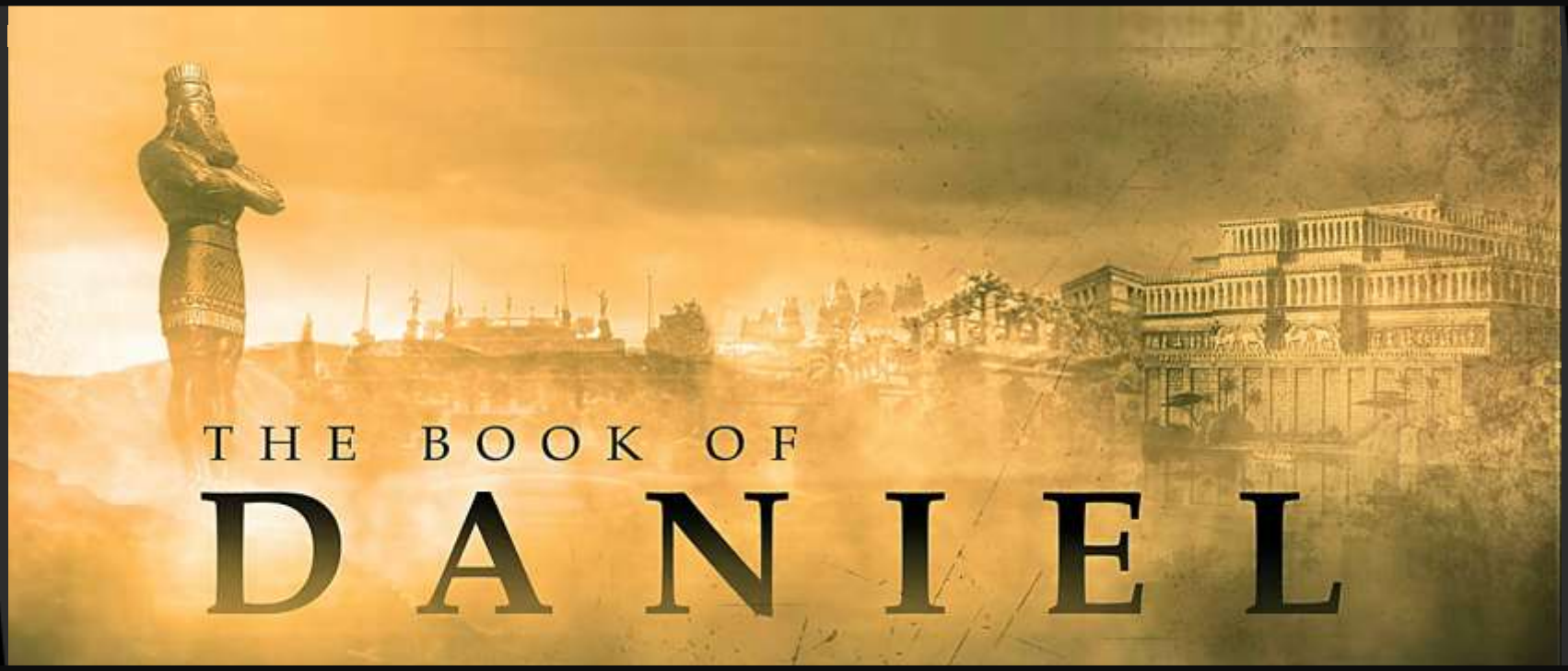
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...a verse by verse study

Introduction

- Daniel contains some of the best-loved stories in the Bible
  - Daniel in the Lions den
  - The story of Sharach, Meshach & Aded-Nego & the fiery furnace
    - Sadly, for many, these are just quaint stories
    - Yet there is compelling evidence for the historical integrity of this record
- It is a book of history
- But it is also a book of prophecy
- …and it is a book of devotion to God

Introduction

- His ministry lasted over 70 years
- Therefore, we see that Daniel's ministry stretched into his late 80's, and saw him serve as 'prime minister' under two successive world empires
  - a feet unparalleled in history.
- But as Daniel records at the end of chapter 1, it was God alone who had lifted him up. His is the power, glory might and dominion, He alone rules in the kingdoms of men.

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

Daniel 1:1-2

- The book of Daniel opens with an historical statement.
- Critics question this statement on two counts:
  - 1) They claim there is no evidence of this siege
  - 2) Nebuchadnezzar was not king in 606 B.C.

