

MAILBOX BIBLE COURSE

LESSON 1 – THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL BIBLE COURSE

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Your Instructor

Harold Smith

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LESSON 1: THE PROPHET DANIEL

Dear Friend,

The Book of Daniel is one of the key books on end time prophecy. All the signs of the times indicates that the days are upon us that these events are about to happen. It is so important to study what the Bible says about the coming of the Lord. You can start right now by downloading this first lessons. You wont understand the Book of Revelation with out first studying Daniel.

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INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

The prophet Daniel was born in the royal family in Judea about the year 620 Before Christ. His name means God is my Judge. The word judge in the Old Testament often means the one who will prove that a man is right when others say he is wrong. In this way, God was Daniel's Friend. Daniel was a captive in Babylon and still a young man when he became famous for his wisdom and his good life. Ezekiel was another prophet of God living in Babylon about the same time and by the Holy Spirit he spoke of Daniel as being very wise; and he named Daniel along with Noah and Job as three righteous men, Ezekiel 14.14,20; 28.3. Daniel also was a servant of God, and the LORD, the God of heaven, gave him great revelations of things future. Daniel learned many details about kings who were not yet born, and empires to be built in the future. Many men today do not believe that anyone could know the future, so they say that someone wrote the book of Daniel after these things happened. But the Lord Jesus Christ called Daniel the prophet, Matthew 24.15; Mark 13.14. This proves that Daniel was real and that God really showed him all these things in advance. After all, God knows all things, past, present and future, Isaiah 46.10. The Holy Spirit led men of God to write the New Testament in the Greek language, and the Old Testament in the Hebrew language. However, Daniel wrote part of his book in the Aramaic language, which is very much like Hebrew. In fact, the Jews spoke Aramaic in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no doubt, the Lord Himself used this language when He spoke to the people. Daniel used Aramaic because it was well known in Babylon, for most of chapters 2 to 7. The first half of the book of Daniel contains the record of six great events in the city of Babylon. The second half tells us about the revelations which God gave to His faithful servant.

1. Daniel in Babylon
2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream
3. The image and the furnace
4. Nebuchadnezzar turned to God.
5. Belshazzar's feast
6. Daniel and the lions
7. The four wild animals
8. The ram and the goat
9. The seventy weeks
10. & 11 The great struggle
11. The time of the end

LESSON 1: DANIEL IN BABYLON

This chapter starts with the great king Nebuchadnezzar and tells how Daniel came to be near him.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's purpose, verses 1-7
2. Daniel's purpose, verses 8-21

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PURPOSE, 1.1-7

The Holy Spirit teaches us one great lesson in this book: that God has a great purpose and He will surely fulfil it. Here Nebuchadnezzar was doing God's will while he thought that he was working out his own purposes.

1. Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his great armies. Jehoiakim was a son of the last good king of Judah, Josiah, but he was like his two brothers and his son who ruled after Josiah, they were all wicked men.
2. Nebuchadnezzar was able to defeat Jehoiakim and conquer the city which God long before chose as the place for His temple. Nebuchadnezzar took some of the holy objects, silver and gold, from

the temple. This was an insult to the God of Israel, still more so when Nebuchadnezzar gave these things as a gift to his own god in Babylon.

Why did the God of heaven allow him to do this? The LORD promised to watch over Jerusalem, to honour the temple with His name and His presence, and to keep David's descendants on the throne forever, 2 Samuel 7.16; 2 Chronicles 6.6; Psalm 87.2. But He warned the people hundreds of times that He would punish them if they did not obey His laws and His prophets. It is remarkable that three of God's greatest prophets all lived about this time: Jeremiah lived in Jerusalem and gave God's last messages to the sinful people and kings; Ezekiel was a captive of Nebuchadnezzar living in Babylon, who also sent messages to those Jews still in Jerusalem, and received God's warnings of great trouble ahead and His promises for Israel's wonderful future; Daniel who gives us many more details of Israel's trouble and the glory yet to come. From this chart, you will see that Daniel went to Babylon with the first captivity, Ezekiel with the second. Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem even at the time of the third and final captivity, but Nebuchadnezzar allowed him to stay there, Jeremiah 39.11,12; 40.4.

