

1. The first chapter provides the historical setting for the entire book.
2. The first two verses gives us the historical setting to include the first siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. (2 Kings 24:1-2 and 2 Chronicles 36:5-7)
3. Notice in verse 1 that the events begin with the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah.
4. However - this seems to conflict with Jeremiah's statement that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. (Jeremiah 25:1)
5. At least two explanations may be given for this apparent contradiction.
6. The first is a difference between Jewish and Babylonian historical accounting or dating of events.
7. The Jewish calendar began the year in Tishri (September–October) while the Babylonian calendar began in the spring in the month of Nisan (March–April). If Babylonian accounting were used, the year Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem was the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. But if the Jewish accounting were used it was Jehoiakim's third year. Daniel, a Jew, may well have adopted the familiar Jewish calendar.
8. A second explanation is based on the Babylonian method of accounting the dates of a king's reign. The portion of a king's reign that preceded the beginning of a new year in the month Nisan, that is, the year of accession, was called the first year even if it was of short duration.
9. If Jeremiah followed that method of accounting, he counted Jehoiakim's year of accession (which was only part of a full year) as the first year. And if Daniel used the Jewish method of accounting (which did not count the first months of a king's reign before the new year) he then counted only the three full years of Jehoiakim's reign. The year was 605 B.C.
10. The capture of Jerusalem and the first wave of Jewish exiles taken to Babylon (including Daniel and his companions) - were the fulfillment of many warnings from the prophets of the coming disaster because of Judah's sins against God.
11. In verse 2 the word translated "Lord" is not Yahweh but "Lord" translated from Adonai - and this fact is significant.
12. "Owner, ruler, or sovereign" is the meaning of Adonai. By the use of this expression, Daniel was emphasizing the sovereignty of God - which is the dominant theme of the book.
13. It was not Nebuchadnezzar's military might or brilliance that brought about the downfall of Jerusalem, but it was the sovereign will of God. (2 Chronicles 36:5)
14. The land of Shinar is literally "Babylonia." Shinar is used elsewhere in the Old Testament as a designation for Babylon. Shinar, was also the site of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9; cf. 10:10), it was synonymous with opposition to God. (Isaiah 11:11; Zechariah 5:11)
15. The explanation of how Daniel and his companions arrived in Babylon is found in verse 3.

16. Nebuchadnezzar told or commanded Ashpenaz to bring some of the children of Israel (a general designation for the chosen people) to Babylon for training to be servants of the king.
17. It is probable that the term “eunuchs” refers to important servants or officials of the king. The Hebrew word has more than one meaning.
18. Daniel and his friends fit into at least one of the two named categories in verse 3 - most likely both. All four young men were from the tribe of Judah. (Daniel 1:6)
19. This demonstrates at least a partial fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that descendants of Hezekiah would be taken as officials to Babylon. (Isaiah 39:7)
20. The requirements for those selected to be brought to Babylon are itemized in verse 4-5.
21. According to the Hebrew word used here, these young men were adolescents approximately fifteen years of age.
22. In summary of verse 4, their total physical, personal, and intellectual capacities as well as their cultural background were factors in the choice.
23. Their training was also to separate them from their previous Jewish culture and teach them the literature and language of the Babylonians (Chaldeans).
24. The phrase “among these” in verse 6 indicates that more young men were taken to Babylon than the four from Judah. Nebuchadnezzar sought to gather the best minds in the empire to serve in his court.
25. The name Daniel means “God is my judge,” but it was changed to Belteshazzar or “Bel protect his life.” Hananiah means “the Lord shows grace,” but his new name, Shadrach, means “command of Aku” (the moon-god). Mishael means “Who is like God?” and the new name, “Meshach,” means “Who is as Aku is?” Azariah means “The Lord is my help,” but “Abednego” means “Servant of Nebo/Nego.”
26. The name of the true and living God was replaced by the names of the false gods of Babylon in verse 7.