

The Historical Aspects of Daniel (chs. 1-6)

**I. THE TIMES AND EVENTS THROUGH THE REIGN OF NEBU-
CHADNEZZAR, (chs. 1-4)**

A. Nebuchadnezzar moves upon God's nation, (1:1-7)

1. Nebuchadnezzar overthrows Jerusalem, (1, 2)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v1} **In the third year** (4th year [605 B.C., Jer. 25:1] under the Jewish calendar),¹ **of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah,**² **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**³ (Nebuchadnezzar means “*Nebo, protect my frontier,*” and he reigned for 43 years, [605-562]), **came to Jerusalem**⁴ **and besieged it,** (2 Chr. 36:6, 7).

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 **COMMENTARY:**

¹“In Palestine the accession year was counted as the first year of the reign, whereas in Babylon it was reckoned separately, so that the next year was considered the first year of the reign. Daniel, therefore, dates this event from the Babylonian viewpoint, as the third year of Jehoiakim's reign,” (Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*, [Moody: IL, 1978], p. 1159).

²Jehoiakim (the eldest son of godly Josiah), was a godless king - he was the one who cut up and incinerated the copies of the Scriptures that Jeremiah produced, (Jer. 36:9-32; [which included the prophecy of 70 years of Babylonian captivity, {Jer. 25:1-11}]). Jehoiakim was deposed, degraded and eventually buried with the donkeys.

The Babylonian captivity was for two principle reasons:

1. Disobedience to God's Word, (e.g., for 490 years they broke the Sabbath of the land [*not to cultivate the land*], which was to take place every 7th year). “God is not playing games with us in the Bible. When God tells us to do something we must do it or pay the price,” (John Phillips and Jerry Vine, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, [Loizeaux Brothers: NJ, 1990], p. 20).
2. Forsaking the worship of God for wholesale idolatry.

God's prophets had been predicting for decades this moment in time, (Isa. 39:6, 7 gives us the threat).

³He became king shortly after this battle as his father, King Nabopolassar died and word was sent to Nebuchadnezzar to hurry back to Babylon. So Nebuchadnezzar quickly made Jehoiakim a vassal king under a suzerainty covenant (*the same as Pharaoh Necho had done when he defeated Jehoiakim in 609 B.C.*), instead of taking him to Babylon (Jehoiakim had little intention of keeping the covenant, [2 Ki. 24:1,2]), and then Nebuchadnezzar made a bee line across the shortest desert route (through the wilderness), rather than around the fertile crescent (which the majority took on their return), to Babylon. Upon Nebuchadnezzar's return he was crowned king.

⁴Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem after first soundly defeating the Egyptians and their hold on Palestine at Carchemish. This took place in the May-June campaign of 605 B.C. on the upper Euphrates River and forced the Egyptians back to their homelands, thereby Nebuchadnezzar opened up land of Palestine to the domination of the Babylonians.

^{v2} **And the Lord** (the Hebrew name *Adonai* is used here which

speaks of God as *supreme Master*, [which implies, no matter what anyone thinks or believes about this incident, *Adonai*, the God of the Hebrews is in complete control of the situation]), **gave** (it was no accident, bad break, tough luck, coincidence or human achievement – *the Lord* had ordered and arranged it – Nebuchadnezzar himself was from the very start only a vessel of mere means to accomplish God’s own ends, [God even used a donkey once, {Num. 22:30}], **Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand** - (1st of 3 deportations in 605 B.C.; 2nd in 597;⁵ 3rd in 586),⁶ **with some** (not all), **of the articles** (sanctified implements of worship, [some of the treasures that king Hezekiah had revealed to the Babylonian emissaries in 2 Kings 20:13, {701 B.C. - 96 years prior}], **of the house of God**⁷ (the temple Solomon had built), **which he** (Nebuchadnezzar), **carried into the land of Shinar** (the land of Mesopotamia where the tower of Babel was built [Gen. 10:10; 11:2], also, in the end days world government will again gravitate to a religious and commercial Babylon in Shinar - [Persian Gulf, {Rev. 18}], **to the house of his god** (archeology shows that the chief Babylonian god was Marduk⁸); **and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.**⁹

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⁵Jehoiakim squandered state funds on a new palace (Jer. 22:13-19), and the last 3 years of his rule “were in revolt against Babylon; and this prompted Nebuchadnezzar to initiate another attack on Jerusalem” (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 29), (2 Ki. 24:1, 2). During this second deportation, Ezekiel was carried off as well as a greater number of the general population.

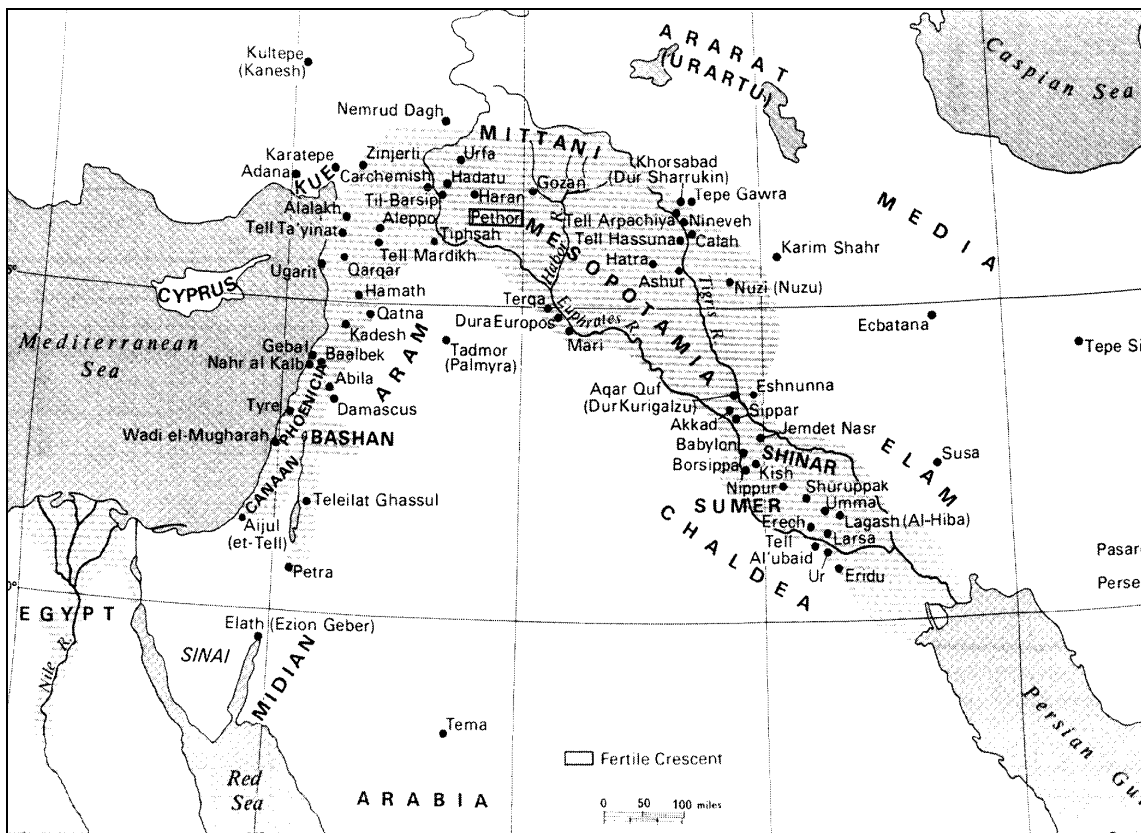
⁶“In 586 B.C., . . . totally exasperated by the disloyalty of Jewish kings and rulers, Nebuchadnezzar ordered *all* the sacred vessels to be destroyed or carried off to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:18),” (Whitcomb, *Daniel*, p. 26). Only the poorest of the poor were left this time.

