

1. Last week I finished the introduction to the Book of Daniel and taught verses one through seven of chapter one. Before we look at verse eight I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 1:1-7.

Dan 1:1 In the third year of Jehoiakim's reign as king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon surrounded the city of Jerusalem and began to siege the city.

Dan 1:2 Jehoiakim king of Judah surrendered the city of Jerusalem; the sieging of the city ceased when Jehoiakim agreed to certain terms mandated by Nebuchadnezzar. As part of the settlement certain very valuable vessels used in the Temple liturgy were carried off to Babylonia where Nebuchadnezzar stored them in the house of his god. The death of Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar occurred during the siege which in part motivated Nebuchadnezzar to cut short his siege; his need to return to Babylon also resulted in Jehoiakim being left on the throne as his Regal agent in charge.

Dan 1:3 In order to guarantee the loyalty of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz whose title was "Prince of The Eunuchs, to take as hostages some seventy young men from Jehoiakim's palace; they were to be of nobility, young men who had been raised in the palace. As was the custom of the day the boys were to be between the ages of 14 and 17.

Dan 1:4 All seventy were to be handsome, well built, intelligent and good students; they were to be well mannered and capable of standing in the presence of king's and potentates; men who had a special aptitude for learning. They were one might say to be the 'cream of the crop.'" Young men who would one day serve Nebuchadnezzar as advisors, prophets, administrators; young men capable of learning the Chaldean language and becoming as Chaldean as Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Dan 1:5 The king decreed the boys would eat with him in the royal dining hall; he assigned them special rations and they were to drink the finest of wine from the king's cellars. They would be trained for three years said Nebuchadnezzar, and after that he would assign them special duties depending on their demonstrated abilities.

Dan 1:6 Among the seventy were, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Dan 1:7 Ashpenaz gave the four boys new names: to Daniel, Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

2. In verse six we have the Jewish boys listed first by their Jewish names; each of which had meaning and significance.

3. It would seem Daniel was the most unusual of all the boys taken hostage He was poised, good looking and unusually intelligent. In Eze 28:3 the brilliance of Satan is compared to that of Daniel. Daniel received the most special of Chaldean names.

4. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar which means "Bel's prince." Bel was the supreme Akkadian god, Bellu, the ruling god of the Babylonian pantheon and equivalent to Zeus the chief god of Greece and Jupiter the chief God of Rome.

5. Daniel must have looked as though he came from the hand of Bellu.
6. Daniel was identified with the chief of the Babylonian gods. This new name was the beginning of his brainwashing.
7. Daniel found himself being selected as the recipient of this "best of names." Fame and fortune for Daniel was just around the corner.
8. Little did the Babylonians know that Daniel was already a man of doctrine, fame and divine fortune. They could change his name but they could not change the inner man.
9. Daniel would learn much about the Chaldean language, religion and customs however he would not be swayed from that which he knew was absolute, the Word of God.
10. So today young Christians as members of God's forever family find themselves in institutions of learning being taught doctrines which are often contrary to God's Word.
11. Rather than rebel, the Christian should learn but not necessarily believe the precepts secularism.
 - 11.1 Doctrine in the soul of Daniel had at least in part revealed to him his real but invisible self with its strengths and weaknesses.
 - 11.2 His knowledge of his idolatrous enemy had equipped him to better serve His supreme commander, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 11.3 The temptation came but just as the Scripture promises, doctrine to resist the temptation will always precedes the inducement.
12. Little did the Chaldeans know, but the doctrine in the soul of Daniel could never be obscured by the exterior of Babylonian lore. Pagan lore with its false doctrine would be learned but the actions of Daniel would have an everlasting and positive effect on the kingdom's of four great gentile kings. Perhaps the most significant effect would occur to the unsuspecting Nebuchadnezzar himself.
13. Hananiah's name was changed to Shadrach which means "illumined by the sun God." In Babylon the sun god Shadrach was but one more god in their pantheon of idolatry.
14. Mishael became Meshach meaning "who and what is Ishtar or Venus." The story is told that while resting on a beach several Greeks, noticed a shell wash ashore and standing on the shell was a beautiful woman. She was so beautiful they named her Aphrodite, goddess of love. Her Latin name was Venus and her Chaldean name was Ishtar, goddess of pleasure.

15. The name of this god whether Venus in Rome, Aphrodite in Greece or Ishtar in Babylon meant "live it up, have fun for tomorrow you die."

16. Azariah had his name changed to Abednego meaning "The servant or slave of Nego." Nego is a corruption of Nebo, which is the Akkadian name of Nabu - the god of wisdom and education.

16.1 This name certainly in hindsight revealed the intent of the Chaldeans. We will, they thought, retrain and by means of education make pagans of these young men from Israel. This is the driving principle of public education today. By education we can make good people out of rascallions.

16.4 Transformation of the soul is the answer to better people, not wiser Old Sin Natures.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

17. By education, the Chaldeans were attempting to change Bible believing nobility into pagan aristocracy.

18. It is amazing that these young men were not snowed by these pressures.

19. Now let's see what we can glean from Daniel chapter one verse eight.

KJV

Dan 1:8 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.

NIV

Dan 1:8 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.

1. Keep in mind Daniel is in a foreign land ruled by a despotic King.

2. Nebuchadnezzar was known worldwide for his cruel treatment of those who disagreed with him.

3. That Daniel dared to question an order originating with the King of Babylon is of itself unusual and reflects the courage of Daniel.

4. As part of Daniel's early training he had been taught the dietary section of the Mosaic law.

5. It would seem Daniel's spiritual maturity was ahead of his chronological age.

6. Not only had he been taught these laws but his parents had apparently practiced and applied the rules. Training a child in the way he should go involves more than merely taking them to church.

6.1 Parents are responsible for getting doctrine in their soul and then sharing the Word and application of the Word with the children.

7. Daniel knew that some of the food and wine may have not been prepared in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

8. More important however was the possibility that the food and libation may have been first offered to idols.

9. Such a sin of eating meat sacrificed to idols was a major problem for Israel and later the church itself; for different reasons but none the less severe.

1Co 10:18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?

1Co 10:19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?

1Co 10:20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

Rev 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against some of you attending the church at Pergamum (the extant universal church from 300-800 A.D.): You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

9.1 Eating of meat or drinking beverages sacrificed to idols was prohibited by the Mosaic law. It would seem Satan used the innocuous necessity of eating and drinking to entice idolatry.

9.2 This, no doubt, was God's reason for prohibiting the eating and drinking of that which had been sacrificed. For emphasis let me repeat:

1Co 10:19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?

1Co 10:20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

10. Daniel like us today decided the Word of God was more real than the reality of his dangerous situation.

10.1 Said another way "the God of Daniel was big enough to deliver him from any situations."

11. We like Daniel, must use the two power options consistently and grow in His grace or else we will succumb to the pressures of time. The two options are: staying confessed up and consistently taking in the Word of God.

12. In Daniel chapter one we will see not just one but four young people with enough doctrine to say no to the temptations of the devil's world.

13. As Col. R.B. Thieme Jr. has written "No longer were parents, priests and prophets available to Daniel for guidance - now it all depended on Daniel's use of doctrine in his right lobe."

End Lesson Taught 7-16-00