3.1 - Daniel 1

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3.1.1 - Daniel 1:1

The significance of the event recorded in the first verse of the book of Daniel, the first of several deportations of Jews from the southern kingdom of Israel to *Babylon* leading to the eventual destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., can only be appreciated by understanding the historical context within which Daniel lived. See *Introduction* and especially *Historical Setting* for helpful background information.

The downfall of Israel occurred in stages, becoming ever more severe, until the city and temple were destroyed. This was the first stage in God's judgment against the rebellious nation, and one can only wonder how things might have turned out if the people of Israel—and especially their corrupt leadership—had responded by repenting and turning back to God. Several prophets were sent by God over a lengthy period of time to warn Israel in advance of the impending judgment, but the nation did not heed. [1] Thus, we find Jeremiah recording the sad pattern.

> The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the **fourth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the **first year of Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon), which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' Yet you have not listened to Me," says the LORD, "that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.' " (Jer. 25:1-11) [emphasis added]

The attack by Nebuchadnezzar [2] was according to the sovereign purpose of God as revealed by Jeremiah and other prophets. This fact becomes evident in the phrase *the Lord gave Jehoiakim . . . into his [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand* in Daniel 1:2▸.

Two chronological indicators in Jeremiah's passage above, the *fourth year of Jehoiakim* and the *first year of Nebuchadnezzar*, factor into an apparent discrepancy between the report of this event by Jeremiah and Daniel (see below).

As Israel continued its descent into godlessness, two more major deportations followed. The final destruction of Babylon would not take place until 587 B.C., some 19 years later, initiating the Times of the Gentiles: the overthrow of independent Jewish rule from the throne of David, placing the Jews under the "hand of the Gentiles . . . [such that] . . . those who hated them ruled over them" (Ps. 106:41).[3] The final fall of the city and its destruction is recorded in 2K. 25; 2Chr. 36:11-21 (2Chr. 36:6-7 being parallel to the events recorded here); Jer. 39:1-10; 52; and Eze. 17:11-21. Both this earlier deportation and the final fall of the city set in motion prophetic clocks related to 70-year periods recorded in Scripture. See *Seventy Years of Judgment*.

3.1.1.1 - Bible Difficulty - Jehoiakim's Third or Fourth Year?

In the third year of Jehoiakim

This is one of several chronological indicators within the book of Daniel (Dan. 1:1▸, 21▸; 2:1▸; 5:31▸; 7:1▸; 8:1▸; 9:1▸; 10:1▸). This event occurred in 606 B.C.[4] See *Chronology of Daniel*.

Critics have seized upon the apparent contradiction between this statement by Daniel which associates the siege by Nebuchadnezzar with the *third year* of the reign of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1▸) and the statement (shown above) by the prophet Jeremiah that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar was Jehoiakim's *fourth year* (Jer. 25:1).

Apparent contradictions are not unusual within the Scriptures. Nevertheless, they do constitute "Bible difficulties" where, at first glance, there *seems* to be some sort of error.[5] Nowhere is this perhaps more frequent than in relation to chronological indicators in Scripture—a subject area of great complexity and subtlety. Upon closer consideration and after obtaining additional facts, these difficulties often resolve, providing additional insight into the Scriptures. The main problem is an incomplete knowledge of the facts.

> What causes such contradictions? It is, generally, from not having all the facts. Kenneth Kantzer, one of the founders of Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, Illinois, tells an account of his aunt's death found in two different newspapers. One newspaper said his aunt was hit by a car while crossing the street and died later that day. Another paper said she was killed when the car in which she was a passenger collided with another vehicle. Both accounts were true. She was hit by a car while crossing the street. Someone put her in his car to take her to the hospital. On the way there was a collision in which she was killed. Not having all the facts can leave us with a misleading feeling that there is a very serious contradiction.[6]

And so it is with many apparent contradictions we encounter in our study of the Bible. Unfortunately, the skeptic lacks the inclination, Scriptural knowledge, and patience to press through to a solution—or is simply too antagonistic to accept a viable solution once it has been identified. (Witness the continued attacks upon the book of Daniel concerning issues which conservative scholars have suitably addressed many times in the past.) However, those who exercise patience and trust in God's Word will find a pattern—the Scriptures are vindicated time and time again!

> If previous 'intractable' problems have consistently yielded to patient analysis, the commentator may become more and more confident that new challenges can be met with equal success and less and less willing naïvely to equate superficial divergence with genuine contradiction. And despite two centuries of skeptical onslaught, it is fair to say that all the alleged inconsistencies among the Gospels have received at least plausible resolutions.[7]

This pattern of apparent discrepancy which resolves upon closer examination is the case before us. More than that, the apparent discrepancy—so readily detectable by the barest comparison of the two passages—actually

provides evidence of the authenticity of Daniel.

> If the book of Daniel was *not* written during the sixth century B.C., but was deliberately forged in the second century B.C. by an intelligent Jew trying to convince his contemporaries that his book had been written by Daniel four hundred years earlier, he would have been extremely careful to avoid obvious contradictions with the famous and canonical book of Jeremiah.[8]

> It should also be noted that Daniel (cf. Dan. 9:2▸) had been studying the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the end of the Exile (i.e., Jer. 25). Consequently it would be strange if he had not paid attention to Jeremiah's designation of the fourth year. Daniel's mention of the third year must therefore be regarded as an incidental touch of authenticity.[9]

In other words, the difference in years constitutes a "more difficult reading" which any forger would take pains to avoid.

There are several factors contributing to an understanding of how Daniel could refer to this as Jehoiakim's third year, whereas Jeremiah refers to Jehoiakim's fourth year. We briefly discuss each factor below and refer the reader to the endnotes for additional detail.

3.1.1.1.1 - Deportation Prior to Carchemish?

Perhaps the simplest solution to the perceived difficulty is that Jeremiah and Daniel are describing *two different events*. There need not be any conflict between Dan. 1:1▸ and Jer. 25:1 if the siege and deportation of Daniel occurred prior to the events described by Jeremiah. Commentators are divided between whether the siege and deportation described by Daniel preceded or followed the campaign of Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish (where Pharaoh Necho of Egypt was defeated, 2K. 23:29; Jer. 36:1; 46:2, 13, 26).[10]

> It is concluded that the data demands both an invasion and a deportation by Nebuchadnezzar in the year *before* that king began to reign, that is, the year prior to Carchemish. The fact is that Daniel Chapter two is contextually after the final testing of Daniel, and chapter one states that the examination took place during the third year of Daniel's deportation (Dan. 1:5▸, 18▸). Furthermore, when this is compared to Jeremiah 25:1, which states that Nebuchadnezzar's first year of reign was Jehoiakim's fourth, it demands the conclusion that the third year of Daniel's deportation was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign . . . It follows then that Daniel 1:1▸ does not conflict with Jeremiah 25:1 as is often claimed. Observe that Daniel 1:1▸ does not say that the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's *reign*. As illustrated, such would be impossible from the data in chapter one when compared to Dan. 2:1▸ which is said to occur in Nebuchadnezzar's second year of dominion. Moreover, Daniel 1:1▸ is merely a statement of *identification*, i.e., the Nebuchadnezzar who came and besieged Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's third year is the same man who became sole Rex the following year (Jer. 25:1). . . . The removal of Daniel, the other "princes" of Judah, and part of the vessels of the House of God had to have occurred in 606 B.C., the year prior to Carchemish.[11]

> Jeremiah (Jer. 25:1; 46:2) merely says, the fourth year of Jehoiakim coincided with the first of Nebuchadnezzar, when the latter *conquered the Egyptians at Carchemish;* not that the *deportation of captives from Jerusalem* was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim: this probably took place in the end of the third year of Jehoiakim, shortly *before* the battle of Carchemish [Fairbairn].[12]

Commentators who suggest that Daniel was taken prior to the battle of Carchemish include Anderson,[13] Fausset,[14] Jones,[15] Leupold,[16] and Wilson.[17]

Other commentators consider it unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar could have reached Jerusalem to take Daniel before the defeat of the Egyptian army at Carchemish.[18]

The view that Daniel was taken in 606 B.C., prior to the battle of Carchemish, has several points in its favor: 1) it offers the simplest explanation for understanding how Daniel 1:1▸ and Jeremiah 25:1 can both be true (they are describing separate events); 2) it accounts for Daniel having undergone *three* years of training (Dan. 1:5▸, 18▸) after which he interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar's *second* year (Dan. 2:1▸); 3▸) it accounts for a 70 year

period from the beginning of Israel's captivity to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem following the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. See *Seventy Years of Judgment*.

3.1.1.1.2 - Nisan or Tishri Years?

If Daniel was captured in the incursion of Nebuchadnezzar after the Battle of Carchemish, additional factors are able to explain the differences between the accounts of Jeremiah and Daniel.

Some of us reading Daniel may live in cultures where the new year begins on the first day in January. Thus, when we see mention of *years* in the Bible, we may not appreciate that the point of view of the person writing Scripture differs from ours. The calendars of ancient cultures varied from ours in numerous ways. For one thing, the year didn't begin on January 1st. Instead, the new year might begin in Nisan (March/April time-frame) or Tishri (September/October time-frame) depending upon the writer. Furthermore, the perspective of two ancient writers might differ if they were writing from different geographic regions or regimes. In the case at hand, Jeremiah wrote from a perspective where the new year (and king's reign) was counted from Nisan, whereas Daniel apparently counted Jehoiakim's reign taking Tishri as the first of the year. Howe explains:

> Daniel employed the Tishri calendar system in which the first month of the year was Tishri, around October in our modern calendar. Jeremiah employed an Assyrian calendar system that marked Nisan (around April) as the first month of the year. . . . Nebuchadnezzar's invasion took place in the summer of 605 B.C., between the months of Nisan and Tishri. [19]

Commentators who agree with Howe include Archer,[20] Miller,[21] Wood,[22] Thiele,[23] Whitcomb,[24] and Yamauchi.[25]

See *Counting Years* where we include a helpful illustration showing how an historical event can be attributed to different years depending upon when the year is said to begin.

3.1.1.1.3 - Accession or Non-Accession Years?

There is another factor which must be considered when comparing dates within Scripture. The situation concerns the practical matter of how to count the years of a king's reign. In some governmental systems, elections are held near the end of one year and those who win the election assume their newly elected office on the first day of the following year. However, in ancient cultures, the change of a king's reign was generally less predictable due to military campaigns, political intrigue, or natural death. Thus, the change of rule on a throne typically occurred sometime during the course of the year. The question then arises: should the partial year of the previous king be attributed to the king who left the throne or to the new king ascending the throne? In the case before us, two different systems were used.

One system counts the initial partial-year a king assumes the throne as his *accession year* rather than the first year of his reign. His first year was said to begin on the following new year. Thus, his first partial year can be considered "year zero." An alternative system counts the initial partial-year of the new king's reign as his first year—this is known as *non-accession-year* dating. A study of chronological indicators in various passages indicates that Daniel, writing from Babylon, used accession-year dating, whereas Jeremiah used non-accession-year dating common among the Jews.[26] Harrison explains:

> The difference of one year can be accounted for by the fact that in Babylonia the year in which the king ascended the throne was designated specifically as "the year of the accession to the kingdom," and this was followed by the first, second, and subsequent years of rule. In Palestine, on the other hand, there was no accession year as such, so that the length of rule was computed differently with the year of accession being regarded as the first year of the particular reign. Daniel thus reckoned according to the Babylonian system of chronology, while Jeremiah followed the normal Palestinian pattern. Consequently, the third year of the Daniel-system of computation would be identical with the fourth year in that employed by Jeremiah, an explanation that removes the alleged difficulty. [27]

In agreement with Harrison, we find Ferguson,[28] Jones,[29] Steinmann,[30] and Wilson. [31]

Some Bible chronologists believe that *both* accession/non-accession-year and Nisan/Tishri-year dating is required to explain the differences. [32]

See *Counting Years* where we include a helpful illustration showing how an historical event can be considered as having taken place in two different years, depending on whether accession- or non-accession-year dating is employed.

3.1.1.1.4 - Siege Begun vs. Completed?

Yet another solution proposed by commentators is that the difference between Daniel's and Jeremiah's count for the year of Jehoiakim are explained by a delay between the two events: that Daniel's perspective is at the point of departure of Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon (or the point when the siege was mounted), whereas Jeremiah's perspective is the point at which Jerusalem succumbed.

> If Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in mid-February he would be in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign (Dan. 1:1▶). If he captured it in the month Nisan a few weeks later, he would be in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign (Jer. 25:1). [33]

> the verb "came," *ba'*, may also be taken in the sense "he set out" rather than in the sense "he arrived." At least the following passages may be cited for this usage: Gen. 45:17; Num. 32:6; 2 Kings 5:5; Jonah 1:3, and perhaps 1S. 22:5. *Keil* and *Zoeckler* defend this view; so does *Hengstenberg*. *Kliefoth* refuses to allow its use in connection with military expeditions, but he must have overlooked Num. 32:6. In any case, the contention built upon this fact is that, though Nebuchadnezzar started in the *third* year of Jehoiakim's reign, he did not arrive until the *fourth*. If it is asked, "Why mention his departure rather than his arrival?" *Keil* suggests very properly that this reflects the point of view of the aged writer, Daniel, who was himself living at Babylon as he wrote and would thus naturally use this point of departure. [34]

This seems to be the solution preferred by Greene,[35] Keil,[36] Larkin,[37] and Zöckler,[38] whereas Kelly attributes the conflicting years of Jehoiakim given by Daniel and Jeremiah to a difference in the use of inclusive or exclusive numbering. [39]

Wood notes that there is no record of a battle associated with the siege, so it remains unclear how long the siege may have remained in place before the city surrendered. "Though Daniel 1:1▶ speaks of his laying siege to the city, this likely means only that he demanded its submission. It is noteworthy that no battle is suggested by either Daniel 1:1▶; 2 Kings 24:1, or 2 Chronicles 36:6, 7. Jehoiakim, then king, whose politics may have differed from those of friendly Josiah, apparently resisted at first, because 2 Chronicles speaks of his being bound; but he must have been later released, for no change of ruler was forced by the Babylon conqueror." [40]

As our knowledge of Bible chronology has grown over the years, it seems there are several possible explanations for the difference between Daniel 1:1▶ and Jeremiah 25:1. However, the simplest solution is to understand Daniel 1▶ as describing a deportation prior to the battle of Carchemish recorded by Jeremiah.

3.1.1.2 - Babylonian Chronicle

One of the archaeological treasures of our age related to biblical history is the Babylonian (or Babylon) Chronicle found in Babylon and purchased by the British Museum in the 19th century.

> 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 where taken to Babylon (Dan. 1:1-5▶). . . . The section pertaining to the fall of Jerusalem reads, 'Year 7 [597 BC] in Kislev the king of Babylonia [Nebuchadnezzar] called out his army and marched to Hattu [the west]. He set his camp against the city of Judah and on the second Adar [March 16] he took the city and captured the king [Jehoiachin]. He appointed a king of his choosing there [Zedekiah], took heavy tribute and returned to Babylon' (Millard 1997:468). The Bible describes the same events in some detail. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged and captured Jerusalem in 597 BC, Jehoiachin was on the throne. He took Jehoiachin, the royal family and important men in the kingdom to Babylon. He then placed Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, on Judah's throne and changed his name to Zedekiah (2K. 24:11-17). Jehoiachin was a young man of 18 when he became king of Judah. He reigned but three months before being carried off to Babylon, where he lived

out the rest of his days (2K. 24:8, 12, 15; 25:27-30). Four tablets found in Nebuchadnezzar's palace name Jehoiachin and his family as among those who were receiving rations from the king (Weidner 1939; Wiseman 1985:81-82)." [42]

Babylonian Chronicle

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The Chronicle also mentions a campaign by Nebuchadnezzar around the time of Daniel's deportation, [43] but the tablet possibly recording the final downfall of Jerusalem has not been found. [44]

3.1.1.3 - King of Babylon

Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar's name refers to one of the Babylonian gods, "The name certainly comprehends, as its first element, the name of the Chaldæan god *Nebo*, = Mercury (נְבוֹ [*nᵉḇô*], Isa. 46:1), and it seems also to include the terms *kadr*, 'might,' and *zar* = שַׂר [*śar*], 'prince.' " [45]

Although always spelled *Nebuchadnezzar* in the English translation, there are several different spelling variations of the name in the original language. [46]

נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר [*nᵉḇûḵaḏneṣṣar*] —This name is the Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name Nabu-kudurri-usur, "(the god) Nebo protect my offspring." "Nebuchadnezzar" is spelled this way only here in Daniel, though this is a common spelling elsewhere in the OT. Elsewhere in Daniel, the spelling is נְבְכַדְנֶצַּר [*nᵉḇuḵaḏneṣṣar*] (e.g., Dan. 1:18▸) or נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר [*nᵉḇûḵaḏneṣṣar*] (e.g., Dan. 2:28▸). The second nun (-נ [*ne*]- represents nasalization of an original *resh*. The name spelled with *resh* (נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר [*nᵉḇûḵaḏreṣṣar*]) is used frequently by Jeremiah (e.g., Jer. 21:2) and always by Ezekiel (e.g., Eze. 26:7). [47]

P. R. Berger has demonstrated that the change of *r* in Akkadian and Aramaic to *n* in Hebrew was not erroneous but an accepted philological practice (*Der Kyros-Zylinder mit dem Zusatzfragment BIN II Nr. 32 und die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch*, ZA 64 [1975]: 227-30). [48]

Some skeptics claim that this [the spelling *Nebuchadnezzar*] is an error, and that the "correct" spelling is *-rezzar*. Indeed, this is the normal Hebrew adaptation from the original Akkadian version, *nabu-kudurru-usur*, meaning "Nabu protect(s) the eldest son," after the Babylonian god Nabu. One theory for the difference is that it was normal Hebrew linguistic practice to change the *r* to an *n*. But van Selms proposed another theory, that the OT's *-nezzar* spelling *may* be derived from a snide reference to Nebuchadnezzar's lycanthropy (animal behavior) by Jewish opposition groups. That is, from *nabu-kudanu-usur*, meaning "Nabu protect(s) the mule." [49]

It was the express purpose of God in the judgment of Israel and the throne of David to raise up Nebuchadnezzar as a major power.

I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. (Jer. 27:5-7)

Yet Jeremiah also indicated that Nebuchadnezzar's ascendancy would be for a limited time, "until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them" (Jer. 27:7 above). Thus, Jeremiah predicts the subsequent fall of Babylon to Medo-Persia recorded in Daniel 5:31▸.

The prophet Habakkuk also predicted the punishment of Israel by Babylon: [50]

> Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Look among the nations and watch-be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you. For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. (Hab. 1:3-6)

king of Babylon

Another criticism leveled against Daniel is the reference to Nebuchadnezzar as *king* when he had not yet assumed the throne from his father Nabopolassar. Apparently Nebuchadnezzar was only the crown prince at the time he mounted this siege on Jerusalem. [51] While Nebuchadnezzar was involved in the foreign campaign described here, his father died leaving the throne in potential jeopardy.

> On August 15 or 16 Nebuchadnezzar's father, King Nabopolassar, died in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar rushed home to claim the throne. He was crowned king of Babylon on the day of his arrival, September 6 or 7, 605 BC. On this trip home, Nebuchadnezzar carried captive with him some of the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem and the cream of the Jewish young men. Daniel and his companions were among those captives. [52]

> On the first day of Elul 605 (September 7), Nebuchadnezzar arrived in Babylon to claim the throne. [British Museum tablet 21946, obverse, line 11 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 68-69).] [53]

We should not be surprised, however, that Daniel referred to Nebuchadnezzar as *king* prior to his actual reign. This is simply a proleptic (in-advance) recognition of the role he would occupy later, much in the same way that Matthew refers to David as *king* at his birth: "and Jesse begot David the king" (Mat. 1:6). [54] Aside from this simple explanation, Wilson describes numerous ways the term "king" was used historically:

> It will be noted, that this objection is valid only when we make one or more of the following assumptions in regard to the use of the word "king": 1. That one cannot truthfully refer to a man as king, unless he was reigning at the time referred to. 2. That a man related to a king may not have been called king for the sake of distinction or honor. 3. That the word for king as used by Daniel must have had the same meaning, the same connotation that we would assign to it to-day. . . . Taking the matter up seriously, then, let us ask the question what would an author of the Book of Daniel writing in 535 B.C., or thereabout, have desired his readers to understand with regard to the man who in the third year of Jehoiakim led the expedition against Jerusalem. . . . The above discussion has, we think, made it clear that a man who was not actually reigning at the time to which some event in his life is afterwards referred might rightly be called king, by a writer who was describing that event after the man had really been clothed with the royal dignity. It has shown, also, that a man who was never king in the sense of having himself reigned *de facto*, or *de jure*, might be called king by way of distinction or honor, because he was in some way related to the reigning king. Lastly, it has shown that the word used for king by the ancient writers is to be defined not by the modern *usus loquendi*, nor by the conception which one may have formed from present-day usage, but in harmony with the manner in which the word was employed in antiquity and in the particular language to which the term, by us translated "king," belonged. Judged by these three rules there is no good reason why the author of Daniel may not properly and justly have called Nebuchadnezzar "the king of Babylon," when referring to an event in his life that happened before he had actually ascended the throne of his father. [55]

The phrase *king of Babylon* is מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל [*melek–bāḇel*]. The Hebrew word for *Babylon* here is translated as *Babel* in several other passages (e.g., Gen. 10:10; 11:9). The kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar is recognized as a continuation or renewing of the very first kingdom mentioned in Scripture which began under Nimrod in the land

of Shinar (Gen. 10:8-9; 1Chr. 1:10; Mic. 5:6). This is why the rise of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar is referred to as *Neo-Babylonia* (new Babylon).

Although there is some disagreement concerning the primary meaning of *Babel*, Genesis 11:9 indicates the name is associated with the introduction of languages leading to *confusion*: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי־שָׁם בָּלַל יְהוה שְׂפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ [*ʿal–kēn qārā šᵉmāh bāḇel kî–šām bālal Yahweh śᵉp̄aṯ kāl–hāʾāreṣ*], "because of this He called its name Babel *because* in that place God confused the language of all the earth."[57]

This association of Babel with *confusion* is also evident in the way Scripture represents the restless confusion of the wicked "peoples" and "nations" with the sea (Isa. 17:12-13; 57:19-21; Jer. 6:22-23; Rev. 17:1▸, 15▸).[58] We believe this association is a subtle clue concerning the Gentile origin of the beasts depicted in Daniel (Dan. 7:3▸) and Revelation (Rev. 13:1▸) who arise from the sea. See commentary on *Daniel 7:3* and Revelation 13:1▸. For additional background concerning the significance of Babylon in regard to Babel, see land of Shinar in the commentary on Daniel 1:2▸.

## Neo-Babylonian Empire

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came to Jerusalem and besieged it

Besieged is וַיָּצַר [*wayyāṣar*], to "encircle and enclose a fortified area as an aggressive military strategy to defeat a city or nation."[59] The term need not denote an actual battle, but emphasizes capturing or taking control of the city. This was the first of a series of deportations the prophet Ezekiel associates with Jerusalem's eventual judgment.

> Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, write down the name of the day, this very day-the king of Babylon started his siege against Jerusalem this very day. And utter a parable to the rebellious house, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Put on a pot, set it on, And also pour water into it. Gather pieces of meat in it, Every good piece, The thigh and the shoulder. Fill it with choice cuts; Take the choice of the flock. Also pile fuel bones under it, Make it boil well, And let the cuts simmer in it. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the bloody city, To the pot whose scum is in it, And whose scum is not gone from it! **Bring it out piece by piece**, On which no lot has fallen. For her blood is in her midst; She set it on top of a rock; She did not pour it on the ground, To cover it with dust.' " (Eze. 24:1-7) [emphasis added]

Nebuchadnezzar was the most significant among numerous enemies God sent against Jerusalem during this period. She was also attacked by "bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon" (2K. 24:1). This was in accord with warnings of judgment given in advance by God's prophets (e.g., 2K. 20:17; 21:12-14; 23:27; Jer. 25:9; 26:20; 32:28; Mic. 3:12).

