Charles Feinberg:

This is a series on The Book of Daniel by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg dean of Talbot’s Theological Seminary of La Mirada California. Today we'd like to look at chapters 1 and 2. The vision of the image or more particularly what we could call the course of world monarchies. If I were asked to put a descriptive phrase over the books of the major prophets, I believe we would put over Isaiah the salvation of the Lord Isaiah has been called the evangelist of the Old Testament. So many passages from his book have been used by gospel preachers as texts to preach the gospel to win the lost to our Lord Jesus Christ the salvation of the Lord for Isaiah over Jeremiah. We could put the judgment of the Lord. You remember how often Jeremiah spoke and predicted he foretold judgment. Exile punishment a visitation of God in wrath upon the people of Israel and so a favorite phrase of his was the burden of the Lord the burden of the Lord and the people got so weary of it. They said Don't you know anything besides the burden of the Lord the burden of the Lord the burden of Lord of these.

But you see Israel was on the toboggan. They were in the decline of their monarchy because of sin and the true prophet of God had to speak Judgement. Over Jeremiah the burden lord over Ezekiel we could well put the title the glory of the Lord. That's the way the first chapter starts with a likeness of the appearance of the glory of the Lord and in the 48th chapter the glory of God is so really in millennial Jerusalem that the name of the city is Jehovah Shammah, The
Lord is there. And in that book we have a wonderful division of it on the theme of the glory of the Lord. Now when we come to Daniel the phrase that would best describe the theme of this prophecy would be the Kingdom of the Lord. Because Daniel as well as the Apostle John later on in the book of the revelation Daniel is interested in telling how the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and He shall reign forever. Now as you study the Book of Daniel carefully you'll see that it has visions in fact in Chapter 2. We have the vision of the image given to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream.

And so Daniel is the great apocalyptic book of the Old Testament unveiling the future under visions. The Book of Revelation is the great apocalyptic book The Book of disclosures of the New Testament. It is interesting that Daniel was written by a man greatly beloved The Book of the Revelation was written by the beloved disciple. The word of God is true the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and love him. Now isn't it unusual friends that man men everywhere who are curious to know the future are yet so perverse about it man will seek to penetrate the future by searching after fortune tellers and mediums and he will not heed. He will not turn to God's clear words of prophecy. My friends, prophecy itself is the strongest argument against in fidelity and unbelief prophecy is not just some shrewd guess some political word of what might happen. No prophecy is a miracle of utterance and true prophecy in the predictive sense is possible only through the revelation the disclosure that comes from the living God.

Now the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation explain one another and they are keys to the whole prophetic word and contrary to the belief of many people who would dissuade us from studying prophecy especially Daniel contrary to the belief of these people. Daniel can be understood our Lord in the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 15 says when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place that which was written of by Daniel the
prophet and then parenthetically let him that readeth understand that plainly means that God meant us God meant us to understand the prophecy of Daniel. He didn't say let him that read a misunderstand it was a great scientist Sir Isaac Newton who said to reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion. He was right. You reject so large a portion that enters in so definitely not only into old testament prophecy but New Testament prophecy and also into the prophetic portions of the Gospels spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to reject that is to reject outright the Christian faith.

Now the book of Daniel is a small book actually. As far as chapters are concerned it has less chapters than the minor prophet Hosea less chapters than the minor prophet Zechariah has 12 chapters and they beautifully divide in half chapters one to six have one theme.

Chapter seven to 12 have another a broad theme [inaudible] has well said chapters one to six speak of historic night. Chapter 7 to 12 speak of his of prophetic light in the first section we have the dreams of Gentile rulers in the second part we have visions and prophecies given to Daniel himself. Now what time area is covered in the book of Daniel. What age was it that the prophet Daniel himself lived in.? Well the book has reference specifically to the time when Israel is under subjection to the Gentiles what we know as The Times of the Gentiles our Lord spoke of it in Luke 21 24 when he said that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. It's the time when gentiles have rule over the earth well hasn't that been from all time. No no in Genesis twelve. God delegated the rule on earth to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants who kings and queens would come from them. And God made them rulers in the earth as long as they would heed God's word and be missionaries concerning the glory of God and the unity of God.

But when Israel had been in the land for many centuries and when they subverted the truth of God would not heed the truth of God. God said you're no longer missionary for me you
become missionary for senseless useless worthless nonexistent idols these idols that are nothing in the world they have no actual objective life at all. God said then I am going to do a tremendous work of immunization on you a work of national immunization. You see if you want to immunize someone against smallpox you take smallpox germs under clinical control and inject them in that person. Give them a minor case of smallpox so the body can resist it. Now Israel was infected with idolatry so God took them down into Babylon because Babylon according to Genesis 10 and 11 Babylon was the very place where idolatry began. And do you know to this very hour the people of Israel are the least idolatrous people on the face of the earth. But it's while they were down in Babylon that God gave Daniel the prophet and gentile rulers dreams and visions and prophecies concerning a long period of time when Gentiles the nations of the Earth would be holding sway and rule and authority in the earth.

