

September 27, 2020

THE JUDEANS ARE STEADFAST IN PRACTICING THEIR FAITH

Daniel 1

Daniel 1:3-7³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring *from* the *Sons* of Israel, *from the* royal family (literally: **seed of the kingdom/royalty**) and *from* the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be ~~educated~~ *raised* for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ *And there were among them from the Sons of Judah Dani-El, Hanani-Yah, Misha-El, and Azari-Yah.* ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs **SET** *to* them names: he **SET** *to* Daniel “Belteshazzar,” *to* Hananiah ~~he called~~ “Shadrach,” *to* Mishael ~~he called~~ “Meshach,” and *to* Azariah ~~he called~~ “Abednego.”

3 “Sons of Israel” – the covenant name, retained by the Tribe of Judah even after the nation split royal family and nobility – strategic removal of next generation leaders

3-4 The goal of this treatment is to assimilate the brightest and best into their own nation

6-7 The names of these Sons of Judah are indeed faithful and important! Their new names are evil!

Dani-El = My judge is God	→ Belteshazzar = “May <i>Bel</i> protect his life”
Hanani-Yah = Yahweh is gracious	→ Shadrach = “Command of Aku (or Marduk)”
Misha-El = Who is what God is?	→ Meshach = “Who is what Aku is?”
Azari-Yah = Yahweh has helped	→ Abed-Nego = “Servant of Nebo”

The Main Point: Satan’s henchmen are wise in their schemes to lead away us and our youth. But it will take more than food, drink, language, books, and vulgar names to separate us from the Name that is above all Names. Of Jesus Christ we hear “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).” Jesus Christ is our God and Judge. He is the gracious Lord Yahweh. There is none who is what He is. He has helped us and will continue to live and reign.

Daniel 1:8-21⁸ But Daniel resolved **SET upon his heart** that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see."¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king.²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

8 "defile himself"- no doubt food that was ceremonially unclean would be on the king's menu

9, 17 God gives them favor and compassion as well as all learning and skill to succeed in the foreign court

17-19 Their wisdom and learning places them above all the pagans

The Main Point: Throughout this section the four Judean youth (going by their faithful names!) receive favor from the true God who grants them success and even fatness when eating only vegetables. He grants them wisdom and understanding in foreign matters. Their high ranking positions will afford them opportunities to bear witness to the true God before kings and princes.

Discussion on the role and place of Christians within a society that is hostile to the Gospel