> And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, **because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place**. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose
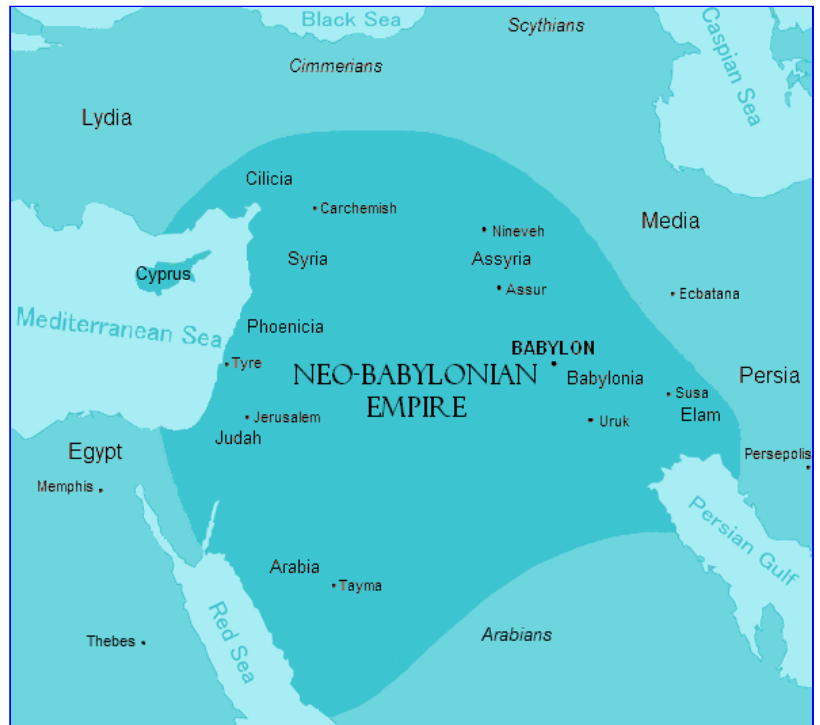
> against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. (2Chr. 36:15-17) [emphasis added]

The advance warnings reveal God's mercy and were intended to turn the people back to Himself so that judgment could be averted. Unfortunately, the people would not listen so Babylon became God's tool to "speak to Israel" using a language they could not understand but with a message they would not soon forget (Jer. 5:15)!

This siege is also described in the books of Kings (2K. 24:1) and Chronicles (2Chr. 36:6). [60]

3.1.2 - Daniel 1:2 📖 ◀

the Lord gave . . . into his hand

The Lord is אֲדֹנָי [*ʾăḏōnâ*], "title of the true God with a focus on the authority and majesty of a ruler (Gen. 18:27)" [61]—found in Daniel only here and in chapter 9 (Dan. 9:3▸, 4▸, 7▸, 8▸, 9▸, 15▸, 16▸, 17▸, 19▸). Daniel intends the reader to understand that the siege of the Holy City was not a random event in history, but judgment of Israel in accord with the Mosaic covenant under which she had bound herself before God (Ex. 19:5-8; 24:6-8; Deu. 29:1, 9, 12, 14; 31:16, 20; cf. Jer. 34:18).

> Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. **The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance**, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. . . . They shall **besiege you at all your gates** until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. (Deu. 28:47-52) [emphasis added]

Although this campaign found its origin, no doubt, in the minds of Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar, it was brought by the sovereign hand of God—a theme emphasized repeatedly in the book of Daniel. Had Israel remained faithful to the Lord, Nebuchadnezzar's control over Jerusalem would have been unthinkable.

> For they are a nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them. Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would consider their latter end! How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had surrendered them? (Deu. 32:28-30)

This judgment at the hand of God was because of Israel's continual idolatry and the unjust reign of her leaders from the throne of David, but also because she had failed to keep the Sabbath of the land for a period of 490 years, a period of 70 x 7. This siege by Nebuchadnezzar was a manifestation of the curses enumerated by Moses in response to continued disobedience associated with the covenant established at Mount Sinai.

> I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. **Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land**; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest-for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it. . . . The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes. (Lev. 26:33-43) [emphasis added]

While Jerusalem remained desolate at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the land remained fallow, in forced obedience of the Sabbath rest due God for the 490-year period during which the land was cultivated in disobedience.

> Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, **until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.** (2Chr. 36:17-21) [emphasis added]

This then, becomes the basis of the famous prophecy of *Seventy Sevens* of Daniel 9▸. The 490 years of disobedience which brought Nebuchadnezzar upon Jerusalem ushered in the Times of the Gentiles and resulted in a subsequent 490 years of significance for the Jews and Jerusalem after which the Times of the Gentiles comes to a close.

Although it looked to observers as if Nebuchadnezzar (upheld by his god Marduk or Nabu) was greater than Jehoiakim (and the God of Israel), it was the God of Israel who brought about this situation. Nebuchadnezzar would eventually learn this lesson the hard way when he underwent God's judgment for his pride: "And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, **until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses**" [emphasis added] (Dan. 4:32▸).

To the Jews, this result was no doubt shocking. "Where is God, if he does not defend his own temple? Although he does not dwell in this world, and is not enclosed in walls of either wood or stone, yet he chose this dwelling-place for himself, (Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16) and often by means of his Prophets asserted his seat to between the Cherubim. What then is the meaning of this?"[62] Yet in the midst of the sovereign judgment of God, there is always hope. "Precisely because it was Yahweh who gave over the Jews into Nebuchadnezzar's power, it was Yahweh's hand that could again snatch them away from their foreign bondage, once they were ready to renew their covenant fellowship with him and carry out their part in his program of redemption."[63] What a great blessing for His people that God is a God of patience, promise, and mercy! For in the midst of the cloud of His judgment He always provides a silver lining, a ray of hope: judgment of those in relationship with Him is *always* followed by promise of restoration.

> And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.' (Jer. 25:11-12)

> Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, As I have punished the king of Assyria.' (Jer. 50:18)

Even though God used Babylon as a tool to correct His covenant nation, the tool itself will subsequently come under His judgment bringing about an end to the captivity of Israel. Is this not the same principle we see whenever the people of God fall under His chastisement? The chastisement itself is evidence of His great love—for He loves His own too much to let them continue to stray. "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction" (Pr. 3:11). "I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me" (Ps. 119:75). "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent" (Rev. 3:19▸). This principle explains why David chose, from among alternatives, to come under the judgment of God (2S. 24:14). And so it is now in the lives of those who are His. While we remain obstinate, He will bring harsher judgment—but always with a heart and intention of eventual restoration and healing (Hos. 6:1).

Jehoiakim king of Judah

After deposing of his father Jehoahaz, Eliakim was appointed as a vassal king by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt and renamed Jehoiakim. After the defeat of Pharaoh Necho by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish, Jehoiakim became a vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar. When Nebuchadnezzar suffered a subsequent defeat while advancing on Egypt, Jehoiakim switched allegiance to Egypt (2K. 24:1) and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. In response, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, prevailed upon it, and eventually killed Jehoiakim (Jer. 22:18-19; 36:30).

Amos, although primarily a prophet to the northern kingdom, prophesied that chief persons would be among the first taken when each house of Israel was overthrown.

> Woe to you who are at ease **in Zion**, And trust in Mount Samaria, **Notable persons in the chief nation**, To whom the house of Israel comes! Go over to Calneh and see; And from there go to Hamath the great; Then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory? Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, Who cause the seat of violence to come near; Who lie on beds of ivory, Stretch out on your couches, Eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall; Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; Who drink wine from bowls, And anoint yourselves with the best ointments, But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. **Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives**, And those who recline at banquets shall be removed. (Amos 6:1-7) [emphasis added]

It was evidently Nebuchadnezzar's intention to take Jehoiakim to Babylon.

> Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried off some of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. (2Chr. 36:5-7)

Yet there is no record of Jehoiakim arriving in Babylon. Moreover, Jeremiah infers he would be killed in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

> Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: "They shall not lament for him, Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!' They shall not lament for him, Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!' He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer. 22:18-19)

> Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night." (Jer. 36:30)

Rather than being taken immediately to Babylon, Jehoiakim served as a vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar. This fact is recorded both by Scripture and archaeology.[64]

> In the second book of Chronicles 2Chr. 36:6, it is said that "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and bound Jehoiakim in fetters, to take him to Babylon." Jahn supposes that an error has crept into the text in the book of Chronicles, as there is no evidence that Jehoiakim was taken to Babylon, but it appears from 2K. 24:1-2, that Jehoiakim was continued in authority at Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar three years, and then rebelled against him, and that then Nebuchadnezzar sent against him "bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it." There is no necessity of supposing an error in the text in the account in the book of Chronicles. It is probable that Jehoiakim was taken, and that the "intention" was to take him to Babylon, according to the account in Chronicles, but that, from some cause not mentioned, the purpose of the Chaldean monarch was changed, and that he was placed again over Judah, under Nebuchadnezzar, according to the account in the book of Kings, and that he remained in this condition for three years until he rebelled, and that then the bands of Chaldeans, etc., were sent against him. It is probable that at this time, perhaps while the siege was going on, he died, and that the Chaldeans dragged his dead body out of the gates of the city, and left it unburied, as Jeremiah had predicted, Jer. 22:19; 36:30.[65]

It has been suggested that the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father led to a sudden change of plans. "Nebuchadnezzar found it necessary to hurry back to Babylon because news had reached him that his father, Nabopolassar, had died. . . . According to 2 Chronicles 36:6, Jehoiakim was actually bound with 'bronze chains' for transportation back to Babylon. But this plan changed apparently due to the need of the moment to hurriedly return to Babylon." [66]

with some of the articles of the house of God

It was not yet Nebuchadnezzar's intention to overthrow Jerusalem, but to subjugate the city. Thus, he left enough articles in the temple for the continuance of service for the people who remained. [68] He undoubtedly took some of the articles in an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of his patron god over the god of whomever he subjugated. This became the one case where it proved to be a serious miscalculation because the God of Israel was the One True Living God (1S. 17:26)! Nebuchadnezzar was permitted to capture the temple articles, yet desecration of these articles would prove fatal to Belshazzar on the night Babylon fell to Medo-Persia (Daniel 5▸).

Romans Taking Temple Articles

[67]

> Included [were] the gold and silver cups and utensils used in the temple ceremonies in Jerusalem. Hezekiah had shown the Babylonians these treasures one hundred years before (cf. Isa. 39:2, 4), and Isaiah had predicted that someday they would be taken to Babylon (Isa. 39:6).... About sixty-six years later Belshazzar would bring these vessels into his feast and desecrate them (cf. Dan. 5:2-4▸). [69]

Scripture records that additional vessels were taken at each of the three major deportations: under Jehoiakim (2Chr. 36:5-7; 2K. 24:11-13); under Jehoiachin (2Chr. 36:9-10; 2K. 24:12-14); and at the fall of Jerusalem under Zedekiah (2K. 25:13-15; 2Chr. 36:18-19; Jer. 52:18-19).

Little did Nebuchadnezzar realize his actions aligned with Isaiah's prophecy given more than 80 years earlier to Hezekiah after the Jewish ruler unwisely revealed all that was "in his house" and "in all his dominion" to a potential enemy: Merodach-Baladan, son of an earlier Babylonian king (2K. 20:17-19; Isa. 39:5-7). [70] The subsequent plundering of the remaining treasures is the subject of several prophecies by Jeremiah prior to the final fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

> Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, "Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon"; for they prophesy a lie to you. . . . For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, concerning the Sea, concerning the carts, and concerning the remainder of the vessels that remain in this city, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, **concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: 'They shall be carried to Babylon**, and there they shall be until the day that I visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.' " (Jer. 27:16-22) [emphasis added]

> For thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see it. I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. Moreover I will deliver

all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon.' (Jer. 20:4-5)

We will not speculate whether certain temple objects were hidden prior to the siege and escaped detection. In any event, it seems that the most valuable or important ones would have been known to the Babylonian's during Hezekiah's time.[71]

This was not the first time a foreign king spirited away the temple vessels: Shishak, king of Egypt, had taken the temple treasures during the 5th year of the reign of King Rehoboam (reigned 931n-909n,[72] 1K. 14:25-26).

Although God brought judgment, He also established hope for the future restoration of the treasures. God declared through Jeremiah that the temple treasures would remain in Babylon "until the day that I visit them" at which time they would be restored (Jer. 27:22). True to His word, the treasures were later returned to Zerubbabel's temple under the reigns of Cyrus and Darius.

> King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. This is the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar kind, and one thousand other articles. All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:7-11)

> Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. And at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record *was* written thus: In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits *and* its width sixty cubits, *with* three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which *is* in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which *is* in Jerusalem, *each* to its place; and deposit *them* in the house of God" (Ezra 6:1-5)

land of Shinar

The *land of Shinar* is a reference to southern Mesopotamia, the region of *Babylon*, near modern-day Bagdad.[73] Its explicit mention seems calculated by the Spirit of God to cause those acquainted with biblical themes to make the connection between Neo-Babylonia under Nebuchadnezzar representing the pride and human independence evident in Nimrod's kingdom of Babel.[74] For it was the region surrounding Babylon which was settled in rebellion to God's command to populate the entire earth (Gen. 11:2). This is an intentional signpost to the many passages of Scripture describing God's ultimate opposition and final judgment of Babylon (e.g., Isa. 13 and 14; Jer. 50 and 51; Revelation 17▸ and 18▸). Note that the first and last Gentile rulers spanning the Times of the Gentiles are both associated with the historic influence of Babylon as a global corrupting agent. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar—as the "head of gold" (Dan. 2:38▸)—serves as a type (or model) for the ultimate ruler of Gentile history—the Beast (or Antichrist) who follows after the ten toes of the same statue (Dan. 2:41▸; 7:7-8▸, 20-21▸, 24-26▸; Rev. 13:1▸).[75] For it is in this very location, Shinar, that wickedness will one day be set up (Zec. 5:5-11)—at a time future to our own day.[76] This is also the region from which Jews will be recovered "a second time" prior to the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 11:11-12). Thus, we find Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, and Shinar representing "the kingdom of man" in contradistinction to Christ, Jerusalem, and the Promised Land representing "the Kingdom of God."[77]

> Babylon represents the highest and best of man's efforts. It traces its beginnings back to Genesis 10 and 11 when Nimrod tried to establish his kingdom and throughout the Bible Babylon always stands for the highest and the best in man's efforts to oppose God. And throughout history it has been that way so there is always

the juxtaposition between Jerusalem representing the city of peace, the city of God on the one hand, and Babylon the city of man on the other hand.[78]

Up to this point Israel had the potential for world domination; after Daniel 2▸ Gentiles only have the dominating power. In fact the modern state of Israel exists only because of Gentile power; it was Gentile power that sustains Israel as a protectorate under the United Nations. Israel is unique in its origin among countries, that her legal status hinges on the UN decrees, which obviously is Gentile power.[79]

See *Babylon* and *The Eternal Kingdom of Messiah*.

to the treasure house of his god

House of his god is בֵית־הָאֱלֹהִים [*bêt–hāʾĕlōhîm*] which may also denote *the house of his gods* (plural): "The Hebrew term can be used as a numerical plural for many gods or as a plural of majesty for one particular god. Since Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist, it is not clear if the reference here is to many gods or one particular deity."[81]

We know that Babylon had a multitude of temples venerating a multitude of gods. "Many details of the city quarters and their temples, of which 53 are now known, have been recovered."[82]

Marduk pursues Anzu

80

The façade of the Ishtar Gate . . . [made of] colorfully glazed bricks alternately [depicting] a bull (symbolizing the god Adad) and dragon (symbolizing the god Marduk). The walls of the Procession Street were decorated with dozens of glazed tile lions symbolizing the goddess Ishtar.[83]

The splendid Marduk temple boasted numerous chapels to deities other than Marduk, but his was the principal one, richly decorated with cedar-wood paneling, gold, alabaster, and semi-precious stones. This temple was likely the one to which Nebuchadnezzar brought Judah's sacred vessels.[84]

85

Although there were many temples in Babylon, it appears that the vessels were transported to a single "house" (temple), most likely associated with Nebuchadnezzar's favorite deity which appears to have been Marduk, also known as Bel (Jer. 50:2; 51:44).

Nebuchadnezzar's name contains the designation of the god Nabu/Nebo, but "his god" probably refers to Marduk (Bel), the chief god of Babylon who of course was worshiped by the king.[86]

Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions refer most to Marduk, Nabu being his father's god.[87]

Of the land of Shinar, it must be remarked, that it was a plain adjacent to Babylon; and the famous temple of Belus, to which the Prophet very probably refers, was erected there.[88]

It may be that Nebuchadnezzar's son's name testifies to his father's chief god much like Nebuchadnezzar's name testifies to the chief god of his father Nabopolassar: Nabu.

Nebuchadnezzar's god was *Marduk*, after whom he named his son Evil-Merodach (Amēl-Marduk), because he was the chief deity of Babylon (another one was Nebo, after whom Nebuchadnezzar was named). Marduk was sometimes referred to as *Bel* (= Ball), or "Lord." [89]

We know from archaeological sources that Nebuchadnezzar worshiped and prayed to Marduk.

That to Marduk was given worship and trust even by Nebuchadnezzar II is demonstrated in a prayer to Marduk:

Without Thee, Lord, what has existence?
For the king Thou lovest, whose name Thou didst call,
who pleaseth Thee, Thou advancest his fame,
Thou assignest him a straightforward path.
I am a prince Thou favorest, a creature of thine hands,
Thou madest me, entrusted to me the kingship over all people.
Of Thy grace, O Lord, who prividest for all of them,
cause me to love Thy exalted rule.
Let fear of Thy godhead be in my heart,
grant me what seemeth good to Thee;
Thou wilt do, verily, what profiteth me. [90]

There were probably several reasons why Nebuchadnezzar deposited the vessels in the house of his god. For one, this was probably an act of thanks or worship to the pagan deity whom he venerated and to whom he attributed victory. [91] For another, this would serve notice to the captives and the surrounding nations that Nebuchadnezzar's god was deemed superior to the God of Israel; while articles from Yahweh's temple remain in the hands of a Gentile pagan power, the *implication* is that Yahweh is powerless to do anything about it.

It is in *this* sense that God's name is profaned when Israel is disobedient and under His judgment. For while she remains judged, numerous promises and protections, which God has associated with His own character, remain in reluctant abeyance. Since the surrounding nations do not appreciate the reasons why God restrains His mighty arm—allowing His chosen nation to languish—they conclude that the God of Israel cannot be a powerful deity, or worse: His promises are empty or perhaps He doesn't even exist!

Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands, (Eze. 20:13-15)

These judgments place God's reputation in jeopardy from the viewpoint of the nations. This creates tension in history which must be resolved—through the repentance and restoration of Israel, bringing the fruition of His promises and vindicating His will and plan. Although the following passage applies to a different historical setting, the principle is similar.

When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name-when they said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and **yet they have gone out of His land**.' But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. **For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.**" (Eze 36:20-24) [emphasis added]

Whenever God's "house" (the temple) is in ruins or Israel is outside her land, it appears as if God's plan for the nation has gone astray—that He is incapable of bringing about what He intends. Thus, any nation used of God to

judge Israel had better take care, because He has "concern for His holy name" which is profaned while they remain in captivity. This principle applies doubly in the case of Babylon because not only would Israel be taken captive, but God's holy vessels were taken into the temple of a pagan deity and His "house" subsequently destroyed. Here is the principle: although God is sovereign in bringing about judgment upon Israel, He will bring disaster upon the entity deporting His people or vessels—on account of their own pride, godlessness, and oppression of His elect nation (Rom. 11:28-29).[92] And so it will be with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. However, for the next 70 years this tension will remain unresolved.[93]

Notice the irony of God: in her idolatry, Israel is subjected to a culture and world view teeming with idols and false Gods. "Now Babylon was the home of idolatry; so thither the Jews were sent, that they might learn to loathe the idols they had loved."[94] God would use their time in Babylon to purge them of idolatry, "What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone' " (Eze. 20:32).

3.1.3 - Daniel 1:3

Ashpenaz

The Babylonian name *Ashpenaz* (אַשְׁפְּנַז [*ʾašpᵉnaz*]) is known from archaeology: "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.' "[95] The name may be related to the term *ašpazakan* meaning "chief of the household." [Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, electronic ed (New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1999.), 96]

master of his eunuchs

Isaiah prophesied to Hezekiah that some of his descendants would become eunuchs "in the palace of the king of Babylon" (2K. 20:17-18; Isa. 39:7).

Eunuchs is סָרִיסִין [*sārîsân*] which can denote a high-ranking official, such as Potiphar who was married, or a court official who, for reasons associated with his office, was emasculated (e.g., Hegai, custodian of the women under King Ahasuerus, Est. 2:3).

Two questions now arise: (1) if Daniel and his compatriots were under the supervision of the chief eunuch (Dan. 1:7-11▸, 18▸), are we to infer that they also served as eunuchs? (2) If so, did they undergo emasculation?

One may ask why enter into such a discussion—of what practical value is it for us to know whether Daniel and his companions were made eunuchs? Here is the reason why: *if* Daniel was emasculated, then his continued loyalty to His God in the face of all he underwent in Babylon becomes a greater witness to his steadfast faith. This would be another severe testing added to the many other aspects of his deportation which he accepted and overcame: a physical trial with the loss of any hope for marriage and raising a family at a time when he and his companions were coming of age.

Although we are unsure of the source of his information, Josephus thinks Daniel was made a eunuch.[96] This is the position often taken in rabbinic literature.[97]

Herodotus informs us of the practice of emasculating young males.

> Hermotimus, who came from Pedasa, had achieved a fuller vengeance for wrong done to him than had any man whom we know. When he had been taken captive by enemies and put up for sale, he was bought by one Panionius of Chios, a man who had set himself to earn a livelihood out of most wicked practices. He would

procure beautiful boys and castrate and take them to Sardis and Ephesus where he sold them for a great price, the barbarians value eunuchs more than perfect men, by reason of the full trust that they have in them. [98]

Those who served before masters, especially where a harem was involved, often underwent this procedure to guarantee their loyalty.

It was an attempt to protect the harem. And that's, frankly, why the eunuchs arose. It was just to protect the king's girlfriends and to produce loyalty in the court. There was a second reason; the second reason was that being eunuchs they could never have children and since these men could never have children they would never have allegiance to getting their son into a high place. [99]

McGee mentions another possible motivation: to reduce distractions during their time of training.

This was something the king did, and it did not destroy the mental development of these young men. It served the purpose of making them more docile toward the king, and it also enabled them to give all their time to the studies which were given to them. I am sure that it is true today as it was when I was in college: I spent half of my time taking a "course" that was known as dating. I had a lot of good times—I did a great deal of studying, but I could have done lots more! But, you see, the king wanted these boys to spend their time studying, and his way of doing that was to make them eunuchs. [100]

In support of this view, we have no record in Scripture of Daniel ever being married or having children. Of course, this is an argument from silence, but the idea that Daniel underwent emasculation is not refuted by Scripture.

On the other hand, the original meaning of the term *eunuch* did not connote sexual impotence. [101] We also have the example of Potiphar, an *officer* (סָרִיס [$s^e r\hat{\imath}s$]) of Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 39:1), who was married. [102] Some understand mention of the young men as having *no blemish* (Daniel 1:4▸) as further evidence that they were not to undergo emasculation. However, if the passage from Herodotus is any guide, this may refer to their external appearance.

bring some of the children

There are a number of possible reasons why Nebuchadnezzar took children from Israel and brought them to Babylon. Perhaps he felt that the people remaining in Jerusalem, especially the leadership, would be more compliant knowing their children were hostage in Babylon. This would reduce the likelihood of rebellion while Israel remained subject to Babylon. [103] Since some of the children appear to be of royal descent (see below), this could subvert development of Israel's future leadership. [104] It may have been Nebuchadnezzar's plan to immerse these youth in Babylonian ways to purge them of their Jewish identity.

The king's intention was not just to educate these young men, but to brainwash them. He wanted them to look like Jews on the outside but be Babylonian on the inside. This is the aim of most secular universities if the professors do not know Christ; they don't care if you look like a Christian on the outside, attending church or marking a denominational choice on your college application, as long as they can teach you to think like a humanist on the inside. [105]

The way you start a new society is always with the youth; brainwash the youth, rip them out of the home and mold them into the society you want. So Hitler would have his youth, and you'd have the young people brought up in these great organizations because the older German families had too much of the old culture in them, we don't bother with the old people, just let them die off and in 20 years we'll be rid of them; that's the attitude. But the young people have to be molded, and so the young people always become the targets of these Utopians and the dreamers and schemers. Here it's no different. [106]

One thing is clear: by deporting and merging the youth into Babylon culture and service, there would be greater integration between the cultures with less tendency for trouble within the growing empire. A large and growing empire is unlikely to remain stable while those within its borders remain in isolated groups retaining their national identity and allegiance.

