

Daniel 1

The Sovereignty of God

Daniel 1:1-2

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 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.”

Daniel 1:1-2

- “And the Lord delivered...”
- Theme of the book: God is in control
- God’s viewpoint is transcending: narrator pulls back the curtain to what is going on behind the scenes.
- Daniel knew that if he was in a foreign land it was because of the hand of the Lord—there is nothing accidental in the life of the children of God.

Daniel 1:3-7 Assimilation

“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— 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. 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. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.”

Assimilation

- Babylon is exercising control over every aspect of their lives.
- Tactics used by Nebuchadnezzar to pull them away from God:
 - Isolation from God's influence
 - Indoctrination into the worldly ways of thinking
 - Compromise with the riches of this world
 - Confusion about their real identity

“The good life that Daniel was offered was intended to wean him away from the hard life to which God had called him.” (Ferguson)

Daniel 1:8-16 Defiled Food

““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. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, 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.’ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ‘please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 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.’ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.”

Defiled Food

- “God gave” second time in this passage- favor with the chief official
- Why does Daniel take this stand?
- Possible reasons:
 - Jewish dietary restrictions
 - Food sacrificed to Babylonian gods
 - Matter of whose food it was—fellowship with a pagan ruler

Defiled Food

“Daniel and his three friends are in a process of education and preparation for service. Their minds as well as their bodies are being fed by the Babylonian court. If they prosper, then to whom should they attribute their success and development? The Babylonians— However, by refusing to eat the food of the king they know that it is not the king who is responsible for the fact that they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. Their robust appearance, usually attained by a rich fare of meats and wine is miraculously achieved through a diet of only vegetables. Only God could have done it.” (Tremper Longman)

Defiled Food

- Opportunity to preserve a distinct identity
- Recognize that it is the Lord alone who nourishes our bodies
- Faithfulness seen not only in our ability to stand firm but the way in which we do so
 - Humility
 - Gentleness
 - Modesty
 - Respect

Daniel 1:17-20 Wisdom

“To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king’s service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.”

Daniel 1:21 Glimpse of the end

“And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.”

- Persian ruler that would overthrow the Babylonian empire
- Daniel would be at home in Babylon for a while
- The Babylonian kingdom, while apparently powerful, would eventually fall
- The Babylonian king, while apparently powerful, would eventually die
- “The servants of God will simply out-endure the kingdoms of this age.” (Davis)

Conclusion & Application

- What has not changed even though we have been carried off to Babylon? Daniel 1 answers: God
- “Sometimes God may allow hardship to reach us because he wants his mercy to reach beyond us.” (Davis)
- Sovereignty of God—He is in control even when it doesn’t look like it.
- Daniel resolved in his heart to trust that God would still act in Babylon—giving him the strength to trust God later in the story when things got harder.

Resources

- **Helm, David. Daniel For You. The Good Book Company Publishing, 2015.**
- **Davis, Dale Ralph. The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Daniel.**
- **Ferguson, Sinclair B. *The Communicators Commentary: Daniel.***
- **Longman Tremper III. *The NIV Application Commentary: Daniel.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.**