

DANIEL, ONE OF GOD'S FAITHFUL YOUNG MEN

BIBLE TEXT : Daniel 1: 1-21; 2:1-47.

LESSON 419 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour" (Proverbs 21:21)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Daniel 1:1-21

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.
2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.
3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;
4 Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.
5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.
6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:
7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.
8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.
9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.
10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.
11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,
12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.
13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

Bible References:

Notes:

Dwindling Power

At the close of King Solomon's reign, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom bearing the name of Israel, and the southern kingdom the name of Judah. From that time on, they continued to lose power until the northern kingdom was carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B. C. Judah continued to be a nation about 100 years longer, but by the time Babylon became a world power, Judah's sins had become so great that God let them be taken captive, too. The people whom God had chosen to preach His religion, and to whom He had promised power over all other nations if they would obey Him, were in bondage to a God-rejecting government because they had turned from God.

God's Punishment

It happened many times during Israel's history that if they did not obey God He would send heathen nations to punish them. It came about this time that God used Nebuchadnezzar, and "gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand."

Some people think that God is too kind to punish the sinner, but the Bible has given many warnings of what God will do in judgment if people refuse to obey Him. Hell will be their eternal destiny if they do not repent. Hell was not made for man, but if man refuses to prepare For Heaven, He will have to go to hell.

Obedient Children

The nation of Judah was being punished, but among the captives who were taken to Babylon from Jerusalem were some young men who still trusted God. Our surroundings will never become so evil but that God can keep the faithful ones who want to be kept. The darker the sin around us becomes, the brighter will glow the Light of the world who is in the heart of the Christian. With Jesus in us, and our purpose firm to live for Him, we can conquer every power of Satan. God wants His people to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Brilliant Students

One day Nebuchadnezzar asked for certain of the captives who were of royal birth to be brought to him. Just as in our day when young people of high intelligence are sought out to train for scientific work, he wanted the most brilliant men to learn the language and science of their day to help in the government. Among those who were chosen were Daniel and the three Hebrew children who were later named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Nebuchadnezzar changed their names, but he could not change their hearts. They remained true to their God.

These fine young men were given a place at the palace to live, food from the king's table to eat, and servants to wait on them. But Daniel had purposed not to defile himself with the king's meat, and he spoke for all four of them who were obedient to God. The luxury of the king's court did not turn their heads nor make them desire sinful pleasure. They preferred simple living;

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.

Daniel 2:1-47

¹ La seconde année du règne de Nebucadnetsar, Nebucadnetsar eut des songes. Il avait l'esprit agité, et ne pouvait dormir.

² Le roi fit appeler les magiciens, les astrologues, les enchanteurs et les Chaldéens, pour qu'ils lui disent ses songes. Ils vinrent, et se présentèrent devant le roi.

³ Le roi leur dit: J'ai eu un songe; mon esprit est agité, et je voudrais connaître ce songe.

⁴ Les Chaldéens répondirent au roi en langue araméenne: O roi, vis éternellement! dis le songe à tes serviteurs, et nous en donnerons l'explication.

⁵ Le roi reprit la parole et dit aux Chaldéens: La chose m'a échappé; si vous ne me faites connaître le songe et son explication, vous serez mis en pièces, et vos maisons seront réduites en un tas d'immondices.

⁶ Mais si vous me dites le songe et son explication, vous recevrez de moi des dons et des présents, et de grands honneurs. C'est pourquoi dites-moi le songe et son explication.

⁷ Ils répondirent pour la seconde fois: Que le roi dise le songe à ses serviteurs, et nous en donnerons l'explication.

⁸ Le roi reprit la parole et dit: Je m'aperçois, en vérité, que vous voulez gagner du temps, parce que vous voyez que la chose m'a échappé.

⁹ Si donc vous ne me faites pas connaître le songe, la même sentence vous enveloppera tous; vous voulez vous préparer à me dire des mensonges et des faussetés, en attendant que les temps soient changés. C'est pourquoi dites-moi le songe, et je saurai si vous êtes capables de m'en donner l'explication.

