

# DANIEL, ONE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL YOUNG MEN

BIBLE TEXT : Daniel 1: 1-21; 2:1-47.

LESSON 419 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE: "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour" (Proverbs 21:21).**

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Daniel 1:1-21

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.  
2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.  
3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;  
4 Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.  
5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.  
6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:  
7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.  
8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.  
9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.  
10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.  
11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,  
12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.  
13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

## Bible References:

### Notes:

#### **Dwindling Power**

At the close of King Solomon's reign, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom bearing the name of Israel, and the southern kingdom the name of Judah. From that time on, they continued to lose power until the northern kingdom was carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B. C. Judah continued to be a nation about 100 years longer, but by the time Babylon became a world power, Judah's sins had become so great that God let them be taken captive, too. The people whom God had chosen to preach His religion, and to whom He had promised power over all other nations if they would obey Him, were in bondage to a God-rejecting government because they had turned from God.

#### **God's Punishment**

It happened many times during Israel's history that if they did not obey God He would send heathen nations to punish them. It came about this time that God used Nebuchadnezzar, and "gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand."

Some people think that God is too kind to punish the sinner, but the Bible has given many warnings of what God will do in judgment if people refuse to obey Him. Hell will be their eternal destiny if they do not repent. Hell was not made for man, but if man refuses to prepare For Heaven, He will have to go to hell.

#### **Obedient Children**

The nation of Judah was being punished, but among the captives who were taken to Babylon from Jerusalem were some young men who still trusted God. Our surroundings will never become so evil but that God can keep the faithful ones who want to be kept. The darker the sin around us becomes, the brighter will glow the Light of the world who is in the heart of the Christian. With Jesus in us, and our purpose firm to live for Him, we can conquer every power of Satan. God wants His people to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

#### **Brilliant Students**

One day Nebuchadnezzar asked for certain of the captives who were of royal birth to be brought to him. Just as in our day when young people of high intelligence are sought out to train for scientific work, he wanted the most brilliant men to learn the language and science of their day to help in the government. Among those who were chosen were Daniel and the three Hebrew children who were later named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar changed their names, but he could not change their hearts. They remained true to their God.

These fine young men were given a place at the palace to live, food from the king's table to eat, and servants to wait on them. But Daniel had purposed not to defile himself with the king's meat, and he spoke for all four of them who were obedient to God. The luxury of the king's court did not turn their heads nor make them desire sinful pleasure. They preferred simple living;

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

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

#### **Daniel 2:1-47**

1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation

and besides, some of that food might have been offered to heathen gods before it was given them to eat.

The head of the servants, Melzar, loved Daniel. He would have selected the best of everything for him, but Daniel knew that it took more than the good things in this life to make him strong for the Lord. Melzar was afraid that the king might punish him if those he was taking care of should become thin and pale from their vegetable diet. Daniel asked for a test. He asked Melzar to let them try the pulse-and-water diet for ten days, then judge if it was good enough for them. "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:15).

Besides, God gave them wisdom in all the things they had to study. At the end of their schooling period, all those who had been studying at the king's court were called before him for an examination. The four who had determined to obey God were at the head of the class and were asked to stand before the king to be matched against the magicians and astrologers of Babylon. They were found to be ten times as brilliant as the Babylonians. In addition to their learning, God had given Daniel the gift of understanding visions and dreams. As a reward, all four of the Hebrew children were given government positions.

#### **Troubled Sleep**

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered most of the known world, had riches and honour, could make almost everyone bow to his will, and yet he worried about the future; and it spoiled his sleep. If he had been trusting God, he would not have had to worry. God would have taken care of him and his kingdom. We who are servants of Jesus today do not worry about the future of the world, whether communism will conquer the world, or some other evil power will bring destruction to our land. We trust God to take care of His own. If we must die for our faith, we will have a glorious entrance into Heaven. Jesus will welcome us Home as He did Stephen when he was martyred (Acts 7:55, 56).