The massive deportations which were in vogue in Babylonian times were, it seems, considered to be a means of ensuring peace within an expanding empire, for subjugated people were diluted with other subjugated people under the theory that they would ultimately all merge into the conquering nation and thus avoid the ethnic fracturing which had been the downfall of earlier empire building efforts. In other words, Babylon devised a scheme through which they aimed to reverse the division of the world which God had enforced in the original Babylon ('Babel' is identical with 'Babylon' in Hebrew). [107]

These fine young men from Israel would benefit Babylon by serving in Nebuchadnezzar's court. Their God-given skills and abilities, with suitable refinement and training in accord with the tastes and practices of Babylonia, would provide the 'best from among the best' for the developing needs of the empire. Although Scripture does not say, it appears that a similar process of deportation, training, and immersion attended captured youth from other conquered cities of other peoples. [108]

Whatever Nebuchadnezzar's purpose may have been, it would appear the real driving force behind the deportation of Daniel was the sovereign hand of God, sending Daniel ahead of the majority of Jews who would follow to secure their favor and provide for their safety within the government of Babylon. Jeremiah had prophesied that it was God's good purpose to send Jews to Babylon where they would prosper while out of the land.

Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: '. . . so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.' (Jer. 24:5-6)

Since there were three major deportations and Daniel was taken in the first, the time required for Daniel to undergo schooling, achieve recognition, and be highly placed in the government before the majority of his countrymen arrived.

The main blow to Judah came in 586 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed and the country became a province of Babylonia (2K. 25:1-21). Eleven years before (597), however, a prior taking into captivity had occurred when Jehoiakim ruled, and some 10,000 leading people were carried to Babylon (2K. 24:11-16). Eight years before this still, Daniel, his three friends, and other young Judeans had been forced to go (605). . . . Thus, **Daniel had been in Babylon for eight years when Judeans of the captivity of 597 arrived, and nineteen years when those of 586 came.** [emphasis added] [109]

This is not an isolated incident in the annals of God's dealing with Israel. Joseph's brothers, intending evil, sold him into captivity unknowingly setting in motion the means by which they would find God's provision in their time of greatest need when the family followed into Egypt many years later (Gen. 50:16-20). So too, Mordecai was taken in the second deportation when *Jehoiachin* (Jechoniah) was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. (Est. 2:5-6) and raised to a position of significance where he could provide favor for his brethren: "For Mordecai the Jew [was] second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen" (Est. 10:3). [110]

the king's descendants and some of the nobles

Here we find partial fulfillment of what Isaiah pronounced to Hezekiah: that some of his descendants would be among those taken to Babylon. "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" (Isa. 39:7). Josephus mentions Daniel as among the royal offspring taken to Babylon.

But now Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took some of the most noble of the Jews that were children, and the kinsmen of Zedekiah their king, such as were remarkable for their beauty of their bodies and comeliness of their countenances, and delivered them into the hands of tutors, and to the improvement to be made by them. [111]

Now among these there were four of the family of Zedekiah, of most excellent dispositions, the one of whom was called Daniel . . .[112]

Nobles is פַּרְתְּמִים [*parᵉtᵉmîm*], a Persian word used by some to argue that Daniel was written much later. See *Language*.

3.1.4 - Daniel 1:4

young men

Young men is יְלָדִים [*yᵉlāḏîm*] which can describe young man of a wide range of age. "Context determines the range of age, from a helpless infant to a young man capable of violence."[113] Some view the term as describing young men who were in their late teens.[114] However, several factors argue for understanding the term as denoting a somewhat earlier age: (1) by the end of their three years of training they would have just attained the age of adult service (Dan. 1:5▸). (2) The length of service in Babylonian which God intended for Daniel was such that a younger initial age would be more suitable. We take Daniel to be approximately 14 years of age when taken to Babylon. See *Chronology of Daniel*.

no blemish

Blemish is מוּם [*mûm*] which can refer to either a physical or moral defect.[115] In this context, however, it refers to their physical characteristics, "physical . . . as excluding from priestly service, Lev. 21:17, 18, 21, 23; disfiguring man 2S. 14:25."[116]

Some see this as an argument against the youths having been physical eunuchs (emasculated).

The same Hebrew term [physical defect] also delineated physically defective animals that were excluded from sacrifice (Lev. 22:30). . . . One of the defects listed is "damaged testicles" (Lev. 21:20), which would seem to demonstrate that in Dan. 1:4▸ the phrase, "without any defect" would specifically rule out the youths' being made eunuchs.[117]

See commentary on *Daniel 1:3*.

quick to understand

Archaeological records indicate that Nebuchadnezzar sought out those who had the greatest natural capacity to serve the purposes of his regime.[118] The knowledge held by the young men was not the issue. Rather, their learning capacity.[119] As is clear from the narrative of this chapter, Daniel and his companions had natural (God-given) gifts in combination with spiritual wisdom and insight—the latter only available to those who know God (1Cor. 2:14 cf. Jas. 3:15).

to serve

The Hebrews were a captive people. It was natural to suppose that they would be restless, and perhaps insubordinate, in their condition, and it was a matter of policy to do all that could be done to conciliate them. Nothing would better tend to this than to select some of their own number who were of their most distinguished families; to place them at court; to provide for them from the royal bounty; to give them the advantages of the best education that the capital afforded; to make an arrangement that contemplated their future employment in the service of the state, and to furnish them every opportunity of promotion. Besides, in the dialog of the government with the captive Hebrews, of which, from the nature of the case, there would be frequent occasion, it would be an advantage to have native-born Hebrews in the confidence of the government, who could be employed to conduct that contact.[120]

teach the language and literature

Although Nebuchadnezzar's policy and intention was to train these youth, we detect the sovereign hand of God in this development, much like that of Moses, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). Both men were sovereignly prepared to interact with governmental officials at the highest levels of their respective regimes, bringing about God's will in relation to the Jews. From this we can learn an important principle: *the hand of God in our lives may move in ways we least expect or recognize*. His ways are not our ways (Isa. 55:8-9) and the situations He works through—nay, even brings about—are not often recognized by us. This fact alone should prove an antidote to our misguided attempts to discern His secret will (Deu. 29:29).

The training of the Jewish youths was in accord with Nebuchadnezzar's interest in establishing Babylon as a cultural center.

> While Nebuchadrezzar was rebuilding the great city of Babylon and adorning it with the tribute extracted from the territories he now dominated, his concern was that the city should regain its place as the cultural centre of the ancient Near East. One way of achieving this was by training selected foreigners in the whole range of Babylonian science which was itself an expression of the local philosophy and wisdom. The extension of Babylonian civilization had influenced courts and learned circles far afield over almost three millennia.[121]

Although Aramaic was the language of diplomacy (see *Hebrew and Aramaic*), it is likely the body of literature which the young men would study was written in Akkadian cuneiform.[123] Akkadian continued to be used in academics although Aramaic was becoming the *lingua franca*—much like the use of Latin in academia continued beyond its widespread use.[124] Even if the young men had previous exposure to Aramaic, working with Akkadian cuneiform would be something completely new.

> Unlike their native Hebrew or the more cosmopolitan Aramaic, which were written with alphabetic symbols, the cuneiform signs were syllabic. This complicated system that uses hundreds of signs would have taken some time to learn to read with proficiency, which accounts for the three years of training that they were to receive before they could enter into full-time service in the Babylonian court.[125]

Literature is סֵפֶר [*sēp̄er*] which in its simplest meaning denotes something written, such as a scroll. Here, it denotes a "body of literature, i.e., several books or writings considered as one unit representing a culture, religion, or philosophy (Jos. 1:8; Dan. 1:17▸; 9:2▸)"[126]. Learning the literature of Babylonia may have required acquisition of multiple languages.

> "The learning of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 1:4▸; 2:2▸; 4:7▸; 5:7▸, 11▸) comprised the old languages of Babylonia (the two dialects of Sumerian, with a certain knowledge of Kassite, which seems to have been allied to the Hittite; and other languages of the immediate neighborhood); some knowledge of astronomy and astrology; mathematics, which their sexagesimal system of numeration seems to have facilitated; and a certain amount of natural history. To this must be added a store of mythological learning, including legends of the Creation, the Flood (closely resembling in all its main points the account in the Bible), and apparently also

Akkadian Cuneiform Tablet
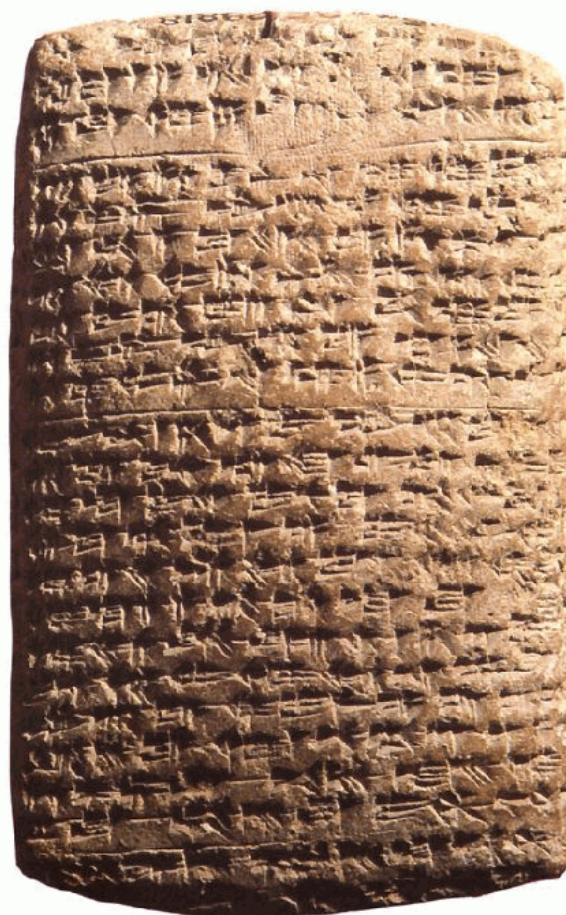
122

the Temptation and the Fall. They had likewise a good knowledge of agriculture, and were no mean architects, as the many celebrated buildings of Babylonia show — compare not only the descriptions of the Temple of Belus . . . and the Hanging Gardens, but also the remains of Gudea's great palace at Lagas (Tel-loh), where that ruler, who lived about 2500 BC, is twice represented as an architect, with plan and with rule and measure. [127]

At this point in history, Babylonia was a world leader in what was then considered the sciences.

The various areas of science appear to have been more advanced there than anywhere else in the world. Babylonians had the benefit of extensive literature from earlier days, especially through the remarkable library left by the Assyrian emperor, Ashurbanipal (669-626 B.C.), as well as advanced studies by contemporary scholars. Many of these writings have been found and are known today. [128]

Now we know from the clay libraries of Nineveh and Babylon that the Chaldeans were a learned people. They had made great advances in grammar, mathematics, astronomy, and the sciences. We must not forget that Babylon was located on the site of Babel, and that the people of Babel inherited all the skill and wisdom of the Antediluvians, who were the inventors of musical instruments, and skilled workers in iron. (Gen. 4:20-22.) [129]

The very careful records Babylonian astronomers kept of the movements of planets, comets, and the phases of the moon were mainly for the purpose of determining the influence these "gods" might exert upon men and nations. Beginning about 747 B.C., very accurate records were handed down (and carefully recorded in Ptolemy's *Almagest* in the second century A.D.), so that the Babylonian astronomer Naburimmanu (c. 500 B.C.) was able to calculate the length of the year at 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes, 41 seconds—only 26 minutes and 55 seconds too long! A later Babylonian astronomer, Kidinnu (c. 390 B.C.) made some measurements even more accurate than were know in the nineteenth century A.D. . . . This is the caliber of men Nebuchadnezzar had in his court. [130]

The Jewish youths were immersed in a program of learning containing many elements contrary to their upbringing. This is a frequent challenge confronting all young people who follow after God.

The pressure to conform to Babylon's pagan culture was severe upon Daniel and his friends. They belonged to a conquered, humiliated people. They had been uprooted from families, friends, familiar surroundings—from everything that had given them security and meaning in life. They had been transported hundreds of miles to a totally strange environment to live among total strangers. In this new setting they were a small minority. They were only teenagers subjected to the authority of the most powerful adult ruler on earth. It appeared that their God had been humiliated. They were put under the instruction of elite but ungodly teachers, men who were regarded as the world's top scholars—a situation that could be deadly for the faith of impressionable teens. Their education exposed them to such anti-God subjects as astrology and pagan mythology. [131]

The question for Christian youth is this: having been brought up in the ways of the Lord, have you established a biblical world view that will withstand the onslaught of the pagan culture in which you will find yourself immersed? Have you made your faith *your own*? Is God's Word and His principles understood and hidden in your heart? [132] Whenever believers find themselves in a strange place and seek to follow God's ways, there is tension and potential conflict. It takes great wisdom to know *how* to walk in such a situation.

They're studying magic, they're studying the mythology of the day, they're studying all the religious systems of the Babylonians, they are studying a lot of stuff they don't agree with. So it would be real easy for them to start having some kind of a conflict or challenging their professors. It's not any different today, if you're going to college somewhere you're going to be in a classroom where you're going to be taught a lot of things from a post-modern perspective, you'll be taught things from an evolutionary perspective, perhaps from a liberal socialist perspective, all of which you know to be wrong. But that doesn't mean you go to battle every time the professor opens his mouth with something you disagree with. [133]

A mature Christian faith will neither overestimate its ability to stand (1Cor. 10:12), nor be overly intimidated of what can be examined, measured against God's Word, and rejected (1Th. 5:21). We should not be afraid to understand the principles driving the humanistic world view. Ignorance has never served God. Some believers

are called and gifted for a ministry where they share the truth of God's Word within settings requiring a strong knowledge of the competing theories and ideas. This is likely how the Jewish youths approached their immersion at Babylon: learning all they could while avoiding participation in or endorsement of things God would disapprove.

> Not that they may follow [the faulty teachings] themselves, but in order to pass judgment upon it and refute it. Just as anyone would expose himself to ridicule if he being untrained in mathematics should desire to write in confutation of mathematicians, or, being ignorant of the teachings of philosophers should desire to write in opposition to philosophers. Hence they [i.e., the Hebrew youths] study the teaching of the Chaldeans with the same intention as Moses studied the wisdom of the Egyptians. [134]

of the Chaldeans

The term *Chaldeans* (כַּשְׂדִּים [*kaśdîm*]) [135] is used in two different ways within the book of Daniel. [136]

> *Chaldeans*, is the name usually given (1) to the inhabitants of the Babylonian kingdom founded by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar, and (2) in a more restricted sense to the first class of the Babylonish priests and learned men or magi, and then frequently to the whole body of the wise men of Babylon; cf. at Dan. 2:2▸. In this second meaning the word is here used. [137]

There appears to be some uncertainty as to the origin of the Chaldeans prior to their appearance in Babylonia.

> The origin of the Chaldeans has been a subject of great perplexity, on which there is still a considerable variety of opinions. According to Heeren, they came from the North; by Gesenius they are supposed to have come from the mountains of Kurdistan; and by Michaelis, from the steppes of Scythia. They seem to have been an extended race, and probably occupied the whole of the region adjacent to what became Babylonia. [138]

> If, then, for the present no certain answer can be given to the question as to the origin of the Chaldeans and the nature of their language and writing, yet this much may be accepted as certain, that the language and writing of the כַּשְׂדִּים [*kaśdîm*] was not Semitic or Aramaic, but that the Chaldeans had in remote times migrated into Babylonia, and there had obtained dominion over the Semitic inhabitants of the land, and that from among this dominant race the Chaldees, the priestly and the learned cast of the Chaldeans, arose. This caste in Babylon is much older than the Chaldean monarchy founded by Nebuchadnezzar. [139]

The term *Chaldeans* is used here to describe a class of sages who were the keepers of lore and science.

> The Babylonian sages combined many of the functions fulfilled by wise men, prophets, and priests in Israel, though they are to be distinguished from those cultic functionaries who were more especially concerned with the temple and its ritual. They were the guardians of the sacred traditional lore developed and preserved in Mesopotamia over centuries, covering natural history, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, myth, and chronicle. [140]

3.1.5 - Daniel 1:5

the king appointed for them a daily provision

This practice at Nebuchadnezzar's court is attested in archaeological records which mention provision granted in support of *Jehoiachin* (who would follow Daniel in the next *Deportations*). [141]

> At the highest level members of the royal families from nations who had been overrun, or were still hostile, were treated with special attention. They received rations from the king's palace in Babylon itself. Texts from the Southern Palace show that in 592/1-569/8 Nebuchadrezzar granted Jehoiachin of Judah . . . oil from the royal stores. Supplies were granted also to his five sons who were in the care of a Babylonian appointee . . . [142]

A Leo Oppenheim lists deliveries of oil for the sustenance of dependents of the royal household in ancient literature and includes specific mention of food for the sons of the king of Judah in a tablet dating from the tenth to the thirty-fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar II. [143]

the king's delicacies

It may have been Nebuchadnezzar's intention to accustom the chosen young men to special treatment to weaken their allegiance and fond remembrances of home.

He does not act thus from any feeling of liberality, and his feeding those miserable exiles from his own table should not be esteemed a virtuous action; but, as we have said, he cleverly reconciles the minds of the boys to be reckoned Chaldeans rather than Jews, and thus to deny their own race. [144]

This high honor would entail enormous risk if slighted. Thus, Daniel's upcoming request to forgo the king's fare is all the more remarkable (Daniel 1:8▸).

delicacies

Delicacies is פַּתְבַּג [*paṯbāḡ*] which is a Persian word of somewhat obscure origin.

פַּתְבַּג [*paṯbāḡ*] comes from *path*, in Zend. *paiti*, Sanscr. *prati* = προτί πρός [*proti pros*], and *bag*, in Sanscr. *bhâga*, portion, provision, cf. Eze. 25:7. With regard to the composition, cf. The Sanscr. *pratibhâgha*, a portion of fruits, flowers, etc., which the *Rajah* daily requires for his household; cf. Gildemeister in Lassen's *Zeits.f. d. Kunde des Morg.* iv. 1, p. 214. [145]

This is one of the Persian loan-words which critics have pointed to in an attempt to overthrow the early date when Daniel was written. See *Persian Words*.

three years

According to Plato, three years was a standard course of training for Persian youths.

Young comments: "Plato, *Alcibiades* 1:121, states that the education of Persian youths began in their 14th year, and Xenophon, Cy., 1, 2 mentions the 16th or 17th years as the close. The [Persian] Avesta says that a student for holy training should go to a master for three years." [146]

If Daniel was 14 or 15 years old at the time of his deportation, this would make him 17 or 18 during his examination before Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:18▸), a reasonable age to begin service to the king.

For a discussion of whether Daniel completed his three years of training prior to interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, see Daniel 2:1▸.

3.1.6 - Daniel 1:6

of the sons of Judah

Daniel and his companions were descendants of Judah (Gen. 29:35), the tribe whose kings ruled Israel (Gen. 49:10). Even though their deportation was a result of God's judgment upon the Davidic rulership, they remained faithful. See commentary on *Daniel 1:3*.

Daniel

This is the first mention of *Daniel* in the book. Daniel is mentioned by name in several other books of the Bible (Eze. 14:14, 20; 28:3; Mat. 24:15; Mark 13:14). Although Daniel refers to himself in the third-person here, he also refers to himself in the first-person. See *Authorship*.

Daniel appears to have been born during the reign of good king *Josiah* and exhibits all the characteristics of a youth who was raised within a godly home. Even though the majority within Israel were far from God, Daniel and his companions stand as evidence that a faithful remnant existed within the corrupt culture. Daniel's parents were among those who succeeded at the difficult task of raising godly offspring in the midst of an antagonistic culture. The passing on of the knowledge of God from generation to generation is of great importance to God (Gen. 18:19; Ex. 10:2; 13:14; Deu. 4:9-10; 6:7; 11:19; Ps. 78:5; Isa. 38:19; Mal. 2:15; Eph. 6:4; 2Ti. 3:15), and Daniel's parents serve as shining examples of this principle producing a young man said to be greatly beloved of God (Dan. 10:11▸).

Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

These young men were Daniel's companions among whom he apparently was the natural leader. Whenever Daniel found favor, he helped his companions (Dan. 1:11▸; 2:17▸, 49▸). Like Daniel, these men were given considerable abilities by God (Dan. 1:19▸) as well as opportunities to witness of their steadfast faith (Dan. 3:16-18▸).

Concerning the meaning of their names in relation to the new names they were given, see commentary on *Daniel 1:7*.

3.1.7 - Daniel 1:7

gave names . . . Belteshazzar . . . Shadrach . . . Meshach . . . Abed-Nego

The very fact that someone can *assign* a name reveals the authority of the name-giver over the recipient (Gen. 2:20-23).[147] When the assigned name is in the same language as the original name, it may reflect a new role or purpose for the individual (Gen. 17:5, 15; 32:28).[148] Here, the new name is in a different language than the previous name, which may indicate a desire to give the individual a new identity in order to forget his past.[149] The practice of a foreign king assigning a captive a new name may have been familiar to Daniel from the Scriptural account of Pharaoh with Joseph (*Zaphnath-Paaneah*, Gen. 41:45). For a comparison of Daniel with Joseph, see *Authorship*.

There is considerable uncertainty concerning the meanings of the newly assigned Babylonian names.[150] Whereas the names of the young men previously bore testimony to the God of Israel, their new names incorporate the names of gods of Babylon. In each case, the Hebrew appellation contains a reference to the true God but the Babylonian counterpart involves an allusion to a pagan deity.[151] Thus, whenever the Babylonians used the young men's newly assigned names, it would serve as an unpleasant reminder of their captivity and service within the pagan culture of Babylonia.[152]

Meaning of Names

Hebrew Name	Meaning	Babylonian Name	Meaning
Daniel	God is my judge [153] God has judged [154]	**Belteshazzar**	Bel's prince (that is, he whom Bel favors) [155] Bel protect the king. [156] whom Bel favors [157] lady [Sarpanitu, wife of Marduk] [158] protect the king [159] protect his life [160] Nebo protect his life [161] Bel protect the hostage of the king [162] Bel's prince or superior [163] lord of the straitened's treasure [164] the treasure of Bel [165] the depository of the secrets of Bel [166]
Hananiah	the Lord is gracious [167] beloved of the Lord [168] Yahweh has shown grace [169] Yahweh has been gracious [170]	**Shadrach**	command of Aku [171] I am [very] fearful [of God] [172] illumined by the sun-god [173] rejoicing in the way [174] little friend of the king [175] young friend of the king [176] the inspiration of the sun [177] god, the author of evil, be propitious to us [178] let god preserve us from evil [179]
Mishael	who is as [what] God [is]? [180] who is like the Lord? [181]	**Meshach**	who is what Aku is? [182] who is like Venus (Shach)? [183] I am of little account [184] I am despised, contemptible, humbled (before god) [185]

			agile, expeditious; waters of quiet [186]
			he who belongs to the goddess Sheshach [187]
Azariah	The Lord is my help [188]	**Abed-Nego** [193]	servant of Nego (also called Nebo) [194]
	Yahweh has helped [189]		servant of the shining fire [195]
	The Lord is my helper [190]		servant of the shining one [Nabu] [196]
	The Lord has helped me [191]		worshipper of Mercury [197]
	Whom the Lord helps [192]		servant of light (or the sun) [198]

The Babylonian names assigned to the young men are thought to refer to various Babylonian deities such as Aku, Bel, Nebo (or Nego) and Sheshach.

Gods Behind the Names

Name	Background
Aku	Moon god of Babylonia [199] , Sumeria or Elam [200]
Bel	"Bel was the Chaldean equivalent of Baal." [201] "*Bel*, called *Belus* by the Greek and Roman writers, is the same as *Baal*; and *Nebo* is interpreted by Castell and Norberg of *Mercury*; the two principal idols of Babylon. When that city was taken by the Persians, these images were carried in triumph. Isa. 21:9. 41:6, 7. Ex. 12:12. 1S. 5:3, 4. Jer. 48:1, etc." [202]
Nebo	Mars, [203] Mercury [204] , morning star, Jupiter or Venus [205] , god of vegetation, [206] son of Baal, [207] son of Bel/Marduk [208]
Sheshach	"*Meshach*, which in Chaldee signifies, 'He who belongs to the goddess Sheshach,' a celebrated deity of the Babylonians, mentioned by Jeremiah, Jer. 25:26." [209]

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, Jospeh was given an Egyptian name by Pharaoh (Gen. 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. [210]

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). [211]

3.1.8 - Daniel 1:8

purposed in his heart

Here we are confronted with the remarkable decision of a relatively young man to honor God when he had every possible reason to compromise his faith:

- He could have easily become bitter toward his own people and their God since their disobedience led to his predicament at the hand of God. After all, wasn't it God Who had failed him by allowing his capture and forced deportation? [212]

- He was a captive of a powerful foreign king and could lose his life. [213]

- There was undoubtedly peer-pressure to accept the food offered all the other young men.