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

Daniel 1:1-2

- Berosus and Josephus, along with the accounts in Kings, Chronicles and Daniel all support the fact that Nebuchadnezzar *did* come into Judah early in the reign of king Jehiokim;
- Berosus and Josephus also unite with Chronicles and Daniel in affirming that captives were taken from Judea to Babylon during this time.

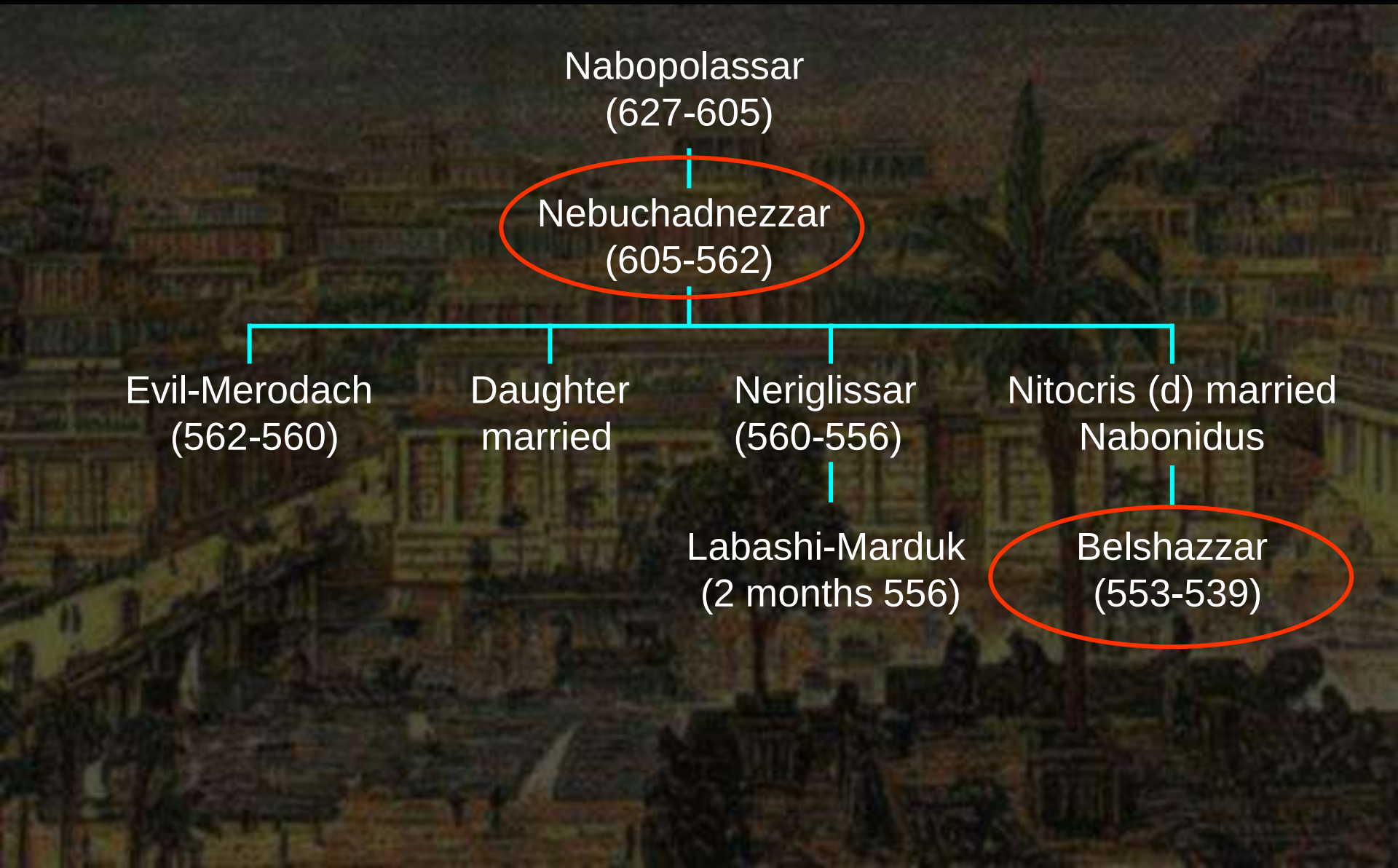
Historical Record

- It is a matter of historical record that Jews were deported to Babylon.
- For the previous 150 years or so, Israel had been preparing for invasion.
  - Initially the threat of Assyria loomed - the Northern kingdom of Israel had been carried away to Assyria in 722 B.C.
- Now the might of Babylon posed an imminent threat to remaining southern kingdom of Judah.
- It is inconceivable that Judah would have let its finest young people and wealth be taken to Babylon without putting up a struggle.

