

CONCERNING THE WAY

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LESSON 40: PROPHECY SERIES — THE BOOK OF DANIEL



No other book in God's Word has been attacked more than the book of Daniel. Daniel represents the greatest offense of the Word of God to modern man. And for that reason the book of Daniel must be crushed by the critics of Christianity, for if the book of Daniel is left to stand then the case against Christianity falls to the ground. Therefore the most vehement hatred has been vented against this book in academic circles. It is this book that has borne the brunt of liberal attacks over the centuries.

Not only can Daniel easily be defended but it can be shown that this book disproves the presupposition of liberal theology. The reasons why it offends so many people and draws so many attacks is basically one simple fact, and that is there's no other place in Scripture where prophecy is so clear and so detailed and has already been so completely fulfilled, that the argument of the book of Daniel shows the existence of a supernatural God, revealing Himself clearly and distinctly to man centuries before an event, and that prophecy coming to 100% fulfillment. There are obviously many unfulfilled prophecies in the book of Daniel but there are already fulfilled ones that are deeply offensive to the anti-supernaturalists. **People who attack Daniel hate the concept of a personal infinite God who speaks to His creatures.**

There are no intellectually acceptable reasons why this book should not be considered as authoritative as any other book in the canon of Scripture. The only reasons given follow from an anti-supernatural bias at the starting point, presupposing that miracles can't be, that God cannot verbally reveal Himself, therefore Daniel cannot be what it claims to be, is the argument of modern higher criticism.

Daniel has had an impact on the thinking of the non-Christian world. As we will show as we go through the book of Daniel, the mere existence of this one man giving testimony to the sovereign Biblical God in the midst of the pagan culture, led to a disintegration of polytheism in the Near East in the area of the sixth century. In the sixth century strange things began to happen across the face of the earth. In that century some six world religions began; you can go through the comparative religions and count them. There's Zoroastrianism, the Hindus had their Reformation, Buddhism, Judaism in its legalistic form, the philosophy of Greece, all these movements began in the sixth century.

And yet very few people today ever bother to even ask the question, why was it that we can have centuries upon centuries of no new religions but then suddenly, as if someone took the cover off the pot of boiling water, we have a multiplication of new religions, all basically the same in structure, rationalist, beginning in the sixth century? Who lived in the sixth century that might have influenced this tremendous shift in the world intellectual climate? One strong candidate is the young man, Daniel and his interactions with the high influential people of Babylonian society.

But Daniel not only had an influence in the ancient world of thought, Daniel has had an influence in the modern world of thought. Daniel, according to R. G. Collingwood in his book, *Idea of History*, was the basis from which Hegel obtained his four kingdoms. Hegel and his philosophy held to the concept that there were four kingdoms in man's history, the Oriental Kingdom, the Kingdom of Greece, the Kingdom of Rome and the Kingdom of Germany, and out of those four kingdoms Hegel explained the ideal spirit behind history. And Hegel in turn sowed seeds into the mind of a man by the name of Karl Marx and his associates. And so we have an interesting situation. It turns out that one of the opponents of Christianity today, communism, attains its very philosophy from Christianity. The concept of historical progress toward an ultimate kingdom is a concept the communists have stolen from the Bible. And the place where they got it, via Marx, via Hegel, is this book.

Let's go to the first problem: the dating of the book of Daniel. This is a problem that liberals will throw against you, if you've taken religion courses you will hear about this. It's a quite simple argument to handle; if you know what the argument is you can deal with it.

It starts from the concept of the Hebrew Bible. The Old Testament was written over many centuries in Hebrew. And this Hebrew canon was divided into three parts. The first part is called the Torah, or the Law. That consists of the first five books, sometimes called the Pentateuch, the word "five." This is considered the basis of the Old Testament; everything is built on the Torah. The word "Torah" means instruction. The second part of the Hebrew canon is called the Nabiiim, and this translated means the prophets. The third part is the Kethubim, and it means the writings.

And here's the problem posed by the book of Daniel. Which of those three would you guess Daniel would be listed under? Keep in mind that the Old Testament Hebrew is not in the same order as your English Bible. When the King James translators translated they didn't follow the order of books of the Old Testament Hebrew, they followed the order of the books in the Septuagint or the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

You would expect that the book of Daniel would be in the second part, the prophets. The second part includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea; etc.; it includes these men so clearly defined in Scripture as prophets. Now if there's one book in Scripture that is known for its prophecy it's the book of Daniel, but in the Hebrew Bible Daniel is not in the Prophets. Daniel is in the Writings. And so the critics have said aha, that proves that Daniel was a recent writing.

Now here's why they draw that conclusion. The liberal argues that first you had the Torah, these books were written down and when they were finished that section of the canon was finished. Then in time we have the development of the Prophets, they were written down, the last of the Prophets is Malachi which is the last book in your Bible, written about 400 BC. And when Malachi was finished then the second part of the canon was finished and closed. Then they argue came the Writings, and Daniel was written too late to make the second part of the Old Testament. Now if the second part of the canon closed at 400 BC and Daniel was written this side of 400 BC it's obviously a forgery because the book claims to be written by a Daniel who lived during the days of the Babylonian Empire. The Babylonian Empire had long since passed off the scene by 400 BC. So, say the critics, Daniel is a late book. Here's our response to that argument. Watch how it's circular. It closes back on itself. The argument starts out saying that Daniel has to be late because its prophecies are too exact to be real, thus Daniel must have been written after these prophecies were fulfilled. Therefore Daniel must have been written in the vicinity of 200 BC or 165 BC, the time of the Maccabean Revolt.

So the first step of the liberal argument is that Daniel has to be late because the prophecy can't be real. Notice that assumes that prophecies can't exist. It has no basis in fact and as we go on through the text I'll show you that, in fact, Daniel must have been written before 165 because we have a scroll of Daniel found in the Dead Sea that dates before 165 BC. If that's the case, then obviously Daniel had to have been written before the Maccabean Revolt.