⁷“Nebuchadnezzar shrewdly took enough of the sacred vessels to demonstrate the superiority of his god over the God of the Jews but left enough in the Temple so the Jews would be able to carry on their ceremonies unhindered and thus be less likely to rebel against their new overlord,” (Whitcomb, *Daniel*, p. 26).

⁸“Marduk was one of the chief gods in the kingdom of Babylon. Each spring the Babylonians celebrated a New Year’s Festival. Marduk was officially honored. The statues of all other Babylonian gods were transported to the city of Babylon by ship or wagon and brought before the statue of Marduk in the great hall of Marduk’s temple. Together, these gods were supposed to help determine and shape each man’s life for the coming year,” (V. Gilbert Beers, *The Victor Handbook of Bible Knowledge*, [Victor: IL, 1981], p. 290). The picture is “The god Marduk . . . from Babylon, middle of 9th century,” (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 4, p. 73).



⁹Nebuchadnezzar probably put these vessels in his god’s temple to thank him for victory and in recognition of his gods *supposed* sovereignty. It was an act of worship - Nebuchadnezzar contributes his success to his god and not the one and true God.



The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology, E.M. Blaiklock and R.K. Harrison, ed., (Zondervan: MI., 1983), p. 490.

~ **APPLICATION:**

(1:1) All that takes place in history is what God directs and permits. God uses all people and nations to accomplish His will, (through the godly as well as through the godless). God used Pharaoh as much as He used Moses and here we see that God is using Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel. Several years later we will see God using Pilate and Christ in the gospels, and the antichrist and the two witnesses in Revelation. Today God uses you and me. No one is going to change the decrees of the Lord, they have been established before the foundation of the world. We are either thinking and acting in *cooperation with God* or we are thinking and acting in *opposition to Him*; we are either godly, ungodly or godless. God will always achieve His desired ends, but, in the end we will not achieve all of ours if we die without Christ, or without living for Him. God always wins, we can win or lose; the *choice* is ours.

1. **Knowing that God will use your life to put Himself on display – whatever your thoughts or actions may be (whether they are in cooperation with God or in opposition to Him); would you say God is revealing to you and those around you, what He can do in and through a:**

o **Godly person**, (i.e., is saved, *is habitually* faithful; committed; obedient, serving and growing)

o **Ungodly person**, (i.e., may or may not be saved, *is habitually*)

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- rebellious; unresponsive; inconsistent; and selfish)
- o **Godless person**, (i.e., is unsaved and doing what is right in his or her own eyes)

2. *Why did you check the above?*

3. *In light of your above choice and response, what attributes of God do you think God is displaying to you and to others through you? For example:*

- o **Holiness** Why? _____
- o **Justice** Why? _____
- o **Goodness** Why? _____
- o **Love** Why? _____
- o **Wrath** Why? _____
- o **Grace** Why? _____
- o **Mercy** Why? _____
- o **Patience** Why? _____

4. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

5. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

6. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

7. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____
 Date: ____ / ____ / ____

(1:1) Although God may delay a long time, it in no way means that God is *slack* concerning His threats or promises as Jehoiakim lived his life. We must not think that God will wink or overlook our sin this once, or think that because we've sinned before and God didn't *seemingly* do anything about it therefore we can probably do it again. Man far too often falls for Satan's lie that God's patience, long-suffering, grace and mercy is really nothing more than oversights, indifference and impotence on God's part. Those who fall for the lies and deceptions of Satan, the flesh, or the world, have a rude awakening around the corner. You won't know the day, the hour, or the

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circumstances, but the day will come, (cp. Psalms chapter 1, [you will either be found to be wise or a fool – you have to be one or the

other, luck has nothing to do with it]).

1. On a scale of one to ten, (10 being the greatest)

- ◆ How would you rate your sensitivity to sin?
(1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 8 9 10)
- ◆ How would you rate your ability to discern sin?
(1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 8 9 10)
- ◆ How would you rate your attitude towards sin?
(1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 8 9 10)
- ◆ How would you rate your repentance record towards sin?
(1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 8 9 10)
- ◆ How would you rate your victory record over sin?
(1 2 3 4 5 - 6 7 8 9 10)

2. Do you have some sin in your life that you give yourself to so often that you sometimes even forget that it is sin?

Yes No

3. Do you have some sin in your life that you don't care what God says or thinks about it, you are not going to give it up?

Yes No

4. Do you have some sin in your life that you have just given up on trying to have victory over it?

Yes No

5. Do you have some sin in your life that you have seemingly gotten away with for so long that getting caught or punished for it rarely becomes a major issue anymore?

Yes No

6. If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?

7. What would you like to change or further develop?

8. Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?

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How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

NOTES:

(2:2) Do we not as Christians *far too often* take *far too much* credit for our accomplishments, and vice versa accredit God *far too often* and *far too much* for our failures?

Even though Nebuchadnezzar's god *didn't even exist*, he still was able to [at this point in time], to see beyond himself to a higher power and authority for his accomplishments, [the thought being, whoever has the biggest god always wins]. We as believers who know and profess the one and only true God *who does exist*, too often do not recognize His work in our life. God will soon prove to Nebuchadnezzar who is really sovereign just as He will in due time prove the same to you.

1. *When you do what you do (at home, school, work, church, alone, with others), what is your motivation? For example:*

- Friendship God Praise Peer pressure
 Principle Fear Power Prestige

2. *When you are complemented for something, how do you handle it? For example:*

- ♦ What do you say? _____
 ♦ What do you think about? _____

3. *When you are reprimanded or criticized for something, how do you handle it? For example:*

- ♦ What do you say? _____
 ♦ What do you think about? _____

4. *How much time does God get when choosing what you're going to do, when and how you're going to do it?*

5. *How much credit does God get for your accomplishments?*

- Generally nothing
 A generic little "Thank you God," when you remember
 Generally a "Let me tell you what God did in my life today!"

6. *When things go wrong how much grumbling do you do with God, family or others?*

- Generally plenty Generally little

7. *In your prayer life, how much entails thankfulness verses petition?*

- Generally plenty Generally little

8. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

9. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

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10. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

11. How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

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2. Nebuchadnezzar seizes the superior youth, (3-5)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v3} **Then** (after this), **the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master** (captain, chief), **of his eunuchs¹⁰ to bring some** (a portion of), **of the children of Israel** (in general), **and** (specifically), **some of the king's** (Jehoiakim's), **descendants** (offspring), **and some of the nobles** (the elite, the princes),¹¹

^{v4} **young men** (Jewish youths were around the age of 15-20 years old), **in whom there was no blemish** (no obvious external, physical flaw; *in good physical condition*), **but good-looking¹²** (*handsome in appearance* so as to attract attention to Nebuchadnezzar's court), **gifted in all wisdom** (who have insight, comprehension; act circumspectly, act prudently, act wisely - *the ability to make distinctions and proper decisions according to the known or revealed facts*), **possessing knowledge** (has a good perception of surroundings, possesses and/or knows various skills, sciences - *knows a lot of factual information*),

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 **COMMENTARY:**

¹⁰Eunuch denotes (a) an emasculated man, a eunuch, Matt. 19:12; (b) in the 3rd instance in that verse, one naturally incapacitated for, or voluntarily abstaining from, wedlock; (c) one such, in a position of high authority in a court, a chamberlain, Acts 8:27-39, (Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, [Fleming H. Revell: Grand Rapids, MI] 1981). It is uncertain whether Daniel and his friends were emasculated, (see 2 Kings 20:18), (*The Ryrie Study Bible*, p. 1306). Potiphar was a "**saris**," eunuch even though he was married, (Gen. 37:36).