Now with that background. Let us look at chapters one and two which speak first of all of the preparation of God's servant. Chapter 1 you will remember that God prepared Abraham bringing him all the way from Ur [inaudible] before God used him. You remember God prepared Moses before he used him forty years in Egypt forty years in the back side of the desert keeping the flock of his father in law Jethro. And so similarly with Daniel we have the preparation of God's servant well who is this man Daniel. Well we have to remember how the people of Israel came to me down there in Babylon. There was a great king called Nebuchadnezzar. He was the Babylonian king. He was a ruler in the Neo Babylonian Empire because there had been a Babylon empire many centuries before this dynasty in which Nebuchadnezzar ruled had been started by his father Nabopolassar. Now it was Nabopolassar with his son Nebuchadnezzar who had brought to an end with their confederates brought to an end. The Assyrian Empire by the fall
of Nineveh and 612 B.C. so Nebuchadnezzar is entrenched as ruler now by the death of his father. He is entrenched in. The Empire.

The Babylonian Empire and he finds that things are unsettled in Judea and he sets out on a campaign and in 606 B.C. six years after the fall of Nineveh in 612, 606 B.C. He takes a certain amount of the people of Israel down in the Holy Land. He takes them away into Babylonian captivity you see in 722 to 721 ten tribes of the northern kingdom had been taken away into Assyrian captivity. These are taken away into Babylonian captivity because Babylon is the dominant empire on the face of the globe. It was at 606 B.C. in that siege that Daniel was exiled and in Daniel 1:1 you have it in the third year of the reign of Joachim King of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon under Jerusalem and besieged it. But you remember a puppet king was put up on the Judean throne by Nebuchadnezzar. But he misbehaved Joachim misbehaved. So in the year 599-598 B.C. along came Nebuchadnezzar in a second siege and took more of the people away.

And then again he put a puppet king ruler on the throne of Judah. And he also misused his office and broke the oath, broke the covenant went back on his agreement with Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadnezzar came back laid siege and from 588 to 586 waged war against the southern kingdom and in 586 the southern kingdom went into Babylonian captivity.

Now notice the names in the first chapter of Daniel. Daniel, his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Of course they are not English names they're not Anglo-Saxon names they're not far eastern names they are Semitic names. These men had names because their godly parents wanted them to have a name that had God's name in it. Daniel the E L means God Hananiah the I A H is for Yahweh or better Jehovah Mishael has E L just like Daniel that's God's name. Azariah I A H. Like the ending that we get from Jehovah these men's names meant something friends when you
name your children may it be a testimony for God they're going to bear those names as long as God allows them to live on this earth.

Why should it just represent and reflect a whim of yours and mine. Why couldn't it have the same time give a testimony to the glory of God. So Daniel was named because his name means God is my judge Hananiah in Hebrew means God is gracious. Mishael means who is like God. Azariah God is my help but oh always the world seeks to blot out anything that would give glory to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ. So before it was all over you will notice in verse seven of Chapter One under whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names this was an important official he gave unto Daniel the name of Belshazzar and to Hananiah Shadrach and to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abednego and you notice L. and Yah are not here at all. No God's not in the picture these who so clearly represent the world want to blot out any identity that relates these men to God and to his praise. Now what did their Babylonian names mean. We're not without resources here in the Assyrian Babylonian Belteshazzar as they are not just Belshazzar but Belteshazzar notice Bel that's the god Bel in Canaanite worship. It was [inaudible] Belteshazzar means the Prince of Bel. That's what they call Daniel. No more names of God Shadrach lighted by the sun god Rach only the pagan deities are here. Meshach not Mishael who is like God but Meshach who is like Shach, comparable to Venus Abednego the servant of Nego.

Well you say that's the end of the testimony of these men. My. Their names have been encrusted with paganism itself. They bear the name of idols of gods of foreigners. Ah but Daniel and his companions especially Daniel is revealed in this book and this very first chapter as a man of faith. There seems to be an allusion to him in Hebrews 11:33. Those godly ones who through their faith subdued kingdoms and stopped the mouths of lions. Daniel and his friends were faithful in their separation from the world. They didn't allow the world to overcome them. By
God's grace they overcame the world and separation in us prepares us too friends to receive God's communications. His revelation and his word now so many say I don't understand why some folk have a deeper more penetrating more searching more incisive knowledge into God's word than I do beloved. I couldn't diagnose that right on the spur of the moment but it could possibly be that you are not as committed. You are not a separated your ear is not quite as open as theirs is to the Word of God and to the will of God and to the revelation of God and oh the whole book opens before you and me.

