

Daniel Bible Study for April 28, 2020

Read Daniel 1:8–21 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

1:8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the royal delicacies or the royal wine. He therefore asked the overseer of the court officials for permission not to defile himself. 9 Then God made the overseer of the court officials sympathetic to Daniel. 10 But he responded to Daniel, “I fear my master the king. He is the one who has decided your food and drink. What would happen if he saw that you looked malnourished in comparison to the other young men your age? If that happened, you would endanger my life with the king!” 11 Daniel then spoke to the warden whom the overseer of the court officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 12 “Please test your servants for ten days by providing us with some vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who are eating the royal delicacies; deal with us in light of what you see.” 14 So the warden agreed to their proposal and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days their appearance was better and their bodies were healthier than all the young men who had been eating the royal delicacies. 16 So the warden removed the delicacies and the wine from their diet and gave them a diet of vegetables instead. 17 Now as for these four young men, God endowed them with knowledge and skill in all sorts of literature and wisdom—and Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams.

18 When the time appointed by the king arrived, the overseer of the court officials brought them into Nebuchadnezzar’s presence. 19 When the king spoke with them, he did not find among the entire group anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah. So they entered the king’s service. 20 In every matter of wisdom and insight the king asked them about, he found them to be ten times better than any of the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire empire. 21 Now Daniel lived on until the first year of Cyrus the king.

COMMENTS:

We learn something important about Daniel in v. 8. He was thinking about how this new life in a new place might change his life. He made an important decision that he would practice his faith in his life. He saw the temptations coming and recognized some necessary action he should take. He would not defile himself with royal delicacies or wine.

Note that he does not act on his own. He asks for permission not to defile himself. Note how God is involved in this. He works in the heart and mind of the court overseer to make him sympathetic to Daniel’s request.

He is also honest with Daniel and says he fears his master, the king. What would the king do if he saw his servants wasting away? Daniel continues not to think only of himself and so he proposes a simple 10 day test. Don’t serve us any meat, only the vegetables we request. Then the overseer can see they maintain their health so he will have nothing to fear from the king.

So the test began and of course God made sure they looked even more healthy than the others. They looked better and their bodies were more healthy than those who ate the king’s diet. Now he was not afraid to let them continue to eat the food they requested rather than what the king offered.

God continues to be with Daniel and his three fellow members of the tribe of Judah. God gifted all them greatly so that as they served the king he found them to be 10 times wiser and full of insight than all of the magicians and astrologers in Nebuchadnezzar's service.

V. 21 warns us that we are a long way away from the end of this story. Daniel would live on until the first year of the reign of Cyrus, the king. I think a good phrase now is one we hear frequently: the best is yet to come. The best part of this story is yet to come.

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Daniel is going to show us the many ways God works. Sometimes when we need God's help we don't see anything happening. I do not know if Daniel knew God was making the overseer sympathetic to his cause or not, but that is an example of how God helps us by something he does in someone else. Most of the time we do not see it or know it until later. I never knew about all God did to bring Marge and I together until over a year and half after we were married. There was a back story I had known nothing about nor had Marge. Another seminary student has been planning on going to Immanuel Lutheran, Pensacola for the summer of 1958. He was not sure if he wanted to be a pastor or a teacher. They had an unusual Summer Confirmation Program which lasted 6 weeks and would give him a teaching experience and some pastoral experience. He was injured in an automobile accident in February and in April the doctor told him the damp climate of Florida would not be good for him so he backed out of going to Immanuel and I went instead. Then we learned in v. 20 today how God blessed these four Hebrew boys with unusual wisdom and insight so they found favor with the king. I know I need to be ashamed of the many times when I questioned the plan of God for me and mine. God always knows what he is doing. Our problem is that we do not always recognize his work.