

DANIEL

About 1000 years separates Moses from Daniel, and yet both had much in common. Moses would lead the slaves out of bondage in Egypt, where God would use the 40-year trip through the wilderness to create and mold His Chosen People, the Jews. Approximately 500 years later, God's chosen people would be their own nation. The pinnacle of that time was indicated by David's reign over a united nation, Israel. Fast forward another 500 years, and Daniel arrives on the scene as the last of God's chosen people are taken into captivity by the Babylonians. It would be almost 2500 years later before the nation of Israel would once again be recognized as a nation, in 1948.

Both Daniel and Moses proved to be men of faith, and both were used by God not only lead, but also to witness to some of the most powerful men in the world. Our study of Daniel will cover a lot of history and a lot of prophesy; but more importantly, I want to focus on the man himself. Both Moses and Daniel were uncommon men. They were highly-educated, with a privileged background, and accustomed to living in the presence of kings and pharaohs. Furthermore, both lived during uncommon and rapidly-changing times, relying on their faith in God above all else.

There is much for us to learn from studying both men, but this study will focus on Daniel — an uncommon man living in an uncommon time. In our first lesson, we will focus on Daniel's background and the book of Daniel itself, before fully beginning our chapter-by-chapter study.

Read Daniel 1:1-21, then consider the following questions:

1. There are three figures mentioned in the first six verses of Daniel Chapter 1, and examining each of them independently will give us a deeper insight into understanding Daniel and God Himself. Who are these three figures?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Daniel, one of a special group of Israelites, chosen to serve in King Nebuchadnezzar's palace.
 - c. ANSWER 3: God, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe.
2. What can we learn and infer from these verses regarding Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon?
 - a. ANSWER 1: He was a leader and a warrior. He led his country, and personally led it in battle. He wasn't just a behind-the-scenes commander.
 - b. ANSWER 2: He was King of a world empire.
 - c. ANSWER 3: He didn't care about your religion.
 - d. ANSWER 4: He worshipped idols and called them "his" gods.
 - e. ANSWER 5: He wanted to be surrounded by the best and brightest in talent, knowledge, and wisdom; but, moreover, he wanted them to be beautiful as well, seeing the world through man's eyes — a world in which ugly is either bad or weak, or both.
 - f. ANSWER 6: He wanted these Israelites to know his country's language and literature; he was not interested in theirs.
3. What can we learn and infer from these verses regarding Daniel, the man?
 - a. ANSWER 1: First, we know that he must have met all of the King's requirements — that is, he must have been young, handsome, with a high level of intellect and quick to understand, with no physical defects.
 - b. ANSWER 2: In spite of the fact that this King had destroyed Daniel's home and his city, had taken him prisoner and hauled him off to a foreign land and people where he did not speak the language, Daniel accepted his role as student in preparation for serving this very same king.
 - c. ANSWER 3: His ethics and his commitment to his faith were unwavering, including something as routine as his diet.

- d. ANSWER 4: He was polite and courteous, and showed respect to his captors and to those placed in charge of him.
 - e. ANSWER 5: God gave him knowledge, understanding of all kinds, and made it possible for him to "understand visions and dreams of all kinds".
 - f. ANSWER 6: Daniel would serve from approximately 605 BC through approximately 535 BC. During this period, kings would come and go, but Daniel would remain.
4. What can we learn or infer regarding God from these verses?
- a. ANSWER 1: God is no respecter of persons, titles, or positions of authority. In fact, God specifically placed Nebuchadnezzar in his position in order For God to bring about His judgment on the rebelling people of Israel.
 - b. ANSWER 2: God works through both the lost and the saved. Note that He worked his will with not only Nebuchadnezzar, but also with the chief official over Daniel.
 - c. ANSWER 3: God is the giver. Note that in the beginning of the chapter "the Lord delivered Jehoiakim King of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God". Further, in Daniel's case, he gave Daniel and his three companions " knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."
 - d. ANSWER 4: In the book of Daniel we will also see repeated many times a precept that God told Isaiah in Isaiah 55:8: "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways". God does things differently than man.
5. Finally, what can we learn or infer regarding ourselves from these verses?
- a. ANSWER 1: When God puts us in a place of service, he also gives us what we need to carry out that service.
 - b. ANSWER 2: There is nothing God can't do.
 - c. ANSWER 3: God works through the hearts of the lost as well as the saved. Remember this the next time you work for a lost person, or have a lost person as a neighbor, relative, or friend.
 - d. ANSWER 4: God does things differently; we short-change God when we limit His thinking to the boundaries of our understanding and rationale.
 - e. ANSWER 5: Chaos to us is a plan in motion to God. Nothing happens without and underlying purpose.
 - f. ANSWER 6: What we eat matters. Think about it.
 - g. ANSWER 7: Staying true to our faith and standing strong in that faith is always the right course of action, no matter the situation.

Daniel the man, and Daniel the follower of God has a lot to teach us; this lesson is just the beginning. Seeing Daniel as a man of God is one thing, but applying what we learn from it is another altogether. It's not easy being a follower of Christ, but it is the only way that God wants us to live. Let's pray for Daniel's faith and commitment in our lives starting today, and see what God can do through each of us when we do.

Have a great week everyone, and thanks for studying with us.

Yours in Christ,

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