

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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The year was 605 B.C. Israel, as a nation, had strayed from faith in Jehovah. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army laid siege to the city of Jerusalem and conquered it. *“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.”* (Vs. 2) There was, however, a remnant of faithful believers who still honored the God of Heaven, Jehovah. Among these was a young man named Daniel and a small group of his associates. The character of this man, Daniel, and the power of the book that bears his name have had a profound effect on the Bible and the history of man.

I. The Power of the man Daniel

King Nebuchadnezzar, as a part of his strategy to subjugate a people, selected the finest of the beaten nation’s young people to take back to Babylon to train for use in his palace. The young man Daniel was one that was selected from Israel. In Daniel chapter one

verse four the qualifications for these young people are given. They were to be “well favored” or beautiful. There could be no obvious malformations either physically or mentally. They were to be “children”. “The common estimate of 14 or 15 years of age is likely right.” (Wycliffe. P. 773) They were to be very intelligent and teachable. That is, “*skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science.*” They were to have the ability to stand in the king’s palace. They were to have natural or acquired talents that would enable them to stand and function in the palace. They had to be of the “king’s seed, and princes.” II Kings 20:18 suggests that Daniel could have been of the family of King Hezekiah. Daniel was a handsome, intelligent, self-possessed son of a king. However, his most important character trait was his personal devotion to the Lord Jehovah. In verse 8 of chapter one it says, “*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.*” The word “defiled” may mean physical defilement (Physical harm); moral defilement; or more frequently ceremonial defilement. The problem for Daniel in this situation “was ceremonial or religious. . . . flesh from the king’s table was doubtless slain

according to pagan ritual and offered to a god. The Jews were forbidden to eat flesh sacrificed to a pagan god.” (Wycliffe P. 773) Daniel sought to remain dedicated to God. This dedication would shape Daniel for the rest of his life.

II. The Book of Daniel

The Holy Spirit of God used this remarkable man in a profound way in Nebuchadnezzar’s palace and in the nation of Babylon. He also used him down through history because of the biblical book that bears his name, Daniel. The study of this Old Testament book of prophecy is important for several reasons.

1. The testimony of Jesus proves it to be God’s Word. (Matthew 24:15)
2. Much of the New Testament is Explained in Daniel.
3. The blessing and power of God on this book is testament to its authority.
4. The integrity of the book underscores The integrity of the Bible as a whole. (Criswell. P. 21-22)

Daniel, himself is an example to everyone because of his special character.

1. He was a man who was in high estate but was faithful to God though a captive hero.
2. He was a man of great spiritual courage.
3. Power and money did not corrupt him.
4. He was a man of prayer and Intercession for others.
5. He was greatly beloved of God.
6. He had great personal hope and confidence.
7. He was a man that God used prophetically.

During his life there was no break “in his moral constitution. Though in high office and in public life, his character was never impeached. He talked with angels. He had visions of God. The very words of the Almighty were spoken in his hearing. His tremendous reputation is referred to as in later years the author of Hebrews mentions him among the heroes of the faith. (Hebrews 11:33)” (Criswell. P. 64.) Daniel was referred to as “greatly beloved” by God three times. There is much that can be said about this great man of God. No greater

activity can be undertaken than the study of his life as recorded in the book that bears his name.