Historical Record

- Nebuchadnezzar did not officially become king until after he had laid siege to Jerusalem.
- Josephus records that Nebopolassar died whilst Nebuchadnezzar was in ‘Palastine’ (606B.C.),
- Thus, by the Babylonian way of reckoning, Nebuchadnezzar’s first year would have been 605 B.C. (the year of ascension was not counted, being the final year of the previous king).
- So why does Daniel call him ‘king’
- Because by the time he wrote this account Nebuchadnezzar was king!

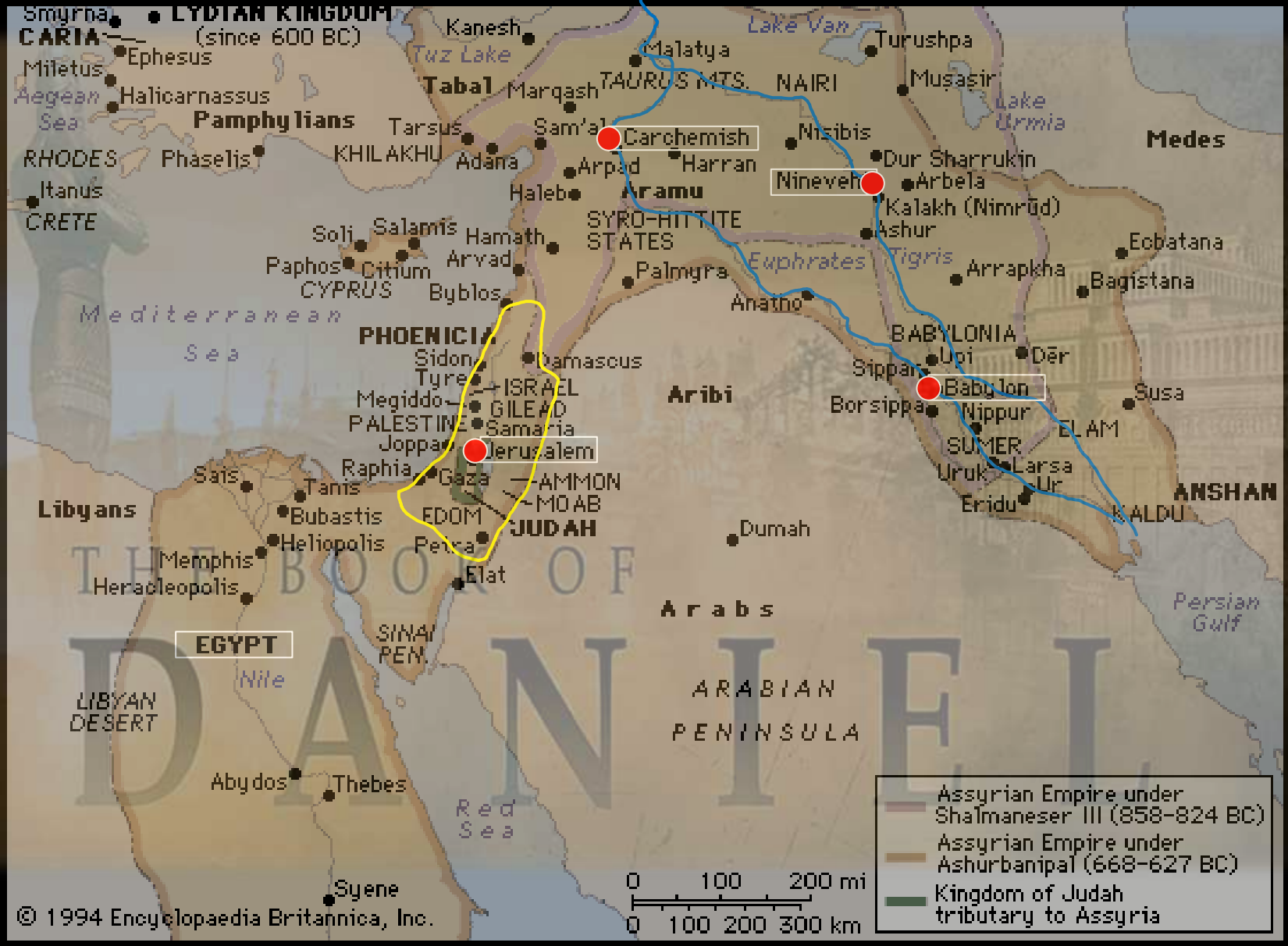
Kings of Babylonian Empire



Chronology

- 612 BC: Nineveh falls
  - to an alliance of Babylon and Media
- 609 BC: Pharaoh Necho leads army against Assyria
  - Josiah fights Necho and gets killed 2 Chron 35:20-24
- 606 BC: Battle of Carchemesh
  - Nebuchadnezzar vs Pharaoh Necho
  - On his way back, Nebuchadnezzar stops off at Jerusalem to take some trophies back to Babylon from the once great nation of Israel
  - At this time Nebuchadnezzar receives word that his father (Nebopolassar) has died.
  - Nebuchadnezzar is now king of the largest empire the world had known up to that time!

The Geography



The Final Kings of Judah

Josiah

Died in battle against Pharaoh Necho

Jehoahaz (3mts)

Taken to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho

Jehoiakim

			609
2 Chron 36:4	Appointed by Pharaoh Necho	1	608
2 Chron 36:5	Reigned 11 years	2	607
Daniel 1:1	Nebuchadnezzar conquered in 3rd year →	3	606
		4	
2 Kings 24:1	Served for 3 years	5	
		6	
		7	
		8	
2 Kings 24:1	Rebelled for 5 years	9	
		10	
		11	

Jehoiachin → 3mts 11d.

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of
Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto
Jerusalem, and besieged it.
2 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.

Daniel 1:1-2

- Note: "The Lord gave Jehoiakim…"
  - Daniel sees this as literally fulfilled prophecy
  - Daniel was fundamentalist!

Fulfilment of Prophecy

I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

Habakkuk 1:5-6

Fulfilment of Prophecy

> ...this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years"
>
> **Jeremiah 25:11**

- When Habakkuk and Jeremiah prophesied this, Babylon was nothing more than just a city state of the then great Assyrian Empire.
- This is partly why so many false prophets had risen up who spoke against the notion of impending judgment.

Daniel's Faith

- Despite how it seemed on the surface, because he trusted God's word through the mouths of the prophets, Daniel knew that God was very much in control and so he says: *"the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand".*
- This was no accident or random event.

- *We can all see God in exceptional things, but it requires the culture of spiritual discipline to see God in every detail. Never allow that the haphazard is anything less than God's appointed order – Oswald Chambers*

