



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Daniel 1: 1-21

“The Preparation of a Prophet”

TRANSCRIPT

Returning tonight to the first of our series of studies in the Book of Daniel, and let me say just a few words by way of introduction.

The first chapter's title is the preparation of a prophet. The historical situation out of which Daniel wrote was the Babylonian captivity of Judah. The Southern Kingdom after the Northern Kingdom now is to go into captivity reaping the bitter harvest sown by their disobedience. The causes of the captivity of Judah have to do with the neglect of the Sabbath law in 2 Chronicles, chapter 36; it is specifically stated that one of the reasons it was necessary for Israel or Judah to go into the captivity of seventy years was that they had failed to observe the Sabbath years. Remember that every seventh year it was the responsibility of the nation to not plant their grain and to live off that which they had harvested in previous years.

Now these Sabbath years were not observed and so the result was that the time came that God had to punish them or discipline them as a result of their neglect of that Sabbath law so that for approximately 500 years they must suffer because of their neglect. In addition, the captivity of Judah was related to the idolatry into which Judah as well as Israel had been plunged and finally in II Chronicles, Chapter 36 it is specifically stated that perhaps a lesser reason but nevertheless a reason was that Jehoiakim, the King of Judah,

was one who did evil in the sight of the Lord. As a result of God’s disciplinary judgment upon Judah there were three deportations from Judah to Babylon, one in 605 BC, the others in 597, and finally in 586 BC, the final one, with the destruction of Jerusalem. So that Daniel writes out of captivity in Babylon for he was one of those that was taken to Babylon from the land.

The personal character of the Book of Daniel is rather remarkable. You will notice as you read through it, and I hope you will be reading it through as we study it over the next weeks together, that Daniel when he addresses his prophecies does not address them to the people of Israel. In fact Daniel does not address the people at all, and God, when he speaks his prophecies does not speak of Israel as his people as he does in the prophecy of Isaiah. He speaks about “my people” in Isaiah but in Daniel it is “thy people.” If you will turn over for just a moment to the 9th chapter and the 27th verse you will see one of the illustrations of this. Daniel chapter 9 and verse 27, “And he will make a firm covenant with many for one week but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate....” Now did I say Daniel chapter 9 and verse 27? That should be verse 24, “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and for your holy city to finish the transgression to make an end of sin,” and notice the expression, “your people and your holy city.” So it is clear that in the book of Daniel God writes as one who has written off that generation of the nation Israel. So that is one of the rather interesting features of this Book of Daniel.

Another thing that stands out in the Book of Daniel is the personal character of Daniel himself. In the Old Testament, he is singled out as being an exceedingly righteous person. Let me read just a few passages in the book of Ezekiel concerning him. Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 14 we read, “Even though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst by their own righteousness, they could only deliver themselves declares the Lord God.” So Daniel is associated with Noah and Job as a person of unusual

righteousness. Then look at the 20th verse, “Even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in its midst as I live declares the Lord God, they could not deliver either their son or their daughter. They were delivered only themselves by their righteousness.”

In chapter 28 and verse 3, reference is made to the wisdom of Daniel. “Behold you are wiser than Daniel. There is no secret that is a match for you.” He is speaking about the leader of Tyrus and he likens him to Daniel as a person who has great wisdom. So Daniel then was a man who was, according to the Holy Scripture, noted for his righteousness and also his wisdom. Some of the traditions concerning Daniel no doubt have no real historical evidence to support them but they are rather interesting any way. Josephus, for example, refers to his skill in architecture and the Arabians allege that he was the inventor of geomancy.

Now, a little secret; I had to look up what geomancy means, specifically. I can tell from the derivation it had something to do with the earth and also something to do with sorcery. But I looked it and geomancy is divination by random figures formed when a handful of earth is cast on the ground or by dots or lines drawn at random. Some of our modern artists engage in something very similar to geomancy when they paint their pictures as they throw their paint at the canvas, but Daniel is supposed to have invented geomancy. Now that doesn’t seem to be so great to me but another thing that Daniel was supposed to have done was to be the author of a book on the principles of the interpretation of dreams. I would like to have a copy of that book because I would like to give it to some of my Arminian friends. It might help them understand the Book of Daniel a little better. But now, I don’t want to start up by attacking some of my friends right in the first lecture when we are not even to the subject of millennialism. So we will drop that.

