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C1224 – July 25, 2012 – Daniel 1:1
Introduction To Daniel

We're starting a new study tonight, the Book of Daniel. You should be receiving some handouts that will help you through our study and as always, if you have questions just raise your hand or write your question down and put it in the little wooden church in the back of the room. I don't mind questions at all, especially when I get to think about them. Sometimes it's your questions that stimulate me to go back to the Scriptures and sort these things out.

Now Daniel is one of the biblical books I studied in Seminary. They don't make you study every book in Seminary, they're interested in giving you tools to study the books of the Bible, but some of the highly important books they do take you through in a general survey. And Daniel was one of those books I went through. The good thing about this book is we're all basically familiar with it to some degree because we refer to it so often and people just have a huge interest in Daniel. So that familiarity will pay huge dividends as it does when you're familiar with any section of Scripture. So hopefully we can discover some more advanced reasons Daniel was written and why it's placed where it's placed in the Hebrew canon and what purpose it served for the Jewish exiles and those of later generations. Daniel was an immensely popular book among the Jews and you can see this by the number of copies you find at Qumran. Everybody was interested in Daniel and with good reason.

Now we will start with an introduction to the book. I'm not going to deal with all the introductory issues surrounding the book, just those that you should be alert to and those that provide the relevant historical background. Interestingly Daniel is not called a prophet in the book even though our Lord calls him a prophet in Matt 24:15 and he did prophesy. It's just that Daniel

was not seen primarily as a prophet. In the three-fold division of the Hebrew canon, called the Tanakh, standing for Torah, which is the Law, Nabiim, which is the Prophets and Kethubim, which is the Writings, notice that Daniel is not placed among the Prophets but among the Writings. And I want you to observe two or three other people listed over there, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. These were all seen by the Jews as wise political or governmental administrators rather than prophets; they were skilled at managing kingdoms and that's why Daniel is placed in the Writings and not the Prophets, he was viewed as a wise political administrator.

And you noticed, as we studied the Twelve prophets a different style of writing than what you see in Daniel. The Twelve prophets we studied, books like Joel, Micah, Hosea, Nahum and Habakkuk, all wrote in poetry. The publisher would indent the paragraphs to show us that in the Hebrew this had a poetic rhythm to it. Now Daniel doesn't have that, Daniel is not like the classical prophets who used poetry, he's not poetic, he writes in two other styles; namely narrative and apocalyptic.

As for narrative, what's narrative? That's just telling a story. For example, chapter 1 is the narrative of how Daniel and his friends got down to Babylon and the kind of training they went through and how they came out superior to all the other young men. Chapter 3 is a narrative of what happened to Daniels' three friends when they wouldn't fall down and worship the image of Nebuchadnezzar and chapter 5 is a narrative of why Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. So a lot of the material in Daniel is narrative and that sets him apart from the classical prophets which are typically poetic.

The other style of writing Daniel employs is apocalyptic and let's camp on this one for few minutes. Apocalyptic is just the Greek word for "unveiling" or "revealing" something that was heretofore hidden but now made known. Granted all the prophetic books unveil things about the future but we don't call Joel or Habakkuk or Isaiah apocalyptic books do we? And the reason we don't is because apocalyptic literature has certain characteristics that distinguish it from prophetic literature.

I've already mentioned the first difference between prophetic literature and apocalyptic and that's that apocalyptic is written in prose and not poetry, meaning there's no rhythm; it's just more the way you would talk to someone,

