

Daniel Keeps Covenant in a Foreign Land

Key Verse: “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: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

—Daniel 1:8

Selected Scripture:
Daniel 1

favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, . . . and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.” (Dan. 1:3,4) Nebuchadnezzar told his servants to feed these special captives the same food and drink that he as king partook of, that their favor and stature would increase all the more, and after three years they

WHEN CONQUERING JERU-

salem and the nation of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar evidently realized that their kingdom had been very successful and powerful for many centuries. He further appreciated that this success was at least in part due to the superior intellect and wisdom of many in the land, so, rather than destroying all the people of Israel as he conquered the nation, he instructed his servants to bring back to Babylon “certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well

would appear once again before the king, to then be used as he would direct.

Young Daniel was the leader of this group of Israelites who were to be thus fed with the king's meat. He realized, however, that much of the diet the king desired them to partake of was forbidden under Jewish Law, and also the richness of the king's food and drink was not what they were used to as common people in Israel. So, in the words of our Key Verse, Daniel requested that he and three of his friends not be forced to do this. The king's servants at first feared that if Daniel and the others did not eat of the royal table, they would become weak and lose their favor with the king, and the servants would be to blame for this. Daniel, however, persuaded them that a trial period be given so that they might eat a plain diet, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be observed in your presence. . . . So he listened to them. . . . At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food."—Dan. 1:12-15, *New American Standard Bible*

At the end of the ten-day trial period, Daniel and his friends' appearance was better than any of those who had been eating the king's meat, so they continued this plain diet for the rest of the three years. At the end of this period they were presented to King Nebuchadnezzar, and far outshined any of those who had been eating of the king's food. "As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm."—vs. 20, *NASB*

Truly Daniel and his friends were living examples of the words of the Apostle Paul, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."—Rom 14:17 ■