

## LECTURE OF THE BOOK OF “DANIEL”

### Lecture #1

### Daniel 1:1-2

There is absolutely no doubt that the Book of Daniel is one of the most important books in all of the Bible. In fact, one writer said it is “one of the most thrilling books in the Bible ...,” but it is also one of the most difficult books. In fact, this is the only O.T. book about which Jesus Christ specifically said, “Let the reader understand” (Matthew 24:15). Not a simplistic book.

**QUESTION #1** – Why study the book of Daniel?

**Reason #1** - Because Daniel is a book of the Bible .

Daniel meets the criteria for being a book in the Bible in both Greek canonical order and the Hebrew canonical order. A biblical Scholar of the 1800’s named Ernst Hengstenberg said Daniel belongs in the Bible: 1) Because it is in the O.T. canon; 2) Because it was acknowledged by councils as belonging in the canon; 3) Because of the testimony of Jesus Christ and the quotations by the apostles; 4) Because of the peculiar style and revelatory data in the book; 5) Because Ezekiel, God’s prophet, sanctioned Daniel (Robinson, p. 6).

A second-century B.C. manuscript of Daniel was found in Qumran Cave 1 in the famous Dead Sea Scroll find, indicating that Jewish believers protected it as a book belonging in the Bible. In fact, Jewish believers have always relied on Daniel as they eagerly wait for the signs of the coming of the Messiah . In our English Bibles, as well as in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T.), Daniel is the 27<sup>th</sup> book of the O.T. which follows Ezekiel. However, in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, Daniel is not classified as a prophetic book but rather one of the “Writings” and is the 35<sup>th</sup> book, which follows Esther. But whether it is the Greek Septuagint, the Hebrew Bible or the English Bible – Daniel is in it as one of God’s inspired books and it is worthy of careful study.

**Reason #2** - Because Daniel is a book that emphasizes the sovereignty of God over political powers and political people.

There are two main O.T. books that emphasize the sovereignty of God – Esther and Daniel. The big difference is that in Esther, God’s sovereignty is secretly silent and in Daniel, God’s sovereignty is strongly stated .

One verse that is considered to be very thematic is Daniel 4:17 which says, “In order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind.”

No matter what the power or no matter who is in power – God establishes and disposes people and power to serve His purposes. This very principle is something that Nebuchadnezzar came to personally understand (i.e. Daniel 4:35). God does according to His will in the political powers of the world. This theme runs throughout the entire book of Daniel. Make no mistake about this, the promotion, the fortunes and the movements of leaders are all subject to the sovereign edicts and decrees of God.

**Reason #3** - Because Daniel is a book that proves that one may be righteous and godly and be mightily used by God in the midst of heathen environments.

Daniel is a tremendous example of one who was godly in the midst of a godless world. In his personal, private and public life, he radiated faithfulness.

He was so faithful, that Ezekiel, his contemporary, ranked him in godliness with Noah and Job (Ezekiel 14:14, 20) as a “paragon of piety.” Daniel was so wise that God used him as an example to the King of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:3). He was so faithful that three times in the book of Daniel it is stated that Daniel is highly esteemed by God (9:23; 10:11, 19). Marv Rosenthal once observed that in the Bible, there are only two major personalities about whom nothing negative is ever said – 1) Joseph; 2) Daniel.

Truth is Daniel was a deportee who could have moved from God because God allowed some bad things to happen to him. He had been taken from his home and had been forced to move to a godless and idolatrous city – Babylon. He was about 16-17 years old when he was deported, and passions are wild in 16-17 year olds. But Daniel never flinched. He and his three friends were righteous young men and God used them in powerful ways in a moral world that was evil. Daniel ended up holding high positions in both the Babylonian (606-538 B.C.) and Persian world (538-534 B.C.). His righteousness influenced nations. He would not bend or bow to the pressures of any evil act. We will see that a major key to his godliness was prayer. Daniel had an intense, persistent and personal prayer life. Three times a day he opened his window toward Jerusalem and gave thanks to God. Daniel also had a passion to know God’s Word (Daniel 7:16; 8:15). He wanted to know exact meanings and precise interpretations.