so no poetry. The second characteristic is apocalyptic is highly visionary. The author will see lots of visions and in those visions are very vivid depictions of an unfolding drama and the author will record what he saw unfolding. In the Book of Daniel Nebuchadnezzar has some, Belshazzar has some and Daniel has to interpret those. Daniel has several and angels have to interpret those. The third characteristic of apocalyptic is it's highly symbolic. In the visions you will see all kinds of symbols used to convey characteristics of things. Nebuchadnezzar sees a statue with a head of gold, arms and chest of silver, waist of bronze and legs of iron with feet a mixture of iron and clay. Daniel sees a He-goat with two horns and one growing up larger than the other and a Ram colliding and shattering its horns. These are all symbolic elements and that is a common feature of apocalyptic literature but not prophecy. A fourth characteristic of apocalyptic is angelic interpreters. You'll find as we get into it that the symbols are not left up to you to interpret, angels show up to interpret them for you. And in the cases where they don't show up you still don't have to resort to your peanut brain to figure them out because if you compare it with other Scripture you'll find that in a parallel context somewhere there will be indications on how to interpret the symbols. So we're not going to resort to allegorization to interpret the symbols, we'll let the Scriptures be their own best interpreter. A fifth characteristic of apocalyptic is that it addresses Israel in difficult times. When they're in dire need of God's help then God reveals in this highly visionary format and He does that for a purpose. And this purpose is the sixth and final characteristic of apocalyptic, it's used to give hope to Israel and humility to the nations. Two things, Israel, on one hand, or any human being for that matter, when they face difficult times, they need hope, you can be very scatter brained when you are in a desperate situation. And so it's this kind of literature that captures the minds eye, it really grabs your attention and it's designed to hold your attention. And so God would use apocalyptic literature to give Israel hope, help pull them out of their despondency. On the other hand, as far as the nations are concerned, apocalyptic literature was used to humble them, first of all because it requires a Jewish interpreter to come in and explain what God means, but also because once the interpretation is known (namely that Gentiles are going to be given a period of world dominance over Israel) that they better recognize that God is sovereign over them and gave them that position and so they better not get arrogant with Israel. They better humble themselves. So those are five characteristics of apocalyptic literature over and against just prophecy; apocalyptic is prose not poetry, it's highly visionary,

has lots of symbols, includes angelic interpreters and gives hope for Israel along with a warning against arrogance to the nations.

Now with that said let's make two more observations about apocalyptic. One, observe where the apocalyptic sections of your Bible are. Where are they located with respect to the two testaments? They're slammed at the end of each testament. The OT ends with books like Daniel, Ezekiel and Zechariah and the NT ends with Revelation. What does that show you? God is about to go silent, after the OT for ~400 years and after the NT for 1900 years now. So right when God is about to go silent He speaks apocalyptically. For Israel this generates hope, for the nations it's supposed to generate humility. And two, apocalyptic literature heavily deals with Israel and its covenant program, the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. So it's not dealing with the Church. The Church doesn't have any apocalyptic literature. Obviously Daniel, Ezekiel and Zechariah have nothing to do directly with the Church. But even Revelation, chapters 2-3 are the only two chapters that deal directly with the Church and they're written in narrative, not apocalyptic. The apocalyptic section that follows in Revelation 4-22 deals exclusively with Israel and her covenant program. So a principle to remember when you read apocalyptic literature and especially when you approach the Book of Revelation, is when it shifts to apocalyptic in Rev 4, suddenly the Church is no longer there and the issue is Israel and her covenant program.

Now, a little bit about the languages in Daniel. Daniel is written in two languages. From 1:1-2:4a and 8-12 Daniel writes in Hebrew. But from 2:4b-7:28 Daniel writes in Aramaic. Now that wasn't a problem for the Hebrew people because they were bilingual. Hebrew was their native tongue and Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the day, meaning the international language, the language of commerce. What's the *lingua franca* today? It's English, at least for right now. And that's significant because whatever nation's language is the *lingua franca* is the one who controls the world, controls the ideas that control the world, who has superpower status. And so we have that right now. In Daniel's time Babylon had that so they were the superpower, they controlled the world and everyone had to learn their language. So the Jews knew their native tongue, Hebrew, but they also knew Aramaic because it was the official language of Babylon and all the little nations around Babylon had to learn it too so they could engage in commerce with Babylon.

