


Daniel 1:

A more particular account of the beginning of Daniel's life, his origin and education, than we have of any other of the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, began immediately with divine visions, but Daniel began with the study of human learning, and was afterwards honoured with divine visions. We have here:

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- I.** The first captivity (v. 1, 2), in which Daniel, with others of the seed-royal, was carried to Babylon.
 - II.** The choice made of Daniel, and some other young men, to be brought up in the Chaldean literature (v. 3-7).
 - III.** Their pious refusal to eat the portion of the king's meat, and their determining to live upon pulse and water (v. 8-16).
 - IV.** Their wonderful improvement, above all their fellows, in wisdom and knowledge (v. 17-21).



FAITHFUL

IN CAPTIVITY


1. The Captivity

2. The Audition with the King.

3. The Pull to Compromise

4. The Unwavering Resolve


5. The Reward of Faithfulness



The LORD gave Judah into the hands of the Babylonians for mainly two reasons. The first was Israel's idolatry and the second was their failure to observe the Sabbaths for the land (**Leviticus 25:1-7 and 26:2-35**). This shows that God always settles accounts with those who refuse to respond to His warnings. In the 587 B.C. invasion the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (**2 Kings 25:9-10**).


I. THE CAPTIVITY

Daniel 1:1-2 "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; 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."




Sin always brings its punishment. King Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of the Lord, so God used Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to be the rod in his hand to scourge his sinful people and their wicked king.

God handed over his people into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. But the enemy cannot touch the Church of God without the divine permission.



Then the holy things, once used for the noblest purposes, become of no further service when the Spirit of God is gone from the Church. The holy vessels were put into the heathen temple, and no miraculous result followed, for God cares nothing for golden vessels in and of themselves. When sin has polluted his people, their precious things are nothing to him. All their value lies in God accepting the service rendered through them.




Nebuchadnezzar took the best of the people of the land, and carried them away captive. He singled out the rich and the noble, those who had education and other attainments, while he left the poorest of the land behind.

II. THE AUDITION FOR THE KING

Nebuchadnezzar was, in many respects, an enlightened ruler. He looked upon this as one of the best things that he could do for his court and vast empire, that he should pick out the best of the young men of every nation, who should bring their national knowledge with them.

In our modern time beauty pageant criteria can include a contestant's physical appearance, poise, talent and intelligence. Some pageants also consider a contestant's stage presence, personality and confidence.



The bible is very clear in verse 3 and 4 regarding the standards set to be fit for the king's service.

"Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans"



Qualities fit for the king's service:


No defect - no physical defect nor moral stain.

Good looking - a good man or woman, beautiful, pleasant, agreeable.

Showing intelligence - prudent, circumspect, wise.

Endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge


Ability to serve - strength to stand, remain, endure, take one's stand.



Application: God is looking for people who have the qualities to serve Him.

III. THE PULL TO COMPROMISE

Daniel 1:5-7 "The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abednego."

