



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

7350 Granbury Rd.

Fort Worth, TX 76123

Daniel, A History

Lesson #1

Daniel 1:1-21

Overall Lesson 41

Although the book of Daniel has been fiercely attacked by the critics, let us remember that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke of "Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15). The twelve chapters of Daniel are easy to read but are by no means easy to understand. They contain dreams and visions, all of which refer to the unfolding of history and to the closing events of the age. Many of the prophecies have already been fulfilled literally, and when the Lord Jesus comes back again all the remaining prophecies will find their fulfilment. The primary object in this series will be to study the life and ministry of Daniel and the great events connected with his long period of service for the Lord, rather than to devote time to a comprehensive study of the dreams and

visions and their interpretation. Daniel is three times described as the "man greatly beloved" (Daniel 9:23; 10:11,19); he was a fine character, with an unblemished record, and if this fact discourages us then let us remember that his God is our God. Turn to Daniel chapter 1 and notice seven things.

1. THE KIND OF MAN HE WAS (verses 3 and 4).

He was an Israelite, about 18 years of age when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah about the year 606 BC; he was captured and then deported to the fabulous city of Babylon, the most magnificent city in the world. He was of royal descent (verse 3), handsome, a man of culture and outstandingly intelligent (verse 4). Because of these qualities King Nebuchadnezzar chose him and gave orders that he should be trained in all the language and literature of the Chaldeans (verse 4); he was a Jew among Gentiles, living in an alien land, a believer among unbelievers- and God had a great work to do through him over a period of 70-80 years. It was a terrible experience for him to be deported a thousand miles to Babylon, but- compare Genesis 50:20 with Philippians 1:12.

2. THE KIND OF FOOD HE ATE (verses 5 and 8).

Daniel was put on a three-years' course of training, and by the decree of the king he was to have special food and wine from the king's table to nourish him. This Daniel refused to accept. Why? Because it had been dedicated to some heathen deity and was therefore abhorrent and defiling to a godly Jew. Instead, he chose to eat only vegetables – look up 1 Corinthians 10:20. He was determined to live a separated life and not to compromise in the slightest degree. The tragedy today is

that many Christians know little or nothing of the true meaning of separation- look up 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1. It was a daring thing to do, but God will always compensate His servants when they are unflinchingly true to Him.

3. THE KIND OF COMPANIONS HE CHOSE (verses 6 and 7).

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were three Hebrews who had been captured and brought to Babylon with Daniel, and directly they were all set to work in the University of Babylon their names were changed.

Daniel ("The Lord is judge") became Belteshazzar ("Bel's Prince").

Hananiah ("The Lord is gracious") became Shadrach ("The command of Aku", the moon god).

Mishael ("Who is like God?") became Meshach ("Who is an Aku?").

Azariah ("The Lord is a helper") became Abednego ("Servant of Nebo", god of intelligence).

What a great thing it is when young Christians who are away from home and surrounded by new temptations can find other Christians with whom they can have fellowship in the things of the Lord! On the question of dedication to God and separation from evil, these four young men joined together and refused to compromise. See what Daniel did – look at the last part of verse 8.

4. THE KIND OF FRIEND HE FOUND (verse 9).

Very often in times of testing we are afraid to stand out boldly for the Lord. This may result in our having to plough a lone furrow in serving

the Lord, whereas if we had taken our stand for Him we would have found someone who would help and encourage us, as Daniel did – look up Proverbs 16:7. Although “the prince of the eunuchs” was not a believer in God, God used and blessed him to Daniel - look up Proverbs 21:1, and compare Genesis 39:1-6. God is not only sovereign in the lives of His children, but in the lives of worldly people as well. He can turn them whichever way He wishes.

5. THE KIND OF COURAGE HE DISPLAYED (verses 11 to 13).

Daniel requested that he and his friends might be allowed to eat vegetables for ten days, at the end of which the prince of the eunuchs could examine them to see whether their health had suffered or not. Daniel was a true Nazarite- look up Numbers 6:3-7; the Word of God which he had learned as a boy was dwelling richly in his heart (Colossians 3:16), and he was emboldened to make this daring challenge. What was the answer to his request? - see verse 14. But Daniel not only challenged the prince of the eunuchs; this was a challenge to God. Would He support and sustain him in this matter? - look up Malachi 3:10. As Daniel trusted the Lord He graciously undertook for him and his friends.

6. THE KIND OF TESTIMONY HE BORE (verses 15 and 16).

He bore a testimony in his face (verse 15). It is a wonderful testimony when our faces reflect the glory of the Lord! - look up and compare Exodus 34:35; Acts 6:15.

He bore a testimony in his head (verse 17). Look up Proverbs 3:13; James 1:5.

7. THE KIND OF GOD HE SERVED (verses 17 to 21).

He served a God who was overruling in his life. “God...gave (them) knowledge...” (verse 17) - and compare verses 18-20, which refer to a period three years later. Notice that “God...had caused the official to show Daniel favour...” (verse 9)- it was God who did it!

He served a God who honoured His servant’s faithfulness - see verse 9, and also read 1 Samuel 2:30; Matthew 6:33.

He served a God who sustained him through his long life. How wonderfully the chapter ends (verse 21)! For over 70 years Daniel was faithful to his Lord, and the same God who enabled him to continue through this long period of time is able to keep us- look up Jude 24, and compare Acts 26:22.

By Francis Dixon

Application/Activity

We have been looking at men of the Bible that we can model ourselves after. We have learned about their lives, their trials and how they conducted themselves. Daniel stands head and shoulders above them all. He conducted himself righteously throughout the entirety of his life. Spend time in prayer this week asking God to give you a heart to serve God the way Daniel did. Look at the seven bullet points above and spend time each day praying about one bullet point. Start with asking God to help you be a man after Daniel’s own heart. Think of what we discussed in class about Daniel that made him so special to God.

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