission** - This could have cost him his life for we see in Daniel 3 the king did in fact cast Daniel's 3 friends into the fire for refusing to bow to his image.

## CRISES: GOOD TESTS OF OUR CHARACTER

Remember that this is a time of crisis in Judah, and the "opportunity" to rise to the top in Babylonian government and society would have been a great temptation (we have no record of any of the other "youths" taking an uncompromising stand like Daniel). Times of crisis help to hone and develop one's character, but such times also test the mettle of our character. In other words, how we respond when difficulties arise says a lot about our character and our trust in God's sovereignty. You've probably not been ripped from your native country, the comforts of your home, your family and taken to a foreign land, but you have doubtless experienced many "smaller" crises (but not small to you!). **How have you responded?** Your answer says much about your belief in God and your character. Remember, **reputation** is what others think of you, but **character** is what God knows is true of you (cp 1Sa 16:7)

Daniel faced the same challenge every believer of ever age faces...to obey the command of God not to be "conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2-note)

As Phillips paraphrases Romans 12:2 **"Don't let the world ("Babylon") around you squeeze you into its own mold**, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you **may prove in practice** ("make up your mind", "purpose in your heart") that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity."

## WHAT WERE THE PRESSURES TO CONFORM?

**(1) Spiritual pressure** - Daniel was in the birthplace of idolatry and false religion (Rev 17:6)

**(2) Intellectual Pressure** - Three years in the "University of Babylon" which must surely have included courses in "astrology" and other pagan practices.

**(3) Peer Pressure** - While we have to be careful when the Scripture is silent, Daniel has no record that other Jewish youths refused to bow to the pressures of the wealth and power of Babylon. After all when you're in Babylon, you do as the Babylonians do. No. Not everyone did. Specifically not Daniel and his friends. They had their priorities straight! The question that comes to mind is "Who do you want to please?". Do you want to please your peers, mere men or do you want to please the Almighty God? (cp 2Co 5:9-note)

**That he might not defile himself** - Daniel did not downplay this issue and choose a strong word, emphasizing the point that he was bold and courageous, not fearing the king. The idea of "defile" is that of polluting or staining something (cp Jas 1:27) How do you feel when you are watching TV or a movie and they take the Name of "Jesus" in vain, even using it as a curse word? Even more convicting, how to you respond? Do you "come apart from them" (cp 2Co 6:17 - The major part of this quotation (after the Lxx with several changes) is from Isa 52:11. The reference in Isaiah is to the captive nation leaving Babylon and returning to their own land, but the spiritual application is to the separation of the people of God today. God commands His people to "come out," which implies a definite act on their part. Get out, escape for with your life like Joseph when he fled from Potiphar's wife Ge 39:12! Flee! 2Ti 2:20, 21, 22, 1Co 6:18 Isa 52:11; Jer 51:6 Rev 18:4 Nu 16:21,26,45 Ezra 6:21, 10:11, Pr 9:6 Note command come out of "Babylon" Isa 52:11, Jer 51:45; Rev 18:4.Nu 33:51-56 cp Ex 23:24,33; 34:13; Dt 7:2,5; 12:3; Jos 11:12; Jdg 2:2)

Paul gave a similar charge to his half Jewish young disciple, Timothy

Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things (false teachers, false teaching), he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified (set apart), **useful to the Master, prepared** for every good work. Now **flee** (present imperative = Command to do this continually.) from youthful lusts, and **pursue** (present imperative = Command to do this continually) righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (Do you observe anything that reminds you of Daniel 1? Was he by himself?). (2Ti 2:21-note, 2Ti 2:22-note)

**Gleason Archer** - By their early refusal to disobey God, they prepared themselves for future greatness as true witnesses for the one true God in the midst of a degenerate pagan culture. It is significant that precisely in the matter of forbidden food, in which Satan successfully tripped up Adam and Eve (Ge 2:16, 17, 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), these four Hebrew youths passed their first test with flying colors. (Ibid)

## **DANIEL'S UNCOMPROMISING LIFE LED TO AN UNASHAMED BOLDNESS**

**John MacArthur** emphasizes that Daniel 1:8 and the succeeding passages emphasize that Daniel had an **unashamed boldness**, and that this God pleasing trait is mentioned directly or indirectly a number of times in Scripture, for example see Ps 71:15, Da 3:13, 14,15, 16, 17, 18, 1Pe 4:16, Ps 119:46, Php 1:27, 28, 29.

### **Dare To Be a Daniel**

by Philip Bliss

([Vocal version of Dare to be a Daniel](#))

([Children singing](#))

Standing by a purpose true,  
Heeding God's command,  
Honor them, the faithful few!  
All hail to Daniel's band!

#### ***Refrain***

***Dare to be a Daniel,***

***Dare to stand alone!***

***Dare to have a purpose firm!***

***Dare to make it known.***

Many mighty men are lost  
Daring not to stand,  
Who for God had been a host  
By joining Daniel's band.

#### ***Refrain***

Many giants, great and tall,  
Stalking through the land,  
Headlong to the earth would fall,  
If met by Daniel's band.

#### ***Refrain***

Hold the Gospel banner high!  
On to vict'ry grand!  
Satan and his hosts defy,  
And shout for Daniel's band.

**Refrain**

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**DARE TO BE A DANIEL** Words and Music by [Philip P. Bliss](#), 1838–1876 - But Daniel resolved not to defile himself ... (Daniel 1:8)

Doubt sees the obstacles—Faith sees the way.  
Doubt sees the darkest night—Faith sees the day.  
Doubt dreads to take a step—Faith soars on high.  
Doubt questions, "Who believes?"—Faith answers, "I."  
—Unknown

The book of Daniel is really a textbook of instruction and an example of how God's people can live in difficult conditions and come through victoriously. Even as the Jewish people were living in Babylonian captivity, so Christians today are pilgrims and sojourners in a foreign culture. We, like Daniel and his friends, must exercise our implicit faith in God's purposes and leading for our lives. We too must resolve in advance that we will not be defiled by the world. And whether our God delivers us or not from the fiery furnace, we will remain faithful to Him (Daniel 3:17, 18).

Daniel and his friends also personify for us Christian courage at its best—not merely a desperate type of courage for some emergency situation, but a quiet steadfast courage that enables us to live in a Christ-like manner each day. It takes courage to be an unpopular minority when truth and right are involved. It takes courage to defend God's name when everyone else is using it in blasphemy. It takes courage to be another Daniel in a godless society.

This is another of the fine Sunday school songs by Philip P. Bliss, one of the truly important contributors to both early gospel hymnody and the rise of the Sunday school movement. Bliss, like many other Christian leaders, realized the unusual potential of teaching our youth spiritual truths through appropriate songs.

Standing by a purpose true, heeding God's command, honor them, the faithful few! All hail to Daniel's Band!  
Many mighty men are lost, daring not to stand, who for God had been a host, by joining Daniel's Band!  
Many giants, great and tall, stalking thro' the land, headlong to the earth would fall, if met by Daniel's Band!  
Hold the gospel banner high! On to vict'ry grand! Satan and His host defy, and shout for Daniel's Band!  
Refrain: Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone! Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known.

God is still seeking people who by faith will dare to prove His greatness and will represent Him courageously—regardless of the circumstances. Let this musical line be the desire of your life— (Kenneth Osbeck - Amazing Grace - 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions).

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**Wisdom for the Workplace** - Daniel 1:8 - If there was ever a manual for Christians in the workplace it is the book of Daniel. Every time I read this book, I am impressed by Daniel's solid character traits. Before you discount his example, consider some very important details of Daniel's career. He was a foreigner employed in a hostile environment. He worked under some of the most wicked men in history. Very few of his peers shared his values. He served in very high-profile positions with incredible responsibility. He was persecuted for his beliefs. Daniel faced the same challenges that many of us face on a daily basis at our places of business. Don't think everything went smoothly for him. He didn't rise to the top without conflict. He didn't achieve success without paying a price. Daniel's career gives Christians a model for behavior. It is possible to serve God and work in a hostile environment. For most believers, there is no choice. A living must be earned. Like Daniel, we need to have an unbending commitment to God, yet a graciousness in our demeanor. Jesus said we are to be "wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves." There is no record of Daniel talking bad about the king or cutting down a fellow co-worker. If God has called you to the hostile workplace, work efficiently and diligently. Faithfully serve your employer. Get along with your co-workers. If you do, then your life will be a living testimony of Christ. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matthew 10:16) (Robert Neighbour - Living Water)

