

Daniel - Chapter One

V.1. As leader of Babylon's army, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, and besieged it. It was while there, his father (Nabopolassar) died.

V.2. 'And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God'.

- Years earlier, according to **Isa.39:4,5**, King Hezekiah of Judah had given a sight-seeing tour of Jerusalem to the visiting Babylonians, showing them the Temple, the golden vessels, etc., and God was displeased with what he had done.

- 'part of the vessels of the house of God' were taken by the Babylonians. Note: Isaiah, over one hundred years earlier (**Isa.39:6**), had said that the remainder of the sanctified vessels would be taken to Babylon at a later date. And it happened just as foretold.

- Vessels of the Temple were 'carried into the land of Shinar'. Note: We are told in **Gen.10:10** that 'the beginning of his (Nimrod's) kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar'. Too, according to **Gen.11**, it was in the 'land of Shinar' that Nimrod and company decided to make a name for themselves. So they set out to build a city and a tower that would reach unto heaven. It was there that God confounded their language and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

- 'he (Nebuchadnezzar) brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god' (the Temple of Bel, the chief god of the Babylonians).

V.3. Ashpenaz, the master of the king's eunuchs, was to select certain of the young captives of Judah for a special time of training. (It's believed that Daniel and his friends were of royal, or princely, descent.) Note: Daniel is one of the most outstanding characters of the Bible, one of the few of whom nothing is written but good. Two others are Joseph and Jonathan.

Vs.4,5. Those chosen were to complete a three-year course of intense training, and were to be taught in the language and traditions of the Chaldeans. **Ex.** I've been told that in order to receive a 'doctorate in physics' (and other related fields of study), a candidate must study Russian or German, because a vast number of recognized works in these particular fields are written in one or the other of these two languages.

- The qualifications required by King Nebuchadnezzar for the trainees were:

- (1) To be of the king's seed; princes.
- (2) Be young.
- (3) Without physical blemish
- (4) Good in appearance
- (5) Well educated
- (6) Skillful in wisdom
- (7) Skillful in knowledge
- (8) Proficient in sciences
- (9) Refined and polished, so as to be able to stand before kings

- There was a special 'palace school' with elaborate facilities for advanced education. Too, I'm sure there was another purpose for such training. Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to forget the learning and belief they had in Jehovah God. Note: It seems much of today's secular education and training has that goal as well.

- A question is raised: Since Daniel and his friends were not personally accountable for the sins of Judah, why were they the ones called upon to pay the price? Answer: Sins of fathers have everlasting repercussions upon their children. That's why it is so important for parents to live holy separated lives. Children often reap the results of their parent's wrong-doings.

Vs.6,7. Captives (foreign slaves) were given names as a 'sign' of their being put under subjection. In this instance, Daniel and his friends were entering the king's service, and that required Babylonian citizenship. This was accomplished by assigning them Babylonian names.

- Daniel: 'God is judge'. (Belteshazzar: Prince of Bel, the chief deity of Babylon)
- Hananiah: 'Gift of the Lord'. (Shadrach: Command of Aku, the moon god)
- Mishael: 'Who is what God is'. (Meshach: Who is Aku)
- Azariah: 'Whom Jehovah helps'. (Abed-nego: Servant of Nebo, god of science and literature)

Note: On six different occasions, while writing this book, Daniel mentions that his name was changed.

Vs.8. When placed in the three-year training program to be educated as scientists and wise men of the land, the young men were put on a 'special diet'. They were to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine, prepared, no doubt, in the royal kitchen.

- But Daniel requested that they not be required to eat and drink such, but, instead, be given pulse (beans and lentils; mill seed) and water. He felt he would be defiled if he were to eat that which they offered.

- Think about it: Although just a teen away from parents and religious leaders of Judah, and unable to worship in the sacred Temple of Jerusalem, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. This was not some rash or foolish idea of a teenager. Daniel was determined that he would not 'go along to get along'; nor would he follow others who were prone to take the easy way out by 'doing as the Babylonians, if in Babylon'. He was committed to serve God, regardless of the cost.

Vs.9-11. Daniel makes a request of Melzar (he who had been put in charge of these Hebrew boys) that they be given an experimental diet of 'pulse and water', rather than the king's 'meat and wine'.

- Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days. Note: This was a challenge to Daniel's faith in God, yet God delights in having His people 'prove' Him'; in having them 'try Him' (believe; take Him at His word).

- At first, Melzar was reluctant to go along with the suggestion. He was afraid they wouldn't fair well. And he knew that if things didn't go as Daniel had suggested, it could cost him his life.. But, somehow, with God's help, Daniel persuaded him to allow them to give it a try.

- Afterwards, Melzar would determine the outcome.

Vs.15-17. Daniel and friends easily passed the 'test'. They stood up for God, and God stood up for them. Not only did God bless them physically, but mentally as well. He gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom'.

- A word to parents: The highest priority in educating your children is to lead them into a personal experience with Christ.

(1) Young people who enjoy a proper relationship with the Lord are much more prone to do well in their educational studies.

(2) It's been said: 'The man who is unlearned in the Word of God can never be properly educated, regardless of the number of degrees he might have'.

(3) The person who neglects the Bible is a 'fool'.

Vs.18-20. When the three-year training course was completed the four young men were brought before the King to be questioned, tested, and examined. And they were found 'ten times better', not just better than the other trainees, but of the king's magicians and astrologers (wise men) as well.

Note: The story of the Hebrew boys is a 'testimony' to what God will do if we will but dare trust him.

V.21. Daniel remained in Babylon for the entire 70 years of captivity, and even during the early years of the reigns of Darius and Cyrus (Medes and Persians).