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2 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.

Daniel 1:1-2

- Fulfilment of 2 Kings 20:14-18

Fulfilment of Prophecy

Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

2 Kings 20:14-18

Fulfilment of Prophecy

And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 20:14-18

3 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 princes;
4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

Daniel 1:3-4

Ashpenaz

- An inscription was found on a clay tablet that is now in the British museum confirming the role of Ashpenaz; the inscription reads: “master of the kings eunuchs” – so once again confirming the historical accuracy of Daniel.
- “The tablet gives the name and title of a high-ranking Babylonian officer who, according to Jeremiah (ch39), was present at the historic siege of Jerusalem with King Nebuchadnezzar II himself”



Young Captives

- The practice of carrying away the best and brightest of a conquered nation was a good strategic move.
- Firstly it meant that you rob that nation of its future leaders, and secondly it would help to keep the conquered nation in subjection, knowing that its favourite sons were ‘hostages’ under the ruling regime.
- The ancient cultures knew that the wealth of a nation is not its silver and gold but its youth; if the next generation were to be destroyed the empire would crumble.

5 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.
6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

Daniel 1:5-6

- 3-year training programme for Daniel and friends
- Intended to be ‘nourishing’
  - What the world offers seldom is!

7 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 Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

Daniel 1:7

- This was intended to make them forget their God and embrace the god's and culture of Babylon.

New Names Given

Daniel	Belteshazzar
"God is my Judge"	"May Bel protect youl"
Hananiah	Shadrach
"Beloved of the Lord"	"Illumined by the Rah"
Mishael	Meshach
"Who is as God"	"Who is like unto the Acou"
Azariah	Abednego
"The Lord is My Help"	"Servant of Nego, a shining fire"

17 To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation 2:17

- A new name given that we might be conformed to His likeness

Daniel's Purity

- How much this change of names influenced Daniel's thinking can be seen in the fact that only once does Daniel call himself by this new name, and it only appears ten times in total in the book - including this occurrence.
  - Bill Cooper points out that Daniel intentionally miss-spells this new name so as not to give any honour to the false Babylonian god!
- Yet he uses His Hebrew name 75 times.
  - Daniel never forgot that 'God was his judge"

8 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 that he might not defile himself.

