



DANIEL'S UPRISING AT THE BABYLONIAN COURT

Daniel 1

Around 600 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and brought many of the people of Israel to Babylon as captives. There, young men were chosen from among distinguished Jewish families to be educated at the court of the Babylonian king. Daniel and his three friends were among them.

The king decided that they were to receive the same food and drink as he himself. At each meal the Babylonians offered some of the food and drink to the idols they worshipped. In other words, their food was at the same time a sacrifice for the idols. Daniel did not want to eat any of this food because he would have transgressed the divine prescriptions with respect to food. That is why he asked the first chamberlain (i.e., a servant at the court) to let him and his three friends have only vegetables and water.

The chamberlain feared that the king would have him killed if the boys looked pale or ill. Daniel, however, was able to talk him into agreeing to a ten-day trial period. At the end of that time, the four looked better than all the others and were therefore able to continue having only vegetables and water. When their education was completed three years later, King Nebuchadnezzar selected Daniel and his friends to serve at his court because no one equalled them.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Daniel 2

King Nebuchadnezzar once had a dream which frightened him so much that he woke up on account of it. But already when he awoke, he could not remember what he had dreamt.

He called all the wise men, astrologers, and magicians together, commanding them to tell him the dream and interpret it. They were frightened and told the king that this would not be possible for any man. This made the king so furious that he wanted to have all the wise men in Babylon killed, including Daniel and his friends.

Daniel asked the king for some more time. Then he prayed together with his friends that God might grant them grace and help, by letting them know the dream. During the night, the dream was revealed to Daniel. He thanked and praised God.

He then went to the king to tell him the dream. In this dream God had shown King Nebuchadnezzar that four earthly kingdoms would come and pass. God, however, would set up an eternal kingdom. The king was deeply moved, recognising in Daniel's God the God of all gods and the Lord of all kings.

As a reward, Daniel was showered with gifts and set as ruler over Babylon.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Daniel 6



The Persians had defeated and taken the Babylonian kingdom. The Persian king, Darius, wanted to set Daniel as ruler over the entire kingdom.

This made the other governors and rulers jealous. They decided to find some charge against Daniel. Since Daniel was faithful in every respect, however, they were unable to find anything to be brought against him.

So they thought about how to trick him. They knew that Daniel prayed to God three times daily. They made the king give the order that everyone who would petition any god or man, other than the king during the next 30 days, was to be thrown into the lions' den.

Despite the king's decree, Daniel remained faithful to the Lord and trusted Him fully. He continued to pray three times daily, kneeling at one of the windows opening in the direction of distant Jerusalem. His enemies lay in wait for him. They caught him praying to God and started proceedings against him before the king.

The king was sad. The law could not be changed. He had to have Daniel thrown into the lions' den. However, he wished him deliverance through his God.

When the king came to the lions' den the next day, he found Daniel unharmed. God had sent an angel who had held the lions' mouths shut. The king was happy and had the miracle of Daniel's rescue proclaimed to all the peoples of his kingdom. At the same time, he gave instructions that Daniel's eternal, living God was to be feared.

The men who had accused Daniel were thrown into the lions' den with their families, and the lions tore them apart even before they had touched the bottom of the den.

EXERCISE 1



The names of the two children below are Hegor and Sabena. They live with their parents in Babylon. Imagine that you are their father. How would you answer their questions?



I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THIS WHOLE STORY! FIRST, THE KING HAS DANIEL THROWN INTO THE LIONS' DEN. THEN HE IS HAPPY THAT THE LIONS DIDN'T HARM HIM.

WHY DIDN'T THE LIONS TEAR DANIEL APART? I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT.



EXERCISE 2



Sabena and Hegor have more questions for their father. Read the following conversation after the roles have been allocated.

- Hegor: Father, can you tell us more about Daniel?
- Father: Yes, of course. Many years ago there was king named Nebuchadnezzar. He captured Jerusalem in a war and took many captives back to Babylon. Daniel was among them. He was of noble Jewish lineage.
- Sabena: How terrible. I think it would be awful if I had to go into captivity. How old was Daniel at the time?
- Father: I don't know exactly, but he was still a very young man, intelligent and good looking.
- Hegor: And what happened to him?
- Father: He and several other young Israelites were selected to be brought up at the royal court and later to serve the king.
- Sabena: Were they able to speak our language?
- Father: Of course not. They all had to learn the Chaldean language. Something unusual also happened at that time. The king had ordered the young men to have the same food and drink as he.
- Hegor: But that is exactly what Daniel and his three friends didn't want. That story I know!

Do you also know the story? Tell it!

- Sabena: What a strange story! They could have had the tastiest meals, but ate only vegetables and drank water. Why didn't Daniel want to eat the king's food?
- Father: At every meal, some of the food and drink is offered to our gods. They are meals and sacrifices to the gods at the same time. That is why Daniel said he would pollute himself by having the king's food and drink. He wanted to remain faithful to his God.
- Hegor: Father, do you think that his God made sure vegetables and water would keep him healthy and strong?
- Father: I don't know. But the fact is, Daniel was a special person. His God blessed him.

EXERCISE 3



God blessed Daniel with spiritual and natural gifts because he was devout. Read the Bible passages below and underline what the blessing consisted of.

“There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation” (Daniel 5: 11–12).

The queen said this to King Belshazzar when he was very afraid. During a feast, the drunk king had the vessels brought which his father, King Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. Those taking part in the feast drank from these holy vessels while praising their own gods. Then there appeared a hand writing something on the wall of the royal hall. When the king looked for someone who was able to read and interpret the writing, the queen recommended to have Daniel brought.

“Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon” (Daniel 2: 48).

“My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me... So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God” (Daniel 6: 22–23).

BOARD
