

BOOK OF DANIEL
DANIEL AND THE HEBREW CHILDREN
DANIEL 1

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Introduction

What would God have us to know about these four servants of God? We will give an introduction of them this week from Daniel 1 tonight and then we will consider Daniel by himself and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego together in separate studies.

I. THE DILEMMA. (VS 1-2)

The LORD gave Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon. (After much longsuffering on the part of the LORD!)

A. This was a fulfilment of the Prophecy of Isaiah that was given to Hezekiah in Isaiah 39 and 2 Kings 20:12-21.

Hezekiah had done foolishly late in his life and it would eventually wind up costing Judah.

B. This was a fulfilment of the Judgment of God against Judah for what went on during the wicked reign and shedding of innocent blood by Hezekiah's son, King Manasseh. (2 Kings 21:10-16; 24:1-4)

C. This was a fulfilment of the Prophecy of Jeremiah that was given to Judah in Jeremiah 25:1-11.

For 23 years Jeremiah and others preached, but by and large, God's people weren't listening!

II. THE DETENTION. (VS 3, 6-7)

Daniel and his companions were chosen to be part of the fulfilment of the prophecy found in **Isaiah 39:7**.

Giving names to captives or foreign slaves was a sign of their being put under subjection.

The name "*Belteshazzar*". which meant, "*preserve thou O Bel*" or "*prince of Bel*," who was the chief deity of Babylon), was given to "*Daniel*" which meant "*God is my judge*" or "*prince of God*".

It is explained **six times** in **twelve chapters** that **Daniel's name was changed**. This would indicate that Daniel was not fond of his new name. In fact, **Daniel uses his own name 75 times in his book**.

The name "*Shadrach*," which meant, "*decree of Aku*" (the moon-god), was given to "*Hananiah*," which meant "*gift of the LORD*."

The name "*Meshach*," which meant, "*who is as Aku*" (the moon-god) was given to "*Mishael*," whose name meant "*who is what God is*."

The name "*Abednego*," which meant, "*servant of Nebo*" (the Babylonian god of science and literature), was given to "*Azariah*," which meant "*Whom Jehovah hath helped*."

These young men **were most likely made eunuchs** in Babylon in fulfillment of the prediction contained in **2 Kings 20:17-18 and Isaiah 39:7** as is also inferred by the fact that they were under Ashpenaz, the "*master*" or "*prince*" of Nebuchadnezzar's eunuchs (**Daniel 1:3, 7**) and is also inferred by there being no mention of them having wives.

III. THE DESCRIPTION. (VS 3-4; 17)

A. Nebuchadnezzar Had 8 Qualifications For Those Who Were To Be Taken:

- 1. They were to be of the king's seed and princes. (vs 3)**
- 2. They must be children (i.e. youths). (vs 4)**
Quite possibly they were teenagers at the time.
- 3. They were to be without blemish physically. (vs 4)**
- 4. They were to be well-favored (i.e. handsome; good in appearance) (vs 4)**
- 5. They were to be skillful in wisdom (i.e. intelligent) (vs 4)**

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6. **They were to be cunning in knowledge (i.e. well educated) (vs 4)**
7. **They were to be proficient in the sciences. (vs 4)**
8. **They were to be refined and polished so as to be able to stand before kings. (vs 4)**

In other words, this was the cream of the crop! These were the best in Judah!

B. These Four Children Were Especially Blest Of God. (vs 17)

IV. THE DECREE. (VS. 4b-5)

For three years they were to be prepared. Three years was the length of the special training course for courtiers.

They were to be taught in the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. They were to be nourished out of the king's meat and wine.

V. THE DETERMINATION. (VS. 8)

Daniel noticed that something was wrong with provisions that were given to them.

We are not told specifically what the problem was, but no doubt they did not line up with the dietary laws given to the Children of Israel in the law of Moses. Possibly the meat of unclean beasts was involved.

Whatever the problem was, **Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.**

Daniel had some convictions and he purposed not to go against those convictions.

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VI. THE DIPLOMACY (VS 9)

I believe that the decree was a test by God to show us a testimony of the kind of character that these boys had.

Daniel took a stand for God, and God honored that stand by giving him favor with the prince of the eunuchs who he was under.

Daniel's case is similar to that of Joseph in some respects:

1. In being a captive from his own people.
2. In receiving favor from his captors.
3. In interpreting dreams.
4. In being exalted by rulers.
5. In holy living.

We see that Daniel was not defiant, but diplomatic in how he handled the situation.

We need to understand that maintaining a right spirit is so critical when dealing with those who are lost!

VII. THE DIFFICULTY. (VS. 10)

The prince of the eunuchs' head was at stake here if he allowed Daniel and his three friends to do something different than what the king had decreed.

VIII. THE DEAL. (VS. 11-14)

Something had to be shown to the prince of the eunuchs in very short order if this was going to be allowed to go on. Only God could do that in the ten day period of time that Daniel suggested.

This test was a challenge to Daniel's faith in God. But , we see and know that Daniel was a man of prayer!

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There must have been an element of the miraculous in the result, for ten days is not long to be able to tell much of a difference because of the eating of certain foods.

IX. THE DEMONSTRATION. (VS. 15-17)

God not only blessed them physically when they took a stand for a proper diet, but He also blessed them mentally and spiritually for their stand regarding His law.

And we see that Daniel was given a special gift by God in his ability to understand all visions and dreams. This gift would later place him in high places in the Babylonian rule.

X. THE DIALOGUE. (VS 18-19a)

The day of reckoning was at hand. They were called before the King.

XI. THE DIAGNOSIS. (VS 19b-20)

In the king's questioning of these four, we see that he found that there were none other like them.

These four were chosen to stand before the king to give him advice in matters.

They weren't only better than the others that were taken captive and fed on the king's diet, but they were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that the king had in his land.