


Historical Background

 Daniel 1:1-2

 Pastor Jeremy Thomas

 May 22, 2016

 fbgbible.org

 Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin Street

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

(830) 997-8834

Last time we introduced the Book of Daniel. The first thing we said is Daniel is the key to prophetic revelation. Not just Revelation but the whole of prophetic revelation. People have a verse here, they have a verse there, they think it proves their timing of the rapture or something. This is what I usually encounter, someone saying, "What about this verse?" I'm not trying to be demeaning but that's like holding up one piece of a 1,000 piece puzzle and saying, "What about this piece?" Yeah, yeah, it has a place but your piece is not going to dictate the picture of the puzzle. Daniel sets the frame for all prophecy and if you don't get it right you can forget it. It's too many pieces. It's too complex. So we follow the order of progressive revelation and we build the frame and then start working on the inside of the frame. There is a proper way to do this. Second, we said Daniel is placed in the Hebrew canon, called Tanakh, within the third section of the Writings. The Hebrew canon had Torah, which is the Law, Nabiim, which is the Prophets, and Kethubim, which is the Writings. Daniel is stated by Christ to be a prophet and we're not challenging that; Moses is also a prophet but he's not placed in the Prophets, he's in the Law. Daniel was placed among the Writings. There's a good reason for that. The Writings contained wisdom and Daniel was viewed primarily as Jew who had wisdom, a Jew who ruled wisely in Gentile governments. So the book has a lot to say about Gentile governments, the fact is they've been given sovereignty but the fact also is they are extremely corrupt. But there are ways to survive in them and actually thrive. Third, Daniel is written in two styles different from classical writing prophets who wrote in poetry. Daniel is written in narrative and apocalyptic. What's narrative? Narrative is telling a story. What's apocalyptic? Apocalyptic is an unveiling of the future. It's highly visionary and symbolic literature, has angelic interpreters and is designed to give Israel hope when they are living in difficult times and to give Gentile nations humility in how they treat Israel because the God of Israel gave them their sovereignty. Further we said this kind of literature was always given when God was about to go silent. Look at all the apocalyptic literature in the OT and it is slammed at the end of the OT. Look at the one apocalyptic book in the NT and see that it is slammed at the end of the NT. So God is saying, I'm about to go silent, I'm going to sketch for you in very dramatic language the distant future. Fourth, Daniel was written in two languages. What two languages? Hebrew and Aramaic. Hebrew to address the Jewish exiles on how to live in Gentile kingdoms and to give them hope. Aramaic to address Gentile nations on how to use their sovereignty and to remain humble. Fifth, what is the unifying theme of the book? The sovereignty of God over Israel and

Gentile nations. He's the one who orchestrates history. Sixth, Daniel wrote between 606BC and 536BC contrary to every liberal scholar who approaches the text from the standpoint of unbelief and dated it after the facts rather than before the facts, though even when they date it between 175 and 164BC they can't account for what is predicted with the Roman Empire. Daniel just stands out and it's been a controversial book.

Today we move on to some of the purposes of the book and the historical background or situation that leads into Daniel 1. As for the purposes of writing we want to look at five purposes. A few of these have really cast some light on Daniel so pay close attention. The first purpose of writing is to reveal God's Program for Gentile Nations, what Jesus calls "the times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24. Both the four metal statue in Dan 2 and the four animals in Dan 7 outline four Gentile kingdoms that will sequentially rule the world; Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Get real familiar with these kingdoms because we still live in these kingdoms and every one of these kingdoms has made a contribution that combines with the previous contributions so that we understand the way Gentiles rule the world today. So a major purpose of writing is to reveal God's program for Gentile kingdoms that characterize the times of the Gentiles. By the way, the "times of the Gentiles" is not the same as the "fullness of the Gentiles" in Rom 11. The "times of the Gentiles" refers to a period of history where geopolitical rule or sovereignty has been given to Gentile nations. The "fullness of the Gentiles" refers to the full number of Gentiles destined to become part of the Church. So the expression "times of the Gentiles" relates to nations, the expression "fullness of the Gentiles" relates to the Church. The second and related purpose of writing is to humble Gentile rulers. Those Gentile rulers who subjugate Israel during the times of the Gentiles, and don't forget, even today the only reason the modern State of Israel is there is because the UN says so. Gentile powers made that resolution back in 1947-48 and they exist as a State only because of them. But the Gentile powers need to recognize that they got their sovereignty from God and that He is sovereign over them and He can take their sovereignty away. This is a problem. Gentile nations are inclined toward arrogance, especially the political leaders, and if they're not, just let them be political leaders for a while and watch what happens. So a major purpose of the book is that they would read this book and realize their tendency toward arrogance and be humbled under the mighty hand of God. A third purpose, and now we turn to Israel, purposes one and two are for Gentile nations. Purposes three, four and five are for Israel. The third purpose is to reveal God's Program for Israel as it relates to Gentile Nations. Clearly Israel will be subjugated to Gentile nations for four sequential kingdoms, one of which sort of has two phases. However, in the end, after they have all run their course, God will restore Israel. God has a covenant program for Israel that will be fulfilled after the times of the Gentiles has run its course. Then Israel will be the head of all nations. In the meantime, purpose four, how are Jews to live under Gentile domination? How are they to live during the times of the Gentiles? This is a period of discipline for their nation. Can individual Jews receive blessing despite the fact their nation is under discipline for four Gentile kingdoms? One of the great purposes of Daniel is to show that in fact they can. The stories of four men, Daniel, Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael are given as examples for later Jews for how to live outside the land under Gentile powers and be blessed. What's Dan 1 all about? The king issues a diet contrary to the Mosaic Law.

