

# Daniel

## Part 1

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[00:00:00] I return please to the first chapter of Daniel and we'll read the whole chapter. Daniel chapter 1 and we'll read from verse 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his God. And he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the prince's children, in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science. And such as had ability in them to stand [00:01:06] in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names. For he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and to Hananiah of Shadrach, and to Mishael of Mishach, and to Azariah of Abednego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs [00:02:04] that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love, with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink, for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, prove thy servants I beseech thee ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat. And as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, [00:03:07] and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days, their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar, and the king communed with them, and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, [00:04:01] Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore stood they before the king, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers

that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus. Before we embark looking into this marvelous book, a few preliminary remarks may be necessary. First of all, we are not dealing with the truth of the church as we find it presented in the New Testament. We're dealing with matters that pertain to earth. That doesn't mean that this isn't important, because it is. It involves the glory of God, and involves the [00:05:04] greatness of our Lord Jesus. So we're not wasting our time when we're looking into a book that deals with things upon earth, and things that are connected with our God. Very, very important things indeed. Secondly, we are dealing with matters that are very, very important in our day, relevant to our day. And they give us some understanding as to how God is operating today, and the principles upon which he is operating. And that's extremely important, because we're living in momentous times. We're living just on the verge of the coming of the Lord for his church, and then when many of the things stated in this book will begin to be fulfilled. So these are important things to consider. I would have liked to have gone over [00:06:01] the first seven chapters of this book, but unfortunately we haven't time. But if you want to have a few headings, I'll present them to you. They've appealed to me, and they certainly help in understanding different chapters. And I've written over chapter one, the meddling monarch. He meddles in things pertaining to the children of God. He wants to change them, change them into his way of thinking. So he's a meddling monarch. It's an alliteration I'm giving you, but still they're helpful. Secondly, chapter two, we have a mystified monarch. He dreams, nobody can tell him what the dream means, until of course he gets the revelation of it through the man of God, Daniel. When we come to chapter three, we have a malicious monarch [00:07:01] in that he sets up this great temple, this great idol, which really is glorifying himself. And if any do not bow down and worship this idol, then they forfeit their lives.

And the malice of this great man is expressed. Chapter four is easy to describe, the mad monarch, how the mighty emperor Nebuchadnezzar is reduced into a condition like a beast. Until he gets converted, his reason returns, and he worships the most high. In chapter five, we have Belshazzar, a mocking monarch. We took the vessels that belong to the temple that were used for the worship of God and prostituted them to the worship of his own gods, a mocking monarch. Chapter six, we have Cyrus, another monarch, great man, and he's maneuvered, [00:08:06] a maneuvered monarch, into a position that he really didn't want to be in, but he had to conform with the laws of the Medes and the Persians. He had signed it, and he was responsible for it, and he was very carefully maneuvered into that position, which really he didn't want to be in. What about chapter seven? Ah, that's different. A majestic monarch, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Ancient of Days, the one who will come and take over and bring in a kingdom of peace and righteousness and blessing and joy for the glory of God and for the blessing of all concerned. Now, these are simple little hooks, shall I call them, that can direct you to the understanding of these chapters much more. [00:09:02] Three other things. First of all, they are historical incidents, these first six chapters especially. The first six chapters are actual historical incidents that can be read to great profit, and of course, the children in the Sunday school, how they delight to read about Daniel and his great feat of being beside the lions and overcoming them in faith, as we find in chapter 11 of Hebrews, stopped the mouth of lions. Daniel, man of faith, or the marvelous thing of three men walking through the fire, again mentioned in Hebrews 11, quenched the power of the fire. And so, these incidents are really extremely interesting, just as incidents themselves, without anything else. Interesting to read, encouraging to read, and very instructive too. [00:10:03] But then, they also indicate, I believe, figures of what the remnant of Israel will pass through in what we call the time of the great tribulation, when the small company of those who are faithful to God will be faced with terrific trials and pressures. And so, these pictures that we find, and chapter one is introductory to them, is an indication of the kind of people who will pass through the tribulation and how God will sustain them and maintain them for his pleasure and glory. Thirdly, as in all the scriptures, they provide moral features that believers in this dispensation can follow with profit. Now,

it would be wrong if we simply were here tonight to talk about historical things or even prophetic things and not to get some present blessing for our own souls [00:11:05] in our own day. And thank God, the book of Daniel can provide these things. There's another point, and I think this is very important. These chapters show that when the Jew is faithful to God, he's infinitely superior to the Gentile. This can be proved quite clearly in the magicians, the astrologers, the wise men of Darius's day, and Belshazzar's day, and Nebuchadnezzar's day. They were all incompetent to help at various junctures, but the man of God was. The godly Jew was. The man who depended on God was. He could provide the answer to all these problems. Well, these are a few preliminary remarks [00:12:02] that are helpful in the study of this book of Daniel. So we proceed with chapter one.