**Reason #4** - Because Daniel is a book that shows God’s love for and protection of Israel.

Daniel was a bright source of light in a very dark world – a time when Israel needed some encouragement. There have been some terrible things that have happened to the nation Israel at the hand of Gentile powers. But God has not forgotten, nor forsaken His nation. God is faithful to His covenantal people – Israel. Even though He may permit them to come under Divine discipline, so also He will bring them to Divine blessing. God will deliver Israel and bring her to a Millennium that will feature great joy and peace, as Israel lives safely in her land.

**Reason #5** - Because Daniel is a book of biblical prophecy.

Daniel is not a mere biography of a man, but it is an outline of God’s future. The irony is that nowhere in the O.T. is Daniel even called a prophet, but his book is powerfully prophetic. In fact, Auberlen called Daniel the Apocalypse of the Old Testament.

I am convinced that you cannot fully understand the book of Daniel, until you understand the book of Revelation and you cannot fully understand the book of Revelation until you understand the book of Daniel. Daniel is a book of critical biblical prophecy. In fact, it was Jesus who specifically called Daniel a prophet (Matthew 24:15). Daniel is a book that gives us a careful prophetic outline of Gentile powers and Gentile history and its conclusion.

Daniel’s predictions are so precise that opponents of the book say it would have been impossible for him to have written the book before the events occurred. Liberal prosecutors have taken Daniel to court, but have not been able to silence him. For example, in the third century A.D. a pagan, atheistic neo-Platonist named Porphyry said that it was impossible that Daniel could have predicted the future so accurately. He started to propagate the idea that the book was a forgery written some 400 years after Daniel lived near 170 B.C. However, what these liberals overlooked was that Daniel was in the Septuagint (Greek Translation of the O.T.), which was written 300 B.C. proving Daniel made the predictions before they occurred. In this book are predictions of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

According to Josephus, when Alexander the Great was conquering the world, something Daniel predicted he would do (Daniel 8:21; 11:1), he was shown a copy of the book of Daniel and was so impressed with it that instead of destroying Jerusalem, he went in peaceably and worshipped at the temple and permitted Israel to obey the O.T. Law (p. 244). In this book is a prediction of the Antichrist and the True Christ. Daniel makes specific predictions about the number of days involved in judgments in the Tribulation. He also gives Israel great hope by revealing that there will be a millennial age of future deliverance and blessing.

Liberals have used nine main arguments to try to attack Daniel, all of which are easily refuted:

**(Argument #1)** - The Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text is the vowel pointed Hebrew Old Testament (compiled by Jewish Scribes from A.D. 400-900). The argument says that the Masoretic Text does not classify Daniel as one of the prophetic books, but one of the writings.

Refutation - Jesus classified Daniel as a prophet as did Josephus the Jewish historian who lived 300-400 years before the Masoretes. Their classification takes precedence.

**(Argument #2)** - Ecclesiasticus, the Apocryphal book written in 180 B.C., doesn't mention Daniel, although it mentions other prophets.

Refutation - The Apocrypha is not inspired by God and even in this book there are many key prophets not named.

**(Argument #3)** - Daniel spoken of by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14) cannot be the same Daniel as in the book of Daniel, because he is equated with Noah and Job and both of them lived many years earlier.

Refutation - Ezekiel is using three illustrations of godly men who stood out in a godless world. Two illustrations were from history – Noah and Job and the other was Ezekiel's contemporary – Daniel.

**(Argument #4)** - Belshazzar is said to have had Nebuchadnezzar as his father (Daniel 5:11) and it is known that the actual son was Nabonidus, who was a son-in-law by marriage to Nitocris (Nebuchadnezzar's daughter), whose son was Belshazzar.