Daniel 1:8

- What an incredible statement by a 14 year-old boy.
- And even more remarkable when you try to picture the following:

Bright Lights of the City

- A 14-16 year old Daniel and his friends leave Jerusalem and travel for weeks across desert terrain.
- Suddenly they see a city in the distance. As they get closer the scale becomes clear.
- This is a city that is 15 miles per side, walls that are 330ft high and 80ft thick
  - wide enough for the Babylonians to have chariot races around the walls – six a breast!
- 250 towers are around the walls; 80ft brass gates reflecting the sun and shining for miles around, and the infamous hanging gardens that were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

- With the Euphrates river running through the city, Babylon had orchards and vineyards inside the city as well as grazing for the herds; pine trees and all kinds of foliage – in the middle of a desert!
- It was completely self-sustaining so that in the event of a siege they could simply shut the gates and carry on life as normal.
- There were over 200 open alters throughout the city, 153 different temples including one that had an 8 mile perimeter. Another had a perimeter of 3 miles.
- One table from the temple of Merodach was 40ft long and 6ft wide made from pure gold.
- The city was about 225 square miles inside, which is about 4-5 times the size of London today.

Babylon 606 B.C.



Bright Lights of the City

- Into all of this come these four young Hebrew boys. You can hear the taunts:
- ‘Don’t tell us about your God – He’s the one whose temple we have just ransacked in Jerusalem, and we’ve brought all of His golden cups and bowls and shields to put them in the temple of our gods – you better start worshipping our gods, they’re the ones with real power!’
- ‘You don’t want to keep those Hebrew names either, people will make fun of you – being named after that God, you need new names that people here will respect.

Bright Lights of the City

- Daniel, what's the use of being called 'my God is Judge' from now on you should be called 'may Bell protect you'.
- Hananiah, there's no point being called 'God is gracious', if He was, you wouldn't be here would you! 'You can be 'Illuminated by Rah'.
- Mishael, people will laugh if they hear you being called 'Who is like the Lord', so why not be 'Who is like Acou' one of our gods.
- And Azariah, you need to rethink your name 'The Lord helps', after all you are not in Jerusalem but Babylon. You should be called 'The servant of Nebo'.

Bright Lights of the City

- Now what would be the problem with eating a bacon sandwich? Or maybe an Oyster? Or having a glass of the king's wine?
- After all Daniel was now a long way away from those who would disapprove, what harm would it do and who cared in Babylon anyway, everyone else would be doing it and no one would think less of him?
- This was the temptation facing these young teenage boys, yet we read: *"He purposed in his heart……"*

Purpose of Heart

- This was not a spur of the moment decision but a way of life that Daniel was not prepared to compromise for anyone or anything.
- As Joseph in Egypt had rejected the lust of the flesh for the sake of his God, so did Daniel.
- Purity was the key; but it is so easy to give in, you only have to do it once and there's no going back.
- The decision was made before the choice was presented.

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy
in all manner of conversation;
16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy

1 Peter 1:15-16

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

Daniel 1:9

- “When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” Prov 16:7

10 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 ye make me endanger my head to the king.

Daniel 1:10

- Ashpenaz was understandably concerned at Daniel's request to have a kosher diet.
- If these boys didn't turn out looking fit and healthy, he would lose more than just his job!

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

Daniel 1:11

- Not content with ‘no’ Daniel goes to Ashpenaz’ servant and proposes a 10-day experiment…
- It would have been easier to give in!

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let
them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.
13 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.

Daniel 1:11-13

- Note that Daniel asks on behalf of his friends!
  - We presume they were in agreement with Daniel!
- This is the importance of fellowship
  - We encourage and help each other to do the right thing!

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved
them ten days.
15 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.
15 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat,
and the wine that they should drink; and gave them
pulse.

Daniel 1:14-15

- Can you imagine how this went down with the other royal captives!
- This may be the start of the distain shown to Daniel

17 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.