I believe the first verse of this book is one of the most solemn that we can read. In fact, verse one and verse two, in one sense, it's incredible, incredible that God should allow his favored people, Israel and this part of Israel, Judah and Benjamin, to be taken into captivity by a Gentile monarch. Why? And the answer is obvious when we read the history of this nation in the book of Kings, in the book of Chronicles, the steady deterioration, [00:13:01] the division that took place in the time of Rehoboam, and afterwards the continual deterioration in the two branches. We ought to say that in connection with the northern kingdom called Israel, there never was one good king, not one. They were all idolaters and promoted idolatry, wicked, cruel, ruthless, no thought of God, and they had nothing to provide for the glory of God. Thank God, in connection with Judah, there were those who were true sons of David, and they did that which was pleasing in the sight of the Lord. But eventually, they too became wicked. They were wicked in the sight of God. Idolaters promoted it and turned away from God. That is why we read these verses, and the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand.

[00:14:04] Incredible. You think of all the wonderful promises that God made to his nation, how he would care for them, how he would protect them, how he would look after them, how he would bless them, how he would take them into the land and care for them in every possible way. Now we read those words, the Lord gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. It wasn't Nebuchadnezzar in all his power and in all his greatness and in all his skill that overcame Jerusalem with his great army. It was the Lord who gave them into his hand. You remember the time when the army came against Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah? They went into the house of God and they spread out the matter before the Lord. They told him about it. They were helpless. They couldn't do a thing about it. What happened? 185,000 were slain. God intervened [00:15:08] and helped his people in a time of extremity. Why didn't he do it now? Because his patience was exhausted. He had given the nation every opportunity and they had continually refused and continually turned away from him. Now that's a very bleak picture, isn't it? Is there any lesson to be learned? Yes, there is. A very, very solemn lesson for us as Christians. A position, a position given by God is not of much value unless there is spiritual condition connected with it. Unless there is continual spiritual exercise, sacrifice, devotion connected with the position of blessing, then God and his governmental dealings will come in. [00:16:05] Mr. Darby said, suppose brethren go to pieces, he will maintain a testimony.

Unfortunately, they have gone to pieces. Still, what can we do? We cannot turn away from the truths that we've been taught. We know that those truths are truths. Truths cannot be anything else but truths. And so we maintain them and seek to live in accord with them. Oh, this is a solemn lesson. Very, very solemn indeed. That a position without the condition that belongs to the position is not a position that's pleasing to God. In fact, it's downright hypocrisy. So there's no good claiming a great position if we're not living in accord with it. Now then, what has happened? What has happened is that God has begun what we call the times of the [00:17:04] Gentiles. We find this expression in Luke's

gospel, chapter 21. It simply means that God has transferred the government of the earth from his favorite people and placed it into the hands of Gentiles. Now in the book of Deuteronomy, we find God saying he grouped the nations round about Israel.