- The food was no doubt of excellent quality and would be tempting.

- His parents were 900 miles away and would not know if he chose to compromise.

- He was a young boy, not someone in leadership or destined to serve as a priest. [214]

This decision, having all the marks of a deliberation, is the first sign of Daniel's destiny: for he chose to follow the narrow biblical prescription of remaining obedient in the little things and trusting God to manage the results (Luke 16:10). [215]

Purposed is יָשֵׂם [*yāśem*] from שִׂים [*šîm*] which appears to be a play on words recalling the assignment of new names ("*gave* names", Dan. 1:7▸) to Daniel and his companions. Although the Babylonian's had "set" names of their gods upon the Hebrews, Daniel responded by "setting" his heart not to defile himself. [216]

Although Daniel purposed *in his heart*, we should not misread this as indicating Daniel followed a "hunch" or an emotional leading. [217] If Daniel's request to forgo the king's delicacies was seen as disparaging the king's provision and the king refused, Daniel almost certainly would lose his life! This decision by Daniel is *every bit as risky* as that of his companions in chapter 3 when they refuse to bow down to the golden image. [218] Daniel was familiar with God's Word and understood that to partake of the king's delicacies would constitute a violation of God's commandments.

> How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes! (Ps. 119:9-12)

In his concern to remain undefiled, Daniel exhibited traits found in other dedicated servants of God such as Ezekiel (Eze. 4:14) and Peter (Acts 10:14).

Not defile himself

Defile is גָּאַל [*gāʾal*] which indicates "ceremonial pollution, i.e., a state of ritual unacceptability (Ne. 13:29)." [219] It shares the same root form with the Hebrew word for *kinsmen-redeemer*, but has a much different meaning here. [220] Barnes explains the possible connection between the two meanings.

> The word which is rendered "defile himself" [יִתְפַּגָּאַל [*yitp̄aggāʾal*]] - from ga'al - is commonly used in connection with "redemption," its first and usual meaning being to redeem, to ransom. In later Hebrew, however, it means, to be defiled; to be polluted, to be unclean. The "connection" between these significations of the word is not apparent, unless, as redemption was accomplished with the shedding of blood, rendering the place where it was shed defiled, the idea came to be permanently attached to the word. [221]

with the portion of the king's delicacies

A straightforward reading of the reason for Daniel's avoidance of the king's delicacies is that aspects related to the preparation or consumption of the king's food constituted a violation of Levitical regulations associated with the Mosaic covenant under which Israel lived. These regulations included avoidance of animals declared "unclean" (Lev. 11:45-47; Acts 10:14-16) and avoidance of meat not prepared according to kosher methods—such that consumption involved eating fat or blood (Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14; 19:26). In fact, part of Israel's judgment during dispersions among the Gentiles was their assumed partaking of unclean foods (Eze. 4:13-14; Hos. 9:3).

nor with the wine which he drank

Daniel's abstinence from the king's wine was apparently in light of other factors because the Torah did not prohibit the use of wine. It has been suggested that perhaps Daniel was concerned with the general principle of avoiding "strong drink".[222]

> To abstain from the Old Testament prohibition against "strong drink" (e.g., Pr. 20:1, KJV; Isa. 5:11, "drinks"), Jews customarily diluted wine with water. Some added 3 parts of water to wine, others 6 parts, and some as much as 10 parts of water to 1 part of wine. The Babylonians did not dilute their wine.[223]

McGee suggests that perhaps Daniel was a Nazirite.

> Perhaps Daniel and these other Hebrew children were Nazirites to whom even wine was forbidden: "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried" (Num. 6:3).[224]

If Daniel had taken a Nazirite vow, it seems odd that the text would not mention this. If so, the vow must have expired prior to the events of chapter ten where we find him fasting from wine—implying he was drinking wine prior to the fast (Dan. 10:3▸).

It seems more likely that Daniel's objection to partaking of the king's wine was due to the wine being prepared or served in a way involving dedication to pagan gods.

> . . . lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and **you eat of his sacrifice** . . . (Ex. 34:15) [emphasis added]

> They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, And **ate sacrifices made to the dead**. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, And the plague broke out among them. (Ps. 106:28-29) [emphasis added]

> Heathen nations not only ate unclean beasts, which were forbidden by the Jewish law, but even the clean animals that were eaten were first offered as victims to their gods, and part of the wine was poured out as a libation on their altars. Hence Athenaeus (l. iv. c. 10) calls the beasts served up at the tables of the Persian kings, *ieria, victims*.[225]

This type of sin led to an earlier judgment of Israel; that is her participation in the pagan sacrificial feasts of Moab that probably involved dedication of meat and drink.

> Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. **They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods**. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. (Num. 25:1-3) [emphasis added]

> The partaking of the food brought to them from the king's table was to them contaminating, because forbidden by law; not so much because the food was not prepared according to the Levitical ordinance, or perhaps consisted of the flesh of animals which to the Israelites were unclean, for in this case the youths were not under the necessity of refraining from the wine, but the reason of their rejection of it was, that the heathen at their feasts offered up in sacrifice to their gods a part of the food and the drink, and thus consecrated their meals by a religious rite; whereby not only he who participated in such a meal participated in the worship of idols, but the meat and the wine as a whole were the meat and the wine of an idol sacrifice, partaking of which, according to the saying of the apostle (1Cor. 10:20f.), is the same as sacrificing to devils.[226]

It is possible that although Daniel understood that meat and wine previously dedicated to a pagan god did not involve him directly in such worship (1Cor. 10:19-22), he realized that consumption of these items in the presence of the other young men who were aware of the pagan dedication would be seen as condoning the deity

—something believers are to avoid (1Cor. 10:27-28). Consuming the king's fare would be like partaking in a religious service to Marduk. [227]

Other possible reasons for Daniel abstaining from both meat and wine include the possibility that Daniel's physical well-being would then be attributable to the deity to whom the food was dedicated [228] or that Daniel refused the king's delicacies out of identification with the plight of his homeland. [229]

In Daniel's actions, we find a clear reversal of the popular advice of today's Christianity elevating pragmatism—fitting in with the culture and remaining relevant in order to gain a hearing—over principles which result in ostracism by the culture. Note that Daniel chose the most important issues to take a stand on. Daniel exercised godly wisdom.

> So the first principle of separation, the first [wisdom] principle that we learn from the book of Daniel is that there are innumerable points of controversy between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint but you have to take your stand at key points. You can't protest everything; you've got to take your stand at certain key points. You don't have to walk around with a martyr complex and protest everything, but you should protest something at critical points . . . Daniel said [this] was a critical point and he would be out of fellowship [with God] if he didn't separate at that point. [230]

> They might have argued with themselves about the apparent folly of letting a ceremonial quibble destroy their chances of attaining high positions in the government. Should they not accept the royal diet and thus avoid giving needless offense to their classmates or to the officials of the king himself? Worldly wisdom pointed in that direction. [231]

Let the reader take note: the issue which caused Daniel to take a stand at this point was his desire to remain in fellowship with God over a desire to remain friends with and be accepted by the culture. In cases where separation from one or the other is unavoidable, the believer should *always* chose the path which retains fellowship with God and leads to further separation from the culture. In this, Daniel succeeded where Israel as a nation had failed. The nation as a whole had succumbed to idolatry and was unconcerned about defilement, but Daniel and his companions were among the faithful remnant who retained godly concerns and followed the narrow path.

> God judged the northern kingdom of Israel, followed by her southern "sister" (see Ezekiel 16), for defiling themselves with the worship and practices of heathen neighbors. Daniel and his friends kept themselves from defilement even in the midst of a heathen land, when death was possible for refusing the king's provisions. [232]

This is a typological pattern we will meet in several places in the book of Daniel (Dan. 3:8-27▸; 6:18-24▸). "These faithful ones headed by Daniel are types of the faithful remnant of Jews, suffering and bearing witness during the time of the end, the great tribulation." [233] See *The Preservation of Israel*.

he requested

He requested is יְבַקֵּשׁ [*yᵉbaqqēš*] which is in the piel stem.

In other words, the form of the Hebrew verb indicates that this was not a casual request. The same verb and stem are used to describe Daniel setting his "face toward the Lord God to *make request* by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" during his earnest prayer introduced in Daniel 9:3▸. Daniel was greatly concerned over the possibility of defiling himself because sin inhibits the believer's relationship with God. [234]

3.1.9 - Daniel 1:9

God . . . brought Daniel into . . . favor and goodwill

Instead of seeking to manipulate his circumstances, possibly by underhanded or ungodly means, Daniel sought to live in a way pleasing to God. This resulted in God bringing Daniel favor. This was how Joseph behaved in

Egypt resulting in similar favor, "But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison" (Gen. 39:21 cf. Ps. 106:46).

Joseph, Daniel, and his companions believed that if they honored God then God might change the situation . . . or not (Dan. 3:18▸)! This differs from the way much of Christianity operates in our culture today—which is about finding ways to remain influential among unbelievers through pragmatism, but counts as simpletons those who take a stand on "impractical principles" and leave the results in God's hands! This unhappy practice—so different from that of Daniel and his companions—is symptomatic of a lack of understanding (due to a dearth of teaching) concerning the sovereignty of God. Daniel was convinced of the sovereignty of God. This is why Daniel and his companions respected the authority man placed over them: they understood that they were placed under that authority by the hand of God (Rom. 13:1-7; Heb. 13:17).

Notice that Daniel didn't create a uproar. He separated on the issue peaceably, with little fanfare, and God gave him favor (Rom. 12:18). By honoring God in all ways *available to Daniel*, God responded on his behalf. This is the ultimate simplicity of the Christian walk. May God grant us the faith of Daniel to walk in this way!

This living Christian witness, an also lead to powerful evangelistic witness. "In setting forth his reasons for the request, Daniel would have had an indirect opportunity to share his faith with Ashpenaz." [235]

chief of the eunuchs

Since Daniel was under the chief of the eunuchs, this suggests that Daniel himself was a eunuch. In regard to whether this entailed emasculation, see the commentary on Daniel 1:4▸.

3.1.10 - Daniel 1:10

faces looking worse

Looking worse is זֹעֲפִים [zōʿăp̄îm], "The participle זֹעֲפִים [zōʿăp̄îm], 'gaunt,' carries the meaning of physical demeanor that indicates a problem. It has this meaning only here and in Gen. 40:6 in the story of Joseph." [236]

I fear

I fear is יָרֵא אֲנִי [yārē ʾănî], "I, I fear" - the personal pronoun accompanies the verb to provide emphasis. It would be no small matter for the chief of the eunuchs to accede to Daniel's request since it differed from the orders of the king.

you would endanger my head

You would endanger is וְחִיַּבְתֶּם [wᵉhîyaḇtem], *piel* stem - to be guilty, become liable for penalty, to lose one's head.

The concern of the chief of the eunuchs was very real given the evidence in the following chapters of the ultimate authority of the king to put to death anyone he chose (Dan. 2:13-14▸; 3:6▸, 19-21▸).

3.1.11 - Daniel 1:11

So Daniel said to the steward

The steward is הַמֶּלְצַר [hammelṣar]. Some translations represent this as the personal name *Melzar*, but it probably represents the office the man occupied.

הַמֶּלְצַר [*hammelṣar*] having the article, is to be regarded as an appellative, expressing the business of the calling of the man. . . . from the New Persian word *mel*, spirituous liquors, wine, corresponding to the Zendh. *madhu* (μεθυ [*methu*]), intoxicating drink, and צַר [*ṣar*] = *ara*, Sanscr. *iras*, the head; hence overseer over the drink, synonymous with רַבְשָׁקֵה [*raḇšāqēh*], Isa. 36:2.[237]

[Montgomery] makes out a very convincing case to the effect that the word is an old Akkadian or Aramaic term for *guard*.[238]

3.1.12 - Daniel 1:12

test your servants for ten days

Some commentators believe that Daniel required special revelation from God to propose a test of such short duration before the results would be ascertained.[239] This may be true, although the text does not indicate so. It is also possible that Daniel had in mind a very limited trial period so the steward might evaluate Daniel's proposal and intervene early if they appeared worse than before. Although Daniel believed God would honor their desire to avoid defilement, he realized that the steward might lose his life if they appeared deficient. Thus, a short period of ten days reduces the stewards risk—he can halt the experiment early enough, if necessary, to avoid a further change in the appearance of the youths.

Notice that Daniel does not attempt to convince the steward using Old Testament law or principles applying to the Jews. These laws or principles are unlikely to have influenced the steward. We see Daniel's great wisdom because his proposal recognizes the needs of the steward by the use of a trial period.

vegetables to eat

Vegetables is הַזֵּרֹעִים [*hazzērōʿîm*], [240] from זֶרַע [*zeraʿ*]. [241] The translation "vegetables" is unfortunate because it leads the reader to think that the diet precluded grains—but such is not the case. The main application of the term appears to be that it excludes meat while allowing consumption of both vegetables and grains. Their food would be similar to what is described today as a "vegetarian diet" which includes more than vegetables. By restricting their diet to vegetables and grains, they could avoid consuming meat considered to be unclean, not prepared according to kosher regulations, or dedicated to idols.

> But Daniel realizes that this is the safest thing to do because usually they didn't consecrate vegetables to the gods, in this particular situation. Apparently he felt safe that he wouldn't have to sweat the religious ceremony bit if he confined his diet to just vegetables and water for ten days.[242]

> [Vegetables denoted] things grown from seeds planted in the soil [which] involved no religious ritual of dedication to a god, for they were not used in pagan rituals as were meat and libations of wine.[243]

This seems to be the best explanation for the dietary limitation suggested by Daniel.

The diet Daniel proposed could qualify as a "diet of affliction" similar to that which Ezekiel prophesied concerning the food the Jews would eat while dispersed among the Gentiles.

> Also take for yourself **wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt**; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. During the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. And your food which you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. You shall also **drink water** by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink. (Eze. 4:9-11) [emphasis added]

Zöckler suggests a sanitary motivation behind Daniel's proposed diet. "In the light of this circumstance, the dietetic regimen imposed upon Daniel and his three companions had a sanitary reason, and their voluntary

temperance may actually have had a good effect during their period of convalescence after the operation." [244]

Some commentators argue that God would have to perform a mighty miracle to maintain the health of Daniel and his companions. "Such reversal of the laws of nutrition would require a miracle," [245] "For if any one asks the medical profession, whether pulse and other leguminous plants are wholesome? they will tell us they are very injurious, since they know them to be so." [246] These views suffer from a bias against the benefits of a vegetarian diet as if meat were necessary for human health. They question the adequacy of a vegetarian diet, yet Scripture teaches that all people were initially strict vegetarians (Gen. 1:29-30; 9:3). [247]

water to drink

By avoiding wine, Daniel and his companions no longer consumed food defiled as libations to Babylonian gods. [248]

> Since the food defiled by idol sacrifices was meat and wine, a part of the former of which was laid on the altar, and a part of the latter poured out as a libation, "vegetables," *zero'im*, "things sowed," would be outside of the pale of the defiled things. So would "water." [249]

3.1.13 - Daniel 1:13

let our appearance be examined . . . and the appearance of the young men

After ten days, the steward was to examine the appearance of Daniel and his companions who were eating a vegetarian diet and compare it with the young men on the king's diet. Daniel was convinced that if he and his companions were motivated to honor God, that God would maintain and even improve their robust appearance. There is much that could be said about the vigor that a simpler diet affords, but this would miss the point: Daniel trusted God for the results regardless of what was being eaten or the time period. The success of Daniel's trial is not to be attributed solely to his wisdom or the potential benefits of the diet.

3.1.14 - Daniel 1:14

he consented

Aside from God granting Daniel favor (see commentary on *Daniel 1:9*), the relatively short period of time gave the steward sufficient confidence that the health of the young men could not degrade too far before he could intervene, if needed, and require them to return to the king's diet.

3.1.15 - Daniel 1:15

better and fatter in flesh

Having restricted their diet to vegetarian foods and water, Daniel and his companions became more vigorous than the other young men.

Fatter is בָּרִיא [*bārî*], "pertaining to being physically healthy, implying a desirability for trade or consumption, whether human, plant, or animal." [250] Thus, Daniel and his companions appeared *healthier* but not necessarily *heavier* than the others. While this result would not necessarily be unexpected from a vegetarian diet, there is little doubt that God's hand influenced the results, because of their desire to please him at considerable personal risk. [251]

3.1.16 - Daniel 1:16

Thus the steward . . . gave them vegetables

The steward accepted Daniel's conditions because he retained control over the results. Having seen that Daniel and his companions were healthier than the other young men, he became convinced that he should extend their practice.

Daniel and his friend's desire to obey God's commands resulted in God's superintendence of their health during the entire period of their training. Although they benefited from the response of God's *hand* upon them (their wellbeing), it was their desire to seek His *face* (retaining close fellowship with God) that motivated their unusual request (Ps. 24:6; 27:8; 105:4).

3.1.17 - Daniel 1:17

God gave them knowledge

"Knowledge" (מַדְּע [*marrāʿ*], Dan. 1:4▸, 17▸; elsewhere only in Ecc. 10:20; 2Chr. 1:10-12), like its common synonym and cognate דַּעַת [*raʿaṯ*], "knowledge" (Dan. 1:4▸; 12:4▸; and eighty-six other times in the OT), signifies more than intellectual knowledge in the sense of facts one has learned. It also denotes awareness of one's situation and the ability to integrate learned facts and concepts into a life of faith that prudently deals with everyday situations. A person endowed with the divine gift of knowledge can not only avoid dangers and pitfalls, but also understand how to lead a God-pleasing life that benefits others as well.[252]

This knowledge was not given solely for their personal benefit, but for a witness to the Babylonians (Dan. 2:24-28▸, 45-47▸; 3:28-30▸; 4:1-3▸, 27▸; 5:19-22▸; 6:20-22▸) and for the benefit of Israel while in her captivity (Dan. 1:19▸, 21▸; 2:49▸; 6:3▸).[253] Daniel recognized his wisdom was given from God (Dan. 2:10▸).[254]

and skill

And skill is וְהַשְׂכֵּל [*wᵉhaśkēl*], the "capacity for understanding."[255] Not just a knowledge of facts, but the capacity for making good use of the facts: insight.

all literature

Literature is סֵפֶר [*sēp̄er*], see commentary on *Daniel 1:4*. The young men were responsible for learning what must have been a large and somewhat intimidating body of knowledge during their period of training.

> The Babylonian library . . . didn't have scrolls, they had clay tablets. The clay tablets were cuneiform tablets and they had to learn that language and we know from archaeological discoveries that there were huge libraries in the ancient world. Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh was enormous. Recently a discovery was made of over a thousand clay tablets in a secondary site, that was one of Nebuchadnezzar's libraries, and they had to master all of that information.[256]

This required *skill* (mentioned above): to glean the best from what they were exposed to while remaining steadfast in God's Word and rejecting those things contrary to His revealed truth.

> The danger of immersing one's mind in current expressions of Satan's religious perversions is enormous. It was not without reason, therefore, that God warned His people: "Beware that you . . . do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' " (Deu. 12:30). The student of comparative religions quite often, in pride and complacency, seeks to maintain a posture of scholarly detachment and objectivity in such matters only to experience subconscious and gradual spiritual poisoning. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Cor. 10:12).[257]

wisdom

Wisdom is חָכְמָה [*ḥoḵmâ*].

> includes spiritual knowledge and the ability to apply what one knows. In some passages in the OT it denotes craftsmanship and proficiency in one's occupation (e.g., Ex. 35:31). In Proverbs it has a wider sense denoting the ability to live in accordance with God's plan and will (e.g., Pr. 1:1-7). It can manifest itself in practical matters and in interpersonal relationships. Wisdom depends on reasoning and the aptitude and willingness to learn, and so it was an appropriately desirable quality for God to give to these young men. It also is characterized by insight into the ways that God has ordered the world, both in creation and in his plan of redemption, as well as into the dangerous ways that sin corrupts the world.[258]

Daniel's wisdom became so well known to his compatriots that Ezekiel later taunted the prince of Tyre in relation to Daniel.

> Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,' Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you!)" ' (Eze. 28:2-3)

Although some believe Ezekiel's passage mentions a different Daniel, this is unlikely. See *Ezekiel Mentioned a Different Daniel?*

Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams

Although Daniel has not yet exhibited his prowess in the area of visions and dreams, we are told about it here in order to set the stage for what will follow. See *Divine Revelation in the Book of Daniel*.

Daniel serves as one of several examples illustrating how a godly person can serve within a pagan environment and remain true to God.

> Can you think of other men in the Scripture that had the same kind of experience as Daniel? Two stand out. . . . add Daniel and we have three fantastic examples you can use in your own personal life for inspiration so survive under very anti-Biblical positions. One man is Joseph. Joseph was trained in the culture of Egypt; he was taken away from his home, without any parents, without any guidance, all alone in a foreign culture, Joseph remained loyal to his God (Gen. 41:37-45). . . . The second man who qualifies to be included is Moses. Moses was taken away from his culture and from his land, brought up in a foreign culture with human viewpoint education, yet turned into one of the most astounding authorities of divine viewpoint. . . . So you have three Biblical examples of young men, brought up with no divine viewpoint in their life after their early years, who turn into spiritual giants: Joseph, Moses and Daniel. . . . So the argument of 1 Corinthians 10:13 applied in your Christian life is simply this: if Joseph could do it, and Joseph worshiped the same God I do; if Moses could do it and Moses worshiped the same God I do, and Daniel could to it and Daniel worshiped the same God I do, then I can do it. So it is possible to survive in the human viewpoint system.[259]

As believers, we can hear secular teaching and learn its principles (e.g., the details of evolutionary theory) without adopting its conclusions, procedures, and world view. We are not fearful isolationists. We evaluate all teaching against the standard of God's Word. Then, when we put forth the biblical world view, we can hold our ground and gain a hearing since we understand the alternative viewpoint and can demonstrate its failings.

Daniel, along with the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7), both exhibited a sincerity and purity of faith which made them trustworthy vessels for God's revelation concerning the future.

> What a lesson for us—that purity of heart and faithfulness to God come before enlightenment in divine mysteries! If you attempt to reverse these things, you need not be surprised if you fall into all kinds of error. If you try to put knowledge before heart-purity; if you try to put a grasp of scripture truth before conscientious living in the presence of God, you are almost certain to have a fearful fall awaiting you. It is right here that large numbers have failed, who may well be a warning to us.[260]

Daniel serves as a role model of what Israel was intended to be.

> The fact that God gave Daniel the ability to understand and interpret visions and dreams (Dan. 1:17▸) meant that throughout Nebuchadnezzar's long reign he depended on Daniel for understanding future events, revealed through dreams and visions. This anticipated the ministry Israel will one day fulfill. God had set Israel apart to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). As such they were God's light to the world (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). They were to receive God's revelation and communicate it to nations that were ignorant of God. They were continually reminded of their role by the lampstand erected in the tabernacle. Daniel, during his tenure in the royal court in Babylon, fulfilled that function as God's spokesman to the Gentiles. When Israel will enter her millennial blessing under the reign of the Messiah, she will fulfill the role for which she was set apart by God and will then communicate God's truth to the Gentiles (Zec. 8:21-23). [261]

Notice that it was *only Daniel* from among the Hebrew youths who was given understanding in visions and dreams by God. His companions were not. This could have led to jealousy on the part of his companions or boastfulness by Daniel. This is a common fact of serving God: each one is given different gifts for the benefit of the entire community of God (1Cor. 12:4-24). As believers, we must accept God's purpose for having distributed gifts in the way He has rather than resent His decision as unfair.

