

Daniel Introduction and Chapter 1 -- John Karmelich

1. Of all the books in the Old Testament, there is only one I know where Jesus commands us to learn. Well, technically, he asks us to learn parts of it.
 - a) "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (**let the reader understand**), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Mark 13:14 NKJV **boldness added**)
 - i) Grant it, this is a bit trivial, but I can't think of any other time in the New Testament where we are specifically told to understand something from the Old Testament, *without giving any further explanation*.
 - b) Therefore, if Jesus tells me to "understand", I'll take that as my marching orders to learn what Daniel said and teach Daniel.
2. Welcome to my study in the Book of Daniel. I picked Daniel mainly because my last 3 bible studies were all on narrative-type books. It was time for me to do something different.
 - a) I divide the 66 books of the Christian Bible into 4 different "types" or styles.
 - b) The first is narrative. Most of the books are straight, continuous stories. The four gospels fall into this category, as does most of the first half of the Old Testament.
 - c) The second type is prophecy. This is where the book does not focus on a straight forward narrative story, but the primary focus is to tell predictive things about the future. The main purpose of prophecy books is to validate the Bible-as-a-whole as the Word of God, as well as teach us things about the nature of God.
 - i) Most of the latter-half of the Old Testament is prophecy books. In the New Testament, the only book that falls into this category is Revelation.
 - d) The third type is instructional. This is a book that the primary focus is a set of instructions to be followed. I think of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, and Paul's letters in the New Testament for this category.
 - e) The fourth type is poetry and wisdom. These are books that are written in Hebrew "prose" or poetry-style. In English, we think of poetry as having rhymes. In Hebrew, poetry is two or more phrases joined at a common thought. Books like Job, the Psalms, Proverbs and others fall into this category.
 - f) Now that I've broken that down, note that these categories overlap.
 - i) There is some narrative in the instructional books.
 - ii) There is some poetry in the prophetic books.
 - iii) There are instructional lessons in the poetry books.
 - iv) Ok, you get the idea. ☺
 - g) So what's my point? Well, after spending the last few years teaching three of the Narrative Books (Exodus, John and Acts), it was time for me to take on a prophetic book, of which I choose Daniel. Next, I'll probably do an instructional book or a poetry/ wisdom book, just so I cover all the types.
3. OK, why Daniel. What is so special about this book?
 - a) I can't think of any other book that is so familiar to most Christians and yet there is always so much more to learn.
 - b) The stories in Daniel are familiar to most Sunday school children. I would estimate that a vast majority of American adults are at least vaguely familiar with some of the stories in Daniel, yet the majority of Christians in this country could not tell you the significance of the prophecies of the book.
 - c) On the other hand, there are Christians who are obsessed with the prophecies, but don't spend a lot of time meditating on the benefits of the narrative portions.

- d) More than any other book of the Bible, including Revelation, Daniel covers the scope of world history from God's perspective.
 - i) One of my promises to you is that by the time we finish Daniel, you will have a new perspective on reading the morning newspapers! Daniel teaches us how to see the world, and world history from God's perspective.
 - ii) The great evils that take place in the world will make more sense to you once you've completed a detailed study of Daniel.
4. It is important to understand how to "break-down" Daniel.
- a) The most important thing to know about the design of the Book of Daniel is this:
 - b) There are 12 chapters in Daniel.
 - i) There are 6 chapters dealing with the life of Daniel, and
 - ii) 6 appendix-chapters that fill in more details during those first 6 chapters.
 - c) Chapters 1-6 are mostly narrative-type chapters, although it does deal with prophecy.
 - d) Chapters 7-12 fill in some missing details that go with Chapters 1-6.
 - e) Remember also when Daniel was written there were no chapter numbers. In the Bible, the original text was one continuous story. The chapter breaks were inserted in the 12th century to help us find verses. The verse numbers were added in the 13th Century.
 - f) In the Catholic Bible, there are two additional chapters, plus additional text in Chap. 3. You will not find these chapters in the King James Version, or any of the modern translations. I do believe these chapters are heresies and were not written by Daniel. When we get to the last lesson in Daniel, I'll talk a little more about this additional text.
5. The Book of Daniel, as stated is in two parts. First, there are 6 stories about Daniel's life and then there are 6 chapters focusing on end-time prophecy? Why both?
- a) One of the great mistakes Christian Bible readers make is focusing too much on one aspect of Daniel and not enough on another.
 - b) There are many people who love the traditional stories of Daniel in the lion's den and Daniel's 3 friends in the fiery furnace, but they spend little time studying the great prophetic chapters.
 - c) On the other hand, there are many (I'm guilty of this) who focus too much on the prophetic chapters and their end-time implications and not enough time on the narrative chapters where God shows the faith and maturity of Daniel.
 - d) One of the real important things to get out of Daniel is how both aspects of the Book of Daniel (growth/faith and prophecy) are necessary and work together.
 - i) God gave Daniel the privilege to reveal to him all these wonderful facts about World History. But Daniel was only given that privilege after his faith was tested in various situations.
 - ii) That is the lesson for us. If we want God to bless our lives and reveal great and wonderful things to us, we first need to grow in faith and trust in him.
 - a) The Bible is full of wonderful blessings and promises to those who trust in God. God is constantly working on growing our trust in him in order to bless us more. The lessons God teaches Daniel in the first 6 chapters are necessary as a prerequisite to the prophecies God gives Daniel.
6. There is a danger to Bible students I need to warn about: The danger of over-familiarity. To me, the Book of Daniel is an old friend. Chapter 9 of Daniel is one of my favorites in the whole Bible, and I could probably preach Chapter 9 off the top of my head without any preparation. That of course, is the danger.
- a) If you have a strong familiarity with any of the aspects of Daniel, let us all pray to God for insight and wisdom. God wants us to constantly grow and mature as believers. That means not relying on past accomplishments. This does not necessarily mean learning "new truth's" as much as learning new applications for our lives.

