

Study of II Peter
Enduring Word Daniel 1
Keeping Pure in the Face of Adversity
September 13, 2026

A. Introduction to the Book of Daniel.

1. Setting the time: The prophet Daniel lived in the sixth century before the birth of Jesus. During this approximate period:

- Construction began on the Acropolis in Athens.
- Mayan civilization flourished in Mexico.
- Aesop wrote his fables.
- Confucius and Buddha lived.
- Greek art began to truly excel.
- The Greeks introduced the olive tree to Italy.
- The Phoenicians made the first known sea journey around Africa.

2. The Book of Daniel is a target of critics who doubt that the Daniel described in the book wrote the book, especially in light of the book's amazing prophecies.

a. The Book of Daniel *claims* to be written by Daniel himself, and the fact that it is written mostly in the third person does not contradict that claim.

i. The author mostly speaks in the third person, except for [Daniel 8:1](#), [9:2](#), [9:20](#), and 10:2, where he speaks in the "I, Daniel" form. However, it was customary for ancient writers to speak in the third person even when writing about themselves. The one Old Testament exception to this is the Book of Nehemiah, which is in the form of a personal diary.

ii. Even God switches between the grammatical first and third person when speaking of Himself. One can compare [Exodus 20:2](#) (*I am the LORD your God*) and [Exodus 20:7](#) (*for the LORD will not hold him guiltless*).

iii. Fortunately, Jesus took away all doubt on the matter. *He* told us that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel: *Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet* ([Matthew 24:15](#) and [Mark 13:14](#)).

b. The Book of Daniel predicts events of the second century before the coming of Jesus (especially the period 175-164 B.C.) with such precision that doubting critics believe it *had* to have been written *after* that period, during the time of the Maccabees (in-between the Old and New Testaments). Supposedly, the purpose for writing Daniel at that time was to inspire God's people on to victory during the Maccabean wars.

i. The first recorded suggestion for a Maccabean date for Daniel was by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyrius of Tyre (third century A.D.). Porphyrius couldn't believe the prophecies, so he suggested the later date. An early Christian writer and scholar named Jerome refuted these arguments in his commentary on Daniel.

ii. Influenced by Enlightenment philosophies, academics began to revive the old Maccabean date theory about the Book of Daniel. There was consensus among many academics that every accurate prediction in Daniel was written after the events took place.

c. The modern argument for late dating Daniel is based on supposed inevitable mistakes that a second century B.C. writer made when writing about a period 400 years before, in the sixth century B.C. In our own day, it would be as if someone wrote a story about the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock while mentioning speedboats and computers. We would know that it was a forgery. There are usually said to be five main historical blunders:

- The date for Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah.
- Using the word *Chaldeans* to describe a class of soothsayers.

- The account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness.
- King Belshazzar and his relationship to Nabonidus.
- The figure of Darius the Mede.

i. There is also a linguistic argument made against the Book of Daniel, claiming that certain Greek words used in Daniel are words that did not come into the Hebrew vocabulary until the second century B.C.

3. (1-2) Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

a. Jehoiakim king of Judah: This was a Judean king placed on the throne by the Pharaoh of Egypt. His name means "Yahweh raises up," but the LORD did not raise him up at all – Pharaoh did.

b. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: This was the mighty ruler of the Babylonian Empire. The name Nebuchadnezzar is a Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name *Nebu-kudduri-utzur*, which means "Nebu protects the crown."

c. Came to Jerusalem and besieged it: Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem because the Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. In response, the young prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish, then he pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai. Along the way (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem, which had been loyal to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

i. This happened in 605 B.C. and it was the first (but not the last) encounter between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim. There would be two later invasions (597 and 587 B.C.).

ii. Some say that this mention of the siege of Jerusalem is a historical blunder made by a pseudo-Daniel. This is based on the fact that this invasion in 605 B.C. is not mentioned in the book of Kings. But the Jewish historian Josephus quotes the Babylonian historian Berossus, showing that the Biblical account of three separate Babylonian attacks on Judah is accurate (*Against Apion*, I 19 and *Antiquities*, X 11, 1).

iii. This specific attack mentioned by Daniel is documented by the Babylonian Chronicles, a collection of tablets discovered as early as 1887 and kept in the British Museum.

