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C1226 – August 8, 2012 – Daniel 1:8-12
Principles Of Advancement In The Kingdom Of Man

Returning to Daniel, in Dan 1:1-2 we have the historical setting; it was in the third year of Jehoiakim, according to the Babylonian reckoning of regal years, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded Jerusalem, the year was 605BC. He had been sent by his father Nabopolassar to do battle with Egypt and he had defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and again at Hamath, it was at that time that he was recalled to Babylon to receive the crown because of his father's death. And as he passed by Jerusalem he saw the beautiful temple, it was splendid, when the sun struck it, it appeared like glistening snow, and so he attacked and took the city quite easily. In verse 2 he took some of the articles of the Temple and put them in the house of his god, signifying the supremacy of the gods of Babylon over the God of Israel. This is the first sign of Gentile arrogance over and against Israel and Israel's God. But it's a theme that will grow throughout and characterize the times of the Gentiles. Also, as verse 3 indicates, he brought back some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles. The purpose of this was insurance on one hand, to keep Jehoiakim paying annual tribute out of the Jewish treasury, and on the other hand, to re-indoctrinate them into Babylonianism so they can minister in his kingdom and lead the rest of the Jews to adopt Babylonian culture.

In vv 3-7 you have a selection of young men according to strict criteria, these were 14 and 15 years old. And aren't you glad we didn't have these requirements to get into college; good looking, intelligent, theoretical knowledge and applicational knowledge? If we had we'd have had very few of us admitted into college. I take it Nebuchadnezzar had very high requirements. There seemed to be two groups, some of the sons of Israel and then within that some of the royal family of the nobles. Now it is generally concluded that Daniel was one of the nobles, but I do notice in verse 6, it

doesn't identify Daniel with nobility but it lists him as among the from the sons of Judah, the broader term rather than the narrow term. And "sons of Judah" would be sufficiently broad to include members of the royal family so whether Daniel was actually royalty or not I don't know, but at least he must have met the other requirements, good looking, intelligent, and so forth, things fitting to make a great servant in the king's court.

As Jews who had a totally different worldview, they needed to be re-indoctrinated into the Babylonian worldview so this required them to undergo a period of training; they had to learn the Akkadian language so they could study the books in their libraries; law, math, art, science, architecture, manners, customs, traditions, everything. And this was to be a three year course. Their tuition was paid, their living expenses paid, the king assumed full responsibility for their training so they could serve him. To maximize their progress the king appointed to each a daily ration from his own table, this was the most nutritious food and from the king's wine, this was the highest quality wine. At the end of it training they would be good Babylonian subjects.

Now we don't know how many were included in the group mentioned in verse 3. Our attention is focused on just four. Each of these four was a testimony to the God of Israel, for in their names you find either El (Elohim) or Yah (Yahweh). This would seem to suggest that these four were born into God-honoring homes, because their parents had given them names that showed their allegiance to the God of Israel. But Nebuchadnezzar didn't want these young Jewish men serving in his realm with names that bore testimony to what he now considered to be an inferior God, so on the first day of school they were renamed, and their new names reflected the gods of Babylon. These pagan names you know, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego because of the song but probably without reading carefully chapter 1 you couldn't have told me Daniel's pagan name was Belteshazzar, but they now have these ugly pagan names in contrast to their lovely Hebrew names and this is all part of the king's re-indoctrination program. The lesson to take away, since we live in the times of the Gentiles like Daniel is that the world has an agenda to suppress the biblical worldview and replace it with a cheap imitation. To do this they hijack the instrument of language, which can only be given justification from presupposing the biblical worldview, and use it to re-indoctrinate the people of God into building the kingdom of man. So there is a

world system we live in and this system, while it uses the tools of God, it uses them against God. And if we're not aware that this is the agenda and this is how the game is being played we'll get sucked up in it just like most of these students did.

Today we come to verses 8-21 where we find how these four men fared in the training program, how they advanced in the school, the means of advancement, and the results - how they turned out. In the end we find out that these four had enough early training by their parents to be able to separate themselves in a foreign culture and honor God and because of this they were blessed. So the lesson today is that even while the nation was under discipline, if an individual in the nation trusted the Lord and obeyed the commandments then he would be blessed. And they became examples to follow for future generations of Jews. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are great heroes to later generations of Jews who live in similar circumstances among Gentile nations. So when you get to Esther, for example, you see that the same principles are there, when all the odds are against you, the thing to do is trust and obey.