7. Before I begin, I also want to talk a little about Daniel-the-author.
- a) There are a lot of liberal Bible “scholars” (I am using that word sarcastically) who deny that Daniel wrote “Daniel”.
 - i) The main reason they cannot accept the authorship is because the prophecies (which simply means predictions) are so accurate, to accept Daniel-written-by-Daniel would mean accepting the Bible as the word of God, which they won’t do. Thus, the critics will say, some other writers wrote it later, or other writers inserted the Biblical history later.
 - ii) First of all, the opening sentence of this lesson is Jesus quoting Daniel. When you read Mark 13:14, you get the impression Jesus believed Daniel wrote Daniel. For me, if I believe in Jesus and what he said is true, then I have to believe in Daniel. If you don’t believe in Jesus, you have much bigger problems than the authorship of Daniel! ☺
 - iii) Second, there is the issue of the “Septuagint”. About 200 years before Jesus was born, the common language of the people of Israel was Greek. Therefore, 70 Rabbi scholars took it upon themselves to translate the entire Old Testament, into Greek. The word “Septuagint” means “70”. The translation included the Book of Daniel. A lot of the prophecies that Daniel predicted with great accuracy had not happened when the Septuagint was completed.
 - iv) Further, six copies of Daniel were found among the Dead Sea scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls date back to the 1st and 2nd Century BC. The fragments match the oldest copies we have of Daniel.
8. Now that I’ve talked for a few pages about Daniel-as-a-whole, let’s talk a little about Daniel Chapter 1.
- a) In this chapter, we have the story of Daniel and 3 of his buddies being taken prisoner to Babylon. Babylon was a city, and the center of an Empire. It is located in modern Iraq. (As a side note, Saddam Hussein has been rebuilding the City of Babylon on and off for the past 10-15 years, but we’ll talk about that later!)
 - i) The Babylonians were conquering the territory of present-day Israel one city at a time. Jerusalem was “captured and destroyed” in 3 stages. In the final stage, the city itself is leveled to the ground. In the first stage Daniel and his buddies are deported to Babylon.
 - ii) The King of Babylon, whose name is Nebuchadnezzar, decides to pick the best of the captives for training in his royal palace. Daniel and his 3 buddies are among the elite chosen for this role.
 - iii) Daniel tells his master to allow him and his 3 friends to “eat only vegetables” for a 10 day period. After 10 days, these 4 guys are just as healthy as all the other captives are.
 - a) The story is a miracle of God preserving them as a reward for their obedience to the Jewish law.
 - iv) Most commentators believe Daniel and his 3 friends were teenagers when Chapter 1 was written. The Book of Daniel spans about a 70-year history. Daniel was still alive at the end of this time span, so therefore, he could not be very old when this chapter takes place. Daniel was probably in mid-teen’s in Chapter 1 and in his 80’s by the end of Daniel.
9. Daniel 1 is a great chapter for parents to read to their children, as well as for adults to study and contemplate.
- a) Daniel has great lessons in “standing up for what is right” and “don’t compromise your principals”. Daniel reminds us to choose between pleasing God and pleasing people.