He placed them in the center and all the nations were round about. And the intention of God was clearly that giving Israel wise laws, spiritual laws, good laws, how to approach God, how to live for God, how to represent him. That was to branch out to the nations. Idolatry was to be overcome and there would be wise government upon earth that would be pleasing to God. That failed. Instead of teaching the nations what they should do and avoiding idolatry, Israel adopted idolatry. [00:18:07] And became connected with the nations in their ways, behavior, dress, and all the rest of it. And of course, they fail. Now then, the Gentiles are given the opportunity to rule for God, to act in government upon the earth for God. They're given an opportunity, the Gentiles. Israel has failed. Well, we put it into the hand of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles began. Well now, were the Gentiles any better than Israel? Not one bit. And remember, we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. I want to say this. Nothing can be better for the government of the earth than what God set out for Israel. It was a perfect presentation of government. All that God gave to them, wise laws, laws affecting [00:19:09] their approach to him, laws that had to deal with themselves in a social way, laws too that governed them in their relations to others, the strangers. Wise, wise laws that covered the whole spectrum of their lives and to influence others. Couldn't be better. Came from God himself. Now then, what's the Gentile to do? Is he to bring in a code of laws of his own that will be beneficial to mankind? What is he to do? Is he to carry on with his idolatry? Well, that would be flying in the face of all that God said in relation to Israel. Sad to say, the Gentile rule is no better one quit than the failure that took place in Israel. [00:20:02] If we know anything about history, and I don't know a great deal, just a little. If we know about anything about history, we see different methods of government tried in this earth, and we'll come to that in chapter two eventually. But they're all ideas, ideas of men, how they can make the world better. We'll give them credit for their sincerity. Nevertheless, they have all failed. They all fail in one very prominent respect, and that is that they leave out God. Take the government of our own land. There may be an acknowledgement of prayer in the houses of parliament, but in all their deliberations, do we ever hear the politicians say, let's turn to the word of God and see what the word of God says? Never. Politics can't possibly take that into account. They have too many people to please, and they forget that their main responsibility, [00:21:05] according to Romans chapter 13, is they are directly chargeable to God. And if they fail in that, they fail in their administration. And so today, we find all sorts of plans and schemes for the benefit of the ruling of the world, whether it be United Nations or blocks here and blocks there, but they all fail. And that's a very sad thing. And so we come to this chapter, and we see the reasons for their failure. And I've written over this chapter. It's a time of change. Change.

That's a very common word in the world today. Change. We've tried this. It doesn't work. We'll try something else. That doesn't work. So there's a continual change, change, change, [00:22:02] and that, unfortunately, might spill over into the professing church too. Actually, what needs to be changed in all times, whether in times that relate to the earth and its government, or today in the testimony of Christianity, what needs to be changed is persons. That's the main thing that has to be changed. When each of us is changed so that we do the things that are pleasing to God, then in that sense, the Christian testimony is strengthened. In the measure in which we fail individually, then the Christian testimony is adversely affected. So if any change is to take place, it's not in methods, it's not in procedures, it's not in this idea or the next idea. Basically, it involves me, you, and every other Christian.

And when we live as Christ lived, and that's our example in the power of the Spirit, [00:23:04] then things are changing and changing for the better. So we find that the first thing that this great man does, and that's a change indeed. First of all, there's a change in that Judah and Benjamin are transported, or at least a remnant of them, from the land of promise into the land of Babylon, land of Shina. They're transported there. They have no part in the matter, nothing they can do about it. Jeremiah warned them, do what you're told now. Go into Babylon. You'll be all right in Babylon. Don't go to Egypt. You won't get any help there. That'll be a disaster. You go. Go along with the king as he comes and takes charge. Go with him and you'll be all right. You'll be there for 70 years. And so they're transported, a change of position. Now we find the king taking all those vessels that belong to the worship of God, and he puts them into the [00:24:05] house of his God, into the treasure house of his God. That, in a sense, is a direct challenge to Jehovah. If you read the historical part in the middle of the book of Isaiah, you remember when they came against Jerusalem, the captain of the army, he throws out the challenge, what are your gods? How is your God going to deliver you? Your God won't be able to deliver you. Where are the gods of the nations? They haven't been able to stand against my master. Do you think your God will be any different? It wasn't very long before he got the answer when his army was slaughtered. But here this man, he takes all those vessels and he puts them into the treasure house of his God. Victory! My God is supreme. That's what he's saying. All those vessels, they were once used [00:25:03] in the worship of another God, a God whom he didn't know, although he learns about him later on, and he puts them into the treasure house of his God, and that's a great victory for him. That's another change. That was an impious change. That was the change of a man who didn't know God. And you know, this is one of the marvelous things about this chapter. Here's a mighty emperor, mighty monarch, this great man, Nebuchadnezzar, and he doesn't know that he's a tool in the hand of God. Just the same with another one later on called Cyrus, and you read about him in the book of Isaiah, and God says, he's my shepherd, and he's my anointed, but he doesn't know it. And that's the thing that we have to understand today. The most high rules in the kingdoms of men, and there may be great monarchs, and there are great leaders in the world, and they may be very proud of their position, but they don't realize that they're only [00:26:05] tools in the hands of God, and he will use them for his ways upon earth in order to accomplish his will. We have to understand that we're still in the times of the Gentiles, and I believe that while the full expression of the title most high will be seen in the world to come, it also operates today the most high rules in the kingdoms of men. The Hitlers, the Stalins, the Mussolini's, the Napoleons, and many others, they all thought, yes, we'll conquer the world. That was their object. There are those today who think the same. Islam has that object. Roman Catholicism has that object. Others might have that object, the new age movement, and not one of them will succeed, not one of them. God, he reserves that for his well-beloved son. The one who died on the cross is the one who one day will be supreme in glory and in administration, but I believe with all my heart [00:27:07] that God operates as the most high in the kingdoms of men. Thus far, no further. God is in control.