Just remember this, that as far as tradition is concerned, Daniel was a man who was outstandingly righteous and also known for his wisdom according to Holy Scripture. When we think of the Book of Daniel, and in the introduction each week, I will try to

give you some more details concerning the book as a whole, not boring you tonight with too many introductory matters, but let me just give you an outline. When we think of the Book of Daniel, the usual outline that is suggested for this book, fortunately its very logically constructed and easy to remember and its major features is this. The first six chapters are historical and then the last six chapters are prophetic. That is the usual outline or one very similar to it suggested for this book.

Now of course you know from your reading of the book of Daniel that the 2nd chapter of the book of Daniel is one of the outstanding prophetic chapters in the whole of the Old Testament and so that outline, while it is very simple, does not truly fit all of the chapters. But in general it is true the first part of the book is primarily historical and the latter part of the book is primarily prophetic. I would suggest A little more detailed outline but one still very simple by suggesting to you that the first chapter is something of a introduction to the book and then the second chapter through the seventh chapter have to do with truths that concern the Gentile nations. And the last five chapters have to do with truths concerning the Israelite nation.

Now, the reason that I suggest this outline to you is that as those who are able to read Daniel in the original languages, notice plural, because Daniel is written in both Hebrew and Aramaic. Now, Daniel chapter 1 verse 1 through chapter 2 verse 3 is written in Hebrew but then in chapter 2, verse 4, you might turn there just for a moment, let me read the verse. At that point, Daniel begins to write through the 7th chapter in Aramaic, “Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic; O king, live forever. Tell the dream to your servants and we will declare the interpretation.” From chapter 2 verse 4 on through chapter 7 the Book of Daniel is written in the Aramaic tongue. Then in chapter 8 again Hebrew is resumed so the last part of the book, the last five chapters, is written in Hebrew.

Now, I think that the reason for this is that those chapters written in Aramaic are chapters that have to do primarily with the gentiles while the latter part of the book has

primarily to do with the Nation Israel. So, there is fittingness about the use of the language itself in the book by Daniel. So I would suggest then that simple outline; the first chapter, introduction, chapters 2 through 7 prophecies or truth concerning the Gentile nations, and finally the last final chapters, truth, primarily prophecies concerning the Israelite nations. We will deal more with that later on.

Now let us turn to the 1st chapter. Our subject is the preparation of a prophet and we want to read now the 1st seven verses.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim King of Judah into his hand along with some of the vessels of house of God...” (You notice incidentally right from the beginning that Daniel is a man who stands in the tradition of those who believe that God controls human history.) “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 (that’s Babylon) to the house of his God and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his God. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring him some of the sons of Israel including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect (who were good looking).”

(Now, that is a contemporary translation, isn’t it?) “Who were good looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge and who had ability for serving the king’s court. And he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them 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. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. And the commander of the officials assigned new names

to them. To Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.”

I wonder what that man would have thought if he had realized what use would have been made of those names down through the years, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? That was really a very brilliant denomination of these young men. The selection of these youths is the subject of these verses. You notice as I say Daniel relates everything that is happening to sovereignty of God. He says, “the Lord gave Jehoakim, King of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.” Later on in verse 9 he will say, “now God granted Daniel favor” and then in verse 17, “and as for these four youths, God gave them Knowledge and intelligence.”

So he is a Prophet who stands in the tradition of biblical writers in that he believes that the ultimate source of meaning is the divine intention. The capture of the city of Jerusalem is referred to here in verses 1 and 2 and we know from other features of the word of God, we don’t have time to look at those prophecies and references in the historical books, that this was the fulfillment of prophecy so when we read, “And the Lord gave Jehoakim King of Judah into his hand.” We not only have an instance of divine sovereignty in the control of the nations, but it was at the fulfillment of the word that he had announced would take place if Israel and Judah did not respond to the word that came to them through Moses and the prophets.