The second step is that the canon represents three periods of history of writing, namely that the three sections of the Bible aren't topically arranged, they are chronologically arranged. And this is completely an assumption, just like the first one. It's all grounded on their theological presupposition which is dishonest to start with, it has no basis in fact.

We argue that Daniel's position in the canon is a result, not of chronological development but it's the result of topical organization. The Writings section of the Bible also include the Psalms of David, and these Psalms are written centuries before, so you can't argue that the third part of the canon was written late. The third part of the canon was collected under a topical system.

Now what topical system? Basically here's the point. There were three subject areas in the Old Testament education. Some of these overlap but there are the priest, the prophet, and the wise men. The priests were the Levites who were ordained to help worship and teach the Law, so the first third of the Bible, the Torah, is the section used by the priests, and we explain the first part of the Bible not as the earliest writings, though in this case they happened to be. The Torah was what the priests taught the people. The Torah included the divine viewpoint of economics, of war, of justice, of capital punishment and so on.

The Prophets section is the work of the Prophets, and they are the ones who added to the Torah; the Torah was the base, the Prophets showed where the Torah was being amended, changed, updated or applied to later history. And so

the Prophets were gathered together in a second set of writings, all by topic, not by time.

Here's an important point to understanding Daniel. The chief purpose of Daniel is not prophecy; if it were it would be in the second part of the Hebrew canon. So obviously there's another reason for Daniel other than prophecy. Prophecy is obviously there, but that's not the chief purpose of the book.

Daniel is in the Writings which were the product of the wise men. The wise men were men who would be wise in skill and living. For example, the Psalms were the writings of the composers of the Hebrew culture. The wise men were the creators of Hebrew culture. They were the ones that took the Word of God out into every area of life and created: the poets, the musicians, the literary people, they were the wise men. So the Psalms represent the songs of the nation. The book of Proverbs represents wisdom in the daily details of life and running a business, a marriage, and running a nation. The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom. The Song of Songs, dealing with sex and marriage, is included in the Writings as a repository of wisdom and skill.

And so Daniel is included, not with the prophets; but with the writings of the wise men. He is writing in order to give skill in living to believers. It is not primarily a book of prophecy; it is a book of wisdom.

Daniel was a young man who fought his way through the most concentrated dose of human viewpoint a believer had ever seen up until that time. Remember all the other heroes of the faith were men who lived inside the kingdom of God, on Jewish soil, under the priests and the prophets. They had their apostasy but they had the temple to go to. They had idolatry but they always had the Torah to come back to. Daniel was all alone; he had no priest or prophet to cry on his shoulder. Daniel lived in a world of complete darkness and he came out to be a shining example.

The book of Daniel is written to give wisdom to us who live in Satan's world. How are we to be successful in coping, without compromise, in a human viewpoint type culture? Daniel is a wisdom book for that reason. Daniel was a model to the Jewish believers living in foreign countries from the time it was written up to the current day, and he is a model for us as church age believers living in enemy territory.

That's the first critical problem, the first point of attack on Daniel. Here are some other arguments that prove that Daniel is historic and written at the time it claims:

- Another reason Daniel is not included in the Prophets section is because he was not called to be a prophet in the traditional way, he held a secular position in the Babylonian government.
- Jesus validates Daniel, confirms that it really was Daniel that wrote the book, and calls him a prophet. Matthew 24:15
- Daniel was known by Ezekiel. Ezekiel 14:14,20 We don't know how much contact they had. Chapter 28:3 also. So Daniel was well known and well regarded as a man of God at a young age. Ezekiel ministered from around 593-560 BC, Daniel ministered from 605 BC to 536 BC, when the 70 yr captivity was ended.
- The book of 1 Maccabees, written around 175 BC, mentions Daniel. If Daniel was written at that time, it is doubtful that Maccabees would mention Daniel, that was normally not done.
- It's doubtful that the Jews living in Palestine during the Maccabean period would have accepted the book of Daniel "hot off the press". Most books of the OT took some time to prove and be accepted by the rabbis and the Jewish community.
- 6th century Aramaic is used from 2:4-7:28, not 2nd century Aramaic, this is well accepted. Just like you can tell a big difference between 17th century English and 21st century English. This marks Daniel as an older book. The Hebrew in Daniel is also seen as the older style of Hebrew from the time of Ezekiel. There are also three Greek words in Daniel, and these words are from the Greek during the period of the poet Homer in the 8th century. There are also Persian words in Daniel dating to the 6th century.
- Daniel is translated in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures at around 300 BC

by 70 rabbis), because Greece was the dominant power of the period (Alexander the Great). Daniel is in the Septuagint, so it couldn't have been written in 167 BC.

Historic confirmation of Daniel

- The Greek historian Xenophon confirms Belshazzar died during the invasion of the Medes. (Skeptics deny the existence of Belshazzar) Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.
- In general, Babylonian cuneiform tablets confirm the accuracy of Belshazzar and Daniel chapter 5. Some of these findings are pretty new, so the liberals really can't say this any more.
- These cuneiform tablets confirm the Jews were in Babylon during that period
- The Judean king Jehoiakim is mentioned as a captive (in the tablets), and was free to move about the city of Babylon around 592 BC, later cast into prison.
- Though not mentioned in Daniel, King Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, ruled around 565 BC, and King Nebonitus 565-536 BC, both mentioned in Babylonian tablets. Meradoc is mentioned in 2 Kings 25,27. Nebonitus co-reigned with Belshazzar as the last rulers of Babylon, before Babylon fell under Darius the Mede.

One further point; before we can start verse 1 we have to define the type of literature we're dealing with. This may be a new word to you, here it is: **apocalyptic**. That's the word that defines the kind of literature that Daniel is—apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature is included in the overall sense of prophecy but it's a special kind of prophecy.

There is a kind of apocalyptic literature in Isaiah 24-27, that's when apocalyptic literature was beginning to develop. Ezekiel 37-48 is another section of the Bible where there is apocalyptic literature; actually the whole book of Ezekiel is apocalyptic. The book of Daniel is apocalyptic, particularly chapters 2, 7, 8 and 10-12; those chapters are generally considered apocalyptic. Zechariah 1-6 is considered to be apocalyptic literature. And finally, the book of Revelation is considered to be apocalyptic literature.