If it wasn't like that, what would happen? Chaos, anarchy, absolute victory for Satan, and God will never, never, never allow that. Well then, we find that when the king gets those people into Babylon, he chooses the best, and of course that's an activity of Satan.

Satan is always attacking the best, and he wanted those young men brought under his full control so that they might be absorbed into the culture and religion of Babylon, and so he says, [00:28:01] children, we'll go down a bit to the end of chapter, verse four rather, end of verse four, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. Now, that's very, very crafty indeed, because he's striking at the very basis of the truth connected with Judah and Benjamin, or if you like, the nation of Israel. All their learning, all their understanding was bound up in the scriptures that they

had. They inspired words of the prophets that were given by God to Israel. There was their learning, shrined in the Hebrew language and also written down for their benefit. We find later on that when Daniel reads the prophet Jeremiah, he becomes instructed as to what is going to happen, and so if a Jew, an Israelite, wanted to learn the mind of God, he turned to his scriptures, the Hebrew scriptures, what was written for their benefit. [00:29:06] So when he says, I want them to forget all about what they learned, want them to forget their Hebrew language, I want them to learn my language, I want them to understand what our teaching is. Well then, all the teaching in Babylon was connected with idolatry and the glorifying of the king himself. All the teaching in the Hebrew language was glorifying God and telling them how they were to live for God. So if he gets them away from the Hebrew language and the Hebrew culture and the Hebrew teaching, he gets them away from God, gets them away from their responsibility and privileges, and he gets them occupied with evil things. Oh, how crafty that is. It's true in history when the English marauders used to cross the border and come to Scotland, [00:30:06] that's what they tried to do too, and destroy all the records. And of course, when the Scots replied, they did the same, and that was true in all countries. Destroy the records, destroy the traditions, destroy the histories, and by so doing, the land comes under complete domination. And oh dear friends, how successful God and Satan has been in that respect, even in the Christian testimony. Occupied with this, that, and the other thing. There's a verse in one of the epistles to Timothy, I just can't remember if it's the first or second, where it speaks about those who are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. That word ever learning means that they're continually learning about other things. When something new comes along, [00:31:05] oh we'll follow that, yes, that sounds good, yes. Something else comes along, ah yes, that's good too. Ever learning, always accumulating knowledge of one kind and another, but never arriving at the truth. And that's what Satan wants for Christians, to get sidetracked, blown about by every wind of doctrine. This, that, and the next thing, which appears so attractive, which appears so interesting, so alive, so energetic. Yes, we'll have that. And oh dear friends, it's not true. That's the basic thing, it's not true. And if it's not true, it's not worth pursuing. And so this was a very crafty endeavour, this change, a change of language, a change of learning. And if that can be achieved, then things go by the board. There comes a time when we read about it, when the children of Israel, [00:32:06] they spoke half the language of Ashdod and half the language of Israel. They're learning, the things of the world crept into their language, and they were talking about things that were of no profit. Isn't it sad when we as Christians might be able to talk more about the popular people in the entertainment world, or the sporting world, or the political world, or any other kind of world? Isn't it sad we can speak more about them than the people in the Bible, the great men of God and women of God? How sad it is. And that's the crafty means whereby the enemy can get us occupied with other things, the world's learning, the world's principles, the world's desires. Oh, how important this is to make sure that the foundation of what we believe is not being destroyed, but continually in spiritual exercise, [00:33:02] as we said at the very outset, spiritual exercise, things are maintained in living power in our souls. Then it says, the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. The food...