¹¹It is possible that Nebuchadnezzar took a large number of Judeans captive and then, after the arrival of all of them in Babylon, made a selection from among them of the young men he wanted. It is more likely, however, in view of the reason for picking them, that the selection was made already in Jerusalem. The very choicest young men were desired, and greater selection would have been possible if made in the home country. Nothing is suggested in the story, either, that any persons besides the youths were taken. Nebuchadnezzar's interest seems not to have been punishment, but only selection of those who could strengthen his rule, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 31).

¹²A handsome form was connected, in Oriental ideas, with mental power, (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *A Commentary*, p. 383).

and quick to understand

(catches on or puts things together fast, ability to see connections of facts and discern their relationship to one another - *keen in-*

tellectually), **who had ability** (the strength, power, might), **to serve in the king's palace** (referring to their personality),¹³ **and whom they might teach the language and literature** (i.e., astronomy, astrology, mathematics, natural history, mythology, agriculture, architecture and the old languages of Babylon), **of the Chaldeans**,¹⁴(the elite, privileged class of several classes of wise men in Babylon. The kings of Babylon belonged to this class).

^{v5} **And the king appointed** (assigned, designated the menu, [no options]), **for them a daily provision** (amount), **of the king's delicacies** (dainties), **and of the wine which he drank** (the oriental custom of feeding the officers of the royal court the choicest of everything from the king's table), **and three years** (Elijah had a 3 yr. school and Jesus taught His apostles for 3 yrs.), **of training** (schooling, tutoring), **for them** (3 yr. scholarship all expenses paid), **so that at the end** (conclusion), **of that time they might serve** (be actively employed) **before the king**, (in his service).

3. *Nebuchadnezzar inherits four special youths, (6, 7)*

^{v6} **Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel** (God is my Judge), **Hananiah** (Beloved of the Lord), **Mishael** (Who is God), **and Azariah**, (The Lord is my help).

^{v7} **To them the chief of the eunuchs** (Ashpenaz), **gave** (new), **names:**¹⁵ **he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar** (Bel's Prince, [*the chief god Marduk*], {cf. 4:8}); **to Hananiah, Shadrach** (command of Aku, [*moon-god*]); **to Mishael,**

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¹³The young men were to have a personality which would allow them to live in a royal court without embarrassment. They should have a proper manner, poise, confidence, and knowledge of social proprieties, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 33).

¹⁴That the heathen lore was not altogether valueless appears from the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses. Compare also the cause of the eastern magi who sought Jesus, and who may have drawn the tradition as to the 'King of the Jews,' from Dan. 9:24, written in the East. As Moses was trained in the learning of the Egyptian sages, so Daniel was trained in that of the Chaldeans, in order to familiarize his mind with mysterious lore, and so develop his heaven-bestowed gift of understanding in visions (vv. 4, 5, 17), (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *A Commentary*, p. 383).

¹⁵The kind of name-change indicated, replacing Hebrew with Babylonian-type names, was not uncommon in ancient custom. Joseph was given the Egyptian name Zaphnath-paaneah (Gen. 41:45) and Eater's Hebrew name wan Hadassah (Esth. 2:7). There were reasons for making such changes, however, and here it was certainly to make the young men more Babylonian, (Wood, *Daniel*, p.36). No longer were they to think like Jews and be loyal to Jehovah. Now they were to think like Babylonians and be loyal to the Babylonian gods, (Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 4).

Meshach (who is what Aku is?); **and to Azariah, Abed-Nego**, (Servant of Nebo, [*the god of wisdom and writing*]).

F APPLICATION:

(1:3) Daniel and his three friends, along with many others were taken prisoners. The godly are not exempt from the consequences of the sin of others. What we do or fail to do, can and does affect the lives of others. Our actions can either bring blessings upon those around us or curses, (e.g., in Gen. 37 Joseph's brothers dishonor God by selling him to the Egyptians and their actions are devastating to Joseph and their father, but in Gen. 40-50, Joseph honored God by his actions and thus brought blessings to those around him).

1. *How has your life been frustrated, made more difficult or even forever changed as a result of another person or persons action?*

2. *Can you think of anytime that your actions frustrated, made more difficult or even forever changed a person's life?*

3. *Have you ever repented and confessed your wrong doing to God and those that were affected?* Yes No
Did you also ever make restitution when and where ever possible? Yes No

4. *Can you make someone repentant and confess to God and yourself about some way that they hurt you?* Yes No ***If no, what can you do or what does God hold you accountable for?***

What you have done to others What others have done to you

5. *If others never repent and ask you to forgive them or make any restitution whatsoever for their wrong doing, what should you do?*

- Seek revenge?
- Treat them like the plague and become bitter?
- Figure out a way to get back what you lost?
- Forgive them whether they ask for it or not?
- Talk about them in a bad way to others?
- Pray for them and work at maintaining a forgiving attitude so that if they should ever ask your forgiveness you would be ready to genuinely give it, while going on with your life in spite of the hurt?

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6. If others do repent and ask you to forgive them and even try to make restitution for their wrong doing, what should you do?

- o Tell them you won't forgive them?
- o Make it as hard as possible for them, make them beg?
- o Forgive them only once or twice at the most?
- o Forgive them but never let them forget it?
- o Forgive them but rub your hardship in their face?
- o Accept their forgiveness and go on no matter how it has been affected with a good attitude?

7. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

8. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

9. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

10. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

(1:7) The devil keys in on those who are “pleasing in appearance, healthy, and handsome.” “That’s the kind of person the devil wants to destroy. Daniel and his friends were young, athletic, and strong. . . . They were to be subjected to the academic, philosophical, and religious ideas of a godless civilization, to pagan philosophies and evolutionary theories. . . . There is always an *authority crisis*. Whom are we going to believe God or the devil? Our young people go off to secular universities and at once face a secular mentality and a secular education. They walk into classrooms where all too often the professor's goal is to shake them from Christian faith, change the source of authority in their lives, remove them from the Word of God, and get them to lean on the theories of men. . . . ***The devil wants to change our appetites. He wants*** us to develop appetites for the things of this world instead of the things of God. ***He wants*** to give us a craving for gold instead of God, for the material instead of the spiritual. ***He wants*** us to be more interested in earth than heaven. We are subject to constant brainwashing, through the media, music, television, books, and magazines. We undergo constant pounding to give us appetites for

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the immoral ways of this world. . . . ‘That at the end thereof they might stand before the king.’ The prob-

lem was that it was the wrong king. We must make up our minds which king we want to stand before.”¹⁶

1. Has God given you some talent or ability that enables or causes you to stick out in a crowd, (e.g., academic, musical, athletic, good looks)?

2. How has and does this talent or ability affect your relationship with God?

- Does it effect appetites that are contrary to, or in competition with God and His will for your life? Yes No
- Does it effect appetites for things of this world rather than for things that produce eternal rewards? Yes No
- Does it effect an authority crisis in your life concerning whom you shall serve; God or the devil? Yes No

Explain: _____

3. List and comment upon the rational concerning your response to the following questions?

- What magazines to you subscribe to and/or read?

List: _____

Comment: _____

- What radio stations do you most frequent and what musicians do you most like?

