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Concepts of Daniel

- **Prophecy - Humanity in General:**
 - In Daniel, we learn how God directed the nations in the past (from Daniel's perspective)
 - We also learn what God was planning on doing in the *near* future, and
 - Finally, we learn what God's plans are for the distant future – the “end times”
 - Chapter 2 reveals the *external* character of the nations involved
 - their relative power and glory
 - Chapters 7/8 reveals their *internal* character
 - their haughtiness, brutality, aggressiveness, and vileness
 - they are all wild animals and birds of prey, symbolizing their hostility

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Concepts of Daniel

- **Prophecy – Israel Specifically:**
 - In Daniel, we learn how God directs the affairs of the nation of Israel, the only nation He personally created for His specific purposes
 - This will happen in TWO stages
 - Both were future from Daniel's perspective
 - One is yet future from our current perspective
 - First stage/Near Future – persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (9:23-26; 11:2-35)
 - This persecution occurred during 2nd century BC
 - Second Stage/Far Future – points to the coming Antichrist, a Roman-like ruler (9:27; 11:36-45)
 - At the time, God did not say these would be 2 different rulers
 - Daniel could not quite understand it all
 - We understand much more today from our perspective

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Concepts of Daniel

- **Prophecy – God Himself:**
 - God's sovereign rule over all time and space is stressed repeatedly in the book of Daniel
 - Daniel includes two sub-revelations
 - God's wisdom, and
 - God's power
 - Absolute sovereignty demands perfect wisdom and limitless power (Constable)
 - God's perfect wisdom is seen in His insight into the course of human history and given to the prophet
 - God's limitless power is seen in His setting up and taking down Gentile kingdoms as He chooses to do so as well as delegating power and authority to Daniel
 - All of this should cause our immediate humility and submission to Him, trusting in His will in all things

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Concepts of Daniel

- **Prophecy – God Himself:**
 - It should be our goal to submit to Him, His plan and His care because of His absolute sovereignty
 - Through our submission to God, we gain insight into:
 - History – both past, present and future
 - We come to understand that God is guiding the course of evil to its ultimate and final end:
 - Eternal destruction
 - He is also guiding the course of *good* to its conclusion:
 - Eternal victory and glory
 - This world is NOT getting better
 - It is becoming MORE corrupt and evil as God allows it to happen for His purposes

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Concepts of Daniel

- **How Should We Live**
 - We should live as Daniel and his three friends lived
 - We should separate ourselves TO God and His will
 - Daniel's revelation should inspire us to persevere in these evil days
 - And we should worship the infinite, eternal God who will ultimately bring us to Him in everlasting life in His eternal kingdom
 - Studying the book of Daniel should bring us to our knees in worship and adoration of our God

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Daniel 1 – Daniel’s Character

- Daniel 1 is Introductory
- It quickly brings us up to speed regarding:
 - how Daniel & friends got to Babylon
 - Daniel & friends’ moral character
 - This moral character is necessary to receive wisdom, discernment and spiritual enlightenment from God’s Word
- Chapter 1:1-14 is a *chiasm*: “A *chiasm* is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in reverse order, creating a mirror effect.”

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Daniel 1 – Chiasm

Structurally, the chapter is a chiasm, with the first 14 verses presenting a tension, and the last seven providing the resolution.²

- A Babylonia assumes supremacy over Israel vv. 1-2
- B Young men taken and subjected to pagan training vv. 3-7
- C Daniel seeks to remain faithful to his God v. 8-14
- C' Daniel remains faithful to his God vv. 15-16
- B' Young men triumph in their pagan training vv. 17-20
- A' Daniel proves supreme over the Babylonians v. 21

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Daniel 1:1

- *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.*
- 3rd year of Jehoiakim's reign (2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chron. 36:6)
- Jeremiah wrote it was the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign (Jer. 25:1; cf. 46:2)
- Scholars have pounced over this "error"
- Difference is probably due to Daniel writing from Babylonian perspective; Jeremiah from Jewish
- Babylonians considered the first "year" as that king's ascension year even if it lasted only months

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Daniel 1:2

- *And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.*
- Daniel clearly acknowledges God's sovereignty here!
- We will see this adoration of God's sovereignty repeat throughout the book of Daniel
- Land of *Shinar* is another name for Babylon, connoting an evil, hostile-to-God place

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Daniel 1:2

- Carrying off the items from another people's temple showed dominion, especially over their God
- Nebuchadnezzar was literally bragging that his god(s) was far more powerful than Israel's God
- Because of this set of events, Daniel reminded readers that:
 - Israel AND God experienced humiliation at Nebuchadnezzar's hands
 - Daniel spent the rest of the book vindicating God

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- *3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, 4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.*

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- Nebuchadnezzar realized what he gained from Israel
- He took those young men considered most promising, and WITHOUT DEFECT
- Placed them in a training program
- This was to eventually make them his counselors and “wise men.”
- No idea how many other young men with Daniel & his three friends were part of this...
- But only these 4 expressed desire in observing Jewish dietary laws

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- Imagine what has happened to you:
- You watch as your country is invaded
- You watch as people in your country are killed
- You watch as many, including you, are taken to another land away from your homeland
- You realize you may never see your homeland again
- You are now in a completely different culture with strange gods and customs

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- You're not so far mistreated
- You are forced into an education you didn't ask for
- You are told to eat foods against your own wishes and God's laws
- You are being expected to ASSIMILATE into Babylonian culture to replace your own
- You ask permission to NOT partake of the king's delicacies
- You request vegetables and water instead

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- “literature of the Chaldeans” (v4)
- “Chaldean” has a double meaning in Daniel
 - Refers to ethnic or southern Babylonians or Babylonians in general, and
 - describes a class of astrologers and priests that emerged from the ethnic Chaldean
- Like all cultures, Babylonian culture developed over generations
- What Daniel & his three friends studied was
 - history and
 - literature of this ancient part of the world

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Daniel 1:3-7 Training Program

- The problem becomes HOW to do this without actually assimilating into Babylonian culture, which would be SIN?
- We've already learned that Daniel was (v4):
 - Good looking
 - Without blemish
 - Gifted in all wisdom
 - Possessing knowledge & quick to understand
- In short, he would be an asset to Nebuchadnezzar...
- BUT...how to remain free of SIN without offending?

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Daniel 1:8-12 Daniel's Request

- *But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. 10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king." 11 So Daniel said to [d]the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.*

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Daniel 1:8-12 Daniel's Request

- Daniel had already decided in his heart NOT to eat the king's food, but...
- Daniel did not want to offend God or the king, so...
- He *asked* the steward (chief of eunuchs), if he could *refrain* from eating the king's delicacies
- Daniel provided a short duration to test the matter
- Notice that God honored Daniel's heartfelt request
- The steward acquiesced to Daniel and tried it for 10 days to see how things would go