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DANIEL 1: 1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Jerusalem, and besieged it.

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Daniel is said to have descended from the royal family of David; and he appears to have been carried into Babylon when very young, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, A.M. 3398, b.c. 602, or 606 before the vulgar era. He and his three fellow-captives, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, being likely youths, were chosen to be about the king's court, and were appointed to have an education suitable to the employments for which they were destined. As they had been carefully bred up in the Mosaic institutions, they regulated their conduct by them, even in the court of a heathen king, where they were in the capacity of slaves; hence, though ordered to be fed from the royal table, they would not touch that food, because the Chaldeans ate of meat forbidden by the Mosaic law, and probably even that which might be dominated clean became defiled by having been sacrificed to idols before it was prepared for common use. At their earnest request, the officer under whose care they were placed permitted them to use vegetables only; and finding that they grew healthy and strong by this aliment, did not oblige them to use the portion sent from the king's table.

Daniel appears to have been instructed in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, which was at that time greatly superior to the learning of the ancient Egyptians; and he was soon distinguished in the Babylonish court, as well for his wisdom and strong understanding as for his deep and steady piety.

His interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the variously compounded metallic image raised his credit so high at the court that he was established governor of the province of Babylon, and made chief of all the Magians, or wise men in that country. The chief facts and incidents of his history are so particularly woven throughout the book bearing his name, and undoubtedly written by himself, that they need not be detailed here.

The reputation of Daniel was so great, even in his lifetime, that it became a proverb. "Thou art wiser than Daniel," said Ezekiel ironically to the king of Tyre, Eze 28:3; and by the same prophet God ranks him among the most holy and exemplary of men, when he declares, speaking relative to Jerusalem, which had been condemned to destruction, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own lives by their righteousness," Eze 14:14, Eze 14:20.

Josephus, Ant. lib. x., c. 12, says that God bestowed many favors on him: that he was advanced to the rank of the most considerable prophets; that he enjoyed the favor of princes, and the affection of the people during his life; and that after his death his memory became immortal. He observes also that, in the complexion of his predictions, he differs widely from all other prophets; they foretold scarcely any thing but disastrous events; on the contrary, he predicts the most joyous events, and fixes the times of accomplishment with more circumstantial precision than they did. And this is so true, that we cannot help thinking that God had given this eminent man a greater degree of light to fix the times when his predictions should issue, than he had given in general to all his predecessors, who simply declared the mind of God in relation to things future, without attempting to indicate the distance of time in which they should be fulfilled. There are but very few exceptions to this either in Isaiah or Jeremiah. And in this respect the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel exceeds all that have gone before, as the incidents and transactions relative to its fulfillment were so various, and yet so fixed and declared six hundred years before the time, that when the time came in which they were predicted to take place, they were expected, and occurred exactly according to the prediction, and the expectations founded upon it. This prophet therefore, far from occupying a lower place

among divinely inspired men, deserves to be placed in the front rank with all those who have been most distinguished among the men who have partaken most largely of the prophetic gift.

The rabbins have endeavored to degrade Daniel, and have placed his prophecies among the hagiographa, books which they consider to possess a minor degree of inspiration; and it is probable that he meets with this treatment from them because his prophecies are proofs too evident that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, and that he came at the very time that Daniel said the Prince Messiah should come. But the testimony and sayings of such men are infinitely overpowered by the testimony of Ezekiel, which has been produced above; and the testimony of our Lord, who gives him the title of prophet, Mat 24:15, without the slightest intimation that he was to wear this title with abatement.

It is very probable that Daniel did not return at the general restoration from the Babylonish captivity. At that time, if alive, he must have been an old man; and it is most likely that he finished his days in Babylon, though some Asiatic authors hold that he returned to Judea with Ezra, came back afterward to Persia, and died in the city of Susa.

Josephus speaks of his skill in architecture, Antiq. lib. x., c. 12, and that he built a famous tower at Ecbatane or Susa, which remained to his time, and was so exquisitely finished that it always appeared as if newly built. In this tower or palace the kings of Persia were interred; and in consideration of its founder, the guard of it was always chosen from the Jews.