Is it falling over? What a catastrophe. Now it's a question of food. It's amazing when we read through the Bible how important a thing food is, and I'm not speaking just of the food that nourishes the body, I'm talking about the many things that have happened in relation to meals in the Bible, and I commend it to you for [00:34:05] your study. Just let me quote two. In the Old Testament, we find a man loses his birthright over a meal, and eventually lost the blessing. Very sad, simple thing, a meal. When we come to the New Testament, we find one of the foremost men in the Christian Testament at that time, apostle, he's vacillating in connection with meals, Jews and Gentiles, and by so doing he doesn't walk straightforwardly according to the gospel. Simple thing, food, and yet it was a very, very

serious matter. So if you go through the Bible, you'll find many, many more instances, and they're very, very important, but here Nebuchadnezzar, he wants to change the food, and of course that food was very likely offered to idols before it was partaken by the Babylonians. [00:35:07] Quite a common thing in their homes, not simply going to a temple to do this, but in their homes. I think I wrote a note in the circular recently to indicate the immense amount of idolatry that went on in Babylon. Thousands and thousands of gods and temples and so on are erected in Babylon. Dear friends, this was a very serious matter indeed, and that's why we find Daniel purposing in his heart that he's not going to partake of this at all, because it involved a very, very serious matter of compromise, and so this question of food is extremely important. In connection with the children of Israel, we have some excellent types of food, which of course present our Lord Jesus Christ, and so that's the kind of food we want to be [00:36:01] occupied with. And first of all, if you think of the nation of Israel in Egypt, and after the blood was placed upon the door posts and the lintel, you remember they were instructed to eat the roast lamb with bitter herbs and with their staff in their hand and so on, ready to move whenever God gave the word. And we believe that is appropriating all the person and value of the death of Christ, and also providing sustenance in getting us out of a world that's doomed and setting our feet on the pathway that leads to the promised land. So there we find the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's excellent food, the best food for the Christian. And then when they get onto the pathway that leads to the promised land, they have the manna. Every day the manna was provided without fail. Plenty for them, every one of them, great company, perhaps a million and a half, [00:37:06] and they're provided for day by day by God and his mercy. A type of our Lord Jesus Christ in his walk in this world, humble, lowly, subject, obedient man, the man of God's pleasure.

Excellent food, excellent food, strengthening food. And I often say this about the manna, if you want to see that it is good food, it is nourishing food, it is strong food, take a good look at Caleb. After 40 years, he says, I'm as strong today as I was when I set out on the pathway, and all that he ate was manna. Well now, there is encouragement for us if we want to be strong, lively, effective Christians, more and more we need to feed upon Christ, Christ here in his pathway. I'll say a word about that in a moment. [00:38:05] But then once they get into the land, the manna ceases. Are they going to starve? Not for one moment. God has provided food that was gathered in a previous harvest, the old corn of the land, and that tells us about Christ in glory, where he is at God's right hand. And my, that's a tremendously encouraging thing, to know that Christ at God's right hand is available for you and for me at every step of the pathway. Very encouraging indeed. Whether it be to understand something of the death of Christ that liberates us from this world, or something of that pathway of Christ that was so pleasing to God that helps us as we tour in a wilderness, or whether we reach the exalted position where Christ is at God's right hand and understand all that's centered in [00:39:02] him, excellent food. And the enemy doesn't want us to feed upon that. Maybe you've heard me say this before, but I'll repeat it. Many years ago, I went to visit a dear old brother called Jimmy Tate, who was an invalid for many, many years. And we began to talk about these types, and he said this, and I've never forgotten it. He said, isn't it a very humbling thing? The children of Israel, they never loathed the roast lamb in Egypt. They never loathed the old corn of the land, but they did loathe it. And he said, isn't it true today that Christians can rejoice that their sins are forgiven, and they've been set free because of the death of Christ? And don't they rejoice when they think they're going to glory where Christ is? [00:40:02] But they're not so happy to take the pathway of separation and rejection that is set out in Christ's humble here, the manna, the pathway of dependence. Isn't that humbling? I'm sure we all feel that. It's so easy to rejoice in things that bring blessing, and so easy to turn away from things that involve responsibility. And so we find that Nebuchadnezzar says, I want to change their food. We'll come to this in a moment. Daniel says no. Now then, we'll come a little further. Verse seven. Unto whom the prince of the eunuch gave names, for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and

to Hananiah of Shadrach, to Mishael, Meshach, and to Azariah of Bednico. By, this was another crafty move. He says, I'll change their names. [00:41:03] All those names that they have, the Hebrew names, are all connected with Jehovah, every one of them. They all connected with their God. The names that Nebuchadnezzar gave them are all connected with Nebuchadnezzar's gods. You see what he wanted? He wanted to get them away from all that belonged to their gods, their God, and get occupied with his gods. And he had many, they had one. And that was a great cry in Israel. There is one Lord, our God.

