Daniel
Understanding God's Prophetic Timeline
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Good News Bible Studies
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Daniel in Babylon

Daniel 1:1-21

"Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets" *(Amos 3:7)*

Introduction:

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

   - Who is Jehoiakim and how was he connected to Daniel?

     1) He was the _____ **king of Judah** and eldest son of King _____ who was the last good king of Judah (See attached chart)

     2) He was king of Judah from 609 to 598 B.C.

     3) During the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophet _____ warned him and the people of Judah that Babylon would invade Jerusalem, plunder the city, and take many of the people captive away to Babylon. (Jeremiah 25:1-11)

     4) This "**Babylonian Captivity**" also known as the "**Period of Jewish Exile**" lasted ____ years and it sets in motion the beginning of the prophetic period known as "**The Times of the <u>Gentiles</u>**" which lasts all the way through the birth of the Messiah and until Jesus returns. (**Luke 21:24**)

     5) Daniel, along with other, will be taken away to Babylon and will serve under several Gentile kings. He will interpret dreams and will be God's mouthpiece to describe the _____ events that the Lord has planned for His people.

- Who is Nebuchadnezzar and how was he connected to Daniel?

    1) The Babylonians became the _____ power during the time in which Daniel lived and Nabopolassar (Nebuchadnezzar's father) conquered much of the Assyrian and Egyptian territories by 605 B.C. which included the land of _____ and _____.

    2) Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father (Nabopolassar) in 604 B.C. and he began his first attack against **Jerusalem** around 605, however his complete conquests of **Jerusalem** occurred between 588-586. (II Kings 25:1-7)

    3) It is that first invasion of Judah in the later part of 605 BC by Nebuchadnezzar that is referenced in II Kings 24, II Chronicles 36:5-21, Daniel 1:1-3, that show Daniel's probable beginning point in _____.

- What happened to Jerusalem and its inhabitants?

    1) Daniel and his companions, along with others were taken captive and brought to Babylon after the first invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army in 605 B.C.

    2) Nebuchadnezzar will attack Jerusalem again in 597 B.C. in response to the rebellion of the king of Judah (Jehoiachin) who refused to listen to the advice of the prophet Jeremiah. It will be during this attack by Nebuchadnezzar that he will take approximately _____ Jewish captives, along with the prophet _____ and bring them to Babylon where they will remain in exile for a 70 year period. (Ezekiel 1:1-3, II Kings 24:8-20, II Chronicles 36:6-10)

    3) Nebuchadnezzar will return to Jerusalem for a third time in 588 B.C. and by 586 B.C. will completely _____ Jerusalem, its Temple and city walls, kill most of the inhabitants and take the remaining Jews back to Babylon.

- It will be during this ___ year period of captivity that was prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:1-12) where Daniel will be used to interpret the dreams of pagan kings, as well as receive prophetic dreams of his own, in which the Lord will describe a "_____ _____" of events that include the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the birth of the Messiah and the eventual permanent Kingdom of our Lord.

2. "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god" (Daniel 1:2)

    - The verse describes some of the actions by Nebuchadnezzar in which he will remove the precious **articles** and **vessels** of silver and gold from the temple in Jerusalem and will bring them to his treasury in Babylon.

    - These actions by Nebuchadnezzar will result in a later judgment by God against the Babylonians because of their lack of respect and honor for what these vessels and articles represented and the purpose in which they were intended for. (See Daniel 5:1-31 for more detail)

3. "Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was **no defect**, who were **good looking**, **showing intelligence** in every branch of wisdom, **endowed with understanding** and **discerning knowledge**, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and the language of the Chaldean's. The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated for three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's service" Daniel 1:3-5)

    - **Ashpenaz**, only mentioned by name once but reference by title 6 times in the first chapter, was given charge over selecting and training a group of young men from the royal family of Judah that met certain criteria the king wanted.

    - The apparent goal of the king was probably to both secure a foothold of _____ within the member of the royal family and to assimilate the people into the Babylonian _____ and _____.

    - This training was a rigorous _ year program making them then eligible for service

4. The stage is now set for the introduction of the young man named Daniel, whom the Lord will use to record the prophetic events that will directly impact the Jewish exiles while in Babylon. Daniel will describe their future in not just their return to Jerusalem to rebuild, but also provide a glimpse of the future kingdom that awaits us all.

Four Men of Extreme Character (Daniel 1:6-7)

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

   - **Daniel** (Babylonian name is _____)

     1) Means: "God has *Judged* or God is my *Judge*" in Hebrew

     2) Means "Lady protect the King" in Akkadian (which was the language of the Babylonians and Assyrians

   - **Hananiah** (Babylonian name is _____)

     1) "Yahweh has been *gracious*" (Hebrew)

     2) "I am *fearful* of a god" (Akkadian)

   - **Mishael** (Babylonian name is _____)

     1) "*Who* is *what* God *is*" (Hebrew)

     2) "I am *despised*, contemptible, *humbled*, before my god" (Akkadian)

   - **Azariah** (Babylonian name is _____)

     1) "Yahweh has *helped*" (Hebrew)

     2) "*Servant* of Nebo – Babylonian god of writing and vegetation" (Akkadian)

2. Note that all four are from the Tribe of _____, and each of their names included a reference to God.

3. **I can't help but wonder if the plans of Nebuchadnezzar were to corrupt the Jews (Note the subjection to the Babylonian gods), but perhaps God is showing us that even in the worst of societies we can be obedient to Him….any thoughts?**

A Decision Not to Defile (Daniel 1:8-16)

1. "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not **defile** himself with the king's choice food, or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself." (Daniel 1:8)

   - The decision by Daniel to not eat the _____ they were offered was because it did not conform to the requirements of the Mosaic Law.