Daniel is famous among the orientalisists. The author of the Tareekh Muntekheb says that Daniel flourished in the time of Lohorasp, king of Persia; and consequently in that of Ceresh, of Cyrus, who gave him the government of Syria; that he taught these two princes the knowledge of the true God; that he preached the true faith through the whole of the Babylonian Irak; and was, on the death of Nebuchadnezzar, sent by Bahman, (Artaxerxes Longimanus), son of Asfendiar, who then reigned in Persia, into Judea; and that, having returned, he died at Shouster, or Susa, the capital of Persia, where he lies interred.

Some have supposed that the Zoraster or Zeradusht of the Persians is a confused picture of the Prophet Daniel. The account given by Abul Pharaje, in his fifth dynasty, may be considered favorable to this opinion. He says, "Zeradusht, author of the Magiouseiah Magism, or sect of the worshippers of fire, flourished in the reign of Cambasous, (Cambyses); that he was a native of the province of Adherbigian, or Media, or, according to others, of Assyria; that he foretold to his disciples the coming of the Messiah, who should be pointed out by a star which should appear in the day time at his birth; that they should have the first information of his advent; that he should be born of a virgin; and that they should present him with gifts; because he is the Word that made the heavens." See Poccocke's Abul Pharajius, p. 83 of the Arabic, and 54 of the Latin.

D'Herbelot, on this account, makes the following remark: "We may see by these words of the historian, that the prophesy of Balaam was pretty generally known throughout the east, and that the Magi, who came to worship our Lord, were the true Magians of Persia, and not Arab kings."

The account given by Abul Pharaje makes Daniel and Zeradusht contemporary, and thus far is favorable to the opinion that the history of former may be dismissed under that of the latter. There have been several Zoroasters, of whom many fables are told; and no wonder, when the persons themselves are generally fabulous.

The Asiatics make him the inventor of remel, or geomancy; and among them he passes for the author of a work entitled Assoul ol Tabeer, "The Principles of the Interpretation of Dreams." I have in

my own library a very ancient work which pretends to be drawn from this, and is entitled Somnia Daniel; it was printed in the infancy of printing, but without date; small 4to. There is an Arabic work in the French king's library, No. 410, entitled Odhmet al Mancoul, an Danial an Nabi, "The Traditionary Predictions of Daniel the Prophet;" which is said to contain many falsities, built on the foundation of Daniel's prophecies; but it has never been given to the public, and I have no other notice of it than the above from D'Herbelot. But although all these are curious from their antiquity, yet they are doubtless impostures.

Abul Pharaje, in his history of the dynasties, says, that the seventy weeks of Daniel are to be dated from the twentieth year of Ardsheer Dirazdest, the Artaxerxes Longimanus of the Greeks, (called Bahman above), and the same to whom Nehemiah was sakee, or cup-bearer. Other orientalisists are of the same opinion. This shall be considered more at large when we come to the prophecy itself.

Artaxerxes had the name of Longimanus, or Long-handed, from the great extent of his dominions.

Daniel cannot be ranked among the Hebrew poets: his book is all in prose; and it is written partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee. The Chaldee, or Syro-Chaldaic part, begins with "מלכא לעלמין חי" malka lealmin chei, "O king, live for ever!" and continues to the end of the seventh chapter.

In the interpretation of his prophecies I have endeavored to follow the best critics and chronologists; and, without an extended comment, to give in as short a space as possible the meaning of every place. On the metallic images and seventy weeks I have been obliged to be more prolix, as these are of too much importance to be slightly handled. It is not my province to enter into the controversy about the date when the seventy weeks commence; even they who disagree so much from each other on this point come so near to the general issue that the difference is immaterial.