Refutation - In Hebrew and Aramaic language there is no term for grandfather and in the O.T., a grandfather is often identified as being the father – Genesis 28:13; 32:10

**(Argument #5)** - Darius the Mede is emphasized as being in charge in Daniel 5:31–6:1, when history abundantly proves that Cyrus the Persian was the one in charge.

Refutation - Cyrus the Persian was in charge but he was on a European military campaign and he appointed Darius in charge in his absence (Daniel 6:28; 9:1)

**(Argument #6)** - The term "Chaldean" refers to astrologers in Daniel 2:2, which could never have been used this way if Daniel were written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

Refutation - When one reads Daniel 5:30, it is clear that the term refers to an ethnic group of people.

**(Argument #7)** - Predictive Prophecy is so accurate that the writer absolutely had to have lived through it to write about it.

Refutation - There are many things predicted in Daniel that have not yet occurred even to this day. For example, even if we hypothetically conclude that Daniel lived after many of the events, how do we explain his accuracy in predicting the rise and fall of the Greek Empire or the rise and fall of the Roman Empire.

**(Argument #8)** - Aramaic language that includes some Greek words for musical instruments (Daniel 3:5), proves Daniel was written later for there is no way this language could have been known at this time.

Refutation - The Greek poet Alcaeus who lived around 600 B.C., mentions that his brother served in the Babylonian Army, who would have known these very words.

**(Argument #9)** - Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) is calculated as ending in 171 B.C.

Refutation - There are things predicted in Daniel 9:24-27 which still have not happened, therefore, it is impossible that the prophecy was fulfilled in 171 B.C.

None of these arguments stand. There is no getting around it – Daniel is an inspired prophetic book of God.

(For a very scholarly treatment of the above discussion, I suggest reading the theological journal of Dallas Theological Seminary, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Volume 136, *Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel*, by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.)

**QUESTION #2** – Who wrote Daniel?

Daniel was written by Daniel. This is certainly the clear testimony of the book – Daniel 7:2, 15, 28; 8:1, 15, 27; 9:2, 20, 22; 10:2, 7, 11-12; 12:5. Perhaps the greatest other evidence we have concerning Daniel being the author of Daniel is the testimony of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus refers to “the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet.”

**QUESTION #3** – When was Daniel written?

The opening verse of the book (Daniel 1:1) lets us know that this story about Daniel begins when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and took some captives hostage. This occurred about 605 B.C. We know from Daniel 10:1 that he was still alive and still a prominent man in the third year of Cyrus' reign (536 B.C.). We conclude that Daniel wrote this book in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. If he were 16 or 17 years old in 605 B.C., when captured by Nebuchadnezzar, he would be 85-86 years old in the third year of Cyrus' reign. Most believe Daniel lived to about 530 B.C., which would have given him ample time to complete the book of Daniel.

**QUESTION #4** – In what language was the book of Daniel written?

The Daniel scrolls found in the Qumran caves go from Hebrew to Aramaic and back to Hebrew again. The book of Daniel is very unusual because it was originally penned in two different parts and two different languages – Hebrew and Aramaic.

Chapter 1 and chapters 8-12 are written in Hebrew and chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic. Daniel knew Hebrew, but was also trained in the language of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:4), which is Aramaic. The book of Daniel in our English Bibles is based on the vowel pointed Masoretic text that was written completely in Hebrew.

One would logically ask – why two languages? A careful study of content gives us the answer. Although Daniel is one book, one single unit, it is written this way and for good reason:

Chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic because those chapters contain information about God's program with Gentile nations – specifically Babylonian and Persian Empires. It is logical that those nations would have that portion in their language so they could read it. Many Jewish people were bilingual, speaking both Hebrew and the Chaldean Aramaic. Chapter 1 and chapters 8-12 contain information concerning Israel, her prophetic plan which includes being dominated by Gentile powers and the effect those nations will have on her as it relates to God's sovereign plan. It is fitting that this portion be written in Hebrew.