> In the sovereign workings of God, Daniel was given an ability to understand visions and dreams. His three companions were not given this ability. God is sovereign in His dealing with all of us who are His children. . . . Our responsibility is not to covet or compare ourselves with others, but to faithfully serve Him as stewards of all that He has graciously given to us (cf. 1Cor. 4:1-7). [262]

Daniel and his companions embodied the spirit of Paul's message to the Church at Corinth, "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1Cor. 12:26).

visions

Visions is חָזוֹן [ḥāzôn], "a communication from God to be communicated to others, with a focus on the visual aspects of the communication." [263] God would soon give Daniel visions concerning the sequence of Gentile kingdoms during the Times of the Gentiles (Dan. 7:2-28▸; 8:1-27▸; 10:1▸-12:3▸).

dreams

Dreams is חֲלוֹם [ḥălôm], "a series of thoughts, images, or feelings that occur during sleep as a natural altered state of awareness, with a focus on the images a dream invokes." [264] Both Daniel and Joseph were given revelation in dreams (Gen. 37:5-10; Dan. 7:1▸) as well as the ability—through God—to interpret the dreams of others (Gen. 40:5; 41:15; Dan. 2:1▸; 4:5▸). Although neither Daniel or Joseph referred to themselves as prophets, their ministries certainly qualified as such. [265]

> Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream." (Num. 12:6)

We sometimes hear believers today interpret their own dreams thinking God is communicating with them. But the characteristics, focus, and purpose of their dreams has little in common with those in Scripture.

> All these [Biblical] . . . dreams are about God's plan for history, not about the individual person per se. The individual person may be involved in the dream but whether it's a Jew or whether it's a Gentile, that dream is linked to God's plan for history. . . . These dreams are not self-centered dreams; they are historically centered dreams. . . . dreams in the Bible . . . are always national and historical centered dreams. They are not primarily for the individual. [266]

> Now don't *you* say that God has spoken to you in a dream, because I must contradict you. I do not think that God is speaking to us that way—He speaks to us today in His Word. For a great many people it is easier to

dream about the Word than it is to study it. I used to have students in a Bible institute who would very piously pray the night before an exam. They didn't study much, but they were very pious about it all. One student told me that he stuck his Bible under his pillow the night before an examination! I asked him, "Do you really think the names of the kings of Israel and Judah will come up through the duck feathers and get into your brain?" The Holy Spirit is not a help and a crutch for a lazy person. You are going to have to study the Word of God. God speaks to us through His written Word today. [267]

3.1.18 - Daniel 1:18

at the end of the days

When the three year period of training was complete (see commentary on *Daniel 1:5*). Some commentators believe the interview occurred *after* the events of chapter 2 (which are said to be in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar), but a simpler explanation seems preferable. See commentary on *Daniel 2:1*.

3.1.19 - Daniel 1:19

the king interviewed them

If Nebuchadnezzar performed the interview himself, he exhibited considerable knowledge concerning many subjects. [268] However, the phrase could simply denote an examination under Nebuchadnezzar's direction and authority by a senior member of the faculty at the academy where the youth were trained. "Some of the factors considered would have been fluency in the Babylonian language, extent of knowledge gained, personality characteristics, and personal appearance." [269] In any event, the kings presence might have been a source of additional stress. Not only were these young men required to answer with great wisdom and skill, but to do so under pressure. Such abilities are needed for leadership positions.

none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

Although the ability to learn was a God-given talent for these Hebrew youths, their natural gifts were augmented by spiritual gifts since they were men of faith. The avoidance of the rich food consumed by the other young men during their training period may have also contributed to their relative performance.

> Daniel and his three friends had pursued a course of strict temperance; they had come to their daily task with clear heads and pure hearts - free from the oppression and lethargy of surfeit, and the excitement of wine; they had prosecuted their studies in the enjoyment of fine health, and with the buoyousness and elasticity of spirit produced by temperance, and they now showed the result of such a course of training. Young men of temperance, other things being equal, will greatly surpass others in their preparation for the duties of life in any profession or calling. [270]

They served before the king

Daniel and his companions applied themselves diligently to their studies and Nebuchadnezzar evaluated and chose them, yet God was behind it all. He arranged their capture and ensured their promotion to a place of influence to smooth the path for the Jews of the subsequent deportations (Gen. 41:46; Pr. 22:29).

Take note: serving within secular government is a form of ministry! This is one way God influences government for His purposes: by working through His people to influence the heart of a king. [271] Daniel ministered in the government of Babylon and that of the Medes and Persians which followed, and was according to the instructions given through Jeremiah.

> Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to

husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters-that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And **seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace**. (Jer. 29:4-7) [emphasis added]

3.1.20 - Daniel 1:20

wisdom

Wisdom is "חׇכְמׇה [*ḥoḵmâ*] [and] comes from a root that in Arabic means 'legal judgment' or 'the exercise of government'; it may also refer to a wise and capable physician. In Hebrew it combines the idea of knowledge arrived at through accurate discernment and the ability or skill to apply that knowledge effectively to the task to be done or the decision to be made. It certainly involves an understanding of the world and of life in general, but is always viewed with relation to God himself, the Creator, Designer, and Governor, who imparts meaning and value to all he has fashioned and to all the laws that govern the physical universe and the moral one as well. But the emphasis of ḥoḵmāh is primarily moral and practical and leads to a proper and successful adaptation of what we know to what we have to do. It involves a well-ordered and purposeful way of life and cultivates the art of using the right means to achieve one's ends." [272]

> Never mistake information or an academic degree for someone who has real knowledge or wisdom; they're different. These men all had wisdom; that means they knew how to take the raw academic information that they had and apply it in a skillful productive manner. [273]

> Instruction in the wisdom of the Chaldeans was, besides, for Daniel and his three friends a test of their faith, since the wisdom of the Chaldeans, from the nature of the case, was closely allied to the Chaldean idolatry and heathen superstition, which the learners of this wisdom might easily be led to adopt. But that Daniel and his friends learned only the Chaldean wisdom without adopting the heathen element which was mingled with it, is evidenced from the steadfastness in the faith with which at a later period, at the danger of their lives (cf. Dan. 3:6▸), they stood aloof from all participation in idolatry, and in regard to Daniel in particular, from the deep glance into the mysteries of the kingdom of God which lies before us in his prophecies, and bears witness of the clear separation between the sacred and the profane. But he needed to be deeply versed in the Chaldean wisdom, as formerly Moses was in the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22), so as to be able to put to shame the wisdom of this world by the hidden wisdom of God. [274]

understanding

Understanding is "בִּינׇה [*bînâ*] . . . a term that emphasizes the power of discernment, the ability to distinguish between appearance and reality, between the false and the true, between the evil and the good. It implies a kind of perceptiveness that can see through any deception or specious appearance and grasp the issue in its proper light." [275]

ten times better

עֶשֶׂר יׇדוֹת עַל [*'éser yāḏôt 'al*], literally "ten hands above." " 'Ten times' is an idiom meaning 'many times' (cf. Gen. 31:7, 41; Num. 14:22; Job 19:3)." [276]

Steinmann provides an example of the frequent misrepresentation regarding the charge of overly-literal interpretation on the part of dispensational interpreters like this author.

> "Ten times" must be a figurative comparison implying a surpassing difference, rather than a literal number, for example, a test score literally "ten times" higher. . . . This is one example that refutes the dispensational rule that all numbers in prophecy must be taken literally. Certainly, "ten times" does not represent a quantifiable measure of the Judeans' abilities relative to the other trainees. [277]

Steinmann might have a point if: (1) this was a prophetic passage; (2) dispensational interpreters insisted that this obvious figure of speech must be understood literally. Alas, neither claim is true. It is likely, however, that Steinmann is correct in thinking that the phrase reflects the cumulative assessment of Nebuchadnezzar over a subsequent number of years concerning Daniel and his companions.

> Dan. 1:20▸ is probably to be understood as a general statement about their service throughout the time they were in Nebuchadnezzar's employ, rather than implying that in one interview he found them superior to all of his wise men. Instead, this statement is prospective and primes the reader to expect in later chapters further accounts of how Nebuchadnezzar learned of the Judeans' superiority. [278]

The surpassing abilities of Daniel and his companions incited curiosity as to what made them so different. [279]

> Then God wished to illustrate his own glory, since without doubt the king was compelled to wonder how they could surpass all the Chaldeans. This monarch had spared no expense on his own people, and had not neglected to instruct them; but when he saw foreigners and captives so superior, a spirit of rivalry would naturally spring up within him. But, as I have already said, God wished to extol himself in the person of his servants, so that the king might be compelled to acknowledge something divine in these young men. [280]

magicians

Magicians is חַרְטֻמִּים [*ḥarṭummîm*]. The same word is used of their Egyptian counterparts, soothsayer-priests who performed occult enchantments under Pharaoh (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:3). [281] Also rendered as ἐπαοιδούς [*epaoidous*] (LXX), working "by way of a charm" [282] and σοφιστὰς [*sophistas*] (OG), "*master of one's craft, adept, expert* [used] of diviners." [283]

> The Hebrew word [חַרְתֻּמִים [*ḥarṭummîm*]], occurs only in the following places in the Scriptures, in all of which it is rendered "magicians:" - Gen. 41:8, 24; Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18, 19; 9:11; Dan. 1:20▸; 2:2▸. From this it appears that it applied only to the magicians in Egypt and in Babylon, and doubtless substantially the same class of persons is referred to. It is found only in the plural number, "perhaps" implying that they formed companies, or that they were always associated together, so that different persons performed different parts in their incantations. [284]

The word conveys one skilled in the writing of their time. [285] In some uses the term may emphasize expertise rather than occult practice. [286]

> "Magician" is a rendering of the Hebrew (and later in the book the Aramaic) word *ḥarṭōm* (Dan. 1:20▸; 2:2▸, 10▸, 2▸; 4:7▸, 9▸; 5:11▸), which also designates the Egyptian magicians in the time of Joseph (cf. Gen. 41:8, etc.) and Moses (cf. Ex. 7:11, etc.). The word literally means "engraver" or "writer" and only secondarily "diviner, astrologer, magician." The root from which the word comes signifies "to cut, scratch" and was used for engraving or writing with a stylus.... These wise men meticulously chronicled, for example, the movements of the heavenly bodies in order to gain religious wisdom from them. [287]

> *Sacred scribes*, skilled in the sacred writing (i.e. in the hieroglyphics) . . . derived from חֶרֶט [*ḥerṭ*] *a style* . . . or whether it be taken as a quadriliteral, formed from the triliterals חָרַט [*ḥāraṭ*] and חָרַם [*ḥāram*] *to be sacred*. But, however, it is not an improbable opinion that the Hebrews imitated in these letters a similar Egyptian word . . . [meaning] *guardian of secret things*. [288]

The word is rendered as *enchanter* in the *Didache* (3:4) [289] and indicates the use of charms. [290]

astrologers

Astrologers is אַשָּׁפִים [*ʾaššāp̄îm*], "enchanter, conjurer, i.e., a class of persons in the profession of sorcery and magic arts, possibly necromancy and communication with the dead." [291]

> The meaning of this word must be determined solely by context, since no etymology is apparent. Perhaps it is a loan word from Babylonia and related to the Assyrian *shiptu* ("conjuration"). Since the word is found only in Daniel, this is all the more likely. [292]

> "Enchanter" (also NRSV; "astrologers," KJV; "conjurers," NASB) is a translation of Hebrew *ʾaššāp* (Dan. 1:20▸; 2:2▸) and of Aramaic *ʾāšap* (Dan. 2:10▸, 27▸; 4:7▸; 5:7▸, 11▸, 15▸), both terms meaning "conjurer, necromancer." The Hebrew and Aramaic words are derived from Akkadian *ašipu*, "incantation priest." [293]

Also rendered as μάγους [*magous*] (LXX), *Magi* or *wise men* in the NT (Mat. 2:1, 7, 16), and φιλοσόφους [*philosophous*] (OG), *philosopher* in the NT (Acts 17:18). [294]

Isaiah spoke disparagingly of Babylon's fascination with using the stars for prognostications.

> Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth-Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; Let now the **astrologers, the stargazers**, And the monthly prognosticators Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you. (Isa. 47:12-13) [emphasis added]

It appears that expertise in both astronomy and astrology—were mixed in this class of experts.

> An on-going tradition for which Babylon was later to be remembered was that of its 'astrologers'. The Chaldean astrologers in Babylon lived in a special city-quarter and were distinguished from the tribe of the same name settled by the Persian Gulf. Oppenheim has shown that this class of experts was grouped into academies or teams of ten or more scholars who, at Babylon, played a significant role in the observance of lunar, solar and stellar phenomena and advised the Assyrian king on the political and religious significance of such matters. . . . [Astronomical] diaries . . . [covered] half a year with a section devoted to observations of at least the major planets and meteorological information for each month. . . . Detailed observations of Venus and of consecutive lunar eclipses arranged in 18-year groups have survived for the years 608/7, 591/0-572/1; 589-573 B.C. . . . [295]

> A late seventh century application of astronomical and mathematical data . . . within two centuries at the latest, was to become renowned as Babylonian horoscopy. Another development beginning now was the transition from planetary to zodiacal astrology which was sometimes considered to have an influence on medicine, much as it was also thought did the weather. [296]

Did Daniel and his companions endorse or participate in the occult and superstitious practices of these Babylonian sages? We think not. [297] What sense would it make for these young men to risk their lives declining food dedicated to pagan gods (Dan. 1:8▸) while embracing practices forbidden by God? [298]

> Daniel was not imbued with the superstitions in those days highly esteemed in that nation. Through discontent with genuine science, they corrupted the study of the stars; but Daniel and his associates were so brought up among the Chaldeans, that they were not tinctured with those mixtures and corruptions which ought always to be separated from true science. It would be absurd, then, to attribute to God the approval of magical arts, which it is well known were severely prohibited and condemned by the law itself (Deu. 18:10). [299]

> These young men who risked their positions and probably their lives to please God in the matter of the king's food certainly would not have become involved in paganism and witchcraft. Moses grew up in Pharaoh's court and was taught the wisdom of the Egyptians (cf. Ex. 2:10; Acts 7:22), but he recorded the regulations concerning the magic arts (Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; Deu. 18:10-11). [300]

And so it is today: those who know God and His Word have ten times the wisdom (and knowledge of the future) than all the peeping magicians and astrological prognosticators of our day. Yet the world ignores God's word in favor of inferior charlatans leading them from one sensational expectation to another. The result is a culture always learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth (2Ti. 3:7).

This is one of the themes of the book: the competition between those practicing occult arts vs. Daniel who relies upon the one true God. The occult arts are shown as defective whereas revelation from God proves reliable.

> But what about the involvement of these four faithful Hebrews in the occult arts? . . . Observe in this connection that the text does not state that the four Hebrews actually engaged in the practice of divination or conjuration themselves, which would doubtless have been forbidden them (cf. Deu. 18:10-12). . . . Examples of Daniel's superiority appear in chapter 2, where he alone could reconstruct Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the fourfold image, chapter 4, where he alone could interpret the warning dream of the felled tree; and chapter 5, where he alone could interpret the mysterious handwriting on the wall. In none of these instances is there any indication that Daniel resorted to occult practices; he simply went to God directly in prayer, and God revealed the answer to him. [301]

As the book of Daniel attests, *only God* knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 42:9; 43:9; 44:7; 45:21; 46:10; 48:3-5; Dan. 2:10▸, 27▸).

3.1.21 - Daniel 1:21

This is one of several verses providing clear chronological indicators within the book of Daniel (Dan. 1:1▸, 21▸; 2:1▸; 5:31▸; 7:1▸; 8:1▸; 9:1▸; 10:1▸). The first year of Cyrus dates to 536 B.C. It is mentioned here because of its significance: we know that Daniel remained in Babylon until at least the third year of Cyrus in 534 B.C. when he received his final vision (Dan. 10:1▸). See *Chronology* and *Chronology of Daniel*.
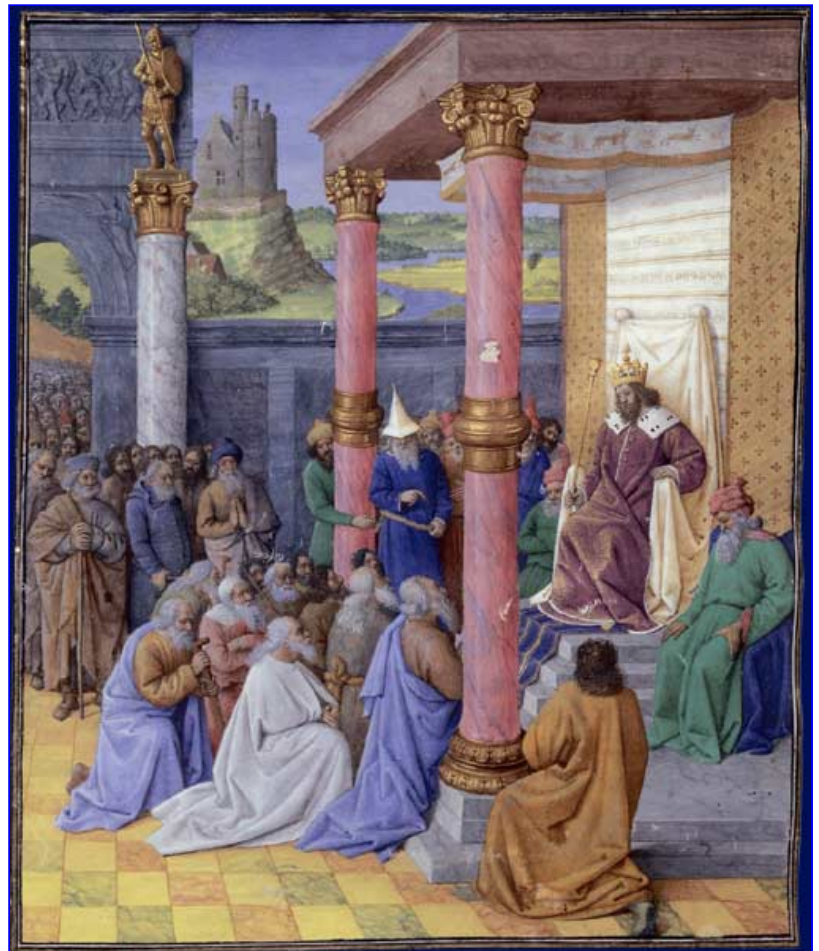
Cyrus Releases the Jews

302

Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus

Some assert that the writer of the book of Daniel errs here because Daniel continued beyond the first year until at least the third year of Cyrus (Dan. 10:1▸).

> The assertion is made that in Dan. 1:21▸ the writer refers to the date of Daniel's death, and the assumption is that no author could do this of himself. The author declares there, however, only that Daniel lived until Cyrus' first year, without indicating that he then died. In Dan. 10:1▸, in fact, it is made clear that he did not die at that time, but lived at least until the third year of Cyrus. [303]

There are several reasons why Daniel emphasizes his continuance until the *first* (rather than *third*) year of Cyrus: (1) the first year of Cyrus marks the fall of the Babylonian empire when Daniel was taken captive (Dan. 5:31▸) and Daniel is emphasizing the fact that by the grace of God, he outlived the regime of his captives; [304] (2) the first year of Cyrus is when the decree was given permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem—an event marking the end of their captivity (2Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5 cf. Isa. 44:28; 45:1-13) in which Daniel

may have played a part. [305] Therefore, the first year of Cyrus serves as a "bookend" in relation to the events recorded in this chapter.

Archaeological evidence of the decree of Cyrus [306] is provided by the Cyrus Cylinder.

> This clay cylinder is inscribed in Babylonian cuneiform with an account by Cyrus, king of Persia 549-530 B.C., of his conquest of Babylonia in 539 B.C. and capture of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king . . . He then describes measures of relief which he brought to the inhabitants of the city, and tells how he returned a number of god-images which Nabonidus had collected in Babylonian, to their proper temples through Babylonia, Assyria and western Iran. At the same time he arranged for the restoration of these temples, and organized the return to their homelands of a number of people who had been held in Babylonia by the Babylonian kings. Though this account refers only to Mesopotamia and Iran it represents a policy which he carried out throughout his newly conquered empire, and the document transcribed in Ezra 6:3-5 authorizing the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, and the subsequent return of the Jews (Ezra 2) to Palestine, were manifestations of this policy. [307]

Daniel's mention of the first year of Cyrus provides evidence that the book of Daniel did not exist in its present form until late in Daniel's years of service.

> This notice tells us that Daniel did not write this chapter (in its present form) until after his service had ended. Thus the book of Daniel is an early Persian period composition, as indicated at both its beginning (Dan. 1:21▸) and near its end (Dan. 10:1▸). This explains the Persian loanwords that appear in the book. Many of these may have already crept into the Aramaic or Hebrew used by the exiles before the fall of Babylon, but many of them may have been quickly adopted by necessity into the Aramaic used by courtiers such as Daniel because of Cyrus' accession to the throne of Babylon. [308]

Here we see another aspect of Daniel's godly behavior: a long, consistent, and distinguished career of persistent reliability. This is rare among Christians today. Many believe that God is only to be found in activities which change their focus and plans every few months: "What is the next move of God?" is their rallying cry. Meanwhile, development of the fruit of the Spirit languish, especially "longsuffering . . . faithfulness . . . [and] self control" (Gal. 5:22-23).

3.1.22 - Lessons from Chapter 1

The first chapter of Daniel contains numerous lessons we can apply in our own lives.

Lessons for Living

- **The True Source of Wisdom** - God alone is the true source of wisdom. The wise men of Babylon attempted to understand "deep things" through human intellect, philosophy, or the occult. These avenues appear to yield knowledge, but they are not the path leading to godly wisdom. Paul warned the Colossian Church, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, *according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world*, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). He touched on a similar theme when writing to the Church at Ephesus, "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, *in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God*, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:17-18). The Hebrew young men had a steadfast relationship with God affording them true wisdom.

[309]

- **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."[310] "[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."[311] "Daniel's life serves as a textbook example of consecration to God first and foremost while trusting in Him to resolve the remaining issues."[312] "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."[313] "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."[314]

- **Build a Scriptural Foundation While Young** - Daniel and his companions were probably teenagers at the time their whole world turned upside-down. Suddenly, the city and house of their God were subject to a foreign power, and they were taken from their families and placed into an intimidating foreign environment. Yet their reaction to these events (e.g., requesting a different diet) indicate they retained their knowledge and trust in God. How did they acquire such faith as youths? The answer, in part, would have to be found in their early upbringing during the time of Josiah's religious reforms and a continued development in the knowledge of God via His written Word. We don't know who their parents were, but we can virtually guarantee they followed the command of God in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Jerusalem had been invaded (and would soon be destroyed), Daniel had been forcibly removed from his family and home, he may have been emasculated, was taken miles away to a foreign city and culture, was inculcated within that foreign culture, and *still* he was faithful! What a testimony that is for believers of any age! "Daniel's age at captivity can be estimated at less than 14 years old. Daniel, when he went into captivity, was Junior High age or less, which shows you the tremendous amount of Bible doctrine that his parents . . . were faithful in teaching their child the Word of God . . . apparently [they] were very strong believers . . . and they knew one thing, that if they, in the early years of their child's life taught them systematically the Word of God in the home, that the character of that child would be so molded that it would never be twisted again, that they had first crack at influencing the soul of their child."[315] "Human viewpoint always seeks to indoctrinate man in the thinking of the kingdom of man. So if you think your kids are getting a neutral education then you are incredibly deceived. From the moment your kids go to kindergarten or nursery school they are being indoctrinated in human viewpoint methodology and human viewpoint philosophy and it's your responsibility to know what that is and to counteract it with doctrine . . . to know what they're being taught in the classroom and to be teaching them, and that means you need to lay that foundation before they ever leave the home to go into that environment."[316]

- **Accepting the Sovereignty of God** - As an individual, Daniel did not deserve to be taken captive. We know from the record of his life in this book that he and his family had been faithful to God even before the captivity. Daniel had every reason to become bitter and angry at God: taken from his family and people, made a eunuch, immersed in a pagan environment, all without any support system other than his God. Yet he understood and accepted that God was in all of these events which negatively impacted him personally. Because he realized this, he was able to continue following God and be a useful vessel fulfilling God's purpose. Notice that Daniel remained faithful without having any idea how this might impact his future. This was because Daniel was convinced "that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

- **Walking Consistently For the Distance** - Daniel's consistent service spanned a period of approximately 70 years. His life bears evidence of a life-long development of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). We notice his steadfast desire to honor God, whether at his first test involving the king's delicacies at the young age of about 15 or the last test that Scripture records when he was cast into the lion's den at an

approximate age of 80. "The Daniel of the second chapter was a young man just entering on a career of extraordinary dignity and power, such as few have ever known. The Daniel of the seventh chapter was an aged saint, who, having passed through the ordeal scathless, still possessed a heart as true to God and to His people as when, some threescore years before, he had entered the gates of the broad-walled city a captive and friendless stranger." [317]

- **Christianity is All-Inclusive** - Being a Christian is not just about study, prayer, worship, and faith. It extends to **every** facet of one's life, including activities not associated with direct service to God, such as politics, secular work, or commerce. To live the Christian life is not to withdraw in sanctified isolation. We are to remain true to God in the midst of whatever life situation God places us while walking in integrity.