What does Daniel do? He shrewdly requests a different diet so as not to transgress the Mosaic Law Code. What's the result? He's supernaturally blessed. What's Dan 3 all about? The king issues a decree for everyone in his administration to worship an idol of himself. What do Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael do? They refuse to worship idols, that's contrary to the Mosaic Law. What's the result? They put their lives in jeopardy but the Lord saved them. Over and over Daniel and his three friends are put forth as examples of how the Jew is to live outside the land under Gentile powers. And if you think about later Jewish generations, like Esther and Mordecai, when they had to stand up against Gentile powers, what examples do you think they were following? They were following Daniel, Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael. These were their heroes in the faith. You can tell they were their heroes because when you read the names of their kids they were naming them after Daniel and Azariah and Hananiah. They looked to these men as the ones who taught them how to live outside the land and still be blessed by God. Finally, a fifth purpose of writing is to provide a key to interpreting later prophecy in the Olivet Discourse, Matt 24-25 and Revelation 4-22. That's what I keep saying about Daniel being the key. Remember, Walvoord said Daniel is the key to prophetic revelation. I didn't come up with that. But if you think about it, it's the only book in the entire Bible that sketches the whole course of world history from the rise of Babylon in 605BC all the way to the future Millennial Kingdom. Right now that's a period of over 2,600 years. So the book covers the period of time we are living in right now and even beyond. Interestingly, people say, "America is not in Bible prophecy." In one sense their right. I used to say that. America is not mentioned in Bible prophecy by name. But we are in the Bible in the sense that we are a part of Gentile kingdoms. So you can't say there's any particular prophecy about America, like the goofball Jonathan Cahn did in his book *The Harbinger*, which was a lot of imaginary thinking. But the Bible does involve America in prophecy because we are just as Gentile as the next nation on the block. My point is to say that no other book is as broad in its scope as Daniel and that makes it the key to understanding Bible prophecy.

Alright, now, a little bit of historical background. I'll probably sound like a broken record to those of you who understand God's covenant program with Israel. But we have to go through this because Dan 1:1 and 2 reports that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and God gave Jehoiakim into his hand. Why is this happening? Why is Jerusalem being attacked. Why is the Temple being sacked? Why is he taking young Jewish nobility into exile? Why is this happening to Israel? The issue has to do with God's covenant program with Israel. God only made covenants with one nation on earth; Israel. He made four unconditional covenants with Israel and one conditional covenant with Israel. We're not going to go through all of those but we do want to understand that the structure of history is set up around these covenants.

Turn to Gen 12. Gen 12 is the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. It has three daughter covenants that are also unconditional; the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant. What's an unconditional covenant? An unconditional covenant is a covenant whose ultimate fulfillment is not conditioned on anything Israel does. Israel can worship idols, they can blaspheme the Holy Spirit, they can crucify the Messiah, it doesn't matter, nothing can change that God will fulfill the unconditional

covenants to Israel. How do we know these are unconditional covenants? The formula for an unconditional covenant is "I will...." As you read the language in these covenants God will keep saying, "I will do this and I will do that. Note verse 1. "Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house," by the way, some make that a condition. Israel had to go forth from his country. I'm not convinced of that but even if it is Abraham met the condition and so the rest is unconditional and nothing can change it. "Go...To the land which I will show you; 2And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Who's the one doing the doing here? God is. God is going to do these things. That's why we call it a grace covenant. Verse 7, "To your descendants I will give this land." It's all "I will" language and as we said the Abrahamic Covenant is the foundational unconditional covenant that gives rise to three daughter covenants that amplify the three main promises. What are the three main promises? The land, the seed and the blessing. The land is a specific real estate, mentioned in verse 7, the boundaries of which are sketched in Gen 15:18-21 as extending from the river of Egypt all the way to the great river Euphrates, that's number one, the land, number two is the seed, an offspring, on one hand collective, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore, on the other hand singular, a specific seed or person who is Messiah, and three blessing, extension of spiritual blessings to the Gentile world based on this covenant with Israel.