List: _____

Comment: _____

- What television shows do you regularly watch and type of videos do you regularly rent and or purchase?

List: _____

Comment: _____

- What hobbies, activities, events, organizations, groups, etc. do you enjoy and support?

List: _____

Comment: _____

- Who are your best friends and why?

List: _____

Comment: _____

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ç In your honest opinion, do you think the above information attests to your ap-

¹⁶John Phillips and Jerry Vine, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, (Loizeaux Brothers: NJ, 1990), p. 22-24.

petite towards the things of this world or of the things of God?

Name: _____

Comment: _____

ç In your honest opinion, do you think the above information attests to your following/serving the King of kings (Jesus Christ), or the prince of the power of the air, (the devil)?

Name: _____

Comment: _____

4. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

5. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

6. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

7. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

(3-7) The pressure to conform to Babylon's pagan culture was severe upon Daniel and his friends.

- ⊗ They belonged to a conquered, humiliated people.
- ⊗ They had been uprooted from families, friends, familiar surroundings – from everything that had given them security and meaning in life.
- ⊗ They had been transported hundreds of miles to a totally strange environment to live among total strangers.
- ⊗ In this new setting they were a small minority.
- ⊗ They were only teenagers subjected to the authority of the most powerful adult ruler on earth.
- ⊗ It appeared that their God had been humiliated
- ⊗ They were put under the instruction of elite but ungodly teachers, men who were regarded as the world's top scholars – a situation that could be deadly for the faith of impressionable teens.

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- ⊗ Their education exposed them to such anti-God subjects as

astrology and pagan mythology.

- ⊗ They were placed in the enviable position of gaining favorable government posts, if they would cooperate fully with their rulers.
- ⊗ They were afforded what many would have regarded as a great privilege – the eating of the king’s fare.
- ⊗ With the change of names, one of the major things that had given them personal identity since birth was removed.

Was their commitment to Jehovah strong enough to withstand this onslaught of pressure? One aspect of the pressure provided the specific test that would tell – namely, the giving of the king’s food to the students.

Eating the fare of a Gentile king posed a twofold problem for a Jew faithful to Jehovah. First, it contained food that God in the Mosaic Law had forbidden the Jews to eat. Second, the king’s food was offered as a sacrifice to the Babylonian gods before it was eaten. To the Babylonian way of thinking, to eat that food was to participate in the worship of their gods. Thus, if a Jew were to eat the king’s fare, he would appear to have forsaken Jehovah for the worship of idols.¹⁷

“These young men from Jerusalem’s court needed to be secure in their knowledge of Yahweh to be able to study this literature objectively without allowing it to undermine their faith. Evidently the work of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk had not been in vain.”¹⁸ ***A secular education does not ruin God’s people, it is a lack of biblical thinking, discipline, purpose, conviction and commitment*** that brings one to ruin.

1. ***Have you ever been humiliated, uprooted from those you love, been the minority, suffered a personal identity crisis, felt that God let you down or that He lost a battle?*** Yes No
2. ***How does that make you feel, (e.g., angry, confused, fearful, rebellious, or betrayed)?***

3. ***In spite of what you feel about the situation, what do you know concerning God and His perspective of the situation? (Back up your comments with scripture.)***

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¹⁷Showers, *The Most High God*, pp. 4, 5.

¹⁸Whitcomb, *Daniel*, p. 28.

4. ***In light of what you feel and know, how should you now proceed through your situation?*** Yes No

5. *Have you ever:*

- o *Been compelled by the peer pressure of others (friends, teachers, boss, etc.), to change your beliefs and practices in order to conform to theirs?*
 - o *Been tempted to compromise what you know God wants you to do for something you would rather do?*
 - o *Been afraid that you may hurt someone's feelings if you turn down a privilege or favor that they are offering you even though you know it would be wrong to accept it ?*
 - ç In light of these situations, what would you do if you knew that right after you made your choice and took action, you would pass from this life and into eternity? (Explain the reason for your answer.)
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- ç In light of these situations, if you knew or felt that it would be a long time before you would meet your Creator, would your approach to the situation change at all? Explain the reason for your answer.)
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- ç In light of the conclusions to our situations, knowing that we WILL All – one day pass into eternity and stand before our Creator – what really is the difference, in logic and principle, if it is today or 50 years from now? If our concerns about standing before God are going to be the same today as years from now, and right is always going to be right and wrong is always going to be wrong, should the element of time have any sway in our everyday decisions concerning these matters? (Explain the reason for your answer)
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6. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your pre-*

sent status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?

7. What would you like to change or further develop?

8. Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?

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How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

B. Daniel resolves not to defile himself, (8-13)

1. Daniel makes his desire known, (8-10)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v8} **But Daniel purposed in his heart** ¹⁹(made up his mind, determined, resolved from his innermost being), **that he** (personally,

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

^{19a}"Daniel purposed in his heart" literally means Daniel "laid it upon his heart." All real decisions are heart decisions. That is why the Bible says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Daniel's Babylonian masters could change many things about Daniel's life. They could change his homeland, diet, even his name, but they could not change his heart. What we are in our hearts is what we are, and nobody can change us in our hearts unless we let them, (Phillips and Vines, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, p 27).

Some of the natural factors involved in making such a decision are obvious, such as:

1. The king had ordered this menu; therefore the order was a law.
2. To disobey could incur punishment.
3. To refuse the food would have seemed a sure way to spoil all chances of advancement toward the goal of a fine governmental position.
4. The quality of the food ordered by the king would have been very attractive.
5. The four were a long way from home, and the parents and relatives would never know if they chose wrongly.
6. It would have been natural to argue that, since God had not protected them from this captivity, they did not have to be careful in obeying His demands, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 37, 38).

for one), **would not defile** (pollute or stain), **himself with** (by accepting and eating), **the portion** (designated menu), **of the king's delicacies** (choice, rich food), **nor** (would he defile

himself), **with the wine which he** (Nebuchadnezzar), **drank;**²⁰ **therefore** (as a result of his decision), **he requested of** (diligently and earnestly sought permission of, petitioned), **the chief of the eunuchs** (Ashpenaz, [Da. 1:3]), **that he might** (be allowed, be granted permission), **not defile himself**, (implying that Daniel is willing to submit to his new found authority over him, but if it means defiling himself concerning his God, he is just as willing, prepared to accept the consequences of not submitting).

F APPLICATION:

(1:8) The four Jewish youths were faced with a dilemma. If they ate the king's food, they would stir up the wrath of God; if they did not eat, they would be in serious trouble with their captors. They could have tried to *rationalize* their way around obedience to Jehovah.

- q They could have said "Under *normal circumstances* God's Law is to be obeyed but we are in an *abnormal circumstance*. Surely God doesn't expect total obedience to every precept of His Law in such a unique situation as ours."
- q They might have asserted: "**God is to blame** for this. If He had not put us in this awful predicament, it would not have been *necessary* for us to break His Law."
- q They could have reasoned: "If we eat the king's food, we shall be placed in government posts. Think of the great impact we can have for Jehovah by being in such influential positions. Certainly God must regard this *opportunity to serve Him* in such a big way as being *more important than obedience* to His Law."
- q Again, they could have said: "If we disobey the king, it may cost us our lives, surely in God's value system the *preservation of human life* is of *greater consequence than obedience to Him*."
- q Finally they could have contended: "If we refuse to eat the king's food, it may cost the life of the official who is responsible to see that we eat. Would not love dictate that we eat the food in order to preserve the official's life? Does not *love over-rule obedience* to a divine command?"²¹

NOTES:

²⁰**Defilement would be derived by three possible factors:**

1. Some of the food would likely include meat that the Mosaic Law classified as unclean.
2. Some of the food would likely have been first offered to the Babylonian gods and thus involved Daniel's recognition (indirectly by association), of the existence and generosity of the Babylonian gods.
3. There could have been some moral defilement as well as the above ritual defilement "arising from the subtle flattery of gifts and favours which entailed hidden implications of loyal support, however dubious the king's future policies might prove to be," (Whitcomb, *Daniel*, p. 31).

