

Daniel 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

Analysis

The phrase "certain Chaldeans came near" introduces accusers who denounced the faithful Jews. The term "Chaldeans" here likely refers to a professional class of wise men or court officials (cf. Daniel 2:2-5) rather than ethnic Chaldeans. Their accusation reveals malicious intent—these were colleagues of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who likely resented their prominence and sought their destruction.

"Accused the Jews" uses the Aramaic *akal-qartseyhon* (אָכַל-קָרְטַיְהוֹן), literally "ate their pieces" or "devoured their fragments," a vivid idiom for malicious slander and accusation. This picturesque expression portrays accusers as predators consuming prey, revealing the vicious nature of their denunciation. Their timing—immediately after the worship ceremony—shows they were watching for the Jews' disobedience, ready to exploit it.

This verse exposes the reality that faithfulness often provokes opposition from envious colleagues seeking advantage through others' downfall. The three Hebrews' integrity and excellence (Daniel 1:19-20) likely generated resentment among Babylonian officials who saw opportunity to eliminate competition. Their accusation sets up the dramatic confrontation where faith faces mortal danger. This pattern recurs throughout Scripture: Joseph's brothers, Daniel's fellow governors (Daniel 6:4-5), and religious leaders opposing Jesus all exemplify malicious accusation against the righteous. Christ, falsely accused before Pilate, understands His followers' experience of slander and provides grace to endure it (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Historical Context

Court intrigue and professional rivalry were endemic in ancient Near Eastern imperial administrations. Officials competed for royal favor, advancement, and resources, making successful colleagues targets for elimination through accusation. Nebuchadnezzar's court was no exception—Daniel 6 records similar machinations against Daniel himself.

Foreigners in administrative positions (like these Jewish exiles) were particularly vulnerable to xenophobic resentment. Native Babylonian officials may have viewed these Jews as interlopers whose prominence came through royal favoritism rather than merit, intensifying motivation to destroy them. The accusers exploited religious law to accomplish political goals, weaponizing the king's decree for personal advantage.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How should knowing that faithfulness often provokes envious accusation prepare you for opposition when your integrity challenges colleagues' compromise?
2. What does the vivid imagery of "eating their pieces" teach about the vicious nature of slander motivated by professional jealousy?
3. How does Christ's experience of false accusation provide both pattern and power for enduring malicious opposition with grace?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	קֵב ל	דָּנָה	יָהּ	זְמַן א	קָרַב	גָּבֵר י	כַּשְׂדָּא י
H3606	Wherefore	at that	H0	time	came near	certain	Chaldeans
	H6903	H1836		H2166	H7127	H1400	H3779
וְאָבַד לוֹ	וְקִרְצִיָּה וְ	דִּי י	יְהוּדָא:				
H399	and accused	H1768	the Jews				
	H7170		H3062				

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