<u>3 PROPHETS</u>	<u>3 CAPTIVITY</u>	<u>5 KINGS OF JUDAH</u>	<u>4 KINGS IN BABYLON</u>
JEREMIAH, 626-587		JOSIAH 640-609	
		JEHOAHAZ, 609	
DANIEL, 605-539	FIRST	JEHOIAKIM, 609-597	NEBUCHADNEZZAR 605-562
EZEKIEL 592-570	SECOND	JEHOIACHIN, 597	
	THIRD	ZEDEKIAH, 597-587	BELSHAZZAR, 562-539
		DARIUS THE MEDE	
		CYRUS THE PERSIAN 539-530	

We shall see that Daniel continued to live to the third year of King Cyrus, and to prosper, v.21; 6.28; 10.1.

- Nebuchadnezzar had another plan: he wanted to get the benefit of the smart young men among his captives. So he ordered one of his officers to bring some of the Israelite young men who were members of the king's family. These were not children, although Jeremiah called himself a child when the LORD called him, Jeremiah 1.6. The word child may mean young man.
- Ashpenaz was to choose those who were handsome and able to learn quickly. They would come right into the palace of the king and learn the language and the science of the Babylonians. Moses long ago learned the wisdom of Egypt, Acts 7.22. He was also an Israelite who came to be very important in a foreign land. Like Moses, Daniel did not accept the religion of the land in which he lived, he continued to follow the Lord GOD of Israel.
- Nebuchadnezzar wanted these young men to spend their time serving him, so he provided their food and drink. He gave them three years to learn the language and science of Babylon.
- Four of the young men were Jewish. The officers gave them Babylonian names:

<u>HEBREW NAME</u>	<u>MEANING</u>	<u>NEW NAME</u>	<u>BABYLONIAN MEANING</u>
Daniel	God is my Judge	Belteshazzar	May the goddess protect the king
Hananiah	Jehovah is gracious	Shadrach	?
Mishael	Who is what God is?	Meshach	I have become weak
Azariah	Jehovah is strong	Abednego	Servant of the shining one

Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel his new name containing the name of his god, Bel, 4.8, or his wife. He wanted the other names also to show that these young men should no longer trust in Jehovah. Shining one is a name of Satan, Isaiah 14.12. These new names are used for Daniel, 2.26; 4.8,9,18,19 (3 times), 5.12; 10.1; for the other three, 2.49; and 13 times in chapter 3.

2. DANIEL'S PURPOSE, 1.8-21

- a) Daniel's request, verses 8-10
- b) Melzar agreed, verses 11-16
- c) The wisdom of the four young men from Judah, verses 17-21

a) Daniel's request, 1.8-10

Verse 8, We do not know the names of Daniel's parents but they taught him to obey the law of Jehovah while he was still young, before he became a captive in Babylon. Many people in Jerusalem gave their sacrifices to false gods, and all four kings after Josiah allowed them to keep on in their sins. Daniel knew that the wicked priests in Babylon offered sacrifices to Bel and other false gods, then the king's cooks prepared this meat for all who lived in his palace. This included the young captives, most of whom were happy to eat the same kind of food as Nebuchadnezzar did. Not Daniel. He was not happy with his name containing the name of a heathen god. He would not make himself unclean before the LORD by eating meat, which was offered to idols. God's prophets taught that murder and all kinds of sin would make a person unclean, Isaiah 59.3; Zephaniah 3.1. So Daniel made a great decision. He asked Ashpenaz, the chief officer, v.3, to allow him not to eat the food or drink the wine, which the king provided. This decision took real courage but Daniel was never sorry he took this step. Others have made a right decision: Joseph, that he would not sin against the LORD, Genesis 39.9; Moses, that Christ was better than all the money in Egypt, Hebrews 11.25,26; Joshua, that he and his family would serve the LORD, Joshua 24.15; Ruth, that God would be her God, Ruth 1.16; Josiah, that he would follow the God of David, 2 Chronicles 34.3; Isaiah, that he would go and obey the LORD, Isaiah 6.8; the younger son, that he would rise and go to his father, Luke 15.18. We all must make decisions every day. Some of these decisions are very important. it is good to know God's Word and make every decision according to His will.