If you look at that list you notice what book comes last? The book of Revelation. That gives you a clue about something. How you interpret Revelation depends how you interpret those other books. Whatever rules you use to interpret Zechariah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel must be the same kind of rules that you play the ballgame with in Revelation. And a lot of people get in trouble because they come to Revelation and think it just can't be the same so they use a different set of rules in Revelation. No, apocalyptic literature has to be interpreted by the same set of rules throughout.

So what is the situation behind apocalyptic literature? It is a time of disaster. **Apocalyptic literature comes about whenever you have massive catastrophes and disasters, when people are discouraged, God gives apocalyptic literature.**

Apocalyptic literature differs from the other books of the prophets in that the prophets condemned the people for their sins but the apocalyptic literature doesn't usually condemn for sin, it encourages, hang in there believer, hang on. The message of apocalyptic literature is hang in there because God's final program is certain. It is an encouragement for downhearted believers in the middle of catastrophe. It was always written during times of darkness. Believers during these times go one of two ways; either they're going to lose their faith and chuck the whole thing, thinking it doesn't work, or they're going to go the other way, and their faith will be strengthened. They see God's grace during the darkest times.

Apocalyptic literature is vision centered. It is mediated through angels; the good ones. Frequently the man will see something and he will turn to the interpreting angel and he'll say what do these things mean.

Or the interpreting angel will show him the picture and he'll say Daniel, do you understand, or John, do you understand the things you have seen? So there will always be an interpreting angel there to aid the understanding of finite man.

Apocalyptic literature is always pessimistic in the short run, there's no hope. The die has been cast, unlike in the prophets when there's a possibility of repentance, by the time you get to the apocalyptic literature the game is over; the whistle has blown, there's no hope for repentance. There's only one option—sit it out until God intervenes. So apocalyptic literature is literature is pessimistic in the short run, optimistic in the long run.

Obviously the last characteristic is it's symbolic. We're going to be interpreting symbols, and it demands careful attention to define these symbols correctly on the basis of the Word itself. If we can define them in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah properly, when we come to Revelation it will be an easy book because Revelation, basically, does not introduce any new symbology. Most of the symbology of Revelation is already explained in these prior books. That's why these books should be approached first.

Overview of Daniel – Things you'll discover

1. Prophecy – history written in advance – some of them have been fulfilled, some have not, those yet future are called eschatology
2. 80% of the prophecy in the Bible has already been fulfilled, since it has been fulfilled literally, you would conclude that the other 20% will eventually be fulfilled literally in history, also.
3. Studying Daniel will prove to us that the Bible is God's Word – we'll see how predictions in Daniel were fulfilled literally. You will not find this in any other "holy" book.
4. The section of history known as the "intertestamental period" – the book of Malachi was written about 400 years before Jesus came, and Matthew is the first book of the NT, written in the early 40's or 50's. This 400 year period is sometimes called the "silent years". There was no new revelation during this period, true, but the book of Daniel tells you some things that went on then, 200 years in advance.
5. Angelology – the doctrine of the angels – we learn much about angels in Daniel. We learn: Some angels are good, and some are bad, and they actually are fighting each other (Chapter 10). Also, Michael's function is to protect Israel (12:1), and Gabriel's function is to reveal new information to Israel (chapter 8,9). Without Daniel, we would have major gaps in our understanding of angels.
6. Spiritual warfare – we are in a spiritual conflict with forces of wickedness in the heavenly places – Daniel 10 – others (Rev. 9,12, Job 1,2, Ezekiel 28)
7. How to live for God in the midst of a pagan environment - Daniel's life is an excellent example to us today in our anti-Christian culture.
8. God's sovereignty over the nations – He is really in charge

Outline of the book

1st section Chapter 1-7, 2nd section 8-12

In the 1st section, Daniel does the interpreting, he speaks of himself in the 3rd person, and concerns primarily the Gentile nations

Chapter 1 is introduction

Chap. 2-7 organized chiastically, not necessarily chronologically. Chapter 2 is the Times of the Gentiles, it lines up with chap. 7, which is also about the Times of the Gentiles. These are Israel's blueprint for the eras they will face in-between the Babylonian captivity and when the Kingdom comes.

Chapters 3 and 6 are connected, both deal with God's protection of Judah in the midst of difficulty.

Chapter 3 contains the story of the fiery furnace, chapter 6 has the story of the lion's den.

Chapters 4 and 5 go together. Chapter 4 is God revealing Himself to a Gentile king, He teaches him a lesson about pride. Chapter 5 God reveals Himself to Nebuchadnezzar's successor, Belshazzar.

Chapters 8-12, the 2nd section, an angel does the interpreting. Daniel speaks in the 1st person. This section deals with the Jews, not the Gentiles.

3 major prophecies given in this section – the vision of the ram and the goat in Chap. 8, the vision of the 70 weeks in Chap. 9, and the final vision in 10-12, all one vision. Chapter 10 is how the vision arrives, 11 and 12 are the vision itself, and it is about empires in Daniel's day, then move into prophecies about Greece, then prophecies about the intertestamental period, and then into the Tribulation, and finally the Millennium. Again, this is designed to comfort Judah, that God has a plan.

In the 1st 4 chapters, Nebuchadnezzar is in power, Chapter 5 Belshazzar of Babylon is in power, Chap. 6 Dairus of Mede-Persia is in power, Chap. 7 & 8 Belshazzar is in power again, Chap. 9 it's Dairus, Chapter 12 Cyrus of Media-Persia. The chapters don't flow chronologically.

Daniel is about 15 when first captured, about 17 in Chap. 2, 19-20 in Chap. 3, 45-50 in Chap. 4, early 80s in Chap. 5, 83 in Chap. 6, mid-60s in chap. 7-8, early 80;s in chap. 9, and mid-80s in chap. 10-12. The Israelites go home, and Daniel stays behind, because of his age.

Seven chronological markers, which helps us age Daniel.

