

DANIEL 1:8-21

LESSON: DANIEL HONORS GOD'S LAW—September 1, 2024

INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Daniel was written by Daniel, a Palestinian Jew. The historical portion of Daniel begins with young Daniel and his friends at the age of 15 or 16 yrs. old captured by king Nebuchadnezzar and being deported to Babylon.

Daniel 1:5-7

1:5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the palace officials to select strong, handsome, healthy boys that were Israelite captives from the royal line of David (perhaps nephews or grandsons of good King Josiah). These captives now in Babylon were served from the same menu as the royal table—the king's meat and wine—the best foods and finest wines. Why? For after three years of training them, they would be given positions in the king's court.

1:6 Now among these were of the children Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:— Four young men of Judah were selected captives: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Their names carried great meaning:

- Daniel meant *God Is Judge or my Judge*.
- Hananiah meant *Jehovah Is gracious*.
- Mishael meant *who Is like God*.
- And Azariah meant *Jehovah helps*.

1:7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego. The master of the eunuchs then gave these same boys Babylonian names.

- Belteshazzar was the Babylonian or Aramaic name given to Daniel while exiled in Babylon meaning *BAAL protect the king*.
- Shadrach was Hananiah's new name meaning *command of Aku, Babylonian moon god*.
- Meshach was Mishael's new name meaning *guest of a king or who is Aku*.
- And Abednego was Azariah's new name meaning *a servant of Nego or slave of the god Nergal*.

LESSON:

I. DANIEL 1:8-10

1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. We see Daniel had another idea as the king's food was presented to him. Daniel now is one of the captives in a culture that did not follow God's Laws, but he purposed; made up in his mind; had a strong determination in his heart to not defile (*contaminate*) himself by eating the king's meat nor drink the king's wine. This food was probably sacrificed to idols and it was certainly not prepared according to Jewish law. The rich foods from the king's table may not have been nourishing as the Jewish recommended menu. But, Daniel desired to take care of his body;

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be faithful to the laws of their religion before eating the king's delicacies. Daniel goes and presents his request to the prince of the eunuchs. He did not demand something foolhardily, but used the wisdom of God. So, he seeks permission to eat some other; more wholesome food. He is really asking to go on a fast; some call it the Daniel Fast. A heart that loves the Lord, trusts the Lord, and obeys the Lord has no difficulty making right choices, because they trust God to take care of them when their convictions are tested.

1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. God honored Daniel's trust and allegiance by sovereignly working favorably for him among the heathen leaders.

1:10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. Though their convictions were good, it could not be fulfilled without some difficulty. God had caused the prince of the eunuchs to like Daniel, but the eunuch feared what his master, the king would do to him if he allowed such a thing. He feared he would be executed; be beheaded if Daniel didn't look healthy as the other captives that were eating the king's assigned royal food, and drinking the king's wine.

II. DANIEL 1:11-16

1:11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,— Then Daniel appealed to Melzar (*the steward in charge of Daniel and his friends*) whom the prince of eunuchs had placed in charge of them.

1:12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. The Babylonians were trying to change the Israelite's thinking by giving them a Chaldean education; change their loyalty by changing their names, and change their lifestyle by changing their diet. Without compromising, Daniel found a way to live by God's standards in a culture that did not honor God. Daniel wisely chose to negotiate rather than to just rebel. He proposed and suggested a 10day trial period on just a simple diet of "pulse"—seeds of a leguminous plants (*belong to the pea, beans, and lentil family*) like beans or peas. Today we say vegetables and water (replacing the king's wine) = fasting.

1:13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. The challenge was to compare the countenances of the ones who ate the king's food to the ones that ate Daniel's diet after the end of the 10day period. Then Melzar, prince of the eunuch was to make the decision upon what he saw; whether or not they could continue to stay on their diet or not, or be dealt with.

1:14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. The steward agreed to the request. During those initial ten days, Daniel and his three friends ate nutritious foods, while their comrades in slavery ate all they could of the king's dainties and wine. Naturally, God helped their cause, and the test proved successful! They maintained their convictions!

1:15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. At the end of the ten days, they looked better and more robust

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than all the others who had eaten from the royal menu. Daniel and his friends took a stance against the fine cuisine of the king's table. They resisted their flesh, maintaining their convictions, and yielding to the God of the Jews!

1:16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse. So Melzar, the steward continued to exempt them from their assigned king's menu, by taking it away, and just allowed them to be served only the vegetables and probably the water.

III. DANIEL 1:17-21

1:17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. This meant that *Daniel and his three friends* learned all they could about their new culture, so they could do their work with excellence. But while they were learning, God gave them knowledge and skill and wisdom while they maintained steadfast allegiance to Him. Daniel had gifted understanding in all visions and dreams and was specially chosen of God to be entrusted with these gifts.

1:18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. When the (3yrs.) period stipulated by the king for the young men's training was over, the chief eunuch presented them to Nebuchadnezzar for oral exams, as he had been ordered to do. He wanted to see what they had learned and understood.

1:19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. Nebuchadnezzar was the final judge of the accomplishments of these young men's training.

1:20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. God had made them so wise that they were better than the other young men. They were even much better than all the other wise men. Even though God had blessed them and given them great abilities, they still had to study. Their reward was to be used of God in key governmental positions. God can also use true believers in government today to bring righteousness, decency, and justice before a king, or to influence legislation in that direction. King Nebuchadnezzar found them to be ten times better than all the skilled magicians and astrologers in all of his realm.

1:21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus. Daniel, one of the first captives taken to Babylon lived to see the first exiles return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. He stayed in Babylon for many years. He served the Babylonian kings and also the kings of Persia. Throughout this time he honored God and God honored him. He was God's spokesman to the Babylonian Empire. Daniel held his appointment as the king's counselor until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.

SUMMARY:

Daniel, one of the captives was in a culture that did not follow God's Laws, but he purposed and made up in his mind and therefore, brought the request to the chief eunuch to not defile himself

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with the king's food and wine. And in that instance, God brought Daniel favor with the chief eunuch. And the chief eunuch said to Daniel that he feared for his life with the king and even the endangerment of his head (beheading) if he would allow such a request. While your convictions are true to your beliefs, they will be tested. God can bring you into favor, but others will test your convictions (1:8-10).

Then Daniel said to Melzar, a steward that was set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by the chief eunuch, "Try us out on a ten day diet of pulse (seeds)/vegetables and water, and then compare us with the young men who eat from the king's table by what you see", and he agreed. And at the end of ten days, Daniel and his friends looked better than those who ate from the king's table. So, Melzar allowed them to continue to eat the vegetables and water; thereby taking away the king's food. (1:11-16).

Their convictions stood out, and God gave these four men knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom as they maintained their convictions through their belief in God! Daniel was gifted in understanding all sorts of visions and dreams. The appointed time to bring them before the king had come. And the chief eunuch presented them before King Nebuchadnezzar. As he spoke to these four young men, in all matters of wisdom and understanding, he didn't find anyone else like them who stood before him. King Nebuchadnezzar found them ten times better than all the skilled magicians and astrologers in all of his realm. Daniel held his appointment as the king's counselor until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus. His convictions were rewarded (1:17-21).