Verses 9 and 10 - Daniel showed the love of God to Ashpenaz and the LORD gave the Babylonian official real love for the young captive from Judah. However, the official was afraid to do as Daniel requested. He thought that Nebuchadnezzar would accuse his servant of eating or selling the food, which he appointed for Daniel and his three friends. This man Nebuchadnezzar did kill people whenever he wanted to do so, 2.9; 3.19. Other ancient kings did the same; for example:

Darius, 6.9;

Herod, king of Judea, Matthew 2.16;

Herod, ruler of Galilee, Mark 6.27;

Herod Agrippa, Acts 12.2.

b) Melzar agreed, 1.11-16

Verse 11 to 13, Daniel did not give up in his decision not to make himself unclean by eating and drinking what was offered to idols. He asked Melzar, the guard, to test Daniel and his friends for ten days. He would give these four young men vegetables to eat and water to drink, not meat and wine. After ten days, Melzar the guard would look at their faces and decide if they looked better or worse than the other young men in training.

Verses 14 and 16, Melzar agreed to this test and gave them nothing but vegetables and water. At the end of the ten days, the four young men from Judah looked better and healthier than all the rest. So Melzar the guard kept them on this simple diet. He could be sure that the king would not accuse him of doing any wrong. The LORD honoured these young men because they chose to obey Him, but it is still true that simple food is often better for any person's health than rich and fancy food and drink, which many people use today.

c) The wisdom of the four young men from Judah, 1.17-21

God gave these young men favour with Ashpenaz and Melzar, but also with King Nebuchadnezzar. This was through the wisdom, which God gave them. Verse 17, God gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: knowledge; ability to learn from books; wisdom. In addition, He gave Daniel the ability to understand visions & dreams. Daniel needed this ability in chapters 2,4. Verse 18, Nebuchadnezzar gave Ashpenaz three years to educate the young captives, verse 5, but they may have made such good progress that he brought them to the king after two years. Old books of history tell us that Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem before he became king of Babylon, so it was his second year when he saw his dream, 2.1. God prepared Daniel so he was ready for that important event. Verse 19 Nebuchadnezzar talked with all these young men and found that the four from Judah were far better than any of the others. So he chose them to stand before him in a special way. Verse 20, Then the king found that the four young men from Judah were wiser than any of the priests whom he usually asked what to do and when to do it. These men are called magicians, fortune-tellers, astrologers, or enchanters. The magicians in Egypt could not tell Pharaoh what his dream meant, Genesis 41.24, although at first they could do some miracles as Moses did, Exodus 7.11,12; 8.7,18; 9.11. Today we have astrologers who say they can tell from the stars and planets what will happen next in this world. Sometimes they are right but we should not listen to these false prophets. Others today can move their hands very quickly, and speak as though their voices came from some other person or thing. They are able to deceive some people. Most of them consult with evil spirits and never give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. We should not pay these people any money, or believe what they say. Verse 21, We read again about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in chapters 2 and 3 only, but Daniel continued for nearly 70 years, until the third year of Cyrus, 10.1. God says that He will honour those who honour Him, 1 Samuel 2.20. He did this with Daniel and his three friends. He does the same today.

TEST PAGE OF LESSON 1 FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL BIBLE STUDY

1. Daniel's name means "God is my helper." - TRUE FALSE
2. Nebuchadnezzar gave the holy vessels to the Moabites - TRUE FALSE
3. Daniel accepted the religion of Babylon - TRUE FALSE
4. The king gave Daniel a new name that he was happy with - TRUE FALSE
5. Daniel gave us much details about the church to come - TRUE FALSE

Fill in the blank in the space provided.

6. Many gave their to false
7. Joseph vowed that Not against

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8. Isaiah said "..... am I, me"

9. Daniel and dreams.

10. The magicians of not the king his was.

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