

# Daniel 1

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[1] In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. [2] And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. [3] Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, [4] youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. [5] The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. [6] Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. [7] And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

[8] But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. [9] And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, [10] and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king." [11] Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned

over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, [12] “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. [13] Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” [14] So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. [15] At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. [16] So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

[17] As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. [18] At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. [19] And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. [20] And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. [21] And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus. (ESV)

## NASB

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, 4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. 6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, 10 and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." 11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. 16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

17 As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. 20 As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

## NIV

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— 4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. 5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, 10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. 16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. 20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

## NKJV

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, 4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. 10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. 21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

## NLT

1 During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. 4 "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." 5 The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

6 Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. 7 The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names:

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishael was called Meshach.

Azariah was called Abednego.

8 But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. 9 Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. 10 But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."

11 Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 12 "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. 13 "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." 14 The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. 16 So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others.

17 God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.

18 When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. 20 Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanterers in his entire kingdom.

21 Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.

## NET

[1] In the third{1} year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar{2} of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem{3} and laid it under siege.{4} [2] Now the Lord{5} delivered{6} King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power,{7} along with some of the vessels{8} of the temple of God.{9} He brought them to the land of Babylonia{10} to the temple of his god{11} and put{12} the vessels in the treasury of his god.

[3] The king commanded{13} Ashpenaz,{14} who was in charge of his court officials,{15} to choose{16} some of the Israelites who were of royal and noble descent{17} - [4] young men in whom there was no physical defect and who were handsome,{18} well versed in all kinds of wisdom, well educated{19} and having keen insight,{20} and who were capable{21} of entering the king's royal service{22} - and to teach them the literature and language{23} of the Babylonians.{24} [5] So the king assigned them a daily ration{25} from his royal delicacies{26} and from the wine he himself drank. They were to be trained{27} for the next three years. At the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.{28} [6] As it turned out,{29} among these young men{30} were some from Judah:{31} Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.{32} [7] But the overseer of the court officials renamed them. He gave{33} Daniel the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah he named Shadrach, Mishael he named Meshach, and Azariah he named Abednego.{34}

[8] But Daniel made up his mind{35} that he would not defile{36} himself with the royal delicacies or the royal wine.{37} He therefore asked the overseer of the court officials for permission not to defile himself. [9] Then God made the overseer of the court officials sympathetic to Daniel.{38} [10] But he{39} responded to Daniel, "I fear my master the king. He is the one who has decided{40} your food and drink. What would happen if he saw that you looked malnourished in comparison to the other young men your age?{41} If that happened,{42} you would endanger my life{43} with the king!" [11] Daniel then spoke to the warden{44} whom the overseer of the court officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: [12] "Please test your servants for ten days by providing us with some vegetables to eat and water to drink. [13] Then compare our appearance{45} with that of{46} the young men who are eating the royal delicacies;{47} deal with us{48} in light of what you see." [14] So the warden{49} agreed to their proposal{50} and tested them for ten{51} days.

[15] At the end of the ten days their appearance was better and their bodies were healthier{52} than all the young men who had been eating the royal delicacies. [16] So the warden removed the delicacies and the wine{53} from their diet{54} and gave them a diet of vegetables instead. [17] Now as for these four young men, God endowed them with knowledge and skill in all sorts of literature and wisdom - and Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams.

[18] When the time appointed by the king arrived,{55} the overseer of the court officials brought them into Nebuchadnezzar's presence. [19] When the king spoke with them, he did not find among the entire group{56} anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah. So they entered the king's service.{57} [20] In every matter of wisdom and{58} insight the king asked them about, he found them



to be ten times<sup>{59}</sup> better than any of the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire empire. [21] Now Daniel lived on until the first<sup>{60}</sup> year of Cyrus the king.

#### Daniel 1:1-21 NET

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{1} 1:1 sn The third year of the reign of Jehoiakim would be ca. 605 B.C. At this time Daniel would have been a teenager. The reference to Jehoiakim's third year poses a serious crux interpretum, since elsewhere these events are linked to his fourth year (Jer 25:1; cf. 2 Kgs 24:1; 2 Chr 36:5-8). Apparently Daniel is following an accession year chronology, whereby the first partial year of a king's reign was reckoned as the accession year rather than as the first year of his reign. Jeremiah, on the other hand, is following a nonaccession year chronology, whereby the accession year is reckoned as the first year of the king's reign. In that case, the conflict is only superficial. Most modern scholars, however, have concluded that Daniel is historically inaccurate here.

{2} 1:1 sn King Nebuchadnezzar ruled Babylon from ca. 605-562 B.C.

{3} 1:1 map For location see Map5-B1; Map6-F3; Map7-E2; Map8-F2; Map10-B3; JP1-F4; JP2-F4; JP3-F4; JP4-F4.

{4} 1:1 sn This attack culminated in the first of three major deportations of Jews to Babylon. The second one occurred in 597 B.C. and included among many other Jewish captives the prophet Ezekiel. The third deportation occurred in 586 B.C., at which time the temple and the city of Jerusalem were thoroughly destroyed.

