

The Book of Daniel

God's Prophet and Statesman

I. Daniel's Exile to Babylon (1:1-21)

A. The *Exile* of Daniel and the Elite of Israel (1:1-7)

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

² **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**.

³ 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**, ⁴ **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 *servicing* in the **king's court**; and *he ordered him to teach them the literature and language* of the **Chaldeans**.

⁵ 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**.

⁶ Now among them from the **sons of Judah** were **Daniel**, **Hananiah**, **Misrael** and **Azariah**.

⁷ Then the **commander** of the officials assigned **new names** to them; and to **Daniel** he assigned *the name* **Beltshazzar**, to **Hananiah Shadrach**, to **Misrael Meshach** and to **Azariah Abed-nego**.

B. The *Ethics* of Daniel (1:8-16)

⁸ 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.

⁹ Now **God granted Daniel favor** and **compassion** in the sight of the **commander** of the officials,

¹⁰ 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.”

¹¹ But **Daniel** said to the **overseer** whom the commander of the officials had appointed over **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah**,

¹² “Please **test** your **servants** for **ten days**, and let us be given some **vegetables** to eat and **water** to drink.

¹³ 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**.”

¹⁴ So he **listened** to them in this matter and **tested them** for **ten days**.

¹⁵ 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**.

¹⁶ So the **overseer** continued to **withhold** their **choice food** and the **wine** they were to drink, and kept giving them **vegetables**.

C. The *Exceptionalism* of **Daniel** and His **Friends** (1:17-21)

¹⁷ 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**.

¹⁸ Then at the **end** of the **days** which the king had specified for presenting them, the **commander** of the officials **presented them** before **Nebuchadnezzar**.

¹⁹ 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**.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ And **Daniel** continued until the **first year** of **Cyrus the king**.

5 Key Observations with Personal Application

1. The *Peril* of **Sin** and the **Judgment** of **God**

Chapter one of the book of **Daniel** begins with the **bad news** of **God’s**

judgment upon **Jerusalem** and **Judah**. This **judgment** came by way of the **king of Babylon**, who **invaded** and **conquered** the land in **605 B.C.** (1:1-2). For hundreds of years **the Lord** had **warned** His wayward people to **repent** or face **judgment**, but they had not listened to **His servants** the **prophets** (9:6). **Israel's idolatry** and failure to keep the **sabbatical year** for the **land**, finally resulted in her **judgment** and **captivity** (II Chronicles 36:14-21).

→ As the **people of God** in this generation, **we too** can expect **God's discipline** and eventual **judgment** if we **forsake Him**, and embrace **sin and evil**. If we **forsake the truths of God's word** and **His principles**, we also can expect to **"reap** what we sow," and face **His divine judgment**.

For the **wrath of God** is revealed from **heaven**
against **all ungodliness** and **unrighteousness** of men
who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness**,...(Romans 1:18)

2. The *Parting* of **Daniel** and **Israel's Sons** to **Babylon**

As a result of **God's judgment**, some of **Israel's finest** and most **noble sons** were **exiled** to **serve** the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar. Among these were **Daniel** and his friends, **Hananiah**, **Mishael**, and **Azariah**. **Daniel** would end up spending the rest of his life in **exile**, as a **prophet** and **official** in the **king's court** in **Babylon** (1:6, 21).

→ As **believers**, have **we not also** been **exiled** from where **we** should be as **human beings** in the **presence** of our **Creator**? Even though we have been **redeemed**, we are still **strangers** and **pilgrims** in **this world**, living out our **"exile"** in **faith**, looking to the **promise** of our **complete restoration** with the **redeemed** of all the ages when the **Lord returns** (Titus 2:11-13). In the book of **Hebrews** we read this concerning the **faithful**:

All these **died in faith**, without receiving the **promises**, but having **seen them** and having **welcomed them** from a distance, and having **confessed** that they were **strangers** and **exiles** on the **earth**. (Hebrews 11:13)

3. The *Pursuit* of **Righteousness**

While in **Babylon**, **Daniel** and his three friends were given a **daily ration** of the king's **"choice food"** and **wine** for their meals. **Daniel**, desiring **not** to **transgress the laws of God**, **"made up his mind"** that **he** would **not defile himself** with **food** that likely was partially **offered to idols**. **Daniel persuaded** his **Babylonian overseer** to feed them only **vegetables** and **water** (1:5, 8-14).

→ Like **Daniel**, **we too** are to **"make up our minds"** to live **consecrated lives** in the midst of a **corrupt** and **ungodly world**. We should seek to **honor the Lord** in all that we **say and do**, and to live **holy lives** for **He is holy** (I Peter 1:15-16).

Even though we are called to live in the world, we are not to be “of the world,” and to

...present our **bodies** “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God,..
And...be not conformed to this world,
but be **transformed** by the **renewing** of your mind,
so that you may **prove** what the **will of God** is,
that which is **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect.**”
(Romans 12:1-2)

4. The *Prosperity* of Righteousness

So God granted Daniel favor, and he and his friends were able to avoid eating the king’s food. After ten days of eating vegetables and water, the Lord honored their faith, for their “appearance seemed better and fatter” than all the other youths who dined on the king’s “choice” food (1:11-15).

→As believers, we are sometimes confronted with having to make choices that may compromise our principles and spiritual walk. We may indeed be tempted to *indulge* in the world and eat its “choice” foods. However, doing the will of God is always the right and healthy choice that eventually results in “fatness,” and spiritual vitality.

“ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6)

Whether, then, you *eat* or *drink* or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)

5. The *Prominence* of Daniel and His Friends

At the close of chapter one, we read tonight that God gave Daniel, Hahaniah, Mishael, and Azariah *knowledge* in every branch of *literature* and *wisdom* (1:17). When the time came for them to be presented before the king, there were none like them, and he found them “ten times” better than all of his magicians and wise men (1:20).

→As believers, we may not be placed in positions of power and influence like Daniel and his friends. However, we all have the gift of the indwelling Spirit of God (I Corinthians 6:19-20), and He is growing us, and preparing us to accomplish His good works and purposes.

For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
(Ephesians 2:10)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.
And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.
There are varieties of effects, but the same God

who works all things in all *persons*. (I Corinthians 12:4-6)

Closing Comments

Daniel's Personal Excellence

Daniel's Pursuit of Holiness

Daniel's Elevation Position /Prominent position

Chapter Summary

The Character of Daniel

1. His Pedigree of Nobility
2. His Pursuit of Holiness
3. His Position of Increasing Prominence
 - a. Having been gifted by God with great knowledge and wisdom
 - b. Having garnered favored with the King