

Daniel in Babylon

Daniel 1

Based on NLT (2004)

Daniel 1:1-2

It was during King Jehoiakim's reign that King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem.

Daniel 1:3-5

Then King Nebuchadnezzar ordered ... his chief of staff to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families who had been brought to Babylon as captives. "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." The king *gave them rich food from his own kitchen*. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

Daniel 1:6-16

Daniel *and his three friends, known by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were four of the young men chosen*. But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods (*for they were against his religious laws.*) Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."

Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, *and his friends*. "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.

At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others.

Daniel 1:17-20

God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, *and his friends*. So they entered the royal service. Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.

Story Crafting

The Scripture passage includes both names for Daniel and his three friends. For these stories, we are using the more well-known names.

Words/phrases to consider:

(for they were against his religious laws.) – Someone familiar with customs of the time would know that Daniel's religious laws had dietary restrictions, so it is included here.

Teaching this Story

What did you like about this story?

Was there something in this story that you did not understand?

What did you learn about “man” (human characters in the story)?

What did you learn about God/Jesus in this story?

What do you need to apply to your life from this story?

Lead a discussion about the story. Some questions that might help get discussion going:

What kind of guys were Daniel and his friends?

Could they have been leaders right away in their own country?

What were they willing to learn in Babylon to attain the positions God gave them?

In what area did they not compromise?

Who was the person of peace for them in this story?

What special gift did God give Daniel that helped him in his new position?