- **God Often Works Through Adversity** - From Daniel's perspective, being captured by the Babylonians and taken almost 1,000 miles from home, possibly undergoing emasculation, and immersed into a foreign culture full of pagan influence would not have seemed like God's will. Yet it was God's will for Daniel to experience adversity. We often have an overly simplistic idea about how God works in our lives. His vision transcends our narrow ideas. We need to be open to the possibility that God is working as much in times of adversity as in times of blessing. In Daniel's case, God's purpose sent him ahead and placed him in high levels of Babylonian government before the majority of his fellow Jews arrived.

- **Principles Over Pragmatism** - Daniel honored God. As a result, God responded. The lesson for us is this: if we do our part, God is faithful to do His. Rather than employing pragmatism in an attempt to manipulate situations, we should maintain biblical principles and trust God in the results. As Spurgeon wrote, "But what have you and I to do with maintaining our influence and position at the expense of truth? It is never right to do a little wrong to obtain the greatest possible good . . . Your duty is to do the right: consequences are with God. . . . It is the devil's logic which says, 'You see I cannot come out and avow the truth because I have a sphere of usefulness which I hold by temporizing with what I fear may be false.' O sirs, what have we to do with consequences? Let the heavens fall, but let the good man be obedient to his Master, and loyal to his truth." [318]

- **Our Conduct is a Witness** - Unbelievers are carefully watching those who know God. There are at least two reasons for this: 1) we live by different principles evoking their curiosity; 2) since we claim to follow God, they will watch us to see whether we live consistently with our testimony. Because of this, the way we *live*—not just what we *say*—can be used of God as a powerful evangelistic tool. When we are persecuted, we need be sure the cause is godliness rather than sin. "It is little wonder that many Christians have a poor testimony with their employers and co-workers today. Many Christians think of their work as secular and unspiritual. They do not excel or even try to do their jobs well. Spiritual ministry is what is important to them, spiritual things like witnessing. They often witness on the job when they should be working. A Christian witness begins in the workplace, on the job, by Christians doing a job well, as unto the Lord. If we excel at what we do, men will take note. They may then be more interested to hear what we have to tell them about God." [319]

For a list of New Testament passages containing references, allusions, and themes found in this chapter, see *Daniel 1 in the New Testament*.

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Notes

[1] "[Jer. 25:1 records] this was the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the twenty-third year that Jeremiah had been giving stern warnings about the doom awaiting Judah if that nation continued to defy God and pursue a course of evil."—Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1983), 185.

[2] As predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:9, 11), other nations assisted Babylon in the attack: "Nebuchadnezzar was assisted by Astibares, that is, by Astivares, Assuerus, Acksweres, Axeres, or Cy-Axeres, the king of the Medes, in the third year of Jehoiakim. They came with an army of Babylonians, Medes, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites to the number of ten thousand chariots, one hundred and eighty thousand foot soldiers and one hundred and twenty thousand calvary. They subdued Samaria, Galilee, Scythopolis, and the Jews in the region of Caleed and besieged Jerusalem (2K. 25:2, 7; Dan. 1:1▸). . . . They captured King Jehoiakim alive and bound him in chains for a time (Dan. 1:2▸; 2Chr. 36:6). They carried the

king, Daniel and other people to Babylon along with part of what gold, silver and brass they found in the temple."—Isaac Newton, Larry Pierce, and Marion Pierce, eds., *Newton's Revised History of Ancient Kingdoms* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1728, 2009), 104. "God threatened that he would take all the families of the north (that is the armies of the Medes, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon), and bring them against Judah (Jer. 25:9, 15)."—Ibid., 108.

[3] "Jerusalem was given over to the Gentiles and the times of the Gentiles began. . . . But as the times of the Gentiles had a definite beginning so will they have a definite end and then Jerusalem will no longer be trodden down, but become the city of the great King. How the times of the Gentiles end we shall find in Daniel's great prophecies."—Arno Clemens Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 2nd (New York, NY: Our Hope, 1911), 12.

[4] Chronologists differ as to whether this took place prior to the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. Those who believe Daniel's capture followed the battle of Carchemish emphasize the importance of this chronological indicator because it serves as a point of synchronism between the chronology set forth within Scripture and obtained from archaeological records. "The date of the captivity is the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, the year AN. HOM. 3520, B.C. 605, the 21st year of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, as King of Babylon, in which year Nebuchadnezzar, being associated with his father on the throne, was also 'King of Babylon,' though the year he was Co-Rex with his father is not reckoned as his first year. . . . Daniel 1:1▸ . . . was in accordance with the prophecy of Isa. 39:7, uttered in the 14th year of Hezekiah, B.C. 711, just 106 years before. The following year, the fourth of Jehoiakim, was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. The synchronism is given in Jer. 25:1. This is one of the most important dates in the Bible. It is the link which connects together the years of sacred and profane Chronology. By it all events of Bible history from the creation of Adam onward, are brought into chronological relation with the events of our own day, so far as the record of the years has been accurately preserved from the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar onward. The 4th year of Jehoiakim was also the 23rd year of Jeremiah's prophecies, which began in the 13th year of Josiah (Jer. 25:3). It was the year in which Jeremiah's memorable prophecy of the 70 years' captivity in Babylon was uttered. All the Kingdoms of the world were to serve the King of Babylon for 70 years (Jer. 25:8-26)."—Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology: The Treatise (Vol 1)* (London, England: Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1913), 222.

[5] In rare cases, the difficulty *may* be due to a copyist error in a manuscript tradition passed down to us. Although the original autographs are without error, the transcription process is not. "Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appears to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free. Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the autograph. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader 'wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2Ti. 3:15)." Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, s.v. *E. Transmission and Translation*. Nevertheless, it has been our experience as a student of Scripture that we are often too quick to attribute an apparent contradiction to a copyist error. Instead, with sufficient patience, other factors often explain the apparent discrepancy.

[6] Paul Ferguson, "Digging Into the Documents and the Attempted Hijacking of Paradise," in *Bible and Spade*, vol. 23 no. 1 (Landisville, PA: Associates for Biblical Research, Winter 2010), 8.

[7] Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2007), 35-36.

[8] John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), Dan. 1:1.

[9] Roland K. Harrison, "Daniel, Book of," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 862-863.

[10] "Now in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates, upon a resolution he had taken to fight with Necho, king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was."—Flavious Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," in Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus : Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996, c1987), 10.84.

[11] Floyd Nolen Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to Basics, 4th ed* (The Woodlands, TX: KingsWord Press, 1993, 1999), 198-200.

[12] A. R. Fausset, "The Book of Daniel," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Dan. 1:1.

[13] "The battle of Carchemish was fought in Jehoiakim's *fourth* year, and therefore after Nebuchadnezzar's accession, whereas the invasion of Judea was during Nabopolassar's lifetime, and therefore in Jehoiakim's *third* year, precisely as the Book of Daniel avers. . . . The question of course arises how this battle should have been fought *after* the successful campaign of he preceding year. There are reasonable explanations of this, but I offer none. Scripture has suffered grievously from the eagerness of its defenders to put forward hypotheses to explain seeming difficulties."—Robert Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic's Den* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1909, 1990), 17-18, 18n1.

[14] Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[15] Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to Basics, 4th ed*, 198-200.

[16] "Leupold, for instance, in consideration of the additional reference in 2 Kings 24:1 where Jehoiakim is said to submit to Nebuchadnezzar for three years, offers another interpretation. In a word, it is the assumption that there was an earlier raid on Jerusalem, not recorded elsewhere in the Bible, which is indicated in Daniel 1:1▸. Key to the chronology of events in this crucial period in Israel's history was the battle at Carchemish in May-June 605 B.C., a date well established by D. J. Wiseman. There Nebuchadnezzar met Pharaoh Necho and destroyed the Egyptian army; this occurred 'in the fourth year of Jehoiakim' (Jer. 46:2). Leupold holds that the invasion of Daniel 1:1▸ took place prior to this battle, instead of immediately afterward. He points out that the usual assumption that Nebuchadnezzar could not have bypassed Carchemish to conquer Jerusalem first, on the theory that Carchemish was a stronghold which he could not ignore, is not actually supported by the facts, as there is no evidence that the Egyptian armies were in any strength at Carchemish until just before the battle that resulted in the showdown. In this case, the capture of Daniel would be a year earlier or about 606 B.C."—John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 1:1. "Three solutions of the problem have been attempted. The first of these is the simplest and has much to commend it. It asserts that Dan. 1:1▸ refers to an event that is distinct from all the others mentioned in the Scriptures. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar came not only in 604 B. C., the first year of his reign, and in 597, the seventh year of his reign, but also in 605, the year before he became king in his own right. If the question is raised: 'Why is there no other reference to this expedition of 605, especially in the historical books, Kings and Chronicles; or also by Jeremiah, who in Jer. 52:28-30 mentions the three different occasions on which Nebuchadnezzar carried away captives from Jerusalem and even tells how many the king took on each occasion?' we answer: 'The raid in 605 was not a major capture like the three mentioned by Jeremiah; besides, only a handful of princes was carried away as v. 3 indicates.' Daniel, however, has a very particular reason for referring to the event because it was the occasion of his own deportation to Babylon. . . . We need [also] to assume that the proleptic use of the title [king] occurs here even as we Americans might tell how our first *president* acquitted himself very creditably in Braddock's campaign, yet we all know that many years were to pass before he became president."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1949, 1969), Dan. 1:1.

[17] "It will be noted, also, that Nebuchadnezzar may have come up against Judah and Jerusalem, during the period between the fall of Nineveh and the death of Jehoiakim, a number of times every year, for aught we know to the contrary. Frequent expeditions across the Euphrates were customary on the part of the kings of the Assyrians, who immediately preceded the Babylonians in the government of Syria and Palestine. Is there any reason for supposing that what had been done by this king of Assyria may not have been done, also, by the king of Babylon? What was possible for one was possible, also, for the other."—Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnams & Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1971), 47. "To harmonize perfectly the apparent anachronisms of Daniel 1:1▸, and Jeremiah 25:1, we have only to suppose that Jeremiah writing in Palestine used the manner of reckoning common in that country, and that Daniel writing in Babylon used the method there employed; or to assume that there were two distinct expeditions, one in the 3rd and one in the 4th year of Jehoiakim."—Ibid., 82. "It must be remembered also that Carchemish was not on the most direct line of communication between Jerusalem and Babylon. The route from Jerusalem to Babylon by way of Damascus and Palmyra crossed the Euphrates about 250 miles below Carchemish, at a place called Thapsacus where there is a shallow ford often only eighteen inches deep. Here is where the ten thousand crossed. Here is where Alexander crossed (Arr., ii, 7). As long as the Babylonians held control of this ford and of Palmyra and Damascus, their line of communication with Palestine through the desert would be safe."—Ibid., 78-79.

[18] "This occasion could not have preceded the Carchemish victory, because the Babylonian king, who at the time laid siege to Jerusalem (Dan. 1:1▸), had no access as far west as Jerusalem until after this victory had been achieved."—Leon J. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 25. "He and his companions were taken captive . . . during the summer of 605 B.C., sometime between the Carchemish battle and Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon to receive the crown. . . . This occasion could not have preceded the Carchemish victory, because the Babylon king, who at the time laid siege to Jerusalem (Dan. 1:1▸), had no access as far west as Jerusalem until after this victory had been achieved. . . . Neither could it have followed Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon to receive the crown—for instance,

during the ensuing months of 605 B.C., when he did go back to continue subjugating the west—because Daniel 1:1▸ gives the date as Jehoiakim's third year; and this year could not have extended beyond the month of Tishri (October), 605 B.C., as the following shows. From 2 Kings 23:28-37, (2Chr. 36:1-5), it is known that Jehoiakim began to rule in the fall of 609 (following the three-month rule of Jehoiahaz, who had immediately succeeded Josiah, killed by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo, July, 609). This means that his initial year, called the accession-year (on the accession-year system then in use), would have ended in the month Tishri (first month of the civil year), 608 B.C., making his official first year to have extended to Tishri, 607, his second to Tishri, 606, and his third to Tishri, 605."—Ibid., 25-26. "The assumption . . . that Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar a year before the battle of Carchemish. What Keil has remarked (*Einl.*, § 133, p. 440) will suffice to refute this view: 'This combination is untenable, because it cannot be reconciled with Jer. 25. In that passage the fourth year of Jehoiakim is mentioned, beyond the possibility of being mistaken, as marking an epoch for the theocracy and for all the nations of Western Asia, in which the Lord would bring Nebuchadnezzar and all the tribes of the north against Jerusalem, that the land of Judæa might become a wilderness and its inhabitants, together with all neighboring nations, be subjected to Babylon during seventy years (chap. 25:9-11). So emphatic a prophecy in the mouth of Jeremiah would be utterly incomprehensible, if Jerusalem had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim been made tributary a year previously, while in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which the prophet so strongly emphasizes (25:3 et seq.), nothing of moment had transpired, and even later in the reign of Jehoiakim nothing had occurred beyond his revolt from the Chaldæans some years afterward, by which he became involved in hostilities with bands of Chaldæans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites (2 Kings 24:2). But this view becomes wholly untenable from the consideration that, at a time when the Egyptian king, who had advanced towards Carchemish at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, was doubtless in possession of that fortress, Nebuchadnezzar could not possibly pass by this hostile force and proceed to Judæa, while exposing Babylonia to so powerful a foe. But had this been possible, and, incredible as it is, had it actually occurred, it is certain that Pharaoh-Necho would not have permitted him quietly to operate in the rear of his army and overcome Jehoiakim his vassal; nor would Nebuchadnezzar, after conquering Jerusalem, have returned to capture Carchemish and defeat his principal enemy, instead of proceeding to Egypt, and making an easy conquest of the country, which was deprived of its defenders. But aside from this, the method under consideration is irreconcilable with the extracts from Berosus furnished by Josephus (Ant. X. 11, 1; contra Ap., I. 19).' "—Otto Zöckler, "The Book of the Prophet Daniel," in John Peter Lange, ed., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), 33.

[19] Thomas A Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 65.

[20] "This follows Babylonian practice, which reckoned the first regnal year as beginning on the first of Nisan following the year of accession to the throne. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's first regnal year was computed as commencing in Nisan (April) of 604, even though he had already been crowned in Tishri (September) of 605. Jehoiakim began his reign in 608, as an appointee of Necho king of Egypt, who officially changed his name from Eliakim ('El will establish') to Jehoiakim ('Yahweh will establish'). . . . If, then, Jehoiakim's first regnal year began in Nisan 608, the Battle of Carchemish, in which Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Assyrian-Egyptian coalition in June 605, would have taken place in Jehoiakim's third regnal year, according to the Babylonian reckoning; and Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent advance on Jerusalem (prior to Nisan 604) would have fallen in the same year. The Jewish calendar, however, began the civil New Year on the first of Tishri (the seventh month), rather than the first of Nisan (the first month of their religious year), and reckoned regnal years accordingly. So if Jehoiakim was first appointed king in the late fall of 609, his first regnal year must have begun in Tishri 608. Therefore Tishri 605 would have marked the beginning of his fourth regnal year, and Nebuchadnezzar apparently did not reach Jerusalem in his mopping-up operations after the victory at Carchemish till November or December of 605. It is only natural, therefore, that Jeremiah (Jer. 25:1; 46:2) would refer to this event as taking place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. 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."—Gleason Leonard Archer, "Daniel," vol. 7 in Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), Dan. 1:1.

[21] "According to the Judean system of regnal dating that Daniel employed for the Hebrew king . . . Jehoiakim's third year extended from Tishri (Sept.-Oct.) 606 B.C. to Tishri 605 B.C. Babylonian historical texts . . . indicate that it was in the late spring or summer of 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar swept down into the region after the battle of Carchemish and attached Palestine.... In 1956 a cuneiform tablet was published that stated that immediately after the battle of Carchemish in the spring of 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar 'conquered the whole area of the Hatti-country.' Wiseman explains that the geographical term 'Hatti' included, 'at this period, the whole of Syria and Palestine.' It was reasonable for Nebuchadnezzar, after defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish (north of Palestine), to move quickly against Jehoiakim, who had been one of Pharaoh's allies and who, in fact, had been placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Necho himself (cf. 2K. 23:34). Jeremiah 46:2 reports that the battle of Carchemish took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, whereas Dan. 1:1▸ places the invasion of Judah (which took place within a few weeks or months after this battle) in the third year of Jehoiakim. This difficulty is best explained by the fact that both the Babylonian and Judean calendars were employed by

the Jews at this time."—Stephen R. Miller, "Daniel," in E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Mathews, and David S. Dockery, eds., *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 56-57.

[22] "Only between the months of Nisan and Tishri in 605 B.C. would the date indications of both Daniel 1:1▸ and Jeremiah 46:2▸ be correct."—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 26.

[23] "Nabopolassar stayed at home in his twenty-first year, beginning with Nisan, 605, but sent Hebrews with the army against Carchemish. A disastrous defeat was inflicted upon the Egyptians. A remnant that fled to Hamath was wiped out with the result that 'Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole area of the Hatti-country.' This includes all of Aram and the territory south to the borders of Egypt. Babylon rather than Egypt was now the master in Palestine. This was the attack mentioned in Daniel 1:1▸ that took place in the third year of Jehoiakim and in which Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon. It should be noticed that this was the third year of Jehoiakim according to Tishri reckoning, but the fourth year according to Nisan years as mentioned in Jeremiah 46:2▸."—Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 183.

[24] "Daniel used *Tishri* (October) reckoning for the beginning of Jehoiakim's official year, whereas Jeremiah used *Nisan* (April) reckoning. . . . Since all events occurring between the spring and fall would automatically be one year off when these two distinct systems of chronology were used, the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar (which occurred in the summer of 605) would still be in the third year according to Daniel's system but in the fourth year according to Jeremiah's system."—Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[25] "Millard points out the possible solution: However, on the accession year system and with an autumnal [Tishri] New Year, his [Jehoiakim's] first year would run from September 608 to September 607, his second 607-6, his third September 606-October 605. This last would just accommodate the statement of Daniel 1:1▸ in chronological terms.[A. R. Millard, 'Daniel 1▸-6▸ and History,' *Evangelical Quarterly 49* (1977): 69; Joyce G.Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), pp. 19-21.]"—Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 137 no. 545 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, January-March 1968), 4.

[26] These alternate reckonings are not arbitrarily established, but have been verified by chronologists using various cross-checks. For more on this, see [Rodger C. Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall?," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 47 no. 1 (Evangelical Theological Society, March 2004)].

[27] Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1969, 1999), 1112.

[28] "The third year of Jehoiakim's reign (by Babylonian reckoning. Jer. 25:1, which refers to the same incident, uses Jewish reckoning, counting from the new year prior to a king's accession.)"—Sinclair B. Ferguson, "Daniel," in D. A. Carson, ed., *New Bible Commentary (4th ed.)* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994, 1970), Dan. 1:1.

[29] "The Babylonians used the accession method of reckoning; hence, Nebuchadnezzar's first official year did not begin until the 1st of Tishri in the following year. However, the Hebrews counted his accession year as his first. Thus the fall of Jerusalem (B.C. 586) is given as his 19th year by Hebrew reckoning but his 18th year by Babylonian dating. Jeremiah 52:28-34 is an addendum written (probably by Ezra) in Babylon after Jeremiah's death; hence these dates are given in Babylonian reckoning (cp. Jer. 52:12-14; 32:1)."—Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to Basics, 4th ed*, xiii.

[30] "During the summer of 605 B.C., which was both Jehoiakim's fourth year and Nebuchadnezzar's first year by non-accession reckoning (Jer 25:1), Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem. Daniel, using accession year reckoning, called it Jehoiakim's third year (Dan. 1:1▸)."—Andrew E Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 158.

[31] "Owing to these two methods of reckoning, it is obvious that the third year of a king according to the Babylonian calendar would be his fourth according to the Egyptian. Among the Hebrews, it is generally agreed, that the Egyptian method of reckoning the years of a king was employed."—Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, 69.

[32] Andrew E Steinmann, *Daniel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), Dan. 1:1.

[33] Larry Pierce, "Appendix C: Ussher's Timeline for the Divided Kingdom," in Archbishop Ussher, Larry Pierce, and Marion Pierce, eds., *Annals of the World* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1654, 2003), 906.

[34] Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[35] "The fact is that Nebuchadnezzar set out on his expedition near the *close of the third year* of Jehoiakim's reign, and this is the point from which Daniel reckons the time. However, the conquest of Jerusalem was not fully accomplished until the ninth month of the following year, and Jeremiah reckons the time of the conquest from that point. Thus, the critics have no ground to stand on when they say that Daniel speaks of the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, while Jeremiah speaks of the fourth year. *Both are correct*."—Oliver B. Greene, *Daniel* (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, 1964, 1974), 24.

36 "If בָּא [*bā'*] is to be understood of an expedition with reference to its point of departure, then the fixing of its time cannot of course refer also to the time of the arrival of the expedition at its termination and the siege then ensuing. . . . The period of the taking of the city can only be determined from dates elsewhere given."—Carl Friedrich Keil, "Daniel," in Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Dan. 1:1-2.

37 "This seeming discrepancy is explained by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar set out on his expedition near the close of the third year of Jehoiakim, from which point Daniel reckons, but did not accomplish the subjugation of Jerusalem till about the ninth month of the following year, and from this Jeremiah reckons."—Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel* (Glenside, PA: Clarence Larkin Estate, 1929), Dan. 1:2.

38 "He departed for Jerusalem, in order to besiege it; he began his expedition against Jerusalem, which resulted in the siege of that city."—Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:1. "The only adequate solution of this two-fold difficulty is found in the hypothesis, that Dan. 1:1▸ does not relate the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar before Jerusalem, but merely his departure for that place, or the beginning of his march (בּוֹא [*bô'*]) as in Jonah 1:3; cf. Gen. 14:5; 45:7; Dan. 11:13▸, 17▸, 28▸). . . [This solution] may be found in Perizonius, *Origines Ægyptiacæ et Babylonicæ*, II., p. 430, and more recently in Hengstenberg, p. 54 et seq.; Delitzsch, p. 275; Keil, *Einl*., § 133, p. 440; and substantially, in Kranichfeld, p. 16 et seq. (but cf. infra, No. 2). It regards the verb בּוֹא [*bô'*] as not designating the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar before Jerusalem, but as merely indicating his departure from Babylon (for the feasibility of this interpretation cf. the proof-texts cited above, to which may be added Num. 32:6; Isa. 7:24; 22:15, and many others; see Gesenius and Dietrich under בּוֹא [*bô'*], No. 3)."—Ibid., 29, 32.

39 "But, speaking of dates, another little point it is well to bear in mind, which the first verse of our chapter, as compared with Jer. 25:1, gives occasion to: years are sometimes reckoned from their beginning, sometimes from their end, that is, either inclusively or exclusively. So it is in the well-known instances of the days between our Lord's death and resurrection, and of the six or eight days before the transfiguration. Thus in Daniel it was said, 'in the third year of Jehoiakim;' but in Jeremiah, 'in the fourth year.' The one was the complete year, the other the current."—William Kelly, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel (3rd. ed.)* (Richardson, TX: Galaxie Software, 1881, 2004), 16.

40 Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 27.

41 "The text [says] that Nebuchadnezzar led his army to Syria-Palestine, besieged Jerusalem and captured it. . . . the importance of the text is that it fixes the date of the first fall of Jerusalem to 16 March 597 B.C., an event referred to in 2 Kings 24:10-17, which identifies the deposed king as Jehoiakim (or Jehoiachin) and Nebuchadnezzar's nominee as Zedekiah."—T. C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum* (London, England: British Museum Press, 1988, 1998), 82. Copyright © 2012 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by special permission and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.

42 Bryant G. Wood, "Nebo-Sarsekim Found in Babylonian Tablet," in *Bible and Spade*, vol. 20 no. 3 (Landisville, PA: Associates for Biblical Research, Summer 2007), 173.

43 "The Babylonian Chronicle tells us that Nebuchadnezzar's campaign in Syria and Palestine lasted until Shebat (early February) 604 B.C. At this time he returned to Babylon, taking captives with him. These captives most likely included Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Dan. 1:6▸). Thus we can date Dan. 1:3-19▸ to early 604 B.C."—Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology*, 158.