This covenant was repeated to Isaac and not Ishmael or any of Abraham's other sons. Turn to Gen 26:3, there is a distinct covenant line. Notice all the "I will" language. This is the language of an unconditional covenant. "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. 4"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Sounds like the Abrahamic covenant repeated, huh? That's because it is. This is the covenant line. Now turn to Gen 35:10 because the covenant was repeated to Jacob and not Esau. This is the boundaries of the covenant people. "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. 4"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Same promises made to Abraham and Isaac are now made to Jacob. All "I will" statements. Jacob was renamed Israel and he became the father of the Twelve Tribes and this is how the Bible defines a Jew. A Jew is a physical descendant of Jacob who was renamed Israel and so a Jew is from one of the twelve tribes of Israel, has to be. No one else can become a Jew. You're either born a Jew or you're not a Jew.

Now for confirmation that this is the covenant people of God turn to Exod 3:15. This is when God was sending Moses back to Egypt to be the deliverer and set the people free. Moses was of the tribe of Levi. He didn't want to go back to Egypt. He was scared to go. God is trying to convince him to go in this chapter. In verse 14 Moses said,

if I go who am I going to tell them sent me? And God said out of the burning bush, "I AM WHO I AM." That's the name of God. It means something like "I exist" or "I am the root and ground of all existence." We read in verse 15, "God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' Why does He say I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Because those are the lines He made the Abrahamic covenant with. So it's the covenant nation of Israel who were down in Egypt who was God's firstborn son and since Pharaoh cursed Israel then God was going to curse Egypt's firstborn son. The Exodus grows out of the Abrahamic Covenant. It didn't matter what Israel was doing down in Egypt. We know they worshipped idols. God didn't rescue them because they were good little boys and girls. God rescued them because He made an unconditional covenant with them. Verse 16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. 17" So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" The whole reason there is an Exodus is because God made covenant promises to this people. All I'm doing here is sketching for you what the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant looks like in history and this is a guide for interpreting what is going on in present history and why Israel is now back in the land and what the significance of that is. It doesn't mean Israel is in obedience, it doesn't mean their good little boys and girls, it means that God is remembering the Abrahamic covenant.

Now I'm going to throw a humdinger at you. An unconditional covenant can have conditions within it. People struggle to see this but this is seen as early as Genesis 17 where, after making the Abrahamic Covenant, God said that the sign of the covenant was circumcision and that every male descendant of Abraham was to be circumcised on the eighth day. This was a responsibility of the parents and if the parents didn't circumcise their baby boys then that family was not eligible for blessing, they were to be cut off from the people.

Let's look at an example. You're in Exodus already so turn to Exod 4:24. People read this and wonder, what is this? Moses was on his way back to Egypt with his wife Zipporah. She was a Midianite girl. Her name means "bird" and she was a nuisance to Moses. They had some boys together. In verse 24 watch what happens, "Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." 26 So He let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood"—because of the circumcision." Do you think Zipporah liked that the Jews circumcised? No, this was a marital dispute they had. But her son's life was at stake and she knew that he was a Jew and they as a family could not enjoy blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant apart from their son being circumcised so she cut off the foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet. What a lovely picture. But the point is that circumcision was a condition for blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant and therefore you can see that an unconditional covenant can have conditions

for enjoying blessing within it. It's just that those conditions can never affect the ultimate fulfillment because that depends on God alone.

Now just as circumcision was a condition for enjoying blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant so the Mosaic Covenant was later added alongside the Abrahamic Covenant and it sketched the Laws of Moses that the Jews had to follow in order to enjoy blessing in the land. This is what Gal 3:15-21 was all about. If the Jews wanted to enjoy blessing under the Abrahamic provisions, they had to obey the Mosaic provisions. This was the one conditional covenant. The formula for the Mosaic Covenant was different than the Abrahamic, it's "if you...then I will..." so the enjoyment of blessing was clearly conditioned on obedience but that covenant was temporary, it would be fulfilled in Christ and be replaced by the unconditional New Covenant and so the fact is that the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant rests on God alone and it will be fulfilled in the future.

