

The Book of Daniel (Chapter 1:8-21)

3-13-19

1. It appears that Daniel accepts a new education and a new name - however - he does object to the new menu. (Daniel 1:8)
2. The meat and wine would have been undesirable because a portion of it was (at least on occasions if not always) offered as a sacrifice to the Babylonian gods before being sent to the king.
3. Many of the foods eaten in Babylon (e.g., pork and horse) would have been unclean according to the law of Moses. (Leviticus 11, 17 and Deuteronomy 14)
4. To eat such foods would have been a sin for an Israelite and would have rendered the individual ceremonially unclean before God.
5. Ashpenaz was not a follower of God - but he was impressed with Daniel. (1:9)
6. We see from verse 9 that God was in control of the situation. He was able to direct the hearts of the captors to accomplish His sovereign will.
7. The word "favor" in this context suggests goodwill, and "tender love/sympathy" conveys compassion or a tender feeling.
8. Ashpenaz had genuinely grown to admire and feel affection toward these Jewish captives.
9. Ashpenaz liked and respected these young men - nevertheless he feared the king, who had specifically designated the captives' food and drink. (1:10)
10. If these young men were not well taken care of (i.e., if they looked bad), he could lose not only his job but his head.
11. The official's fears probably were well founded. Nebuchadnezzar's harshness and rash decisions are evidenced on other occasions.
12. In verse 11 there is a translation variance of the Hebrew word "*mešār*" - which occurs only in this chapter in the Old Testament.
13. In verse 12-14 we see the details of Daniel's proposal.
14. Since the Mosaic Law designated no vegetables as unclean, the young men could eat any vegetables put before them without defiling themselves.
15. In this short time span (10 days) there could have been no marked deterioration that would jeopardize the life of anyone in authority.
16. In fact Daniel stated that their appearance would be better than that of the others who were on the king's diet.
17. When the trial period was concluded, Ashpenaz would check their "appearance," - their physical condition - to see if they passed his inspection.

18. If they looked healthy, they would be allowed to continue the diet. The overseer agreed to this proposition, and the experiment was carried out.
19. At the end of the 10-day period the young men looked “fairer/better” and “fatter of flesh.” (Verses 15-16)
20. The text stresses that Daniel and his friends were in better condition than all the others, who ate the king’s royal diet.
21. In addition to the gifts received by Daniel along with his three companions, God also gave him another gift that was not shared by the others. (verse 17)
22. It was now time to bring the young men before the king. (verses 18-20)
23. The king interviewed these young men and was more impressed with them than with any of the others. Daniel and his friends were given places of leadership in Nebuchadnezzar’s administration.
24. Daniel also was blessed by the Lord with a long life, probably about eighty-five years. (verse 21)
25. The world with all of its attractions and pressures still lures the believer to compromise (and even to forsake) the faith, but Daniel is a reminder that serving the Lord pays great dividends.
26. Faithfulness is invariably rewarded, but that reward may be in the next life.
27. God is in the controlling position.