44 "This tablet forms part of a series which summarises the principle events of each year. Each annual entry is separated from the next by a horizontal line, and begins with a reference to the year of reign of the king in question, The present tablet, which covers the years 605 to 594 B.C., is of particular interest from the point of view of Biblical archaeology because of the entry for the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar (598-7 B.C.). The text (lines 11-13 on the reverse) runs '[1.11] in the seventh year, the month of Kislimu, the king of Akkad mustered his troops, marched to Hatti-land, (1.12) and encamped against the city of Judah (*ālu ia a hu du*) and on the second day of the month of Addaru he seized the city and captured the king. (1.13) He appointed there a king of his heart, received its heavy tribute and sent (it) to Babylonian.' In this passage it is clear from the preceding entries that the 'king of Akkad' was Nebuchadnezzar, the 'Hatti-land' was Syria-Palestine, and the 'city of Judah' was Jerusalem. The text is therefore saying that Nebuchadnezzar led his army to Syria-Palestine, besieged Jerusalem and captured it. . . . the importance of the text is that it fixes the date of the first fall of Jerusalem to 16 March 597 B.C., an event referred to in 2 Kings 24:10-17, which identifies the deposed king as Jehoiakim (or Jehoiachin) and Nebuchadnezzar's nominee as Zedekiah. . . . This document has a tantalizing aspect because it ends with the year 594 B.C., and the next surviving tablet in the series only takes up the story again in 556 B.C., so the Babylonian evidence for the final destruction of Jerusalem, probably in 586 B.C., is lacking."—Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, 82.

45 Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[46] "As regards the name Nebuchadnezzar, it is hard to repress a feeling of indignation against the dishonesty of the critics. They plainly imply that this spelling is peculiar to Daniel. The fact is that the name occurs in nine of the books of the Old Testament, and in all of them, with the single exception of Ezekiel, it appears in this form. In Jeremiah it is spelt in both ways, proving clearly that the now received orthography was in use when the Book of Daniel was written, or else that the spelling of the name throughout the sacred books is entirely a matter of editing."—Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic's Den*, 45n1.

[47] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[48] Miller, *Daniel*, 56n2.

[49] Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), 21.

[50] "**I raise up**—not referring to God's having brought the Chaldeans from their original seats to Babylonia (see on Cmt. on Isa. 23:13), for they had already been upwards of twenty years (since Nabopolassar's era) in political power there; but to His being about now to raise them up as the instruments of God's 'work' of judgment on the Jews (2Chr. 36:6)."—A. R. Fausset, "The Book of Habakkuk," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Hab. 1:6.

[51] "The Babylonian's lent extensive efforts to strengthening their hold in the area of Izalla, to the northeast. It is noteworthy that the crown prince, Nebuchadnezzar, took on prominence in those efforts for the first time, being mentioned as commanding one of the Babylonian forces for the campaign of 607 B.C."—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 24. "Jerusalem was first taken by the Chaldeans in the third year of Jehoiakim. His fourth year was current with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:1). This accords with the statement of Berosus that Nebuchadnezzar's first expedition took place before his actual accession (Josephus, *Apion* 1:19). . . . But here we must distinguish between the narrative of Josephus, which is full of errors, and his quotation from Berosus, which is consistent and definite. . . . What Berosus says is that when Nebuchadnezzar heard of his father's death, '*he set the affairs of Egypt and the other countries in order*, and committed the captives he had taken *from the Jews*, and the Phoenicians, and Syrians, and of the nations belonging to Egypt, to some of his friends . . . while he went in haste *over the desert* to Babylon.' Will the critics tell us how he could have had Jewish captives if he had not invaded Judea; how he could have reached Egypt without marching through Palestine; how he could have returned to Babylon *over the desert* if he had set out from Carchemish on the Euphrates!"—Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic's Den*, 154-155.

[52] Renald E. Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1982), Dan. 1:1.

[53] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[54] "Exception has also been taken to Daniel's designation of Nebuchadrezzar as king, when in actual fact he was then only crown prince. The term, however, is employed proleptically, as we today may speak of the childhood of President Washington."—Harrison, *Daniel, Book of*, 1:863. According to Anderson, another possible explanation for taking Nebuchadnezzar as king at this early date may be reflected in the way the *Misha* records the Jews having reckoned a king's rule."According to the Canon of Ptolemy, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar dates from B.C. 604: *i.e.* his accession was in the year beginning the 1st Thoth (which fell in January), B.C. 604. But the Captivity began in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year (*cf.* Eze. 1:2 and 2K. 24:12); and in the thirty-seventh year of the Captivity Nebuchadnezzar's successor was on the throne (2K. 25:27). This, however, gives Nebuchadnezzar a reign of at least forty-four years, whereas according to the canon (and Berosus confirms it) he reigned only forty-three years. It follows, therefore, that Scripture antedates his reign and computes it from B.C. 605. . . . This might be explained by the fact that the Jews acknowledge him as suzerain from that date. But it has been overlooked that it is accounted for by the *Mishna* rule of computing regnal years from Nisan to Nisan. In B.C. 604, the first Nisan fell on the 1st April, and according to the *Mishna* rule the king's second year would begin on that day, no matter how recently he had ascended the throne. Therefore the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:1) was the year beginning Nisan B.C. 605; and the third year of Jehoiakim, in which Jerusalem was taken and the Servitude began, was the year beginning Nisan B.C. 606."—Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic's Den*, 155-156. However, this seems unlikely given the evidence that Daniel was most likely using Babylonian rather than Jewish reckoning.

[55] Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, 87-88, 95.

[56] *The extent of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*. Image obtained from Wikimedia, 2010. Image is in the public domain.

[57] Some believe the term *Babel* originally denoted a location: the *gate of god*—where God "came down" (Gen. 11:7). "In Assyrian written *Bâb-ili, gate of god*."—F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 93. "The oldest attested extrabiblical name is the Sumerian ká-dingir-ki (usually written ká-dingir-ra, 'gate of god'). This may have been a translation of the more commonly used later Babylonian *Bāb-ilī*, of which an etymology based on Heb *bālal*, 'confused,' is given in Gen. 11:9."—Donald J. Wiseman, "Babylon," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Grand

Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 1:385. "Babel [is an] obviously Akkadian word meaning the 'door/gate of god'. . . . Despite what has been understood and held as true by so many scholars over the centuries, I am convinced that the biblical author's emphasis in verse nine was not on the confusion of the languages, but rather on God's decision to appear 'there'. This is the real reason the place was named 'the door of God', because God chose to come down in that specific place (šām) and confound the futile plans of men (Ge 11:5)! . . . This failure to make the connection between the repetition of 'there' (šām) and 'Babel' (the door of God) puzzled me until I checked on the Septuagint's rendering of the passage. The name Babel doesn't even appear! The 2nd century B.C. translator, obviously the perpetuator of the problem, evidently had no idea that Babel meant 'door of God' and translated it as 'Synchysis': quite literally 'confusion'. Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint reads, 'On this account its name was called Confusion, because there the Lord confounded the languages of all the earth, and thence the Lord scattered them upon the face of all the earth.' "—Mark L. Howard, "Therefore it was called Babel," in *Journal of Creation*, vol. 23 no. 3 (Creation Ministries International, 2009), 56-57. "The place where they built the Tower was called Babylon, on account of the confusion of languages. Here we have again the statement as in Genesis that the meaning of Babel is 'confusion.' This, as is well known, is based upon the purely Hebrew etymological law, which makes [balal], 'to confuse,' or 'mingle,' assume a reduplicate form; but as far as the cuneiform inscriptions, which are now very numerous, give us information, Babel, from baldlu, 'to mingle' (the root in question), was an impossibility. But on the Babylonian side, that the rendering of the name as Bab-ili (-ilani), 'gate of god' ('of the gods') was a folk-etymology, is undoubted, notwithstanding that the Sumero-Akkadian form Ka-dingira, with the same meaning, is far from rare."—T. G. Pinches, "Babel, Tower of, The Meaning of Babel," in J. W. Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1915). The relationship between *Babel* and *Balal* may reflect a play on words: "Genesis 11:9 gives the name as Babel (perhaps from *bālal* 'to confuse') but probably intended as a parody, a word play referring to what happened when the languages were confused."—Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999, c1980), #197. We prefer the view of Gesenius who gives priority to the inspired Scriptural account: "others [who reject the *Scripture* account as to the origin of the name, and follow their own fancies] make it . . . gate, i.e. hall of Belus"—Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1846, 2003).

[58] Also note that many animals in the sea were unclean according to the Law of Moses (Lev. 11:10-11).

[59] James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), #7443.

[60] "That both of these statements [2K. 24:1; 2Chr. 36:6] refer to the same expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Jehoiakim mentioned here, appears not only from the statement of the book of Chronicles agreeing with v. 2 of this chapter, namely, that Nebuchadnezzar took away a part of the sacred vessels of the temple to Babylon, and there put them in the temple of his god, but also from the circumstance that, beyond all doubt, during the reign of Jehoiakim there was not a second siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It is true, indeed, that when Jehoiakim threw off the yoke at the end of three years' subjection, Nebuchadnezzar sent Chaldean, Aramaean, Moabitish, and Ammonitish hosts against him for the purpose of bringing him into subjection, but Jerusalem was not again laid siege to by these hosts till the death of Jehoiakim."—Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1-2.

[61] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #151.

[62] John Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998, 1561), Dan. 1:1.

[63] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[64] "Jehoiakim remained a loyal vassal of Nebuchadnezzar for three years, most likely sending him tribute each year (2K. 24:1). However, probably due to Nebuchadnezzar's disastrous campaign that ended in defeat at the hands of the Egyptians during Kislev of 601 BC (November 21-December 19) [British Museum tablet 21946, reverse, lines 6-7 (Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 70-71)], Jehoiakim ceased his loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim died in December 598 before Nebuchadnezzar could exact vengeance."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

[65] Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1884-85), Dan. 1:2.

[66] Paul Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come* (Clifton, TX: Scofield Ministries, 2007), Dan. 1:2.

[67] This image depicts a similar historical event: the armies of Rome hauling away temple articles in A.D. 70. *Roman Triumphal arch panel copy from Beth Hatefutsoth, showing spoils of Jerusalem Temple*. "The *Arch of Titus* . . . is a 1st-century AD honorific arch, located on the *Via Sacra*, Rome . . . It was constructed in c. 81 AD by the Emperor Domitian . . . to commemorate Titus's official deification or *consecratio* and the victory of Titus together with their father, Vespasian, over the Jewish rebellion in Judaea."—Wikipedia. Copyright © 2010 by בית השלום. Use of this image is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

[68] " 'with part,' for the deportation was for the correction, not the ruin, of the whole nation."—Hippolytus, "Scholia on Daniel," in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume V:*

Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Novatian, Appendix (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 185. "Why they were not 'all' taken away at first does not appear, but perhaps Nebuchadnezzar did not then intend wholly to overthrow the Hebrew nation, but meant to keep them tributary to him as a people. The temple was not at that time destroyed, but probably he allowed the worship of Jehovah to be celebrated there still, and he would naturally leave such vessels as were absolutely necessary to keep up the services of public worship."—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:2.

69 Miller, *Daniel*, 58.

70 Hezekiah reigned from 729-687 B.C. [Rodger C. Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 48 no. 2 (Evangelical Theological Society, June 2005), 246]

71 "for some, as Saadliah says, were hid by Josiah and Jeremiah, which is not to be depended on; however, certain it is that all were not carried away, because we read of some of the vessels of the temple being carried away afterwards, in Jeconiah's time, 2K. 24:13, and still there were some left, as the pillars, sea, bases, and other vessels, which were to be carried away, and were carried away by the king of Babylon, in Zedekiah's time, Jer. 27:19."—John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Broken Arrow, OK: StudyLamp Software, 1746-1763), Dan. 1:2.

72 Young, *Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders*, 245.

73 "Used of the country round Bagdad."—Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 841. "Shinar is the OT designation for southern Mesopotamia, the alluvial plain between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The area was known by the Sumerians as Sumer and Akkad. It later became known as Babylonia. In two of the eight passages Shinar is called Babylonia in the LXX (Isa. 11:11 and Zec. 5:11)."—Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, #2424.

74 "This does not seem to be a mere geographical notation. The author could certainly have used the name 'Babylon' (בָּבֶל [*bāḇel*]) since in verse 1 Nebuchadnezzar is identified as the King of Babylon."—Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 66.

75 "Nimrod was a forerunner of the Man of Sin. . . . the spirit that will occupy the Man of Sin also indwelt Nimrod."—Greene, *Daniel*, 182.

76 Zechariah's prophecy was given in approximately 520 B.C. "The prophecies in Haggai take place in the second yar of Darius I (Hag. 1:1, 15; 2:10), that is, 520 B.C., which is also the year in which Zechariah begins to prophesy (Zec. 1:1, 7)."—Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology*, 181. Therefore, Zechariah's prophecy of the woman in the basket (Zec. 5:5-11) cannot be a prediction concerning Neo-Babylonia which had already fallen in 539 B.C.

77 Although these themes are represented in Scripture, this does not deny the literal meaning of the reality behind the themes (e.g., the Promised Land as a piece of real estate with physical borders in a specific geographic location).

78 Robert Dean, *Lessons on Daniel* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso [transcriber], 2006), 3.28-29.

79 Charles Clough, *Lessons on Daniel* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso, [transcriber], 2006), 3.30.

80 *Marduk, sun god of Babylon, with his thunderbolts pursues Anzu after Anzu stole the Tablets of Destiny.* (Black and white crop of full plate scan, from Austen Henry Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh, Second Series' plate 19/83, London, J. Murray, 1853.) Copyright © 2010 by George Lazenby. Use of this image is subjec to a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

81 *New English Translation : NET Bible*, 1st ed (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998, 2006), Dan. 1:2.

82 Donald J. Wiseman, "Babylon, In the Old Testament," in J. D. Douglas, ed., *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1980), 1.161.

83 Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 374.

84 Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 31.

85 "The Babylonians worshipped more gods than one; there were Rach, Shach and Nego, from whom Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are supposed to have their names given them by the Chaldeans, Dan. 1:7▸. Rach is thought to be the sun, whose priests were called Rachiophantae, observers of the sun; Shach, to which Sheshach is referred by some, Jer. 51:41, for which a feast was kept once a year for five days, when servants had the rule and government of their masters; and Nego either was worshipped for the sun, or some star, so called from its brightness. Venus was also had in veneration with the Babylonians, whom they called Mylitta; in whose temple many acts of uncleanness and filthiness were committed, as Herodotus relates. And, besides these, there were Merodach, Nebo, and Bel; of which see Isa. 46:1, the latter seems to have been their chief deity, and who was called Jupiter Belus; and with whom were the goddesses Juno and Rhea. And in the city of Babylon stood the temple of Bel, or Jupiter Belus, which was extant in the times of Herodotus."—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 1:2.

86 Miller, *Daniel*, 58-59.

[87] John E. Goldingay, "Daniel," vol. 30 in Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, eds., *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books), 15.

[88] Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:2.

[89] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:2.

[90] Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 44.

[91] "These, as booty, were placed in the treasure house of his god, probably as a *thank offering* Cf. also Ezra 1:7; 5:14."—Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1949, 1998), Dan. 1:2. "His bringing them to the temple of his god was meant as an act of worship of his god."—Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 67.

[92] Concerning Israel's election: Ex. 19:5-6; Ex. 34:10; Lev. 20:26; Deu. 4:7-8, 34-37; Deu. 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2; 26:18-19; 28:10; 32:9; 2S. 7:23-24; 1K. 8:53; 1Chr. 16:13; 17:21; Ps. 47:4; 105:6, 43; 106:5; 135:4; 147:19-20; Isa. 41:8-9; 43:1-4, 10, 15, 20-21; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:12; Jer. 10:16; Zec. 8:23; Acts 13:17; Rom. 9:4, 27; 11:5; 11:28.

[93] "This action by Nebuchadnezzar would afford Jehovah a splendid opportunity to demonstrate two things. First, Jehovah isn't subject to any gods. He is the Most High, the Sovereign One of the universe. Second, it was Jehovah, not Marduk, who gave Nebuchadnezzar his victories."—Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:2.

[94] H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 2nd ed (New York, NY: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), 15.

[95] David Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 19.

[96] "He [Nebuchadnezzar] also made some of them to be eunuchs."—Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.186.

[97] "Rabbinic literature often asserts that Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were eunuchs [Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 4:326; 6:415]."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[98] A. D. Herodotus and Godley, ed., *The Histories (English)* (Medford, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 8.105.1-2.

[99] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 2.21.

[100] J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981), Dan. 1:3.

[101] "The term *sārîs* was—at least sometimes—understood as denoting castration or natural impotence; it is so used in Isaiah 56:3 ('I am only a dry tree'), in Jeremiah 38:7 (Zedekiah's Ethiopian eunuch), and in Persia as reflected in Esther 2:3. But etymologically the word *sārîs* is derived from the Akkadian *ša rēši šarri* ('he who is of the king's head') and therefore had no original connotation of sexual impotence."—Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[102] Many infer from Potiphar's marriage that he could not have been emasculated. However, some see the intensity with which Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph as possible evidence to the contrary. "However, some literal eunuchs did marry, most notably, the eunuchs who served the Chinese emperors. Moreover, castration does not absolutely prevent a man from engaging in sexual intercourse, but it does reduce his sexual desires and of course renders him incapable of siring children. Therefore, Potiphar's marriage is not a good argument that in his case the term simply indicated a royal official. To the contrary, the fact that Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph may argue that Potiphar was a eunuch and his reduced libido prompted his wife's bold behavior."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[103] "[Nebuchadnezzar] couldn't trust them [the Israelites] so he simply took hostages to guarantee that they would submit to Babylon."—Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 2.17.

[104] "Their exile to Babylon was likely the result of Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to rid the land of Judah of its next generation of leaders, thereby hindering the remaining Judeans from rebelling against Babylon."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:3.

[105] Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel*, 30-31.

[106] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 2.21.

[107] Monty S. Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1988, 1999), Dan. 1:1.

[108] "This king recognized that all peoples had something which they could teach him and he therefore moved the most promising minds in his empire to his capital with the intent of adding their knowledge to the resources of his empire and using them in his administration."—Ibid.

[109] Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 13.

[110] In Esther 2:6, the NKJV inserts the name *Kish* in italics indicating the word is not found in the original. This may be unwarranted. See . [Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology: The Treatise (Vol 1)*, 224]

[111] Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.186.

[112] Ibid., 10.188.

[113] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #3529.

114 "The word *yeladim*, rendered children, is frequently used for lads, or young men (see Gen. 21:8, 14-16), *neaniskous*, as the LXX. renders [also used in the NT: Mat. 19:20; Mark 14:51; 16:5; Luke 7:14; Acts 2:17; 5:10; 23:18; 1Jn. 2:13]; and Daniel must have been at this time at least seventeen or eighteen years of age."—Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Dan. 1:4. "The word translated 'children' in the A.V. is more correctly rendered 'youths' in the R.V. Its scope may be inferred from the use of it in 1K. 12:8, which tells us that Rehoboam 'forsook' the counsel with the *young men* that were grown up with him."—Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic's Den*, 19.

115 "מוּם [*mûm*] 'blemish,' can refer to either a physical or a moral defect (HALOT, 1, 2)."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

116 Brown, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 548.

117 Miller, *Daniel*, 61, 61n26.

118 "One stated and major purpose of [Nebuchadrezzar's] campaigns in the west was to bring back booty and expert prisoner-of-war labour for the enrichment of his capital city."—Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985, 2004), 42.

119 "As Houbigant renders, 'apt to understand wisdom, to acquire knowledge, and to attain science;' for it was not a knowledge of the sciences, but merely a capacity to learn them, that was required."—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:4.

120 Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, s.v. "Introduction to Daniel."

121 Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 81.

122 *Akkadian diplomatic letter found in Tell Amarna. Written in cuneiform script.* Image courtesy of Dbachmann, 2005. Image is in the public domain.

123 Cuneiform script is one of the earliest known systems of writing which began as a system of pictographs. Over time, the pictorial representations became simplified and more abstract as the number of characters in use grew smaller.

124 "Although Aramaic was spoken in the sixth century B.C. as the language of diplomacy, official records of the Neo-Babylonian Empire from this period were written in Akk. cuneiform, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that a form of Akk. was the common speech of Babylon's citizens."—Miller, *Daniel*, 62n33. "though Aramaic had begun to replace Akkadian by 600 B.C., Babylonian scholars continued to study and even write literature in their classical tongue."—Earl D. Radmacher and H. Wayne House, eds., *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), Dan. 1:4.

125 Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

126 Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #6219.

127 T. G. Pinches, "Chaldea; Chaldeans," in J. W. Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1915), s.v. "The Chaldeans as Learned Men."

128 Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 43.

129 Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:17.

130 Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 36.

131 Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:3-7.

132 "The contest . . . is simply this: can [an] external educational program destroy the internal strength of the human soul? Which is stronger, Daniel's soul or Nebuchadnezzar's educational indoctrination? Which is going to survive?"—Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.30.

133 Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.34.

134 Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 407, 1958), Dan. 1:8.

135 Leupold explains how *Kasdim* came to be *Chaldeans*: "The term *Kasdim*, according to a Babylonian phonetic rule, 's' before a dental becoming 'l,' is rendered in Greek as Χαλδαιοι [*Chaldaioi*], i. e., Chaldeans."—Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

136 Some have misconstrued the dual use of the term in Daniel as an inaccuracy."A second objection has been raised in connection with the fact that in Daniel the term 'Chaldean' was employed in an ethnic sense and also in a restricted context to denote a group of wise men, a usage that occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament and is not found on inscriptions. This, it has been commonly assumed, is an inaccuracy, and is characteristic of a period considerably later than the sixth century B.C. A difficulty of this sort can be resolved quite readily by reference to the work of Herodotus (*ca* 450 B.C.), who in his *Persian Wars* consistently spoke of the Chaldeans in ethnic terms, recognized their priestly office, and accepted

the fact that certain of their religious procedures went back to at least the time of Cyrus. . . . As Wiseman has pointed out, the prominence of the classes of priests who at Babylon and other centers maintained the ancient traditions of astrology and philosophy in the classical Babylonian languages led to the application of the designation 'Chaldean' both to priests (Dan. 3:8▸), astrologers, and educated persons (Dan. 2:10▸; 4:7▸; 5:7▸, 11▸), which is in general accord with the testimony of Herodotus."—Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1113. "Haevernick has what strikes us as being a rather plausible explanation as to how the name of a conquering people came to designate a college of priests and astrologers. He says: 'What is in itself more likely than that the Chaldeans as conquerors of Babylon made themselves masters of that group (Stand) that exercised the strongest influence in the state, the group to which the care of sacred things and of the very religion itself was entrusted?' Though this is conjecture, something of this sort must have happened. Another solution of the difficulty is presented by *Wilson* . . . He assumes that the noun 'Chaldeans' in the second sense is derived from the Babylonian *galdu*, which is used with reference to a type of official that is often met with in Babylonian records and inscriptions, who has the supervision of public projects of every sort. Since such projects were never engaged in nor dedicated unless favorable auguries and prognostications had been secured, the work of these officials would naturally involve astrology and kindred practices. This agrees well with the Biblical position assigned to the Chaldeans. Besides, *galdu* is obviously analogous to *Kaldu*, the Babylonian term for the Chaldeans. In any event, we have here a possibility that can be reckoned with."—Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:2.

[137] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[138] Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:4.

[139] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[140] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 16.

[141] "From administrative documents found in Babylon, some information concerning the fate of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, can now be gathered. These cuneiform tablets list deliveries of oils for the subsistence of individual who are either prisoners of war or otherwise dependent upon the royal household. . . . '10 (*sila* of oil) to *iākūu'-kīnu*, the son of the king of *lākūdu* (i.e., Judah) 2.5 *sila* for the 5 sons of the king of Judah (*lākūdu*)' "—James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 275.

[142] Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 81.

[143] Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, 35.

[144] Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:5.

[145] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:4.

[146] Miller, *Daniel*, 63.

[147] "Just as Adam's right to name the animals (Gen. 2:19) showed his divinely given authority over earth and the animal kingdom (Gen. 1:26-28), Nebuchadnezzar's renaming of the four Hebrew youths demonstrated the authority that he claimed over their lives."—Andy Woods, *Introduction to the Book of Daniel*, 23.

[148] "The practice of bestowing a new name to signify entering upon a new condition or relation in one's career was a common ancient Near East custom . . ."—Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), 1610.

[149] "If they were eventually to make good governmental personnel, they should become Babylonians in their thinking and manner of life as soon as possible; and Babylonian-type names would help."—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 36.