Now some have taken it that the two languages indicate two authors. But I think it's much better to interpret this as gearing the message for two different audiences. The Hebrew portion is primarily geared to the Jews and that would include chapter 1 and chapters 8-12. The Aramaic portion is geared to the Gentiles and that's chapters 2-7. Now just because these sections are written in two languages doesn't mean they are disjointed, they both share the same basic theme and that is that God is sovereign over all, both Jew and Gentile. In the Hebrew section God's sovereignty is revealed to Israel because even while she's under Gentile kingdoms God is sovereign over those Gentile kingdoms and will ultimately fulfill His covenant program to Israel. In the Aramaic section God's sovereignty is revealed to Gentiles because even though they have sovereignty over Israel it is God who gave them that sovereignty and therefore they should not get arrogant against Israel, their dominion was given by God and can just as easily be taken away. So the theme is the sovereignty of God over all and there are nuances to this theme throughout the book that we'll elaborate as we work our way through.

Now the date of the book is a bone of contention. The traditional date is 605-536BC based on 1:1 and 10:1. But in the 3rd century AD a man named Porphyry claimed it wasn't written until the 2nd century BC. His basic argument was that the details of these kingdoms is too elaborate to have been written in advance. And when we get into some of the details of chapter 11, the battle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, the negotiations, the intermarriages, the conflicts, it is extremely detailed and Porphyry's point was this is far too detailed to have been written in advance, it had to have been written after the fact. So he had a presuppositional bias against supernaturalism. In the 17th century the higher critics resurrected the same type of argument. Always, always they start with a presupposition against any kind of supernaturalism and from that starting point deny the traditional early date of Daniel's book because that just can't happen. And of course, the higher critics added a lot of supporting arguments. I'll just mention a few. One of their arguments is that there are Greek loan words in Daniel and the Greeks didn't come along till 330BC with Alexander the Great so it couldn't have been written until after 330BC. However, the Babylonians did commerce with the Greeks in the time of Daniel and so it's not surprising to find some Greek loan words in Daniel. And further, if it was written after 330BC when Alexander conquered the then known world, then we would

expect a far greater number of Greek words than we actually find. A second argument against the early 6th century date of Daniel is that there are no clear references to Daniel as the author and so it must have been written by a later forger. But Dan 12:4 seems to be direct evidence and the Lord Himself in Matt 24:15 ascribed the book to Daniel. So we're going to go with the Lord on this one. There are other arguments but suffice it to say that they've all been answered sufficiently in various books that deal with Bible difficulties. The basic problem with these people is they come to the text with a closed mind. They're not open minded, they're closed minded, the miraculous is off limits, so when they come to the text they're not trying to read it for what it says and give the guy the benefit of the doubt, they come to it trying to tear it up. So the traditional date of the book is between Dan 1:1 which was 605BC, which we know was the first incursion of Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem and extends to Dan 10:1 which was 536BC, which was the third year of Cyrus the Persian.

Now if you'll look at the two charts I handed out. Chart 1 I'm indebted to Andy Woods for. He included this in his notes on Daniel and got it from his class notes at Dallas Seminary under Charlie Dyer. You'll notice on Chart 1 that the chapters in Daniel are not chronological, so this chart helps you keep track of what kingdom was dominant and what king was ruling in the various chapters of Daniel.

Kingdoms and Kings in Daniel		
Chapter(s) in Daniel	Kingdom	King
1-4	Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar
5	Babylon	Belshazzar
6	Medo-Persia	Darius (Gubaru)
7-8	Babylon	Belshazzar
9	Medo-Persia	Darius (Gubaru)
10-12	Medo-Persia	Cyrus

Chart 1: The chapters in Daniel are not chronological, so this chart helps you keep track of what kingdom was dominant and what king was ruling.

The other chart, Chart 2 gives you Daniel's age when certain events happened. This sheds some light on things. So if you'll keep these charts with you, get a Daniel notebook or something, a three-ring binder you can put

these handouts in, I'm sure as we go forward I'll have other charts to hand out, but these two will help you keep track of *when* we are and who's who.