¹⁰ Les Chaldéens répondirent au roi: Il n'est personne sur la terre qui puisse dire ce que

and besides, some of that food might have been offered to heathen gods before it was given them to eat.

The head of the servants, Melzar, loved Daniel. He would have selected the best of everything for him, but Daniel knew that it took more than the good things in this life to make him strong for the Lord. Melzar was afraid that the king might punish him if those he was taking care of should become thin and pale from their vegetable diet. Daniel asked for a test. He asked Melzar to let them try the pulse-and-water diet for ten days, then judge if it was good enough for them. "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:15).

Besides, God gave them wisdom in all the things they had to study. At the end of their schooling period, all those who had been studying at the king's court were called before him for an examination. The four who had determined to obey God were at the head of the class and were asked to stand before the king to be matched against the magicians and astrologers of Babylon. They were found to be ten times as brilliant as the Babylonians. In addition to their learning, God had given Daniel the gift of understanding visions and dreams. As a reward, all four of the Hebrew children were given government positions.

Troubled Sleep

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered most of the known world, had riches and honour, could make almost everyone bow to his will, and yet he worried about the future; and it spoiled his sleep. If he had been trusting God, he would not have had to worry. God would have taken care of him and his kingdom. We who are servants of Jesus today do not worry about the future of the world, whether communism will conquer the world, or some other evil power will bring destruction to our land. We trust God to take care of His own. If we must die for our faith, we will have a glorious entrance into Heaven. Jesus will welcome us Home as He did Stephen when he was martyred (Acts 7:55, 56).

The Psalmist said of Christians: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD" (Psalm 112:7). In Proverbs 3:24 we read: "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." The Apostle Peter asked this question: "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Peter 3:13).

But what does the Scripture say about the sleep of the wicked? "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (Deuteronomy 28:67). "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22). "For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night" (Ecclesiastes 2:23). "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isaiah 57:20).

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

One night Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream that troubled him, but when he awoke in the morning he could not remember what it was. He felt it must be important, so he called in his magicians to tell him what the dream was and what it meant. The magicians were horrified. They said that no king should ask such a thing. They would have been glad to try to interpret the dream if they knew what it was, but they had nothing to start with.

The king had always had his own way, and he was very unreasonable. He said if no one was able to tell him his dream he

demande le roi; aussi jamais roi, quelque grand et puissant qu'il ait été, n'a exigé une pareille chose d'aucun magicien, astrologue ou Chaldéen.

¹¹ Ce que le roi demande est difficile; il n'y a personne qui puisse le dire au roi, excepté les dieux, dont la demeure n'est pas parmi les hommes.

¹² Là-dessus le roi se mit en colère, et s'irrita violemment. Il ordonna qu'on fasse périr tous les sages de Babylone.

¹³ La sentence fut publiée, les sages étaient mis à mort, et l'on cherchait Daniel et ses compagnons pour les faire périr.

¹⁴ Alors Daniel s'adressa d'une manière prudente et sensée à Arjoc, chef des gardes du roi, qui était sorti pour mettre à mort les sages de Babylone.

¹⁵ Il prit la parole et dit à Arjoc, commandant du roi: Pourquoi la sentence du roi est-elle si sévère? Arjoc exposa la chose à Daniel.

¹⁶ Et Daniel se rendit vers le roi, et le pria de lui accorder du temps pour donner au roi l'explication.

¹⁷ Ensuite Daniel alla dans sa maison, et il instruisit de cette affaire Hanania, Mischaël et Azaria, ses compagnons,

¹⁸ les engageant à implorer la miséricorde du Dieu des cieux, afin qu'on ne fît pas périr Daniel et ses compagnons avec le reste des sages de Babylone.

¹⁹ Alors le secret fut révélé à Daniel dans une vision pendant la nuit. Et Daniel bénit le Dieu des cieux.

²⁰ Daniel prit la parole et dit: Béni soit le nom de Dieu, d'éternité en éternité! A lui appartiennent la sagesse et la force.

²¹ C'est lui qui change les temps et les circonstances, qui renverse et qui établit les rois, qui donne la sagesse aux sages et la science à ceux qui ont de l'intelligence.