And so dear friends, this was another very, very crafty move. Now, I can't remember all these things, so I'm just going to read them out to you to confirm what I'm saying. Daniel, his name means God is judge. He changed his name to Belteshazzar, and it means, [00:42:05] Bell, protect his life. Now, if you turn to the 46th chapter of Isaiah, the first verse speaks about Bell and Nebo, two gods of Babylon. So here we find Nebuchadnezzar saying, Daniel, you forget that your God is judge. You come under the protection of my God. My God, Bell, will protect your life. Hananiah means God is gracious. Shadrach means the command of Aku, another Babylonian god. God is gracious. Why, all the favor of God was contained in that name, Hananiah. And now he's to be at the command of a heathen god, a pagan god. Oh, that's unthinkable for a man who knows the one true God. Mishael, who is as God is. And Meshach means who is as Aku is. Well, that's very serious.

[00:43:13] But I'm going to turn my back on the one true real God, the God who is. The Bible says those who come to God must believe that he is ever existing, must believe that he is, and he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him out. Now I've got to say, who is as Aku is? Oh, the heathen gods are greater than the one true God. Unthinkable for one who believes in the one true God. And lastly, Azariah, whom God helped.

Abednego means servant of Nabal. Very, very sad that one who can experience the help of God [00:44:05] can turn to a heathen God. That's tremendously sad indeed. And this is what Nebuchadnezzar meant by changing their names. And oh dear friends, we bear an honored name. Christian is an honored name. And we're thankful that we are Christians in the true sense of the word, that we follow Christ. We are children of God. We are sons of God. We are priests to God. Many, many names that we bear, those who really belong to our God. And we're not going to change them for the appellations that belong to this world. And they have many, but they're not honored. Oh no, we want to follow the one true and living God. So you can see these crafty endeavors on the part of Nebuchadnezzar change, change, change, change. It's always in one direction. It's towards Nebuchadnezzar's gods [00:45:06] and to obliterate the knowledge of the one true God. Well then, thank God for faithfulness that can resist that kind of thing. And this is why I believe we have this introductory chapter to the book of Daniel to indicate that the principle of faithfulness, faithfulness to God and his word is the only power whereby we can resist the efforts of the enemy to change the truth of God into a lie. And so we want to be alive to this and be like Daniel and his companions and on the basis of faithfulness resist. So it says, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs [00:46:05] that he might not defile himself. We're not told specifically what was the reason for the defilement if he had taken the food. There are two things that can be suggested. First of all that the food would be offered to idols and of course that's clear for us in the epistle to the Corinthians in chapter 10. Paul was into that matter but this affected Daniel in his day and of course unthinkable for any man who believed in the one true and living God to partake of food that had been offered in the worship of a heathen God. And so Daniel says I'm not going to take that and of course there might have been blood connected with those sacrifices which of course was