Nebuchadnezzar's 605 B.C. presence in Judah is documented and clarified in these tablets.

iv. When the Babylonian Chronicles were finally published in 1956, they gave us first-rate, detailed political and military information about the first 10 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. L.W. King prepared these tablets in 1919. He then died, and they were neglected for four decades.

v. Excavations also document the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over the Egyptians at Carchemish in May or June of 605 B.C. Archaeologists found evidence of battle, vast quantities of arrowheads, layers of ash, and the shield of a Greek mercenary fighting for the Egyptians.

vi. This campaign of Nebuchadnezzar was interrupted suddenly when he heard of his father's death and raced back to Babylon to secure his succession to the throne. He traveled about 500 miles in two weeks – remarkable speed for travel in that day.

vii. Therefore, we know that the siege of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. was cut short by Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon. This was not specifically detailed in the Babylonian Chronicles, but it is entirely consistent with the record.

d. In the third year of the reign: There is also no contradiction between Daniel (who said this happened in the third year of Jehoiakim) and [Jeremiah 46:2](#) (which said it was *in the fourth year of*

Jehoiakim). Daniel reckoned a king's years after the Babylonian method: the first year of a king's reign began at the start of the calendar year *after* he took the throne. Jeremiah used the Jewish method.

- i. "It was customary for the Babylonians to consider the first year of a king's reign as the year of accession and to call the next year the first year... Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology." (Walvoord)
- e. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand: In this 597 B.C. deportation Jehoiakim, Ezekiel, and others were taken away. This deportation is described in [2 Kings 24:14-16](#).
 - i. This was prophesied in [Isaiah 39:7](#): *And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon*. This prophecy leads some to think Daniel and his companions were made eunuchs. Certainly, the Hebrew term *saris* was used of literal eunuchs; but the word derives from a phrase that simply means to be a servant of the king. It wasn't exclusively applied to literal eunuchs.
 - ii. The LORD gave Judah into the hands of the Babylonians for mainly two reasons. The first was Israel's idolatry and the second was their failure to observe the Sabbaths for the land ([Leviticus 25:1-7](#) and [26:2-35](#)). This shows that God always settles accounts with those who refuse to respond to His warnings. In the 587 B.C. invasion the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed ([2 Kings 25:9-10](#)).
- f. Some of the articles of the house of God: Nebuchadnezzar did not take *all* the furnishings of the temple, only some. The remaining furnishings were either hidden before Nebuchadnezzar came or they were brought to Babylon later.
 - i. The confiscation of these items and their deposit in a Babylonian temple was a dramatic declaration by Nebuchadnezzar saying, "my god is better than your God." Now the God of Israel had to vindicate Himself.
 - ii. This was a low time for Judah and God's people. It seemed that the God of Israel lost out to the gods of Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. The Book of Daniel shows God vindicating Himself at a time when the conquest of Israel might have brought God's reputation into disgrace.

B. Babylon's system of indoctrination.

1. (3-4) The best and the brightest of Jerusalem's young men are chosen and taken to Babylon.

Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.

- a. Bring some of the children of Israel: Nebuchadnezzar not only confiscated holy things from the temple but also the shining lights of Judah's future (young men perhaps 13 to 17 years old).
 - i. Walvoord on the phrase king's descendants: "The Hebrew for *the princes* is a Persian word, *partemim*, which is cited as another proof for a late date of Daniel. However, inasmuch as Daniel lived in his latter years under Persian government as a high official, there is nothing strange about an occasional Persian word."
- b. Who had the ability to serve in the king's palace: Nebuchadnezzar demonstrated that he was a wise administrator and a shrewd tactician. Taking these young men as hostages reminded the people back in Jerusalem that they should not revolt against the recently imposed Babylonian rule.

2. (5-7) In Babylon, the Hebrew youths are groomed for the civil service.

And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king. Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

a. The king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies: It was a given that the Babylonian government would provide for these young men in training. Yet, having the same food and wine prepared for the king was intended to be a special honor.

i. In the ancient world much more than in the modern world there was a huge difference between the food enjoyed by the elite and what common people ate.

b. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: Daniel tells us about four of these youths, and their new Babylonian names.

i. The name Daniel (meaning *God is my judge*) was changed to Belteshazzar (meaning *Bel's prince*).

ii. The name Hannaniah (meaning *Beloved by the LORD*) was changed to Shadrach (meaning *Illumined by Sun-god*).

iii. The name Mishael (meaning *Who is as God*) was changed to Meshach (which may mean *Who is like Shach*, which some believe was a Babylonian goddess corresponding to Ishtar or Venus).

iv. The name Azariah (meaning *The LORD is my help*) was changed to Abed-Nego (meaning *Servant of Nego*).

c. Three years of training for them: The purpose of the food, names, and education was simple. This was an effort at total indoctrination, with the goal of making these young Jewish men leave behind their Hebrew God and culture. Undoubtedly, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to communicate to these young men, "look to *me* for everything." Daniel and his friends refused, insisting that they would look to God.

i. Calvin wrote that Nebuchadnezzar knew that the Jews were a stiff-necked and obstinate people, and that he used the sumptuous food to soften up the captives.

ii. Satan uses a similar strategy against believers today, wanting to indoctrinate us into the world system. Satan wants us to:

- Identify (name) us in reference to the world.
- Feed us what the world offers.
- Educate us in the ways of the world.