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Daniel

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DANIEL

Daniel's Captivity in Babylon

1 In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it. ²The Lord handed King Jehoiakim of Judah over to him, along with some of the vessels from the house of God. Nebuchadnezzar carried them to the land of Babylon, to the house of his god, and put the vessels in the treasury of his god.

³The king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and from the nobility — ⁴young men without any physical defect, good-looking, suitable for instruction in all wisdom, knowledgeable, perceptive, and capable of serving in the king's palace. He was to teach them the Chaldean language and literature. ⁵The king assigned them daily provisions from the royal food and from the wine that he drank. They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to attend the king. ⁶Among them, from the Judahites, were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷The chief eunuch gave them names; he gave the name Belteshazzar to Daniel, Shadrach to Hananiah, Meshach to Mishael, and Abednego to Azariah.

Faithfulness in Babylon

⁸Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief eunuch not to defile himself. ⁹God had granted Daniel kindness and compassion from the chief eunuch, ¹⁰yet he said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and drink. What if he sees your faces looking thinner than the other young men your age? You would endanger my life with the king."

¹¹So Daniel said to the guard whom the chief eunuch had assigned to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹²"Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³Then examine our appearance and



the appearance of the young men who are eating the king's food, and deal with your servants based on what you see." ¹⁴ He agreed with them about this and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days they looked better and healthier than all the young men who were eating the king's food. ¹⁶ So the guard continued to remove their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

Faithfulness Rewarded

¹⁷ God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding in every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel also understood visions and dreams of every kind. ¹⁸ At the end of the time that the king had said to present them, the chief eunuch presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they began to attend the king. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king consulted them about, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and mediums in his entire kingdom. ²¹ Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams that troubled him, and sleep deserted him. ² So the king gave orders to summon the magicians, mediums, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. When they came and stood before the king, ³ he said to them, "I have had a dream and am anxious to understand it."

⁴ The Chaldeans spoke to the king (Aramaic begins here): "May the king live forever. Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

⁵ The king replied to the Chaldeans, "My word is final: If you don't tell me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn



limb from limb, and your houses will be made a garbage dump. ⁶But if you make the dream and its interpretation known to me, you'll receive gifts, a reward, and great honor from me. So make the dream and its interpretation known to me."

⁷They answered a second time, "May the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will make known the interpretation."

⁸The king replied, "I know for certain you are trying to gain some time, because you see that my word is final. ⁹If you don't tell me the dream, there is one decree for you. You have conspired to tell me something false or fraudulent until the situation changes. So tell me the dream and I will know you can give me its interpretation."

¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king, "No one on earth can make known what the king requests. Consequently, no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked anything like this of any magician, medium, or Chaldean. ¹¹What the king is asking is so difficult that no one can make it known to him except the gods, whose dwelling is not with mortals." ¹²Because of this, the king became violently angry and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³The decree was issued that the wise men were to be executed, and they searched for Daniel and his friends, to execute them.

¹⁴Then Daniel responded with tact and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to execute the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵He asked Arioch, the king's officer, "Why is the decree from the king so harsh?" Then Arioch explained the situation to Daniel. ¹⁶So Daniel went and asked the king to give him some time, so that he could give the king the interpretation.

¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house and told his friends Haniah, Mishael, and Azariah about the matter, ¹⁸urging them to ask the God of the heavens for mercy concerning this mystery, so Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the



rest of Babylon's wise men. ¹⁹The mystery was then revealed to Daniel in a vision at night, and Daniel praised the God of the heavens ²⁰and declared:

May the name of God
be praised forever and ever,
for wisdom and power belong to him.

²¹ He changes the times and seasons;
he removes kings and establishes kings.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those
who have understanding.

²² He reveals the deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and light dwells with him.

²³ I offer thanks and praise to you,
God of my ancestors,
because you have given me
wisdom and power.
And now you have let me know
what we asked of you,
for you have let us know
the king's mystery.

²⁴Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had assigned to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He came and said to him, "Don't destroy the wise men of Babylon! Bring me before the king, and I will give him the interpretation."

²⁵Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him, "I have found a man among the Judean exiles who can let the king know the interpretation."

²⁶The king said in reply to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to tell me the dream I had and its interpretation?"



²⁷Daniel answered the king, “No wise man, medium, magician, or diviner is able to make known to the king the mystery he asked about. ²⁸But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. Your dream and the visions that came into your mind as you lay in bed were these: ²⁹Your Majesty, while you were in your bed, thoughts came to your mind about what will happen in the future. The revealer of mysteries has let you know what will happen. ³⁰As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but in order that the interpretation might be made known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

The Dream's Interpretation

³¹“Your Majesty, as you were watching, suddenly a colossal statue appeared. That statue, tall and dazzling, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was terrifying. ³²The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its stomach and thighs were bronze, ³³its legs were iron, and its feet were partly iron and partly fired clay. ³⁴As you were watching, a stone broke off without a hand touching it, struck the statue on its feet of iron and fired clay, and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the fired clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were shattered and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶“This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷Your Majesty, you are king of kings. The God of the heavens has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and glory. ³⁸Wherever people live — or wild animals, or birds of the sky — he has handed them over to you and made you ruler over them all. You are the head of gold.