²¹Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 6

1. *Have you ever used rationale to cover up, smooth over, or clear your conscience concerning some wrong or ques-*

tionable matter you have done or been involved in? Yes
 No

Name one or two: _____

2. Are you using rationale to clear the way, diminish feelings of wrongdoing, or to harden your conscience concerning some wrong or questionable matter you want to do or be involved in now? Yes No

Name one or two: _____

3. For what reasons or in what situations and circumstances are you most susceptible in using rationale?

- When no one is around, or when you are with strangers?
Give the principle concerning your rationale behind it:

Remark upon your long-term success or failure concerning this rationale:

Give some scripture to support or oppose your rationale:

- When you are afraid of losing something, someone or an opportunity?
Give the principle concerning your rationale behind it:

Remark upon your long-term success or failure concerning this rationale:

Give some scripture to support or oppose your rationale:

- When you are afraid of the repercussions of others, (e.g., peers, mate, friends, boss, etc.)?
Give the principle concerning your rationale behind it:

Remark upon your long-term success or failure concerning this rationale:

Give some scripture to support or oppose your rationale:

NOTES:

- When you feel that you deserve a little selfish pleasure?

Give the principle concerning your rationale behind it:

Remark upon your long-term success or failure concerning this rationale:

Give some scripture to support or oppose your rationale:

- o When you are depressed about yourself or angry with God? Give the principle concerning your rationale behind it:

Remark upon your long-term success or failure concerning this rationale:

Give some scripture to support or oppose your rationale:

4. *If you continue or develop a habit of rationalizing wrongdoing or questionable matters, what can you expect to gain or lose?*

- o In this lifetime concerning:

Yourself: _____

Others: _____

God: _____

- o In eternity concerning:

Yourself: _____

Others: _____

God: _____

5. *Read the following verses and put them in your own words?*

Acts 5:29	Rom. 12:1, 2	1 Cor. 6:9-11
2 Cor. 6:17	Eph. 5:11	2 Tim. 2:3, 4
Heb. 11:24-26	Psa. 119:9-11	Ecc. 12:13, 14

6. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

7. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

NOTES:

8. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

9. How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?

How: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

(1:8) Daniel, and it appears his friends as well, determined not to defile themselves. We must choose our closest friends *very carefully* as our future will certainly be affected by them and may very well depend upon them. We must not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful, (Pr. 1:1). “Look about and see the thousands and thousands of God’s people who instead of being *transformed* are *conformed* to this world. They have fallen in line with this present evil age and instead of being separated, they walk in its ways and hence they are barren in spiritual things. . . . We too must take a positive stand and dare to stand alone and cast ourselves upon a faithful Lord.”²²

1. Do you have any standards set for the kind of person that you want as your closest friend/s? Yes No

What are they if yes:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____

2. If you don’t have any standards or very few, what do you think are the potentials concerning your friendships down the road?

3. Concerning the friends that you have now:

- Do they support you when you desire to do what is right or best?
- Do they reprimand you when you desire to do or do something wrong or that is not in good taste?
- Do they say **no** when you or someone else tries to get them to do something wrong or questionable?
- Do they stand alone when their convictions are challenged?

NOTES:

- Do they push themselves and encourage you to do and be your best and grow?
- Do they admit their mistakes and exhibit genuine

²²Arno C. Gabelein, *Daniel*, Kregel: MI, rp. 1985, pp. 14, 15.

repentance when in the wrong?

- o Do they avoid persons who exhibit character such as being mischievous, rebellious, slothful, disrespectful, and vengeful, but maintain a prayerful attitude towards them?
- o Do they habitually abstain, refrain from those things that would defile them concerning their personal testimony as a Christian and walk with God?
- o Do they exhibit a burden for the lost, God's Word and church?

OR

- o Will they pick on and tease you if you try to do what you feel is right in light of what they may be asking you to do?
- o Will they laugh and encourage you when you do something wrong or in bad taste?
- o Will they consistently follow the crowd, the majority, the most influential and encourage you to do the same?
- o Will they compromise their convictions without too much of a struggle?
- o Will they put down anyone who wants to better themselves and grow and treat them like a "goodie two shoes?"
- o Will they admit their mistakes or blame others, make excuses or confess wrong doing only under direct pressure and rarely exhibit remorsefulness for their actions?
- o Will they embrace persons who exhibit character such as being mischievous, rebellious, slothful, disrespectful, and vengeful?
- o Will they struggle little from refraining from something if it is something they want even if it's not right or best?
- o Will they shun those who are so called "religious," and make fun of them and life difficult for them when possible?
- o Will they sneak and lie if it is going to be to their advantage?

4. Read the following verses and put them in your own words?

Prov. 13:20	Prov. 22:24	1 Cor. 15:33
Prov. 28:23	Prov. 27:6	I Sam. 20:17
Prov. 14:7	Prov. 27:9	Jam. 4:4

5. If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?

6. What would you like to change or further develop?

NOTES:

7. Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?

8. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____



INTERPRETATION:

^{v9} **Now God had** (by His sovereign hand, according to the good pleasure and counsel of His will which He purposed in Himself), **brought Daniel into the favor and good will of the chief of the eunuchs**, (meaning that God worked in the heart and mind of Ashpenaz, **causing him** to have a disposition of kindness and sympathy [compassion], towards Daniel and his friends).²³

F APPLICATION:

(1:9) God gives grace to the godly who suffer as the result of the consequences of another’s sin, (e.g., God provided a way of escape [1 Cor. 10:13], by providing Daniel and his three friends with favor and compassion in the eyes of their captors). God doesn’t remove the consequences, but helps the godly and repentant through them. Daniel still died in exile, outside of the borders of the promised land.

- *When a man’s ways please the Lord*, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him, (Prov. 16:7).
- *The effectual and fervent prayers of a righteous man* availeth much, (Ja. 5:16).
- The LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: **no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly**. O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in Thee, (Psa. 84:11, 12).

1. *Whether or not you are suffering the consequences presently as the result of another’s sin – would you sincerely say that your present life style, attitudes and/or motivations are pleasing to the Lord?* o Yes o No

Give a reason for your answer:

NOTES:



COMMENTARY:

²³God is the controller of everything, even the human mind. He can cause people to have whatever knowledge, feelings or ideas He wants them to have, (cp. Dan. 1:2, 9, 17; 2:20-23, 28-29, 37-38, 44, 47; 3:17, 29; 4:2-3, 24-25, 32, 35, 37; 5:18-19, 21, 23, 26-28; 6:16, 22, 26-27; 7:13-14, 22, 27; 8:25; 9:2, 7, 11-12, 14-15; 11:32).