{5} 1:2 tn The Hebrew term translated "Lord" here is אֲדֹנָי ('adonay).

{6} 1:2 tn Heb "gave."

{7} 1:2 tn Heb "hand," which is often used idiomatically for one's power and authority. See BDB 390 s.v. 2 אֶ.

{8} 1:2 tn Or "utensils"; or "articles."

{9} 1:2 tn Heb "house of God."

{10} 1:2 sn The land of Babylonia (Heb "the land of Shinar") is another name for Sumer and Akkad, where Babylon was located (cf. Gen 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Josh 7:21; Isa 11:11; Zech 5:11).

{11} 1:2 tn Or "gods" (NCV, NRSV, TEV; also later in this verse). The Hebrew term can be used as a numerical plural for many gods or as a plural of majesty for one particular god. Since Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist, it is not clear if the reference here is to many gods or one particular deity. The plural of majesty, while normally used for Israel's God, is occasionally used of foreign gods (cf. BDB 43 s.v. אֱלֹהִים 1, 2). See Judg 11:24 (of the Moabite god Chemosh); 1 Sam 5:7 (of the Philistine god Dagon); 1 Kgs 11:33

(of the Canaanite goddess Astarte, the Moabite god Chemosh, and the Ammonite god Milcom); 2 Kgs 19:37 (of the Assyrian god Nisroch). Since gods normally had their own individual temples, Dan 1:2 probably refers to a particular deity, perhaps Marduk, the supreme god of Babylon, or Marduk's son Nabu, after whom Nebuchadnezzar was named. The name Nebuchadnezzar means "Nabu has protected the son who will inherit" (HALOT 660 s.v. נְבוּכַדְנֶצְצַר). For a discussion of how temples functioned in Babylonian religion see H. Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 77-81.

{12} 1:2 tn Heb "brought." Though the Hebrew verb "brought" is repeated in this verse, the translation uses "brought...put" for stylistic variation.

{13} 1:3 tn Or "gave orders to." Heb "said to."

{14} 1:3 sn It is possible that the word Ashpenaz is not a proper name at all, but a general term for "innkeeper." See J. J. Collins, *Daniel (Hermeneia)*, 127, n. 9. However, the ancient versions understand the term to be a name, and the present translation (along with most English versions) understands the word in this way.

{15} 1:3 sn The word court official (Hebrew saris) need not mean "eunuch" in a technical sense (see Gen 37:36, where the term refers to Potiphar, who had a wife), although in the case of the book of Daniel there was in Jewish literature a common tradition to that effect. On the OT usage of this word see HALOT 769-70 s.v. סָרִיס.

{16} 1:3 tn Heb "bring."

{17} 1:3 tn Heb "and from the seed of royalty and from the nobles."

{18} 1:4 tn Heb "good of appearance."

{19} 1:4 tn Heb "knowers of knowledge."

{20} 1:4 tn Heb "understanders of knowledge."

{21} 1:4 tn Heb "who had strength."

{22} 1:4 tn Heb "to stand in the palace of the king." Cf. vv. 5, 19.

{23} 1:4 sn The language of the Chaldeans referred to here is Akkadian, an East Semitic cuneiform language.

{24} 1:4 tn Heb "Chaldeans" (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV). This is an ancient name for the Babylonians.

{25} 1:5 tn Heb "a thing of a day in its day."

{26} 1:5 tn Heb "from the delicacies of the king."

{27} 1:5 tn Or "educated." See HALOT 179 s.v. גָּדַל.

{28} 1:5 tn Heb "stand before the king."

{29} 1:6 tn Heb “and it happened that.”

{30} 1:6 tn Heb “among them”; the referent (the young men taken captive from Judah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

{31} 1:6 tn Heb “the sons of Judah.”

{32} 1:6 sn The names reflect a Jewish heritage. In Hebrew Daniel means “God is my judge”; Hananiah means “the Lord is gracious”; Mishael means “who is what God is?”; Azariah means “the Lord has helped.”

{33} 1:7 tc The LXX and Vulgate lack the verb here.

{34} 1:7 sn The meanings of the Babylonian names are more conjectural than is the case with the Hebrew names. The probable etymologies are as follows: Belteshazzar means “protect his life,” although the MT vocalization may suggest “Belti, protect the king” (cf. Dan 4:8); Shadrach perhaps means “command of Aku”; Meshach is of uncertain meaning; Abednego means “servant of Nego.” Assigning Babylonian names to the Hebrew youths may have been an attempt to erase from their memory their Israelite heritage.

{35} 1:8 tn Heb “placed on his heart.”

{36} 1:8 tn Or “would not make himself ceremonially unclean”; TEV “become ritually unclean.” sn Various reasons have been suggested as to why such food would defile Daniel. Perhaps it had to do with violations of Mosaic law with regard to unclean foods, or perhaps it had to do with such food having been offered to idols. Daniel’s practice in this regard is strikingly different from that of Esther, who was able successfully to conceal her Jewish identity.