The Psalmist said of Christians: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD" (Psalm 112:7). In Proverbs 3:24 we read: "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." The Apostle Peter asked this question: "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Peter 3:13).

But what does the Scripture say about the sleep of the wicked? "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (Deuteronomy 28:67). "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22). "For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night" (Ecclesiastes 2:23). "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20).

#### **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

One night Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream that troubled him, but when he awoke in the morning he could not remember what it was. He felt it must be important, so he called in his magicians to tell him what the dream was and what it meant. The magicians were horrified. They said that no king should ask such a thing. They would have been glad to try to interpret the dream if they knew what it was, but they had nothing to start with.

The king had always had his own way, and he was very unreasonable. He said if no one was able to tell him his dream he

thereof.

10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath

would kill all the magicians and wise men in the kingdom. A servant started to carry out the orders of murder; and the captain of the king's guard came to Daniel and the three Hebrew children to lead them off to execution. It seems the king had forgotten about Daniel and he had never been asked to interpret the dream. He quickly went to the king and asked for a little time. Then he went home and asked the other three to pray with him that the Lord would reveal the secret to them so they would not be killed. Because they had always obeyed God and had lived to please Him, they had confidence that He would hear and answer their prayer.

In the night God showed Daniel what the dream was and what it meant; and how happy he was! He praised God for His goodness and kindness to them. He glorified God for answering his prayer. We should never forget to be grateful when God does something for us, especially when He answers our prayers.

Not only did God's interpretation of the dream save the lives of many, but it foretold the future for hundreds of years. God had it in His power to set up the kings who would reign in years to come. In Daniel's prayer of gratitude he said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things" (Daniel 2:20-22). Daniel understood that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). God puts up whom He will and puts down whom He will.

### **The Dream**

Daniel was taken to the king and explained to him: "The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Then he went on to tell the king exactly what his dream had been, and what it meant.

The king had dreamed about a large statue which had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay mixed. As the king looked at it, a stone was cut out without hands which rolled over the statue and crushed it to powder so fine that it was carried away by the wind until there was nothing left. The stone then became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

### **The Interpretation**

Daniel then explained the meaning. He reminded the king that though he was king of all kings, all-powerful throughout his vast kingdom, yet that power and strength had been given to him by God. God had made him ruler over all people, no matter where they lived. So he was the head of gold. But his kingdom would not last forever. The next world power would not be so strong. They were the Medes and Persians and were illustrated in the statue by the arms of silver. Many years later the Greeks conquered the world. They were the thighs of brass. The Roman Empire came next, very strong and harsh. The Romans were pictured by the legs of iron. From the fall of the Roman Empire there has been no world power. No doubt the toes of iron mixed with clay are the strong and weak nations of today, which cannot unite as one, for iron and clay do not stick together.

The stone that was cut out without hands is Jesus. One day He will come again, strike down all earthly rulers, and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. All remembrance of the kingdoms that have once ruled the world will be gone, blown away like the dust on a summer threshing floor. The things of this world are

demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the

nothing compared with the Kingdom of God. How important it is to be ready to rule and reign with Jesus when He comes again and His righteous kingdom reaches from shore to shore in every land!

### **God Honoured and Daniel Promoted**

Nebuchadnezzar was so grateful to Daniel that he fell on his face before him; but more important, he said: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." He did give God the glory. He also rewarded Daniel and the three Hebrew children by making them rulers in Babylon.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Where did Daniel and his friends come from?
2. Why were they chosen to live in the palace?
3. What did they determine not to do?
4. How well did they do in their examinations? Where did they go to work?
5. Why was Nebuchadnezzar troubled when he went to bed?
6. What did the king plan to do to the astrologers and magicians because they could not reveal his dream?
7. Who could interpret the dream? How did he get the wisdom?
8. Who was the head of gold? The arms of silver? The thighs of brass?
9. What was the stone that was cut out without hands, and what did it become?
10. What will happen to all other nations when Jesus comes to reign?

God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.