2. *What would it take to improve upon or change your lifestyle, attitudes and/or motivations so that you may further please or begin to please the Lord?*

3. *If you are presently suffering the consequences of another's sin, or were to (beginning today) – do you, or would you perceive that your present life style, attitudes and/or motivations would add to your suffering or be a source of encouragement and hope in spite of them?*

- add to your suffering 0
be a source of encouragement and hope in spite of them 0

Give a reason for your answer:

4. *Can you sincerely say that your present life style, attitudes and/or motivations are godly and are not hindering your prayers and will not bring negative consequences upon the lives of others?* Yes No

Give a reason for your answer:

5. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

6. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

7. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

8. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____
Date: ____ / ____ / ____

NOTES:

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v10} **And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear (reverence, am rightfully afraid of), my lord (master), the**

king²⁴ (Nebuchadnezzar), **who has appointed** (assigned, designated, ordered), **your food and drink**. **For why** (“explain to me why,” or “give me one good reason why”), **should he see your faces looking worse** (literally, “*saddened*,” [implying less healthy physically and emotionally]), **than the young men who are your age**, (your fellow captives)? **Then you would endanger** (cause me to forfeit, jeopardize), **my head** (my very life, to say nothing about my position), **before the king**.²⁵

F **APPLICATION:**

(1:10) It pays to build good reputations. Because of this favor, Ashpenaz was willing to listen seriously to Daniel, if he had not been so inclined, he doubtless would have dismissed the request quite abruptly.²⁶

1. ***Do you have a history of crying wolf, breaking promises, saying one thing and doing another, going with the flow or in the way of least resistance, and/or being unpredictable?***
o Yes o No

If yes, list the areas and give one example for each area:

2. ***Would you classify a part of your character as being any of the following?***
o Rebellious o Flippant o Indecisive o Divisive
o Conniving o Greedy o Selfish o Angry

If yes, give one example for each area:

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

²⁴Ashpenaz had good reason to fear the king. One, because of the king's power and authority and two, because he had probably seen the king upset about a matter before, (cp. Dan. 2:12, 13; 3:13, 19-20).

²⁵Ashpenaz showed his human nature in thinking first of his own welfare before that of the four friends: if he should accede their request, he might lose not only his fine position but his very life. It is to his credit, however, that he at least considered the request when he did have this fear for himself. This gives added stress to the high standing they (*Daniel and his friends*), held with him, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 40).

²⁶Wood, *Daniel*, p. 39

3. ***In light of your responses to the above questions, do you think that you have a right to expect people to listen seriously to you?*** o Yes o No

Why or why not? _____

4. *In light of your responses to the above questions, do you think that you have a right to get all upset if people abruptly dismiss your requests?* Yes No

Why or why not? _____

5. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

6. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

7. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

8. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

(1:10) The ungodly fear what man can do to them. Man can be incredibly cruel. We see it in our children as well as in adults. We see children and adults doing or acknowledging what they know is wrong, as well as not doing or acknowledging what is right. Why? – because of the fear of what others may say, do or think about them. Daniel and his friends are as human as we are, but are victorious over it, rather than being victimized by it.

1. *Do you allow yourself to be victimized by the intimidation of others?* Yes No

If yes, explain how you feel afterwards – and if no, explain how you escape being victimized:

NOTES:

2. *Do your actions depict you as being more peer dependent or God dependent?* Peer dependent God dependent

Explain the reason for your answer: _____

3. *Describe the area/s (if any), that you feel you would cave in to fear and do what is wrong rather than what God would want you to do?* (For example: If my job was threatened or if the kids in school would laugh at me)

4. *Look up the following verses and rewrite them in your words using your own name somewhere in the verse?*

- 1 Jn. 4:18 • Acts 18:9 • 2 Tim. 1:7 • Lu. 12:4, 5
- Ro. 8:15 • Acts 5:29 • Isa. 26:3 • Mat. 28:5, 10

5. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

6. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

7. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

8. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

2. *Daniel offers a plan, (11-13)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v11} **So** (in light of Ashpenaz's fear and Daniel's firm resolve), **Daniel said to the steward** (the melzar - meaning the warden, chief butler, the attendant), **whom the chief of the eunuchs** (Ashpenaz), **had set over** (entrusted the care of), **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,**

NOTES:

^{v12} **"Please test** (prove, try, give the order for), **your servants for ten days, and let them**

(those who would actually bring the food), **give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.**"²⁷

^{v13} **"Then** (at the end of 10 days), **let our appearance be examined before you, and** (be compared to), **the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies;** (rather than vegetables and water), **and as you see fit, so deal with your servants** (after this test, deal with us according to the results you see)." ²⁸

F APPLICATION:

(1:11-13) When Daniel decided to obey God, he did not go on a fanatical rampage that would have reflected negatively on Jehovah. Instead, he went through proper channels. He approached the chief marshal and requested permission to abstain from the king's fare. He honestly explained the reason for his request.²⁹ After this he approached the melzar, the warden with a plan.

When one is asked to act in direct violation to the Word of God, Daniel shows us that we need not retaliate, but politely make our protest and requests known and wait upon God for our next response.

- The godly need to make commitments to themselves and to God on how they are going to live their life and what they are going to live for.
- The godly need to recognize that even though God showed favor to Daniel and his friends, God did not do ***everything*** for them. Daniel still had to stick up for his convictions and use discernment on how to maintain them.
- The godly as well need to make their commitments public when necessary and/or profitable. Daniel humbled himself and approached the situation with a gracious attitude.

NOTES:

COMMENTARY:

²⁷ It is perceivable that Daniel and his friends received some derogatory remarks from those who brought the food being surprised at Daniel and his friends for turning down what they would consider choice food for vegetables and water. They were probably thought of as being quite foolish and would never make it as one of the king's wise men.

²⁸ In view of the type of petition Daniel now brought, it appears that Ashpenaz had chosen to decline the request as first presented. But Daniel was not to be deterred, and began working to prove that the four would not suffer physically from the alternative diet. There is further reason in this for giving commendation to Daniel. Now that he had properly asked for relief from the order and been refused, he had a ready-made excuse for resisting in his decision. Most would have been glad to use it. But Daniel clearly was not looking for an excuse - only a way to carry out his well-made choice, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 40).

²⁹ Showers, *The Most High God*, pp. 6, 7

"We ought to take a stand, we ought to be firm, unyielding in our convictions, but we must be careful to be gracious and humble when we stand for those convictions. Often

people who have strong convictions become hard, unyielding, and obnoxious in the way they hold their beliefs. They turn people away from the Christian faith and its standards by the rude way they express their views. One doesn't have to be a crank to have convictions."³⁰

- Push hard for good standards and programs.
- Be realistic.
- Pick your battles - there are very few things worth dying for, but there are a few. Just make sure before you wage a possible major battle that the issue is one of the few.
- Always pray, look and listen, and then pray look and listen some more.
- Listen to what is said, as well as what is not.
- Be slow to speak, (make sure you have a handle on the situation or issue first).
- Don't be afraid to maintain open communication.
- Take the time and effort to clarify definitions, terms, phrases, inferences, and/or ambiguities whenever thought necessary.
- Agree to disagree.
- Plan for a long term relationship and effect.
- Be a part of the team, not an enemy or a vigilante because of another's concerns, opinions or ideas.
- Be well educated on your issues and be able to explain them clearly and concisely.
- Assess your teammate's stands, ideas, or concerns. Seek to understand why they exist. Are they well grounded and can they clearly and concisely defend or explain them, or are they just something they "**feel**" they should stand for or head towards?
- Plan your arguments on issues taking the teammate's stands, ideas or concerns into consideration and utilizing or building upon them whenever possible.
- Support the team at every opportunity.