The men that are chosen are men who are described, evidently I should qualify that by saying this. Evidently when Nebuchadnezzar brought the captives and also the vessels back to the city of Babylon, he thought that it might be wise to have some individuals who were Jewish themselves to be head over the administration of Jewish affairs. Perhaps that’s the reason why he decided that he would like to have some of these men be trained and then to serve him. So thinking since he now has a wider territory and needing leading young men to arise and who knew the situation there, he

arranged for choice to be made among them. Notice the qualities that were to characterize them. They were to be young men, not old men, youths; they were to be men who were without blemish physically because the ancients felt that a person who was blemished, in some way physically had some defect, could not have the kind of understanding that an unblemished person could have. So they would be youths in whom there was no defect. They were to be good looking; a special attention is directed to the intellectual side of these men, “Showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge and capacity for serving in the king’s court.”

So they were to be young, good looking, intellectual, that is they were to have good minds, and they were to have knowledge that would be constructive, knowledge that would be wide, knowledge that would be deep and the capacity to serve in the royal court which I assume would be when we would call something like polish and good culture coming from a family used to this kind of thing. Now the interesting thing about this I think is that the purpose of all of this is a reeducation of these men with unusual capacities. It was ancient brainwashing, and what he hoped to do was to, by the training, prepare these men to be the kind of men who would be faithful and subservient to him, faithful also to the king of Babylon.

Now in this brainwashing that was to take place he wanted of course to change their way of thinking because they were going to be taught, we read in verse 4, the literature and language are the Chaldeans. Then also they were to be given new names. Now these new names are all related to heathen gods. So they were to change their intellectual thinking, they were to change their worship, and then they were to be given different food. Even their bodily construction would be changed by the activities of reeducation. To put it in New Testament language, they were to be completely conformed to the world of Babylonia.

It is also interesting that he devises for them three years of training in the *evesta*. A student asks, “How long a time of a year’s length shall a student go to a master of spiritual learning?” And the answer comes, “for a period of three spring times,” years, “he shall gird himself with a holy education.” So a three-year course or a triennium of high education was the normal period under the Persian system and the Babylonian monarch evidently followed in that general tradition.

Now special attention is directed toward the food. And we read in verse 5, “the King appointed for them a daily ration from the king’s choice food.” That word translated choice food in the New American Standard Bible and in some of the versions “delicacies” is a word that was commonly used in Hebrew and Syriac for choice food or delicacies but it was derived from a Persian word *patebaga* [phonetic]; it is in Hebrew, *pathbagh*, and it means an offering or a tribute. So they may be implicit in the idea of the word that the food was part of an offering that had been made either to the king who is a heathen king or else it was food that had been first of all devoted to false gods. So it probably is for this reason that Daniel does not desire to partake of it. In other words, it is food that has been offered in sacrifice to heathen gods or is related to them. In addition it may well have been, I am not certain of this, but it may well have been that the kind of food that is included in the “choice food” also had as part of it some of the unclean animals that the Israelites were forbidden from eating. So for some reason Daniel determines that he is not going to defile himself with that food.

Before I go on let me just say something about the literature and language of the Chaldeans. What did this mean? The literature and language of the Chaldeans? Now it evidently was a rather serious kind of subject, and it must have been a rather broad subject, because these men were to study it for three years. One of the authors in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, in an article dealing with Chaldea, describes what he thinks the learning of the Chaldeans was. And I think you can understand why Daniel not only was a wise man when he started, but he was a very wise man when he



finished. This author says, “The learning of the Chaldeans comprised the old languages of Babylonian, the two dialects of Sumeria with certain knowledge of Kassite, which seems to have been allied to the Hittite, and other languages of the immediate neighborhood.” So he had a full training in the languages of the area.

