

Daniel in a Foreign Land

AIM:

To have the awareness that we are God's children in every experience of our lives and we must remain firm in our

Theme : Upholding Faith and Commitment in the midst of adversity

UNIT 1, LESSON 5

Daniel 1:1-21 (NRSV)

1 In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into his power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of God. These he brought to the land of Shinar and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods.

3 Then the king commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to bring some of the Israelites of the royal family and of the nobility, **4** young men without physical defect and handsome, versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace; they were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. **5** The king assigned them a daily portion of the royal rations of food and wine. They were to be educated for three years, so that at the end of that time they could be stationed in the king's court. **6** Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from the tribe of Judah. **7** The palace master gave them other names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine; so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself. **9** Now God allowed Daniel to receive favor and compassion from the palace master. **10** The palace master said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your own age, you would endanger my head with the king." **11** Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: **12** "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** You can then compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations, and deal with your servants according to what you observe." **14** So he agreed to this proposal and tested them for ten days. **15** At the end of ten days it was observed that they appeared better and fatter than all the young men who had been eating the royal rations. **16** So the guard continued to withdraw their royal rations and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. **17** To these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all visions and dreams.

18 At the end of the time that the king had set for them to be brought in, the palace master brought them into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, **19** and the king spoke with them. And among them all, no one was found to compare with

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they were stationed in the king's court. **20** In every matter of wisdom and understanding concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. **21** And Daniel continued there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Teacher's Preparation

Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom Judah was captured by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE during the reign of king Jehoiachin. Daniel is one of the Hebrew boys taken into exile in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar decided to train some young Hebrew boys from the royal lineage who were physically fit, handsome and wise to serve in the palace court. Of these boys, four of them; Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah stood out as God's chosen people because they remained faithful to the Jewish law while serving a foreign king. They chose to eat vegetables and drink water rather than defiling themselves with the rich and fattening food and wine that was served from the King's table. Even though the palace officials believed that they must eat the "choice food" in order to be physically strong and wise, the four young men proved them wrong and were found to be more superior in intelligence and wisdom than the young men who ate the palace food. God's favor was shown upon these four men because they remained steadfast in their faith. Although they had the opportunity to succumb to the worldly temptations of the palace, instead, they chose to live simply and humbly serving the God of Israel. The aim of the lesson is to make the students understand that if you remain steadfast in your faith, God will provide and watches over his chosen people at all times.

Daniel comes from Hebrew meaning "God is my judge"

Student Introduction

Have you ever been in a situation where you feel like you need to give into the temptations of the world? Were you ever given opportunity to share your faith in God with others?

Tim Tebow used his career as a professional NFL player to witness his faith and commitment to God. Tim witnessed his faith by wearing John 3:16 on his eye black during a championship game. This act generated over 90 million Google searches. Although Tim was criticized for his acts of faith, he continued to wear different Bible verses. What does Tim Tebow's life teach us about our



Tim Tebow

Picture Source: <http://www.cbssports.com/mcc/blogs/entry/22475988/34284646>

UNIT 1, LESSON 5

Bible Exploration

The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, commanded his palace master Ashpenaz to train some of the Hebrew boys to be specially trained in Babylon to serve in the King's court. Of the men chosen, four stood out for their courage and willingness to profess their faith in the midst of adversity. The men were given new names by the chief official. To Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah the name Shadrach; to Mishael the name Meshach and to Azariah the name Abednego. As a part of the King's order, they were offered food and wine from the King's table. However, Daniel did not want to defile himself by indulging in the royal food and wine, so he asked the chief official for permission to not eat the palace food. Although refusing to follow the king's order meant death, they decided to remain steadfast in their faith and religious practices rather than polluting their bodies with food that was not prepared according to the Jewish law. In Leviticus Ch:11, we read that the Israelites were not allowed to eat the meat of certain "un-clean" animals. Also, in Leviticus 17:12, we can see that the Israelites were forbidden to eat meat that was not slaughtered according to the Jewish laws.



Picture Source: <http://www.jw.org/en/publications/books/bible-stories/part-4-israels-first-king-to-captivity-in-babylon/story-75-four-boys-in-babylon/>

The chief official feared that if he granted Daniel's wish, the King would become angry and kill the chief official for not taking proper care of the four men. Daniel then asked for a test for ten days. He asked that they be given nothing to eat and drink but vegetables and water. The test would compare the appearance of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah with the other young men who were eating the royal food. At the end of the ten days, the four men looked healthier and superior in appearance than the men who ate the food given by the palace. God blessed the men by giving them knowledge and understanding and Daniel could understand dreams and visions. The time had come for the chief official to present the men to King Nebuchadnezzar and "the king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah" and they were stationed in the King's court. They were found to be 10 times better in wisdom and intelligence than all the enchanters and magicians in the whole kingdom.

Activities

I. Match the Following

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|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Daniel | A Abednego |
| 2. Hananiah | B Meshach |
| 3. Mishael | C Belteshazzar |
| 4. Azariah | D Shadrach |

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2. What are some of the qualities of these young men which we can relate to our personal life?
 3. Imagine you had to leave you family and go to a new place. How would you ensure that you continue to grow in faith? Share your response with your classmates.



Lesson Review

1. What qualities did King Nebuchadnezzar find favorable in the young men?
2. How strong was the faith and obedience of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah? How was their faith tested?
3. How did Daniel respond when he was offered worldly pleasures in the palace?

Values For Life

1. If we remain steadfast in our faith , God will bless us immensely no matter how difficult the circumstances are
2. We must always have unwavering faith in God

Faith In Action

Although they did not succumb to the worldly acts at the palace, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah sustained and grew their devotion to God. Even though they did not eat the food of the palace, they still gained strength through God. Challenge yourself on how you would react in this situation. Oftentimes, we tend to pick worldly pleasures over Godly direction which weakens us instead of strengthening us.

Memory Verse

“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.”

Daniel 1:8



Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn about how faith in you was practiced in the Bible and in modern times. Help us to remember you in times of adversity and to show our faith in whatever platform we are given. Amen

References

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<http://www.teensundayschool.com/>

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