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Introduction to Chapters 1-6

The purpose of studying Holy Scripture is *not* to collect a great number of unrelated facts and bits of knowledge, but rather to *understand* the revelation of God. We must see God's great works in Christ, and gain insight in the ways that God delivers His people and the world, thereby enabling us to determine the situation of God's people today.

For this reason, the preparation of an introduction should include, first of all, a careful and thorough reading of the text, placing it in the context of the entire revelation of God. We should not attempt to sound important or scholarly, but rather simply to trace what Scripture says, and together seek the understanding of God's message in Christ.

In this manner, our study society work will prepare us for the great life battle wherein we, armed with the Word of God, must also take our place.

Employ a critical approach to commentaries and reference books, rather than thinking: "This is what the commentary says, therefore it must be correct." Scripture must always be placed above any of these reference books. Keeping this constantly in mind, you will notice that Scripture is always richer than the works of men. When you remember this you will not resort to a servile copying from books, but rather will come to see them as *study aids*.

Outline 1

Daniel 1

The Service of God is Radical

A. Introduction

We will begin by introducing the book of Daniel, including when and where the prophet lived. We will discuss the place of this book in divine revelation.

Note how God places His servant Daniel in relation to his day and age. God's Word is always timely, and in relation to the specific situation of the age involved. Here we see the beginning of the age of great world powers. Israel ceased to be an independent people and was absorbed into the melting-pot of nations. Daniel is the prophet who shows the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the earth. Therefore, even today, this book is relevant.

Daniel is the counterpart to the Revelation to John. Daniel, inspired by God between the first destruction of Jerusalem and the first coming of Christ, was a great comfort for God's people in the ages when the prophets were silent. The Revelation to John, inspired by God between the second destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ, was also a great comfort to God's people in those days. This theme should be discussed further in the introduction.

B. The time in history of the prophesies of Daniel, vv 1&2

Note the time in history: in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. The reign of Jehoiakim is used to place Nebuchadnezzar's time in history, not

vice versa. The mighty king is placed in history by the date of the prince of a small and vanishing country - Jehoiakim occupies the throne of David, and in this, dominates the rich and the powerful of the earth.

C. A satanic attempt at subversion, vv 3-7

Satan now attempts to subvert God's faithful servants. He cunningly tries to assimilate the true servants of God with the servants of the idols. This is done by the incorporation of the princes of Judah into the court of Nebuchadnezzar and the education of the royal seed, the seed of David, in the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

Satan's onslaught continues in the partaking of the king's food and drink. The foods are sacrificial cakes, and the wine is the libation wine of idols. It is unclean and prohibited for Israel. It is a great temptation, this cunning attempt by Satan, to seduce David's family into contaminating itself with the worship of the idols, thereby breaking Israel's spiritual resistance and equalizing the Church of God with the nations of the world.

D. Maintained by Christ, vv 8-16

But Satan's wily attempt fails; Daniel and his three friends persevere, they reject and refuse this commandment. They are not permitted to contaminate themselves. We see here that Christ sustains and maintains His people in the face of crafty attacks by Satan. They could not have persevered by their own power, but Christ delivers them. It is He Who makes them persist. They give a courageous testimony of God's law over against the gentile authorities (see deGraaf, *Promise and Deliverance Vol 2*¹).

¹ Ed. note: Author is referring to *Promise and Deliverance* by S. G.deGraaf, Paideia Press, St. Catharines, ON. 1977.