

Daniel Enters Nebuchadnezzar's Personal Service – Chapter 1

Hebrew¹

Dan. 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it.²

Dan. 1:2 And Adonai gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God. Then, 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.³

Jehoiakim

Nebuchadnezzar⁴

609-598 B.C.

605-560 B.C.

Dan. 1:3 Afterwards, 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,

Dan. 1:4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every kind of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had the ability to serve in the king's court. He ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.⁵

Dan. 1:5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and he appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.

Dan. 1:6 Among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.⁶

Dan. 1:7 The commander of the officials assigned new names to them. To Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abed-Nego.⁷

Dan. 1:8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore, he sought permission from the commander of the officials in order that he not defile himself.⁸

Dan. 1:9 And God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials,

Dan. 1:10 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

¹ Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28 is written in Aramaic.

² The first of three sieges and captivities—1) in 605 B.C., 2) in 597 B.C., and 3) in 587 B.C. Thus 605-536 = 70 years as predicted by Jeremiah 29:10, "For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.'"

³ God's transcendent orchestration of human history is mentioned here, a theme that dominates the entire book of Daniel.

⁴ Throughout the translation of the twelve chapters of Daniel, the people associated with various empires will be listed in color according to the specific empire/kingdom with which they are associated – M.E. = Middle East

Babylonian **Persian (Mede)** **Greek** **Syrian Greek** **Egyptian Greek** **Roman** M.E. **Messianic**

⁵ The literary language of the Babylonians since the days of Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.) was Akkadian.

⁶ Daniel (דָּנִיֵּאל) = God is Judge, Hananiah (חַנַּנְיָהוּ) = Yahweh is Gracious, Mishael (מִשְׁאֵל) = Who is Like God?, Azariah (אֶזְרָיָהוּ) = Yahweh Has Helped

⁷ Belteshazzar (בֵּלְשַׁצְצָר) = Protect the Life of the King; Shadrach (שַׁדְרָח) = The Command of Aku (the Sumerian moon-god); Meshach (מֶשַׁח) = Who is Like Aku; Abed-Nego (אֶבְד־נֶגוֹ) = Servant of Nego (a god of the Babylonians?).

⁸ Daniel was committing himself to the dietary laws of the Mosaic Covenant (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14).

looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.”

Dan. 1:11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Dan. 1:12 “Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

Dan. 1:13 “Then, let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king’s choice food. Afterwards, deal with your servants according to what you see.”

Dan. 1:14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

Dan. 1:15 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.

Dan. 1:16 Consequently, the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink. Instead, he kept giving them vegetables.

Dan. 1:17 As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence with respect to every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel even understood everything about visions and dreams (וְדָנִיֵּאל הַיְּהוּדִי בָּכָל-הַחֲזוֹן וְהַלְמוּת) (καὶ τῷ Δανιηλ ἔδωκε σύνεσιν ἐν παντὶ ῥήματι καὶ ὄράματι καὶ ἐνυπνίσις καὶ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ).

Dan. 1:18 At the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan. 1:19 The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. As a result, they entered the king’s personal service.

Dan. 1:20 In regard to every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.

Dan. 1:21 Thus, Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

Cyrus the Great⁹
Conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.¹⁰

559-529 B.C.

⁹ **Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman M.E. Messianic**

¹⁰ The 42,000 Jews under Zerubbabel would have returned to Israel at this time. Cf. Ezra 1:1,2 – In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of Yahweh, the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.’”