10. Well, three full pages of introduction, what do you say we break down and actually start *going through Daniel*? ☺
11. Daniel Chapter 1, Verse 1: In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
- a) Historians are fairly certain of the date of this event, which is 605 BC.
 - i) At this time, there was a war between the Babylonians and the Egyptian Empires. Remember that “Israel”, was divided into 2 kingdoms, the north and the south. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed/scattered a century earlier by the Assyrian Empire. The Southern Kingdom (a.k.a.) Judah was still there and was lead by King Jehoiakim.
 - a) King Jehoiakim was aligned with Egypt. The Egyptians placed him in power. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt in a major battle, and was now going after Judah, who was loyal to Egypt.
 - b) “Nebuchadnezzar” is a mouth full. Usually it is pronounced “Neb-ee-cand-nez-er”
 - i) Nebuchadnezzar is a Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name Nebukudduri-utzur, which means “Nebu protects the crown.” (David Guzik)
 - ii) I won’t even attempt to pronounce “Nebukudduriutzur”. ☺
 - c) Years in the Old Testament were marked by the reigns of kings. In the books of 1st and 2nd Kings, you will see references like “in the 3rd year of King Ahaz”.
 - i) The modern Hebrew calendar, which estimates time based on Adam-to present, was not used until relatively recent times. The year 2002 (when this study was written) is the Hebrew year 5762.
 - d) The prophets Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel overlap each other’s ministries.
 - i) Jeremiah prophesized in Israel after Daniel got deported to Babylon. Remember that Babylon had 3 separate “attacks” on Jerusalem. In the first one, Daniel was taken away. By the third one, Jerusalem was leveled.
 - ii) Ezekiel was taken in the 2nd deportation. He prophesized from “the streets of Babylon” while Daniel was in the court of the king. Ezekiel referenced Daniel in his book. (Ezekiel 14:14, 14:20 and 28:3)
 - iii) There is an interesting quote about King Nebuchadnezzar by Jeremiah:
 - a) Now I (God) will hand all your countries (Israel, surrounding nations) over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. (Jeremiah 27:6 NIV)
 - b) Notice God calls Nebuchadnezzar “my servant”. This is a Gentile king who destroyed Israel! God calls him “my servant”.
 - c) Was Nebuchadnezzar aware of this “fact” while Jeremiah said this?
 - d) Was Nebuchadnezzar aware of this when Daniel was in his presence?
 - (1) The answer is neither. In a few chapters, which happens years later, we’ll learn that Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that the “God of Israel” is above all other Gods.
 - e) The point is simply that God uses people for his will. The same way God “hardened Pharaoh’s heart” In Exodus.
 - (1) “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.” (Proverbs 21:1 NIV)

- f) Does this mean we are still accountable to God if he can “control” our thoughts? I would argue yes. God still holds us accountable for our actions, and has the capability of using our enemies for judgement.
 - (1) I like to think of it as “God knows all things”. God can plant thoughts in our heads, but it is up to us to act upon them. That is the best I can do to reconcile “free-will” with God’s eternal plan for our lives.
 - e) Last thing, why did God allow Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem? What about all the innocent children that died because of the immorality of the adults?
 - i) First of all, I do believe all children are saved, and God judges fairly.
 - a) For support, study the story of David, Bathshiba, and the child born out of adultery in 2nd Samuel Chapter 12. When the child was dying, David fasted and prayed. When the child died, David ate again. David said in Verse 23 that David “would see him again” in the resurrection.
 - ii) “Sin” has consequences upon innocent people. When God established the law, it was a “two-way” agreement. The Israelites agreed to keep the law. God promised to punish them and send them away if they failed to obey. Right before all this began Judah (the Southern Kingdom) sunk to its lowest point.
 - f) Again, lets look at what was said about Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Jeremiah.
 - i) Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. (Jeremiah 27:6 NIV)
 - ii) Three times in Jeremiah God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as “his servant” (25:9, 27:6, and 43:10). Isn’t it interesting that God refers to a Gentile king, who, at this point in his life doesn’t even know God as “his servant?”
 - iii) The lesson to be learned is that God can (and does) use anybody he wants. Nebuchadnezzar may not have been aware God was using him, but he was. God works that way throughout history.
 - a) History is often called “His-story”, referring to the works of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament leads up to appearance, death and resurrection of Jesus. Time, since that event is focusing on the growth of the church and God working on growing “the body of Christ”.
 - b) All through history God works *through* people. God also uses the people we least expect for his glory.
12. Verse 2: And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his (Nebuchadnezzar’s) hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.
- a) Imagine what a defeat this had to be to the average-Jew living in the Southern Kingdom. They believed in God. They had this great temple. They knew the promises of the Bible that a Messiah would be set up and rule from this temple. Now they were watching this evil-heathen empire carry away the temple “furniture” of the true-and-living God into the temple of a false God.
 - i) The Jews are right in that that the Messiah will one-day reign from the temple. All of that is true and will happen in the future. (To borrow a cliché that means I’m very sure of this: “bank on it”! ☺)
 - ii) The problem with the Jews at this time is that they were putting trust in human abilities and not God. Remember that they made an alliance with Egypt in order to protect themselves from the Babylonians as opposed to trusting God. They were trusting in the *existence* of the temple, as opposed to the God who made the temple.