“Some knowledge of astronomy and astrology, mathematics, which they’re secsgesimal system” -- I am not sure how to pronounce that, I forgot to look it up in the dictionary – “system of numeration seems to have facilitated and a certain amount of natural history. To this must be added a store of mythological learning including legends of the creation, the flood, Babylonian legends particularly. They had likewise a good knowledge of agriculture and were no mean architects as the many celebrated buildings of Babylon show.” So this was a rather extensive close of education that Daniel was asked to undergo. Daniel must have been a teenage boy at this time so far as we can tell perhaps, somewhere in the ages between the ages of 16 and 20. So this was something like university training and evidently was a rather extensive one.

The change of names as rather interesting because it evidently was designed to make these men feel more at home in Babylonia, in other words to conform them to the world, the world of Babylonia. Let me notice the names. Now in verse 6 and 7, we read of the names, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Daniel’s name means “God is my Judge.” But his name Belteshazzar means Bel’s treasurer. Now the next was Hananiah; Hananiah means, “whom Jehovah favored,” but Shadrach means “illuminated by the sun god.” Mishael means “who is what God is” and then his new name is Meshach and that is, “who is what Venus is.” And finally Azariah means “whom Jehovah helped.” *Azar* meaning the Hebrew word “to help” and *yab* of course Jehovah, Yahweh, whom Jehovah helped, but Abednego means the servant of Nebo. So you can see that their names were radically changed. Instead of being identified with the God of Israel, they are now identified with the false gods of Babylon.

We next read in verses 8 through 16 of Daniel’s decision let me read verses 8 through 16. “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. Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials.” I guess the meaning there is if He had not granted him compassion he might have lost his life for even asking to do what he was asking to do because this official was responsible to Nebuchadnezzar and if Nebuchadnezzar found out that he was not carrying out his orders, his head would be lopped off. But Daniel evidently impressed this man sufficiently so that he was not himself punished for even asking the question.

Verse 10, “And the commander of the official 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. But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah...” In other words, he didn’t get very far with the first man that he asked but now he is asking the next man. Translated incidentally in some of the versions as Melzar, but the meaning really is something like overseer as found in the New American Standard Bible.

“Please test your servants for ten days.” So he did not get any response from the commander and so he asks the overseer, “well, give us a test.” “Test your servants for ten days and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.” Now, this I think is rendered in Authorized Version as I remember, I did not look this up, “pulse.” Now, this is not simply vegetables but it includes vegetables. It also includes others products from grain so that bread would be included as well. I know that people wonder how is it possible to eat vegetables and look better than those who eat at the king’s table. Those of you that are health food addicts need not answer and explain how that could be done but any way if we realize that this is simply vegetables, I mean not simply vegetables,

then I think we will understand that Daniel had a little bit more than it might appear. He says in verse 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; so he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days and 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.”

Now that shows you it is not health food because they were fatter than they had been before. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink and kept giving them vegetables. Someone has said incidentally and Dr. Donald Campbell in his commentary on Daniel has commented on this that this is a typical teenage protest, for Daniel doesn’t protest the bondage, he doesn’t protest the treatment that he is getting, but he does protest the food that is being put on the table. Now Daniel says, Daniel determined that he would not defile himself and I gather from this that we are to assume then that there was something about the food that he thought defiling.

Now that could be that it was food sacrificed to a heathen idol and then put on the king’s table or it may be that it was food that violated Israel’s food laws for remember in the Book of Leviticus, Israel was given certain food that they could eat and certain food that they could not eat, and so Daniel perceiving that he would be in violation of the Word of God determined, made up his mind that he would not defile himself with that choice food or with the wine which he drank. And so that is why he sought permission to avoid being put in that position.

Now I think this is rather interesting because it illustrates that Daniel still considered himself to be under the law of God even though he had been taken captive to the land of Babylon. He might well have argued, well when you are in Rome, do as the Romans do or in the tradition of that statement, when you are in Babylon do as the Babylonians do. And consequently since I cannot keep the law of Moses as I should,

then the Lord will forgive me for not seeking to live up to his word. But Daniel’s attitude is different. He has a conviction that the word of God is true and that leads to action.