1. *Do you tend to be like a bull in a china store or like a mummy in a tomb when it comes to living up to or sticking up for your convictions?* Bull Mummy Neither

Explain the reason for your answer: _____

2. *What does it take and with what frequency do you publicly model and explain or defend your convictions?*

What does it take: _____

With what frequency: _____

NOTES:

3. *If any of the above principles listed in the application could be an asset to you in the future, list which ones and explain why?*

³⁰Phillips and Vine, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*, p. 31.

4. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

5. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

6. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

7. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

3. *Daniel's care giver accepts the plan, (14-16)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v14} **So** (as a result of, and on the conditions of Daniel's plan), **he** (the chief attendant [not Ashpenaz]), **consented** (agreed), **with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.**³¹

^{v15} **And at the end of ten days** (the end of the probation period), **their** (outward, visible, external), **features appeared better** (appeared to have benefited in comparison, [e.g., skin color, physical posture and eyes alert]), **and fatter in flesh** (put on more weight), **than all the young men** (their fellow captors), **who ate the portion of the king's delicacies.**

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

³¹Commendation is due Daniel for devising a plan that would have this appeal. Daniel recognized the melzar's problem, saw the matter from his point of view, and made a proposal which he could understand and accept, (Wood, *Daniel*, p.41).

^{v16} **Thus** (in consequence to their agreement), **the steward took away** (canceled), **their portion of delicacies and the**

wine that they were to drink, and gave (continued to give), **them vegetables**, (made the temporary provision [agreement], permanent for the time being).³²

F **APPLICATION:**

(1:14-16) To live in accordance to God’s principles and precepts, are always proven to be the best. God does not need a multitude of people to accomplish His work, (*as desirable and advantageous as it may seem*). Of all the Hebrew captives, only these four are mentioned as maintaining their convictions. Babylon was the most powerful nation in the world – and God was going to superintend over it through four teenage boys.

1. Have you decided (and/or testify by your practices):

- o To live your life for sin and Satan
- o To live your life for righteousness and God
- o To follow the crowd and adopt the customs and the habits of the world?
- o To regardless of what the world does, live for Christ?

Defend your choice/s: _____

2. The devil masters the life of one of the above and Jesus masters the life of the other – which are you subservient to?

- o Jesus
- o The devil

Explain the reason for your choice by finishing the following sentence at least three times. “*If I was to find myself _____*” (name the situation), “*the people who know me best, would predict that I would _____,*” (explain how you would handle the situation).

3. If you could see the face of the one who decided to follow sin and Satan 10 or 20 years from now, what do you think you would see?

Name several characteristics and briefly explain why you chose them.

NOTES:

³² It is reasonable to assume that, at this point, the melzar notified his superior, Ashpenaz, concerning the ten-day test and his resulting decision; inquiring whether he had Ashpenaz' approval for the continuance. He probably made it a point to add that he could change the menu at any time, as a safeguard. Ashpenaz evidently gave the approval. It would have been at this stage in the developments that the favor of Ashpenaz toward the youths, as noted in verse nine, would have carried its greatest significance, (Ibid., p. 42).

4. If you could see the face of the one who decided to follow righteousness and Christ 10 or 20 years from now, what do you think you would see?

Name several characteristics and briefly explain why you chose them.

5. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

6. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

7. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

8. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

C. God promotes Daniel and his 3 friends, (17-21)

1. *Daniel and his friend's ability is specially endowed, (17)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v17} **As for** (in consequence of, or in respect to), **these four young men,**³³

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

³³ This formal phrase appears at first to be out of keeping with the movement of the story. Its purpose, however, is to show the beginning of this new section, and to stress that God's favor was on these four in distinction from the other young captives, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 42).

God gave them ³⁴(accredited to them, blessed them with), **knowledge** (a good perception of the factual information concerning the sciences), **and skill** (understanding in the ability to explain the nature and significance of information), **in all** (stresses the extent of the youth's intellectual attainments), **literature** (Babylonian books), **and wisdom** (wisdom books);³⁵ **and** (in contrast to, over and above, in addition to the others), **Daniel had understanding in** (or God made Daniel understand), **all visions** (trance like state while awake), **and dreams**,³⁶ (communicated while sleeping, [his or someone else's] – both a special, supernatural interpretative ability).

F APPLICATION:

(1:17) God gave special gifts to Daniel and his friends. Those who prove themselves faithful stewards over little are eventually given much and those who take the initiative and inspire others to do the same are sometimes given a bonus, (as an exception is made on

NOTES:

³⁴ The credit for the advance of these young men is properly given to God. He gave the benefits now listed. To God must be given the praise for all life's attainments, for in truth they are His gracious gifts. God, however, regularly uses means to accomplish His purpose, and we may be sure that He did here. The "knowledge and understanding" that God bestowed on the four were not given apart from their own diligent effort. God gave them this intellectual advance only through the natural manner of their own study programs. **From their point of view**, the outcome lay with them to do their very best, especially since they had not been able to cooperate as to the menu designated. **From God's point of view**, the result was entirely in His hands for granting them the desire and learning capacity for this attainment, (Ibid., p. 42, 43, [emphasis mine]).

³⁵ Babylon was the center of knowledge of the day. The various areas of science appear to have been more advanced there than anywhere else in the world. Babylonians had the benefit of extensive literature from earlier days, especially through the remarkable library left by the Assyrian emperor, Ashurbanipal (669-626 B.C.), as well as advanced studies by contemporary scholars. Many of these writings have been found and are known today, (Ibid., 43).

³⁶ In contrast to the gifts of "knowledge and understanding," in the attainment of which the human instruments has a part, this gift was **entirely** of God. Daniel could not learn the technique of true vision and dream interpretation. There is point to noting this here, for the Babylonians believed one could do so. In fact, much of the literature in which the young men would have had to become proficient concerned such techniques. Methods of divination for determining the will of the gods had been devised, and serious attention was given to these methods by specialists. The four Judeans would have had to reject all such thinking, as they recognized that true revelation could come only from God, and as He pleased. **One reason for including the statement** concerning Daniel's special gift is likely to make clear that he, with the others, did reject the Babylonian way and that God replaced this methodology with His own enabling gift. **Another reason** is more obvious; namely, to prepare the reader for Daniel's activity in the, following chapters, where he is repeatedly depicted in the role of interpreter of God's revelations, (Ibid., p. 43, 4,4[emphasis mine]).

Daniel's behalf in the allocation of rewards). God gives people what He wants, when He wants, and for the purposes He wants.

1. *Are you asking God to trust you with great favor and responsibility before you have proven yourself faithful over what you already are responsible for?* Yes No

Explain the reason for your answer:

2. *Are you in control of yourself, taking the initiative among (or in spite of), your friends and relationships to live a godly life? Endeavoring to inspire your friends and acquaintances to do the same, or are you willing to follow whatever course others set for you as well as for themselves?* Yes No

Give examples for your answer:

3. *Are you presuming upon God that He owes you great blessings because of your benevolence towards Him and others?* Yes No

Look up the following verses and rewrite them in your own words using your own name somewhere in the verse:

Romans 9:15, 16 1 Samuel 2:7 Psalm 75:7 Daniel 2:21
Ephesians 1:3, 4 Job 1:21 1 Corinthians 12:18

4. *If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?*

5. *What would you like to change or further develop?*

6. *Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?*

7. *How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?*

How: _____

Date: ____/____/____

NOTES:

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

2. *Daniel and his friends wisdom is ten times better, (18-20)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v18} **Now at the end of the days**, (the 3 year training period, probationary period), **when the king had said that they** (all the young men involved, enrolled, [not just Daniel and his friends]), **should be brought in** (brought before the king for their oral exams so to speak), **the chief of the eunuchs** (Ashpenaz), **brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar**.