In verse 8 we have Daniel, a 15 year old, and pay attention to his character. **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.** What happened was the king's menu came to Daniel's attention and he thought long and hard about it, he thought about the food and he thought about the drink. Food and drink were big issues to Jews; they had kosher and non-kosher foods, clean and unclean, the Mosaic Law was very specific and that's the issue here, the Mosaic Law. So here this young man is very sensitive to the menu because he is very sensitive to the Mosaic Law. He had been trained in the Mosaic Law. We don't know if he had a Bible, probably he didn't, he was in Babylonian school now, so those books would have been outlawed, so what he's responding to is the word of God hidden in his heart. So let's take an aside on getting the word of God in our hearts. How does the word of God get in our heart? How did it get in Daniel's heart?

Turn to Deuteronomy 6. Remember, we can tell from his Hebrew name, **Daniel**, meaning "God is my judge," that he had very godly parents. And one

thing a godly parent recognizes is that his number one ministry is to his wife and kids, it's not to some other brat, some other person. Lots of times what happens is a pastor ministers to everyone but his family and then his family goes to pot. That's why they have an acronym for pastor's kids, PK's and everyone knows about PK's, they're brats, and all that signifies is a failure on the pastor's part to recognize that his number one ministry God gave him was his wife and kids, not the congregation, and if he fails in the family he'll fail in the church for one of the elder requirements is that he is successful in the family, that's what qualifies him for the church! Now the godly Jewish parents recognized this and trained their children from knee high to a grasshopper in the word of God, they had several means by which this was accomplished and it was their top priority. For one they had national feasts like Passover and Unleavened Bread which God instituted at the Exodus. This was training on the national level, it was supplemental training, three times a year the whole nation would gather and celebrate these feasts to the Lord. And the feasts were pedagogical devices used to train the nation in who God is and what God had done for them by redeeming them from Egypt. Those things were burned on the mind of the children. But those feasts only came three times a year so you had to have more than that to develop a biblical worldview. So notice the family training regimen in Deut 6:5, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart." Now its imperative the word of God being on your heart, the words put together are ideas, so the point is God's ideas, His ideas are going to be inscribed on your heart. And what do you have to do to get ideas written on your heart? How do you learn how to think? You've got to go over the ideas and over them and over them some more. As they say, repetition is the mother of all knowledge. And verse 7 gives the means by which this was accomplished. The parents would train the children, family training. "You shall teach them diligently to your sons," that's the first thing, teach them, but not just teaching them, teaching them diligently, it doesn't just happen, it takes self discipline on the part of the parent, it's the chief priority in raising children, everything else is nothing compared to this, teach them the word of God, formal Bible study. But it's more than that. As he goes on he shows that it's connected to all of life, this is informal, "and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." So all day, all the time, in the house, outside the house, when you get up, when you lay down, this is your conversation, it's revolving

around the word of God no matter what your topic of discussion, no matter what your environment, no matter what you're doing together as a family, every experience together is a teaching opportunity, and this is how the godly Jewish parents trained their children so thoroughly in the Scriptures. So we'd say they had national training at the annual feasts, formal training in the home informal training in every day life, how to apply the national and formal training to every day life. So their whole life revolved around the word of God, it's a thought pattern that had to be developed so you are trained to habitually respond according to the word of God. This way, notice according to verse 12 you'll be prepared, he says, "watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." See, there's a danger of forgetting. The only way to keep from forgetting is to have it enameled on your heart through years and years of training. Verse 13, "You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. 14You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, 15for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. 16You shall not put the LORD your God to the test," come down to verse 24, "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today."