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**Daniel's Undaunted Courage** - "Therefore he requested the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). It was a brave stand followed by a courageous step. How dare he do it! Take his stand contrary to the command of the king and to the customs of the court! Even the prince of the eunuchs feared that his consent to Daniel's unheard-of request, would endanger his own head to the king. But Daniel with much wisdom pled for a ten days' trial — and Daniel won out completely; for at the end of the days the countenances of him and his three friends were fairer and fatter than those of any of the youths, who had eaten the king's meat and who had drunken his wine. There is a word that goes the round these days. "When you are in Rome do as the Romans

do." This was wholly obnoxious to Daniel. He believed that when he was in Babylon, he should do as God would have him do, having no fear for the consequences. It would have been the easy thing and the natural thing and the pleasing thing, for him to have graciously accepted the wishes of the king. Was he not a youth thrust by good fortune into the very presence of the king? Daniel might easily have reasoned thus: "I have every possible chance of favor and preferment now with the prince of the eunuchs; why should I spoil it all with my conscientious quibbles? My raising has been faulty, the requirements of my God are too severe. Why should I be different from others? Why spoil my chances?" It is always easy to drift with the tide, to follow public opinion, to do the natural thing. Illustration: We know of a youth who, just before he went to college, spent a while with a civil engineer corps. There were eight in the gang. Most of them young men from the same village. Only one was a Christian. This youth found the habits of the other boys quite contrary to his own. The real test came at bed time; when he had prepared to retire and the time had come for him to kneel down by the bed, as he had done from childhood. It was a simple thing to do? It did not seem so to him. He dreaded the laughter of the others — for all the men were sleeping in one large room. Finally, refusing to side-step his responsibility, and to merely pray under the covers, or even to wait until the light was out; he fell on his knees and began to pray. Some of the boys made fun. One fellow turned a somersault on his bed and said mockingly, "Now I lay me down to sleep." When, however, the ordeal was over, the other fellows stood up for the one who had dared to pray, and as he crawled into bed, and quiet came on; he heard a still small voice saying: "My son, I want you to preach My Gospel." That was years ago, today that boy is a preacher and he sits here pounding the machine and thanking God as he writes this lesson, thanking God he won out in a very simple but wide-reaching test. (Robert Neighbour - Sermons and Bible Studies)

**Making a Difference** - "Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief official not to defile himself. (Daniel 1:8) Would you dare to believe that God, who called you to Himself and equipped you with His Spirit, could work mightily through you? Have you made the connection between the time and place in which you live and God's call upon you? World events never catch God by surprise. He placed you precisely where you are for a purpose. Daniel did not let the temptations of his day interfere with his relationship to the Lord. He knew that to make his life useful to God he must be obedient in all things. Regardless of what the most powerful king in the world commanded, Daniel refused to compromise what he knew God required of him. History is replete with examples of Christian men and women who believed that God would work through them to make a significant difference for His kingdom. God placed Esther strategically in the king's court at a crucial time when she could save the lives of God's people (Esther 4:14). God placed Joseph strategically to become the most powerful adviser to the pharaoh in Egypt and to save Jacob and his family from a devastating drought (Gen. 41:39–40). Are you allowing your surroundings to determine how you invest your life? Or are you letting God use you to make a difference in your generation? Ask God to reveal His purposes for you and His will for your life today. (Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby - Experiencing God Day by Day).

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**Daniel's Holy Purpose** - "And Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine that he drank" (Dan. 1:8). Many young men want to have their fling; they seem to have a craze to try out the sinful pleasures of this world. Even Solomon said: "Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure." Solomon also said: "I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom." But not so Daniel. Daniel refused to defile himself. Daniel's way proved far the wiser. Solomon sinned in many things. He grievously departed from God. Daniel never did. While, in after years, Daniel said in one of his wonderful prayers: "I prayed unto my God and made my confession, and said \* \* We have sinned;" the striking truth still remains that Daniel is one of the few characters in the Bible, which are treated with any fullness, against whom not one condemnatory word is recorded. It is utterly false that a young man must sow his wild oats; that he must taste the world in order that he may realize its folly. Young men may live and die without ever having transgressed the highest ideals of rectitude. Nor need any one doubt but that such a course of action always pays — pays immeasurably. How many homes today are wrecked and ruined because the father sinned in the days of his youth. He sowed to his flesh; and his children and his beloved wife, in after years, suffered the harvest of his deeds. Daniel's course is the sane, the safe, and the satisfying course to pursue. It is the best in the end, the best in the beginning, and the best all the way along. It never pays to defile one's self in any way. The young man who smokes, swears, keeps bad company, plays cards, goes to the theater, drinks, gambles, will find out some day to his sorrow, and to the sorrow of all those intimately associated with him, that sin does not pay. The wages of sin is death. Therefore let us, like Daniel, refuse to defile ourselves. Let us "enter not in the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men." Let us "avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away." Sin will darken your countenance, destroy your character, degrade your morals, and lead you to the doom of darkness and eternal despair. (Robert Neighbour - Sermons and Bible Studies)

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**INTEGRITY ENJOYS GOD'S FAVOR** - "Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials." (Daniel 1:9) **God's favor is the rich reward of obedience.** God delights in granting special grace and favor to those whose hearts are set on pleasing Him. For example, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" and was spared the ravages of the

Flood (Gen. 6:8). Joseph found favor in His sight and was elevated to prominence in Egypt (Gen. 39–41). God granted Moses and the children of Israel favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they were able to plunder Egypt in the Exodus (Ex. 11:3; 12:36). When Daniel chose to obey God by not defiling himself with the king's special diet (Dan. 1:8), he demonstrated great courage and integrity. God responded by granting him favor and compassion in the sight of Ashpenaz, the commander of the king's officials. The Hebrew word translated "favor" speaks of goodness or kindness. It can also include a strong affection from deep within. "Compassion" means a tender, unflinching love. Together these words tell us that God established a special relationship between Ashpenaz and Daniel that not only protected Daniel from harm in this instance, but also helped prepare him for his future role as a man of enormous influence in Babylon. Today God's favor is the special grace He grants His children in times of need. It is especially evident when their obedience brings persecution. The apostle Peter wrote, "This finds favor [grace], if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.... If when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor [grace] with God" (1 Peter 2:19–20). Daniel knew that refusing the king's special diet could lead to serious consequences, but he was more interested in obeying God's Word than avoiding man's punishment. He had the right priorities, and God honored his obedience, just as He will honor yours. Suggestions for Prayer: Let the prayer of Moses be yours today: "Let me know Thy ways, that I may know Thee, so that I may find favor in Thy sight" (Ex. 33:13). For Further Study: Read Genesis 39. What were the results of God's favor upon Joseph? (John MacArthur - Strength for Today)

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**A Dare-Saint** - "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." (Daniel 1:8) - THERE are a number of "dare-devils" around in society. But Daniel was a "dare-saint." The words of the song, "Dare to be a Daniel," emphasize this truth. Our verse reports that Daniel did a very daring thing. He made a holy resolve in his heart. We note the calendar in the resolve, the character of the resolve, and the courage in the resolve. Calendar in the resolve. We often make resolves early in the year. Daniel made this resolve early in his life, for he was no older than a teenager when he made this resolve. You do not have to be up in years before you start living for God. It is better to start living for God when old than never; but when you start living for God early in life, you give a lifetime for God and prevent many wasted and sin-scarred years. Character of the resolve. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." There are two important notes here about the character of Daniel's resolve. They concern the site and the subject of the resolve. First, the site. The resolve was made in his heart. It was not just words to impress people, but it was in his heart which gave it strength. Too much dedication today is only outward. It does not come from the heart, and so it will not last. Second, the subject. The resolve had to do with purity, for Daniel would not "defile" himself with the king's food and drink. Many folk resolve to do a lot of things, but few resolve to live a holy life. But the resolve to holiness is the kind of resolve we need more than anything else. Courage in the resolve. Daniel had to have much courage when he made this resolve, for he was a captive under the authority and custody of wicked men, and he was going against the king's wishes. If you are going to live a pure life, you will have to have courage. It will not be popular and many will protest and mock. But stick with your holy resolve, for it will bring you Divine blessings. (Daily Bible Reading: Volume 2: Sermonettes - John Butler)

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**SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS** - Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself. (DANIEL 1:8) In addition to an overall commitment to pursue holiness in every area of life, I find it helpful to make specific commitments in areas where we're particularly vulnerable to sin. There's great value in identifying those areas—either in what we do (for example, gossip) or in what we fail to do (such as loving our wives as Christ loved the church)—and then making specific commitments of obedience to God in those areas. I urge you to list any areas of temptation wherein you need to make this specific commitment. Do you need to make a covenant with your eyes about what you look at (Job 31:1), or with your mouth about what you say, or with your mind about what you think? Is there a particular temptation or sinful practice that arises in your work environment that needs a commitment to fortify you against it? Write these commitments down on paper, for your eyes only, so you can review them and pray over them daily. Perhaps there's a particular area in your marriage or in your relationship with your children, your parents, a friend, or an associate at work where you aren't demonstrating the Spirit's fruit of love, patience, or kindness. Do you need to make a commitment that, in dependence on the Holy Spirit to enable you, you'll seek to display that particular "fruit" toward that individual? If so, I urge you to make such a commitment. You may find the need to make several commitments—sins to put off or avoid and Christlike traits to put on. If you don't commit yourself to the pursuit of holiness in these specific areas of your life, you'll find a tendency to vacillate in the face of these temptations. (Jerry Bridges - [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts for Your Spiritual Journey](#))

