

1:8-10 – Daniel Chose Not to Defile Himself

Dan.1:8-10 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. Then God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So, you would endanger my head with the king."

The captives were confronted with a compromise: to eat the king's food.

The king's cunning strategy was for them to become accustomed to the good life.

They would never want to go back to the old ways, and they would feel obligated to him.

But the wine & meat had been dedicated to the Babylonian idols; this went too far.

Daniel understood that Israel was in captivity because they failed to observe God's law.

Babylonian culture conflicted with God's Word; Daniel had the courage to say no.

He could have said, "Why not enjoy - everyone else is! My parents will never find out."

He could have said, "We'll probably never see home again anyway - this is home now."

He was tempted to bend the rules and gain political power so that he might "serve God".

But it is never right to do wrong in order to do right. Wherever God said no, Daniel said no.

The test of true obedience and moral standards is what you do when no one is watching.

God protects when we don't compromise; 1:8 Daniel commits, 1:9 God acts: "Then God...".

Daniel was courteous not rebellious (thus avoiding punishment), a conscientious objector.

Daniel was determined to obey God whether he felt like it or not, even if it was inconvenient.

God intervened to pave the way for Daniel's request; the same strength is available to us.

Ashpenaz, prince of the eunuchs, could have been killed for changing the king's orders.

Ashpenaz was afraid Daniel would soon appear malnourished, prompting an investigation.

1:11-14 – Daniel Requests a 10-Day Test

Dan.1:11-14 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." So, the steward listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

Daniel diplomatically offered an alternative: "pulse" KJV (beans, vegetables, cereal) and water. This would be a nutritious diet, on a trial basis for a limited time (minimal risk).

This satisfied the concerns of Daniel and Ashpenaz, to *test* the diet before extending it.

When we stay in God's will, He cares for us and strengthens us. Prov.16:7; 1 John 2:15-17

1:15-21 – God's Blessing on Daniel and Friends

Dan.1:15-21 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. So, the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink & gave them vegetables. As for these 4 youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief

of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore, they stood before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

After 10 days, they looked healthier and better nourished than those who ate the king's meat. It wasn't the food that caused this; it was their commitment to obey God.

After 3 years of study (Dan.1:5, 18) Daniel & friends had 10 times the wisdom of top advisers. *Because Daniel obeyed*, God revealed to *us* the major future events leading up to Christ's return.

Daniel shows it is possible to be well-educated and still believe in God. (Isaac Newton)

Many universities have now gone astray, even though some were founded as seminaries.

Only Scripture can give us *spiritual* knowledge and *discernment* we need for moral judgment.

The book of Daniel hinges on this: he realized that the choices he faced were crucial.

He chose not to compromise or make concessions, even if he was "rocking the boat".

He did what was right; he did not waver when he stood alone, or under peer pressure.

Today's culture says if you want to get ahead, you're going to have to bend a few rules.

Everywhere that we see compromise in the Bible, we see loss: Adam, Abraham, Sarah, Esau...

God uses people (not just pastors & missionaries) even unsuspecting unbelievers, to accomplish His purposes. Nebuchadnezzar thought that *he* had captured Jerusalem, but God *gave* it to him.

Even the most corrupt men can be tools for God (King Cyrus of Persia, Dan.6:28)

Cyrus was mentioned *by name* in Scripture *175 years before* he took Babylon. God revealed through Isaiah the military strategy to be used that night in Daniel 5, and how Cyrus would send the Jews home to rebuild. Cyrus was destined before birth to end Babylon's rule over the Jews.

Isa.44:28-Isa.45:1-4 [The Lord] says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'" Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: "I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me.

Ezra 1:1-2 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah (25:11-12, 29:10) might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."

Chapter 1 concludes by saying that Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. Daniel lived a godly life, in the *palace* of Babylon, in *captivity*, for *over 70 years*. His whole life was an inspiration for the captives (and for us) - an unending testimony of God's grace. Psa.112:1-6