Now put yourself in Daniel's shoes. His parents trained him nationally by going to the annual feasts, they trained him formally in Bible study and informally in every day life. Now he's ripped away from them, driven 800 miles on foot and imprisoned in a foreign country under a foreign king. The foreign king appoints a menu that is contrary to the Mosaic Law. This law is written on Daniel's heart. Who is Daniel going to fear? He's got a choice here, and boy, that Nebuchadnezzar is big, he just defeated your nation, so who are you going to fear? The LORD or Nebuchadnezzar? That's the battle Daniel was having in his own soul in Daniel 1:8. What does he decide to do? **Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine.** This was a firm decision in the Hebrew. It's a decision that requires some action. He's got the food and the drink to deal with. It was **the king's choice food**, the best food in all of Babylon. But it would defile Daniel. Why? For three reasons. First of all, who prepared the food? Gentiles prepared it. And by that very fact alone the food was unclean. Gentiles were the heathen; they were dirty, so if they touched the food the

food became unclean. Secondly, some of the foods may have been clean like venison and chicken, but some of it would have been ham and you can't mix the clean with the unclean food, that was contrary to the Mosaic Law. And thirdly, whose food was it? The king's food. And since it was the king's food it would have been sacrificed to the Babylonian gods and goddesses before it was served to the king. And this was contrary to Exod 34:15 - you weren't to eat food sacrificed to idols. Now in the king's mind, and this may be the main reason for assigning them this food, when you ate the food sacrificed to the gods that would insure the favor of the gods upon you. So he may have assigned them this food to assign them to the Babylonian religion just like he changed their names to signify loyalty to the Babylonian religion. So for these three reasons Daniel concluded he could not eat this food in good conscience, his conscience said no on three counts; one it was prepared by Gentiles, two, some of it was unclean and three, it had been sacrificed to these gods.

But that's not all, the wine would defile Daniel too. Why? How did wine defile? For one, it was probably also dedicated to the gods in the pagan temples, and for two, it was undiluted with water. The only wine authorized in Israel by the Mosaic Law was diluted with water, and they diluted it in some places 1:3, in other places 1:4 and in some other places as much as 1:10. But to drink unmixed wine was to drink strong drink and that was condemned by the Mosaic Law. So the drink would defile too. Daniel **made up his mind** verse 8 **that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank;** So rather than defile himself he's going to take steps to get a change of menu and what this shows is that Daniel is trusting the Lord and seeking to obey the Lord. And it's noteworthy that a 15 year old started recalling his training as a young boy and was now applying it out in a pagan land and was willing to live with the consequences of his actions, whatever they might be.

So he set in his heart not to defile himself and then he takes action, middle of the verse. **So he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.** Now this was Ashpenaz, we met him last week in verse 3. He was responsible for training these men in all the learning of the Babylonians. And evidently Daniel told him why he was seeking another menu, namely, so he wouldn't **defile himself**. So Daniel would have to explain to Ashpenaz the nature of the defilement. Now in a way this is civil disobedience and Daniel is one of the major players in the

doctrine of civil disobedience along with the Hebrew midwives in the Book of Exodus and the apostles in the Book of Acts. Those three cases are case studies in how to commit civil disobedience. And here you see one of the shrewd ways you can go about this when the government tells you to do something that's against the Lord. One of the strategies is to ask permission to be exempted for religious reasons. You don't have to be a bonehead about it and throw a fit. Just be polite and respectful and ask permission to be exempted for religious reasons. That's against my beliefs. Well why is that against your beliefs. And you just explain to them the problem. So Daniel explained to Ashpenaz why he didn't want to eat the food the king appointed for him. It was because YHWH said that menu was not on the table. And so that's one of the routes we can take when the government tells us to do something against the Lord, simply ask permission, hey, can I get a break here because of my beliefs, but if you can't, beware, there may be consequences for this type of thing. And Daniel was willing to face the consequences.

But what do we notice in verse 9? God honors Daniel's obedient action. God goes to work for Daniel. Daniel honored Him, **Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials.** What happened was Ashpenaz started to look upon Daniel with favor and with compassion unlike all the other students in the school. And it had nothing to do with his hairstyle, it had nothing to do with his personality, it had nothing to do with anything natural, it had everything to do with a miraculous thing God did with this **commander**. So already we see that when we trust and obey the Lord honors that and starts working on our behalf. And in the years to come this will serve as an example for Jews of how to live among the Gentiles as well as for you and for me. And how you don't compromise, you don't say, well, the LORD will understand if I break His commandments, I'm out here in this foreign country and I have no other option than to disobey God and I'm sure God will understand. No, God will not understand. Daniel said I'm going to obey the Lord and because of that the Lord is honoring Daniel in that he's elevating Daniel, he's becoming noteworthy in the eyes of the commander.

But the commander is still hesitant, notice verse 10, **the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king,"** these dictators in the Middle East, they're all tyrants, it's the same story today.

Nebuchadnezzar didn't mess around, if you disobey he'd chop your head off. So he says, **"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? Why should he see you looking unhealthy? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."** So he basically rejects Daniel's first request and most Christians would think, well, God just closed that door, that's not an open door and therefore it's not God's will so I shouldn't pursue that door anymore. But a closed door does not mean it's not God's will, you can't interpret your experience that way, a negative response is not necessarily a closed door, it's not an indicator of God's will. Why not? Because God's will isn't determined by experience, it's determined by the word of God. So since Daniel knows that it's God's will to go through that door because otherwise he'll be disobeying the word of God, he tries another way. So Daniel comes with a second request in verse 11, and this one's a bit different. **But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,** and you can see there that all four of them had decided not to defile themselves; Daniel's the leader, but none of them want to defile themselves. This time Daniel comes to the **overseer**, apparently this man was directly appointed over these four guys which shows you there were a lot of guys in the school and Ashpenaz had a lot of responsibilities so he had to delegate some of it to lesser officials. So Daniel goes to this lesser official and says, verse 12, **Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.** Now again, this would be a form of civil disobedience. Except there are a few differences. First of all, there's nothing stated about defilement. That's not put forth as the reason. This time it's just a test, hey let's do an empirical test. Maybe these fake legs will buy that one. They didn't buy the religious card, let's play the empirical card. Will you please do a ten day experiment? Notice the please, he's very cordial, he doesn't get nasty. The second difference is he requested it of a lesser official, the **overseer** whom Ashpenaz, the superior officer, placed directly over these four young men. And thirdly, the test is not open ended but limited to ten days, so it's not like it's going to be the end of the world, in ten days nothing too bad could happen from eating vegetables and drinking water, but what this means on the flipside is that it's crunch time, now there's only ten days for God to work and make an observable difference in these young men's appearance compared to the other men. So if they are going to look significantly better then it's going

to have to be a miracle of God, food won't naturally make that much difference in that period of time, especially when it's an inferior diet, vegetables and water. So clearly these men trust God is going to do a miracle. And this again will train Jews how to live among Gentile nations, how to obey the Lord and trust Him for the results.

Now the suggested menu here would all be clean foods, no vegetable was outlawed by the Mosaic Law and the word includes grains, so vegetables and grains along with water which was fine to drink. It's kind of a boring diet but he requests it all the same to remain obedient to God's word.

In verse 13 the empirical challenge is laid out, **Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.**" So he respectfully says, you decide, after ten days take a look at us, it'll be empirical, you evaluate and you decide what you want to do, and whatever you want us to do, we'll do. Now underlying that Daniel has entire confidence that God is going to work miraculously to make them appear better than all the others. And it's very interesting coming from a 15 year old. You have to admit, a 15 year old with this kind of tremendous confidence in God is an anomaly today. And His tremendous confidence is not that God can do it *if* He wants to. His tremendous confidence is that God *will* do it because He always blesses those who bless His word.

Verse 14, **So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.** Now this is the **overseer** but the overseer doesn't have the authority to change the menu, he has to get permission to do this, so we can infer that he went to his superior, Ashpenaz, and evidently Asphenaz granted the permission to run this test for ten days. Maybe he thought it would be interesting, I don't know, but this is where we see that God was granting Daniel favor and compassion in the eyes of the commander. And there may be a bit of pragmatism in Ashpenaz's decision because if the plan goes sour and the king finds out he could argue to the king that he never granted this overseer permission to give them that menu, that he was a wild card, and that way he could keep his own head. So with an ace in the hole he endorses the plan.