Daniel 1 takes place in the 3rd year of Jehoiaikim, which we place at 605 BC

Daniel 2 takes place in the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar, which we place at 603 BC

Daniel 5 is when Babylon is overthrown by Persia, and this is dated by secular history at 539 BC

Daniel 7 is during the 1st year of Belshazzar, which we date at 553 BC

Daniel 8 is the 3rd year of Belshazzar, which we date at 551 BC

Daniel 9 is during the 1st year of Dairus, which we date at 538 BC

Daniel 10 is in the 3rd year of Cyrus, which we date at 536 BC.

Purpose of Daniel

1. To teach Jewish people how to live in a Gentile world. Daniel was ripped away from his family and everything he knew, and sent to a foreign pagan country. This has been an inspiration to all of the Jews in the dispersion throughout history, during the Times of the Gentiles.
2. To teach Gentiles about Israel's God.
3. Daniel was put in position to look out for the welfare of the deported Jews. There has always been a remnant of believing Jews throughout history. If not for that, there would be no church. Believing Jews started the church.

Historical Setting

Daniel was born in 620 BC during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BC) in Judah, Israel's last godly king. Josiah brought revival to Judah, but it was basically external. The tearing down of idols and burning objects of idolatry took place, and people began to observe biblical feasts again, but the hearts of the people were generally untouched. Jeremiah commented on this in Jeremiah 3:10.

Daniel, being from the house of David, grew up in the court of the king and benefited from the godly leadership of King Josiah, the priests, and from the prophetic ministries of men like Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habbakuk.

On the world scene, the Assyrian empire had dominated the ancient near east for centuries. But their power was declining. The Median peoples gained their independence from Assyria in about 650 BC and the Chaldeans (Babylonians) revolted from Assyria in about 625 BC. In 612 BC, Media and Babylon joined forces and attacked Ninevah, the capital of Assyria. This fulfilled the prophecy of the prophet Nahum.

The Egyptians, fearing the rising power of Babylon, went to the aid of the Assyrians at Haran. King Josiah of Judah and his army went out and challenged the Egyptians to keep them from helping Assyria, and Josiah was killed in that conflict. You can read about Josiah in 2 Kings 22-23 and 2 Chronicles 34-35.

In the year 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar replaced his aged father Nabopolassar as the head of the armies of Babylon and won a decisive battle against Assyria and Egypt at Carchemish, which established Babylon as the power in the world. After this battle, Nebuchadnezzar marched south and conquered the land of Syria and Israel. The Babylonians attacked Jerusalem and Daniel and others were deported to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar returned suddenly to Babylon because he received word that his father was dying.

In 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar came back and took 10,000 skilled workers back to Babylon, this is the 2nd deportation, Ezekiel went in this one. In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar returned and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Daniel by this time had been in Babylon for 19 years and was firmly established in the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 introduces and sets the tone for all the prophecy in the book of Daniel. Christians who fail to read Daniel 1 and jump into the middle of things in chapter 2 because they're prophecy freaks fail to get oriented to why Daniel was written. **Daniel was written to give you as a believer wisdom in living in this world.** From God's point of view Daniel is not a book of prophecy, it's a book of *chokmah*, or wisdom, which sounds strange because most people think of Daniel as prophetic. So Daniel, entering Gentile politics in chapter 1, is going to become a model for us as to how we live inside the kingdom of man. We don't live in the kingdom of God, the world is not politically controlled by Jesus Christ, and because the world is not controlled by Jesus Christ we face problems. Satan is the god of this world.

This was the era, 587-586 BC, when the southern kingdom fell. This was the era when the kingdom of God ended, and it ended with two characteristics. One, the Shekinah glory was removed from the temple, Ezekiel 8-11, and the second characteristic was that supreme political international power was delivered up into the hands of the Gentiles. Up to this point Israel had the potential for world domination; after Daniel 2 only Gentiles have the dominating power.

Daniel 1:1-2 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. (2) The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, 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.

This was the deportation in 605 BC. Jeremiah 25:1 indicates this was the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign. Daniel is criticized for this, but Daniel is using Babylonian reckoning, which begins counting in the first full year of a king's rule. Jeremiah, who was still in Israel, was using Jewish reckoning, where any part of the year is included.

This is the year the 70 year captivity will be counted from. Jeremiah 25:10-14, 29:10-14 mentions that the Jews will be in captivity for 70 years before they're allowed to return. Why 70 years?

1. to provide 70 years sabbatical rest for the land. 2 Chronicles. 36:21 reminds us God commands that the land be allowed to lay fallow for a year every 7 years, and Israel never did it, they continued to plant every year for 490 years. So Israel owed God 70 years.
2. Because of Israel's idolatry and pagan practices. 2 Kings 21:1-15, 2 Chronicles 36:14-20, Jeremiah 44:20-23. The ironic thing is idolatry and false religion began in Babylon (Tower of Babel in Genesis 11), and always has been a center for it, and still is today. God deported Israel right into the center of idolatry, He was basically saying, OK, you want to worship other gods, I'll send you to the home base for that. The Jews apparently learned their lesson from this, because idolatry was never again a major problem with the Jews.

The god mentioned here is the god Marduk. He was the god of the Babylonians; he is equivalent to Jupiter to the Romans and Zeus to the Greeks. Now this Marduk was the center of a polytheistic pantheon in the ancient world and to understand this we must go back to the history of the time. Notice the word in verse 2 for the Mesopotamian plain, Shinar. If you remember our study in Genesis that word should ring a bell in your mind: Shinar. That was the place where the tower of Babel was erected. That was the place where the kingdom of man took its first form. It was the land of Shinar from which God called Abraham out in around 2000 BC or later, to form a divine counterculture, to fight against the human viewpoint culture. Now we have come full circle because in the book of Daniel the product of Abraham's seed, existing over many centuries, has been brought back to Shinar, the place of apostasy, the place where God called Abraham out of in order that he might teach him divine viewpoint.