#### **QUESTION #5 – How does the book of Daniel break down?**

The book of Daniel breaks down in the following ways:

- 1) Historical matters in Daniel's lifetime. Daniel 1-6
- 2) Prophetic visions for Israel's future. Daniel 7-12

J. Vernon McGee broke the book down similarly this way:

- 1) The historic night with prophetic light. Daniel 1-6
- 2) The prophetic light in the historic night. Daniel 7-12

Dr. John Walvoord outlined Daniel this way:

- 1) Daniel's personal background. Daniel 1
- 2) The Times of the Gentiles. Daniel 2-7
- 3) Gentile History as it relates to Israel. Daniel 8-12

John Calvin outlined Daniel this way:

- 1) Daniel is recognized as God's prophet. Daniel 1-6
- 2) Daniel predicts what will happen to God's people. Daniel 7-12

#### **QUESTION #6 – What is the theme of Daniel?**

To answer this question, we need to understand something about God's plan for Israel. God promised Israel that if she remained faithful to Him He would make her a nation among nations. Israel did not remain faithful to God, so God caused nations to rise up who were used to carry out His judgments. But does this mean that Israel is done? Does this mean God is finished with Israel? Dr. Walvoord said, "The book of Daniel, like Esther, reveals God continuing to work in His people Israel even in the time of their chastening" (p. 13). God would sovereignly use Gentile powers to carry out His sovereign plan to punish His people, but His plan would eventually mean that Israel would one day be in her city, worshipping in her Temple and free from sin. There is no question that a key theme of Daniel is the sovereignty of God. G. Campbell Morgan said that theme was the "Persistent Government of God in the World." Daniel is a book that puts the Sovereign God of the Bible back on the throne where He belongs. However, it is very clear that in the big picture of God's sovereignty, He never loses sight of the individual. There is not even a sparrow that falls to the ground without God's Divine permission (Matthew 10:29). In fact, the very hairs of your head are numbered (Matthew 10:30). God is in control of the big world and of your world.

We believe we are very close to the theme of Daniel in this thesis statement:

**GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY WORKING OUT HIS PLAN IN BOTH GENTILE AND JEWISH HISTORY AND HE IS MOVING HISTORY TO HIS PROPHETIC CONCLUSIONS AND, AS HE WORKS OUT HIS PROGRAM AT ANY TIME, HE GREATLY HONORS AND USES THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO HIM.**

What is so interesting in Daniel is that heathen, Gentile world leaders came to the point where they acknowledged God's sovereignty. This was true for the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:46-47; 3:28-30; 4:1-3, 34-37). This was true for the Babylonian king, Belshazzar (Daniel 5:21, 23, 29) and this was true for the king of the Medes, Darius (Daniel 6:26-27).

Certainly if heathen powers can see this and get it, God's people need to see this and get it. Your God is in control of the big world and of your personal world. This is the truth of Daniel.

### **DANIEL 1:1-2**

To understand the setting for the book of Daniel, we need to turn the clock back some 150 years before Daniel. David and Solomon had made Israel a beautiful united monarchy, but the nation split. Israel had been divided into a northern Kingdom (Israel) and a southern Kingdom (Judah). This split was due to sin. It all started back in King David's day but really occurred in Solomon's day. Jeroboam, Solomon's servant's son, the son of Nebat (II Chron.10:2, 15) became king of the northern ten tribes known as Israel, and Rehoboam (Solomon's son- II Chron. 10:4) became king of the southern two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) known as Judah. Both groups fell into sin, so God raised up prophets to warn of pending judgment.

Nineteen kings ruled over Judah for about 345 years until its final fall in 586 B.C. Of those 19 kings, only 8 were good and 11 were evil. At the time of Daniel, Jehoiakim (the 17<sup>th</sup> king) was in power and he was evil. God finally had enough.

