

## **TRUST IN TRYING TIMES** **(Daniel 1)**

### **1.The removal (Daniel 1:1-2).**

- a. Jehoiakim had come to the throne of Judah after his brother had reigned for three months.
  - i. His brother, Jehoahaz took the throne upon Josiah's death at the hands of Pharaoh Necho.
  - ii. Necho went on to Carchemish, where Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Assyrians, and on his way back, stopped in Jerusalem and enchained Jehoahaz and placed Jehoiakim on the throne as his puppet.
- b. Three years into Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, after wiping out the rest of the Assyrian army, came down and besieged Jerusalem.
  - i. This was around 606 BC.
  - ii. It was during this first deportation that Daniel and the three young friends were all taken.
- c. Not only did Nebuchadnezzar take these young men, but also some of the vessels used in the temple.
  - i. He did not take the items necessary to worship God.
  - ii. It seems that he took the bowls, utensils, and things of that nature.
- d. He did this to show that his god, which was known as Marduk, was more powerful than the God of Jerusalem.
  - i. However, notice the wording of the beginning of the second verse.
  - ii. The Lord gave the city and the vessels to Nebuchadnezzar.
  - iii. This shows the collapse of Jerusalem was not due to the might of Nebuchadnezzar, but to the will of God.
- e. We mentioned that Daniel never asked where God was during this time.
  - i. While Daniel may have, and probably did, write this while he was older, he had come to know that God had ordained all these events.
  - ii. Everything that took place was according to God's plan, not because Nebuchadnezzar was so powerful.
- f. This removal is how Daniel came to be in Babylon.

### **2.The requirements (Daniel 1:3-7).**

- a. The goal of Nebuchadnezzar was to surround himself with the best and brightest of minds so that his court would far exceed all others.
- b. The young men removed from Jerusalem were required to meet certain characteristics.
  - i. They had to be of the nobility.
    - (1) It is possible that Daniel and the three friends were closely related to the king.
    - (2) At the least, they were from families that were highly placed in the tribe of Judah, close to the king.
  - ii. They could have no physical imperfection and considered good-looking young men.
  - iii. They had to be intelligent and able to comprehend and process information.
  - iv. This was for the purpose of being able to stand before the king and in his court.

- c. These young men, it seems, were made eunuchs, who were entrusted in environments where a normal man would not have been.
  - i. It was told Hezekiah several years before this that such would be the case.
  - ii. Isaiah 39:7.
- d. These men were taken care of by the king.
  - i. They were given food and shelter.
  - ii. They were educated with the best teachers of the time.
- e. This training was to last for three years, at which time they would then be brought before the king for him to question them.
- f. Not only were they removed from their homeland, their names were removed.
  - i. The removal of their names was to rid them of ties to their homeland and specifically to their God.
  - ii. We mentioned that Daniel means “God is my judge”, while his new name meant “Bel protect his life”.
  - iii. Hananiah meant Jehovah is gracious, while his new name meant “The command of Aku”.
  - iv. Mishael meant “Who is what God is”, while his new name meant “Who is what Aku is”.
  - v. Azariah meant “Jehovah has helped” while his new name meant “servant of Nebo”.
- g. Each of the young men had a Jewish name that was tied to God.
  - i. The names given them in Babylon had to do with Babylonian false deities.
  - ii. Bel was another name of Marduk.
  - iii. Aku was the moon god of Babylon.
  - iv. Nebo was another of the false gods of the land.
- h. This was done to estrange them more from their homeland and indoctrinate them into the culture of Babylon.
- i. What is interesting is that throughout the book however, Daniel never forgot his Jewish name.
  - i. Later, when Nebuchadnezzar would refer to Daniel as Belteshazzar, Daniel still was inspired to write his Jewish name.
  - ii. His ties with God were never erased.