     1) There were strict dietary requirements that an Israelite was to follow and one of them was that meat was to be prepared a certain way (i.e. there was to be no blood in the meat), which he knew the Babylonians did not practice.

     2) Another issue was the Gentiles (specifically the Babylonians) offered their meat to their idols first and it would have rendered the meat (according to Mosaic Law) _____ for Daniel and his companions. (Exodus 34:12-17)

   - The decision by Daniel to not drinking the king's ____ was based on the warnings of Scripture as to the dangers of strong drink and over excessive indulgence.

     1) The Jews "typically" _____ their wine about 3 parts wine to 6 parts water which effectively diluted its inebriating effect and the Babylonians did not.

     2) Daniel would have known that had he participated in drinking the king's wine it could have "potentially" rendered his testimony _____ so he chose not to partake of it. (**Proverbs 20:1, Isaiah 5:11**)

   - Daniel's resolve not to **defile** himself may well have set the "_____ _____" for his entire life among the Babylonian people and it no doubt had a profound _____ on King Nebuchadnezzar.

   - His decision was a gutsy one as it could have easily been considered offensive to the king that Daniel would reject his offer of his finest food and wine, but the results turned out well for Daniel and also brought the _____ of the Lord upon him and his companions.

2. "Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander and officials, and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." (Daniel 1:9-10)

   - We see here that the Lord caused the relationship between Daniel and Ashpenaz (the commander of the officials) to be one of _____ cooperation and trust.

   - Ashpenaz was no doubt concerned for his own life that by granting this request by Daniel it could backfire on him if their countenance and physical frame should look weakened by not eating the food and drink they were offered.

3. Thus the "Daniel Diet" was introduced:

   - "Please test your servants for ten days and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youth who are eating the king's choice food and deal with your servants according to what you see" (Daniel 1:12-13)

     1) Some conclude that the Hebrew word for vegetables meant "sown things" or things from the soil/ground and may also have included _____.

     2) There was no **vegetable** that was prohibited in the Mosaic Law because the Lord created them for our _____ and _____.

   - The result after ten days was amazing; "At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables" (Daniel 1:15-16)

     1) It is interesting to note that this diet conformed to not just the Mosaic Law but was also **healthy** and the proof was in the **results**!

     2) There isn't a "**blanket**" prohibition against eating meat or drinking wine that is found in this case but the evidence of obedience to the Lord's instructions is shown through the blessings that will come later upon these four young men.

Preparation for the King's Service (Daniel 1:17-21)

1. "As for these four youths, God gave them **knowledge** and **intelligence** in every branch of **literature** and **wisdom**. Daniel even understood all kinds of **visions** and **dreams**" (Daniel 1:17)

   - Nebuchadnezzar was preparing these four young men (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah) to serve in his **royal court** and probably act as **liaisons** between the Jewish leaders with the probable goal to maintain _____ between them.

   - The Lord on the other hand had other plans and gave them unique abilities that would later be very useful:

     1) He gave them _____ – reasoning skills which allowed them to think clearly and logically.

     2) He gave them _____ – special insight and discernment to interpret things accurately in its true light and not be distracted by falsehood.

     3) He gave them unique skills that allowed them to easily learn all aspects of Babylonian _____, pursuits and practices. (i.e. literature, mathematics, arts, science, etc.)

   - It would be Daniel who would excel at understanding and interpreting various _____ and _____:

     1) This was a gift given to him by the Lord and Daniel became an instrument of the Lord to not only be a testimony to pagan kings and leaders but he also was used by the Lord to provide _____ and _____ to the people of Israel who were taken captive and removed from their homeland.

     2) Daniel would be used of the Lord to interpret dreams and visions that would lay the course of event for the _____ of God's people (the Jews) in not just the centuries to come but also provide insight into the future _____ kingdom that would be ruled by the Lord Jesus Himself. (see Daniel 7:9-28)

2. "Then at the end of the days which the kings had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the kings personal service" (Daniel 1:18-19)

   - At the end of the 3 year period that was set aside for their training, all four young men (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) were presented to the king and the moment of truth had arrived.

   - The decision by Daniel and his companions not to defile themselves with the diet and luxuries that were made available to them, resulted in their being found **acceptable** in the king's eyes (just as Daniel said they would) and they were placed into the king's **personal service**.

3. "As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, **<u>he found them ten times better</u> than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm**. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king" (Daniel 1:20-21)

   - The Babylonians were known for their pursuit of knowledge and wisdom and they were also a very _____ people with a large interest in astrology, mysticism, magic and sorcery.

   - The king had a pretty large contingent of these "____ men" (magicians, conjurers, astrologers etc.) who he heavily relied on to advise him on various matters.

   - What we are told here is that the king was more impressed (**10 times as much** or "**<u>many times more</u>**") with Daniel and his other 3 companions than he was with his closest advisors.

   - Daniel's will continue as an _____ in the king's court for a long time

     1) King Nebuchadnezzar will come to rely heavily on Daniel for advice and counsel especially in relation to the _____ of his various dreams.

     2) Daniel will continue in his role all the way through until the first year of king _____ of Persia who will overthrow the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.