

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

LESSON 3 NOTES

DANIEL 1:8-21

As we begin this part of our study, let's take a look at the country where Nebuchadnezzar has taken the Hebrew captives. The trip from Jerusalem to Babylon was approximately 900 miles, although Babylon was pretty much directly east of Jerusalem, the trip was north from Jerusalem, and then followed along the Euphrates River to Babylon. History tells us that the city was situated along the banks of the Euphrates, and a type of moat had been built around the city where the Euphrates flowed through the city itself, creating a beautiful Oasis in the midst of the desert. Babylon was considered in early history, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. After a long trek through the desert, this was the sight that greeted the Hebrew captives. Iraq currently occupies the area of ancient Babylonia.

Daniel 1 continues with the narrative or the written account of connected events. The narrative continues through chapter 6. Often the narrative chapters can cover periods of selected time periods. Chapters 7 through 12 are considered the prophetic chapters of Daniel, prophecy of future things.

Daniel's Decision and Request 1:8

Throughout their history, remaining true to the Mosaic law in matters concerning diet was often a challenge for Jews when in foreign lands. Yet, Daniel had set upon his heart not to be defiled by the King's food and drink. In verses 11-16 we see that this was not just a decision on Daniel's part, but also on the part of his closest companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

The Bible, which contains God's revealed moral will in His law and commandments, is His revelation to His people. As such, the Bible becomes our source of morality because the Bible is the very Word of God in written form (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). If the Christian wants to know God's will, he turns to the Bible. The world looks to it's own desires of what is right.

The world, like Nebuchadnezzar, expects us all to follow its fashions and to obey its rules. The god of this world is the devil, and he claims implicit obedience. Sin in some form or other is the image Satan sets up and requires us to serve. If we mean to be a Christian, and therefore intend to cast off the bondage of this present evil world, our resolve must be taken to bear all consequences rather than worship the idol of the hour. We cannot be Christ's disciples unless we have come to this point and abide by it, for Jesus leads only in the ways of righteousness.

The world might demand that we should yield to its mandates, but as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will refuse to do so. **C.H. Spurgeon on Daniel.**

Daniel and his friends understood that straying from what they believed would be morally wrong, eating contaminated foods and drink that had been handled in unclean ways and possibly offered to idols prior to being brought to the king's table, would also lead to spiritual defilement in their standing before God and their testimony to trust the one true God.

In our study last year, in 1, 2, 3 John and Jude, we were often warned about evil doers, false teachers, idol worship and the importance of distancing ourselves from such people. We were also warned not to invite them in or to even eat with them. Daniel in the wisdom God had given him, understood that to take the same food and wine from the King's table would be an acceptance of their dependence on him. They wanted to make sure that everyone knew it was the Lord God they were dependent on for everything.

In order to avoid any defilement, Daniel, a captive, asked the Chief Official if he might be served a substitute diet. In making his request, Daniel was polite and tactful. We could learn much in following Daniel's example in making requests or making an appeal with anyone.

The Chief Official's Response 1:9-10

We see God at work in these verses, as God caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel. But the official's fear of Nebuchadnezzar kept him from approving Daniel's request. Nebuchadnezzar was a fearsome king, and from study we see how quickly he loses his temper and threatens death to all concerned. This official had likely witnessed his fury and rage, and didn't want to take the chance on the loss of his own head.

Daniel would have had a great opportunity to talk to the official about his own faith in the one true God and his reasons for his change of diet. What great opportunities God gives us in the midst of the most unfair trial to look at the situation as an opportunity to share our faith in Christ, rather than argue about our rights to have life our way. Although Ephesians 4:29 was written long after Daniel was with the Lord, we can see how this verse was exactly how Daniel handled the situation. Wholesome words, words that build up, words for the need of the moment, words that give grace to those who hear.

Daniel's Appeal 1:11-14

Daniel proposed to the guard who was assigned to oversee their care, most likely appointed by Ashpenaz, that he would allow their change of diet of vegetables and water for 10 days. The

Hebrew word 'zeroa', means anything grown from sown seed, which could include grains, vegetables, fruit and bread that is made from grain. By this request, Daniel is not suggesting that eating meat was wrong, for a meat diet was permitted and in some instances was even commanded (e.g. the Passover Lamb and other sacrifices) Daniel sought to eliminate meat for the reasons we discussed earlier. He said that at the end of the 10 days, the overseer could judge for himself if their physical condition looked healthy, then they could continue with the vegetable and water diet. The overseer agreed to the proposition.

The Outcome 1:15-16

At the end of the 10 day trial period, Daniel and his friends looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the overseer took away the choice food and wine, and gave them vegetables and water instead.

God's blessings to Daniel and his friends 1:17-21

God gave gifts to these young men for their faithfulness and we know all abilities ultimately come from the Lord, who is the source of all blessings (James 1:17) Each of the 4 youth received the gift of keen intellectual ability, and to Daniel also received the gift of understanding visions and dreams of all kinds. They were faithful to stand true to the one true God. They knew Him as the source of all wisdom and strength. They had been instructed in the words of God from their childhood. It helped them stand firm when they were confronted with all forms of evil and wickedness. Knowing God, gave them discernment, understanding and the wisdom to understand why obedience to God was vital.

When Daniel and his 3 friends appeared before the king, he found none who could compare to their knowledge and understanding, even in his court among his magicians and enchanters. As a result of their God given gifts, the young men were all given places of leadership in the king's court.

Daniel with his additional gift would be an invaluable witness for the wisdom of God as Daniel would be called on many times to tell and interpret the dreams of the kings, as Daniel proclaimed his knowledge came from God, the king would proclaim the goodness of Daniel's God. But like many unbelievers today, when they believe God works to their benefit, it is easy to give Him credit, but the first time something doesn't turn out as they expect, they quickly ridicule Christians and God. We are here for His purpose and His glory, no matter what happens.

Daniel's narrative let's us know that he remained there in Babylon until the first year of King Cyrus, who was the 4th king after Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel lived a long productive life as a servant to the kings of Babylon. He was faithful to stand firm and be God's faithful witness, even when his life was threatened. Pray that we can be found faithful like Daniel and his friends even when our lives, or livelihood and our families are threatened.

John MacArthur Study Bible

C.H. Spurgeon Study Bible

Logas notes on Daniel 1

Grace to You – Daniel 1:8-21