

DANIEL'S FIRST YEARS IN BABYLON

(Daniel 1:1-21)

- I. Judah's CAPTIVITY (Daniel 1:1-2; cf. 2 Kings 24:1-2; 2 Chron. 36:5-7)
 - A. A PUNISHMENT for SIN
 - B. Included removal of GOLDEN VESSELS from the TEMPLE
 - 1. Implied VICTORY over Israel's GOD
 - 2. Implied SUPERIORITY of Babylon's GOD
- II. Babylon's TRAINING PROGRAM (Daniel 1:3-7)
 - A. Established by ORDER of the KING
 - B. Conducted by Ashpenaz, "MASTER of his EUNUCHS" (literally)
 - C. Intended for SPECIALLY SELECTED young men
 - 1. Must come from the ROYAL FAMILY
 - 2. Must be without PHYSICAL BLEMISH
 - 3. Must be exceptionally INTELLIGENT
 - 4. Must have excellent background EDUCATION
 - D. Designed to train them for ROYAL SERVICE in Babylon
 - E. Included ROOM and BOARD in the PALACE
 - F. Programmed to take THREE YEARS
 - G. Four individuals became SIGNIFICANT
 - 1. Daniel, "God is JUDGE", became Belteshazzar, "May Bel PROTECT"

2. Hananiah, “YAHWEH is GRACIOUS”, became Shadrach, “Command of Aku” (Babylonian MOON GOD)
3. Mishael, “Who is what GOD is?”, became Meshak, “Who is what AKU is?”
4. Azariah, “The Lord HELPS”, became Abed-nego, “SERVANT of Nebo” (SON of the chief god, BEL)

III. Daniel’s RESOLUTION (Daniel 1:8-14)

- A. Determined to remain UNDEFILED
 1. Food was not “KOSHER”
 2. Wine and meat had been DEDICATED to IDOLS
- B. Obedience of these four was DISTINCT from the REST of the captives
- C. Asked the program DIRECTOR for a special DIET
 1. Approached DIPLOMATICALLY, but was DENIED
 2. Explanation opened door for a COUNTER proposal
- D. Asked their personal SUPERVISOR for a 10-day VEGETARIAN and WATER trial

IV. God’s BLESSING (Daniel 1:15-21)

- A. Passed the FOOD TEST
 1. Showed significant IMPROVEMENT over the others
 2. Established their PERMANENT diet
- B. Succeeded EDUCATIONALLY
 1. All EXCELLED in EVERY academic study
 2. Daniel gifted with SPIRITUAL insights
- C. Demonstrates God’s GRACE in DIFFICULT times
- D. Shows how God can USE people who are COMMITTED to HIM