

Daniel

Scripture: Daniel 1-6

Time Period: Babylon, during the exile

The story of Daniel

Daniel and his three friends lived in Israel. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar conquered their homeland and took all the smart young men from the noble families away to his country. The king had chosen the brightest and best young men from every country in the world. He planned to train them in the language of Babylon so they could become his servants and help him run the kingdom.

The young men ate what the king ate, but Daniel and his friends did not want to eat that food because it may have been offered to false gods. Daniel worshiped the one true God, Yahweh, and had promised he would never do anything against

his God. Yahweh, the God of Israel had commanded His people to have nothing to do with idols or false gods. Daniel asked the person in charge of his training for permission to not eat the king's food. If the king found out, he would be very angry, but God had made Daniel a favorite with this man so he agreed to give Daniel and his friends a test. For ten days they would eat only vegetables and drink only water. At the end of ten days Daniel and his friends looked much healthier than all the other young men who ate the king's food, so they were allowed to continue with only vegetables and water.

These young men honored God and God honored them. God gave Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego -knowledge and skill in the things they learned, and God also gave Daniel the wisdom to understand visions and dreams.

After three years of school in Babylon, all the young men were presented to King Nebuchadnezzar. He picked Daniel and his three friends as the best of them all. In fact, the King discovered that Daniel had more wisdom than all the wise men in his kingdom.

One night, the king had a bad dream, and He called for his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers to come and stand before him. Everyone but Daniel. The king said, "I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream." The wise men answered, "O king, live for ever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will tell you what it means."



The king responded, "No! You must tell me what I dreamed and what it means. If you don't, you will be cut into pieces and your houses burned! But if you tell me the dream and what it means, you will receive gifts and rewards and great honor." Of course, none of the wise men could tell the king his dream.

The wise men told the king, "There is not a man on the earth that can do what you ask. Only the gods can do that, and they don't live on earth. The king got very angry. "Destroy all the wise men of Babylon!" When the soldiers came for Daniel, he said to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the king destroying all the wise men?" Then Arioch told Daniel everything that had happened. Daniel went to see the king and asked for more time so he could tell the king the meaning of his dream. Then Daniel went to his house, and told everything to his friends.

Daniel didn't know what the dream was or what it meant, but he knew that God knows everything. So Daniel and his friends prayed and God showed Daniel the dream and its meaning. Daniel blessed the God of heaven, saying, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are His." Daniel hurried to the king and said to him, "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets." He told the king what he had dreamed and what the dream meant. When King Nebuchadnezzar heard the dream and its meaning, he fell down before Daniel and said, "Truly your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret!"

Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts. He made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief over all the wise men. King Nebuchadnezzar would later turn from worshiping God and make false idols for his people to worship and would punish any who did not obey. But the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is a story for another time.

After King Nebuchadnezzar died, Darius became the new king of Babylon. He picked a hundred and twenty of the very best people in his kingdom to help him rule. Then he picked three of them to be in charge. Daniel was one of those three men. King Darius respected Daniel so much, he thought about making him the ruler over the whole kingdom. The other leaders were jealous. They planned to find some fault in Daniel so they could get him in trouble with the king. But no matter how they tried, these leaders couldn't find anything bad about him. Daniel was true to the king in all that he did. The jealous leaders knew there was only one way they could trap Daniel: they knew that nothing on earth would stop him from worshiping the God of Israel. So Daniel's enemies thought up a plan. They made a new law for the king to sign. The law said that everyone should pray only to King Darius. Anyone who disobeyed would be thrown into a den of lions! King Darius signed the new law, but the new law made no difference to Daniel. He did what he always did. He knelt by his open window three times a day, and prayed to the God of heaven. The jealous leaders rushed to tell the king and King Darius had no choice but to arrest Daniel. The law had to be obeyed. Daniel had to die. The king tried hard, but he couldn't find a way to change the law.

Daniel was sentenced to die by being put into a den of lions. Before he was thrown to the hungry lions, King Darius said to him, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you!" The king didn't sleep that night. Very early the next morning, he rushed back to the lions' pit. King Darius shouted out, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God delivered you from the lions?" Daniel called out, "O king, my God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths! King Darius was delighted and he ordered Daniel to be lifted out of the pit. The king knew that God had delivered Daniel and that his enemies were God's enemies. He gave a command, and all those who had tricked him were thrown into the lions' den. King Darius wanted the world to know that the God of Heaven had protected His faithful servant, Daniel. The king wrote a letter that commanded everybody to worship the living God and the king restored Daniel to honor and leadership.

Daniel was faithful to God and was honored to serve in authority under several different kings of Babylon throughout his lifetime.