And I want you to notice too that he does this with meticulous care. He first of all goes to the commander of the officials and he asks him and when he received a no he does not then say to himself, Well I have tried, and surely the Lord will not blame me now if I eat in order to live, this food that is contrary to his word.” No, he persisted, and so then he goes to the overseer and asks for a test, very persistent, very meticulous in seeking to obey if at all possible the revelation that God has given in his word.

Now to me that is a great lesson, a great lesson for all of us who are Christians. The word of God is very important and it’s a very important thing that we be submissive to the teaching of the word of God and avoid rationalizations based on our particular situation. Israel today, to give you one illustration, does not observe the Passover according to the word of God. Because there has grown up among Israelites, among the Jews a so called “as if” doctrine. In other words the Passover should be slain in Jerusalem. We don’t live in Jerusalem. We are scattered over the face of the earth. So we cannot keep the Passover. Therefore we live as if we could keep the Passover. You see if they were really meticulous in their desire to follow the Old Testament teaching they would go back there and observe their Passover. They would not have an “as if” doctrine. The “as if” doctrine has risen in order that rationally they may avoid keeping the word of God. Now of course we believe, we Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, we believe that God has sovereignty in His providence brought it about that they cannot go back because that old service is no longer a valid service since the Lord Jesus Christ the last Passover has come and offered the once and for all sacrifice that does away with observance of the Passover ceremony.

But Daniel is very meticulous in obedience to the word of God, and that is something that all of us should notice. Well he obtained his desire. He was tested and the results are given in verse 14 through verse 16 and the verses that follow and of course

what happened was that so far as those who were avoiding the king’s choice food was concerned they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king’s choice food, better as well. The initial evidence is that it is not better to go along in order to get along in spiritual things. I don’t know whether that was LBJ’s saying or whether that was his mentor’s saying, but that’s a great rule politics. You need to go along in order to get along. Daniel knew nothing about the kind of expediency represented by that.

Well, the conclusion follows in verses 17 through 21 and you sense as you are reading through this that the author of this first chapter has a little bit of skill in creating suspense because we are all interested if we are reading this with understanding. We are all interested in what’s going to be the response to Nebuchadnezzar to all of this that’s going on of which he doesn’t have any idea.

So we read in verse 17 through 21 about the final exam. Final exam comes when these men are brought in before Nebuchadnezzar and the suspense builds up to that. Verse 17 through verse 21,

“And 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. Then at the end of the days, which the King had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. And 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. And 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 all his realm. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus, the King.”

This is I think also generally before I look at the special results. This is I think generally speaking a very good illustration of the truth that all truth is God’s truth. And

there is a book, the title of a book written just about two years ago by Christian philosopher. That of course is not a new idea. All truth is God’s truth is the fundamental truth that was lying back in Abraham Kuyper’s mind when in Holland having been brought out of liberalism to the knowledge of the Lord he established the Free University of Amsterdam in order to integrate all human learning with the knowledge of the word of God. Mr. Kuyper was a man with a tremendous intellect. He was prime minister of Holland. He was the leader of one of the outstanding political parties. He was the founder of that university and first the professor, I believe the first Professor of systematic theology who also taught Hebrew in that institution too. I believe he was Professor of Hebrew.

In addition, he was the editor of a newspaper, a political newspaper that came out, a man of prodigious learning and activity. Kuyper believed that all truth was God’s truth and that that all truth in whatever sphere could ultimately be subsumed under the revelation of God in the word of God. And so the key by which he operated and I think and a Christian key is that the scripture is the key to all knowledge. Now the Scripture is not all knowledge but the Scripture is the key to all knowledge. It is the Revelation of God and out of Scripture one may construct a true and satisfying and the divinely supported world view. And all other learning, whatever it may be, economics, the arts, medicine, law whatever it may be, everything may ultimately be related to the primacy of the revelation of God in the holy Scripture. Now, I think you see an evidence of this here in that here is Daniel with his three companions giving themselves totally to the word of God., and following that word of God and as a result of that they are given by God unusual understanding in the other areas of life. The first reward is the reward of understanding.