About 117 years before the events of Daniel begin, God allowed the northern division of the Kingdom, Israel, to be taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Judah knew about this but she didn't learn from this and she did not repent. So God warned Judah. Isaiah (39:5-7) predicted in 701 B.C. (nearly 100 years before it actually happened) that God would allow Judah to be taken captive by the Babylonians. Still, she did not repent. Just a couple of years before the events of Daniel, the prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:5-6) predicted that God would raise up the Chaldean people to punish His own and still there was no repentance. So in 605 B.C., God did just what He predicted He would do, He permitted Judah to be taken captive, along with Daniel and his three friends. **God's people in any dispensation need to know that just because God's judgment does not come immediately, it will eventually come precisely; just exactly as God has promised.**

The historical events surrounding the book of Daniel take place at a very tough time in Israel's history. Israel was experiencing severe punishment from the hand of God and now so was Judah. The entire Promised Land was under siege. God had predicted, through His prophets, that because of Israel's sin and rebellion, He would allow Israel to be taken captive and now He did the same thing to Judah (Jeremiah 1:15-16; 2:17).

There is an important principle to glean from this background – **God expects His people to do that which avoids judgment in view of watching the rebellion of others which brought His judgment.** Judah had every opportunity to learn from watching what happened to Israel, but she didn't learn so God permitted the same negative things to happen to her.

The book of Daniel opens with the words “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah...” To understand what these words mean, we must go back to II Kings 23 and II Chronicles 35. **These opening words prove God is sovereign over all political power, including that which is corrupt.**

Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah (II Kings 23:34). Josiah was a godly, righteous King of Judah, who put Israel back on a path of true worship (II Kings 23:24-25). In fact, God had hoped that under Josiah's leadership, Israel would come back to Him (Jeremiah 3:6-8). Harry Bultema said – Josiah “...undertook the work of reformation, but he was not able to stop the vile stream of unrighteousness” (p. 32). He was killed by Neco, the Pharaoh/King of Egypt (II Chron. 35:20-27).

In the aftermath of Josiah's death, his other son, Jehoahaz (II Kings 23:30) was appointed King. But after a reign of about ¼ year, Neco removed Jehoahaz from being King and replaced him with his brother Eliakim, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim (II Chronicles 36:4).

Now one would naturally think that since Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim were the sons of a very godly righteous father/king, this would be the way they would be. This would be the way they would turn out, the way they would lead. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Both boys turned out to be evil. They were rotten apples, who grew out of a beautiful fruit producing tree. They had the privilege of living through a great, rare godly revival, but it didn't faze them. Both Jehoahaz (II Kings 23:32) and Jehoiakim (II Kings 23:37) were evil kings. In fact, one writer said that Jehoiakim “excelled in wickedness.”

As a result of their evil, God said He would remove Judah from His sight, including a casting off of Jerusalem and the temple (II Kings 23:27). In fact, not one time in Daniel does God call Israel “His people” nor does He use His covenantal name “Jehovah” (LORD). Israel was totally corrupt. It was this terrible corruption that prompted God to permit Nebuchadnezzar, the heathen Babylonian King to take over Jerusalem and besiege it. It was this evil that led to Daniel 1:1-2. **God is never an “idle spectator” when it comes to His people's evil.**

**WHEN EVIL IS NOT ELIMINATED BY GOD'S LEADERS, GOD EVENTUALLY WILL ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO BE PUNISHED AND TAKEN CAPTIVE BY GODLESS PEOPLE AND GODLESS POWERS AND GODLESS THINGS.**

A key theme which shows up in the O.T. time and time again is that if Israel were not faithful to Him, He, Himself would allow her to be delivered into the hands of her godless enemies and carried away. This theme was developed by Moses (Leviticus 26:14-45; Deuteronomy 4:27; 28:25-37); by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 18:16; 19:8; 42:18; 43:10; 44:22; 51:37); and by Micah (Micah 3:12) just to name a few. God's Word needs to be taken seriously and literally. God will do what He promises both positive and negative.

