

DANIEL, ONE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL YOUNG MEN

BIBLE TEXT : Daniel 1: 1-21; 2:1-49.

LESSON 419 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the kings meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8).

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:

I Daniel's Stand at the Beginning of His Captivity

1. Daniel and three Hebrew children are taken captive to Babylon about 606 B. C., Daniel 1:1, 2;

2 Kings 24:1

¹ In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

2. Three years' training and diet are decreed by the king, and names changed, Daniel 1:3-7.

3. Daniel purposes not to defile himself with meats offered to idols, Daniel 1:8;

Deuteronomy 32:36

³⁶ For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is none* shut up, or left.

Deuteronomy 32:38

³⁸ Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, *and* drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, *and* be your protection.

1 Corinthians 10:20

²⁰ But I *say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

II God's Blessing upon Daniel's Uncompromising Spirit

1. Given favour with the officer, a change of diet is approved and granted by their guard, Daniel 1:9-16.

2. Knowledge and skill is bestowed upon them by God, and they are found to be ten times better than magicians and astrologers in all the realm, Daniel 1:17-20.

III The King's Undisclosed Dream and Daniel's Request for Time

1. The wise men are summoned to make known his dream and the king is angry and disputes with them, Daniel 2:1-11.

2. Sentence of death is pronounced upon all wise men, including Daniel and his companions, Daniel 2:12, 13.

3. The king grants Daniel time to fulfil his promise, as he and his companions turn to the Lord in prayer, Daniel 2:14-18.

4. The secret is revealed and Daniel praises God, Daniel 2:19-23;.

Deuteronomy 29:29

²⁹ The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

Psalms 25:14

¹⁴ The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

Job 12:22

²² He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

IV Daniel's Description of the Dream

1. Taken before the king he gives glory to God and describes the image the king saw, Daniel 2:24-33;

Isaiah 42:8

⁸ I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images..

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

2. The great Stone destroys the image, Daniel 2:34, 35

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

¹⁴ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:26-27

²⁶ But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end.

²⁷ And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Psalm 118:22

²² The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner..

V Daniel's Interpretation of the Dream

1. The head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Daniel 2:36-38,

Daniel 7:3

³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

Daniel 7:4

⁴ The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

2. The breast and arms of silver are the Medes and Persians, Daniel 2:39;

Daniel 7:5

⁵ And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh..

3. The belly and thighs of brass represent the Alexandrian kingdom Daniel 2:39;

Daniel 7:6

⁶ After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

Daniel 8:4

⁴ I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

Daniel 8:6

⁶ And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

Daniel 8:20-21

²⁰ The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia.

²¹ And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes is the first king..

4. The legs of iron represent the Roman kingdom, Daniel 2:40;

Daniel 7:7

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns.

that ye can shew me the interpretation 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

Daniel 7:23

²³ Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces..

5. The feet of iron and clay illustrate the disunited kingdoms, Daniel 2:41-43;

Daniel 7:24-25

²⁴ And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time..

6. The Stone that smote the image is the Kingdom of God, Daniel 2:44, 45;

Isaiah 28:16

¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Acts 4:11

¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner..

7. Daniel and his companions are promoted by the king, Daniel 2:46-49.

Notes:

Daniel Among the First

Daniel was in the first group of captives taken from Jerusalem to Babylon in about 606 B. C. He and his three friends are thought to have been related to King Zedekiah (verse 3). That gave them entrance to the palace of Babylon, along with God's divine plan.

In Daniel's day, the city of Babylon not only was the premier city of the pre-Christian world, but it ruled the most powerful empire that had, up to that time, existed. Daniel was there from its zenith to its fall, in all about 72 years (verse 21). From the first of the Jews' captivity until after their return, he was God's witness in the palace of this world empire. The 70 years of Judah's captivity was the same 70 years that Babylon ruled the world. The year that Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylon, 536 B. C., he authorized the return of the Jews to their own land.

Daniel's Purpose

Daniel's record is one of the few in the Bible without recorded flaw. Daniel and his friends must have been very young. Some think them to have been about twelve when taken captive; and by reason of their purpose they stand out as boy heroes.

The purpose of Daniel was not in his head, but in his heart. We have learned by experience that to take a firm stand upon God's Word at the beginning, and to seek God's help in maintaining that purpose, is the true way to a victorious life with Christ. It was contrary to the law of his God to eat meat offered to idols. Daniel feared God, and therefore determined to stand true to his convictions.

There were many circumstances in Babylon set in array against Daniel's stand. He and his companions were not guests; they were captives in Babylon, surrounded by a wicked, idolatrous people, under the rule of a tyrannical king whose word was law. These young men were selected as potential servants for the king, and were brought to the palace for the express purpose of being trained for efficient positions in his court. Their instruction and diet were prescribed by the king himself. Even their Jewish

king, and said, The secret which the king hath 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 beheld 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.

names, the significance of which pointed them to their God, were basely changed to pagan names, relating in one way or another to the gods of Chaldea. Daniel and his companions could not look with any hope to their own people, for they had fallen away and now were shamefully given over to idolatry themselves.

