

## Daniel

### The Choice Young Men

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord handed Jehoiakim king of Judah over to him, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

<sup>3</sup> Then the king told Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, <sup>4</sup> youths in whom there was no impairment, who were good-looking, suitable for instruction in every kind of expertise, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability to serve in the king's court; and he ordered Ashpenaz to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

<sup>5</sup> The king also allotted for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and ordered that they be educated for three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. <sup>6</sup> Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. <sup>7</sup> Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abed-nego.

### Daniel's Resolve

<sup>8</sup> But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. <sup>9</sup> Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials.

<sup>10</sup> The commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has allotted your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking gaunt in comparison to the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." <sup>11</sup> But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please put your servants to the test for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

<sup>13</sup> Then let our appearance be examined in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see." <sup>14</sup> So he listened to them in this matter, and put them to the test for ten days. <sup>15</sup> And at the end of ten days their appearance seemed better, and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.

<sup>16</sup> So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

<sup>17</sup> And as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every kind of literature and expertise; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>19</sup> And the king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. <sup>20</sup> As for every matter of expertise and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the soothsayer priests and conjurers who were in all his realm. <sup>21</sup> And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

### **We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions**

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### **Paul's observations and insights**

1. Was Jehoiakim a bad king?
2. Rabbinical literature describes Jehoiakim as a godless tyrant who committed atrocious sins and crimes. He is portrayed as living in incestuous relations with his mother, daughter-in-law, and stepmother, and was in the habit of murdering men, whose wives he then violated and whose property he seized.
3. Who prophesied, Jehoiakim, downfall?
4. Jeremiah served as prophet during the reigns of Judah's last five kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. - Jehoiakim shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem" - Jeremiah 22:18–19 "and his dead body shall be cast out .
5. Jehoiakim was King in Jerusalem for three years when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and engaged him in a war.
6. Was Jehoiakim a bad King?
7. God allowed Jehoiakim to be captured and his kingdom to be overcome. Why?
8. He allowed the temple treasure to be stolen? Why?
9. Nebuchadnezzar began to implement his desecration of the Nation of Israel by infiltration of culture.
10. He chose the best of Israel and introduced them to Babylon culture.
11. He picked out the best looking young men and educated them with the wisdom of Babylon.
12. Nebuchadnezzar was preparing for himself, through these young men, future leaders and governors to take care of the Babylonian empire.
13. What does it mean to have wisdom and understanding?

14. What does it mean to have discerning knowledge?
15. All that were chosen were put through the Babylonian sausage machine, not too dissimilar to the Roman Empire.
16. This process meant that they were well fed from the King's table.
17. They were provided for in every way.
18. They were educated for three years, as though they went to University.
19. Now, the best of the bunch were, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Daniel.
20. What was the significance of renaming these three men?
21. Their original names all had the names of God in them, their changed names exalted the Gods of the Babylonians.
22. Why did Daniel make the choice to abstain from the privilege of the Kings' table in the food that he ate?
23. Daniel's character is seen even as a young man, he had humility, and went about making a stand in the right way.
24. Sometimes doing the right thing in the wrong way only creates an even greater problem, God wants us to do the right thing in the right way.
25. The Official's taking care of the young men embraced them, as God had given to them favour in their eyes.
26. Daniel's request to abstain from non-kosher meat presented a problem to the official as he feared for his life.
27. Daniel makes it easier for him and presents to him an acceptable test, suggesting a meat free and wine free diet.
28. The test proved conclusive and the four stood head and shoulders above those who had indulged at the Kings' table.
29. Daniel and his friends had won the battle and proved themselves for the first time, and for the next three years were secure within their conscience.
30. God had blessed and equipped these four young men with incredible gifts and talents, but Daniel stood tallest of all.
31. Daniel had the insight of a seer into visions and dreams.
32. After the three years education, at the graduation, the four were presented to Nebuchadnezzar.
33. Nebuchadnezzar interviewed each of the four, he was fully persuaded these were top of the class in serving the nation of Babylon.
34. Nebuchadnezzar declared, having interviewed them, they were ten times better equipped, in all matters, than all the rest!
35. Daniel stood in high office until King Darius invaded the land.