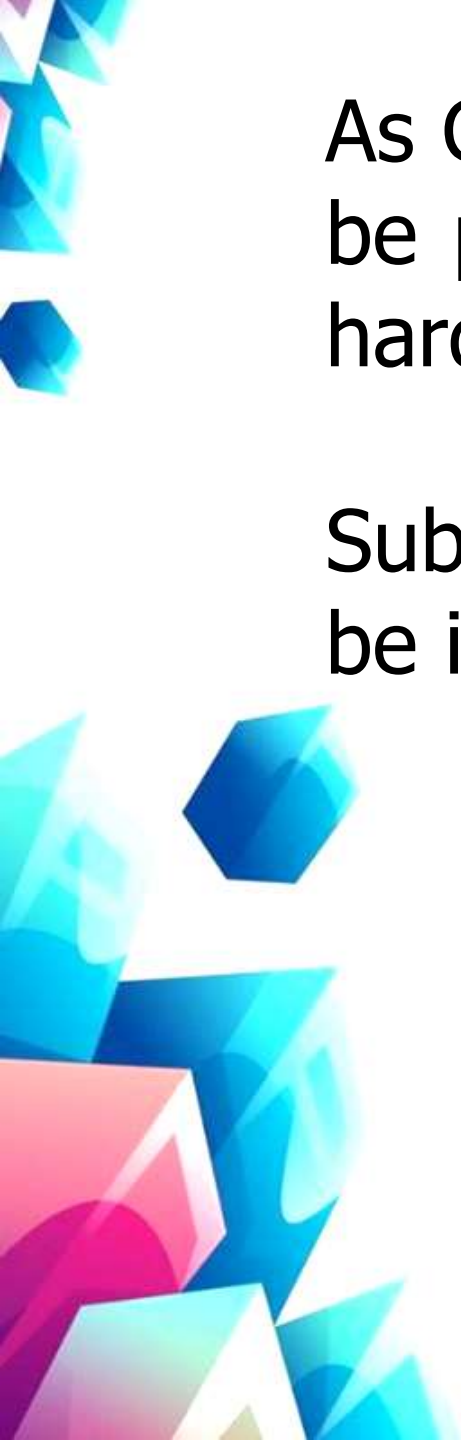


He ordained that they must eat of the meat he ate, and drink of the wine he drank. Putting them to college, as it were, for three years. This was to Chaldeanize them, to take away from them everything Jewish.

These young men's Jewish names had the name of God wrought into their texture. There is a signification about each name connecting it with God.

"El", which is the name of God.

"Iah", which brings out the name Jehovah.




As God's people there will be times when our faith will be put under severe or subtle tests. Severe tests are hard tests that can cause you to leave the faith.

Subtle tests are deceiving tests that can cause you to be ignorant or simple.

Application: The devil wants to Chaldeanize us. He wants us to forget who we are and he is using every way and means to veer us away from our faith and conviction by pulling us out, sometimes through wrong education or career and by wrong association or influence.


IV. THE UNWAVERING RESOLVE

Daniel 1:8-13 "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, and the commander of the officials said to Daniel,



“I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.”


But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king’s choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.”



When the plan is to seduce men from right, then it is a happy thing to have a but, **“But Daniel purposed in his heart,”** determined, settled, fixed it.

Though Daniel here mentions only himself, the three others were one with him in the resolve and the request. He was the leader. Sometimes there would be no Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, if there was not a Daniel.


So we often owe much to spiritually-minded men, who are able to help others to take a right course.



God has the hearts of all men under his control, and he may give his people favor where they least expect it.

The terror: where kings can do as they will. **"Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."**

For the smallest offense, a man's head may be in danger. But may we never lose our old names! May we ever be known as the servants of God, and not as Chaldeans!



Daniel turns to the overseer, and says to him, **“Prove thy servants for a suitable time. Let us have vegetables to eat, and water to drink.”** He put his request in an extreme light, in order to be quite sure that nothing brought to him would come from the king’s table.

The Babylonians were trying to change:

(1) The thinking of the young men by giving them a Babylonian education.

(2) Their loyalty by changing their names.

(3) 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.


As God's people, we may adjust to our culture where possible as long as we stay true to God's Word.

You may think that Daniel is especially exceptional and that you could never think your way out of a tough spot like this. But Daniel is known as a great example of faith because he had confidence that God would help him. He trusted in God, and God acted.

Application: Do you have this kind of assurance? Trust God the next time you are in a tough spot and feel tempted to compromise your faith. As you put your confidence in Him to help you, your faith will flourish, your courage will blossom, and you will become a faithful example as well.

V. THE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS

Daniel 1:15-21 - "At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.



Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king."



All true knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom are the gifts of God.

What was their reward?


They were made to be his attendants, his advisers, these very men who had been so absurd as not to eat the food from the royal table, so obstinate as to consider that they would defile themselves if they did. It is these absurd and obstinate people who cannot be bent, but must be straight; the upright men, who shall stand before kings, for God is with them.




Men of God are ten times better than all that lot put together.

These two words summarize the whole of Daniel's history: **"Daniel continued."**

Daniel and his 3 friends were rewarded because they remained faithful. They did not waver despite the pull of compromise. Many of us cannot always resist, cannot always say **"no"** to temptation. What happens around us has caused a change to our thinking habit, our loyalty and lifestyle. In short we fail in our faithfulness.



But we thank Jesus that He remains faithful when we are not. He was resolved to face death, even the death on the cross for our sake. The faithfulness of Daniel and his friends led them to the king's palace, but the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus led Him to the cross. Daniel and his friends went up to a higher position but Jesus in lowliness went down to the grave.



Jesus, our greater Daniel gave up his position as Son of the King so that those who believe in Him will be raised to the position as sons of the King. He was faithful on the cross, worse than captivity. But now that he is risen from death, He is King of kings. We are faithful because he made us by giving us the heart of faithfulness. As He is so we will be.

CONCLUSION:

God is looking for people who have qualities and character to serve. Even if you say you are not so qualified, He also provides ways for you to rise. Just make yourself available.

Times of testing will also come to shake you but like Daniel and his friends they made a stand not to compromise. And in the end, faithfulness will bear its fruits. God is faithful and even if we fail, He remains faithful.