Daniel's Age		
Chapter(s) in Daniel	Event	Age
1	Taken Exile to Babylon	15
2	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of Metal Statue	17
3	Daniel's 3 Friends in the Fiery Furnace	19-20
4	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of Tree	45-50
5	Belshazzar's Handwriting on Wall	early 80's
6	Daniel in the Lion's Den	c 83
7-8	Daniel's Vision of Animals	mid-60's
9	Daniel's 70 Sevens	early 80's
10-12	Daniel's Dreams of Latter Days	mid-80's

Chart 2: The chapters in Daniel are not chronological, so this chart helps you keep track of Daniel's age when certain events occurred.

As for the purposes of writing we want to look at five purposes and a few of these have really cast some light on Daniel so pay close attention. The first purpose of writing is to reveal God's Program for Gentile Nations, what Jesus calls "the times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24. Both the four metal statue in Dan 2 and the four animals in Dan 7 outline four Gentile kingdoms that will sequentially rule the world; Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. In Dan 8 the He-goat and the Ram reveal more detailed facts about the Gentile kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece. So a major purpose of writing is to reveal God's program for Gentile kingdoms that characterize the times of the Gentiles. By the way, the "times of the Gentiles" is not the same as the "fullness of the Gentiles" in Rom 11. The "times of the Gentiles" refers to a period of history where geopolitical rule or sovereignty is given to Gentile nations and it always relates to Israel. The "fullness of the Gentiles" refers to the number of Gentiles that believe and enter the body of Christ, the Church,

it always relates to the Church. I bring this out to distinguish between Israel and the Church. The times of the Gentiles relates to Israel, the fullness of the Gentiles relates to the Church. The second purpose and related purpose of writing is to humble Gentile rulers. Those Gentile rulers who subjugate Israel during the times of the Gentiles need to recognize that they got their sovereignty from God and that He is sovereign over them. Gentile nations are constantly inclining toward arrogance. So a major purpose of the book is to humble them. A third purpose, and now we turn to Israel, purposes one and two are for Gentile nations. Purposes three, four and five are for Israel. So the third purpose is to reveal God's Program for Israel as it relates to Gentile Nations. Clearly Israel will be subjugated to Gentile nations for four sequential kingdoms. However, in the end Israel will be restored. Israel's covenant program will be fulfilled and Israel will once again be chief of all nations. In the meantime, purpose four, how are they to live under Gentile domination? How should individual Jews live while under national discipline? Can individual Jews receive blessing despite the fact their nation is under discipline for four Gentile kingdoms? One of the great purposes of Daniel is to show that in fact they can. The stories of four men, Daniel, Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael are put forth as examples of how to live outside the land. For example, in Dan 1, when the issue of diet is broached, Daniel shrewdly requests a different diet in order to obey the Mosaic Law Code and because of this he is blessed. In Dan 3 when the decree to worship idols is passed; Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael refuse to violate the Mosaic Law and worship an idol, they put their lives in jeopardy but the Lord saved them. Over and over these four men are put forth as shining examples of how the Jew is to live outside the land under Gentile powers. And if you think about later Jewish generations, like Esther and Mordecai, when they had to stand up against Gentile powers, what examples do you think they were following? They were following their heroes in the faith; Daniel, Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael. And you can tell these men became heroes of the faith to those later generations because when you read the names of those who returned to the land in Nehemiah you find they were naming their kids Daniel and Azariah, they looked to these men as the ones who taught them to live outside the land and be blessed by God. Finally, a fifth purpose of writing is to provide a key to interpreting later revelation in the Olivet Discourse, Matt 24-25 and Revelation 4-22. Daniel is the key to prophetic revelation. If you think about it, it's the only book in the entire Bible that sketches the whole course of world history from the rise of Babylon in 605BC all the way

to the future Millennial Kingdom, everything is included, including where we are today. And so no other book is so broad in its scope and so necessary to understanding the total prophetic picture.