[150] "בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר [*bēlṭ°šaṣṣar*] - There is little agreement on the derivation and meaning of the Babylonian names given to the Judeans. The first one, 'Belteshazzar,' is often said to derive from *(Bēl-)balaṭ-u-uṣur*, '(may Bel) protect his life.' *Bel*, 'lord,' in this context is a reference to the Babylonian god Marduk. However, it has also been proposed that the name derives from *Bēlet-har-uṣur*, 'Lady [referring to the consort of Bel], protect the king.' However, this seems less likely, since the name would have to be spelled with a ח instead of a ט, and [Dan. 4:8▸] specifically connects this name with the name of Nebuchadnezzar's god. Shea argues that Belteshazzar is a deliberate corruption of the theophoric element in the name 'Belshazzar,' which derives from *Bēl-har-uṣur*, 'Bel protect the king.'. . . שַׁדְרַךְ [*šaḏrak*] - There is little agreement on the derivation of 'Shadrach.' Some derive it from *shudur-aku*, 'the command of Aku.' Aku was the Babylonian moon god. Others derive it from *'hādurāku*, 'I am very frightened (of a god),' but this seems less likely. The other three names given to the young men appear to be explicitly theophoric (with pagan deities), so this name is most probably explicitly, not implicitly, theophoric. If Shea's analysis of the name 'Meshach' is correct . . . then 'Shadrach' is most probably a deliberate corruption of *shudur-marduk*, 'command of Marduk,' with the final consonant (ךְ) being the only element left from the theophoric element of the name. מֵישַׁךְ [*mêšak*] - 'Meshach' is the most obscure of the four

Babylonian names. Some see it as a deliberate play on the meaning of the name 'Mishael' and derive it from *mi-sha-aku*, 'who is what Aku is?' Others see it as deriving from *mēhāku*, 'I am of little account,' which seems forced and inappropriate. Shea proposes that this is a deliberate corruption of the name *Mushallim-marduk*. A person by that name appears on a clay prism from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and Shea tentatively identifies him as this biblical Mishael/Meshach. עֲבֵד נְגוֹ [*ăḇēḏ nᵉḡô*] - There is general agreement that 'Abednego,' or 'Abed-nego,' is a corruption of the Aramaic name עֲבֵד נְבוֹ [*ăḇēḏ nᵉḇô*], 'servant of Nebo.' The Babylonian equivalent would have been *Arad-nabu* or *Ardi-nabu*. Nebo was the Babylonian god of wisdom and agriculture, the patron of scribes and schools, and the god after whom Nebuchadnezzar was named."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

[151] "Whether or not these are the exact meanings of the names is unclear. But what is clear is that these who were identified with the God of Israel were now being identified with the gods of Babylon."—Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 1:7. "Nebuchadnezzar did not want men serving in his realm that bore testimony to what is now to be considered an inferior god. So they were renamed, and their names now reflect the god of Babylon, the gods of Babylon."—J. Dwight Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso [transcriber], 2006), 2.12.

[152] "It appears as if these names in Dan 1:7▸ are purposely bowdlerized by Daniel, the author of the biblical book. First of all, the theophoric element in each name contains a corruption involving an addition, deletion, or change of one or more consonants. Thus 'Belt-' instead of 'Bel-' in 'Belteshazzar,' '-k' instead of '-marduk' in 'Shadrach,' and '-nego' instead of '-nabu' in 'Abednego' (see the third textual note on 1:7▸ for 'Meshach'). This consistent pattern points to deliberate alteration of the names. . . . Daniel may have been indicating that while they could not do anything about what the Babylonians were intent on calling them, they did not personally approve of having names associated with pagan gods instead of their God."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

[153] [Thomas Constable, *Notes on Daniel* (Garland, TX: Sonic Light, 2009), Dan. 1:7], [Charles Lee Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1981), Dan. 1:6], [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4], [John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), Dan. 1:7], [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983), Dan. 1:7].

[154] Ibid.

[155] Scripture tells us this name is associated with Nebuchadnezzar's God, "his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god" (Dan. 4:8▸). , [Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:7] , [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:7] [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12-13]

[156] [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7,] [*New English Translation : NET Bible*, Dan. 1:7], "In view of Daniel 4:8▸, however, it seems better to find it represented in *Belti-shar-usur*, meaning 'Belti, protect the king,' in which the diety Bel (Belti) is identified."—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 36.

[157] [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4].

[158] Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*.

[159] [Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 69], [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Yamauchi, *Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel*].

[160] [Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [*New English Translation : NET Bible*, Dan. 1:7].

[161] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7n7.

[162] "I would suggest as a third view, that we read Bel-lit-shar-usur, 'Bel, protect the hostage of the king.' . . . The view suggested by me harmonizes with the statement of the author of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar called him after the name of his god; and also with the statements of the first chapter of Daniel, which plainly imply that 'certain of the children of Israel, even the seed royal, and of the nobles' were taken to Babylon as hostages for the good behavior of the king and people of Judah."—Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, 30-31.

[163] Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel* (Broken Arrow, OK: StudyLamp Software, 1832), Dan. 1:7.

[166] Ibid.

167 [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:6], [Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:6], [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7].

168 [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4].

169 Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

170 Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

171 [Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7n7], [Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Miller, *Daniel*, 65-66], [*New English Translation : NET Bible*, Dan. 1:7].

172 [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Yamauchi, *Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 69], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

173 [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12-13], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4].

174 [Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7], [Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:7].

175 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7.

176 Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:7.

177 Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

178 Ibid.

179 Ibid.

180 [Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:6], [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:6], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4], [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

181 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7.

182 [Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7n7], [Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Miller, *Daniel*, 65-66].

183 [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:7], [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12-13], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4].

184 [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Yamauchi, *Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

185 [Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 69], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

186 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7.

187 Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

188 [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:6], [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4].

189 [Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

190 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7.

191 Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7.

192 Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:6.

193 "Abednego also occurs in the Elephantine Papyri of the fifth century B.C."—Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

194 [Ibid., Dan. 1:7n7], [Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 12-13], [Greene, *Daniel*, 29], [Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 69], [Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:6], [Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:4], [Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7], [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Miller, *Daniel*, 65-66], [*New English Translation : NET Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible*, Dan. 1:7], [Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

195 "Abed-nego—that is, 'servant of the shining fire.' . . . Bel, the Chief-god, the Sun-god, Earth-god, and Fire-god. To the last three youths were consigned when refusing to worship the golden image (Dan. 3:12▶). The *Chaldee version* translates 'Lucifer,' in Isa. 14:12, *Nogea*, the same as *Nego*."—Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:7., . [Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, Dan. 1:7]

196 "Assyriologists have proposed satisfactory explanations of these names on the basis of Akkadian analogies as follows: *Belteshazzar* from *bēlet-šar-uṣur,* 'Lady protect the king.' *Shadrach* from *šādurāku,* 'I am very fearful (of God).' *Meshach* from *mēšāku,* 'I am of little account.' *Abed-nego*, 'Servant of the Shining One,' using west Semitic *abed* instead of Akkadian *'arad* 'servant,' and assuming a play on the name of the god Nebo.[P.-R.Berger, 'Der Kyros-Zyltnderàund die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch,' *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 64 (1975): 224-34; Millard, 'Daniel 1▶-6▶ and History,' p. 72.]"—Yamauchi, *Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel*, 4., [Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7].

197 Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 600.

198 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7.

199 [MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*], [Miller, *Daniel*, 65-66], [Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:1].

200 Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7n7.

201 Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

202 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 796, Isa. 46:1.

203 "This word 'Nebo,' among the Chaldeans, probably denoted the planet Mercury. This planet was worshipped by them, and by the Arabs, as the celestial scribe or writer."—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:7.

204 "[Nebo] . . . the planet Mercury . . . worshipped as the celestial scribe by the Chaldeans (Isa. 46:1) and the ancient Arabians . . . As to the worship of Mercury by the Chaldeans and Assyrians, we find it attested by the proper names which have this name at the beginning, as *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nebushasban* . . . and also those mentioned by classic writers, *Nabonedus*, *Nabonassar*, *Naburianus*, *Nabonabus*, etc."—Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 526.

205 "[Nego] . . . was one of their divinities; by which they meant either the sun, or the morning star; whether Jupiter or Venus."—Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 1:7. "The word [Nebo] signifies 'shining brightness': which some understand of fire worshipped by them; others of the bright planet Venus; and others of Lucifer, or the morning star. Saadiah takes it to be the same with Nebo, by a change of a letter, which was a god of the Chaldeans."—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, 1:7.

206 "Nego being a Heb. variation of the Babylonian name of the god Nebo). Nebo (cf. Isa. 46:1), son of Bel, was the Babylonian god of writing and vegetation. He was also known as Nabu (cf. comments on Dan. 1:1▶ on Nebuchadnezzar's name)."—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

207 "Nebo was the son of Baal."—Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 1:1.

208 Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 69.

209 Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 1:7.

210 Miller, *Daniel*, 64-65.

211 "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.

212 "How easy it would have been for Daniel to become bitter toward Babylon, toward his own people [after all, Israel's sin brought on God's judgment], and even toward God [God gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:2▶)]!"—Bob Deffinbaugh, *Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety* (Richardson, TX: Bible.org, 2006), Dan. 1:3-21.

213 "But as the king had given his orders, it might have seemed as though these Hebrews had no choice in the matter. Many, at least, would have argued in this way, and said there was no individual responsibility in such a case. Nebuchadnezzar's authority was derived from God. They had only to obey, they might reason, as the Lord Himself had put them in his power. But not thus did Daniel or his young companions view it."—Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 16-17.

214 "Now notice, this is a 14 year old boy; this is not somebody who has been to seminary, this is not somebody who is making their life work some professional Christian ministry."—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 4.44.

215 "Mark you, the only way to go on with God is by being faithful in little things. He who honors the Lord by conscientious adherence to His Word in what some would call minor details is likely to be exercised about greater things."—Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 18.

216 "Instead of using the common Hebrew idiom for naming, קָרָא [qārāʾ] ('to call') plus שֵׁם [šēm] ('a name'), he uses the less common שִׂים [śîm] ('to set/place') plus שֵׁם [šēm] ('a name,' 1:7), an idiom most commonly used of God placing his name on his people (Num. 6:27) or in Jerusalem or its temple. In two passages, it recalls God's naming of two of the patriarchs: Jacob/Israel (2K. 17:34) and Abram/Abraham (Ne. 9:7). Daniel seems to be indicating that he and his

companions viewed their Hebrew theophoric names as given by Yahweh (perhaps through the agency of their parents), and now the Babylonians were attempting to impose the perceived will of their false gods on these young men. . . . Just as the Babylonians 'set' (שִׂים [*śîm*]) a pagan name on Daniel and his companions, Daniel 'sets' [purposed in] his heart on undoing the most offensive part of Nebuchadnezzar's acculturation of these young men into Babylon's pagan society."—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:7-8.

[217] "In Hebrew, the heart (לֵב [*lēḇ*] or לֵבָב [*lēḇāḇ*]) is not only the source of emotions such as joy (Isa. 24:7), fear (Jos. 2:11), and despair (Ecc. 2:20), but also the seat of intellectual capacities such as insight (Pr. 2:2) and critical evaluation (Jos. 14:7), as well as the locus of the human will (2S. 7:3; 1K. 8:17). Thus in some contexts, such as this one, it is best translated 'mind.' "—Ibid., Dan. 1:8.

[218] "A number of factors rendered this a courageous act. . . . To refuse the royal diet could have been taken as an insult to the king and as an act of direct disobedience to Nebuchadnezzar's orders. . . . Such unorthodox behavior could have [also] jeopardized their changes for advancement."—Miller, *Daniel*, 67. "The king of Babylon would immediately have been angry, had he known this. What! he would say, I honor those captives, when I might abuse them as slaves; nay, I nourish them delicately like my own children. and yet they reject my food, as if I were polluted."—Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:9.

[219] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #1459.

[220] "The word ga'al is a homonym; a homonym is a word that is spelled the same but they have different meanings, there is another Hebrew word, ga'al which means to redeem, but that's not this word; this word . . . it indicates the Aramaic background of Daniel."—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 4.44.

[221] Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:1.

[222] Regarding the dangers of abusing wine: Gen. 9:21; 19:32, 34; Pr 20:1; 21:17; 23:20, 29-35; 31:4-7; Isa. 5:11-12, 22; 28:1, 7; 56:12; Amos 4:1; Hab. 2:15; Eph. 5:18; 1Ti. 3:3, 8.

[223] Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:8.

[224] McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Dan. 1:8.

[225] Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Dan. 1:7.

[226] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:8.

[227] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.34.

[228] "The food offered to the idol was usually given only to the king since the divine blessing would be conferred upon the king by eating the food. In this case, the king's food was given to these young men apparently in the expectation that they would receive the blessing and become the kinds of servants that Nebuchadnezzar desired . . . This may indicate that one reason Daniel refused the king's food is that he did not want his condition to be attributed to the gods of Nebuchadnezzar. By refusing the king's food, Daniel's condition would be attributed to his God, the God of Israel. By eating the king's food, any superior intelligence, skill, or health in Daniel would have been attributed to the gods of Babylon, not to the God of Daniel."—Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist's Den*, 71.

[229] "Their land was in ruins; the temple where they and their fathers had worshipped had been desecrated and plundered; their kindred and countrymen were pining in exile; everything called them to a mode of life which would be in accordance with these melancholy facts, and they, doubtless, felt that it would be in every way inappropriate for them to indulge in luxurious living, and revel in the pleasures of a banquet."—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:8. This seems unlikely since at this point in time the city and temple were not yet destroyed. Moreover, the text explicitly states that Daniel's concern involved defilement.

[230] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.35.

[231] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:3-5.

[232] Deffinbaugh, *Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety*, Dan. 1:1-21.

[233] Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 14.

[234] Concerning sin causing separation from God: Deu. 23:14; 31:17-18; Jos. 7:12; 2Chr. 24:20; Ps. 66:18; Isa. 59:2; 64:7; Eze. 14:4-5; 23:18; Amos 3:2-3; Mic. 3:4; 1Pe. 3:7.

[235] Miller, *Daniel*, 68.

[236] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:10.

[237] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:11.

[238] Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 1:11.

[239] "Without doubt he had some secret revelation on the subject; and if the servant allowed him and His associates to feed on pulse, it was a happy answer to his prayers. Hence, I say, he would not have spoken thus, except under the guidance and command of the Spirit."—Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:11. "It seems to me that Calvin is correct in asserting that Daniel had received a special revelation from the Spirit of God and that, in speaking, he was acting in accord with that revelation. What warrant could faith have that at the expiration of a short period of time such a change would be apparent in the physical appearance of the youths as is suggested here?"—Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 1:12.

[240] "any plant growing from seeds (Lev. 11:37; Isa. 61:11)"—William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1971), 92.

[241] "Literally, *zāraʿ* refers to the action of sowing seed in the fields (Gen. 26:12: Isa. 37:30)."—Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v. "#582b."

[242] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.37.

[243] Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1610.

[244] Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 8.

[245] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:10.

[246] Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:15.

[247] The author was a heavy meat eater for most of his life, but experienced improved health over a number of decades having switched to a predominantly vegetarian diet. It would be a mistake, though, to interpret this passage as a biblical argument in favor of vegetarianism. "Supercilious works purporting to teach a 'biblical' truth can instead undermine a layperson's trust in the Scripture, especially when those 'how to' type of books fail. For example, does anyone really believe that Dan 1:8▸–13 is properly extrapolated into a comprehensive weight loss and healthy eating paradigm as Rick Warren does?"—Dennis M. Swanson, "Inerrancy and the Local Church: What Does the Debate Mean to the People in the Pews?," in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 26 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, Spring 2015), 54.

[248] The apocryphal "Bel and the Dragon" portrays dedication such vegetarian foods (grains) to idols: "Now the Babylons had an idol, called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine."—*The Apocrypha : King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1995), s.v. "Bel. 3." This apocryphal work, besides being of questionable accuracy, was written much later and may not reflect the actual practices of Babylon in Daniel's day.

[249] Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:12.

[250] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #1374.

[251] Such was God's response to Israel in her unique time in the wilderness (Ex. 23:25).

[252] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:17.

[253] Since God gives wisdom, He can also take it away: Job 12:17; Isa. 29:14; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 8:9; Mat. 11:25; Rom. 1:21-22.

[254] God gave Solomon wisdom: 1K. 3:12; 4:29-31; 2Chr. 1:12. Concerning God as the source of wisdom: Job 32:8; Ps. 119:98-100; Pr. 2:6; Ecc. 2:26; Dan. 5:11-14▸; Luke 21:14-15; Acts 6:10; 1Cor. 12:7-11; Col. 1:9; Jas. 1:5-7.

[255] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #8505.

[256] Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 4.50.

[257] Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:17.

[258] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:17.

[259] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 2.25.

[260] Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 22.

[261] Pentecost, *Daniel*, 1332.

[262] Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 1:17-21.

[263] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #2606.

[264] Ibid., #2706.

[265] Jesus referred to Daniel as a prophet (Mat. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

[266] Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 4.46, 49.

[267] McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Dan. 1:17.

[268] "Nebuchadnezzar, himself an extraordinarily intelligent man as manifested in his great exploits, was quick to respond to these bright young minds."—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 1:19.

[269] Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 45.

[270] Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:19.

[271] Concerning God's control over kings: 1Chr. 5:26; Ezra 7:27; Job 12:23; Isa. 10:5-7, 13-15; 37:29; 44:28; 45:1-6; Jer. 51:11; Eze. 38:4, 10.

[272] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20n.

[273] Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.33.

[274] Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20.

[275] Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20n.

[276] Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20.

[277] Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20.

[278] Ibid.

[279] "I get weary of these so-called eggheads who act as if the Bible was written by a group of ignoramuses. If you feel that way about it, you are mistaken. Daniel was nobody's fool. He was a brilliant young man, and he was taught as few men have been taught. Don't despise the learning of that day. There were many men who were well advanced in knowledge, in science, and in many other areas."—McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Dan. 1:4.

[280] Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:18.

[281] There may be a connection between the Babylonian magicians and those in Egypt. "Though the Egyptian loanword may be used in these passages without any reference to Egyptian nationals, the idea that there were Egyptian magicians and soothsayers in Mesopotamia is not so far-fetched as Hartman believes. The Jehoiachin ration tablets indicate that, among other nationals, Egyptians were given provisions by the royal court. Moreover, a recent study by Eph'al indicates that among the Egyptians who resided in Mesopotamia in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. were the following professionals: *luʿbārê* 'diviners,' *luʿḥarṭibi* 'dream interpreters,' and *luʿmušlahhê* 'snake charmers.'[Eph'al, 'The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th-5th Centuries B.C.,' *Orientalia* 47 (1978): 78.] Ḥarṭōm and *harṭibi* are cognate."—Yamauchi, *Archaeological Backgrounds of the Exilic and Postexilic Era, Part I: The Archaeological Background of Daniel*, 10.

[282] Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, With a revised supplement, 1996 (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1996), 610.

[283] Ibid., 1622.

[284] Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 1:20.

[285] "The term for magician . . . refers to those who were scribes and it was so few people had the ability to understand cuneiform writing or to write in cuneiform so they thought it was almost magical, so their knowledge made them seem as if they had a special insight into reality. And in many cases it was guarded knowledge."—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.54.

[286] "It's a poor translation because they are not magicians in the sense that we think of the word magician. These are the masters of literature and it would correspond to the professors of literature today."—Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.59.

[287] Miller, *Daniel*, 72.

[288] Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 304.

[289] Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 283.

[290] Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 610.

[291] Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #879.

[292] Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, #181.

[293] Miller, *Daniel*, 21.

[294] "a 'member of the Persian priestly caste' . . . which according to Herodotus . . . was one of the 6 tribes of the Medes. . . . Their religious ideas are thought to be strongly influenced by philosophy; for this reason the Greek philosophers are often portrayed as their pupils. . . . Pseudo-Plato . . . refers to the activities of the Persian μαγοι [*magoi*] as teachers."—Gerhard Delling, "Magos," in Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromily, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 4:356. "According to Herodotus (1.101), the magi (Greek *magos*, plural *magoi*) were originally one of the tribes of the Medes who functioned as priests and diviners under the Achaemenian Persians (sixth-fourth centuries b.c.). Herodotus (1.132) wrote that 'no sacrifice can be offered without a Magian.' The magi also interpreted dreams (Herodotus 1.107, 120, 128). Other classical writers knew that the magi served before fire altars (Strabo 15.3.15; Xenophon, *Cyropædia* 4.5.14; 7.5.57) and offered libations (Strabo 15.3.14). . . . By the Roman era (for example, Tacitus, *Annals* 2.27; 12.22, 59) the magi and their arts were associated with sorcery. We derive

our word *magic* from the Latin *magicus*, which in turn is a loan from the Greek *magikos*. . . . Elsewhere in Acts (13:6, 8) we read of a Jewish sorcerer, a *magos* named Elymas Bar-Jesus, who was influential at the court of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus. . . . From the fourth century b.c. on the magi were increasingly associated with the Chaldeans as astrologers."—Edwin E. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 467-472.

295 Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 88-89.

296 Ibid., 90.

297 "It is obviously forbidden to Jews to have anything to do with them: 'He who learns from a magus is worthy of death,' [*Shabbat*, Mishnah-, Tosefta-, Talmud tractate *Sabbath* (Strack, *Einl.*, 37).]"—Delling, *Magos*, 4:358.

298 Concerning God's opposition to divination and occult practices in general: Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; Deu. 18:10; 1S. 15:23; 28:3, 9; 2K. 17:17; 21:6; 23:24; 1Chr. 10:13; 2Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; 19:3; 44:25; Eze. 12:24; 13:7, 9, 18-23; Zec. 10:2; Mal. 3:2-5; Acts 16:16; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 18:23▸; 21:8▸; 22:15▸.

299 Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 1:17.

300 Miller, *Daniel*, 73.

301 Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:18-20.

302 *This is a depiction of the biblical character, Emperor Cyrus the Great of Persia, who permitted the Hebrews to return to the Holy Land and rebuild God's Temple*. Original artwork by Jean Fouquet, 1470. Image is in the public domain.

303 Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 21.

304 "Before his mind's eye the author, reviewing, of course, his own life, sees a succession of notable figures rise to power and fall again: Nebuchadnezzar II (602-), Amel Marduk (562-), Nergal-shar-usur (560-), Labashi-Marduk (556-), Nabunaid (555-), and lastly Cyrus, who came and conquered Babylon in 538 to top off all his other conquests. . . . Interpreters love to refer to *Pusey's* fine comment on this verse. He says: 'Simple words, but what a volume of tried faithfulness is unrolled by them! Amid all the intrigues indigenous at all times in dynasties of Oriental despotism, amid all the envy toward a foreign captive in high office as a king's counsellor, amid all the trouble incidental to the insanity of the king and the murder of two of his successors, in that whole critical period for his people, Daniel continued.' "—Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 1:21.

305 "It is clear from Ezra 1:2 that Cyrus was acquainted with the prophecy of Isa. 44:28-45:13, which may have been pointed out to him by Daniel, since Daniel was in a position of high authority at Shushan, in the province of Elam, in the 3rd year of Belshazzar, B.C. 539 (Dan. 8:1▸), where he attended to the King's business (Dan. 8:27▸)."—Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology: The Treatise (Vol 1)*, 233.

306 "Earlier scholars (Julius Wellhausen, Willem H. Kosters, Maurice Vernes, Charles C. Torrey, Gustav H�lscher, Robert Pfeiffer, William O. E. Oesterley, Kurt Galling) had questioned the authenticity of the decree because of the Jewish phraseology of the document. But documents from the Persian period and archaeological discoveries have provided convincing evidence of its authenticity."—Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, 90. Although the decree was according to God's will (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-13), Cyrus' policy was not unique to the Jews. "Cyrus instituted the enlightened policy of placating the gods of his subject peoples instead of carrying off their cult statues and peoples as the Elamites, Hittites, Assyrians, and Babylonians before him had done. His generosity in permitting the Jews to return to their homeland was not unique but was paralleled by his benevolence to the Babylonians and others."—Ibid., 89-90. "Cyrus repaired the Eanna temple at Uruk, the Enunmah temple at Ur, and temples in Babylon, as we have noted above."—Ibid., 91.

307 Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*, 83.

308 Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 1:20.

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310 Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 1.6.

311 Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 1.9.

312 Woods, *Introduction to the Book of Daniel*, 29.

313 Kelly, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel (3rd. ed.)*, 25-26.

314 Steinmann, *Daniel*, 106.

315 Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 2.17.

316 Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 3.35-36.

317 Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 10th ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1894, 1957), 35.

318 Iain H. Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966, 2009), 170, 219.

319 Deffinbaugh, *Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety*, Dan. 1:1-31.

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