²² Il révèle ce qui est profond et caché, il connaît ce qui est dans les ténèbres, et la lumière demeure avec lui.

²³ Dieu de mes pères, je te glorifie et je te loue de ce que tu m'as donné la sagesse et la force, et de ce que tu m'as fait connaître ce que nous t'avons demandé, de ce que tu nous as révélé le secret du roi.

²⁴ Après cela, Daniel se rendit auprès d'Arjoc, à qui le roi avait ordonné de faire périr les sages de Babylone; il alla, et lui parla ainsi: Ne fais pas périr les sages de Babylone! Conduis-moi devant le roi, et je donnerai au roi l'explication.

²⁵ Arjoc conduisit promptement Daniel devant le roi, et lui parla ainsi: J'ai trouvé parmi les captifs de Juda un homme qui donnera l'explication au roi.

²⁶ Le roi prit la parole et dit à Daniel, qu'on nommait Beltschatsar: Es-tu capable de me faire connaître le songe que j'ai eu et son explication?

²⁷ Daniel répondit en présence du roi et dit: Ce que le roi demande est un secret que les sages, les astrologues, les magiciens et les devins, ne sont pas capables de découvrir au roi.

²⁸ Mais il y a dans les cieux un Dieu qui révèle

would kill all the magicians and wise men in the kingdom. A servant started to carry out the orders of murder; and the captain of the king's guard came to Daniel and the three Hebrew children to lead them off to execution. It seems the king had forgotten about Daniel and he had never been asked to interpret the dream. He quickly went to the king and asked for a little time. Then he went home and asked the other three to pray with him that the Lord would reveal the secret to them so they would not be killed. Because they had always obeyed God and had lived to please Him, they had confidence that He would hear and answer their prayer.

In the night God showed Daniel what the dream was and what it meant; and how happy he was! He praised God for His goodness and kindness to them. He glorified God for answering his prayer. We should never forget to be grateful when God does something for us, especially when He answers our prayers.

Not only did God's interpretation of the dream save the lives of many, but it foretold the future for hundreds of years. God had it in His power to set up the kings who would reign in years to come. In Daniel's prayer of gratitude he said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things" (Daniel 2:20-22). Daniel understood that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). God puts up whom He will and puts down whom He will.

The Dream

Daniel was taken to the king and explained to him: "The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Then he went on to tell the king exactly what his dream had been, and what it meant.

The king had dreamed about a large statue which had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay mixed. As the king looked at it, a stone was cut out without hands which rolled over the statue and crushed it to powder so fine that it was carried away by the wind until there was nothing left. The stone then became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The Interpretation

Daniel then explained the meaning. He reminded the king that though he was king of all kings, all-powerful throughout his vast kingdom, yet that power and strength had been given to him by God. God had made him ruler over all people, no matter where they lived. So he was the head of gold. But his kingdom would not last forever. The next world power would not be so strong. They were the Medes and Persians and were illustrated in the statue by the arms of silver. Many years later the Greeks conquered the world. They were the thighs of brass. The Roman Empire came next, very strong and harsh. The Romans were pictured by the legs of iron. From the fall of the Roman Empire there has been no world power. No doubt the toes of iron mixed with clay are the strong and weak nations of today, which cannot unite as one, for iron and clay do not stick together.

The stone that was cut out without hands is Jesus. One day He will come again, strike down all earthly rulers, and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. All remembrance of the kingdoms that have once ruled the world will be gone, blown away like the dust on a summer threshing floor. The things of this world are

les secrets, et qui a fait connaître au roi Nebucadnetsar ce qui arrivera dans la suite des temps. Voici ton songe et les visions que tu as eues sur ta couche.

²⁹ Sur ta couche, ô roi, il t'est monté des pensées touchant ce qui sera après ce temps-ci; et celui qui révèle les secrets t'a fait connaître ce qui arrivera.

³⁰ Si ce secret m'a été révélé, ce n'est point qu'il y ait en moi une sagesse supérieure à celle de tous les vivants; mais c'est afin que l'explication soit donnée au roi, et que tu connaisses les pensées de ton cœur.

³¹ O roi, tu regardais, et tu voyais une grande statue; cette statue était immense, et d'une splendeur extraordinaire; elle était debout devant toi, et son aspect était terrible.

