



The Book of Daniel #1

by Rich Glasgow

Ron: Tonight we begin a study of the Book of Daniel. This is a pivotal book that covers the time of the Babylonian Captivity. 2 Chronicles 36, 17 through 20:

2 Chronicles 36

NIV

¹⁷ He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁸ He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials.

¹⁹ They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

²⁰ He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

Daniel and his three friends were among those who were taken to Babylon. I'm Ronald Dart. Now let's join Rich Glasgow as he presents part one of his study on the Book of Daniel.

Rich: Hello everyone, I'm Rich Glasgow and it's great to be back in the studio at the world headquarters of Christian Educational Ministries, right here in Whitehouse, Texas. Thank you, Ron, for that introduction. Ron Dart's longtime announcer, Gary Gibbons (who *is* the voice of East Texas), is on the other side of the glass doing what he does so well. Can you say, "Hi", to everyone, Gary?

Gary: Hi, everybody. So glad you could join us.

Rich: Thank you, Gary, and thanks for all you do—and now you know why he's called the voice of East Texas. Gary is the technical genius behind these Bible studies, and we're very fortunate to have his studio right here in the CEM building. Well, we're all here, and I think *we're* ready to go, and you all know where *you* are, so let's get started. Tonight, like Ron said, we're going to begin a series on the Book of Daniel. And we're going to get going right after this short break. Go grab some snacks and hurry back.

This book isn't all that long—it only has 12 chapters—but it's *packed* with intrigue; acts of courage and bravery, conviction, courtesy, and perseverance; and it even gives us a peek into the spirit world. Daniel was an *amazing* young man. He was *special*, and we're going to see what made him so special. Daniel stood out. He was highly regarded because of his wisdom, insight, and natural leadership ability. And his three friends—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—they were special, too. They shared many of the same characteristics as Daniel. They were all intelligent and good-looking, and they were being groomed to be leaders in Jerusalem. They were the up-and-comers—the future pillars in Judah's hierarchy. All of them were from nobility in Judah, and maybe even descendants of David. They were getting the best education available in Jerusalem, and they were about to be getting the best education *all of Babylon* had to offer. But first, they had to be taken captive.

We're told early on in the first chapter of Daniel that, quote:

Daniel 1

NIV

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—

⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

Okay, that's the New International Version, and for the most part that's what I'll be using throughout this study, but the King James version and some other translations describe Ashpenaz as "the master of his eunuchs" and we'll talk more about this when we get into chapter one. Most commentaries agree that Daniel was probably only 14 or 15 years old when he and his friends were taken captive. Still, at that young age they exhibited the sterling characteristics that were so desirable to Nebuchadnezzar. What they went through during the violent overthrow of Jerusalem isn't recorded. Daniel writes about these events in a very matter-of-fact way, but it's obvious they witnessed the *bloody invasion* of Babylon's armies and experienced first-hand the partial destruction of the city. It must've been *terrifying* for these boys. They'd never experienced war before. They'd never experienced *anything* like this before. They had to have been well-aware of the captivity and destruction of the northern house of Israel, which occurred 100 or so years earlier, but this was different. Their homes and schools were being destroyed. People were being slaughtered and buildings were being torched right before their eyes. Death and bedlam had to have been all around them. When the soldiers ransacked the temple and gathered the nobility together, they didn't know what to expect. They didn't know if they'd be murdered, tortured, thrown in prison, or just what would happen. They were in the middle of an indefensible, bloody invasion, and the people of Jerusalem were apparently helpless.

I think the Book of Daniel is one of the most fascinating books of the Bible, and I hope it's going to be an interesting and compelling study for everybody. Daniel isn't a very lengthy book (as I mentioned) like the other major prophets, but it's one of the most important prophetic books of the Bible. And it's the last of the prophetic books to be written. The Hebrew Old Testament—which is comprised of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—place the Book of Daniel not among the books of prophecy, but rather include it in the Writings. They did recognize it as being a prophetic book, but they thought of it as being different than the other prophetic books, and they thought it was a better characterization if it were going to be among the Writings. It's quite clear, though, that Daniel was considered to *be* a prophet by none other than Jesus Christ, who said this about him in Matthew 24:15, quote:

Matthew 24

NIV

¹⁵“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

And that's not the entire thought, but that just tells you that Jesus recognized Daniel as a prophet. So if *Jesus* considered Daniel to be a prophet then he was a prophet. And Daniel was highly-esteemed, even during his own lifetime. Daniel is mentioned twice in the Book of Ezekiel, and both mentions are direct quotes by Jehovah. The first quote refers to his righteousness, in Ezekiel 14, verses 13 and 14, where it says this:

Ezekiel 14

NIV

¹³ “Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals,

¹⁴ even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

In another Ezekiel quote, Jehovah referred to Daniel’s wisdom—Ezekiel 28, verses 2 and 3:

Ezekiel 28

NIV

² “Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

‘In the pride of your heart
you say, ‘I am a god;
I sit on the throne of a god
in the heart of the seas.’