Everything stood against Daniel, but he never faltered -- he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat. The God of his fathers, whom he loved, honoured his stand, bestowed upon him skill and wisdom until he excelled all the wise men in Chaldea, won the favour of his officers, and was promoted to great honour in the kingdom. And before Daniel's career was ended God delivered him out of every danger and unfolded through him a prophetic view of the last days which we are seeing fulfilled in our time. It pays to stand true to Daniel's God.

Daniel's Prosperity

Daniel's meteoric rise to world-wide fame is indicated in **Ezekiel 14:14** ¹⁴ Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *but* their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. **Ezekiel 14:20** ²⁰ Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall *but* deliver their own souls by their righteousness. **Ezekiel 28:3** ³ Behold, thou *art* wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee; written only fifteen years later, while Daniel was still a very young man. What a remarkable young man! He was absolutely unswerving in his religious convictions, yet so loyal to his idolatrous king that he was trusted with the affairs of the empire. This is an example for us not to "follow a multitude to do evil, (**Exodus 23:2** ² Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest *judgment*). God has given the martyrs of more recent days the courage to stand true to the death, even though they could have had their lives spared by "pouring out a little wine" or "dropping some incense on the fire," to the honour of some ruler.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

This was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as sole ruler, having been placed in charge of his father's armies six years before. He had invaded the western countries and wrested control of Palestine from Egypt three years later. It is thought that it was at this time Daniel was taken along with other Jewish captives to Babylon. Daniel had been in Babylon only three years.

The king's thoughts upon his bed were the same entertained by all sane-thinking people: what shall come to pass hereafter? God deals with all men in regard to eternity. It is a question on every mind, young or old, rich or poor. The Bible tells us that God "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

When the king's dream left him upon awaking, he realised that something solemn had been presented to him in his dream, without being able to recall it. The inability of the wise men of the realm to tell what the dream had been only served to show man's weakness in dealing with the things of God. The king threatened to destroy all the magicians and make their houses a rubble heap if they did not bring forth the dream. Threats or gifts cannot change the limitations of man. Their pleas for the king to tell the dream and they would interpret it only served to show the king their corrupt and lying words. He reasoned that if they could not tell what had already happened, how could they foretell the future?

Divine Help Needed

The wise men told the king that only the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh, could reveal this matter. In their pagan unbelief, they realised the need for divine intervention if their lives were to

44 And in the days of these kings shall the 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.

be spared. Contrast this heathen idea of utter severance of God from man with: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Daniel and his companions do not seem to have been numbered among the magicians, and so were not summoned before the king. God ordered it so, that all mere human wisdom would be shown vain before His divine power. Daniel reasoned with the king's guard that time might be granted him. He called his companions to prayer (**Matthew 18:19**¹⁹ Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.). The same instrumentality rescued Peter from his peril when he was held in prison by Herod, and the church prayed for his release. The angel of the Lord came to his rescue and brought him out (**Acts 12:5**⁵ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. **Acts 12:12**¹² And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.).

God's Answer

Upon God's answering the prayer by a revelation in a vision to Daniel, he immediately gave God the glory and thanksgiving, ascribing to Him all wisdom and power in the removal and setting up of kings. God is still the ruler of the universe.

The Babylonian captivity was more than just a passing event in the history of the Jews. It was the end of Israel's government and the beginning of the Gentile dominion. God gave Nebuchadnezzar, as a representative of the Gentiles, a panoramic view of the future, which was fittingly disclosed by this image of man, for it represented man's day, a day in which he had the opportunity to see what he could do for himself.

The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldean or Babylonian kingdom. The breast and arms of silver foretold the reign of the Medes and Persians. The belly and thighs of brass typified the ushering in of the Alexandrian rule of the Grecian kingdom. The legs of iron pointed to the iron rule of Rome. The feet of iron and clay mixed showed the latter times of man's rule upon earth when there would be no cohesion in the rule of the nations, which we can see today. The Stone that was cut out of the mountain, without hands, and brake in pieces the image until it became as chaff of the summer threshing floors, is none other than the Kingdom of God, which shall not be destroyed, nor left to other people, but shall become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

From the days of Daniel to the coming of Christ, the world was ruled by these four empires, exactly as Daniel predicted. But another day is coming, of which the Bible frequently speaks; it is "the Lord's day." The great Stone is about ready to fall and crush the Gentile nations, and then will be established the glorious Millennial Kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. In whose reign was Daniel taken captive?
2. Give your reason for Daniel's success.
3. Give the Hebrew names of Daniel's companions.
4. Why was Daniel granted time when the Chaldeans were refused?
5. Show the two methods God used in this lesson to reveal the things to come.
6. How does the prophecy of Daniel differ from that of other prophets?

7. State the beginning and the ending of Gentile dominion.
8. Name its four great historical divisions.
- 9.** In what sense do the world powers grow inferior to one another as portrayed by the image?