The chronology of the several events mentioned in this book Calmet endeavors to fix as follows: -

A.M. Event 3398 Daniel led captive to Babylon, Dan 1:1-7. 3399 Death of Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar. 3401 Jehoiakim revolts against Nebuchadnezzar, 2Kgs 24:1. 3402 Dream of the compound statue, Dan 2:1, etc. Daniel and his companions promoted to honor at court. Birth of Cyrus, son of Cambyses and Mandane. 3405 Jehoiakim is taken and put to death by the Chaldeans. Jeconiah is raised to his throne, but reigns only three months and ten days. Zedekiah, last king of Judah, succeeds; and reigns eleven years. 3416 Taking of Jerusalem, and destruction of the temple, 2 Chronicles 36. 3434 Return of Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon after his great conquests in Phoenicia, Judea, Egypt, etc. His dream of the great tree, 2Chr 4:7, etc. 3435 He becomes insane, which lasts for seven years, 4:32, 33. 3442 He becomes sane, and re-ascends the throne. The golden image set up. The three Hebrews cast into the fiery furnace, 2: Death of Nebuchadnezzar after a reign of forty-three years, according to Berosus. Evil-Merodach succeeds him, and reigns two years. - Berosus. He sets Jeconiah at liberty, Jer 52:31. 3444 Belshazzar his son succeeds, Dan 7:1. Daniel's vision of the four beasts, representing the four great empires, chap. 7. 3447 Vision of the ram and he-goat, 8: The death of Belshazzar, chap. 5. 3449 Darius the Mede, called Cyaxares by Xenophon, and Astyages in the Apocrypha, son of Astyages, king of the Medes, and maternal great uncle to Belshazzar, succeeds him in the government of Chaldea, Dan 5:30, Dan 5:31. See Isa 13:1, etc. The visions of Daniel related, chap. 9, 10, 11, Dan 12:1-13 : Cyrus attacks the Medes in the first or second year of Darius the Mede, Dan 10:1. 3455 Daniel is cast into the den of lions, chap. 6. 3456 Death of Darius. Cyrus succeeds him. 3457 End of the Babylonish captivity declared by Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, 2Chr 36:22, and Ezr 1:1; but afterward interrupted. See below. 3485 Termination of Jeremiah's

seventy years under Darius Hystaspes, who gives orders to continue the rebuilding of the temple. 3550 Commencement of the seventy weeks, Dan 9:24. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem, Neh 2:1-6.

In this chronology Calmet differs from Usher.

As a writer, this prophet is simple, yet pure and correct: and he is so conscientious that he relates the very words of those persons whom he introduces as speaking. He writes Hebrew where what he delivers is a bare narrative; but he relates in Chaldee the conversations which he had with the wise men and the kings; and in the same language he relates Nebuchadnezzar's edict, which he made after Daniel had interpreted his dream concerning the great metalline image. This is a proof of his great and conscientious accuracy; and exhibits this prophet in a most advantageous point of view. Daniel writes both Hebrew and Chaldee with great purity.

This book divides itself into two parts.

Part 1 is historical, and is contained in the six former chapters.

Part 2: is prophetical, and occupies the other six.

This chapter begins with giving a short account of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judea, when Jehoiakim became tributary to him; and consequently the seventy years' captivity and vassalage began, Dan 1:1, Dan 1:2. On this expedition (taking Egypt in his way) the king of Babylon set out towards the end of the third year of Jehoiakim, but did not take Jerusalem before the ninth month of the year following. Hence the seeming discrepancy between Daniel and Jeremiah, (Jer 25:1), the one computing from the time of his setting out on the expedition, and the other from the time in which the purpose of it was accomplished. We have next an account of the manner in which Daniel and his companions were brought up at the king's court, Dan 1:3-7. They reject the daily provision of meat granted by the king, lest they should be defiled, and are allowed to live on pulse, Dan 1:8-16. Their great proficiency in the wisdom of that time, Dan 1:17-20. Daniel flourishes till the reign of Cyrus the Persian, Dan 1:21.

#### Verse 1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim - This king was raised to the throne of Judea in the place of his brother Jehoahaz, by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, 2Kgs 23:34-36, and continued tributary to him during the first three years of his reign; but in the fourth, which was the first of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 25:1, Nebuchadnezzar completely defeated the Egyptian army near the Euphrates, Jer 46:2; and this victory put the neighboring countries of Syria, among which Judea was the chief, under the Chaldean government. Thus Jehoiakim, who had first been tributary to Egypt, became now the vassal of the king of Babylon, 2Kgs 24:1.

