

SBC – Feb. 9 2025

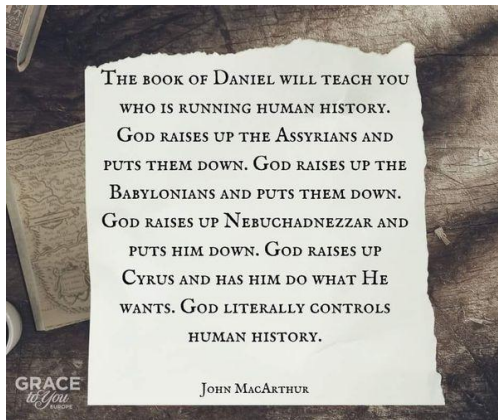
Daniel 1 (NKJV)

*“Daniel’s Integrity – God’s Favor”*

#1

Writ LARGE over the book of Daniel is the Sovereignty of God. Daniel emphasizes that God is sovereign even when present circumstances might dictate otherwise.

### Slide # 1



God controls world history, and Daniel shows us that He has chosen to do so largely in relation to His people, Israel. There are TWO great hubs in the Bible around which prophecy swirls and they are 1) Israel, and 2) the Messiah – Who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s GLORY is to predict what is going to happen through prophecy and then bring it to pass. And in Isaiah 42:8-9 God says He will not share this glory with any other. Daniel is an AMAZING book of prophecy. It proves the God of the Bible, the God of Israel, is the true and living God because of His omniscience to know the future and His omnipotence to bring it to pass.

“I wish to stress... that none of the prophets has so clearly spoken concerning Christ as has this prophet Daniel. For not only did he assert that He would come, a prediction common to the other prophets as well, but also he set forth the very time at which He would come. [cf. Dan. 9:24-27] Moreover he went through the various kings in order, stated the actual number of years involved, and announced beforehand the clearest signs of events to come.”

– **Jerome (A.D. 347-420)**

The book of Daniel is unquestionably the key to all biblical prophecy. It is the great apocalyptic book of the Old Testament, whereas Revelation is that of the New Testament. Passages such as Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, and the book of Revelation are unintelligible without a knowledge of the book of Daniel. – **Charles Feinberg**

Because Daniel is so accurate in his prophecies, critics have said it had to be written as history (looking back) instead of prophecy (looking forward). In chapter 11 alone, there are over 100 prophecies that were fulfilled during the intertestamental time **[400 silent years before the time of Christ]**. Because of this, the critics have tried to place the time of writing in connection with the days of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (175-164 BC). But the fact is Daniel wrote this book in about 530 BC. – about 350 years earlier than the critics say.

The real honest critics admit that their problem is with the supernatural. There are too many miracles in Daniel, such as Daniel in the lion's den. There are too many predictions that are fulfilled to the letter for rationalistic criticism to accept.

Just as Daniel the prophet escaped unscathed from the lions' den, so does Daniel escape from the "critics' den" in the minds and hearts of intelligent believers. – **William MacDonald**

Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel and speaks of him several times, showing he was a real person of history in the days of Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14, 20, 28:3)

Our Lord **quoted** from Daniel in reference to the "Abomination of Desolation" as seen in Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14. He also directly quoted Daniel 7:13 when describing His second coming "Behold, with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of Man was coming" (Matt. 24:30; 26:64, Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27). He also used **terminology** that is rooted in Daniel such as "the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3; -see Dan. 2:44) – "the son of Man" (Mt. 26:64, - see Dan. 7:13-14) – "a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now" (Matt. 24:21, - see Dan. 12:1). **Paul also** borrowed from its terminology: "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2:3-4, see Dan. 7:25, 11:36-39) and that one day "the saints will judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2; see Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). Then, too, the chronological structure and time references concerning the Tribulation and much of the symbolism in Revelation are built upon the book of Daniel. (Rev. 13:1-2, 17:3, 12; Dan. 7:3-27, 9:27, 11:36-39, 12:1-7).

In other words, if you want to get rid of Daniel – you are also going to have to get rid of Ezekiel, Jesus, Paul and John – because they all speak with one voice as to the legitimacy of the prophet Daniel.

Also, there are a good number of verses in the book that indicates plainly that Daniel is the writer in connection with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. (cf. 8:15, 27; 9:2; 10:2, 7; 12:4-5).