^{v19} **Then the king interviewed them** ³⁷(each one came under the king's scrutiny, were examined, challenged by him), **and among them all** (out of the entire class), **none** (not one), **was found like** (as gifted and talented as), **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore** (in consequence to their high grades, [probably to Ashpenaz's and the melzar's great relief], they graduated at the top of their class, four valedictorians), **they served** (were assigned to stand), **before the king**,³⁸ (were employed in honorable offices at the king's court and received special royal favor).

^{v20} **And** (not only that but), **in all matters of wisdom and understanding** (meaning – in everything which required peculiar wisdom to understand and explain), **about which the king examined them, he found** (discovered), **them ten times better than all the magicians** (sacred scribes, skilled in the sacred writings of the gods), **and astrologers** (reading the stars, enchanters, practices of the arts of the occult),

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

³⁷ The king examined the young men by conversing with them, probably individually, or at least in small enough groups to make individual judgments. He may have had trained subordinates with him to help in noting strengths and weaknesses, and to lend advice. Some of the factors considered would have been fluency in the Babylonian language, extent of knowledge gained, personality characteristics, and personal appearance. The interviews provided tense moments for the young men, for the outcome would determine their future standing in the court, (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 45).

³⁸ It is not said, indeed, that the others were not permitted also to stand before the monarch, but the object of the historian is to trace the means by which **these youths** rose to such eminence and virtue. It is clear, however, that whatever may have been the result on the others, the historian means to say that these young men rose to higher eminence than they did, and were permitted to stand nearer the throne. The phrase "stood before the king," is one which denotes elevated rank, (Albert Barnes, *Barne's Notes on the Old Testament: Daniel*, Baker: MI, Rp., from 1853 ed., p. 113).

who were in all his realm,³⁹ (each one singly was equal to any ten of the best men the king and his kingdom could produce),

§ § § § § § § § § § § § § § § §

3. *Daniel enjoys a long-term as an administrator to royalty, (21)*

 **INTERPRETATION:**

^{v21} **Thus** (in this state, in this above mentioned capacity), **Daniel continued** (served), **until the first year⁴⁰ of King Cyrus,** (through the downfall of the Babylonian Empire by the Medo-Persian Empire in October, 539 B.C., 66 years after Daniel's captivity at about the age of 81).

F **APPLICATION:**

(1:18-21) In spite of the fact that they had obeyed God instead of the king, Daniel and his friends were not only advanced to government posts, but – to the best posts and with the best benefits.

“The sovereignty of God was sufficient to get them there without their resorting to faulty rationalizations around obedience to His command. Through this experience they had demonstrated that a saint of God is to obey Him no matter what the circumstances and to let the results rest in His sovereign hands.”⁴¹

- Exile came before exaltation and humility came before honor – It is obvious that God honors those who honor Him.

NOTES:

 **COMMENTARY:**

³⁹ In verse 19 Daniel and his friends are examined and are found to stand head and shoulders above all their classmates. In verse 20, “Daniel and his friends are compared here with *‘magicians and enchanters.’* terms designating classes of wise men and hardly appropriate for young men just completing their education; . . . these *‘magicians and enchanters’* are said to have been from ***all the kingdom,***” (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 45, 46).

⁴⁰ Through all the plots and intrigues that regularly exist in oriental courts; through all the jealousy and envy that could only be expected toward a foreign captive in high office; through a series of four rapid successions of Babylonian kings, two of which had suffered assassination; and through the fall of Babylon itself to the genius of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian, he, Daniel, had lived and still served in high office! (Wood, *Daniel*, p. 47).

Verse 21 declares that Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus, the King of Medo-Persia. This is not a contradiction of chapter ten, verse one, which talks about Daniel receiving a message in the third year of Cyrus.

Verse 21 does not say that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus. The verse is simply a summary statement which ends the historical introduction of the book. The first year of Cyrus was the end of Babylon's rule. Thus, the verse is saying that Daniel survived the entire Babylonian rule in spite of all the oriental intrigue of that rule. This again is a testimony to God's sovereignty, (Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 8).

⁴¹ (Showers, *The Most High God*, p. 8)

- Those who are grounded in and obedient to God's Word – those who are led by God's

spirit, and are committed to God's will; cannot help but outstrip those who are of the world and believers who compromise their faith.

- God's gifts cannot help but *be* the best and *produce* the most.

1. ***Have you ever lost a job, position, friends, associates, or some other opportunity because of the deeds of another?***
o Yes o No

Give a couple of examples:

2. ***Have you ever had to humble yourself before someone and seek their forgiveness, or have you ever had to humble yourself by accepting a less favorable position than you once held or thought you deserved, or have you ever had to humble yourself by doing tasks that are mundane, trite, tedious, that no one else wants to do?*** o Yes o No

Give a couple of examples:

3. ***Does God, His Holy Spirit, His Word and His will play an important role in your life?*** o Yes o No

If yes answer the following inquires:

- 1) How much time do you personally spend each day in the Scriptures?
o Never o Hardly ever o When I'm troubled
o Often o Only at church o When I need something
o Always o At a Bible study o When I'm in the mood

- 2) How often do you have family devotions, if you have a family?
o Never o Hardly ever o When we're troubled
o Often o When we need something
o Always o When we're in the mood

- 3) When was the last time you discovered something in the Bible on your own? (Name what it was as well as when.)

- 4) How often do you sense the Holy Spirit's presence throughout your day and the direction He gives? (Explain your answer and give an example.)

- 5) Would you say you quench and grieve the Holy Spirit more than submit to His guidance, reprimands, encouragement, etc.?
o Yes o No (Explain the argument/s for your answer)

NOTES:

- 5) Do you know what the will of God is for you each and everyday as the dynamics of your daily situations and cir-

circumstances fluctuate? Yes No (Explain the argument/s for your answer)

3. Based on the answers to the above questions; on a scale of one to ten (ten being the highest), – how would you rate yourself in relationship to Daniel and his friends concerning their willingness to obey God and let the results rest in His sovereign hands?

1 2 3 4 5 – 6 7 8 9 10

Give an explanation to your above circled answer:

4. If you continue in the direction you are presently going (according to what you know and understand about God's Word concerning your present status), what would you expect God to do in your life now and how will that affect your life in the hereafter?

5. What would you like to change or further develop?

6. Why do you want to change or develop the above and what is your scriptural basis for it?

7. How are you going to reach your goals and when are you going to start?

How:

Date:

___ / ___ / ___

NOTES:

**SOME PRAYERFUL REFLECTIONS
CONCERNING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DANIEL CHAPTER ONE:**

Lord,

- + *May I not complain when I suffer as the results of another's sin.*
- + *May I not expect to be exempt from the sinful consequences of others.*
- + *May I see that You have allowed this situation in my life and may I remember that I can prosper in spite of it.*
- + *May I not fail to see and use today's circumstances and situations as an opportunity to prove my commitments and faithfulness to You.*
- + *May I purpose in my heart to live in harmony with Your principles and precepts that You have revealed to me up to this point in my life.*
- + *May I be diligent in expressing my convictions to others when necessary and in faith wait upon You to provide the way for me to maintain them.*
- + *May I prove myself a faithful and just steward today over all that You have laid to my charge up to this point in my life; that You may use me in what ever way that would be pleasing to You; today as well as in the future.*
- + *May I be totally satisfied with however much or little You provide me.*
- + *May I never lose sight that Your gifts are always the best and will always produce the most.*

NOTES: