



SESSION 1 | DANIEL 1:1-4 | DR. RANDY WHITE

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- The book of Daniel, more than any other book, gives the prophetic overview of the times of the gentiles, under the reign of the all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar.
 - Darby: *the “dominion of the head of the Gentiles, and of the Gentile kings”* ¹
 - Scofield: *“But Daniel is distinctively the prophet of the “times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24, refs.). His vision sweeps the whole course of Gentile world-rule to its end in catastrophe, and to the setting up of the Messianic kingdom.”* ²
- The book is about the reign of the Gentile kings, but is concerned with the condition of the Jewish remnant.

THE LIFE OF DANIEL

- Born into the royalty or nobility in Jerusalem – Dan. 1:3
- Deported to Babylon in 605 BC
- Lived from Nebuchadnezzar the Great of Babylon to Cyrus the Great of Persia.
 - Made ruler over the province of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar
 - Made third ruler over the entire Babylonian Kingdom under Belshazzar
 - Made one of three Presidents of the Chaldean region of the Medo-Persian empire by Darius the Mede.
- The events of the book cover 73 years (Usher).
 - Deportation – 605 BC
 - Cyrus’s 3rd year – 536 BC
 - Daniel probably lived until about -530 BC
 - See *Captivity and Return*, pg. 18 – The Bible Graphically Presented

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK

- Without the book of Daniel, a chronology of future events is impossible.
- This is why, when “Higher Criticism” became a force, they attacked the book of Daniel mercilessly.
 - Their attack: The book was written at the time of the Maccabean Kings
 - Sir Robert Anderson: *Daniel in the Critic’s Den*
- The historicity of Daniel is unquestionable for those who trust Scripture.
 - Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3

¹ Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: Ezra to Malachi*.

² Scofield, C. I., ed. *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*. New York; London; Toronto; Melbourne; Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1917.

- Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14
- See *The Chronological Suspension Bridge*, pg 78 – The Bible Graphically Presented

WHY ISN'T DANIEL IN THE NEVI'IM?

- The *Nevi'im* is the section of the *Prophets*. Daniel is in the section of the TaNaKh called the *Ketuvim* (the writings).
- The Jewish people *did* recognize the prophetic nature of Daniel.
- Daniel's ministry was certainly prophetic, but unlike other Prophets, his career was as a servant to the King. The *Nevi'im* were for "full-time prophets."

EXEGESIS

VERSE 1

- **In the third year** - Jeremiah 25:1 says it is the fourth year of Jehoiakim. The Jews and the Babylonians had a different way of counting regal reign; the Babylonians did not count the time from the coronation to the new year while the Jews did. Since Jehoiakim became king in the fall of the year 609, the remainder of 609 was not counted in Babylonian chronology, and the year 608 was "year 1."
- **Jehoiakim** was the second son of Josiah.
 - King Josiah had died in battle against Pharaoh Neco at the Battle of Megiddo (609BC), where Josiah had attempted to stop Neco from aligning with the Assyrians against the Babylonians.
 - When Josiah died, his third son Jehoahaz became King of Judah, but was taken captive by Neco after a three-month reign.
 - Neco replaced Jehoahaz with Jehoiakim (the eldest son of Josiah, first named Eliakim) and caused him to pay heavy tribute.
 - In 605BC, Nebuchadnezzar gained control of Judea and Jehoiakim began paying tribute to Babylon. At this time, Nebuchadnezzar took the finest leaders of Judah into exile, and Daniel was one of these captives.
 - Nebuchadnezzar would ultimately destroy the city of Jerusalem in 598BC.
- **Nebuchadnezzar** - Reigned from 605 to 562 BC, son of Nabopolassar, who managed to free Babylon from 300 years of Assyrian control. Most known for his destruction of Jerusalem and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

VERSE 2

- **The Lord gave...Judah** –
 - This was after years of warning by Jeremiah. See Jer. 25:3.
 - This is the beginning of the "Times of the Gentiles," the details of which are most revealed in Daniel.
- The corresponding historical account is given in 2 Kings 23:34-24:7 and 2 Chron. 36:4-8.
- **Shinar** - Shinar is the region around Babylon, and the name is always given in a negative context.

- Walvoord says, "'Shinar' is a term used for Babylon with the nuance of a place hostile to faith."³
- It is first seen as the home of the Tower of Babel.
- **his god** - Nebuchadnezzar is named after his god, Nebo, the Mesopotamian god of wisdom and writing.
 - Nebo was the scribe of the moon god "Sin" (from which the Wilderness of Sin gets its name).
 - Mount Nebo in Moab (Jordan) is named after this god.

VERSES 3-4

- These verses are the fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah. See 2 Kings 20:16-19 (also recorded in Isaiah 39:7).
- **Well favored** - The Hebrew is *mareh tob* - "good appearance" (as in YLT),
- **Cunning in knowledge** - The Hebrew has a single word for **cunning in knowledge**, which is *yod*, a word for knowing, learning, perceiving. It is used in Genesis 3 for Adam and Eve who **knew that they were naked** after eating of the fruit. It is possible that the iconic *Yoda* is named from this Hebrew word.
- **Understanding Science** - Only here is the word translated **science**. It is simply a word for *knowledge*. Used together with the word translated **understanding**, the two words give the concept of a mind adept with the scientific method. It could even be loosely translated, "a discretion of knowledge," giving indication of a mind that can filter facts and make good conclusions.
- **The learning and the tongue** - Recall that Moses was educated in the **learning and the tongue** of the Egyptians.

³ ● Walvoord, John F. Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation. Galaxie Software, 2008.