The moment we read the first chapter the eighth verse here's the secret. But Daniel purposed oh how much purpose under God. God has given us a will and a purpose. Let us subserve it to him. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore, he requested the prince of the Eunuchs that he might not defile himself. There was purpose of heart there. Now how could he defile himself with a portion of the king's meat. It wasn't that he was vegetarian as some folk think not at all but they certainly would have prepared meat in a way and the type of meat that was forbidden by the law of Moses. There were certain forbidden meats and certain unallowable meats mentioned in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy and I'm sure Nebuchadnezzar and his chef wouldn't have cared to conduct their kitchen and their culinary operations. According to the law Moses that was the last thing in their mind but Daniel was an observant godly Israelite and he will not at all costs he will not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat. It wasn't just that he was trying to be contrary. Nor would he do so with the wine which he drank this was polluted.

He wanted to be alive and alert and in possession of his faculties and to know and have the deep assurance thundering in his soul that he'd been doing what God wanted him to do. So he
requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might defile himself. Now it's wonderful that Daniel had been living such a life that he had come into favor. And it's a tender concern with the prince of the eunuchs. Well who was Daniel in this instance. Well you see Nebuchadnezzar was not really a great king but he was a very wise king as well and he had long before any American president thought that he had a brain trust. So we read in Daniel 1:4 children in whom was no blemish well favored skillful in all wisdom cunning in knowledge understanding science such as had ability in them stand in the King's palace and whom they might teach the learning and the language tongue or language of the Caledonians or the Babylonians and these were men who would be as we'd say today in the cabinet of the president this would be in the brain trust or the cabinet of the great emperor Nebuchadnezzar. Ah it's in that area. So these men are not just ordinary men.

And don't forget these men Daniel belonged to royalty because verse 3 tells us that those who had been taken away captive certain ones were the children of Israel and of the King's seed. They were related to the Royal Family the Davidic family and of the princes and God gave Daniel purpose of heart in spite of all his high position and all there was one thing he wanted more than anything else in all the world and that was to obey God. The account is told that during the South African War there was a meeting held for the British Christian soldiers and it was a big Scottish Highlander who got up in just a few words with deep sincerity said Now look here chum's tell me you all read about Daniel in the lion's den. Could you tell me why did not the lions eat Daniel? There was a pause. He said Well I'll tell you it was because Daniel was three parts backbone and all the rest Gristle and then he said put backbone into your Christianity friends comrades. Be like Daniel. God will give you all the needed strength to stand against temptation to overcome sin. What with that purpose of heart he might have purpose in the heart?
But the prince of the eunuchs the one who was over this brain trust or this Cabinet of King Nebuchadnezzar didn't want to you didn't want to endanger his head.

He said I'm afraid of my Lord the king he's appointed your meat and your drink. He said Why should your faces be worse looking than the children which are of your age. Why should you show up deficient? Why that would endanger my head to the king if he began asking questions and found out that we had reversed his orders and something had happened that we didn't obey them. Where would I be. Daniel said just test us out, verse 12. Well just give us ten days and you see verse five indicates that there were to be nourished three years was certainly ten days out couldn't ruin what could be regained in the remaining three years. He said try it out just for ten days give us vegetables to eat give us water to drink instead of this other and then put it to the test. Look at our faces. See if we are in any sense behind if we are emaciated. Then in that fashion deal with your servants. So he consented he figured that he would test them ten days. What did he have to lose at the end of the ten days.

Why these men looked fairer than all the children that were eating the portion of the king's meat and so he said well if that's going to do that much good you can just have this kind of a diet for the rest of the time. And then the wonderful truth that God gave them knowledge and skill and all learning and wisdom and this is the background friends for the next eleven chapters in Daniel. Yes. God gave them skill knowledge learning wisdom. Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. And then when the time came at the end of the test at the end if you will of the training period that were brought before Nebuchadnezzar and oh how the king was pleased in all matters of wisdom and understanding the king inquired of them and found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm and that wasn't just because of physical food it was because these men were trusting God and going by faith. And
isn't it a lovely touch in the last verse of the first chapter. Daniel continued even to the first year of King Cyrus. What does that mean.

This man of God was so blessed of the Lord God was so gracious to him he allowed him to live to the end of the Babylonian captivity. He had been taken captive at the beginning of the captivity in the reign of Jehoiakim. He lived all those 70 years oh God knoweth how to reward in such a way that no man knows. Now we come to the second chapter the first chapter has been dealing with the preparation of God's servant. After we read those 21 verses friends we can certainly expect great things of these men have God because they've given themselves wholly over not to the things of this world but to God and to God alone. But as we read the second chapter of Daniel the first 13 verses we find in unmistakable terms the consternation of men. They are literally at wit's end. Notice and in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams where with his spirit was troubled his sleep broke from him. The king commanded to call the magicians astrologers the sorcerers the Chaldeans to show him his dreams so they came and stood before the king and the king said unto them I've dreamed a dream my spirit is troubled to know the dream.