Verse 15, **At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter, fatter** meaning healthier, they appeared more healthy, probably you could tell they were in better health by the better skin color, the alertness of their eyes and the extra weight, they weren't fat, it's just that they were looking better and stronger and this is clearly a miracle of God because vegetables and water don't do that. So God, here again, and this is the principle you see throughout the narrative, if you honor the Lord by trusting and obeying His word, then He will bless you.

So after ten days they were better and fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. We come to verse 16, **So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink**, in other words the ten days was up, experiment over. They apparently didn't tell the king, that might offend the king, but these guys want a good product, they're going to keep the experiment going. And we can guess that if they saw anything going sour they'd put them right back on the king's choice food and drink, but hey, they're looking better and stronger so they withheld the choice food and wine. They've successfully committed civil disobedience. And they never had to throw a fit, they never had to raise a hand, they just politely proposed a test. And now, on a continual basis, for the remainder of the three years he **kept giving them vegetables**.

Now in verse 17 at the end of the three years we see the final results, **As for these four youths, distinguishing them from all the other youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams**. Now this is interesting because God caused the four to excel in their studies, the natural study had to take place and I'm sure all four of them did their very best, but even doing their very best God gave them a miraculous increase in the areas of **knowledge and intelligence** far above the other students. One of the ways God often works is in conjunction with man's responsibility. So they had to diligently study but God sovereignly granted an unusual advance in **knowledge and intelligence**. The word **knowledge** in the Hebrew refers to "knowledge which is attained through the five senses." The word **intelligence** refers to "the process of thinking through a complex set of thoughts and organize them in a manner in which they can be dealt with wisely." So we would say that they were extremely educated to the point that even if they did not know everything that the Babylonian culture knew,

they could by careful thought figure it out, they understood the Babylonian worldview and they could think through the logical implications and all this in just three years.

Now their **knowledge and intelligence** was in every *branch of literature and wisdom* in Babylonian culture, as is evident in verse 17, they were to study the Babylonian literature in the Babylonian language. So they mastered the books in the Babylonian libraries, which would have included many annals from the Assyrian libraries that they conquered. **And wisdom** refers to skill, skill in the various areas of thought whether it be mathematical thoughts, aviary thoughts, botanical thoughts, marine thoughts, political thoughts, economic thoughts, military thoughts, they were able to master these areas of thought from a Babylonian point of view.

Now what's interesting, and one of the reasons this is pointed out in verse 17 is that while God gave them this superior knowledge and intelligence over all the other students, yet they didn't buy into the system, they understood the Babylonian system and they could think through the logical implications of the system but they did not for a second believe the system. God gave them this unusual advance in understand that pagan system in order to elevate them in that kingdom. So He was blessing them in order to put them in positions of rule in a Gentile kingdom. And that's one of the things you see among the Jews whatever nation they're living in they march right up the ladder, it's one of the anomalies in the world, this radical disproportion of Jews in leadership positions among Gentiles.

Now look at this procedure from the Christians point of view and I think we can get some direction on how to live in a pagan culture. When the Christian student goes on the university campus he should learn the material, learn it inside out, learn how to think through the system being taught and spit it out on the test, ace the classes, get an A++, but while you're doing that, don't buy the system. There's nothing wrong with mastering the pagan worldview, what's wrong is buying into the pagan worldview. So don't be glib about having to sit through these classes that teach pagan doctrine, learn it, learn to see the holes, learn how to refute it, spit it out on the test, get the best grade in the class and then go on. That's what these guys did and God even helped them do it.

But as for **Daniel**, notice verse 17, **Daniel** is peeled away from the other three here, **Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.** Now **visions** you can participate in and interact with because you're awake and most of the visions in the Bible the person who sees the vision gets to participate in the vision. But the dreams, in the dreams you are neutral, you can't participate or interact in them because you're asleep. So Daniel got some of both, but actually the emphasis is not on Daniel having visions and dreams is it? But on Daniel understanding them. Now this contrasts with the knowledge and intelligence God gave all four. That knowledge and intelligence required diligent effort on their part, but understanding visions and dreams is a sheer gift of God, it's a miraculous ability that no matter how hard Daniel tried he could never contribute anything. It was sheerly a gift of God.