At the end of three years Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who, then occupied with other wars, did not proceed against Jerusalem till three years after, which was the eleventh and last of Jehoiakim, 2Kgs 23:36.

There are some difficulties in the chronology of this place. Calmet takes rather a different view of these transactions. He connects the history thus: Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, finding that one of his lords whom he had made governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia had revolted from him, and formed an alliance with the king of Egypt, sent Nebuchadnezzar his son, whom he invested with the authority of king, to reduce those provinces, as was customary among the easterns when the heir presumptive was sent on any important expedition or embassy. This young prince, having quelled the insurrection in those parts, marched against Jerusalem about the end of the third or beginning of

the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He soon took the city, and put Jehoiakim in chains with the design of carrying him to Babylon; but, changing his mind, he permitted him to resume the reins of government under certain oppressive conditions. At this year, which was A.M. 3398, the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity commence. Nabopolassar dying in the interim, Nebuchadnezzar was obliged to return speedily to Babylon, leaving his generals to conduct the Jewish captives to Babylon, among whom were Daniel and his companions.

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DANIEL 1: 2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

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#### Verse 2

Part of the vessels of the house of God - He took the richest and finest of them for the service of his god Bel, and left what were necessary for carrying on the public worship of Jehovah, (for he did not attempt to alter the civil or religious constitution of Judea); for leaving Jehoiakim on the throne, he only laid the land under tribute. The Chaldeans carried these sacred vessels away at three different times.

1. In the war spoken of in this place.
2. In the taking of Jerusalem and Jeconiah a few months after, 2Kgs 24:13.
3. Eleven years after, under the reign of Zedekiah, when the city and temple were totally destroyed, and the land ruined, 2Kgs 25:8-16.

The land of Shinar - This was the ancient name of Babylon. See Gen 11:2.

The treasure house of his god - This was Bel, who had a splendid temple in Babylon, and was the tutelary god of the city and empire.

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DANIEL 1: 3 The king spoke to Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in some of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles;

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#### Verse 3

Master of his eunuchs - This word eunuchs signifies officers about or in the palace whether literally eunuchs or not.

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DANIEL 1: 4 youths in whom was no defect, but well-favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and endowed with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace; and that he should teach them the learning and the language of the Chaldeans.

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#### Verse 4

Children - ילדים yeladim, youths, young men; and so the word should be rendered throughout this book.

Skilled in all wisdom - Rather, persons capable of every kind of literary accomplishment, that they might be put under proper instruction. And as children of the blood and of the nobles were most likely, from the care usually taken of their initiatory education, to profit most by the elaborate instruction here designed, the master of the eunuchs, the king's chamberlain, was commanded to choose the youths in question out of such.

DANIEL 1: 5 The king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at its end they should stand before the king.

#### Verse 5

A daily provision - Athenaeus, lib. iv., c. 10, says: The kings of Persia, (who succeeded the kings of Babylon, on whose empire they had seized), were accustomed to order the food left at their own tables to be delivered to their courtiers.

So nourishing them three years - This was deemed a sufficient time to acquire the Chaldee language, and the sciences peculiar to that people. I suppose they had good introductory books, able teachers, and a proper method; else they would have been obliged, like us, to send their children seven years to school, and as many to the university, to teach them any tolerable measure of useful and ornamental literature! O how reproachful to the nations of Europe, and particularly to our own, is this backward mode of instruction. And what is generally learned after this vast expense of time and money? A little Latin, Greek, and mathematics; perhaps a little moral philosophy; and by this they are entitled, not qualified, to teach others, and especially to teach the people the important science of salvation! To such shepherds, (and there are many such), the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed; and if all are not such, no thanks to our plan of national education.

DANIEL 1: 6 Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

#### Verse 6

Now among these - There were no doubt several noble youths from other provinces: but the four mentioned here were Jews, and are supposed to have all been of royal extraction.