So the relationship between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant is just like your relationship and fellowship with God. If you are a believer you have a relationship with God, nothing can change that, you have eternal security, but to enjoy blessing what do you have to do? Walk in fellowship with God. But even if you rebel your whole life, guess what? In the end you still have eternal security. You can't do anything to cancel eternal security. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. And Israel can't do anything to cancel their ultimate blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant. Ultimately Israel will enjoy the land, the seed and the blessing. But along the way to that destiny there may be ups and downs depending on their obedience or disobedience to the Mosaic Covenant.

Deut 28. Let's look some at the conditional Mosaic Covenant. The OT was specific as to how God would bless Israel if they obeyed and how He would discipline them if they disobeyed. Deut 28:1-14 outlines the blessings for obedience. Verse 1, "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2" All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:" So was the blessing conditional? If words have meaning. Then he explains the blessing as being material, it was enjoyment within the land. Verse 3, "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country." Urban and rural blessing in the land. "Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock." Agricultural prosperity. What does that transfer into? Economics. All the blessing is material prosperity for Israel.

Then come down to verse 15, "But," signaling the contrast, "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:" and he begins to sketch the cursings which are also material. Verse 16, "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country." Again urban and rural, meaning you can't escape it! It goes on, there are five degrees of cursing or discipline. In other words, what God was laying in front of them was an option. The nation Israel could obey and enjoy blessing or they could disobey

and be cursed in the land. And when they disobeyed God would raise up a judge or a prophet to come in and call the nation to repentance and warn of discipline. If they did not repent then they would go under the first degree of divine discipline. If they still didn't respond to the discipline He'd send the prophet to warn them again, tell them to repent and then if they refused to repent but hardened their heart against Him then He'd send them the second degree. And this would go on to the third degree, the fourth degree and finally the fifth degree. The fifth degree was the worst but if at any time in the degrees of discipline they repented, then God would restore the blessing.

If you come down to verse 47 you see the fifth degree. God predicted the nation would come under the fifth degree, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; 48therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you." The fifth degree is to be in exile to and subject to Gentile powers. Verse 49, "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, 50a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young." A military invasion by a foreign army is going to sweep down and overtake them. Verse 52, "It shall besiege you in all your towns," verse 53, "Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters...during the siege." This happened three times in Israel's history, 721BC while under the Assyrian siege, 586BC under the Babylonian siege and AD70 under the Roman siege. The famine was so bad during the siege that the people went psychotic and ate their own children. He summarizes it verses 63ff, "It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. 64"Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. 65"Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. 66"So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. 67"In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!' because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you will see." We could go on. It would be terrible. At times it looks like the nation Israel is on the verge of extinction, that God's anger is so great that He's just going to wipe them off the planet. But that's never going to happen. Why? Because of the Abrahamic Covenant. So we have the Abrahamic Covenant which guarantees ultimate blessing and the Mosaic Covenant which promised blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience.

In that context, why in Dan 1:1 is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon coming to Jerusalem and besieging it? It's the fifth degree of divine discipline. God has sent them prophet after prophet calling them to repentance and they haven't repented and that's it, the southern kingdom of Judah is going into exile.

Habakkuk is a whole book where God said He was raising up the Babylonians in their day as a rod to discipline Israel. Let's look a moment at the rise of Babylon and that will bring us to Dan 1:1. Assyria was the world power before Babylon came along. The northern kingdom had come under the fifth degree of divine discipline and went into Exile to Assyria in 721. The southern kingdom was graciously delivered from the Assyrians because of the repentance of Hezekiah and that generation. But his son Manasseh was the worst king in all the house of David and he led the southern kingdom back into idolatry and so God started raising up the Babylonians. The Babylonians began their rise in 627BC with Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 1:1. In 614 the tension grew between Babylon and Assyria because Babylon made some military incursions into Assyrian cities. In 612BC a major shift in world power occurred. The Babylonians allied with the Medes and Scythians and invaded Assyria and defeated them. The fall of Ninevah, the capital of Assyria was prophesied by Nahum in painstaking detail. The Assyrians were routed and retreated to Haran. They tried to re-organize a government but in 610 the Babylonians routed them again so the Assyrians called on the Egyptians to help them stave off the Babylonians. Pharaoh responded with his army in 609BC. While passing through Israel, Josiah, the last good King of Judah went to Megiddo and tried to stop Pharaoh and his army. He was killed and in his place Jehoiakim took the throne. He's the king of Judah in Dan 1:1. Pharaoh and the Egyptians continued, joined the Assyrians, faced off against the Babylonians at Haran again, but were defeated. The Assyrians pass off the scene. A new power was rising, the Babylonians. They go head to head with the Egyptians. It's 605BC, Nabopolassar is still on the throne but he's an old man. His son Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon in Dan 1:1 is fighting battles against the Egyptians. They meet at Carchemish, a famous ancient battle and the Egyptians are defeated. Nebuchadnezzar continues to pursue them and beat them back all the way to the Egyptian border. Along the way a courier brings him a message, his father has died. He stops pursuing the Egyptians and turns back to return to be crowned king of Babylon. As he's passing by Jerusalem he remembers all the reports of gold in the Temple of Jerusalem. So what does he do? He's already there so he stops and in verse 1, he besieged Jerusalem, in verse 2 he sacked the temple and took many vessels out of the Temple. And, of course, as we'll see, he took Daniel and others captive to Babylon. That's what was going on on the international stage at that time. It was a huge power struggle going on between the Assyrians and the Babylonians and the Egyptians and Israel got caught in the middle.

