

Lesson 2 for  
January 11, 2020

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**Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem three times to subdue it.**

**The last time was in 586 BC. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people of Israel was deported to Babylon.**

**The second time was in 597 BC. The king took the craftsmen, blacksmiths and other important men (including Ezekiel).**

**The first time was in 605 BC. The princes of the people were taken to Babylon. The idea was to "babylonize" those princes to make them loyal to Babylon. Daniel, Hannaniah, Mishael and Azariah were part of that group.**

 **God is in control.** Daniel 1:1-2, 21

 **Training:**

 **Paganizing.** Daniel 1:3-7

 **Diet.** Daniel 1:8-16

 **Results:**

 **Perfect.** Daniel 1:4, 17

 **Superior.** Daniel 1:18-20



# GOD IS IN CONTROL



**"And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god."**

**(Daniel 1:2)**

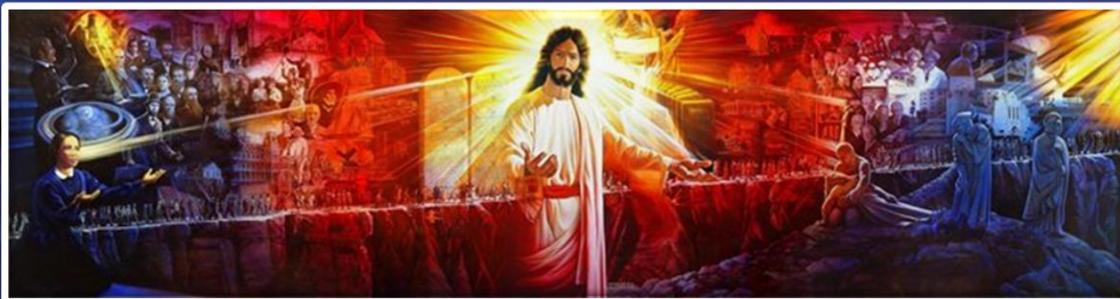
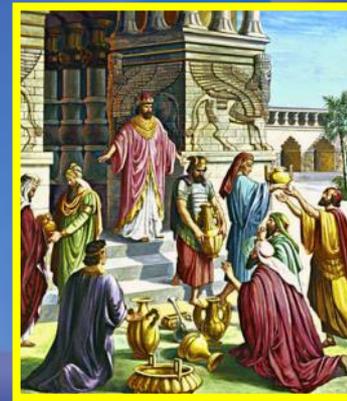
The true God may be seen as a defeated and exiled god who cannot defend His own people.

However, the expression "the Lord gave..." changes everything.



God was using Babylon to punish the impiety of His people (Habakkuk 1:5-11).

He is in control of history. He restricted the punishment to 70 years. He used Cyrus to make His people free again (Esdras 1:1).



We can be sure that God will always be in control of history. He will protect His people to the end, until His Second Coming.

# PAGANIZING

"To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego." (Daniel 1:7)

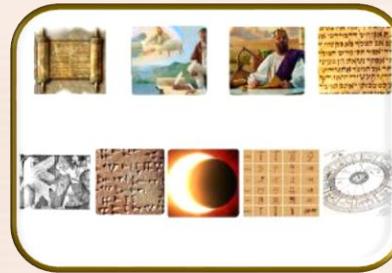
**Nebuchadnezzar wanted to turn the Hebrew princes into loyal Babylonians. He tried to change their mindset and worship.**



**He changed their residence, from humble Jerusalem to sumptuous Babylon**



**He changed their names, to link their identity to Babylonian gods**



**He changed their education, to teach them about Babylonian culture and religion**



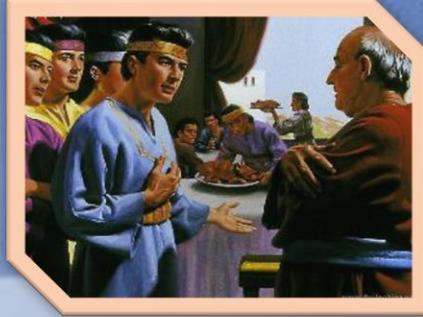
**He changed their diet, to make them worship the Babylonian gods**



**If they accepted all those changes, they'd become royal public workers. Would they trade their principles for an easy and comfortable life?**

Apparently, the young Hebrew men couldn't do anything to resist the changes.

However, Daniel wasn't willing to give in to the things that went against his faith.



# DIET

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." (Daniel 1:8)



The king's diet included meats that were forbidden by God (Leviticus 11).



That food had been sacrificed to Babylonian gods. Eating them was part of their worship (Acts 15:28-29).

Daniel suggested a diet to avoid both issues. Besides, he requested to drink something that let him think clearly.

Above all, he trusted God. He believed He would act extraordinarily in a short period of time (ten days).



**“There are many among professed Christians today who would decide that Daniel was too particular and would pronounce him narrow and bigoted. They consider the matter of eating and drinking of too little consequence to require such a decided stand—one involving the probable sacrifice of every earthly advantage. But those who reason thus will find in the day of judgment that they turned from God’s express requirements and set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They will find that what seemed to them unimportant was not so regarded of God. His requirements should be sacredly obeyed.”**

# PERFECT

**"As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." (Daniel 1:17)**

**Ashpenaz choose young men "without any physical defect" (Daniel 1:4 NIV). This was Nebuchadnezzar's symbolic thanksgiving sacrifice to his god Marduk.**



**All young men were without any physical or mental defect. However, only four showed no spiritual defects.**

**God awarded their faithfulness by giving them a physical appearance and an intellectual knowledge above all the other Hebrew young men (v. 15, 17).**

**God also gives us wisdom to remain faithful to Him in a world contaminated with myths and lies.**



# SUPERIOR

“And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.” (Daniel 1:20)



They had to learn things that went against their beliefs. Today, we also have to learn wrong things that are taught as truths.

Thanks to the decisions they made to defend their faith, God could bless them by giving them superior intellectual skills. They passed their exam with honors!

We can learn the following from their experience:



God is in control of history

God gives us wisdom to overcome in hostile environments

God awards those who decide to obey him no matter the circumstances



**“Daniel was subjected to the severest temptations that can assail the youth of today; yet he was true to the religious instruction received in early life. He was surrounded with influences calculated to subvert those who would vacillate between principle and inclination; yet the word of God presents him as a faultless character. Daniel dared not trust to his own moral power. Prayer was to him a necessity. He made God his strength, and the fear of God was continually before him in all the transactions of his life.”**