

# Daniel's Faithfulness with Food

Daniel and his three friends refuse the king's rich food and wine, choosing vegetables instead, and God honors their faithfulness by making them healthier and wiser than all others.

Daniel 1:1-21

CHARACTERS: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Nebuchadnezzar, Ashpenaz, Melzar

THEMES: Faithfulness, Obedience to God, Wisdom, Integrity

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IN THE THIRD year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem and carried away some of the vessels of the house of God, along with certain children of Israel, including those of the king's seed and of the princes. These young men were to be taught the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans, prepared to stand in the king's palace. Among them were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who were given Babylonian names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

The king appointed them a daily provision of his own meat and wine, intending to nourish them for three years before they entered his service. However, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. These foods likely violated the dietary laws God had given to Israel, and Daniel sought to remain faithful to the covenant even in captivity.

Daniel requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself, and God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with this official. Yet the prince feared the king's wrath if these young men appeared worse than their peers. Daniel then proposed a test to Melzar, the steward: 'Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them

give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat.'

Melzar consented to the test. At the end of ten days, Daniel and his companions appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the king's provisions. Melzar therefore removed their appointed meat and wine, giving them pulse instead. God gave these four young men knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. When their three years concluded and they stood before Nebuchadnezzar, the king found none like them in all his realm. In all matters of wisdom and understanding, they were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in his kingdom. Thus God honored their faithful obedience.

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