Alright, now, a little bit of historical background. And I'll probably sound like a broken record to those of you who've been here for awhile, but why is Israel going into Exile? Why is Jerusalem going to be destroyed? Nebuchadnezzar is going to make three invasions, 605, 597 and 588-586. On that last invasion he's going to destroy Jerusalem. Why is this happening to Israel? To God's chosen people? Well we've been studying the nine pre-Exilic prophets. Some of them were prophets to the northern kingdom and some to the south because remember, the kingdom divided after the reign of Solomon. So you had these two Jewish kingdoms and the northern kingdom started rebelling against God and God would send her a prophet. Why the prophet? To call the nation to repentance! To warn of discipline if they refused to repent. Always the purpose of discipline is to convict the offender of sin so they'll repent of their sin and if they do God will relieve the discipline. So God sent the prophets to convict the nation, proclaim discipline and this goes for the northern and southern kingdom. The northern kingdom didn't heed the prophets so ultimately they went into Exile in 721BC to the Assyrians. The southern kingdom heeded here and there, there are a few good kings in the south, men like Hezekiah and this enables them to last about 150 years longer, but they also rejected the prophets warnings and so they went into Exile in these three stages to Babylon. So all the truths we're studying are disciplinary truths, they outline how God disciplines Israel.

So turn with me to Deuteronomy 28 to be reminded of how God disciplines. There are two absolutely critical chapters in the OT for understanding the history of Israel and what are they? Lev 26 and Deut 28. Now background. Israel's history goes back long before this to the Abrahamic Covenant which was an unconditional covenant given to Abraham in Gen 12, 13, and founded on blood sacrifice in Gen 15, repeated to Isaac and to Jacob. This covenant is unconditional in that its final fulfillment rests on God's faithfulness. The covenant promised three basic things; a land, a seed and a worldwide blessing. These three aspects were amplified by the Land Covenant in Deuteronomy 29-30, by the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31. So the Abrahamic Covenant stands back of everything in Israel's history.

Now pay close attention here, an unconditional covenant may have conditional blessings. Think about that. An unconditional covenant may include conditional blessings. We see this as early as Genesis 17 where after making a covenant God said that every descendant of Abraham, every male, was to be circumcised. It was an act of obedience, and if the male were not circumcised he was not eligible for the blessings, he was to be cut off from the people. So there were blessings that were conditioned on obedience. The Mosaic Covenant was then added alongside the Abrahamic Covenant, Galatians 3:19, to define the obedience that God expected as a prerequisite to the nation receiving the blessings promised in the Abrahamic Covenant; if you want to be blessed, this is what I expect of you.

And when you come to Deuteronomy 28 you see these conditions. Basically it comes down to what? If you bless me Israel, I will bless you, but if you curse Me I will curse you, meaning obedience yields blessing and disobedience yields cursing. If you want the blessing you have to obey!

Notice Deut 28:1-14 outlines the blessings. Notice verse 1, “Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.”² “All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:” The blessing is conditional and then he goes into it, it’s all material blessing, this isn’t the prosperity gospel but God’s promised blessing if the nation learned obedience.³ “Blessed *shall you be* in the city, and blessed *shall you be* in the country.” Urban and rural blessing. “Blessed *shall be* the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.” It’s all material blessing.

Then come down to verse 15, “But,” signaling the contrast, “But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:” and he begins to sketch the cursings, also in the material department. Verse 16, “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.” Again urban and rural,

meaning you can't escape it! It goes on, there are five degrees of cursing or discipline. In other words, what God was laying in front of them was an option, they could obey and be blessed or they could disobey and be cursed. If they disobeyed then God's procedure was to send them a prophet to call them to repentance and warn of discipline if they didn't repent. If the nation didn't repent then God would send them the first degree of divine discipline. If they still didn't respond to the discipline He'd send the prophet to warn them again, tell them to repent and then if they refused to repent but hardened their heart against Him then He'd increase the discipline, send them the second degree. And it was worse than the first. And this would go on to the third degree, the fourth degree and finally the fifth degree if the nation refused to repent. But anytime in that cycle of discipline, if the nation would repent, God would restore them to blessing.

But come down to verse 47 where God anticipates their disobedience.

“Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; ⁴⁸therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you.” They'll be subjugated to foreign powers. Verse 49, “The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, ⁵⁰a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young.” A military invasion by a foreign army. Verse 52, “It shall besiege you in all your towns,” verse 53, “Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters...during the siege.” The famine will be so bad during the siege that the people would resort to cannibalism. He summarizes it verses 63ff, “It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. ⁶⁴“Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. ⁶⁵“Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. ⁶⁶“So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. ⁶⁷“In the morning you shall

say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!' because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you will see. ⁶⁸"The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships," This is a reversal of the Exodus, they wanted to go back to Egypt, the Exile is going back to Egypt, "you will go back to Egypt in ships by the way about which I spoke to you, 'You will never see it again!' And there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer." Now if that's not a description of Israel for the last 2600 years I don't know what is, they're out there among all the nations, this is God's method of discipline. He started off gently and they didn't repent so He turned up the discipline and they didn't repent and so the intensity increased and He keeps on increasing the intensity until they repent.

Why is Israel going into Exile? Why are Daniel and his friends being taken captive? The nation was disobedient! They'd been through the first four degrees of discipline now God was sending a foreign army. Habakkuk said God was raising up the Babylonians in their day as a rod to discipline Israel. So let's look a moment at the rise of Babylon and that will bring us to Dan 1:1. Assyria was the world power before Babylon came along. The northern kingdom had gone into Exile to Assyria in 721. The southern kingdom was graciously delivered because of the repentance of Hezekiah and that generation. So they get to stick around for awhile longer. But his son Manasseh was a spiritual loser and he led the nation back into disobedience so God started working among the Babylonians. They start their rise about 627 with Nabopolassar, he was Nebuchadnezzar's daddy. In 614 there's tension between Babylon and Assyria, Babylon is making some incursions on Assyrian towns, in 612BC a major shift in world power occurs. The Babylonians invaded Assyria along with some Medes and Scythians and defeated it, this was prophesied by Nahum in great detail and you remember going through the fall of Nineveh in that great prophetic work. Assyria retreated from Nineveh to Haran and tried to re-organize the government but in 610 the Babylonians routed them again. The Assyrians called on the Egyptians to help them stave off the Babylonians so the Pharaoh came up with his army in 609 to join Assyria. On the way Josiah, King of Judah, thought he would get in good with the Babylonians so he tried to stop the Egyptian army. He was killed at Megiddo and Jehoiakim was placed on the throne. The Egyptians went on and joined the Assyrians and faced off against the Babylonians at Haran again, but they were defeated. Assyria passes off

the scene and the Babylonians go head to head with the Egyptians. In 605 Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, is out fighting his battles against the Egyptians and they meet at Carchemish. It's there that the Egyptians were defeated. And while Nebuchadnezzar was pursuing the defeated Egyptians back to the Egyptian border he gets word of his father's death. So Nebuchadnezzar stops pursuing the Egyptians so he can go back to Babylon and be crowned King. As he's passing by Jerusalem he remembers reports of all the gold in the Temple of Jerusalem so he stops and takes Daniel and others captive to Babylon.

That's 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." It was 605BC. We'll deal with one of the Bible difficulties there next week. Verse 2, "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand," notice this was a disciplinary action, Nebuchadnezzar did not take Jehoiakim, God gave Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, this is a disciplinary move on the part of God, "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. 3Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal families and of the nobles," so they were very picky and choosy here about which boys they're going to train, and we'll get into the why and the criteria for selection next week.

But tonight we covered the introductory information. Daniel is not so much a prophet as a wise political ruler and that's why his book is placed among the Writings. He writes narrative and apocalyptic; narrative to tell stories about the faithful Jewish Exiles, apocalyptic to give hope to the nation Israel and humility to the nations. He writes in two languages; the Hebrew portion is geared to the Jewish people, the Aramaic portion is geared to the Gentile nations. The theme that unifies the two portions is that God is sovereign over both Israel and Gentile nations. The Hebrew portion gives hope to Israel by assuring them God is sovereign over the nations. The Aramaic portion gives humility to the Gentile nations by reminding them that God is sovereign over them. And of course, the major purpose of the book is to reveal the times of the Gentiles and how Israel can live during the times of the Gentiles by following the example of Daniel and his three friends, which will ultimately result in the confession and restoration of the Jewish nation.

[Back To The Top](#)

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