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**UNDEFILED IN THE MIDST OF WICKEDNESS** -But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8-9). The word defile here suggests "freeing through repudiation." Daniel was saying, "Any compromise of my standards will rob me of my freedom." So he committed to eat only beans and drink only water for ten days. When the chief of the

eunuchs learned this, he told Daniel, "You are going to cost me my life! You will look sickly at the end of ten days. Your cheeks will be sunken, and the king will surely notice. Here, eat just a little meat. You need the protein. Drink the wine to build up your blood. Eat some of these sweets to give you energy!" I believe Daniel and the three Hebrew men had something more in mind than avoiding being ceremonially unclean. They had been taken captive along with thousands of their countrymen. What they saw when they first arrived in Babylon must have shocked them beyond belief. It was a society so loose, immoral and full of wickedness, these four men's spiritual sensibilities were assailed. They made a commitment with each other: "We dare not compromise. We will be separate from society and disciplined in our walk of faith." They did not go about preaching their way of life to others. It was strictly a matter between them and God. When you are in a crisis, do you cry out in unbelief and frustration? What if the Lord should answer, "I need strong voices in these sinful times through whom I can speak. Where are you when I need a voice? You say you want Me to come to your crisis—yet you remain a part of the wicked, worldly system. Tell Me—are you committed to My purposes?" Daniel and his friends' witness was a testimony that turned all the people's heads around. They were delivered from the lions' den and the fiery furnace—and the whole society knew it was God who did it. (David Wilkerson - [God is Faithful: A Daily Invitation into the Father Heart of God](#))

**INTEGRITY STANDS ON PRINCIPLE** - "And 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.... 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." DANIEL 1:5, 8 ✧✧✧ **Godly integrity is built upon the foundation of biblical authority.** From the world's perspective, King Nebuchadnezzar had much to offer his Hebrew captives: the best food, the best education, and high positions in his kingdom. But Daniel's perspective was quite different. He did not object to receiving a pagan education because God had given no direct prohibition against that, and a Babylonian education had much to offer in the areas of architecture and science. But as with anyone receiving a secular education, Daniel would have to exercise discernment in sorting out the true from the false and the good from the bad. It was when Daniel was asked to violate a direct command from God that he drew the line and took his stand on biblical principle. That's the character of godly integrity. It bases decisions on the principles from God's Word, not on mere preference, intimidation, or peer pressure. Seemingly Daniel had every reason to compromise: he was young, away from home, and facing severe consequences if he defied the king's order. Yet he was unwavering in his obedience to God. Although Daniel couldn't obey the king's order, he handled the situation in a wise and respectful manner by seeking permission to abstain from eating what God had forbidden. From his example we learn that standing on principle will sometimes put us at odds with those in authority over us, but even then we can love and respect them. Suggestions for Prayer: Pray for those in authority over you who may want you to do things that would displease the Lord. ✧ Pray for wisdom and grace to maintain a loving attitude toward them while still standing on biblical principles. For Further Study: Read Acts 5:17–29. How did the apostles respond to the authorities who commanded them to stop preaching the gospel. ([John MacArthur - Strength for Today](#))

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**H A Ironside** - Daniel and his three friends, and Paul the apostle, are striking examples of men who would not risk the ruin of their testimony by self-indulgence or pandering to "fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11-note). Christians cannot afford to be careless as to these matters. The body is the Lord's. It is the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. To defile it by any form of unclean living is to dishonor God and to render one powerless in the hour of stress. In the world we hear much today of efficiency experts. Men realize that if a workman, a clerk, a professional man, or an executive, is to be at his best, he must avoid many things that others indulge in who think only of momentary pleasure and sensual gratification. The man to be trusted is the man who rules himself and holds all his appetites in subjection. In spiritual things the same rule applies. He who purposes in his heart that he will not "defile himself," but yields to the control of the Holy Spirit, is the one who will be most used of God on earth, and some day will stand before the King to be rewarded in the day of revelation.

There is a purity of heart,  
A cleanness of desire,  
Wrought by the Holy Comforter  
With sanctifying fire.  
There is a glory that awaits  
Each blood-washed soul on high,  
When Christ returns to take His Bride  
With Him beyond the sky.

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**Compromising Convictions** (Daniel 1:8; 3:16–18) " Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in

the LORD; I shall not slip."(Psalm 26:1) When Daniel refused to defile himself by eating the king's food, he held fast to a conviction he deemed worthy enough for death. Convictions always challenge our level of commitment. Daniel viewed continuing his relationship with God far more important than satisfying the king's whims. Once he took his stand, God provided a solution to the situation, and Daniel was allowed to eat what was in keeping with God's commandments. Pleasing God, not men, was the most important issue to Daniel. Loving the Lord and keeping His commandments were his utmost desires. It wasn't a matter of preference but a matter of godly conviction. Preferences are based on feelings. They change erratically and are often abandoned for the sake of immediate gratification. However, a conviction is based on God's principles and deals with life from an eternal perspective. Satan's ultimate goal is to move you from a point of conviction to a point of preference. Once he has done that, he changes your view from God's best to what satisfies the flesh. Be wary of compromising your convictions, for you belong to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Dear Lord, help me to stand firm in my convictions despite the temptation to compromise. (Charles Stanley - Seeking His Face)

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**"I HAVE SET MY FACE"** by Vance Havner - For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isa. 50:7). So wrote Isaiah concerning God's suffering servant, and when that suffering servant came to earth "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

Our Lord did not have a hard face for it was full of love and compassion, but He did have a set face. He had made up His mind. He knew where He was going. He had fixed His course and He allowed no one to deflect Him. The devil offered Him the kingdoms of this world but our Saviour took no short cut; He chose the way of Calvary. John the Baptist in prison, questioned whether Jesus was "he that should come" (Luke 7:19), but our Lord answered, in effect, "I'm running on schedule and doing what I came to do." His brothers urged Him to go up to Jerusalem and perform before the world. That was not His program. Peter confessed Christ but denied the cross and remonstrated at the thought of Calvary. Our Lord declared him to be speaking not for God but for the devil. When He heard of Herod's threats, He called the king a fox and made it clear that He would go ahead with His plans as scheduled. He had set His face like a flint, and neither friend nor foe, man nor devil, could divert Him from His goal.

Throughout the Word of God, the heroes of faith were men who set their faces like a flint.

- Caleb "... wholly followed the Lord God" (Joshua 14:14).
- Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
- Elijah asked, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21).
- Daniel "purposed in his heart" (Daniel 1:8) to be true to God.
- Paul said: "... this one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13).
- He also set his face to go to Jerusalem and said, "... none of these things move me" (Acts 21:24).
- (**Ed:** To this list of godly men I would add the godly woman Mary of Bethany - Luke 10:42, context Lk 10:38-42)

One of our biggest problems today is that most of our church people have never really made up their minds to follow Jesus Christ. They are like Mr. Looking-both-ways in The Pilgrims Progress, or like Lot's wife looking back toward Sodom. They are like the man in the Civil War who wore a blue coat and gray trousers, and was shot at from both sides. They are like a donkey between two bales of hay—undecided as to which to eat. They are like the son in our Lord's parable who said, "I go, Sir" (Matthew 22:30), and went not. They receive the word with joy, but have no root nor depth and soon fall away. They never really make up their minds, and are like the man who was asked, "Do you have trouble making decisions?" He replied, "Yes and no."

In the ninth chapter of Luke we read that our Lord stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. In the same chapter, we read in contrast of three who were exactly opposite; they were not really going anywhere. They sounded as though they were serious but, one had not counted the cost, one wanted to bury his father, and another to bid his family goodbye before following Jesus. Whether it be the uncounted cost, the unburied corpse or the unforsaken circle, their attitude was, "I will follow Thee BUT...." Our Lord made it very clear to each of them, that He meant business, that He was going somewhere, and that His kingdom was no place for a man with his face pointed in one direction and his feet in the other.

I have been a pastor and have tried everything to induce church members to go on with God. I have scolded, praised, coaxed, and persuaded, but I am convinced that they go where they want to go, and where their hearts are, their heels will follow. We are dealing largely with a mixed multitude of uncommitted, disinterested, undisciplined people, who have never set their faces to say, "This one thing I do." Theirs is the sin of dissipated devotion. As someone has put it, their lives are not like swords with one point, but like brooms ending in a thousand straws.

Dr. J. B. Gambrell was a great dog lover as a boy. He got hold of a book that told him what he could be in life if he applied himself. He decided, "I cannot be what I ought and keep up with all these dogs," so he gave up dogs. He once wrote quite a piece about the neighborhood dog that wears no collar, is unattached, doesn't belong to anybody, feels no responsibility to keep stray dogs and cats

off any place, goes around smiling and wagging his tail, and will bark as much at one house as another. The neighborhood dog, Gambrell wrote, is broad-minded, makes up with everybody, gets in no fights, for to him nothing is worth fighting for. "Judicious barking", we read further, "is a fine trait, but miscellaneous barking is worth nothing, and is confusing to dogs that are really hunting something." Then Dr. Gambrell made his application. "The neighborhood dog has a lot of kin who are too broad-minded to join any church. They run to all churches, particularly if there is a special service for they like crowds. The man who says one church is as good as another doesn't love any church enough to be of any use to it. There are hoboes in the dog world and deadbeats in the religious world. A thousand of them would never support a church or send a missionary."

These are the opposite of the saints of the set face! When Cortez landed on these shores, he burned his ships so that he and his company could not leave. He made no arrangements for a retreat. He had come to stay. God grant us a crop of saints who have stedfastly set their faces to go to Jerusalem; who will allow neither man nor the devil, friend nor foe, to deflect them from their holy resolve, "This one thing I do!"

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**A Will to Choose - [Frederick Brotherton \(F. B.\) Meyer](#)** was a dynamic preacher and author of more than seventy books. Charles Spurgeon wrote: "Rev. F. B. Meyer is a great gain to the armies of evangelical truth; for his tone, spirit and aspirations are all of a fine gospel sort. In all his books there is a sweet, holy savor." How did F. B. Meyer develop such closeness to the Lord and accomplish so much in his lifetime? When he was seventeen Meyer believed that the Lord was calling him into the full-time ministry. He discussed it with his mother and she pointed out that being in the ministry would involve sacrifice and many trying times. She also mentioned that if he later regretted taking such a step he could always leave the ministry. Looking her straight in the eye the young man said, "Never, Mother! That would be putting my hand to the plow and looking back." Through God's grace, F. B. Meyer did not waiver from his high calling and maintained a vigorous ministry serving Christ. Many have pointed to his decision as a seventeen-year-old as a watershed act, a resolve that carried him through a lifetime of service. How's your resolve? Today in prayer, give thanks to Jesus Christ that He rewards those who seek Him in all that they do. "God has given us a will to choose his will.."—[Henrietta C. Mears](#)

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** - Daniel 1:8 - In 1877, a group of Cambridge University students began to study the Bible, pray, and witness to their classmates. This InterVarsity student movement spread across England to Canada, and in 1938 the first U.S. chapter opened at the University of Michigan. Today, more than a thousand InterVarsity staff members work on more than 550 campuses, publish books and training materials, and facilitate events such as the Urbana missions conference. Like InterVarsity at secular universities, Daniel and his friends in the Babylonian palace stood out by contrast. They were God's lights in a dark place. From a human perspective, though, they were in no position to be leaders. They were young and inexperienced. They were exiles from a conquered nation, taking part in a highly competitive three-year imperial education program for a shot at a civil service job. The training rules were strict; the punishments for violations dire. This was a power-deficit situation if there ever was one! Yet God called Daniel to be a leader, and Daniel knew that God's sovereign control (Da 1:2) actually gave him the upper hand. He resolved not to accept the royal food and wine, and influenced his friends to do the same, probably because the prescribed food would have been offered to idols (Da 1:8 ). Instead, he boldly requested a special diet. Given the reality of the situation, he chose a non-confrontational approach: He asked permission from the proper authority and was ready with a ten-day-trial plan when the man (not unexpectedly) balked. God honored these steps of faith, and after the ten days their request was granted. In the end, Daniel and his friends graduated with honor. God gave them success in their studies and even gave Daniel an ability to interpret dreams (Da 1:17-20). This is how Daniel began his career, leading by tact and example and saturating everything he did with faith in the Lord. It wasn't flashy, but it was highly effective. and it honored God.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the obstacles to obedience in his life, Daniel tallied up the advantages on his side and stepped out in faith. Servant leadership or witness may seem to you like similar impossibilities. But have you counted the advantages you have? We all have a God who is sovereign over your bosses. You may also have favor in a supervisor's eyes, access to professional training, or whatever your circumstances may offer. You can approach your workplace challenges in the spirit of Daniel and his friends.

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** Daniel 1:3-20 - You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. - Isaiah 26:3 In 1924, Scottish sprinter Eric Liddell found his decisions questioned. His sister Jenny wondered if he was wasting time running races when he could be headed to the mission field. Fellow racers and the British Olympic committee doubted the wisdom of his decision not to race on Sundays. Eric famously told his sister, "I believe that God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. When I run it is in His pleasure." He declined to run his best event, the 100-meter dash in the 1924 Olympics because it was held on Sunday, but he won the gold medal in the 400-meter race. In our story today we read of Daniel and his friends standing for

what was right. Their courage impressed the Babylonian leaders and was blessed by God. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were the cream of the crop of Jewish exiles in Babylon (Da 1:3). They were selected for service to Nebuchadnezzar, an honor that included luxurious meals of the king's choicest food. The Babylonians stripped away their Hebrew names, but they could not take away their loyalty to God and His Law. Eating the food would have required Daniel and his friends to violate Jewish dietary requirements. Rather than refuse outright to participate, Daniel asked the chief official whether they could abstain. When the official balked, Daniel proposed a test. After ten days on their diet of vegetables and water, the four Jews were healthier than the others; one wonders how happy the other young men were to discover their access to the king's lush banquets was now curtailed (Da 1:16)! Scripture is clear that God blessed Daniel (Da 1:9, 17). All four young men became high officials in Nebuchadnezzar's court and sought to give him their best service (see Dan. 2:12-49). At the same time, they all remained faithful to God and continued to pursue obedience to Him as their highest priority (see Daniel 3, 6).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Most of us have obligations at work, school, or our community. At the very least, we are subject to the laws in our country. Daniel gives us an example of how to navigate tensions we might encounter as a follower of Christ and also as an employee, citizen, or student: first, commit to obeying God; second, be a responsible, hard-working contributor; third, try to negotiate solutions; and always surround every situation with prayer (cf. Dan. 2:18).

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** Daniel 1:8-13 - But Daniel resolved not to defile himself. - Daniel 1:8 - "Please, sir, I want some more." Those words from *Oliver Twist* are one of the most famous requests in literature. Even though Oliver spoke on behalf of his fellow starving orphans, barely surviving on paltry servings of gruel, his boldness earned him solitary confinement and dismissal from the parish. Daniel put himself in similar peril, except he was being offered a feast prepared for a king and he asked to be given less. The text doesn't indicate what exactly about the meat and wine would have defiled Daniel, but we can assume the Babylonians prepared the food in a manner contrary to Mosaic Law. What we do know is that Daniel made up his mind that he wouldn't compromise on the matter of his diet. **Daniel's resolve didn't detract from his overall attitude of respect.** He asked for permission to have a different diet, and God rewarded him by granting him sympathy from the chief official (Da 1:9). Personal affection, however, was outweighed by fear of Nebuchadnezzar, and the official wouldn't grant the request. Daniel didn't react stubbornly or brazenly. Instead, he sought out a different opportunity with another authority figure, his personal guard. He asked for a ten-day trial run on a vegetarian diet. His request was reasonable and respectful, and it was phrased to allow the guard an alternative plan of action if the results of the new diet were unfavorable. Notice how Daniel operated within the construct of authority he was under. He opposed ungodly orders without being self-righteous or rebellious. Both Daniel and the chief official spoke of comparing Daniel and his three friends with other young men their age. We can assume that they weren't the only young Israelites recruited into the three-year training program. Judging by Judah's history of floundering faith, Daniel and his friends were probably very rare examples of people who still remained true to the commands of the Lord. Daniel's faith didn't just stand out against the pagan culture, it was also one of the last signs of hope among God's chosen people.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - It's certainly unacceptable for Christians to silently adopt sinful behavior, but we should not loudly and proudly parade our rightness. If someone orders you to compromise your beliefs, make up your mind to stay true to the Lord. Then ask God to soften your heart to avoid heated conflict or pride. Respect for authority and love for others is more important than drawing attention to ourselves. Remember, forcing the spotlight on our righteousness tends to reveal our sinfulness as well.

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**ABHOR ... EVIL, CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD** (Romans 12:9; Genesis 39:7-9; Daniel 1:8) - Stronger words could not be used to describe our attitude toward evil. Abhor it. It is the only time this word is used in the New Testament. It means to 'detest utterly' or 'to hate'. There can be no compromise or accommodation of evil in any way in our lives. The Psalmist instructs us, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil', Ps. 97:10, and sets the example for us, 'I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me', Ps. 101:3. Evil here is that which is evil in effect or influence. It goes beyond things that are essentially evil and includes that which spreads evil. We are to simply hate it. We hate it because God hates it. It is everything that opposes Him and is contrary to His will. It is destructive and leaves its victims in misery and despair. This is entirely opposite to the effect of the gospel and therefore a reason why the Christian abhors evil. Evil is around us everywhere in our culture. It presents itself in subtle and deceiving ways. It gets into our thinking and our lives almost unnoticed. How we need the word of God to keep us alert and cleansed from evil. But today's command is not just negative. Our lives are not to be spent only in hating evil, but embracing good. In fact a life that is filled with good will not be able to accommodate evil. The word for cleaving here means 'to glue or stick'. The idea is that embracing good is not an occasional or changing practice but something that is done continually and becomes the habit of life. In our other two readings, Genesis 39 and Daniel 1, we have examples of these very principles. Joseph, who fled from the presence of Potiphar's wife, demonstrated the need to abhor that which is evil. He asked, 'How ... can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?', Gen. 39:9. The injustice that he suffered did not deflect him from such a habit of life. Of Daniel, we read that he 'purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself', Dan. 1:8. The risks involved with his decision were

great but obedience to the command of God is not optional, whatever the consequences might be. (John Bennett - Day by Day: Bible Commands)

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**PICKING A WINNER** - But Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself. (Daniel 1:8) HOW WOULD YOU define a winner? If you had to pick someone out of a crowd and hold him up as an example of what it takes to get ahead in life, what would you look for? What would it be that sets that person apart? King Nebuchadnezzar decided that he knew winners when he saw them, and those were the kind of people he wanted around him. He didn't want any slouches serving in his court, so he commanded his chief palace official to bring him the best and brightest he could find from among the Jewish royal family and nobility. "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace" (Daniel 1:4). Then when his guards rounded them up, he instructed them to treat the young men like kings. They were to eat the best foods and drink only the finest wines from his own kitchens. They were to be taught Babylonian history and literature by the greatest professors around. They were to "be all that they could be," and serve as a reminder to all Babylon what kind of people the king admired. These were the winners in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar. Among the ones chosen was a young man named Daniel, but he wasn't about to let it go to his head. He saw himself as a child of God, not a protégé of the king, so he immediately set himself to a different standard. "Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief official for permission to eat other things instead" (1:8). Much of the food the king wanted them to eat was forbidden by Jewish law, so Daniel convinced his handler to let him and his four friends eat only vegetables and water. "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other[s]" Daniel told him (1:13). The king's attendant agreed and soon saw that they were healthier than the rest. Because of Daniel's obedience, God gave him a special measure of wisdom and knowledge as well as the gift of interpreting dreams and visions. In the eyes of God, Daniel was a winner. It wasn't because he was strong or intelligent or good-looking. It was because of his loyalty to his King. His willingness to stand up for his beliefs. His obedience to his God in spite of the pressure and temptation to go along with the crowd. **REFLECTION** - Have you ever come under pressure to bend your principles? How did you react? How did God bless your response? ([Embracing Eternity: Living Each Day with a Heart toward Heaven](#)).

**Ed comment:** I refer to "living each day with a heart toward heaven" as **VERTICAL VISION** in contrast to living with your eyes on the world which I call **HORIZONTAL VISION.** Daniel was clearly a man who even as a youth choose to live his life with **VERTICAL VISION!** May his tribe increase in Jesus' Name and for His glory. Amen See my discussion of **VERTICAL VISION**

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**DANIEL HAD A GOAL - TO GLORIFY GOD** - Christians without goals are a little like Alice in the fairy tale Alice in Wonderland. In a conversation with the Cheshire Cat, Alice asked, "Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where," said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. That way of living may be okay in Wonderland, but it doesn't work in the real world. If I am going to make spiritual progress, I must be specific. It's not enough, for example, to say, "I'm going to try to be a better Christian." That's far too general. I need to say, "I'm going to set up a plan to battle my tendency to think that other people always have life easier than I do." If we do not establish specific spiritual goals for ourselves, we will make little if any real progress. We'll wander aimlessly from one experience to another. Realistic goals stretch our faith.—D. C. Egner.

**If you aim for nothing, you're sure to hit it!**

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**Daniel 1:8** - An interesting thing to watch from an airplane is the winding path of a river. No two waterways are alike, but they all have one thing in common: they are crooked. And the reason is simple—rivers follow the path of least resistance. They flow around anything that blocks their eroding work. Rivers are crooked because they take the easy way. Christians become crooked for the same reason. When we fail to overcome temptation, resist the devil, or tackle the enemy head-on, we deviate from the straight path God would have us follow. Unlike Daniel, who "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself," we bend to worldly pressures and compromise what we know is right. This shouldn't happen. Nothing is so strong that we need allow it to sidetrack us. Writing to Christians, John said, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1John 4:4). Believers can be "strong in the Lord" and press forward in "the power of His might." Rather than being overcome, we can be overcomers. Nothing should deter us in our Christian walk or divert us from our prescribed course. We don't have to give in to any temptation or foe. Unlike rivers, which have no choice in the matter, we can remain straight by refusing to follow the path of least resistance. —R W De Haan

**No one ever goes crooked  
who stays on the straight and narrow.**

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**Daniel 1:8** - WHILE working on a summer construction job to pay his way through seminary, Byron accepted a special favor from his supervisor. In exchange for a little painting and repair work on the man's hunting lodge, he could spend the rest of the day fishing, swimming, and relaxing at full company pay. Byron was enjoying his first evening in the cabin when the phone rang. It was his father. "What are you doing collecting company pay for private work?" he asked pointedly. Byron felt the sting of conviction. Even though he needed the money and knew he might be fired if he backed out, he left the cabin at once and told his supervisor he could not continue the arrangement. Many Christians are serious about guarding against the "big" sins like sexual immorality, but they aren't as careful about the "lesser" ones. Byron made this mistake, but he was sensitive enough to recognize it and correct it

The prophet Daniel and his three friends were asked to eat food that was ceremonially unclean according to Jewish law. To them it seemed like a little thing, but they had decided to be obedient to God in everything.

**How we handle little temptations  
is the true test of our character.**

—H V Lugt

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**Dare To Be A Daniel**—Daniel 1:8 - Bible characters like Daniel encourage us and show us how to live. We still need "Daniels" today—men and women who have convictions and the courage to stand for them even when it involves sacrifice or unpopularity. My father, Dr. M. R. De Haan, was just such a man. Oh, he wasn't perfect. He was human. He had his faults. Some people even thought of him as stubborn. But he was a man of the Book. He was a man of conviction. And he was a man of courage. It was 30 years ago, on December 13, 1965, that my father went home to be with the Lord. Yet I can recall his words to me on one occasion as if he said them only yesterday. Accenting his statement by pounding his fist on his desk, he said, "Richard, I don't care if the whole world differs with me. I must do what's right. I must act according to my convictions!" Of course, we must be careful to make sure our beliefs are properly grounded. But once we are certain of that, we should be like Daniel, who not only had convictions but the courage to stand for them. Today, when you are tempted to compromise your principles, don't give in. Dare to be a Daniel! — by Richard De Haan

The life that counts must toil and fight,  
Must hate the wrong and love the right,  
Must stand for truth, by day, by night—  
This is the life that counts.

—Anon.

**Christ gives us the courage of our convictions.  
You won't fall for what's wrong if you stand for what's right.**

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**Gaining Respect** - Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. —Daniel 1:8 - When a professional musician nicknamed "Happy" became a Christian, he quit playing in nightclubs and offered his services to a rescue mission. Some time later, he received a phone call from a club manager who wanted to hire him to do a show that would have brought in a lot of money. But Happy turned down the offer, telling the manager that he would be playing at the mission. Happy said, "He congratulated me. That surprised me. Here was a man who wanted me to play for him and he was congratulating me for refusing his offer." The manager respected Happy's decision. Daniel was a captive in a foreign land, but he did not forget his religious principles. He could not in good conscience eat meat that had been dedicated to a pagan god and had not been slaughtered in accordance with Hebrew laws. He asked for a simple fare of vegetables and water, and the steward risked his life to honor his request. I believe he did this because Daniel's noble conduct had earned his respect. The world looks with disdain on Christians who do not live what they say they believe. That's why we should remain true to our convictions. Consistency of character is what gains the respect of others.— by Herbert Vander Lugt

You'll gain respect when people see  
That you are faithful to God's Word;  
There may be some who disagree,  
But they will know you love the Lord.

—D. De Haan

**If you're living for Christ you may lose some friends,**

but you won't lose their respect.

## Daniel 1:9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials

- Ge 32:28 39:21 1Ki 8:50 Ezra 7:27,28 Ps 4:3 106:46 Ac 7:10

### "NOW GOD"

Compare Nehemiah's prayer (Neh 1:11) and the answer (Neh 2:4).

**Now God** - What a glorious phrase in the midst of national defeat and personal affliction (bondage)!

Surely this verse in concert with Da 1:8 is evidence that Daniel and his 3 friends experienced the truth Jehovah's great promise that...

the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.... (2Chr 16:9)

**God granted** - Don't miss this! A gift of God to the committed man of God, so that he might keep his commitment to be holy as He is holy. God honors those who choose to honor him (1Sa 2:30), regardless of the overwhelming "odds" against that person.

**Granted favor** - Solomon records a parallel thought, which while not a promise is nevertheless generally true (and which I have personally experienced)

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Pr 16:7)

Compare the godly life of **Joseph**...

Genesis 39:21 But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.

**Favor** ([02617](#))(**hesed/chesed/heced**) speaks of the Lord's loyal love, His covenant love, His steadfast, unfailing love and tenderness. Hesed indicates faithfulness to a relationship. To show kindness or hesed is to act in a loyal, loving way to a person. Hesed is the devoted love promised within a covenant. Hesed is love that is willing to commit itself to another by making its promise a matter of solemn record.

"**Hesed** encompasses deeds of mercy performed by a more powerful party for the benefit of the weaker one."  
(Huey)

**Hesed** is central to God's character and is closely tied to His covenant with His Chosen people; in fact the covenant may be thought of as the relationship from which the hesed flows.

God's **hesed** is "the Divine Love condescending to His creatures, more especially to sinners, in unmerited kindness" (Delitzsch).

**Compassion** (**racham**) is from a root word which speaks of a deep love (usually "superior" for "inferior") based on some "natural" bond (eg, Joseph's deep yearning feeling toward Benjamin. Ge 43:30)

**Solomon** prayed for compassion

1 Kings 8:50 forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You, and **make them objects of compassion** before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them

Daniel 1:9 is a beautiful example of the truth about God in Psalm 106:46 ([note](#))...

He also made them objects of compassion in the presence of all their captors.

**Spurgeon's Comment:** In our very worst condition our God has ways and means for allaying the severity of our sorrows: he can find us helpers among those who have been our oppressors, and he will do so if we be indeed his people.

**A. R. Fausset's Comment:** He made them also to be pitied of all them that carried them captives. This improved feeling towards the Jews through God's influence appears in Da 1:9; as Joseph similarly had his captivity improved by God's favour (Ge 39:21). So Evil Merodach, King of Babylon, treated kindly Jehoiachin,

**Racham** - 42v: Ge43:14 43:30 49:25 Dt13:17 Jdg5:30 2Sa24:14 1Ki3:26 8:50 1Ch21:13 2Ch30:9 Neh1:11 9:19,27,28,31 Ps25:6 40:11 51:1 69:16 77:9 79:8 103:4 106:46 119:77 119:156 145:9 Pr12:10 30:16 Isa46:3 47:6 54:7 63:7,15 Je16:5 42:12 Eze20:26 Da9:9,18 Ho2:19 Am1:11 Zec1:16 7:9

**Daniel 1:10 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."**

- Jn 12:42,43
- looking...haggard Mt 6:16, 17, 18

**Related Resources: How to Handle Fear Part 1; Part 2; Part 3; Part 4**

## FEAR OF MAN

**I am afraid** - In **Proverbs** we read that the antidote for **fear** (Ashpenaz) is **faith** (Daniel)...

The **fear of man** brings a **snare** (= The bait or lure in a fowler's net. Snare allures, then entraps and results in ruin), but he who **trusts** (Confident Trust in God's sovereignty and loving watchcare and sure Word of promise allows frail man to overcome the fear of man) in the LORD (Not "in" other people, not in psychological ploys, not in medications, not in programs, etc, but "**in Jehovah**") will be **exalted** (See Hebrew verb "sagab" also used in Pr 18:10 = "safe" - scroll down page to "Insights into Meaning of Sagab from the Psalms). (Pr 29:25)

**Charles Bridges comments:** (The fear of man is a) weighty hindrance to Christian integrity. Indeed--as Mr. Scott most truly observes--'it is'--often at least--'the last victory the Christian gains. He will master, by that grace which is given of God, his own lusts and passions, and all manner of inward and outward temptations. He will be dead to the pleasures of the world, long before he has mastered this fear of man. "This kind of spirit goeth not out" but by a very spiritual and devout course of life.'The hindrance meets us at every turn, like a chain upon our wheels; so that, like the Egyptian chariots, they "drive heavily." (Ex 14:25.) Oh! for a free deliverance from this principle of bondage; scarcely however to be expected, till we have been made to feel its power! Thank God--there is a way of deliverance. **Faith** unbinds the soul from **fear**. If **fear** makes the giant tremble before the worm, **trust in the LORD** makes the worm stronger than the giant. Neither the fury of the King (2Ki 6:31, 32) or of the people (Nu 14:6-10) neither the fire (Da 3:17), or the den of lions (Da 6:10) daunts and hurts him that "believeth in his God." 'He that fears to flinch, shall never flinch from fear.' Faith gives power to prayer. The strength from prayer makes us cheerful in obedience, and resolute in trial. Here is safety, strength, courage, peace. Nothing but faith gives the victory; but the victory of faith is complete.(1Jn 5:4,5, cp He 11:27) He only, who puts his trust in the Lord, is prepared, when God and man are at contraries, to "obey God rather than man." (Ac 4:19) A secret union with God is implanted in the soul by this faith; an union as right, as it is secret; a sacred spring of life--the energy of God Himself (Ga 2:20); triumphant therefore in the mightiest conflict with the flesh. The man, dependent on the world for happiness, is in bondage. The servant of God is in liberty. It matters not to him, whether the world smile or frown. He is safe, beyond its reach--set on high.1 Faith brings him to his strong tower. (Chap. 18:10.) There he is "kept by the power of God unto salvation." (1 Pet. 1:5.) Fear brings us into the snare. Faith brings liberty, safety, exaltation. Oh! thou God of power and grace, may my soul praise thee for this mighty deliverance, this joyous freedom! May I never be ashamed of my Master! May I be bound to his people, and glory in his cross! (Gal. 6:14.) (Example = 'I cannot wield the sword of the Spirit'--said the weak and timid Haller to his friends, when going to the disputation at Berne against the Romanists. 'If You do not stretch Your hands to me, all is over.' He then threw himself trembling at the feet of the Lord, and soon rose enlightened, and exclaiming 'Faith in the Saviour gives me courage, and scatters all my fears.'-D'AUBIGNE'S Hist. Refor. ([Bridges, Charles: A Commentary on Proverbs](#))

When we fear men's criticism, rejection, etc, one result is we fall into the **trap** of seeking to be men pleasers (Ga 1:10), constantly trying to do whatever it takes to make others like us. And if we fear men we will find ourselves falling into the trap of one **compromising** situation after another.

**We cannot simultaneously be a bondservant of the Most High God (like Daniel) and a slave of men (like Ashpenaz)**(cp Mt 6:24-note). **If you want to walk without the fear of man, then you must choose the fear of God which will enable you to walk as a "God-pleaser"**. There is simply no middle ground when it comes to our spiritual allegiance (cp Elijah's challenge to the "sons of Israel" in 1Ki 18:21, 22ff, 2Ki 17:41) Even as Daniel was faced with the challenge of theological compromise, believers today encounter continual (and increasing) pressure and temptation to accommodate to pagan beliefs or practices (e.g., [New Age practices](#), [Theophostic "Prayer Ministry" \[click for critique\]](#), listen to Bob DeWaay's [Running Against the Wind series in 2007](#), etc) in the worship and service of the true God, a ploy that Satan, the great deceiver has unfortunately used in every age.

**John MacArthur** runs a series of Biblical examples of compromise that drive home the point that the uncompromising life is the exceptional life...

And so go the compromises.

Adam compromised God's law, followed his wife's sin and lost paradise.

Abraham compromised the truth, lied about Sarah, and nearly lost his wife.

Sarah compromised God's Word, sent Abraham to Hagar who bore Ishmael and lost peace in the Middle East.

Esau compromised for a meal with Jacob and lost his birthright.

Saul compromised the divine word, kept the animals and lost the royal seed.

Aaron compromised his convictions about idolatry and he and the people lost the privilege of the Promised Land.

Samson compromised righteous devotion as a Nazarite with Delilah and lost his strength, his eyes and his life.

Israel compromised the commands of the Lord, lived in sin and when fighting the Philistines, lost the ark of God.

David compromised the moral and divine standard of God, adulterated Bathsheba, murdered Uriah and lost his child.

Solomon compromised convictions, married foreign wives and lost the United Kingdom.

Ahab compromised, married Jezebel and lost his throne.

Israel compromised the law of God with sin and idolatry and lost their homeland.

Peter compromised his conviction about Christ, denied Him and lost his joy. Later on, he compromised the truth of the one church for acceptance with the Judaizers and he lost his liberty.

Ananias and Sapphira compromised their word about giving, lied to the Holy Spirit and lost their lives.

Judas compromised his supposed love for Christ for 30 pieces of silver and lost his eternal soul.

Compromise...sad word. But, there are some people who don't compromise. ([The Consequences of an Uncompromising Life, Part 2](#)) (Ed: Did you note the common "refrain" of the tune of compromise? **Lost...lost...lost!** What irony, for the compromiser thinks he gains something and may seem to for a while but in God's accounting method, that gain is always loss! It seems axiomatic that spiritual compromise always leads to spiritual loss. **Dare to be a Daniel the next time you are tempted to compromise your convictions, your values, your integrity. God's "investment plan" has a guaranteed "high rate of return" not only in this life but the life to come** (cp 1Ti 4:7,8-note)

A few quotes on **compromise** from The Complete Gathered Gold (highly recommended)...

The middle of the road is where most accidents happen. - Anon.

Those who follow the crowd are quickly lost in it. - Anon.

It is impossible to compromise with sin and conquer it at the same time. - John Blanchard

Compromise makes a good umbrella but a poor roof; it is a temporary expedient. - James Russell Lowell

We must eternally bid defiance to that peace with men which is inconsistent with peace with God. -John Owen

**GOD HONORS THOSE  
WHO HONOR HIM**

One of the better stories of "no compromise" is the inspiring story of Scottish track star [Eric Liddell](#) he who had trained for the 100 meter race in the 1924 Olympics only to find out that it was to be run on Sunday. Although he was favored to win, his conviction to honor the Lord's day led him to withdraw a decision which resulted in considerable criticism from those who had formerly praised him. As providence would have it (cp 1Sa 2:30), a runner dropped out of the 400 meter race (a race he had not trained for) and Eric offered to fill the slot of this longer race which was scheduled for a weekday. And to everyone's surprise, Eric Liddell ran and won the gold medal in 1924. God honored his non-compromising spirit. Eric eventually died in a war camp in 1945 in China where he had gone to serve as missionary, a man who like Daniel remained uncompromising to the end. The stirring account of Eric Liddell's story was made into a movie (if you've not seen it, it is recommended), Chariots of Fire ([click for DVD version](#)), which won the Academy Award for best picture in 1981.

#### Resources Related to Fear of Men:

- How To Handle Fear Part 1
- How To Handle Fear Part 2
- How To Handle Fear Part 3
- How To Handle Fear Part 4
- Anxiety (merimna) - Word Study
- Anxious, be anxious (merimnao) - Word Study
- Jesus' solution "Do not be worried" Mt 6:25ff
- Paul's Solution - Philippians 4:6; Philippians 4:7
- Peter's Solution - Cast your cares on God - 1 Peter 5:7
- Worry - What is it?

**Daniel 1:11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.**

**To the overseer** - Not Ashpenaz, but someone under his command.

In Da 1:10 we see fear of man, but in Daniel we see faith including the conviction borne of that faith (Heb 11:1). He choose to take a stand on his convictions and because he had these convictions, he did not succumb to the fear of man (including even the possibility of death by an angered King! And in the next verse we see Daniel's tact.

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#### Daniel 1:11-21 Three Friends

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. —Proverbs 17:17

The Old Testament characters Job and Daniel had much in common. Both went through serious trials and challenges. Both had great success because of the blessing of God's presence in their lives. Both are viewed as giants of the faith, one for his patience in suffering and the other for his purity in an impure culture.

Job and Daniel had something else in common—each had three significant friends. Here, however, the similarities end. Job's friends became a thorn in his flesh, offering him condemnation when he needed compassion and companionship. As Job struggled with loss and grief, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar seemed bent on intensifying his pain rather than helping him in his adversity.

Daniel's three friends were very different. Taken captive together, Daniel and his companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, supported and strengthened one another in difficult times. They stood together in honoring God (Daniel 1) and in prayer (2:17-18), and in refusing to bow before the king's image (3:16-18). That's the kind of friend we need.

So what kind of friend am I? Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times." Who needs you to be a friend today?— by Bill Crowder

Lord, help me be the kind of friend  
That makes my friend secure,  
So he can find new strength and hope,  
His trials to endure.  
—D. De Haan

**A true friend is like support to a leaning wall.**

**Daniel 1:12 Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink**

**Please test your servants** (not just "us" but "your servants" - a submissive spirit) - Daniel presents a good model for respectfully presenting godly "objections" to superiors - he was tactful and polite, not brash and demanding. And because he had taken a stand for the Most High God, God stood with him and lifted him up granting him favor in the eyes of his superior. **How thoughtful and careful are we in what we say in similar situations that might compromise the integrity of our walk with God?**

**Vegetables** (zeroa') - This Hebrew word appears in a plural form in the OT, only here and in Da 1:16 and might refer to wheat or barley or fresh vegetables.

### **Daniel 1:12 Courage And Courtesy**

I have always admired the boldness, courage, and conviction of Daniel. Recently I was struck by the way he stood for his principles in a pagan culture. The Bible tells us that Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" with food and drink that God said was forbidden for Jews, so he asked his captors for another menu (Dan. 1:8). Instead of crossing his arms and refusing to eat, Daniel asked permission to take a different nutritional approach. When the official refused, Daniel pursued his goal with a polite request to someone else: "Please test your servants for ten days" (v.12).

We can learn from this young man, who took a bold stand for God by asking permission instead of making demands. There is no trace of arrogance in his behavior.

Gentleness and respect are to characterize our testimony to an unbelieving world. We are not to compromise our commitment to Christ, but we are to be ready to answer anyone who asks about our hope (1 Pet. 3:15-16). Our witness for Christ, therefore, is to be lived and spoken boldly, yet gently and respectfully.

When it's time to take a stand, let's follow Daniel's powerful example of courage combined with courtesy.— by David C. McCasland

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!  
—Bliss

**It's easy to stand with the crowd  
It takes courage to stand alone.**

**Daniel 1:13 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.**

### **Derrick Strickland - A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH**

INTRO: Sometimes our faith can become an inconvenience. It will place us in inconvenient situation.

I. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED NON-NEGOTIABLES IN OUR LIVES.

II. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH NEED NOT BE CONFRONTATIONAL.

III. A NON-NEGOTIABLE FAITH MEANS EMBRACING THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CONVICTIONS."

**Daniel 1:14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.**

Why did this man who feared he might lose his head listen to this young Jewish boy? Recall that in Daniel 1:9 God showed Daniel favor and compassion and this was surely a manifestation of this divine favor.

**Daniel 1:15 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.**

Such a reversal of the laws of nutrition would require supernatural intervention, again a reflection of the fact that God "granted Daniel favor and compassion" in Da 1:9.

**Archer** comments that...

This was the first- recorded exercise of faith on Daniel's part, and it served to prepare him for the even greater testings that were to follow. It proved completely successful; and at the end of the ten days the four Israelites looked healthier and handsomer than all their classmates (Ibid)

**Daniel 1:16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.**

- Da 1:11

Presumably this continued for their next 3 years at Babylon U.

**TODAY IN THE WORD**- Daniel 1:1-21 In the popular children's book *The Secret Garden*, Frances Burnett tells the story of the young girl Mary Lennox. Her childhood was spent in India, as her father worked for the English government there. For reasons unknown, Mary's parents kept her hidden from the outside world. died...and Mary was forgotten until some soldiers happened upon her. As there was no family living in India to care for her, Mary was then sent to England to live with her Uncle Archibald Craven whom she had never met, in a place she had never been. far from family and all that is familiar! This happened to Daniel when King Nebuchad-nezzar conquered Jerusalem and took the people to Babylon and Daniel was probably just a teenager when he was taken. foundation that kept him upright. Daniel had an amazingly strong commitment to the Lord. prisoners refuse to cooperate with their captors. But Daniel took that risk because he had his eye on Someone bigger than the king. He was committed to being pure before God, no matter the cost. Because God honored Daniel's resolve, his diet became the diet of all the young men being trained for the king's service (v. 16). And when the three-year training was over, God blessed them further by gifting them beyond the wisest counselors Nebuchadnezzar had around him. It's worth noting that Daniel chose his battles wisely. He didn't seem to object to being given a Babylonian name or to being trained in the language and learning of his captors. But when it came to the revealed law and will of God, Daniel was immovable. Daniel knew God and His Word, and nothing could make him say yes, or even maybe, when God had said no.

**Daniel 1:17 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.**

- God: Da 2:21,23 1Ki 3:12,28 4:29, 30, 31 2Ch 1:10,12 Job 32:8 Ps 119:98, 99, 100 Pr 2:6 Ec 2:26 Isa 28:26 Lk 21:15 Ac 6:10 7:10 Col 1:9 Jas 1:5,17
- knowledge Ac 7:22) (Understood visions and dreams - Da 4:9,10 5:11,12,14 10:1 Ge 41:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 Nu 12:6 2Ch 26:5 Eze 28:3 1Co 12:7, 8, 9, 10, 11

**God gave** - For the third time in this chapter we see the hand of God intervening in the life of men (Da 1:2, 9, 17), in this case granting them enhanced intellectual ability because of their faith and commitment to His Word. Although God never speaks directly in the book of Daniel, His sovereign presence saturates the story from beginning to end!

**Dreams and visions** - Daniel was granted skill in the "art of oneiromancy" (interpretation of dreams) even as Joseph had been granted during his "sojourn" to Egypt, in both cases this skill serving a to propel them into positions of power and influence in their respective governments.

**Matthew Henry...**

Pious young persons should endeavour to do better than their fellows in useful things; not for the praise of

man, but for the honour of the gospel, and that they may be qualified for usefulness. And it is well for a country, and for the honour of a prince, when he is able to judge who are best fitted to serve him, and prefers them on that account. Let young men steadily attend to this chapter; and let all remember that God will honour those who honour him, but those who despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

### Henry Morris...

In Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3-note). To those who sincerely study, believe and obey God's Word and who are determined to stand for His truth in an ungodly society, God will provide the necessary wisdom and knowledge to accomplish the work He calls them to do.

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### TODAY IN THE WORD Daniel 1:14-21

To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding. - Daniel 1:17

Although it was first introduced in 1972, the Atkins diet made its biggest explosion onto the weight-loss scene in 1999. People who employed the peculiar technique were shedding weight at an astounding rate, while boasting of eating as much bacon, steak, and other fatty foods as they pleased as long as they refrained from carbohydrates. What seemed like a formula for weight gain proved to be an effective weight-loss regimen for many people.

