

DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

This story shows the faith, courage and obedience of four young men taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar. God blessed them even in Babylon.

by Shelby Faith

Daniel was a young man of the tribe of Judah living in Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and captured the city. The king took some treasures from the temple of God back to Babylon (Daniel 1).

King Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the young men of Judah to Babylon. They were taught the language spoken in Babylon. The king wanted young men who had wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He planned to teach them for three years so they could serve him.

Daniel was among those chosen, along with three of his friends. The Babylonians gave Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, but the Bible uses his Hebrew name, Daniel. His friends' names were changed to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego.

A TEST

The king wanted them to have his own special food and drink.

But they refused to eat the food that the king's servant brought to them. (Some of it was probably unclean food that God commands us not to eat, as explained in Leviticus 11.) The servant set over them was afraid that they would not look healthy. If this happened, he knew the king would punish him.

Daniel told him, "Test us for 10 days and give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then see if we are well and healthy."

The servant allowed this. At the end of the 10 days, they looked better and healthier than those who ate the king's food. From then on, they were given vegetables as they had asked.

God blessed these four young men and gave them knowledge and wisdom. Daniel also understood dreams. The king found them 10 times wiser and better than all the wise men, magicians and astrologers in his kingdom.

THE KING'S DREAM

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him. Not one of his wise men could tell him what his dream was about. He became so angry, he ordered all of them killed. As the wise men were being killed, Daniel heard about this. He knew that he and his friends would be killed too. He went to the king and asked him for some time to make known the dream (Daniel 2).

QUIZ TIME

How did God bless the four young men?

QUIZ TIME

What did the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream look like?

Then Daniel and his friends prayed and asked God to help them. God revealed the secret dream to Daniel. Daniel thanked God for showing him the king's dream.

Daniel told the king, "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. He will show you, King Nebuchadnezzar, what will happen in the latter days."

Daniel then told the king what his dream was about.

"You saw an awesome sight. There was a great image standing before you that had a gold head with a silver chest and arms. Its belly and thighs were made out of bronze, and its legs were made out of iron. Its feet were part clay and part iron.

"While you kept watching, a stone was cut out of a mountain by invisible hands. It struck the feet of the image, breaking them into pieces. Then the whole image was crushed into tiny pieces and blown away by the wind. Nothing of the image was left. The stone grew into a great mountain that filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:31-35).

THE MEANING

Daniel told the king, "That is what you dreamed. Now I'll tell you what it means.

"You are the head of gold. After you, another kingdom will be in power, but it won't be as great as yours. Then a third kingdom will rule the earth. After that a fourth kingdom will rise up, and it will destroy all the other kingdoms. Then the stone that you saw in your dream will break all those kingdoms into pieces. There will be nothing left of them. God will set up His Kingdom that will never be destroyed, and it will last forever."

QUIZ TIME

What was the meaning of the prophecy?

This is a prophecy about the [Kingdom of God](#) that will come when Jesus Christ returns to the earth and sets up God's Kingdom to rule all mankind in the right way (Daniel 2:36-45).

King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face before Daniel. Then the king said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings. He reveals secrets, since you could tell me this secret."

The king made Daniel a powerful man, gave him rich gifts and set him up as a ruler of the whole area of Babylon. He was made chief over all the king's wise men. Daniel asked the king to also give power to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. They helped Daniel take care of Babylon.

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Did Daniel and his friends do what was right even if it meant they could have lost their lives?
2. What happened when they refused to eat the king's food?
3. Should you always do the right thing even if everyone else is doing the wrong thing?

Read more about Daniel in our article "[Daniel the Prophet](#)."



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