

## LESSON 6

### CHOOSING GOD'S WAY

**CENTRAL TRUTH:** God rewards those who choose to follow his ways.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine.....  
Daniel 1:8.

#### LESSON TEXT

Daniel 1:1-20

Daniel 1:

**1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia<sup>[a]</sup> and put in the treasure house of his god.

**3** Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— **4** young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.<sup>[b]</sup> **5** The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

**6** Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

**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. **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your<sup>[c]</sup> food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

**11** Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **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." **14** So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

## INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of Daniel gives a picture of four young men who were committed to serve God in a strange land. Though they had been carried away from their home and family to a foreign land, God had not forsaken them. So, they would stay true to God and follow his ways. In this week's study we will see how God honours commitment to him and rewards those who choose to follow his ways.

## LESSON

When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, conquered the kingdom of Judah he gave order for some of the Jewish young men who were physically and mentally sound to be taken to Babylon to be trained for service in his kingdom. Daniel and three of his friends were among those selected for that purpose.

The king who sought to assimilate them into the culture of Babylon decided to change their food and also their names. Each of them was given names to honour the deities of the Babylonians. Daniel, which means "God is my judge" was renamed Belteshazzar, which means "Bel, protect his life." Hananiah, "Jehovah has been gracious" was renamed Shadrack, "Servant of the moon god Aku". Mishael, "who is like God" was renamed Meshach, probably "the shadow of the prince". And Azariah, "Jehovah has helped" was renamed Abednego, "servant of Nego," (a form of the god Nebo or possibly the goddess Ishtar).

The king commanded that Daniel and his friends were fed with food from his table. This food without doubt had been offered to pagan gods before it was offered to the king and therefore unclean. Since Jews were forbidden to eat food sacrificed to pagan gods, Daniel requested that he and his companions would be given vegetables and water to eat instead of king's prescribed meal for ten days. The chief official obliged to their request. At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his friends looked better and healthier than those who fed on the king's meal. Having

purposed in their heart to please God in all they did, God gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah special knowledge and skills during their three years of preparation and training. Additionally, Daniel was given the ability to interpret visions and dreams.

At the end of their preparation they were brought before the king. As the king interviewed them, it became evident that Daniel and his three companions were by far the best. The king invited them to become his counselors and assistants. They were described as ten times better than the rest of the king's advisors. This proves the fact that God indeed honours those who purpose in their to live for him.

### **LIFE APPLICATION**

The positive attitude of Daniel and his friends is a great challenge to us believers to live by God's standards in whatever situation we find ourselves. God expects us as Christians to live our lives in faithfulness to him as a testimony to the world. The people of the world also need to know that God walks with his people through their difficult moments. These young men were committed to God. No matter the challenges in their lives, they knew that God was with them. They also demonstrated to us that, God was greater than any power against us.

As believers in God, we must pray that he will help us to be living examples of the power of the gospel in the world. We are to bring glory to God through our good works and good living. As we remain faithful to him, God will reward us.

1. What are some things we can do to prepare ourselves to stay committed to God when that commitment is tested?
2. How can we help others to be strong in their faith?

### **----- DAILY BIBLE READING -----**

Monday: Faith Rewarded. (Joshua 14:6-15)

Tuesday: A God-pleasing choice. (1 king 3:5-14)

Wednesday: Choose to Rejoice. (Hab. 3:17-19)

Thursday: Love Commended. (Mark 14:1-9)

Friday: Cost of Commitment. (Luke 14: 25-33).

Saturday: Press On. (Philippians 1:19-30).

### **----- Fellowship of the Spirit -----**