Now why are we told this at this time? One reason this ability is lodged in verse 17 is because the Babylonians, like all pagans, had trained experts in interpreting visions and dreams. They believed you could do this and they used certain techniques of divination. We're going to be introduced to these specialists next week. But Daniel, while he read books about how to do it like the Babylonians, it was not a true science, it was a pseudo-science, there are no techniques for interpreting visions and dreams, it's only divine revelation that can do that. So Daniel was given this special gift and through the book the Babylonian specialists fail to interpret the visions and dreams but Daniel succeeds and the reason is because only God can reveal them.

A second reason this is included in verse 17 at this point is to prepare us for chapter 2 because here Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and Daniel is going to be the one who tells him the dream and interprets the dream. So at this point we are alerted to the fact that God blessed Daniel with this ability for his leadership of the three other Jews in trusting the word of God and obeying the Mosaic food laws.

Now verse 18, **Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them,** the period was three years, so the year in verse 18 is 603 or 602BC, if you make notes in your margin you might put the dates down because the chapters are not in chronological order, verse 1 is 605BC, by verse 18 it's 603/602BC, Daniel is probably 17 or 18 years old. At that time **the commander of the officials presented them before**

Nebuchadnezzar. So it's time for the final exam and the king personally administers the exam.

Verse 19, **The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah;** so perhaps hundreds of young men from the various countries the Babylonians conquered and not a single one, the emphasis is on no individual, was even close to the four vegetarians. That's not an endorsement of vegetarianism; it's an endorsement of obedience to the word of God. Obedience brings forth blessing and here we see it. The king talked with each one of them and he examined their fluency in the Akkadian language, he examined their knowledge of the Babylonian worldview, he examined their personal appearance, he may have had attendants help him in the investigation, but in all these things they were far above any of the other students. **So they entered the king's personal service.** They received the top governmental positions, they served personally the king. And the others, well, they probably received positions but none as high as Daniel and his friends. They were at the top of their class and this is one of the great illustrations of God taking care of those who put His will first in their lives.

Verse 20, **As for 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.** Ten times is a Hebrew idiom meaning "many times," they were far better and notice, not far better than their fellow classmates, though they were, but far better **than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm,** those are the native Babylonians, they were a class of academics, so this is the scholars and in just three years they far excelled them. And this is a testimony of the great blessing of God upon His own when they trust Him for the results and obey. Now the **magicians and conjurers** main work involved counseling, counseling in every subject area (whether scientific, governmental, military, etc...) and gave the best advice, but these young men were found far superior.ⁱ And there's just no way this can be done naturally. It's got to be a miraculous work of God and that's what God does when we trust and obey!

Verse 21, **And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.** We don't know how long the other three continued but Daniel continued until 536BC which was **the first year of Cyrus the king,** that's 70 years, the