forbidden for a godly Israelite and so Daniel says I'm not going to [00:47:01] defile myself. And on the other hand it might have been some infringement of the dietary laws that we find. You remember that Israel they were instructed as to what was clean for them to eat and what was unclean so it may have been something that was unclean and Daniel says I'm not going to defile myself. I refuse to eat this food. Now that was a bold thing to say after all it was the king's commandment that had indicated that these people were to eat this food. It was his desire his commandment and to say I'm not going to do it was very courageous indeed and not only did he make a purpose in his heart he requested he took steps to try and avoid this thing and it says God brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. You see whenever [00:48:03] there is faithfulness to God, God's there and this is one of the things I said at the beginning here's a great monarch, great man, greatest man of his time in the world as far as the gentiles were concerned. Even greater in some features than even the favored people of God. God takes him up and uses him. He's a tool in the hands of God. Now God comes down to a young man, one young man and in the midst of all this corruption all this idolatry here's one young man who says I'm not going to do anything that's offensive to God and God's right behind him. Now that's a marvelous thing whether it's the highest in the world most important in the world one little person one young person who's prepared to be faithful God's there. Now that's an encouragement for you and for me. We're all pretty unimportant persons as far as this world's [00:49:05] concerned but not for God. All who want to be faithful are extremely important to God because we're going against the run of the tide and God delights where he finds faithfulness in any shape and form and of course we're not talking theoretically we're talking after many years of experience that wherever there is faithfulness God supports it. He wouldn't be God if he didn't. God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which will you're able but will provide the outlet. That's not the exact quotation but it's near it and here we find this expressed in Daniel. My my isn't that a wonderful thing in the midst of all the corruption and all the pride and pomp and glory of Babylon. Here's a young man possibly 16 to 19 somewhere around about [00:50:03] there and he says I'm going to please God and God brought him into favor. Then of course once the thing gets moving Daniel says I want you to prove us prove thy servants just give us the opportunity to prove that God is God prove that what we are doing is right. Well we can understand the servant of the king was a bit reluctant says I might lose my head over this but this is all right and so he acquiesced to the desire of Daniel and he changed the food and it says he gave them pulse. Now that's a vegetable kind of food whatever it was and that of course might support the idea that there was blood in the sacrifices that were offered to the Babylonian gods and now offered to Daniel and his companions and so he takes vegetables no blood in them and of course [00:51:07] that comes directly from God. You'll find I think in the book of let me see second Samuel when a great amount of provisions were brought to David you'll find that pulse was amongst them. Good food for the king good food for a young man in Babylon when he desires to be faithful to God and so they ate it Daniel and his three companions and at the end of the period there they were fatter fitter more attractive than all the others that had been fed on the king's meat. What does it mean? Surely means this that for Christians if we feed upon Christ there's going to be a level of behavior and life that's attractive first of all to God [00:52:07] and is beneficial to men. I exercise myself says Paul to have a conscience void of offense towards God, God first and man and I believe if it were possible to get statistics regarding crime I'm perfectly sure the amount of crime that takes place amongst upstanding Christians of integrity is negligible compared to what goes on in the unconverted world which to me indicates the kind of life the kind of behavior that's nourished by feeding upon divine things feeding upon Christ feeding upon divine principles set out by God that kind of thing makes Christians far more attractive in the sight of God and in the sight of men. Why is it that employers are [00:53:06] thankful for Christians who are upright and who can be dependent upon because they know there's an integrity there an honesty and an uprightness if it's not so it's a very sad reflection on the life and behavior of a Christian if he isn't

marked by dependability integrity as we find in the life of Daniel in the rest of this book but I believe by and large this is true in the lives of Christians they are what they feed upon if they feed upon Christ then there is that kind of life that is pleasing to God and so Daniel and his companions they were proved. Verse 17 as for these four children God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom and Daniel had understanding [00:54:04] in all visions and dreams. Turn their back upon all that belongs to Babylon and God gave them all that was necessary so that when we come to chapter 2 and to chapter 5 when there's a problem Babylonian men useless don't even know where to start but the man of God knows because God gave them wisdom and instruction and so on if they had immersed themselves in the learning of the Babylonians they would have just been like the Babylonians unable to interpret the dreams and the visions as they were able to do oh how wonderful this is God gave them God supported them God was behind them oh what an encouragement for faithfulness for you and for me some of us have very long to go at the very longest and the testimony of Christianity [00:55:04] rests upon the shoulders of those who are younger and this is one of the basic features that is necessary that is faithfulness and I believe we could write over this chapter the benefit of faithfulness in spite of the untoward circumstances now just one point verse 21 and Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus now that tells us a lot it tells us that Belshazzar that tells us that Nebuchadnezzar disappears it tells us that Belshazzar disappears but it tells us that the man of faith continues and thank God that will always be true when the great men of this world with all their ideas come and go those who are faithful to the Lord continue and because Christ is in high [00:56:06] and because the Holy Spirit is indwelling the believers then the testimony of Christianity will continue and will continue until the Lord comes and the question for you and for me is are we in it intelligently actively doing what is pleasing to the Lord and avoiding the things that are obnoxious to him well these are just a few remarks there much more in this wonderful chapter may we be encouraged for his name's sake