What happens to these Jewish slaves? I can tell you one thing that happened, and we know it from archeology. Archeologists were surprised to discover certain tablets on which the entire banking system of Shinar was illustrated, and guess who within fifty years controlled all the banking of Shinar? The Jews! Daniel and his brethren were very successful. Anything of worth in Babylon wound up in Jewish hands within one generation. They took over the culture, and it shows you, can the believer survive in a human viewpoint culture. You bet, because they did.

At the time of Daniel the nation of Israel has gone into disaster. They have not paid attention to their sins, even though the prophets have pointed them out over and over again. One king in particular led the nation to disaster. His name was Manasseh. To see what a nice gentleman this man was turn to 1 Kings 21 where we have the account of the administration of Manasseh. Strange thing, this Manasseh; he was the son of one of the most godly men of Israel, Hezekiah. And yet, he was the most vicious unbeliever ever to sit on the throne. One of the things Manasseh did, according to extra biblical tradition, he couldn't stand the prophet Isaiah, they had a doctrinal conflict, to put it mildly. So he decided he was going to shut up Isaiah and the tradition which seems to be mentioned in Hebrews 11:37 is that he had Isaiah sawed in half, and that was his way of taking care of it.

Isaiah was sawn in half by Manasseh and this was a great insult to God. Manasseh began his reign in 687 BC, it terminated in 642 BC. During that reign the announcement came that the nation was doomed; no one could stop the machinery from destroying the nation by this time.

2 Kings 21:10-16 Now the LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, (11) "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols; (12) therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. (13) 'I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. (14) 'I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies; (15) because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day.'" (16) Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

So obviously Manasseh wasn't the best king that came along. Now what happened in history after this? In 642 BC Amon assumed the throne. He was quickly succeeded by a very godly king called Josiah. Josiah was able to delay judgment by a revival, but he could not eliminate the judgment. By this time the doom

upon the nation had become so certain that only a postponement could be had. Whether the United States is in a similar position where we are going to get ours, or whether we are in a situation where we can actually postpone this thing or do away with discipline, God only knows, but certain nations reach a point of no return. And **believers from that point forward in the nation can only do one thing; basically teach the Word and prepare for the worst.** We may be in that kind of a situation, where it may be too late to reverse the tide; it may not be, and since we don't have a living prophet to tell us we can't be dogmatic either way. We can just kind of read the signals and move as we see.

In Josiah's ministry came Jeremiah the prophet; Jeremiah began to preach in the year 627 BC. That year is significant; subtract 40 from 627 BC and you get 587 BC. Jeremiah spans forty years, and there's the number forty coming up, the number of testing. God allowed the nation forty years to prepare for that disaster. Jeremiah preached disaster was coming, and his message to believers was get ready for it, get your economics in shape, get your home in shape because this country is going down, we can't stop it we can only postpone it. And Jeremiah preached until 587 BC, the nation went down then and that was the end of his ministry, forty years exactly.

After Jeremiah began there arose to the northeast a man by the name of Nabopolassar, where this man came from no one knows. He comes out of the area of the Assyrian Empire, he gathered together some Chaldean tribes, they lived in four or five different tribes, and he gathered them together into a kingdom. In 616 BC he began to attack the mighty Assyrians, and by 612 BC Nineveh had fallen and then we have the rise of God's instrument for destruction, Babylon.

Now even the fall of Nineveh, which was the capital of Assyria, is a story in itself. Nineveh was a great city that had an opportunity to hear the Word of God; Jonah took the Word of God to Nineveh. And that city heard Jonah loud and clear and, although they accepted it at first and God's judgment was postponed, they eventually rejected the Word so another man came along by name of Nahum. And he said okay, you people in Nineveh, you had your chance to hear the Word of God and you rebelled; God's going to wipe you off the map. And the mighty Assyrians, who had the most ferocious military machine known to man laughed; huh, who's going to eliminate Assyria? Nabopolassar eliminated Assyria in 612; Nineveh fell; Nineveh, the city that could have been saved had they responded to the Word.

Nabopolassar had a son; the son's name was Nebuchadnezzar, the man you meet in Daniel 1:1. Nebuchadnezzar did battle at a place called Carchemish. The Assyrian Empire had been to the north, centered on Nineveh. This man operated further south out of Babylon. Babylon is right next to a city called Ur. Back in Genesis 15 Abraham is said to have come from Ur of the Chaldeans, so you see this full cycle.

Nebuchadnezzar realized that his father had indebted the nation, they had inflation and the nation of Babylon in its first generation, was plagued with deficit financing. So Nebuchadnezzar, being a smart economist and also being a very smart military commander, realized that if his father's empire was going to hold he had to capture trade routes. The Median Empire to the north had captured all the trade routes from India and so trade was moving north of Babylon up into the Median Empire and then back down along the coast.

So Nebuchadnezzar said we're going to take those trade routes. So he began to embark on a military campaign and moved to a place called Carchemish; it was at Carchemish where one trade route stopped and another began, where the goods were traded and then redistributed. It was a collection and distribution point, kind of a hub of the ancient eastern trade route. Carchemish was important militarily also and so it was Carchemish where he decided to strike. And he moved his armies up northwestward and he fought with the Assyrians and the Egyptians. When he did so, he was met by a residue of Assyrians from Nineveh who came down from the north. By this time the Assyrians knew they were in trouble so they

began to make overtures to Pharaoh, who was Pharaoh Neco; Neco moved his forces to the north, but he had to move through Israel to get to Carchemish, and Josiah thought he saw his chance.

In 2 Kings 23:29, Josiah made a desperate attempt to influence the outcome at Carchemish. He knew what was on Pharaoh's mind; Josiah had a small army but he was a wise man and he thought he could use it so he went to a place near Megiddo, and he tried to stop that northward advance of the Egyptians. Josiah wanted Egypt destroyed; he hated the Assyrians and anybody that was against the Assyrians, as far as Josiah was concerned, was for the Hebrews, even if it meant playing games with Babylon. So he tried to stop Pharaoh Neco, and you can see the results in verse 29.