But you are a mere mortal and not a god,
though you think you are as wise as a god.

³ Are you wiser than Daniel?
Is no secret hidden from you?’”

So it’s clear the Jehovah was thoroughly pleased with Daniel. How great would it be to have our sovereign Lord say those laudatory things about you and me? Ezekiel and Daniel were contemporaries, and Ezekiel was taken captive into Babylon, as well. It would have been pretty fascinating to have been able to listen in on some of those conversations, don’t you think? Daniel wrote this book in his old age, at the end of the captivity, which would have been about 70 years or so after he and his friends had been taken captive. I think the beginning of the book would have been much more explicit had he written about the capture and the Babylonian invasion shortly after it occurred or while it was occurring. As it is, he doesn’t tell us very much about the events surrounding that first conquest of Jerusalem in 606–604 BC. And there were a total of three Babylonian invasions—and the dates vary but Daniel and his friends were taken captive during the *first* conquest by Nebuchadnezzar. We don’t know what happened to his family or friends that he had to leave behind. He doesn’t *tell* us what happened to them. He doesn’t tell us much of anything about the logistics of their capture or the ruthlessness of what must have been a *ferocious* military attack on the city. Nor does Daniel give us any details about the 900-mile trek to Babylon or about the captives in Babylon—how they fared or what the living conditions were like. Apparently, Daniel didn’t think any of that information was germane to his writings. 70 years had passed and, at this point his life, maybe he figured that the details of the invasion was just water under the bridge. Like so many events and stories throughout the Bible, we always want *more details* and we wish the writers would have filled us in with more information.

But Daniel *did* think it was important to show how God worked with his people and how he intervened for them even during times of chastisement in captivity. And in that respect, the Book of Daniel resembles the Book of Esther. Both books exemplify God’s love and concern for his people in times of trouble and great despair.

The Book of Daniel is divided into three parts. The first part is the brief introduction to Daniel and his but three friends in chapter one. The second part shows the key tests of character of Daniel and his friends and how God miraculously intervened on their behalf. Daniel’s dream-interpretation skills become known, but he is quick to give God the credit. The third part contains the major prophecies of the world-ruling empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. And they will take us right up to the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of his kingdom here on earth. These prophecies in Daniel are the keys to understanding the Olivet Prophecy in Matthew 24 and 25, as well as much of the Book of Revelation...but more about those prophecies in the studies to come.

Because Daniel is such a significant book, historically and prophetically, and because of the fact that it covers the 70-year duration of the Babylonian Captivity, it really behooves us to take a look at what led up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the 70-year Babylonian Captivity. So, as we review the events

leading up to the captivity, try to keep in mind what's going on in *our own* country. After all, these things were recorded *for us* so that we might learn from them and not repeat the sins that led *them* into captivity.

Okay, the northern ten tribes of Israel had been destroyed, scattered, and taken captive by the Assyrians around 722 BC, or about 117 years prior to Daniel's captivity. Prior to the Babylonian Empire, it was the Assyrians who dominated the ancient Near East. And when they invaded the northern house of Israel, they were at the *peak* of their size and power. Ahaz was the king in Judah just prior to the destruction of the house of Israel. And at the time, Judah was being *attacked* by Israel, so Judah became a vassal of Assyria in order to be protected from the northern ten tribes. So Judah paid tribute—or protection money, as it were—to Assyria so they'd be safe from Israel. If you want to follow along in your Bible, go to 2 Kings, chapter 16, and let's read a little bit about King Ahaz. Let's start in verse two of 2 Kings 16:

2 Kings 16

NIV

² Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God.

³ He followed the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, engaging in the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

Okay, let me just interject here what Barnes's commentary says about this, quote:

Ahaz was the worst of all the kings of Judah. He imitated the worst of the Israelite kings - Ahab and Ahaziah — by a re-introduction of the Baal worship, which had been rooted out of Israel by Jehu and out of Judah by Jehoiada.