- iii) The great lesson to learn is always “am I trusting in God *and what else?*” The prophets of the Old Testament spoke of how the Jews went into idolatry over and over again, and always turned their back on God. With God destroying Judah here, albeit, for 70 years, before they returned, God was disciplining his people *for their own good*. God does the same with us, but usually not in as dramatic a fashion. God loves us too much *not* to discipline us!
13. Verse 3: “Then the king (Nebuchadnezzar) ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility-- ⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. “
- a) In this attack on Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar deported to Babylon a lot of the royal families and “key people”. Nebuchadnezzar then gave the order and said “take the best young men of this group, and train them in all the ways of the Babylonians so they could be my servants.
 - i) Nebuchadnezzar was thinking, “why should I waste good prisoners in jail?” This is why he took the young, influential ones with lots of potential and sent them to “Babylonian University” for further training. They were to learn the culture and the language of the Babylonians.
 - b) Notice the qualifications for “Babylonian U”. The king wanted men who had “no physical defects, which means handicaps, good looking, quick to understand, which is what we call “High I.Q.’s (I.Q. means intelligent quotas) and qualified to serve in the king’s palace, which refers to loyalty.
 - i) This is a perfect description of how “man” judges man. These qualifications sound like a mixture of Harvard University and a Hollywood actor casting call mixed together. The world judges people based on good looks, high IQ’s, no physical defect. This is glorifying the creature, rather than the creator.
 - a) But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV)
 - b) In Verse 6 we will get introduced to the heroes of this story, which are Daniel and his 3 friends. They were picked among this group. The point is that God *gave* them these qualifications as God wanted to use them as witnesses to Nebuchadnezzar, and us for how to behave in these situations. One does not have to “have” these qualifications in order to be used by God.
 - ii) I heard a great quote from Allister Begg on this verse “I’m sure when Daniel dreamed of going to college, Babylonia U. did not make his top 20 choices”.
 - a) What he meant by that is sometimes God puts us in situations we didn’t expect. God expects us to adapt to whatever situation he puts us in without compromising our principals and our beliefs in God.
14. Verse 5: The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.
- a) There are “perks” to being trained at “Babylonian U”, as I call it. The king was enticing these young men from all over his empire to abandon their previous lifestyle, their previous religions and previous cultures in order to adapt to the ways of the Babylonians. To entice them, they were now part of the Babylonian privileged class.

- i) Most of you can see where I'm going with this. ☺ Satan does that to us. The devil offers "the best the world has to offer" in order to entice us away from the true and living God. Some of the most ungodly men I've ever met are very rich and/or very good-looking and/or very intelligent. (Intelligent is the ability to think quickly. It is nothing to do with wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to apply the knowledge you have.)
 - a) It doesn't mean God can't give you any of these skills, talents or gifts. The key is 1) are you using them to glorify yourself, or God?
- 15. Verse 6: Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.⁷ The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.
 - a) Here we meet the star of the book, Daniel, and his 3 supporting cast members, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.
 - b) Remember that the Babylonians want these trainees to forget their past. To help them do that, they give new names to the captives. Thus:
 - i) Daniel is given the name "Beltshazzar", Hananiah is given Shadrach, Mishael, is given Meshach and Azariah and Abednego.
 - ii) One of the neat little things to notice about Daniel, who wrote this book, always refers to himself as Daniel. He only uses the Babylonian name "Beltshazzar" when he is speaking in the 3rd person. Daniel never forgets his original identity, which is associated with the true God of Israel!
 - a) Other people can call you what they want, but how you view yourself is what is important to God!
- 16. Verse 8: But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.
 - a) We can see already Daniel standing up for his beliefs. Despite the temptation of the best food in the house, he desired to keep "kosher" and honor the God of Israel.
 - i) In Leviticus Chapter 11, God lays out a list of certain types of animals that are ok and forbidden to eat. Daniel, in his childhood, knew this list.
 - ii) "Kosher" is actually a broader term than specified in Leviticus Chapter 11. It refers to how food is to be prepared as well as food combination choices.
 - b) Give some credit to Daniel's parents and his "youth-ministers". Daniel is a teenage boy, hundreds of miles from home. He was deported, and saw his homeland conquered. Despite the temptations of another culture and world, Daniel stood up for his principals that he had been taught as a boy.
 - i) Remember that when you train up your children. They may rebel against going to church, but there may come a day, when you least expect it (like Daniel), where that training will pay off.
 - a) There is a great little half-a-bible-verse in Proverbs 31. In this chapter, God talks about what is an ideal Christian woman:
 - (1) "Her children arise and call her blessed;" (Proverbs 31:28a NIV)
 - (2) Let's face it. I don't know too many children who rise up in the morning and say, "bless you mom, thank you for all your hard work and training ☺". That does not come until years later, during the hard times when they recall, and need that training, that it is appreciated.
 - (a) The same applies in sending your children off to school or off with their neighbors and friends. Then is when all the training pays off.

- c) Last thing to point out. Why “take a stand” over food?
 - i) Of all the things to stand up and say “no” to, why this? Why not go all the way and say “no” to attending Babylon U? How about the opposite extreme of not doing anything at all and just “go with the flow” and not even mention your religious convictions to anyone?
 - ii) Daniel is setting a great example of what God expects of us, as we are his witnesses to the world: Balance! God expects us to do enough that people notice we are different, that we live by a higher set of standards than the world.
 - a) On the other hand, he does not want us to go to either extreme. One extreme for Daniel would be to go into complete rebellion and run away. That same extreme applies for Christians. God does not want us to avoid the world and live in our turtle shell. He expects us to interact.
 - b) The other extreme is to not do anything. For Daniel, this would be to go along with *whatever* his instructors tell him to do. For us today, this would be to adapt to society and never live differently.
 - (1) A good question to ponder is, if a stranger asked your neighbor “Is that person (you), a Christian? Do they answer yes? How do they know? Are they somehow different? If you are totally ignoring your neighbors because of your piousness or your neighbors have no idea you are Christians, in either case, you are being a bad witness to them!
17. Verse 9: Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel.
- a) Daniel was defying the direct orders of his superior officers. For Daniel to take a stand and not eat what is commanded of him not only could mean the loss of privileges but possibly the loss of his life.
 - b) The same holds true for Daniel’s superior officer. If Daniel’s trainer were to allow Daniel to eat only his foods, his job and possibly his head would be on the line too.
 - c) Now re-read this verse. God caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel. God *rewarded* Daniel’s obedience by allowing his superior to grant Daniel’s request.
 - d) I can’t tell you how often I see God work this way. It is only *after* we take a stand for God and be *willing* to accept the consequences no matter what, then God does marvelous and miraculous work in our lives.
18. Verse 10: but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."
- a) There is a classic Sunday school line that goes with this verse “Hey Daniel, I’m trying to *get* ahead, not *lose* a-head. Go with the program!”
 - i) The problem with Daniel’s teacher is he has a greater fear of man (Nebuchadnezzar) than of God.
 - b) Let’s face it, the official was not born-again. He didn’t have the spirit of God, or the Bible to reinforce him to believe that “God is in control.” It is ok to disobey authority if it violates the Word of God realizing that we may have to face the consequences for that disobedience!
 - c) Daniel was being a witness to the official. This is how we are witnesses to the world around us! It is our actions, more than our statement of faith that causes people to react. The official was focusing on the situation and not on God, and naturally, he was worried for his life.

19. Verse 11: Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.
- a) Daniel took a step of faith. He said "All right, here's an idea: Let me and my buddies go on a veggie-diet for 10 days, and after that, check our weight and our energy level."
 - i) It takes "hoospa" or "guts" to stand up to your teacher and say, "let me tell you how you can test us". Especially if that person has the power to throw you in jail, or worse!
 - b) Daniel made enough of an impression on him, that he was willing to listen.
 - c) Daniel also picked an issue (proper foods) that was not such an extreme request, but a reasonable one to stand up for God. It wasn't like Daniel was asking for time off from school so he could go to Jewish seminary! ☺ He agreed to all the studies, but he choose the food-issue, as a way to show others that the God-of-Israel is the God-of-all Gods.
 - d) Remember Verse 9: "Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel." God softened the heart of Daniel's instructors so this guy would agree to Daniel's 10-day test.
 - i) I find that "God works on both ends of the equation". If God has placed it in your heart to accomplish his will, he will often clear the path and change people's hearts in order to make that will be accomplished.
 - e) Notice in these verses how Daniel was a witness to his 3 buddies Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. I suspect Daniel was the leader of this group. It was Daniel's idea to do the food test. They probably nodded their heads up and down as Daniel was explaining his 10-day idea to their 3 friends.
 - i) In Daniel 3, we'll read a chapter about these 3 guys *without* any reference to Daniel himself. I suspect Daniel was an inspiration to them and their faith.
 - ii) There is a classical Christian hymn by Philip P. Bliss called "Dare to be a Daniel". This verse is an excellent example of that principal. Because Daniel had the courage to stand up for his faith, I believe that courage spread to Daniel's 3 friends. It is a great example of leadership by example as well as standing up for your principals.
20. Verse 15: At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.
- a) This is not a recommendation for a vegetable-only diet ☺. I believe this is a miracle by God. God used Daniel's test as an example to show his glory. God is in control over all human nature, including your body!
 - b) I kept thinking about the long-term temptation of this verse. Remember in Verse 5 that Daniel and his 3 friends were to study at "Babylonian U" for three years. It is one thing to keep up a "veggies-only-no-dessert-for-me-thank-you" diet for 10 days, but try going 3 years without your favorite dessert! That alone would keep me dependent upon God on a moment-by-moment basis! Now think back to your teenage years, when you wanted to "explore and try new things". Here was Daniel and his 3 friends not having any drink or new foods to try. That is a testimony to Daniel's faith to God, as well as a testimony to those who raised Daniel.

21. Verse 17: To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.
- a) God blessed them for taking a stand. For being a witness to the other captives and teachers at “Babylonian U”, God gave all 4 of them the gift of understanding.
 - i) Ever met the kind of person who barely studies, yet gets “A’s”? That is the “gift of understanding”. It is simply the ability to comprehend a lot of stuff.
 - b) To all students out there reading this notes, this verse is not a support for lack-of-studying. Some people read this and think “I just don’t get algebra (or whatever), I guess God didn’t give me the ability to understand this like Daniel and his friends.
 - i) I’m sure these four guys still had to study. God gave them the ability to learn quickly. They themselves still had to *apply* that gift and study themselves.
 - c) Notice the education is secular. This is a good support that it is “ok to study things other than the Bible” (You would be surprised what some Bible-thumpers preach!). The question is always “What does God call you to do”, and “Is what you are doing glorifying to God.
 - d) God works that way in our lives to. I find when we seek God, he rewards us for our obedience. Not because “we’re special for doing this”, but because God always wants to take us to the “next level”. I always describe Christians as “construction projects”. People who God wants to build and mold into his desire for our lives. As we mature and turn more and more aspects of our lives over to him, God blesses us with special gifts that we can continue to use for his benefit.
 - e) Daniel himself is given a gift over and above the others: The ability to interpret dreams. This is a spiritual gift that is only spoken of by Joseph and Daniel in the Bible.
 - f) So why did God give Daniel and his 3 friends these gifts?
 - i) The answer is always *to glorify God*. We’ll read in Chapter 2 that God gave this gift to Daniel so he could tell Nebuchadnezzar that his God is the *true* God.
 - ii) The instructors over Daniel and his 3 friends *knew* that they were still loyal to their god and proved it by their diet. I’m sure that their instructors became well aware of their gift to comprehend knowledge quickly.
 - iii) The point is that God gives special talents and gifts to us to be used to glorify God, and not us.
22. Verse 18: At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.
- a) We now fast-forward in time three years to graduation day. King Nebuchadnezzar gives himself the final exam himself. He interviews the students and see who is qualified for what job after all the education.
 - b) Daniel says that he and his 3 friends were “10 times better than anyone else”.
 - i) I wonder how they determined that. Was there a written test and did they get a score 10 times greater than the others?
 - a) “Hey Bob, tough final exam. I didn’t do very well. I got an 89. Tom over there got a 99. That’s the highest score I’ve heard. What did you get? You got a 1,000? Wow, that’s amazing.” ☺
 - ii) I suspect the truth was more like King Nebuchadnezzar saying, “These 4 guys are 10 times smarter than anyone else I’ve interviewed”. Knowing the king’s ego, as we’ll discover in the rest of the chapter, I’m sure he stated this out loud for everyone to hear.

- a) I know I'm speculating here, but to me, when King Nebuchadnezzar said "these guys are 10 times better than anyone else", I bet Daniel flashed-back to three years earlier when he asked for the 10-day test. I believed God was reminding Daniel how proud he was of him taking that stand with the "10" reference.
 - c) There is an old Biblical expression that goes: "God will be a debtor to no man."
 - i) What is meant by that is you cannot out-give God. I've never meant a person in my life who has gone broke by giving too much of his money or his time God. Daniel stood by his convictions for the three years in "graduate school" and God made him 10x smarter than anyone else on his final exams.
 - ii) David said, "I have been young and now I am old. And in all my years I have never seen the Lord forsake a man who loves him; nor have I seen the children of the godly go hungry." (Psalm 37:25 The Living Bible)
 - d) Another interesting question is that Daniel was found better than "all the magicians and enchanters". The Old Testament strictly forbids a Jew to study enchantment due to its satanic origins.
 - i) The text says Daniel was *wiser* than these guys were, not that Daniel actually studied these arts.
 - a) Hey, it's a trivial point, but Bible critics will use that as an argument against the authority of scripture! ☺
23. Last Verse, Verse 21: And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.
- a) This verse shows that Daniel either wrote this chapter near the end of his life or added this verse many years later. King Cyrus was a Persian King. The Persians conquered the Babylonians. At that time Daniel probably went back to Jerusalem.
 - i) From the time Daniel was taken away captive to the time of King Cyrus was close to 70 years.
 - b) I doubt when Daniel had this little adventure at the Kings Palace that he suspected he would be spending the next 70 years or so in Babylon.
24. If I had to pick out the my favorite applications from these first few chapters, they would be:
- a) First, notice Daniel's leadership. Daniel took a stand for what is right. That stand became a good witness not only to his captors, but also to Daniel's 3 friends.
 - b) Second, notice the Daniel uses his spiritual gifts to glorify God. God gives *all* believers special gifts They are discussed in 1st Corinthians 12-14, et.al.. Part of the joy of Christianity is discovering *what* your gift is, and using it for God's glory.
 - c) Lastly, use this chapter as a model for raising Godly children, or being a witness to other children in your church. Here was Daniel, 700 miles away from his home and culture, and he uses his early childhood training to stand up for what is right.
 - i) We, as Americans, send *our* children off "to Babylon" in the public school system or simply out in the world after they have grown up. Daniel's parents and teachers deserve great rewards in heaven. Like Daniel's unnamed parents, you never know if and when your children, or the children you influence will stand up for God. This chapter is testament to the importance of raising your children right.
25. For those of you new to my studies, I hope you enjoyed this and are looking forward to lesson two. Remember to pray as you read these notes and let the Holy Spirit inspire your learning. Let's pray: Father, we thank you for these lessons you have taught on Daniel. Give us the disciple to stand up for our convictions. Give us the wisdom for the decisions we have to make as we walk in the world, but not be a part of it. Like Daniel, help us to be good examples to the world around us that committing your life to God is far greater than anything else the world has to offer. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Class Notes for Daniel- Chapter 1: "Daniel in Graduate School" (Page 1 of 2)

Introduction - Jesus comments on Daniel:

"So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Mark 13:14 NKJV)

- Using this verse: Jesus validates Daniel as a prophet of God.

Introduction - The 66 books of the Bible can be divided into 4 different writing styles:

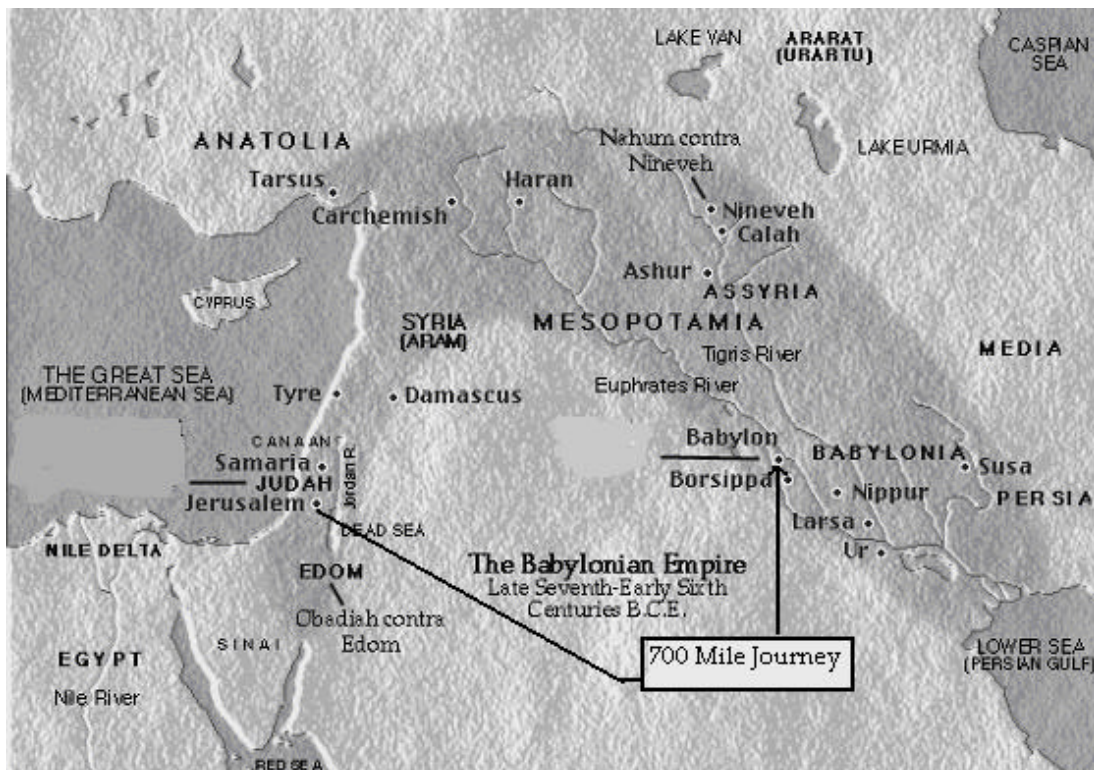
1. Narrative: A story. There is a start and a finish (e.g., Gospels, Genesis, Exodus, 1st & 2nd Kings).
2. Prophecy: The primary focus is to foretell future events (e.g., Isaiah, Daniel, Revelation).
3. Instructional: The primary purpose is to give instructions (e.g., Leviticus, Paul's letters).
4. Poetry and Wisdom. The text is written in Hebrew Poetry style (e.g., Psalms, Proverbs, Job).

All the books overlap in style. There is prophecy in the narratives, poetry in the prophetic books, etc.

Historical Overview of the Book of Daniel:

- During this time span the Babylonians conquered Israel.
- By the 3rd "attack" on Jerusalem, it was in rubble. All Jews deported.
- Daniel was deported as a teenager to Babylon (located in Modern Iraq) during 1st attack.
- There are 12 Chapters in Daniel: The first six are primarily narrative; The 2nd six are prophetic.
- The first six are narrative stories that occur during the 90+ year lifespan of Daniel.
- The 2nd 6 are "appendices". They are prophetic visions that occur during the time of the 1st first 6 chapters.

Daniel's Deportation from Jerusalem to Babylon



Notes for Daniel- Chapter 1 (Page 2 of 2)

A Summary of Chapter 1:

- Verses 1-2: The Babylonian king attacks the Southern Kingdom of Judea (605 BC).
 1. Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdom during this time.
 2. The northern kingdom was conquered 100 years earlier and no longer exists.
 3. Daniel, here as a teenager was among the captives taken 700 miles to Babylon.
 - Verses 3-7: Daniel and his 3 friends are picked for “Babylonian graduate school”.
 1. Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar picks the best of the captives for service.
 2. The “hero’s” of Chapter 1: (1) Daniel, (2) Hananiah, (3) Mishael and (4) Azariah.
 3. They are given new Babylonian names: (1) Belteshazzar; (2) Shadrach; (3) Meshach; (4) Abednego
 - Verses 8-16: Daniel and his 3 friends make a statement about their faith to their captives.
 1. Daniel tells his tutor at “Babylonian U” let me & my friends eat vegetables only for 10 days.
 2. Daniel asked this of his boss as a test to show how God is supporting them.
 3. After 10 days, Daniel and his 3 friends looked as healthy as everyone else.
 4. They continued this diet until their graduation, 3 years later.
 5. In exchange for Daniel’s obedience, God gave him the spiritual gift of discernment.
 - Verses 17-21: Three years later, at the final exams and graduation.
 1. King Nebuchadnezzar himself gave the “graduate school final exam”.
 2. Daniel and his 3 friends were pronounced “ten times better than the rest”.
-

Verse 1: King Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem.

- “The third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah”. This is 605 BC.
- Nebuchadnezzar is a Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name Nebu-kudduri-utzur, which means “Nebu protects the crown.” (David Guzik)
- What God said about Nebuchadnezzar prior to this event:
 - “Now I (God) will hand all your countries (Israel, surrounding nations) over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him.” (Jeremiah 27:6 NIV)
 - Three times in Jeremiah God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as “his servant” (25:9, 27:6, and 43:10)
- God can use people, even non-believers to accomplish his will:
 - “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.” (Proverbs 21:1 NIV)

Verses 3-8: Daniel and his 3 friends are picked for “Babylonian graduate school”.

- Nebuchadnezzar picked students based on good looks, fast thinkers, etc. God does the opposite:
 - But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV)
- Give credit to Daniel’s parents and maybe his “youth ministers” for proper training:
 - “Her children arise and call her blessed;” (Proverbs 31:28a NIV)
 - Think about this verse. How many times have your children “arisen and called you blessed? ☺
It is a reference of gratitude *after* your children have grown.

Verses 20: God repays Daniel’s faithfulness by making him “10 times” smarter than the other students.

- David said, “I have been young and now I am old. And in all my years I have never seen the Lord forsake a man who loves him; nor have I seen the children of the godly go hungry.” (Psalm 37:25 The Living Bible)