Daniel 1:17

- This is setting the scene for what will come…

Promotion is of the LORD

6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.
7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Psalm 75:6-7

Promotion is of the LORD

- We strive so often, but it is the Lord who increases knowledge and gives understanding.
  - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prov 1:7)
- Only a short while before this Daniel and his friends were being taken captive and led to a foreign land uncertain of their future. But like Joseph in Egypt they remained true to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and He gave them favour and exalted them in due time.
  - “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)

Grace to the Humble

29 So He *said to them,* "Assuredly, I *say to you,* there is
no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife
or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,
30 who shall not receive many times more in this
present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29-30

18 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.
19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

Daniel 1:18-19

- *"Therefore they were appointed to stand before the king"*

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:20

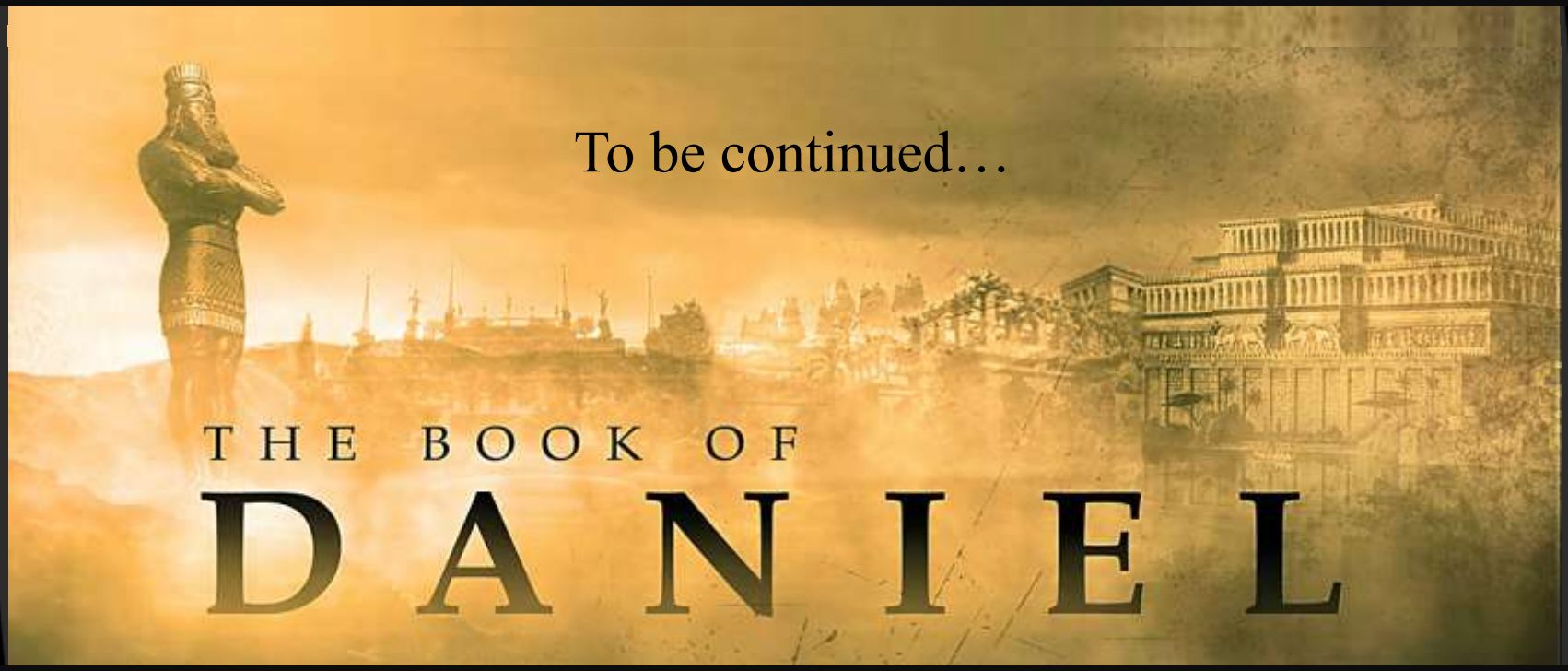
- The king's council consisted of:
  - Chaldeans – native to Babylon
  - Astrologers – who interpreted the stars
  - Sorcerers – who used enchantments
  - Magicians (Magi) – a priestly sect from Persia
    - There was a particular rivalry between the Chaldeans & Magi

21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

Daniel 1:21

- Daniel purposed in his heart as a 14 year old, and as we will see, nothing has changed by the time he is in his 90's.
- *'Daniel continued'*
  - What a testimony, what a challenge!

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...a verse by verse study



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