2 Kings 23:29-30 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went to meet him, and when Pharaoh Neco saw him he killed him at Megiddo. (30) His servants drove his body in a chariot from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

And Pharaoh-Neco came back after slaying Josiah, and he established one of Josiah's sons on the throne; named Shallum, and he was renamed by Pharaoh-neco as Jehoahaz; Jehoahaz tried to play footsy with the Egyptians, and all this gives you the background for why Nebuchadnezzar is going to do certain things. Jehoahaz pledged one thing for the Egyptians and he double crossed them. And Nebuchadnezzar heard about these Hebrew kings that double crossed their authorities. So he put one of Josiah's other sons, Eliakim, on the throne of Judah, which is the man that you encounter in Daniel 1.

2 Kings 23:34 Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away and brought him to Egypt, and he died there.

In 609 BC the first battle of Carchemish has been fought; and Jeremiah begins to prophecy doom in a very intense form. In Jeremiah 25:1 you can see the effect of that battle on Jeremiah. Jeremiah was not an idiot and when he saw what happened at Carchemish he knew that the Hebrews had made a big mistake because at the battle of Carchemish international power is being decided.

That fourth year was when the balance of power shifted completely into the hands of the Babylonians. Now what does that mean as far as Judah was concerned? The battle lasted in the spring of that year and as the summer months persisted, Nebuchadnezzar came down through Palestine, and he was pursuing the Pharaoh actually, and Egyptians forces. He decided he was going to stop off for a little visit at Jerusalem. And during that visit he said I'm going to fix you so you don't double cross me like you double crossed Pharaoh-Neco. What he did we see in Daniel 1:1-2.

Daniel 1:2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, 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.

When he took the vessels of the house of God he took two things. He took part of those vessels which he knew was sacred to the Hebrews, and he did another thing. He went through the palace and said all right, I want you, you, you, you're coming with me. And he pointed out all the young Jews who were princes and of royal blood and he said, Jehoiakim, if you ever double cross me you are never going to see these children again. He went through the palace of the king and stripped them of all the young noblemen of Hebrew culture. Daniel was in that group.

This was a practice among pagan kings, whereby when a king conquered another kingdom, they would take objects representing the defeated gods back to their own country as a sign that our god is greater than their god. Israel was a problem for the Babylonians, because there were no images of their God. They came into the temple and didn't find any representation of God, so they took what they found - cups, bowls, etc.

In the 2nd deportation in 597 they took some more temple items (2 Kings 24:13). The third time they were knocking down the walls so they took anything else they could find, and in doing this, the fate of the Babylonian empire was sealed. In Daniel 5 his grandson Belshazzar used these holy vessels to praise his false gods, and that very night they were conquered by the Medo-Persians.

Verse 2 is also the fulfillment of a prophecy made in Isaiah 39:1-8, and 2 Kings 20:16-19 about King Hezekiah. One of the good kings, God granted him an additional 15 years of life, and God gave him a sign of that by making the sun go backwards. The Babylonians were great astrologers, they saw the sun move, and they came to Israel to find out what was going on. When Hezekiah received these visitors, he was a very good host, too good. He showed them everything, including the treasury.

In verses 3-7, Nebuchadnezzar begins to absorb Daniel into Babylonian culture with brainwashing. Verses 3-7 speak of some of the things that this young teenage boy, probably aged about 15, faced as a lone believer, torn away from his loved ones, hundreds and hundreds of miles away from his parents, had to exist on what resources he had in his soul and how he could lean moment by moment through these resources upon the Lord. Daniel is a testimony to what parents can do with their children. Daniel's parents must have been two of the most tremendous believers in Israel. They taught Daniel as a young boy the Bible doctrine, they taught him how to apply it, how to pray, they gave him a lot of background and it all paid off because when he was 15 he was ripped away from his home, had to go on his own, and Daniel becomes the epitome of a wise man in politics. Where did he get his wisdom? Only as God taught him, first through his parents and then through the Word of God directly.

Daniel 1:3-4 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, (4) youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

This included Daniel, so we can conclude that Daniel and his friends were from the house of David. "Court officials" can also be translated as "eunuchs", so it is possible that Daniel and the other young men selected were made eunuchs, we don't know for sure. It's unlikely they would allow a person to serve in the court that wasn't a eunuch, though.

These young men were from 15-20 years old, and they would have been taught the sciences and the occult sciences of the Babylonians. Though he was taught it, there is no indication he practiced the occult. They, of course, would have been taught Aramaic, which he used in chapters 2-7.

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

So Daniel would have been 18 when he completed his training. The diet was a problem for the Jews, since there were certain things they were not to eat under the Mosaic Law.

Daniel 1:6-7 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. (7) Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

It's interesting that we always call Daniel by his Hebrew name, but you rarely hear the Hebrew names mentioned of his three friends. We always hear them called by their Babylonian names. Daniel means "God has judged." Belteshazzar means "may Baal protect his life". Hananiah means "Yahweh has been gracious." Shadrach means "I am fearful of a god". Azariah means "Yahweh has helped." Abednego means "servant of Nebo". Mishael means "who is like God?", Meshach means "who is Aku?" Their Hebrew names all reflected a Godly personality. (Names in the Bible always have something to say about the person's character) Their names were changed to separate them from their Hebrew background, and to glorify Babylonian gods. The king thinks his gods are greater, because he conquered Israel.

Daniel 1:8 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.

We have to stop with the "made up his mind." Daniel made a decision in his soul all by himself, it was strictly his decision. He made it without external pressure. He did it strictly by his own volition out of his loyalty to the God of the Bible. It was from this decision that everything else flowed, all the activity that Daniel is about to engage in, stems from an inner mental attitude, a mental attitude that defied the human viewpoint culture to change him. He made a basic decision that he was going to remain loyal to the Word, period, regardless of the pressure brought to bear.

It's interesting that Daniel and his friends didn't make an issue of the pagan education they were receiving, and they didn't make an issue out of their names being changed. But they drew the line here, with the food. I think it was more than just the dietary issue, it was also that to eat at the king's table or to eat the food meant that he would be partaking of a religious worship of Marduk, the god of the Babylonians.