About one year before the events of Daniel 1:1-2 occurred, the prophet Jeremiah made a remarkable prediction – “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah ... I shall also punish him and his descendants and his servants for their iniquity, and I shall bring on them and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah all the calamity that I have declared to them – but they did not listen” (Jeremiah 36:30-31).

Jeremiah had written this inspired prophecy and Jehoiakim did not repent. In fact, when it was read to him, he cut the Scriptures with a knife and burned them in the fire (Jeremiah 36:20-23). Now, one year later, what God predicted was coming true literally. **God's judgment for not dealing with evil typically does not come instantly, but it always comes eventually.** As Dr. A. T. Robinson said, "Judgment may be slow but it is always sure." Just because one scoffs at God's predictions doesn't mean they will not be literally fulfilled. God always has the last word. God will punish those who try to cut up or disregard His Word. That is the story of Daniel.

**Daniel 1:1a** – We learn when these events occurred.

The book of Daniel opens with events occurring in **the third year of reign of Jehoiakim**. There has been some debate on this point because the prophet Jeremiah cites this as the fourth year and not the third year (Jer. 25:1; 46:2). Tremper Longman cites a well-known Assyriologist, D.J. Wiseman, who discovered the solution. Judean calculation counts the first year of the reign as year one and Babylonian calculation cites the first year as the ascension year and year one starts at year two. **Daniel was using the Babylonian calculation year three and Jeremiah was using the Jewish calculation year four.**

Jehoiakim became king when he was 25 years old (II Chronicles 36:5). Jehoiakim was the 17<sup>th</sup> king of Judah (Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, **Jehoiakim**, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah). He was a vicious, godless, irreligious man who promoted abominable idolatry. As we said, he so hated God's Word that when he heard things he didn't like, he cut the Scriptures and burned the Scriptures (Jeremiah 36:1, 23).

He was appointed king in 609 B.C. by a godless Egyptian Pharaoh whose name was Neco. In the third year of his reign, which would be the year 606-605 B.C., these events occurred. This is the first of three major deportations of the Jews: 1) 605 B.C. (II Chronicles 36:5-8); 2) 597 B.C. (II Chronicles 36:9-18); 3) 586 B.C. – Jerusalem destroyed (II Chronicles 36:19-20).

**(Observation #1)** - Just because one is in power does not mean he has a legitimate right to that power. The whole political system was corrupt. But even at this, God was still sovereign.

**(Observation #2)** - Just because evil is not instantly punished does not mean it will not be eventually punished. Jehoiakim got away with evil for three years – then things came crashing down on him.

**Daniel 1:1b** - We learn who God used to punish Israel.

The key man God used to bring His punishment to Israel was Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King. He would dominate Israel for forty-three years (605-562 B.C.). He was a brilliant military strategist, builder and politician. But we must never forget this point; **Nebuchadnezzar is the instrument God used to punish His own people.**

Nebuchadnezzar's success as a person, as a leader and even as a dictator was due to the sovereign hand of God. Several times in Scripture he is referred to as the "servant of the Lord" (Jer. 25:9; 27:6; 43:10). This term does not mean he wished to willingly serve the Lord in a way that was faithful to God and His Word. It means God used him for His purposes. God can make someone rise to power and succeed until he has accomplished His purposes and then God can and will pull the plug on his very existence. He came to Jerusalem and besieged it.



The Hebrew word “besiege” is one that means he bound the city, he secured it, confined it with his military (*B.D.B.*, p. 848).

God allowed a foreign, Gentile power to take over His most sacred of places – the people, the city and the Temple. God makes no apologies – He completely sanctioned Israel’s overthrow. Early in the year 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar was leading the Babylonian army to conquer the Mediterranean world. A key battle was fought against the Egyptians, which was “world-changing,” the Battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates (Jeremiah 46). Nebuchadnezzar, by the sovereign direction of God, put Egypt on the run and the Egyptians were retreating south, which brought Nebuchadnezzar right to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar became the new leader of the world in 605 B.C.