He didn't know the details of it I believe but he knew it was so bizarre it was so strange it was so unheard of. He'd never had an experience like this that just as sometimes you may not remember the details of a dream given to you. Of course this was given him of God in a special category about things to come. But it's understandable he may have been thinking about the future of his kingdom the scripture says the dreams come because of the abundance of business he may have been thinking. Who's going to follow me. What's going to happen to this great empire that my father Nabopolassar started. And I am now ruling what will happen. And so some things had been divulged to him he couldn't remember the details he didn't know all the different
minutiae. His spirit was troubled to know the dream. And then he spoke to these Caledonians in Aramaic that was the language that they spoke down there in Mesopotamia he spoke to them. And asked them to give this dream to them.

And then they spoke to him in the Army and said Old King Live Forever tell thy servants the dream and we'll show the interpretation. You see they were temporizers. They couldn't do it. No they couldn't do it. But they figured this way if the king would tell them the dream. Then just as in the Greek and Roman oracles or in the Grecian Delphine oracles they could use the subject matter of the Dream that the king gave them as a nose of clay. They could they could twist in any way they wanted but Nebuchadnezzar was wiser than that. The king answered and said to these Chaldeans the thing has gone from me if you will not make known me the dream with interpretation then you all should be cut in pieces your houses shall be made it dung hill. You see unlike pharaoh at the end of the book of Genesis who remembered his dream that was repeated unto him in the time of Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten his.

Some think and there are some good scholars who feel this way. Good students of the word. They think that Nebuchadnezzar hadn't forgotten it at all but that he was keeping it back just to test them to see whether these men were true or they were just fakers he was not in them in the business of just giving them free board and free hotel service. He's been training these men for three years. He wants them to come up with some good answers and he didn't himself initiate the dream. If you can't help me in my time of need why do I need you but I rather believe that Nebuchadnezzar had truly forgotten it. I can see why. Probably from fright. And then see the failure and the terror of the magicians. There was no power in them to answer the king. He says uh they said to him if you show the dream well we'll be able to give the interpretation. He said if you show the dream and the interpretation both you can be sure I'll give you gifts I'll reward you
handsomely you'll get great honor. And they keep pleading oh will you please tell us the dream we'll show. We'll tell you the interpretation he said. I can see now it's just very plainly written. The situation is as clear as it can be. You're just your temporizing you're trying to dally for time you see the thing's gone from me and he says I tell you once and for all if you're not going to make known this dream there's going to be one.

So one decree there's going to be one solution to all of you. You prepare prepared lying and corruptions words you'd think that time is going to be changed in the back of your mind you think that I'm in a bad mood and a bad temper and you just say well we're just wait until he cools off. Oh no no I'm not of a mind to be talked out of this. You think that the time is going to be changed he says you tell me the dream and I'll know that you can show me the interpretation he was right. If they could retrieve for him the dream that he forgot he could have a great deal of confidence that they knew what it was all about. And then they make a remarkable statement friends listen Chaldeans answered before the king and said there's not a man on the earth that can show the king's matter in other words this is going to take something supernatural. Therefore, there's no king Lord nor ruler that asks such things of any magician or astrology or Chaldean. Not only that it's a rare thing that the king requires.

This isn't something that's in the ordinary run of things you're asking something that's quite unusual. There's nobody that can show it before the king except the gods who's dwelling is not with flesh noticing their paganism. There were some things that they indicated that there is no one who in himself. No man on earth that could show the king's matter. They were right. It was going to take a revelation out of the natural realm. And that's the way it did come in the second chapter. And then they also said there's no one can show you the truth of this matter and bring all the details to you except the gods pagan that they were whose dwelling is not with flesh.
Ah but we know the true God one day did come and dwell in flesh. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glories of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth.

Well.

After they had temporized in this fashion with the king his patience came to an end. He was angry he was furious and his command went forth he says destroy all this group of wise men in Babylon and the decree went forth that all of them were to be slain and they were looking for Daniel and his companions to be slain. Now some have asked why Daniel wasn't there. We have no way of knowing there's not enough scripture to go on. But I rather think that Daniel and his friends were not in hiding. They were not out on a vacation. I believe they were somewhere in Nebuchadnezzar's realm the king's business doing something for the empire and then they would find out later on when they were sought and were all the terrible predicament in which they all were the because of this tremendous decree of Nebuchadnezzar. The great king. [End]