### **3. The request (Daniel 1:8-16).**

- a. Here we see the faith of Daniel for the first time.
  - i. Up until now, all we know is that Daniel and his three friends had met certain requirements sought out by the Babylonian king.
  - ii. We know nothing of any type faith of any of them.
- b. Daniel resolved that he would not eat of the food the king gave them.
  - i. There are two possible reasons for this.
  - ii. The first is that the meat may have been some type of meat that was unclean to a Jew.
  - iii. The second is that the king’s meat may have been offered to idols and then given to the young men.
- c. It may have been a combination of both these reasons as to why Daniel made up his mind not to be defiled.
- d. Overall, Daniel had made up his mind that he was not going to break God’s

law and that he was going to be faithful.

e. Instead of eating the meats offered to him and the others, Daniel made a request that he and his friends simply for vegetables and water.

i. The only way that Daniel's request was granted was that he was found favorable by the head of the eunuchs.

ii. He then asked the one who was over him specifically the same and he was allowed to do so.

iii. In this, we see the providential hand of God in that we are told God made Daniel to find this favor with the head of the eunuchs.

f. Daniel offered a trial period of 10 days for he and his friends to eat this way and then be compared with the others who were eating the king's meat.

i. At the end of the time the comparison was made.

ii. Daniel and his friends were found to be far healthier than the others.

g. The reaction of the chief of the eunuchs is interesting.

i. He was worried about his head, literally, with the king.

ii. This tells us something about Nebuchadnezzar.

(1) He was not a man whose orders could be ignored.

(2) This man knew what would happen to him if he brought in young men who looked malnourished and then told the king it was because he had disobeyed his orders.

iii. While Nebuchadnezzar could be ruthless, history also tells of his intelligence.

(1) He was a man who had high aims in life.

(2) He wanted to make Babylon the greatest country on earth.

(3) This was why he would take young men from other nations and bring them into his court.

(4) He was concerned with having the best and the brightest and it didn't matter to him from where they came.

(5) He was also a builder, building up the city of Babylon, a humongous temple, and the hanging gardens of Babylon, which were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

h. The time was given to the four young men and at the end of 10 days it was seen that they were much healthier looking than the other young men.

i. At this point, all the young men began to be given vegetables and water.

ii. By this means, the conscience of Daniel and the young men was kept clean and the king's purpose was kept.

#### **4. The reward (Daniel 1:17-21).**

a. We are now told that God gave these four young men knowledge and skill in all learning.

i. No doubt this was because of their faithfulness already shown.

ii. They were willing to do God's will so they were rewarded by God for doing so.

b. Daniel, however, was given special blessings.

i. He was given the ability to understand all visions and dreams.

ii. This was God choosing Daniel to be an inspired prophet according to Rex Turner, Sr.

c. What we now have is a prophet in the court of the most powerful king to have lived since Solomon.

- d. At the end of the three years, all the young men that had been removed from their homeland were brought before the king.
  - i. We are told that the king communed or talked with them.
  - ii. He interviewed them for positions in his court.
- e. Notice the result of God's providence in the lives of these four young men.
  - i. None of the other young men came anywhere close to these four.
  - ii. Not only that, the king quickly could tell a difference between these young men and all the advisors he had.
- f. Truly, God had providentially aided these young men, and in the case of Daniel, miraculously had as well.
- g. By his God-given abilities, Daniel was allowed to prosper all the way into the reign of Cyrus.

### **5. Some reasonings.**

- a. We want to take these truths and make them practical to us.
- b. We are commanded to learn the lessons found in the Old Testament.
- c. One thing that stands out is the faith of these young men.
  - i. Their faith did not depend on their circumstances.
  - ii. It would have been incredibly easy for them to say that God did not care for them since he had allowed them to be removed from Jerusalem.
  - iii. They could have let that cause them to do whatever they wanted in order to try and find peace in a new land.
  - iv. Instead, they resolved to do what was right
- d. Another thing that stands out is their courage.
  - i. Faith allowed them to make a request that most would never make.
  - ii. They endured a change of location, a change of name, but they would not endure a change of diet because that affected their relationship with God.
  - iii. Our faith, in order to stay true to it, will cause us to have to take courageous stands at times.
- e. We also learn some things about morality.
  - i. Some choices are always right - it is always right to do God's will.
  - ii. Some choices are always wrong - it is always wrong to go against God's will - no such thing as situation ethics.
  - iii. Some choices are a matter of opinion.
  - iv. It was a matter of opinion to learn the Babylonian language and have their name changed.
  - v. It was not a matter of opinion to allow himself to be defiled by unclean meats so Daniel refused to do so.
  - vi. We need to understand right from wrong but also what is opinion and what is not opinion.