

DANIEL 1:2-16

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A. Who is in charge?

1. **Daniel 1:1** *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.*



Bible History Online

2. Why did Nebuchadnezzar put the articles of the temple in the Marduk's temple?
3. Who thinks he is in charge?

Figure 1 Tiamat, on the left, is being defeated by Marduk. From <http://www.bible-history.com/ibh/Babylonian+Gods/Marduk/Battle+Between+Marduk+and+Tiamat> accessed on 30 Dec 12.

4. **Daniel 1:2** *And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand . . .*
Jeremiah 25:9: *I will summon all the peoples of the north and My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the Lord, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.*
 - a. Circle or highlight God's action.
 - b. Who is in charge?

5. Look up Isaiah 44:28 *Cyrus = shepherd "My shepherd"*
6. Look up Isaiah 45:13 *Cyrus will build Jerusalem*

God is in charge of even the heathens - Nebuchadnezzar = my servant, Cyrus = My shepherd

B. What three characteristics do we see about God in the Daniel 1:2?

1. *Holy*
2. *Omnipotent*
3. *Faithful*

Practical application: What comfort do we gain from Daniel 1:2? *Ans. God is in charge*

Daniel 1:3 *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—*

- A. Why does Nebuchadnezzar want to put into service the royal family and nobility?
1. *To show himself master - if he is in charge of the royal family, he is in charge of everyone.*
 2. *To remove the leadership; less chance of rebellion.*
 3. *To corrupt the leadership and have them become more Babylonian than Jew.*
John Calvin: "that those who were nourished in his palace would be degenerate and hostile to the Jews, and he thought their assistance would prove useful to himself."

B. Eunuchs:

1. NIV: *Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials . . .*

KJV: *Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs . . .*

Compare Genesis 39:1. This is the same Hebrew word in speaking of Potiphar as an *officer of Pharaoh*. We know that he was not an eunuch because he was married.

2. Some Jews serving in Babylon became eunuchs, which fulfills the prophesy of Isaiah 39:7: *And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.*

Daniel 1:4 *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.*

A. "without any physical defect." Daniel and his three friends were probably not made eunuchs.

B. What is the difference between:

1. *aptitude for every kind of learning* ans: innate ability

2. *well-informed* ans: knowledge

3. *quick to understand* ans: ability to learn (like aptitude - reinforcing)

Daniel 1:5 *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.*

A. Three years training was standard practice.

B. How old were they? *Ans: Plato states that the youths began training in the 14th year; Xenophon that they began training in their 16th or 17th year.*

Practical Application: How well are our youths trained so that at 14, or 16, or 17 they would be able to stand up for their faith against the peer pressure? against the world's influence?

Daniel 1:6-7 *Among these 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.*

A. Name changes were frequent in the Bible due to change in job or purpose

1. Abram → Abraham
2. Joseph → Zaphenah-Paneah
3. Solomon → Jedidiah
4. Hadassah → Esther

B. Name change

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Daniel | <i>God has judged</i> | → Belteshazzar | <i>Bel (Marduk) protect his life</i> |
| 2. Hananiah | <i>The Lord shows grace</i> | → Shadrach | <i>Command of Aku-moon god</i> |
| 3. Mishael | <i>Who is what God is</i> | → Meshach | <i>Who is what Aku is</i> |
| 4. Azariah | <i>Jehovah has helped</i> | → Abednego | <i>servant of Nebo</i> |

C. But what is the purpose of changing these names?

1. Edward Young: "In each case the change has the effect of obliterating the name of the true God."

2. John Calvin: "the names were changed to abolish the remembrance of the kingdom of Judah from their hearts ... namely, to cause these miserable exiles to feel themselves in captivity, and cut off from the race of Israel; and by this mark or symbol they were reduced to slavery, to the king of Babylon and his palace."

Daniel 1:8 *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.*

- A. Why was it wrong to eat and drink the royal food and wine? *The food had been sacrificed to the gods*
- B. Compare Romans 14:1-4
- C. I Corinthians 10:18-22
- D. Daniel offers a compromise. Young: "Daniel exhibits himself as a true gentleman. He never yields in devotion to principle, but he does not permit devotion to principle to serve as a cloak for rudeness or fanaticism. He was a true hero of the Faith." (p. 44)

Practical Application: How do we treat unbelievers?

Daniel 1:9 *Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel,*

- A. Who is in charge? *Ans. God is in charge. He makes the official show favor*
- B. Cf. Gen. 39:21 *Ans. Joseph finds favor.*
- C. Cf. Psalm 106:46 *Ans. He caused them to be pitied by all who held them captive.*
- D. Calvin: "God softens their iron hardness, and turns the wolf into the lamb."

Daniel 1:10-16 *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 [Melzar] 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 [Melzar] took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.*

- A. In vs. 9, Daniel appeals to "the chief official" but he has no success. What does Daniel do next? *Ans. He appeals to the guard under the chief official*
 - B. The guard is under the chief official who just rejected Daniel's request for fear of his life. Why would the guard agree to Daniel's request? *Ans. God is sovereign*
- Hint: What is the theme of the book of Daniel?

Practical application: Calvin: "It is a clear and serious proof of our faith, when we are not fatigued when anything adverse occurs, and never consider the way closed against us."

- C. Ten days = ten = completeness; e.g., 10 Commandments

- D. Calvin: "Without doubt he had some secret revelation on the subject. . . Hence, I say, he would not have spoken thus, except under the guidance and command of the Spirit."
1. Daniel knew for how long to make the contest.
 2. Daniel knew that after the contest, the results would be obvious.

E. Is the issue over whether Daniel should be a vegetarian? *No. The issue is one of holiness.*

F. How many Jews were tested? *All four*

Thus, the miracle of the different diet had to work for all of them and be dramatically different in ten days!!

G. What is the theme of the book of Daniel? *God is sovereign*