Now if we had time, we don’t have time to do this, and we could speak about these Hebrew words that are used here for knowledge for their different kinds but let me kind of sum it up this way. There was given to Daniel and those with him knowledge,

evidently a reference to what was true, so they came to understand what was true. They were also given what I would like to call insight, intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom, insight; insight into literature and wisdom is the ability to apply the knowledge and insight that one is given in the mind. In the New Testament we have this. We have knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is the knowledge of what is true generally. Wisdom is a skill in applying that knowledge to the facts of life. Now lots of people have a lot of knowledge but very little wisdom. And then there are lots of people who have a great deal of wisdom. They don’t have a whole lot of knowledge. Of course, I’d rather have wisdom if you have to make a choice because that is the application of what you do know. It is skill, it is perception. So as a reward of their faithfulness to the word of God they were given understanding.

Many years ago I heard Carl Armerding, who so far as I know is still living, a very fine Bible teacher who is about 90 years of age now, very godly man; he has been a missionary, a teacher at theological seminary at Wheaton College. He was going through Daniel, I think the first time I had ever gone through Daniel, this was a few years back and I remember that Dr. Armerding said, “Piety is profitable,” and it certainly was profitable here. I am going to ask you to turn back with me to Psalm 119, Psalm 119 and verse 98, the psalmist has a word to say about his teachers. Now he says, “O how I love thy law,” verse 97, “It is my meditation all the day.” Now notice these words, this is not braggadocio, either. “Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged because I have observed thy precepts.” What a magnificent tribute to the knowledge found in Holy Scripture. Truly, if you apply yourself to it, you will be knowledgeable, have insight and be wise.

Now the next thing that was given Daniel understood in visions and dreams, according to verse 17. The separated man, this man was separated unto the truth of God is a sagacious man. He is a man who understands not only knowledge and insight and

the practical side of things but he is given special knowledge in visions and dreams and that of course is for the special place that he will come to occupy in the revelation and specifically the revelation that is found in the Book of Daniel.

And finally the chapter concludes with, “And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus, the King.” Now, I want you to know that, that was a long time. Now that was a very important statement and I am going to read a statement that is quoted very often in connection with that verse. You know the more you know about the Bible the more you understand about the Bible and if you reflect upon what happened between the time of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, you will understand what that means. Daniel continued. Anybody down in Nicaragua who would understand and people in Cuba in South America, they would understand and even in places like France, which has had, may be twenty governments in the past twenty-five years. Listen to Pusey, “Simple words, ‘Daniel continued’ but what a volume of tried faithfulness is unrolled by them. Amid all the intrigues, indigenous at all times, and dynasties of oriental despotism, amid all the envy toward a foreign captive in high office as a king’s counselor, amid all the trouble incidental to the insanity of the king and the murder of two of his successors, in that whole critical period, for his people, Daniel continued.” That is the sovereign providence of God.

Let me close by saying this. This chapter shows us the kind of man to whom God gives light. When you read that Daniel is a man forthright enough to stand up in the midst of the Babylonians, his captors, and ask that he be allowed to follow the word of God, you can see that he is a kind of man who regards truth as being very precious, and because he is a man who purposes in his heart to follow the Lord then I think you can understand why he was given these magnificent visions and prophecies in the Book of Daniel. God’s men are prepared men, spiritually and morally. And here is a man who is willing to purpose within his heart to do the will of God.



That’s what Barnabas told those to whom he spoke that they would with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord. That’s what Ruth did and that’s one of the reasons why she was blessed. Many Christians jettison their principles in order that their path may be easier but in that they are unlike Daniel, the prophet. The great principle given to Eli by the man of God is found here. “Them that honor me I will honor.” May God give us the Grace to have the courage of a Daniel to stand by the teaching of holy Scripture.

Next week, the Lord willing, we plunge into one of the greatest of the prophecies in the entire Old Testament. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are so thankful to Thee for these chapters in the word of God that stress such important principles that apply to us in 1979. Enable us to dare to be Daniels as well. Enable us Lord to purpose within our heart to please Thee in spite of what the world about us may think or urge us to do and if it should please Thee too Lord, give us wisdom and knowledge and insight. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.