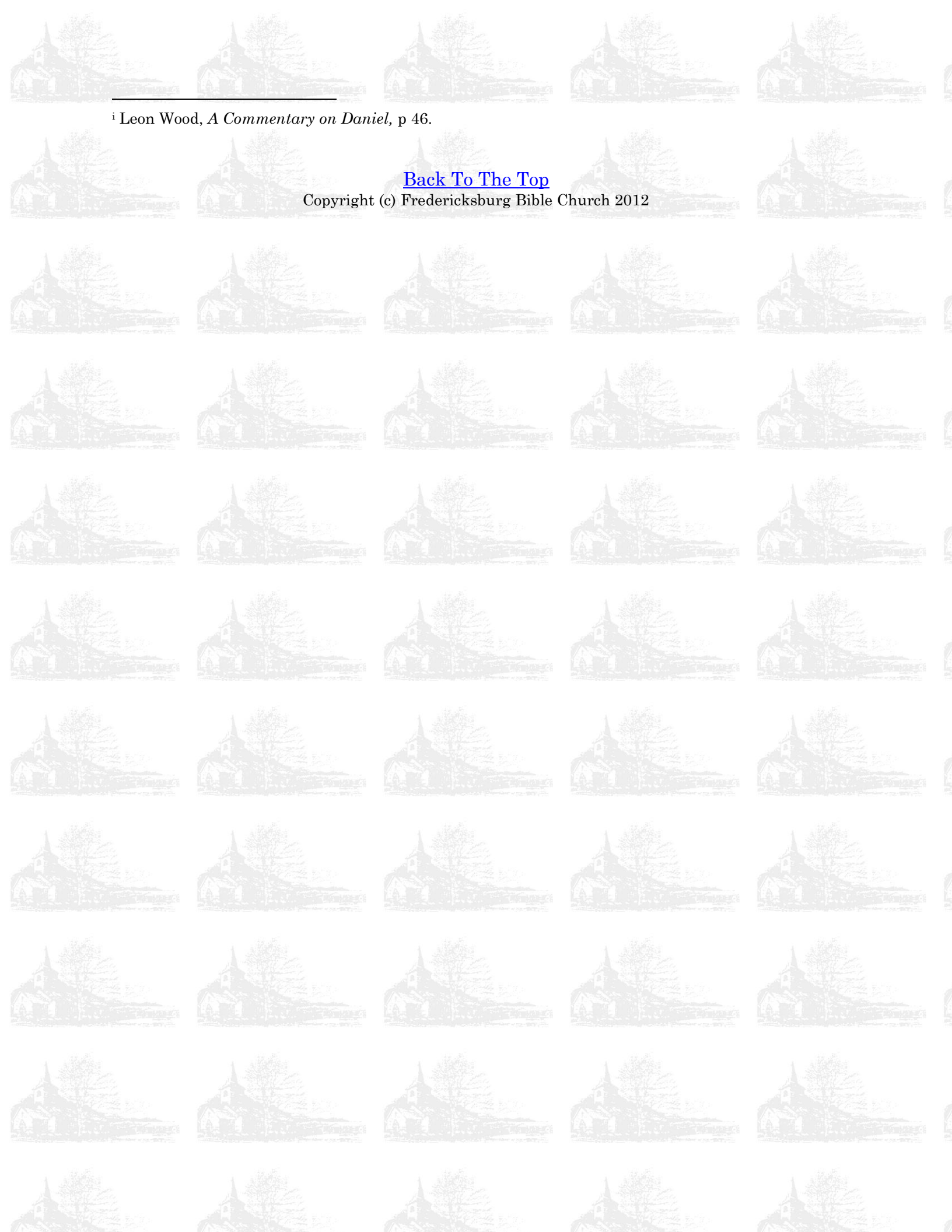
entire Babylonian captivity because **Cyrus** is a Persian king. Cyrus doesn't come on the scene till 536BC, so that's a long time, almost all of Daniel's life, Daniel is going to be in the government until he's in his 80's. As you notice on Chart 5:

Kings and Kingdoms Daniel Continued Under		
Kingdom	King	Regal Years
Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar	605-562BC
Babylon	Evil-Merodach	562-560BC
Babylon	Neriglissar	560-556BC
Babylon	Labashi-Marduk	556BC (3 or 9 months??)
Babylon	Nabonidus/co-rex Belshazzar	555-539/553-539BC
Media-Persia	Darius the Mede	539-537BC
Media-Persia	Cyrus the Persian	536-530BC

Chart 5: The two kingdoms and seven governments that Daniel continued to reign under.

Now you have to have tremendous political skill and adaptability to survive seven administrations and a kingdom shift, you have to be an absolutely indispensable asset. Daniel was a remarkable politician and ruler. And this is one of the reasons that the Jews classified Daniel among the Writings and not among the Prophets. He was a skilled governmental ruler, an outstanding statesman and it's a testimony to what God will do if we honor His word.

So in conclusion, the lesson is that these four men engaged in civil disobedience politely, respectfully in order to obey the Lord and as a result God worked on their behalf to not only grant them favor in the eyes of the commander, but to miraculously advance them to be far superior to every other student in the school and even the native Babylonian scholars. By this they were exalted to the highest positions in the Babylonian kingdom. The lesson for us of course is that as we live within what is now a pagan Gentile nation we should not trust our own devices but trust God's word and obey Him despite what the government might tell us to do. We cannot compromise the truth; we can respectfully and politely commit civil disobedience and if we do we can expect Him advance us at His pleasure and for His names sake.



ⁱ Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, p 46.

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