

1. Last week I taught verses nine and ten of chapter one.
2. Before we continue that study let's take a look at an expanded translation of Dan 1:1-10.

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.

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.

Dan 1:8 But Daniel from the Bible Doctrine stored in his right lobe decided he should not defile himself by eating at the palace dining hall; Daniel was certain that the food and libation had not been prepared in accordance with the dietary rules proscribed in the Mosaic Law therefore he asked Ashpenaz if he might be excused from attending.

Dan 1:9 Now God Himself had made certain Ashpenaz saw Daniel as a young man with a future; Ashpenaz looked upon Daniel with favor and genuine appreciation.

Dan 1:10 And Ashpenaz said unto Daniel, "I am afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. Remember he has selected what you will eat and drink; now if he sees that a diet other than that selected leaves you less healthy than the other Hebrew children, I will lose my job and maybe my life."

3. Daniel is now faced with a matter of application. He has the doctrine in his soul but he has been turned down by his mentor. He must decide how to proceed.

4. Daniel develops a plan. He will first seek out a subordinate of Ashpenaz's and then repeat his request. He does not give up.

5. Let's see how the young man from Jerusalem proceeds.

KJV

Dan 1:11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

NIV

Dan 1:11 Daniel then said to the "guard" whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,

1. The Hebrew word Meltzar (seen in the NIV as "guard") is not without controversy. Strong in his dictionary has this to say of this transliteration: Meltzar is of Chaldean origin; it means the butler or some other officer in the Babylonian court.

2. Some have said it is a man's name and others a title.

3. If a man's name there are those who think he was a subordinate to Ashpenaz and then others believe it to be a subordinate responsible among other things for the food service function.

3.1 He is either a general subordinate responsible for the general daily supervision of the boys or he has a specialized supervisory role relating to the preparation of their food.

4. In my view it is a title. I believe, in the parlance of the Air Force, he was the Base Food Service Officer.

5. He was the man in charge of the boy's dining facility.

6. Daniel decides to slightly alter his approach. He seems to challenge the Meltzar to engage in a "scientific experiment."

KJV

Dan 1:12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

NIV

Dan 1:12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

1. Daniel knows it is the Lord who determines the outcome of everything.
2. He knows that doctrine is more real than reality.
3. Doctrine demands he follow the dietary laws of Moses; he wants only vegetables and water.
4. The word translated "prove/test" is Nasah parsed here as a piel imperative of entreaty. It means to test, to assay, to prove, to try for the purpose of determining genuineness.
 - 4.1 As you can see Daniel makes his presentation a little stronger with Meltzar - he uses the piel stem in the imperative.
5. The noun Zeroa from the verb Zara is translated pulse in the KJV. Zeroa is the product of anything planted and its verb form Zara means "to sow seed."
 - 5.1 The NIV has translated pulse correctly as simply "vegetables."
6. The word for water is the common Hebrew word Mayim translated more often than not as "water."

KJV

Dan 1:13 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.

NIV

Dan 1:13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see."

1. Daniel speaks as you might expect rather convincingly.
2. Daniel expects a miracle; for in ten days he believes God will show in his body and the bodies of his friends a discernible change for the good.
3. To convey doctrine to others, be it informally in the case of the layman responding to a question or a pastor-teacher using his gift, you must yourself be convinced of the truth.
4. Said another way you have to know before you can communicate correctly.
5. By limiting the experiment to ten days Daniel gives the Meltzar reason to approve the test.

5.1 Perhaps the Meltzar thought, "how much discernible damage can be done in ten days."

6. Now let's see what happened.

KJV

Dan 1:14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

NIV

Dan 1:14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

1. Agreed here is a translation from Shama meaning to hear and pay attention. It would perhaps better be "he heard him out and could see no harm so why not."

2. Zeh is the Hebrew demonstrative whose antecedent is the "proposal".

3. By going to the Meltzar Daniel also takes his friend Ashpenaz off the hook. After all the prince of the Eunuchs has said no.

4. We do not know if Daniel asked permission to go see the Meltzar or not but chances are he did. Assuming the steward is a subordinate of Ashpenaz there would be no reason for permission.

5. Nasah is again translated here in the KJV "proved" which is not bad. The NIV uses "tested." Both proved and tested are good translations as we have seen.

5.1 Nasah here is a 3rd person singular piel imperfect with the conversive Va.

5.2 The idea was to give the boy his wish for ten days (Eser Yom) and then at that time we will take a look at their "general appearance." It was a test in the eyes of the Meltzar.

6. Now let's see what the boys looked like after ten short days:

KJV

Dan 1:15 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.

NIV

Dan 1:15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

1. The phrase "ten days" is often used in Scripture idiomatically for a short time.

2. As we have earlier seen it is simply Eser Yom in the Hebrew and literally should be translated ten days.
3. A judgment call is necessary and I have opted for the literal ten day translation.
4. Let me give you a translation from Col. Thieme of Berachah Bible Church: "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared more beautiful in color, and firmer of skin texture than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."
5. The word for countenance in the Hebrew is Marah which according to Strong means "to view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen), whether (real) or a shape; it is used often in the plural for "the looks of someone or something; it is used also for visions; (especially is it used if that which is viewed is handsome ...
6. The word in the KJV translated fairer is: Tov which according to Strong means simply good, like as a good thing, a good man or woman; the good, goods or good things, also as an adverb it means (well)
7. The word translated in the KJV fatter is: Bari which according to Strong in his means simply "fatted or plump" as in the case of an animal 'lot fed' and thus ready for slaughter.
 - 7.1 It is better "firmer flesh" as against "fatter."
8. The context demands a little more than the literal Hebrew.
9. We can therefore understand the boys looked healthy in every respect even given their diet of "pulse and water."
10. The test was successful and so Daniel and his friends were spared the embarrassment and emotional tension from having to defend their law and, of course, the discipline from the king.
11. Again we see God honoring His Word.
12. When a believer takes a stand based on the Bible - he or she never loses.
13. By following the Mosaic Law they were not only pleasing God, they were eating things that were healthful and it showed in their overall appearance.
14. Their victory must have benefited "Melzar" and Ashpenaz for we have no record Daniel and his friends were ever again asked to eat or drink at the king's table.

15. In the devil's counterfeit program, his motivating the Babylonians to eat and drink the finest of foods, most of which had been offered earlier to idols was supposed to make them healthy

15.1 We see in this test case of Daniel verses the Babylonian establishment, it is God's protocol which succeeded and not the devil's counterfeit program.

KJV

Dan 1:17 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.

NIV

Dan 1:17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

1. Recall the boys were to learn for three years academic skills needful for success as a Babylonian.
2. This included the Chaldean language.
3. These four boys because of their relationship with God and the inculcation of doctrine in their soul, each was an academic success.
4. They graduated at the top of their class.
5. The boys took their studies seriously; they did their jobs as unto the Lord.
6. Notice it was God who gave the knowledge.
7. God does not confine himself to the "spiritual;" He is interested in our total development.
8. Remember we all have our very own spiritual life which includes everything we do in time.
9. God was interested in how these boys did in their academics; He wanted their lives to be a witness and so He gave them wisdom.
10. Daniel was given a special gift. He would excel in the business of foretelling dreams and visions.
11. In Babylon the astrologer or diviner was very influential; the Kings staff was replete with "magicians" - and "wise men."

12. Daniel was given the gift of prophecy though he did not hold the office of prophecy. Daniel, as we will later see, will challenge the wise men—Daniel will win out.

End Lesson Taught 8-13-2000