So we read Dan 1:1, **In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah**, it was 606 or 605BC.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. Nebuchadnezzar...besieged it because he wanted to besiege it, he wanted the gold and precious things out of the Temple, but verse 2 says **the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand** and now you know why, it was the fifth degree of divine discipline. It's actually the first of three stages of the fifth degree because this is the first in 606 or 605, then there is another invasion in 597 and then the final one in 588-586. You see that God was reticent to send them into exile to foreign powers, but on the third time He did. The Temple was destroyed. What's the significance of the Temple? It signified God dwelling among them. So what's the significance of the destruction of the Temple? God

is no longer dwelling among them. The Shekinah Glory departs. That's a scary thought for Israel. But on this first of the three stages Nebuchadnezzar doesn't destroy the Temple but takes some of the precious things from the Temple, but even that's a signal that God is starting to depart. Another thing you'll notice in verse 2 is that Nebuchadnezzar did not take Jehoiakim in his hand but God gave Jehoiakim into his hand, because nobody can touch the house of David without God allowing it. This was a disciplinary move of God. God gave him into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, **along with some of the vessels of the house of God;** there's the temple vessels, **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.** His chief god was *Marduk*, we'll get into that later. Verse 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 families and of the nobles.** So they had taken some **of the sons of Israel** too, and note who they had taken, those of the **royal families and of the nobles.** You don't take commoners; you take top people. Nebuchadnezzar was not stupid. Daniel and his friends represented top families in Israel. They were elite people in society and we'll see why Nebuchadnezzar did this next week. Nebuchadnezzar was implementing a strategy here, a strategy of foreign relations because he wants to rule the Jewish people but to be successful he needs people from within the Jewish culture to be his liaisons, men who will be able to help him govern the Jews so that he avoids as many problems as possible. This man conquered many different peoples, the Jews were just one of them and so he's going to have a big foreign relations department.

Alright, today we covered the five purposes of the book and the historical background. The first purpose is to reveal God's Program for Gentile Nations. What's going on today is not just random. Gentiles rule because God gave Gentile kingdoms sovereignty during this time. The second purpose is to humble Gentile rulers. These Gentile rulers got their power from the God of Israel. And if they mistreat Israel they will lose their power. The third purpose is to reveal God's Program for Israel. God has a plan for them during the times of Gentile kingdoms. The fourth purpose is to show Jews how they can live under Gentile dominion and still be blessed. The fifth purpose is to provide a key to interpreting later prophecy in the Olivet Discourse, Matt 24-25 and Revelation 4-22. Remember, Daniel is the key to interpreting all prophetic revelation. But what stands behind Daniel and is even bigger than Daniel itself is the covenant program of God for Israel. God made covenants with only one nation on earth; Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional and eternal covenant meaning that its ultimate fulfillment depends upon God alone. It gives Israel as a nation eternal security. Now within that there is the Mosaic Covenant which is a conditional and temporal covenant, meaning that the enjoyment of blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant is conditional on obedience and if they are in disobedience they will be under divine discipline. And so to understand what is happening in Dan 1:1-2 you have to understand that Israel has been disobedient to God and this is divine discipline. Nebuchadnezzar besieging Jerusalem and Jehoiakim being given into his hand is divine discipline for Israel turning away from God and turning to idols. So God is giving them into the hands of a bunch of idolaters so they can have their fill of it. But we should always remember that even though Israel faces severe divine discipline, they can never be destroyed because God has

made eternal unconditional covenants with them that God will ultimately fulfill in the future kingdom of God.

Next week we'll start with the text.