

Daniel: The Man Who Heard God's Secrets

Daniel 1:1-20 NIV

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— ⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

⁶ Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

⁸ But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. ⁹ Now God had caused the official to show favour and compassion to Daniel, ¹⁰ but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵ At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

¹⁷ To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so, they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

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Background to the book of Daniel.

- Thousands were deported to Babylon after Judah was conquered.
- Daniel faced an egocentric despot, while surrounded by idolaters.
- Not giving in or giving up, he held onto his faith in his God.
- The book of Daniel centres around the sovereignty of God.
- Some of the greatest accounts of the faithfulness of God recorded.
- Daniel & his ability to interpret the king's dreams.
- The fascinating account of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego in the furnace.
- Belshazzar's encounter with God's message written on a wall.
- Daniel being condemned to die in a den of hungry lions.
- God intervened and saved him, shutting the mouths of the lions.
- The series of visions that Daniel had outlining God's future plans,
- We can read Daniel, watch God work and find our security in His sovereignty.

Daniel

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- * The Book of Daniel is a remarkable narrative that combines adventures in faith with prophetic insights. It emphasizes God's sovereignty over all humanity and encourages living faithfully in the present rather than fixating on future events.
- * The Story of a Prisoner in Iraq (Daniel 1:1-8)
- * Daniel and his friends were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon after its fall. Despite being chosen to serve King Nebuchadnezzar, they faced significant trials. This story highlights the universal theme of facing testing times in life.
- * Daniel's Courageous Decision
- * Nebuchadnezzar controlled every aspect of Daniel's life, but Daniel chose to remain faithful to God rather than submit to defilement. His decision to reject the king's plan and adhere to a higher purpose illustrates his devotion and courage.
- * Full Commitment Required Daniel's commitment to not defile himself by consuming the king's food and drink was a defining moment. It demonstrated his unwavering purpose to serve God and avoid compromise, setting a standard of purity and devotion.
- * Daniel's Big Decision (v. 8)
- * Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king's provisions, influencing

his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. His decision required immense faith and courage, ultimately leading to a test to see which diet was better.

- * Facing Defilement.
- * The story encourages readers to consider what challenges might defile them and to draw inspiration from Daniel's example of purity and faithfulness.
- * Daniel's Confidence in God (vv. 11-16)
- * Daniel's request to abstain from the king's food and his confidence in God led to a test of faith. The positive results—healthier appearances than those who followed the king's diet—demonstrated God's faithfulness and power.
- * Commitment That Called for a Contest
- * Daniel's faith led him to challenge the king's diet, confident in God's support. This section underscores the need for believers to trust God amidst daily challenges, looking past difficulties to ultimate victory.
- * Commitment to God Is a Two-Way Street
- * Daniel's unwavering faith resulted in God's blessings. His and his friends' faithfulness impressed even the king, leading to their prominence in the kingdom. Their example highlights the reciprocal nature of commitment to God and the blessings that follow.
- * Daniel and his friends exemplify dedication and commitment to God, serving as a model for believers to avoid compromising their faith amidst societal pressures. Daniel's life of integrity, prayer, and humility earned him divine insights, urging believers to fully surrender to God.