Daniel can't fight everything, he's only a 15 year old kid, so he's going to concentrate on this issue because if he compromises there he has ruined his soul; because he has permitted God's name to be defiled by participating in worship to demons. So at that point Daniel makes his stand; that is worth separating over.

So a principle of Biblical separation that we learn from the book of Daniel is that there are many differences between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint but you have to take your stand at key points. You don't have to walk around with a martyr complex and protest everything, but you should protest something at critical points.

Daniel 1:9-10 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, (10) and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."

This 15 year old boy came up to the commander and said, Sir, I request that such and such be changed for the following reasons," and the guy was impressed. God opens the man's eyes to Daniel's soul and the man could see that it wasn't just a little kid being a brat; it was a kid that had something fantastic in his soul. So right here, this man is open to being witnessed to. Daniel submitted to authority, and God rewarded his effort by opening the man's soul up to Daniel's character. We never hear whether he was led

to the Lord or not. He wanted to help Daniel, but he was worried about losing his head, which was a very real possibility in that kingdom.

Daniel 1:11-13 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, (12) "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. (13) "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 Daniel didn't give up, he went to another guy in authority with a proposal. Daniel apparently goes away and thinks about it for a while, and then he proposes a ten day experiment. Imagine that, "let us have vegetables to eat and water to drink." No kid in his right mind would do something like that. But Daniel realizes that this is the safest thing to do because usually they didn't consecrate vegetables to the gods.

Daniel 1:14-16 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. (15) At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. (16) So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

In the Hebrew, "fatter" in verse 15 literally also means healthier. And this was after only ten days! This has to be a miracle of God, because with all scientific logic, they should have been skinnier on a vegetarian diet. This is not so much a dietary lesson, but seeing the power of God move on these men's lives.

Daniel 1:17 As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

Apparently only Daniel was given this gift of interpreting dreams, not the other three. And notice it was God who gave them this knowledge, He is the one who is really in control. If you let your memory flip back in Scripture, who else was a lone Jew, all by himself as a young boy, taken away from his home and raised in a Gentile culture, and he was given the ability to discern dreams? Joseph in Egypt, the same thing. Why is God so interested in giving His people inside a pagan kingdom the ability to discern dreams?

What about dreams? We can say some things about dreams in general, then we'll get into what the Bible says. Basically in modern thought dreams are produced two ways; there are two sets of factors. Of course the most famous exposition of dreams was Sigmund Freud's work, and although much of his material has been disproved, the core of it has been authenticated, and Freud was right that one of the things that causes dreams is that you'll have suppressed personal antagonisms; in other words, it's your psychological state that sets you up to dream certain things. Freud was right in this, but modern research in dreams has added another factor, and that's external stimuli.

Now both of these are important for something I'll show you in a moment. External stimuli, you've all had the situation of dreaming and the alarm would go off next to your bed and in your dream there would be the alarm, and you'd wake up and realize it was the alarm next to you that was doing this. They have experimented with people in laboratories. In one experiment they took this boy and they had him lie down and go to sleep and as he was dreaming the researchers stroked his arm with cotton, and he had a dream that he was holding hands with his girlfriend. So external stimuli is a source of dreams.

If you'll look at both of these for a minute you'll notice something that fits perfectly with the Biblical doctrine of man. Go back to the soul; the mind is in the soul, the soul is connected to the body, where you get the physical stimulation, and the soul is also a product of the spirit and this is where you have your psychological dimension. So dream research fits the Biblical picture of man; man is not just material, he is material and immaterial. And so dreams, being a function of the soul, have two sides to them, external physical and internal psychologically.

That's generally the dreams, but the point is that most dream researchers stop here and they say that's all that's involved in your dreams, it's just psychological or physical, or a combination but there's no real sense of dreaming with added insight. Researchers believe that the only insight you get is what's already in your mind. For example, you've had a bad day, and you have lots of things rocking around in your brain that you've picked up, and during the night this stuff is dreamed about, and there's all sorts of weird associations and so on. Now the point is that all the stuff you dream about comes out of your own head, or the alarm clock next to you or something. It's always something right near you. Dreams, according to modern man are just that which you already possess.

Now here's where we have to part company with the modern dream researcher. In the Scripture there is evidence that there is a third source of dreams, and that is outside spiritual powers that impinge upon your soul. So in Scripture there are three sources. The Scripture would permit the idea of external forces; and that most dreams are caused by your psychological state, but the Scripture would also insist that you live inside a world with spiritual forces that operate upon you. And these can influence the way you dream.

Now we want to look at dreams in Scripture and see if we can understand why Daniel's ability to discern is such a key point in the book of Daniel. Before we get to the content of the dream of Daniel we want to understand just dreams in general.

First of all we can say this, there are 22 dreams in Scripture; 16 in the Old Testament, 6 in the New Testament. That is not a lot, only 22 dreams recorded in the Bible. 11 out of the 16 in the Old Testament occurred before the Old Testament was written, which is very important. God used dreams to communicate before the written canon of Scripture. And in the New Testament the 6 dreams were dreams before the New Testament had been written. So that shows you right away that dreams in Scripture are linked with revelation from God before the canon of Scripture became established.

Turn to Genesis 20:3 for one of the first dreams of the Bible. Here we are forced to conclude there's other factors than just your personal junk in your subconscious that's causing the dream. This is Abimelech's dream. Abimelech is the king of Gerar; remember Abraham has come down there, he's afraid of Abimelech, he isn't trusting in the Lord so he passes his wife off as his sister again.

Genesis 20:3-7 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." (4) Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? (5) "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." (6) Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. (7) "Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

That last part of verse 6 is one of the most powerful evidences for sovereignty and responsibility you can

think of. Here is Abimelech, he had no idea God was twisting his arm. And yet this announcement says that his very behavior pattern towards Sarah was determined by God's sovereign will. God chose to control his behavior when he had no idea that there were forces restraining him; none whatsoever.

But the important part of verse 6 is the first part; there we see that this dream of Abimelech comes about not because of personal conflict and not because of external stimuli. This dream comes about because God wants to communicate to the man involved and God does appear to him. So that's the third reason for dreams besides the two given by modern research.