[...] Ahaz adopted the Moloch worship of the Ammonites and Moabites (2 Kings 3:27; Micah 6:7), and sacrificed at least one son, probably his firstborn, according to the horrid rites of those nations, and the Canaanite tribes (Deuteronomy 12:31; Psalm 106:37-38). Hereto, apparently, the Jews had been guiltless of this abomination. They had been warned against it by Moses (marginal reference; Deuteronomy 18:10); and if (as some think) they had practiced it in the wilderness (Ezekiel 20:26; Amos 5:26), the sin must have been rare and exceptional; from the date of their entrance into the promised land they had wholly put it away.

Albert Barnes' - Notes on the Bible

In other words, it was a nonexistent sin, it wasn't happening.

Now, however, it became so frequent (compare 2 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 21:6) as to meet with the strongest protest from Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jeremiah 7:31-32; Jeremiah 19:2-6; Jeremiah 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20; Ezekiel 20:26; Ezekiel 23:37, etc.)

Albert Barnes - Notes on the Bible

2 Kings 16

NIV

⁴ He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

⁵ Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, but they could not overpower him.

[...]

⁷ Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, “I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me.”

⁸ And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace and sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria.

So what Ahaz did here was dip into the Temple treasuries and pay protection money to the king of Assyria. This wouldn't have been at all pleasing to God, because it *completely bypassed* God. God would have protected them if they would have been rightly worshiping him, but they forsook God and worshiped Baal and Molech, instead. So they looked to the evil Assyrians for help. Verse nine:

2 Kings 16

NIV

⁹ The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death.

This short, little verse—2 Kings 16:9—briefly describes what may have been the beginning of the destruction and captivity of the house of Israel, the northern ten tribes. So King Ahaz died, and his son Hezekiah became king of Judah. And Hezekiah was one of the few *good* kings that reigned in Judah. Hezekiah may have learned that the ways of his father Ahaz were not the *least bit* pleasing to God, and maybe he heeded the good counsel of Isaiah (who was in Jerusalem at that time), and maybe he was becoming aware of the impending punishment upon the house of Israel because of their flagrant disobedience to God for so many years. It wouldn't be long before the Assyrians wreaked havoc on those northern tribes, and it's highly probable Hezekiah's spies and runners were keeping the king posted on what was happening up north. The account of King Hezekiah is found in 2 Kings 18 and 19. Let's go there. 2 Kings 18, verse one:

2 Kings 18

NIV

¹ In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

Hoshea was the last king of Israel and reigned nine years. So, at this point, Israel had about six years left before they're decimated and scattered. Verse two:

2 Kings 18

NIV

² He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah.

³ He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

⁴ He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)

Pretty often, we read about the “Asherah poles” when it comes to Baal worship. And because the Bible is more or less a G-rated book, it never really explains what an Asherah pole is. Basically, Baal worship revolved around illicit sex, and the Asherah pole was nothing more than a phallic symbol, and that symbol has become part of architectural design throughout the ages in the in the form of various obelisks—even on our modern-day church buildings. Here's something that might be interesting to do: if your church building has a steeple, ask your minister what the significance of that steeple is and where does it

fit in Christian worship. What does it even have to do with Christian worship? It's something to think about. Now verse five:

2 Kings 18

NIV

⁵ Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.

⁶ He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses.

⁷ And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

So Hezekiah refused to pay tribute or protection money to Assyria, unlike his father Ahaz. Hezekiah trusted in God for protection, and rightly so. Okay, now notice the next four verses. The destruction and captivity of the house of Israel is underway, and it's somewhere around 723 BC, give or take a couple of years. Verse nine:

2 Kings 18

NIV

⁹ In King Hezekiah's fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it.

¹⁰ At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured in Hezekiah's sixth year, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel.

¹¹ The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in towns of the Medes.

So why is this happening? Verse twelve:

2 Kings 18

NIV

¹² This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant—all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.

Okay, this next verse begins telling of the events that began ten years later, in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign. So there's a space of ten years between verse 12 and verse 13. Now, the remainder of this chapter and all of chapter 19 is *really fascinating*, and it's excellent reading, but most of the story doesn't really have much to do with the events leading up to the Book of Daniel and the Babylonian Captivity. But these chapters illustrate the tremendous scope and power of the Assyrian Empire before, during, and after they took the northern ten tribes captive. The Assyrians utilized ferocity and *unspeakable cruelty* as a method of terrorizing their enemies. It was said that some cities opted to *kill themselves* rather than face the ruthless Assyrians. The Assyrians dominated that part of the world until Babylon destroyed them shortly before Judah was taken captive. I mention this because, when it came to cataloging the world-ruling empires in the Book of Daniel, the Assyrians didn't even get an honorable mention (or dishonorable mention, as the case may be). Still, they were an intimidating force to be reckoned with—as King Hezekiah came to find out in the remaining verses of 2 Kings 18 and 19. (And read that sometime, when you get a chance.)