From an onlooker’s perspective, these historical events may seem insignificant, but this war between Egypt and Babylonia was all aimed at bringing punishment to Israel including right to the city of Jerusalem and its Temple. God was directing all these events. God was the One controlling the world, including the war in the world.

**Daniel 1:2** - We learn what Nebuchadnezzar did.

Notice the fact that Daniel emphasizes that everything happens by the sovereignty of God (1:2, 9, 17). Notice the proper noun used for God is “Lord,” which is Adonai, which is the name that refers to God being the supreme ruler or supreme master. God is the One who takes full responsibility for Nebuchadnezzar’s success. He let His people become captives and this captivity will do at least three things: 1) punish His people for their rebellion; 2) purify His people with a desire for repentance; 3) Give the promised land the Sabbath rests that Israel had refused to give it (II Chronicles 36:21).

**Daniel 1:2a** – He took Jehoiakim prisoner.

Chronicles tells us that Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim with bronze chains and took him to Babylon (II Chronicles 36:6). Notice Daniel says, “The Lord gave Jehoiakim ... into his hand.” One theologian observed – Jehoiakim became Nebuchadnezzar’s “puppet king” by sovereign decree of God.

**Daniel 1:2b** – He took Temple articles.

Many of these Temple articles had been made in the days of Solomon (I Kings 7:48-51). These were sacred things dedicated to God. This is what disobedience always does; it makes a mess of sacred things.

Note that Nebuchadnezzar took his prisoners and the Temple articles to the “land of Shinar,” which is Babylonia, which is modern day Iraq. This specific geographical part of the world has a history of making mockery of the true things of God.

I want you to carefully notice that the Temple (v. 2) is not called the “House of Jehovah,” Israel’s special sacred name, but “House of God.” It is not uncommon to refer to the Temple as the “house of God”; however, most Jewish prophets clearly establish that it is the “House of Jehovah.” Isaiah often refers to the Temple as “Jehovah’s House” (Isaiah 37:1, 14; 38:20, 22). So does Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7:2; 17:26). Ezekiel often refers to the Temple as the “Jehovah’s House” (Ezekiel 8:14, 16; 10:19; 11:1).

So does Hosea (Hosea 8:1; 9:4). So does Joel (Joel 1:9, 14); Micah (Micah 4:1); Haggai (Haggai 1:2, 14); and Zechariah (Zechariah 1:16; 8:9). But Daniel never calls the Temple, Jehovah's House. Why? Because Israel had deteriorated and progressed in evil. The place that once was the sacred place where Jehovah was worshipped, which contained His glory, was now in the hands of a foreign king who worshipped a false god. Just because something was once very sacred does not mean it stays that way forever.

Again, Chronicles tells us that Nebuchadnezzar actually took these things from the Temple of God and took them to Babylon and put them in a heathen temple (II Chronicles 36:7). The location of this heathen temple is about fifty miles south of Baghdad, Iraq. These were the sacred vessels which had been collected and made during David and Solomon's time (I Kings 7:48-51). Now instead of being in God's Temple in Jerusalem, they were in a heathen temple in Babylon. In fact, his drunken grandson, Belshazzar, would use these sacred vessels at his final drinking orgy (Daniel 5:1-4).

Nebuchadnezzar put these items in the temple of Marduk for two main reasons: 1) To thank his heathen deity for giving him victory; 2) To show that the Babylonian god was stronger than the God of Israel. What Nebuchadnezzar did not know was – **it was the God of Israel who ordained and permitted him to accomplish this**. Godless, heathen powers are still powers controlled by God and subject to God's sovereignty, even if they are corrupt, idolatrous and immoral.

What a tragedy; here were sacred things supposed to be used for worshipping God, now used in the worship of idols. But as Warren Wiersbe said – what looks to be a victory for idols was actually a victory for God (p. 12).

It doesn't matter how corrupt or bizarre things may seem, God is still sovereign. As A. T. Pierson said, "History is His Story." All of it. Every bit of it. The good and the bad. God controls it all.

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