{37} 1:8 tn Heb “with the delicacies of the king and with the wine of his drinking.”

{38} 1:9 tn Heb “Then God granted Daniel loyal love and compassion before the overseer of the court officials.” The expression “loyal love and compassion” is a hendiadys; the two words combine to express one idea.

{39} 1:10 tn Heb “The overseer of the court officials.” The subject has been specified in the translation for the sake of clarity.

{40} 1:10 tn Heb “assigned.” See v. 5.

{41} 1:10 tn Heb “Why should he see your faces thin from the young men who are according to your age?” The term translated “thin” occurs only here and in Gen 40:6, where it appears to refer to a dejected facial expression. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning “be weak.” See HALOT 277 s.v. II قمت.

{42} 1:10 tn The words “if that happened” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.

{43} 1:10 tn Heb “my head.” Presumably this is an implicit reference to capital punishment (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT), although this is not entirely clear.

{44} 1:11 sn Having failed to convince the overseer, Daniel sought the favor of the warden whom the overseer had appointed to care for the young men.

{45} 1:13 tn Heb “let our appearance be seen before you.”

{46} 1:13 tn Heb “the appearance of.”

{47} 1:13 tn Heb “delicacies of the king.” So also in v. 15.

{48} 1:13 tn Heb “your servants.”

{49} 1:14 tn Heb “he”; the referent (the warden mentioned in v. 11) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

{50} 1:14 tn Heb “listened to them with regard to this matter.”

{51} 1:14 sn The number ten is sometimes used in the OT as an ideal number of completeness. Cf. v. 20; Zech 8:23; Rev 2:10.

{52} 1:15 tn Heb “fat of flesh”; KJV, ASV “fatter in flesh”; NASB, NRSV “fatter” (although this is no longer a sign of health in Western culture).

{53} 1:16 tn Heb “the wine of their drinking.”

{54} 1:16 tn The words “from their diet” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.

{55} 1:18 tn Heb “at the end of the days which the king said to bring them.”

{56} 1:19 tn Heb “from all of them.”

{57} 1:19 tn Heb “stood before the king.”

{58} 1:20 tc The MT lacks the conjunction, reading the first word in the phrase as a construct (“wisdom of insight”). While this reading is not impossible, it seems better to follow Theodotion, the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Sahidic Coptic, all of which have the conjunction.

{59} 1:20 tn Heb “hands.”

{60} 1:21 sn The Persian king Cyrus’ first year in control of Babylon was 539 B.C. Daniel actually lived beyond the first year of Cyrus, as is clear from 10:1. The purpose of the statement in 1:21 is merely to say that Daniel’s life spanned the entire period of the neo-Babylonian empire. His life span also included the early years of the Persian control of Babylon. However, by that time his age was quite advanced; he probably died sometime in the 530’s B.C.

## Questions

1. How did Jehoiakim come to be king of Judah? What was he like? What finally happened to him? (2 Kings 23:31-24:6)

2. What characteristics—physical, intellectual, personal—did Nebuchadnezzar look for in the captives from Judah chosen for training in Chaldean culture?

3. Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food. To be resolved means that Daniel "placed upon his heart" not to defile (pollute or stain) himself with the king's food. In other words, he put himself under obligation to obey the law of God rather than the command of Nebuchadnezzar. As recorded in Acts 5:29, "Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" In the foreseeable future of our culture, over what issues might you have to resolve to obey God rather than men?

4. In the behavior of the four young Judean captives, is there any evidence to suggest they were bitter or felt God was treating them or any of their fellow countrymen unfairly? What was their attitude toward God and their stressful situation?

5. Daniel resolved not to pollute himself in spite of great pressure to go with the flow. What influence do you think that had on Ashpenaz? Daniel and his three countrymen could have reasoned, as godly Jews, that being a good witness to their pagan captors might mean setting aside a few of God's laws in order to make Judaism seem "relevant." But instead, they chose to obey God completely, no matter what the consequences. What does that say to the Church today? What was the result of their obedience? Will that always be the result for God's faithful servants?

6. In verse 9, "favor" (Heb. Heseb) means unfailing love; "compassion" means yearning in the bowels. We might say Ashpenaz had gut-wrenching concern for the four Hebrews. God put such feelings in his heart. Have you ever seen the Lord do such things in unbelieving people whom you were seeking to influence for Jesus? Give examples.

7. God gave Daniel favor with the chief eunuch and his steward. That was partially the result of whose prayer (1 Kings 8:50) and partially because of what personal characteristics they saw in Daniel and his friends?

8. V. 17 “God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom...” If, like Daniel, you find that you possess skills and talents that are admirable, that set you apart from most other people, what should be your attitude about that? (1Corinthians 4:7; Jeremiah 9:23-24)

9. What are the difference between dreams and visions?

10. Plots and intrigues were common in oriental courts. What does the fact that Daniel not only survived but flourished in the thick of both Babylonian and Medo-Persian corruption say about God and the paths of men or women who fear him?