**Author:** Daniel. Daniel was of noble birth and was taken captive to Babylon as a very young man. He was a stand-out young man in every way and even as a young man – a man of NO COMPROMISE. He is said three times to be “**beloved of God**” (cf. Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19). Daniel is described as a man of purpose, prayer, and prophecy.

**Date of writing:** Probably about 530 B.C.. The date mentioned in Dan. 10:1 (the third year of Cyrus) was 536 B.C.. Daniel probably completed his writings shortly after this time.

## **Slide # 2**

**Theme: God is Sovereign over History**

**Outline:**

- A. The personal history of the prophet Daniel – chapter 1
- B. The prophetic history of the Gentiles – chapters 2-7
- C. The prophetic history of Israel – chapters 8-12

There is overlap, but the first six chapters are mainly narrative and the last six are largely prophetic. There are six narratives in chapters 1-6 and four visions in chapters 7-12.

**Background:**

1. About one-fourth of Scripture, when originally given, was prophetic. About half has literally been fulfilled, leaving the other half to yet be fulfilled. Israel is the prominent nation in prophecy, and Jerusalem is the prominent city. Prophecy consistently ties to Israel and Jerusalem as the major players. The central figure in all of prophecy is Christ Himself. He is the stone that crushes the image (cf. Dan. 2:34-35). He is the Son of Man (cf. Dan. 7:13). He is the Messiah (cf. Dan. 9:26).
2. Three books were written during the time of the captivity.
  - 1) Lamentations looks back in remorse.
  - 2) Ezekiel looks forward with an emphasis on the Temple (priestly view).
  - 3) Daniel looks forward with an emphasis on the nation (political view).
3. Daniel was intimately associated with four kings: Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:1), Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1), Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:31), and Cyrus the Persian (Dan. 10:1).

4. The book of Daniel was written using two languages. Chapters 1:1 - 2:4a, and 8-12 were written in Hebrew. These sections largely deal with God's program related to the Hebrew nation of Israel. Chapters 2:4b - 7:28 were written in Aramaic, with the emphasis being on the Gentile nations and how they fit into God's overall program in relation to Israel.
5. There were three sieges of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

### **Slide # 3**

#### ***Three Babylonian Sieges of Jerusalem***

605 B.C. – Daniel was taken captive

597 B.C. – Ezekiel was taken captive

586 B.C. – The Temple & the city of Jerusalem was destroyed

6. God is sovereign over history. He rules in the kingdom of men (cf. Dan. 2-4), setting up and putting down according to His will and purposes. God has a sovereign plan concerning the Gentiles (The times of the Gentiles) as seen in Dan. 2 and 7. God also has a program concerning Israel as seen in Dan. 9:24-27 (The 70 weeks of Daniel). In addition, in the New Testament, we see a PARENTHETICAL PROGRAM called the Church age (cf. Rev. 2-3). When God concludes His church-age program, He will then follow up and bring to consummation His program for the nations and His special plans regarding His people Israel.

### **Slide # 4**

God is sovereign in bringing Daniel to Babylon and granting him favor there. Chp. 1

God is sovereign in His rule over the world empires. Chp. 2

God is sovereign in the fiery furnace of persecution. Chp. 3

God is sovereign in humbling proud Nebuchadnezzar. Chp. 4

God is sovereign in judging forgetful Belshazzar in accordance with the writing on wall. Chp.5

God is sovereign in the lion's den. Chp.6

God is sovereign over the Gentile world powers. Chp.7

God is sovereign over Israel's future. Chps. 8-12

Daniel 1 serves as an introduction to the entire book. It provides the setting (Babylon) and the main characters in the narrative – especially Daniel. If you want to know where the future is going, you need to know Daniel. If you want to know where God is taking world history, you need to know Daniel.

**Daniel 1:1–21 (NKJV)**

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

At this time, Babylon has just become the unrivaled world power. Initially, Nebuchadnezzar was coregent with his father Nabopolassar over Babylon. However, immediately after Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, he got word that his father had died, and he rushed home to claim the throne, he was officially crowned the king of Babylon on Sept. 6 or 7 in 605 BC.

Critics have sought to make a big deal over the dating here. Jeremiah writes that this happened in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 25:1, 9; 46:1) while as noted here, Dan. 1:1 says it happened in the third year of his reign. Critics argue both can't be right. But hold on, maybe they can be.

Most likely, Daniel used the Babylonian system, which did not count a king's year of accession to the throne, while Jeremiah used the Israelite system of counting, which did include the accession year, thus making it the fourth year. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

This besiegement of Jerusalem is well documented as happening in 605 BC. This is a profound date because it marks the first time since Israel had a Davidic King that the Gentiles were allowed to take over Jerusalem. Thus, this marks the beginning of the transition to what Christ referred to as "***the times of the Gentiles***" (Lk. 21:24).

**Slide # 5****Luke 21:24 (NKJV)**

**24** And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled.

The times of the Gentiles are marked by these three traits...

**Slide # 6*****What Defines the Times of the Gentiles:***

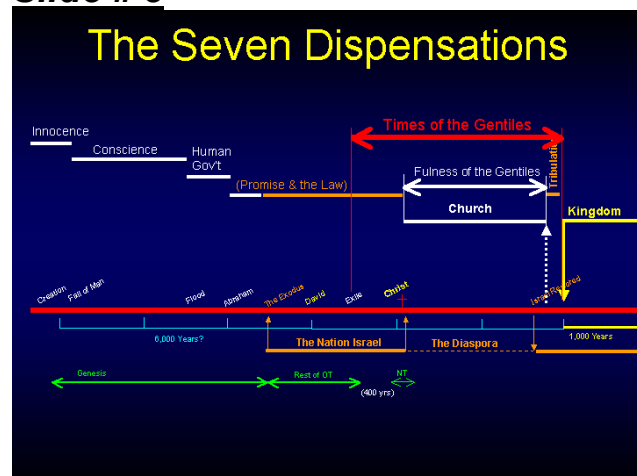
1. David's Throne is Unoccupied
2. Jerusalem/Israel is under Gentile domination
3. God's glory is absent from His temple

The transition to the times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonians taking over Jerusalem in 605 and continues all the way to the Second Coming of Christ. So right now, we are still in “***the times of the Gentiles***,” and Jerusalem/Israel is still dealing with their perennial Gentile problem. Even now the Gentiles control the Temple Mount – the most sacred site in Israel for the Jews.

### Slide # 7



### Slide # 8



The “*times of the Gentiles*” relates to four major Gentile world powers that will comprise world history from the time of Babylon on as developed in Daniel 2 & 7. Those four kingdoms are Babylon, Medo/Persia, Greece, and Rome, including the last phase of the Roman Empire which we commonly call the Revived Roman Empire out of which comes the Antichrist.

Daniel 1:1 transitions world history into “***the times of the Gentiles***” where we still are today.

**2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.**

Here we have our first “**sovereign alert**”. Notice this happened because the Lord did it. Nebuchadnezzar was able to do what he did against the Jews only because God allowed it. It was the sovereign hand of God controlling the whole situation. It wasn’t a matter of being “unlucky”. It was God’s doing. It was a matter of judgment, just exactly as God had said He would bring on His disobedient people (cf. 2 Chron. 36:21; Jer. 25:11).

**Shinar** is the old name for Babylon.

In Zechariah 5:5-11 a vision was given concerning the end times in which was seen an ephah basket, which was a basket used for commercial purposes to measure dry grains, etc. In the basket was a woman representing wickedness. The basket is then pictured as being carried away, and Zechariah asks the interpreting angel:

### Slide # 9

#### **Zechariah 5:10–11 (NKJV)**

**10** So I said to the angel who talked with me, “**Where** are they carrying the basket?”

**11** And he said to me, “To build a house for it **in the land of Shinar;** **when it is ready,** the basket will be set there on its base.”

Shinar is the old name for Babylon. Shinar is the oldest designation for this area, followed by Mesopotamia, followed by Chaldea, followed by Babylon – all referring to the same basic locale. Shinar is the more ancient term, harking back to the days of Nimrod and the hatching of the mystery religions and corrupt commercialism in this area in conjunction with the tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 10:10, 11:2, Dan. 1:2).

House refers to a place of dwelling. In view is the CENTER, or the key base of operations. This will be located in the land of Shinar. It is there that the basket will be set on its base or on its pedestal in the end times. In effect, this will be the HEADQUARTERS for wickedness!

The idea is that wickedness as a system involving corrupt commercialism originated in the land of Shinar and then emanated outward and corrupted the entire world but was still restrained. It was under Nimrod that Babel became the earth’s “mother of harlots” (cf. Rev. 17:5). At a future time, this wickedness will once again be concentrated where it first originated –in the **land of Shinar**, which is the heartland of modern-day Iraq.





When it comes to Israel, God does nothing unless He first reveals it to His servants, the prophets (Amos 3:7). This is the consistent divine pattern. God prophetically tells what is going to happen to Israel and then He brings it to pass. This has been the pattern since they became a nation.

**3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles,**

Ashpenaz was the chief official of Nebuchadnezzar. Eunuchs could denote one who had been emasculated, but sometimes it simply meant one who was an official – such as in the case of Potiphar in Genesis 39:1.

Very possibly, Nebuchadnezzar had Daniel and his friend emasculated as it was common to do this to slave labor. Daniel never married.

This leading official was ordered to bring some of the children of Israel and note, specifically, “**some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles.**” Nebuchadnezzar was looking for royal young people of noble background from the Jews whom he could mold and shape to use for his purposes.

Again, this was exactly according to prophecy: Over one hundred years before, in about 701 BC, King Hezekiah in Judah had wanted to impress visitors from Babylon, so he showed them all his treasures. Isaiah the prophet then confronted Hezekiah...

### ***Slide # 11***

#### **Isaiah 39:1–2 (NKJV)**

**1** At that time Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, **king of Babylon**, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

**2** And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and **showed them the house of his treasures**—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—**all that was found among his treasures**. There was **nothing** in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

### ***Slide # 12***

#### **Isaiah 39:6–7 (NKJV)**

**6** ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, **shall be carried to Babylon**; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD.

**7** ‘And they shall take away **some of your sons** who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall **be eunuchs** in the **palace of the king of Babylon.**’ ”

Fast forward over 100 years, and here we are in Babylon, seeing the fulfillment of what Isaiah had said. They took the temple treasures and they took the noble descendants to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon – exactly as prophesied.

It wasn’t a matter of Babylon’s god winning the day – but rather a matter of fulfilled prophecy as a matter of disciplinary judgment on the Jews.

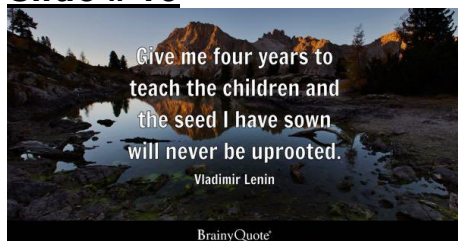
**4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.**

“**Young men**” literally means “**boys**” or “**children**”. They were thought to have been about 15 years of age. These young men were sharp – the cream of the crop. They were good-looking, physically fit, smart, and good potential candidates to serve in the king’s palace.

The goal was to “Babylonize” them. To “culturalize” them to where they spoke and thought like good Babylonians. This really was intended to be a form of brainwashing.

According to the Babylonian strategy, they were still young enough to be impressionable, still being in their formative years.

### **Slide # 13**



However, the “programmers” underrated the resolve of commitment found in Daniel and his three friends. They were not your average young people. They had a genuine relationship with the Lord God of Israel.

At this time, Babylon was considered to be the seat of academia in the known world. So they were looking for brilliant young men they could train and assimilate into the culture of Babylon – especially those who could be of useful service to the king in his palace.

The Chaldean language was especially difficult. In addition, it is thought that they would have had instruction in such things as astronomy, astrology, agriculture, architecture, law, mathematics, literature, and religion.

**5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.**

Their training was to last for three years and the king gave them provisions of his own delicacies and wine. They were being trained to serve the king in his court, and no expense was spared.

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

These were their Jewish names, which honored the God of Israel. Their names were probably meant to be a testimony. Even today, many Christian parents give their children names that reflect their faith.

### **Slide # 14**

**Daniel** - God is my judge

**Hananiah** - God is gracious

**Mishael** - God is without equal

**Azariah** - God is my helper

**7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.**

*“Welcome to Babylon! The first thing we are going to do is change your names. We are going to give you Babylonian/Pagan names. We are going to change your very identity from that of God-fearing Jews to that of idolatrous pagans.”* Whereas they had God-honoring names now they were given names reflecting idolatrous gods.

**Slide # 15**

Daniel renamed **Belteshazzar** - meaning "***Bel will protect***" (chief god over all others – also called “Marduk” – god of creation, etc.)  
 Hananiah renamed **Shadrach** - meaning "***Command of Aku***" (sun-god).  
 Mishael renamed **Meshach** - meaning "***Who is like Aku***" (sun-god).  
 Azariah renamed **Abednego** - meaning "***Servant of Nego***" (god of vegetation)

The attempt of the Babylonians was to change the religious identity of these Jewish young men. It was part of the brainwashing strategy.

**8 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.**

**“But Daniel”**. There are a few major “BUTS” in the book of Daniel. Here is the first one. “But” is a contrast word. In spite of all the influence and pressure to assimilate, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s provisions.

People might do a lot of things outwardly that are beyond a person’s control to try and make them conform, but the HEART is still controlled by the individual. The HEART is the place of commitments involving the will.

**Pastor Chuck Swindoll** famously said, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."

We don’t choose our circumstances. We don’t choose the weather, the direction of the economy, what people around us will do, or the direction of world events. So, often we don’t get to choose our situation, but we always do get to choose our attitudes.

**Victor Frankl**, was a brilliant Jewish doctor whom the Nazis imprisoned in a concentration camp He said that he learned that *“everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way”*.

You can choose to respond to people in ways that glorify God no matter what they do to you or the circumstances you find yourself in.

Some ships go east, and some go west,  
 Before the wind that blows;  
 It's the set of the sail, and not the gale;  
 That determines the way it goes.

Even as a very young man Daniel was committed to his God. This was a testing time -and he passed the test. He resolved within himself that he would not compromise.

This type of commitment does not normally happen spontaneously on the spur of the moment. No, Daniel had a steeled commitment to God already in place. And then, when he faced this challenge, his commitment was unmovable.

It appears that Daniel was the leader of his young friends. They all followed suit, but Daniel set the pace. In all the book of Daniel, we never find him compromising – anywhere throughout his entire 70-year career. He was consistently a man of “**no compromise**” – a man of resolve to be faithful to God.

There is an old song titled “***Dare to be a Daniel***”.

Dare to be a Daniel  
 Dare to stand alone  
 Dare to have a purpose firm  
 Dare to make it known

Now, we are not told exactly why the king's provisions were defiling – only that they were. They very possibly included things like “**pork**,” which were forbidden to the Jews (cf. Lev. 11).

Defile is a strong word that Scripture applies to things the Lord abominates (cf. Lev. 18:24-30). – **John MacArthur**

Daniel was a man of conviction and committed to “**no compromise**” but he also handled himself with great wisdom.

In a winsome way he “**requested**” (not demanded) of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. He sought to reason with him. He humbly asked permission. The spirit in how one handles himself, often makes all the difference.

His actions were a combination of godliness, courtesy, and courage.  
 – **Charles Feinberg**

**9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.**

Here we have another “**sovereign alert**”. God had brought Daniel into favor with the chief of the eunuchs (cf. Prov. 16:7). Note Daniel’s resolve in verse 8 and God’s favor in verse 9. They go together. God honors those who honor Him. In 1 Sam. 2:30 God says, “**those who honor Me I will honor**”. That was certainly true in Daniel’s life.

**Slide # 16**

**2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV)**

**9** For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those **whose heart is loyal to Him**. ...

**Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)**

**23 Keep your heart** with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

**10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.”**

This chief of the eunuchs, in effect, said to Daniel: “*I like you, but if this change in diet leaves you looking thin and wimpy, it could cost me my life.*”

But again, we see the poise and wisdom of Daniel...

**11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,**

**12 “Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.**

**13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king’s delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.”**

At this point, it appears that Daniel appealed to a lower-ranking person (the steward) who didn’t have the responsibility to report directly to the king. Again, note the reasonable and humble demeanor of Daniel in dealing with this situation. Being loud and demanding seldom works – especially when you are in a subservient position of weakness.

Daniel wisely and winsomely suggests a proposal – a test. He suggested that for 10 days, they be allowed to eat just vegetables and water and then be examined. Then he said, “***as you see fit, so deal with your servants.***”

**14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.**

**15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies.**

Sweet reasonableness won the day! The steward consented and tested them for 10 days. At the end of that period, Daniel and his friends appeared to look better and healthier than all the other young men in the program. “Fatter” here is the idea of “healthier”.

**16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.**

Once they passed the test, the steward no longer felt it necessary to continue the regiment of the king’s delicacies and wine but instead gave them a steady diet of the vegetables they requested.

This obviously was a visible testimony to the pagan steward who should have realized something special was happening in relation to these young men. It certainly was evidence of God’s blessing in their lives.

**17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**

Here, we have the **third “sovereign alert”** in the passage. God gave these young men special knowledge and wisdom. They were the brightest in the class by far. But it was God-given!

In addition, Daniel was also given an understanding regarding visions and dreams, which we will see play out in short order. This sets the tone for the events of the next chapter and the remainder of the book.

But the point is they were “***God-made***” men – not self-accomplished. They were sold out to the Lord, and God made them what they were.

All the way through, we see an emphasis on the sovereign hand of God.

**Slide # 17**

- v. 2 And the **Lord gave**...
- v. 9 Now **God had brought** Daniel into favor...
- v. 17 ...**God gave them** knowledge....

**18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.**

**19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.**

In the final interview before the king, Daniel and his friends excelled! They were brilliant! They definitely got the job and were granted to be in the position of special service to the king.

**20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.**

The *magicians* dealt in the dark world of the occult. They claimed to have access to dark secrets, tell fortunes, or predict things to come.

The word “*astrologers*” is translated as “*conjurers*” in the LSB. It refers to those who, through spells and incantations, seek to communicate and connect to the spirit world.

Babylon was a dark place that dabbled in all manner of demonic activity.

But the bright spot was Daniel and his three friends who knew and stood for the one true God – the God of Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar did not yet realize it, but he was being initiated into the reality that the One True God has a way of working that defies human wisdom and the ways of the world.

He did not yet realize it, but what he saw on display in these young men was a GOD THING! God was about to take these young vulnerable men and turn the world of Babylon upside down through their influence.



But really, it was GOD behind the scenes who was the KEY player.

God's ways are not our ways – they are so much more awesome and grand. Think about it: These young men had everything against them. They were young, totally out of their element, estranged from their land of nativity; they were in the extreme minority in the thick of a totally idolatrous and wicked context, and they faced circumstances in captivity where they had all their rights and freedoms stripped away.

Seems like a pretty dismal and hopeless situation – right? WRONG! God was about to put Himself on display through these “weak” instruments in a most powerful way (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). This sets the table for the rest of the book.

## **21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.**

Daniel was the stand-out young man of no compromise. God honored Daniel by giving him a long-term ministry in Babylon and then also in the Persian Empire that followed.

The first year of Cyrus denotes the end of Babylon's rule. Thus, we see that Daniel survived the entirety of Babylonian rule. In spite of all the attempts of Babylon to brainwash and influence him, in spite of it all he remained faithful to the end.

God made special mention of Daniel in the book of Ezekiel as being an outstanding example of faithfulness.

### **Slide # 18**

#### **Ezekiel 14:14 (NKJV)**

**14** Even if these three men, **Noah, Daniel, and Job**, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord GOD.

#### **Ezekiel 14:20 (NKJV)**

**20** even though **Noah, Daniel, and Job** were in it, as I live,” says the Lord GOD, “they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”

Daniel had more than 70 years of service (often in close connection to the highest realms of government) in the heart of the pagan world (cf. Dan. 10:1).

He served under various kings and, in each case, with distinction and without compromising his faith. In the sovereignty of God, Daniel found himself in Babylon, but Babylon was never in him. His heart remained sold out for God throughout. No wonder that three times in the book of Daniel, he is called “**greatly beloved**” (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19).

It is possible that the long-term effects of Daniel’s ministry include 1) influencing Cyrus’s decree in sending Israel back from exile as seen in Ezra 1; 2) in the Jews’ rebuilding Jerusalem’s wall under Nehemiah; 3) in eventually seeing the wise men from the East come to worship the new born King of Israel Who was born in Bethlehem; and 4) in the multitudes of people that have been influenced down through history even to this day by his no compromise example.

**In fact**, we named our daughter Faith after Daniel – giving her the name Faith Daniele. Our desire was that her name be used as a testimony.

What a standout example is Daniel to us in these days of apostasy. It is possible to stand for God without compromise as we purpose in our hearts that we will be faithful! As we do so we too can expect the favor of God to rest upon us.

There are TWO great introductory emphases in the first chapter of Daniel.

- 1) In spite of bleak circumstances, there is an emphasis on God greatly using “no compromise” godly representatives no matter the odds.
- 2) There is an emphasis on the sovereign God, the One true God, the God of Israel, Who behind the scenes controls all things.

If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle-field besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point. (This quote is often attributed to Martin Luther, but this is debatable).

*Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone, Dare to have a purpose firm, Dare to make it known. Dare to be a person of no compromise to the glory of God!*

God help us to purpose in our heart to be faithful to Him!