DANIEL 1: 7 The prince of the eunuchs gave names to them: to Daniel he gave the name Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, Shadrach; and to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

#### Verse 7

Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names - This change of names, Calmet properly remarks, was a mark of dominion and authority. It was customary for masters to impose new names upon their slaves; and rulers often, on their ascending the throne, assumed a name different from that which they had before. דניאל Daniel signifies "God is my Judge." This name they changed into בלטשאצר Belteshatstsar; in Chaldee, "The treasure of Bel," or "The despository of the secrets (or treasure) of Bel." הנביא Hananiah signifies, "The Lord has been gracious to me," or "He to whom the Lord is gracious." This name was changed into שדרך Shadrach, Chaldee, which has been variously translated: "The inspiration of the sun;" "God the author of evil, be propitious to us;" "Let God preserve us from evil." מישאל Mishael signifies "He who comes from God." Him they called מישך Meshach, which in Chaldee signifies, "He who belongs to the goddess Sheshach," a celebrated deity of the Babylonians, mentioned by Jeremiah, Jer 25:26. עזריה Azariah, which signifies "The Lord is my Helper," they changed into אבד נגו Abed-Nego, which in Chaldee is "the servant of Nego," who was one of their divinities; by which they meant either the sun, or the morning star; whether Jupiter or Venus.

The vicious pronunciation of this name should be carefully avoided; I mean that which lays the accent on the first syllable, and hurries so the end, without attending to the natural division of the word Abed-Nego.

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DANIEL 1: 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

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Verse 8

But Daniel - would not defile himself - I have spoken of this resolution in the introduction. The chief reasons why Daniel would not eat meat from the royal table were probably these three: -

1. Because they ate unclean beasts, which were forbidden by the Jewish law.
2. Because they ate, as did the heathens in general, beasts which had been strangled, or not properly blooded.
3. Because the animals that were eaten were first offered as victims to their gods. It is on this account that Athenaeus calls the beasts which here served up at the tables of the Persian kings, *ιεργα*, victims, lib. 4 c. 10, p. 145.

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DANIEL 1: 9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.

DANIEL 1: 10 The prince of the eunuchs said to Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths who are of your own age? so would you endanger my head with the king.

DANIEL 1: 11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

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## Verse 11

Then said Daniel to Melzar - Melzar was an officer under Ashpenaz, whose office it was to attend to the food, clothing, etc., of these royal captives. Others think מליצר meltsar, master of the inn or hotel, the name of an office.

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DANIEL 1: 12 Test your servants, I beg you, ten days; and let them give us vegetables to eat, and water to drink.

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## Verse 12

Give us pulse to eat - הזרעים hazzeraim, seeds or grain, such as barley, wheat, rye, and peas, etc. Though a vegetable diet might have produced that healthiness of the system in general, and of the countenance particularly, as mentioned here; yet we are to understand that there was an especial blessing of God in this, because this spare diet was taken on a religious account.

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DANIEL 1: 13 Then let our faces be looked on before you, and the face of the youths who eat of the king's dainties; and as you see, deal with your servants.

DANIEL 1: 14 So he listened to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

DANIEL 1: 15 At the end of ten days their faces appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths who ate of the king's dainties.

DANIEL 1: 16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

DANIEL 1: 17 Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

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## Verse 17

As for these four children - Young men or youths. Our translation gives a false idea.

In all visions and dreams - That is, such as are Divine; for as to dreams in general, they have as much signification as they have connection, being the effects of the state of the body, of the mind, or of the circumstances of the dreamer. A dream may be considered supernatural, if it have nothing preposterous, nothing monstrous, and nothing irregular. If the whole order and consequences of the things be preserved in them, from beginning to end, then we may presume they are supernatural. In such dreams Daniel had understanding.

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DANIEL 1: 18 At the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

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## Verse 18



Now at the end of the days - That is, at the end of three years, Dan 1:5.

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DANIEL 1: 19 The king talked with them; and among them all was found no one like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

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Verse 19

And among them all - All the young noble captives from different nations.

Therefore stood they before the king - It appears that only four were wanting.

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DANIEL 1: 20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters who were in all his realm.

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Verse 20

Magicians and astrologers - Probably the same as philosophers and astronomers among us.

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DANIEL 1: 21 Daniel continued even to the first year of king Cyrus.

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Verse 21

The first year of king Cyrus - That is, to the end of the Chaldean empire. And we find Daniel alive in the third year of Cyrus, see Dan 10:1.