What else can we say about dreams? Let's divide the dreams of the Bible into two kinds. Let's divide them into the dreams of the Jews and the dreams of the Gentiles and you'll notice something about Biblical dreams. None of these dreams directly involve the individual. All these third class of dreams are about God's plan for history, not about the individual person per se. The individual person may be involved in the dream but whether it's a Jew or whether it's a Gentile, that dream is linked to God's plan for history.

Let's look at how it works with the Jews. Turn to Genesis 28:12, Jacob's dream.

Genesis 28:12-13 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. (13) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

So Jacob here is dreaming about the Abrahamic Covenant. It is not just about Jacob's personal life; it is about how his life relates to God's overall historic plan. These dreams are not self-centered dreams; they are historically centered dreams. In Genesis 31:10 we have another dream of Jacob.

Genesis 31:10-13 "And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled. (11) "Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' (12) "He said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. (13) 'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'"

That has reference to the overall working of the Abrahamic Covenant. Again the dream is not a self-centered dream, the dream is about what God is going to do in history for the Jew, so it is a national type dream, not an individual type dream. Then in Genesis 31:24,

Genesis 31:24 God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad."

Again the dealing isn't with Laban per se, it is with Laban's relationship with Jacob under the Abrahamic Covenant that is at stake, and thus again the Biblical dream is not individual, it is national. Then in Judges 7:13 we have the dream of a soldier in the middle of a camp one night just before they entered a battle. This is the story of Gideon and the Midianites.

Judges 7:13-14 When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, "Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat." (14) His friend replied, "This is nothing less than the sword of

Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand."

Here incidentally is the fact that dreams are symbolic and in verse 13 you have the barley bread, and what is the occupation of Gideon? He's a grain farmer. And his production is the barley bread, and so the dream has a symbol that stands for Gideon. Dreams are symbolic; Freud was right on this point. Again, this has to do with victory in holy war; it has not to do with the soldier's individual destiny but with the destiny of the nation. Now we come to 1 Kings 3:5, the dream of Solomon.

1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish me to give you."

Solomon, though he had prophets also had a revelation through dreams. Now it could be possible that this dream as well as some of the others, had some of his own soul involved. God comes to him, He's going to say something, but the dream is very intimately connected with verses 1-4. Solomon is doing worship, he's come down to Gibeon to worship, in other words there are thoughts on his mind and God can use those as secondary means.

1 Kings 3:6-9 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. (7) "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. (8) "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. (9) "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

Now this dream contributes something very interesting to what the Bible says about dreams. By the way, researchers say 90% of the time you dream in black and white, not in color; they've also pointed out that in most dreams you are passive to the action, you are an observer to it, vocally that is. In other words, you may be active and moving but very few dreams are you actually speaking in the dream. But here is one of those cases where Solomon is an active participant in his dream. Solomon is verbally saying something back to God, he's not just watching a picture. Obviously this is a nationally centered dream rather than just an individual centered dream.

There are others; but you can see that Jewish dreams that are portrayed in Scripture are dreams that have to do with the history of the nation under God's program of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now what about Gentile dreams. Let's look at two Gentile dreams. Since we're in Daniel, we'll be reading Nebuchadnezzar's two dreams in Daniel 2 and Daniel 4, and Nebuchadnezzar is dreaming about his country and its destiny. So there again it is a national destiny.

Now Pharaoh's dream, turn back to Genesis 41:1, Pharaoh, another Gentile ruler, like Nebuchadnezzar, and in Pharaoh's dream,

Genesis 41:1-3 Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile. (2) And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. (3) Then behold, seven other

cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile.

By the way, there you have the dream symbolism operating again. The Nile is that which provides the water and the fertilizer for the ground. What is raised in the ground that is fertilized by the Nile? The cattle. And so in the dream the cattle come out of the Nile; the Nile is the source of the cattle. So the dream is symbolic, but it corresponds to what's really happening. The cattle come up out of the Nile, and then the lean cattle eat up the fat cattle, and this is the story of the coming plagues. But again, as with the Jews, these dreams involve mass movements among nations. They involve national and historical destinies.

Now back to Daniel. Daniel says, I can't interpret these dreams, apart from God's spirit. Joseph said to Pharaoh, I can't interpret these dreams apart from my God. And when these men interpret the dreams it proves that Elohim, the God of Israel, is the God of all history. And since He's the God of all history, He is greater than the gods of Egypt and Mesopotamia. That's the argument of the book of Daniel.

And **don't miss this point when we get involved in prophecy, the purpose of prophecy is to glorify the character of God.** We can argue about details from now until forever and that's not the issue.

Now the Bible also says there are demonic dreams and that's another whole story, but demons can cause dreams in believers and unbelievers, and they can tempt you in dreams, and you can actually sin by giving in to these kind of dreams. We'll show passages later on but today we're just dealing with one kind of dream, the good kind that come from God. And I believe we can say pretty firmly, that they are not going on today because the canon of Scripture is closed. God is not giving new revelation. All the revelation that God wants to give to us has been given, it is in the canon of Scripture.

Daniel 1:18-20 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. (19) The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. (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.

These four Jews were superior to all the other people in service to the king, and as so often happens throughout history, the ability of the Jews to thrive, even in foreign cultures, leads to problems. Every time Jewish people are exalted in a culture, problems come of it down the line.

Daniel 1:21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

In 10:1 we see that Daniel continued to the 3rd year of Cyrus, which was beyond the 70 years of deportation. Daniel stayed in Babylon while the Jews went back to Israel to rebuild Jerusalem, probably because of his age.

Daniel and his friends were believing Jews, they were not guilty of the sins of Israel which caused God's judgment, but they suffered with the rest of Israel. God raised them up, but they were not immune to the punishment. In the holocaust it is estimated that 250,000 Jewish believers were killed by the Nazis.

All right, that gives you a good introduction to the book of Daniel, and the first chapter, which is also introductory. Next lesson we'll go over chapter 2, where the plot thickens, and we see the first prophecy in Daniel, given by a dream by God to King Nebuchadnezzar, in which he tells him of the world kingdoms to come in history.