A portion of chapter 20 of 2 Kings is pertinent to the Babylonian Captivity, and I think we should read it. So let's go to 2 Kings 20, verse 12. And this is right after Hezekiah had been healed of his fatal illness, and God granted him 15 additional years. 2 Kings 20, verse 12:

2 Kings 20

NIV

¹² At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness.

¹³ Hezekiah received the envoys and showed them all that was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine olive oil—his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?"

"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came from Babylon."

¹⁵ The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD:

¹⁷ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD.

¹⁸ And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

¹⁹ "The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?"

Huh? Is that the kind of response you would expect after hearing what Isaiah had to say? Think of it—Isaiah just told him his palace would be *ransacked*, everything would be pillaged, and his own flesh and blood would be taken away to Babylon and they would be made eunuchs. That would be *horrific* news, and maybe he *was* horrified but didn't really know how to deal with that information. I guess we could give him the benefit of the doubt. He may have just been so *ecstatic* from being healed and promised 15 more years that he couldn't relate in any way to what Isaiah had just told him. I don't know. Verse 20:

2 Kings 20

NIV

²⁰ As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

This tunnel refers to what is called "Hezekiah's Tunnel", interestingly enough, and it's under the City of David—just a few hundred yards south of the southern wall of the Temple Mount. It was built as an aqueduct and connected the Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam, and it enabled the city to have a water source in case an invading army tried to barricade the city. Verse 21:

2 Kings 20

NIV

²¹ Hezekiah rested with his ancestors. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

So this prophecy that Isaiah told to King Hezekiah happened in about 714 or 713 BC, which was a little more than 100 years before the first invasion of Judah in 604 BC. God added 15 years to Hezekiah's life, and he died in about 697 BC. So now Manasseh is king of Judah, and we're about 100 years away from the first captivity. And this might be a good place to take a short break, and we'll be right back.

Okay. Hezekiah's son Manasseh becomes king, and it's important we see what Manasseh was like—all he did and the role he played in Judah's future. Let's continue on in 2 Kings 21 and verse one:

2 Kings 21

¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah.

² He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

³ He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them.

⁴ He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name."

⁵ In the two courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts.

⁶ He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

⁷ He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple, of which the LORD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever.

⁸ I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their ancestors, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them."

⁹ But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

¹⁰ The LORD said through his servants the prophets:

¹¹ "Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols.

¹² Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle.

¹³ I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

¹⁴ I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and give them into the hands of enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their enemies;

¹⁵ they have done evil in my eyes and have aroused my anger from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until this day."

¹⁶ Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end—besides the sin that he had caused Judah to commit, so that they did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

The "innocent blood" described here must have run the gamut from children sacrificed to Molech, to the murder of the prophets and others who upheld God's law. Manasseh was among the *bloodiest* of Judah's kings. The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown commentary says this about King Manasseh:

Not content with the patronage and the practice of idolatrous abomination, he was a cruel persecutor of all who did not conform. The land was deluged with the blood of good men; among whom it is traditionally said Isaiah suffered a horrid death, by being sawn asunder.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown - Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible

Hebrews 11 says this about the bloodshed—verse 37 of Hebrews 11:

Hebrews 11

NIV

²⁷ They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—
³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.
³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised,
⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

So Manasseh finally died after reigning 55 years, then his son Amon became king. Now pick up in verse 19 of 2 Kings 21:

2 Kings 21

NIV

¹⁹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was from Jotbah.
²⁰ He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done.
²¹ He followed completely the ways of his father, worshiping the idols his father had worshiped, and bowing down to them.
²² He forsook the Lord, the God of his ancestors, and did not walk in obedience to him.

And all this evil is accruing in Judah; God is incredibly patient—hoping the Judah would repent and seek him once again. Well. Amon didn't last too long. After two years:

2 Kings 21

NIV

²³ Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated the king in his palace.

And that's probably a good place to wrap up this evening. Next week we'll take up after Amon and we'll see what happened after he was assassinated and Josiah becomes king. So we'll say, "Goodnight", for tonight and take up again next week.

Christian Educational Ministries

P.O. Box 560 ❖ Whitehouse, Texas 75791

Phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44 ❖ Fax: (903) 839-9311

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