³² La tête de cette statue était d'or pur; sa poitrine et ses bras étaient d'argent; son ventre et ses cuisses étaient d'airain;

³³ ses jambes, de fer; ses pieds, en partie de fer et en partie d'argile.

³⁴ Tu regardais, lorsqu'une pierre se détacha sans le secours d'aucune main, frappa les pieds de fer et d'argile de la statue, et les mit en pièces.

³⁵ Alors le fer, l'argile, l'airain, l'argent et l'or, furent brisés ensemble, et devinrent comme la balle qui s'échappe d'une aire en été; le vent les emporta, et nulle trace n'en fut retrouvée. Mais la pierre qui avait frappé la statue devint une grande montagne, et remplit toute la terre.

³⁶ Voilà le songe. Nous en donnerons l'explication devant le roi.

³⁷ O roi, tu es le roi des rois, car le Dieu des cieux t'a donné l'empire, la puissance, la force et la gloire;

³⁸ il a remis entre tes mains, en quelque lieu qu'ils habitent, les enfants des hommes, les bêtes des champs et les oiseaux du ciel, et il t'a fait dominer sur eux tous: c'est toi qui es la tête d'or.

³⁹ Après toi, il s'élèvera un autre royaume, moindre que le tien; puis un troisième royaume, qui sera d'airain, et qui dominera sur toute la terre.

⁴⁰ Il y aura un quatrième royaume, fort comme du fer; de même que le fer brise et rompt tout, il brisera et rompra tout, comme le fer qui met tout en pièces.

⁴¹ Et comme tu as vu les pieds et les orteils en partie d'argile de potier et en partie de fer, ce royaume sera divisé; mais il y aura en lui quelque chose de la force du fer, parce que tu as vu le fer mêlé avec l'argile.

⁴² Et comme les doigts des pieds étaient en partie de fer et en partie d'argile, ce royaume sera en partie fort et en partie fragile.

⁴³ Tu as vu le fer mêlé avec l'argile, parce qu'ils se mêleront par des alliances humaines; mais ils ne seront point unis l'un à l'autre, de même que le fer ne s'allie point avec l'argile.

⁴⁴ Dans le temps de ces rois, le Dieu des cieux suscitera un royaume qui ne sera jamais détruit, et qui ne passera point sous la domination d'un autre peuple; il brisera et anéantira tous ces royaumes-là, et lui-même subsistera éternellement.

nothing compared with the Kingdom of God. How important it is to be ready to rule and reign with Jesus when He comes again and His righteous kingdom reaches from shore to shore in every land!

God Honoured and Daniel Promoted

Nebuchadnezzar was so grateful to Daniel that he fell on his face before him; but more important, he said: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." He did give God the glory. He also rewarded Daniel and the three Hebrew children by making them rulers in Babylon.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did Daniel and his friends come from?
2. Why were they chosen to live in the palace?
3. What did they determine not to do?
4. How well did they do in their examinations? Where did they go to work?
5. Why was Nebuchadnezzar troubled when he went to bed?
6. What did the king plan to do to the astrologers and magicians because they could not reveal his dream?
7. Who could interpret the dream? How did he get the wisdom?
8. Who was the head of gold? The arms of silver? The thighs of brass?
9. What was the stone that was cut out without hands, and what did it become?
10. What will happen to all other nations when Jesus comes to reign?

⁴⁵ C'est ce qu'indique la pierre que tu as vue se détacher de la montagne sans le secours d'aucune main, et qui a brisé le fer, l'airain, l'argile, l'argent et l'or. Le grand Dieu a fait connaître au roi ce qui doit arriver après cela. Le songe est véritable, et son explication est certaine.

⁴⁶ Alors le roi Nebucadnetsar tomba sur sa face et se prosterna devant Daniel, et il ordonna qu'on lui offrît des sacrifices et des parfums.

⁴⁷ Le roi adressa la parole à Daniel et dit: En vérité, votre Dieu est le Dieu des dieux et le Seigneur des rois, et il révèle les secrets, puisque tu as pu découvrir ce secret.