Daniel took more of a high-fiber, low-fat, high-faith approach, but weight loss was what he and his friends were hoping to avoid. At the end of the ten days, they shattered the expectations of the Babylonians, appearing healthier than their meat-eating peers. The results weren't necessarily miraculous, as a diet of beans, grains, fruits, and vegetables can provide more than adequate nutrition even for growing young men.

But the king didn't just want these men for their physical prowess. His chief concern appeared to be the areas of wisdom and understanding (v. 20). And the result of their faithful allegiance to God was unrivaled expertise in foreign fields of study. Daniel was granted additional insight into dreams and visions. It wasn't the training program that made them so talented. The text clearly names God as the source of their gifts (v. 17).

One might expect a man of Daniel's faith in Jehovah to be marginalized or belittled in the Babylonian court. But Nebuchadnezzar found the faithful four to be ten times better than the competition, and not just the other graduates of the program. Daniel and his friends surpassed the abilities of the king's entire roster of mystical experts.

The last statement in today's reading shows Daniel's longevity of service even until the end of the exile. Through his consistent pattern of faithfulness to the Lord, he was able to see the fulfillment of his purpose: to help restore Israel to her past glory and favor in the eyes of God. Daniel was also proving his credibility as one of the most important of God's prophets.

### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Why not ask God to bless you with wisdom appropriate to your situation so that He can be glorified today? Perhaps increased emotional understanding and sensitivity could help you witness to your family, or maybe God could grant you insight into scientific and logical matters and use you as an apologist. No matter what you choose, diligently seek out the knowledge of God as a foundation for your development and growth.

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**DANIEL 1:17 - IMAGINE** being a teenager in Daniel's predicament. The king has told you what you're to eat and drink. But there's a problem. God has told you something different. He said that the food on the king's menu is prohibited. How many of us could stand up to that kind of pressure?

Many people today think teenagers don't have what it takes to do what's right in situations where it costs something to take a moral stand. And some parents of adolescents think that the teenage years are simply a time to endure. But instead of dwelling on the things teens do wrong, we ought to be taking advantage of opportunities to encourage them to do right.

Teens that love God and want to serve Him need guidance and encouragement not scorn and criticism. They need people ahead of them blazing the trail not behind them biting their ankles. Only when adults exercise self-control and refuse to give in to the pressure of their own peer groups can we expect to have teens who do the same. —J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### Daniel 1:17 Teens and Those Who Love Them

Imagine yourself in Daniel's predicament. The king has told you, a Jewish teenager, what you're going to eat and drink. But there's a

problem: God has said that the food on the king's menu is prohibited. Could you stand up to that kind of pressure?

Many people don't think teens have what it takes to do what's right in a case like this—or in similar situations where it would cost them something to take a moral stand. Parents often think that the teenage years are simply a time to endure. But instead of dwelling on the difficulties they will face, we ought to think of the opportunities we have to encourage them to do what is right.

I think Daniel, the teen who was challenged to stand up to the king in God's name, must have had people who taught him to make right choices. And it showed, for he boldly challenged the king's rules.

Many teens have the love for God and wisdom that Daniel displayed. What they need is guidance and encouragement, not a prejudiced, negative attitude about the younger generation. Help the teens you know to develop the courage of Daniel.— by Dave Branon

#### ACTION SUGGESTIONS

Stay involved in the lives of teenagers.

Affirm their importance with words and actions.

Expect them to do what's right, even if it won't be popular.

Help them set their standards high—like Daniel's.

**Children tend to rise to the level of their parents' expectations.**

**Daniel 1:18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.**

**The end of the days** - Three years in the "Babylon U". If the youths were 14-15 when taken into exile in 605BC, they are now 17-18 years old. Recall that Daniel served during the reigns of 4 kings for approximately 70 years.

See how they kept from being indoctrinated at "Babylon U" - [See previous discussion](#)

**Daniel 1:19 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.**

- So - Da 1:5 Ge 41:46 1Ki 17:1 Jer 15:19

**Entered the king's personal service** - Daniel and his friends are a wonderful example of the the proverb...

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men. (Pr 22:29-[note by Charles Bridges](#)) (Remember although proverbs are not "promises" per se, they do are generally true...and worth heeding!)

**Daniel 1:20 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.**

- in every matter: 1Ki 4:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 10:1, 2, 3,23,24 Ps 119:99
- ten times: Ge 31:7 Nu 14:22 Neh 4:12 Job 19:3
- magicians: Da 2:2-11,21 4:7,8-18 5:7,8,17 Ge 41:8 Ex 7:11,12,22 8:7,19 Isa 19:3 47:12, 13, 14 2Ti 3:8,9

**Ten times better** - This phrase is most likely qualitative, signifying a fullness in their wisdom and understanding compared to their pagan peers. And so too can all believers be "ten times better". How? Knowing God's Word! As the psalmist affirms

Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. (Ps 119:98)

**Magicians and conjurers** - The question arises "What about their involvement in these occult practices?" Although it is difficult to

give a definitive answer, the fact remains that Daniel interpreted dreams in Daniel 2 and Daniel 4 as well as handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5 without any mention of having to resort to occult practices. Instead he simply went to his God in prayer and God revealed the interpretations directly to him. In sum, there is no evidence of inappropriate contact or conduct by Daniel in regard to the occult. To be in the same "realm" as the occultists does not mean he was an occultist. He was simply better at interpreting dreams and visions than the occultists because God granted him favor and ability and his God given superiority is shown repeatedly in the succeeding chapters.

**Tony Garland - Living in the Kingdom of Man** - Throughout this book, we find Daniel and his companions excelling in their service while immersed in a pagan culture which is man-centered rather than God-centered. Their example shows that, with wisdom, it is possible to resist worldly temptation while walking according to godly principles. If they could do so, then we can do so also. "How does the believer live in the kingdom of man, when he is surrounded 100% by human viewpoint, how does he live? Daniel was a young man who fought his way through the most concentrated dose of human viewpoint a believer had ever seen up until that time. Remember all the other heroes of the faith were men who lived inside the kingdom of God, on Jewish soil, under the priests and the prophets. They had their apostasy but they had the temple to go to. They always had the idolatry of Baalism but they always had the Torah to come back to. Daniel was all alone; Daniel had no priest; Daniel had no prophet to cry on his shoulder. All alone Daniel lived in the world of complete darkness and Daniel came out to be a shining example." (Robert Dean) "[The Book of Daniel is] written to show us that you don't need to compromise, you don't need to give in to some sort of expedient course of action, and you don't have to go along to get along just to advance in life, that God is the one who's in control of the believer's promotion or not, not mankind. It's not your job, it's not your employer, it's not your culture, it's not the political system, it's God who is in control, not man."<sup>306</sup> "Daniel's life serves as a textbook example of consecration to God first and foremost while trusting in Him to resolve the remaining issues." (Leon Woods) "If we, too, are to understand the Scriptures, I believe that we must travel the path of separation from the world. Nothing more destroys spiritual intelligence than merely floating with the stream of men's opinions and ways." (William Kelly) "God receives glory through his captive people who learn to work within a pagan system and yet retain their faith in him. Thus Daniel and his companions assimilate to Babylonian culture when possible without compromising their faith (Steinmann)." ([Daniel Defended - Daniel 1](#))

#### Daniel 1:21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king

- Da 6:28 Da 10:1)

### DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS HONORED WITH LONGEVITY AND HONOR

**Until the first year of Cyrus the king** - Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539BC and Daniel continued as an official under the Persians. The word **until** does not signify that Daniel died, for Daniel 10:1 takes place in the "third year of Cyrus king of Persia" or approximately 536BC. And so we can deduce that Daniel lived to see the completion of the 70 years of exile in Babylon and the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy that the Jews would be allowed to return to Jerusalem (see Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10, Ezra 1:1, 2, 2Chr 36:22, 23).

The venerable pastor **Ray Stedman** offers this wise counsel regarding our study of the book of Daniel...

A second precaution God has taken in Daniel, and even more especially in the book of Revelation, is that he doesn't introduce the prophetic section first, but brings us through six chapters into an understanding of the moral character he requires of the reader before the prophetic program can begin to make sense. In other words, you can't understand the last section of Daniel unless you have lived through and understood what is involved in the first six chapters. There is no way to understand what the prophetic program means unless you first grasp the moral lessons of the first part of the book. There is no way to cheat on this. You can't just read it through, and then turn to the prophetic program and hope to understand. You will find that you get nothing out of it. You really have to carefully analyze these initial chapters, think them through, begin to walk accordingly, and experience them, before the prophetic program comes to life. That is the glory of God's book. You can't understand it with just the intellect. . . . The first six chapters are for you if you are a teenager going to school where you are surrounded constantly by those who seem to have no interest in what God is like, or in the things of God. Daniel and his friends were themselves teenagers when they were first taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and carried off to the land of Babylon. As they began their career of faith, they did so with a total lack of understanding of life and with all the insecurity of a teenager in a hostile environment. The book

records in these first six chapters the pressure they underwent as they stood for their faith in the midst of these difficult surroundings. ([Daniel - On the Way to the Future](#))

**Daniel 2:1-23 Commentary**  
**Daniel 2:24-49 Commentary**

PREVIOUS

NEXT