

DANIEL'S TRAINING IN BABYLON

Daniel 1:1-21

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

Key-location: Babylon

Key-repetitions:

- Positive happenings for Daniel: Daniel and his three friends selected for training (Dan 1:4-6); chief-of-staff's kindness toward Daniel (Dan 1:9); supervisor agreed to test Daniel and his friends on a vegetarian diet (Dan 1:14); the Jewish youths looked healthier than youths who ate the royal food (Dan 1:15); God gave the Jewish youths ability to learn (Dan 1:7); Daniel could understand visions (Dan 1:17); the Jewish youths entered the king's service (Dan 1:21).
- Daniel's attempts to avoid defiling himself: he made up his mind not to defile himself (Dan 1:8); he asked the chief-of-staff for permission to eat a vegetarian diet (Dan 1:8); he asked the supervisor for permission to be tested on a vegetarian diet (Dan 1:11-12).

Key-attitudes:

- Nebuchadnezzar's irreverence for God in taking utensils from God's temple.
- Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance.
- Daniel's determination not to defile himself.
- Chief-of-staff's fear of the king.
- Positive attitude toward Daniel and his Jewish friends.

Initial-situation:

Judah, the Southern Kingdom, had twenty kings during 390 years. During this time, Judah experienced a spiritual decay that was interrupted by the reforms of a few kings who imitated David and served the Lord. During the downward spiral of spiritual decay, the kings, religious leaders, and the people followed the wicked examples of pagan neighbors and the evil kings of Israel. They worshiped worthless gods and they became worthless, like the gods they worshiped. The Lord sent his prophets to the kings and the people, but they rejected the prophets' messages and ridiculed them.

Finally, God became so angry with Judah that he sent King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to conquer and destroy Judah. Babylon's first invasion into Judah took place in 605 B.C., during the first year Nebuchadnezzar was king.

Initial-problem:

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Judah and he took various intelligent Jewish youths into exile to Babylon.

Final-situation:

God gave the four Jewish young men wisdom and the ability to learn. At the end of the three years of training, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego entered the king's service.

BIBLE STORY

The year Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, he invaded Judah for the first of three invasions. King Nebuchadnezzar took various intelligent Jewish youths into exile to Babylon along with some utensils from God's temple (Dan 1:1-2; 2 Kin 24:1).

King Nebuchadnezzar told his chief-of-staff, "Choose from Judah's royal family some healthy, handsome, and intelligent youths with leadership potential. The youths will study the Babylonian language and literature, and they will eat the same food and drink the same wine served at the king's table. After three years of training, they will enter the king's service." Four youths from Judah were selected: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 1:3-7).

Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself with the king's food and wine. Daniel asked the chief-of-staff for permission not to defile himself with the king's food and wine. God made the chief-of-staff friendly and kind toward Daniel. The chief-of-staff told Daniel, "I'm afraid of my master the king. The king determined what you should eat and drink. If he sees you looking worse than the other young men your age, he will cut off my head."

The chief-of-staff put a supervisor in charge of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel asked the supervisor, "Please test your servants for ten days on a simple diet of vegetables and water. Afterwards, compare us with the young men who eat the royal food. Then determine our diet on the basis of how we look."

The supervisor agreed. He tested the four Jewish youths for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water. The Jewish youths looked healthier than the young men who ate the royal food. So the supervisor exempted the Jewish youths from the royal food and wine and instead gave them vegetables to eat and water to drink (Dan 1:8-16).

God gave the four Jewish young men knowledge, wisdom, and the ability to learn. Daniel could also understand visions and dreams. At the end of the three years of training, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego entered the king's service (Dan 1:17-21).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. | What catches your attention in the story? | 5. | How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. | Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. | How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. | Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. | Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. | What problems did the characters face? | 8. | What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the Jewish youths get from the palace in Jerusalem to the palace in Babylon?
2. Why did Daniel want to avoid eating the king's food and drinking his wine?
3. What pressures do Christians face to do things that would defile them?
4. What barriers did Daniel face in his desire not to defile himself?
5. What barriers do people today face who desire not to defile themselves with things that everyone else is doing?
6. What happened to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego after their training?
7. How can Christians today serve God in a culture that is anti-God?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **At times, God allows his work to suffer.** The Babylonians raided the temple of God and took worship articles to the temple of a god in Babylon (Dan 1:2).
2. **The youth who lives just like everyone else in his social setting will become impure and will be contaminated spiritually.** Daniel and his friends decided not to be contaminated. They made a choice to maintain a lifestyle different from the other youths in training (Dan 1:8).
3. **The person who determines where to draw the line, will be ready to say "No" when temptation comes.** Daniel and his friends made their decision to be faithful to God's laws before they were faced with the king's food and wine (Dan 1:8). They found a way to live by God's laws in a culture that did not honor God (Dan 1:9-16).
4. **The person who serves God often faces crises.** Daniel and his friends were taken captive from their home and exiled to another country (Dan 1:1-2). They were under the death penalty (Dan 2:12). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the furnace (Dan 3:19-30). Daniel was thrown into the lions' den (Dan 6:1-22).
5. **Culture manifestations which do not violate God's commands, can help God's people to accomplish God's purposes.** Daniel and his companions found a way to live by God's standards in a culture that did not believe in God. They studied the Babylonian literature and prospered in the culture (Dan 1:4, 17).
6. **Sometimes people who are loyal to God experience success in an anti-God environment.** Daniel is an example of one who was loyal to God and prospered in a pagan kingdom (Dan 1:9, 20; 2:48-49; 6:2-3). Joseph in Egypt is another example (Gen 41:41-49).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

All	
“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV).	
Group 1	Group 2
No <u>temptation</u> has seized you except what is common to man.	Other people face similar temptations as you.
And God is <u>faithful</u>	God <u>keeps</u> his promises.
he will not let you be tempted <u>beyond</u> what you can bear.	God will not let you be tempted beyond your limit.
But <u>when</u> you are tempted	<u>When</u> you are tempted
he will also <u>provide</u> a way out	He will furnish you an escape.
so that you can <u>stand up</u> under it.	You <u>can</u> stand.
All	
“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV).	

2. **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to pray about the story in “twitter” length prayers. Tell God:

- How they feel about the story.
- How they are similar to or different from Daniel.
- How they, like Daniel, can learn from their culture while staying true to God.