LIFEPAC®

Bible

Alpha Omega Publications®

BIBLE 1207
DANIEL

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DANIEL

The book of Daniel, written in both Hebrew and Aramaic, is one of the most studied books of the Old Testament. In the Christian Bible, it is one of the Prophets, while for the Jews, it is included among the Writings. Hebrew canonical scholars claim that while Daniel possessed the prophetic gift, he did not possess the office of prophet. A person who held the office of prophet was one with the prophetic gift who was also raised up and empowered by God to serve as a mediator between the Lord and His people. In Deuteronomy 18:18, God spoke of the coming Prophet, Christ: "I… will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Daniel's ministry is primarily that of a statesman. He was not only concerned with the people of Judah, but also the kings and kingdoms he had to serve under.

In this LIFEPAC®, you will study Daniel as statesman and prophet, man of conviction and interpreter of dreams. You will then study Daniel's visions and interpretations of them.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you should be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAC.

When you have finished this LIFEPAC, you should be able to:

1. Describe Daniel's childhood and heritage.
2. Explain Daniel's behavior and convictions while in pagan captivity.
3. Illustrate Daniel's honesty in delivering God's message in every situation.
4. Identify Daniel's concern and intercession for his nation before God.
5. Describe the vision of the four beasts.
6. Describe the vision of the ram and the he-goat.
7. Outline the revelation of the seventy sevens.
8. Describe the vision of the mighty kings.

Survey the LIFEPAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

I. INFLUENCE

Daniel's influence was so great in his lifetime that it penetrated two world empires and effected four mighty monarchs. This humble servant brought God's Word to bear on the Babylonian, Median and Persian empires. He spoke God's truth to their kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. God effectively used Daniel to minister for His purposes.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Describe Daniel's childhood and heritage.
2. Explain his behavior and convictions while in pagan captivity.
3. Illustrate his honesty in delivering God's message in all situations.
4. Describe his concern and intercession for his nation before God.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

compatriots	evince	obliterate
debauchery	induce	solicitude
emulation		

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the Glossary.

Read Daniel 1, 3, and 1 Corinthians 10:18-33.

CONVICTIONS

From the first mention of Daniel in Scripture, we realize that God destined him to do great things. He was of noble birth and heritage, and in Ezekiel 14:14 and 20, God equates the righteousness of Daniel with that of Noah and Job.

Daniel was a young man of conviction with a noble heritage and a godly purpose, shared with his young Hebrew companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Heritage. From Daniel 1:3 and 6 we learn that Daniel was a royal prince as were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Comparing these verses to 2 Kings 20:12-21 and Isaiah 39, we conclude that Daniel may have been a descendant from King Hezekiah, one of the last great rulers of Judah prior to the Babylonian Captivity. As a young Hebrew prince, Daniel heard the preaching of the prophets Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, who ministered during Judah's dark days. As a small boy, Daniel may have observed the reforms of godly King Josiah, who swept the land smashing all idols.

It is likely that these experiences helped mold his character. For the remainder of his life, Daniel unflinchingly followed the Lord, by obeying His laws and regular prayer.

JOSIAH DESTROYED HIS KINGDOM'S IDOLS

Daniel was probably very personable and handsome. Daniel 1:4 states that he had "…no blemish, but (was) well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and… *had* ability… to stand in the king's palace…" He and his companions were about fifteen years old when deported to Babylon. Although they had suffered the traumatic experience of being replanted in an alien land, Daniel and his companions were faithful and lived according to their heritage. Their faith in the God of Israel was so strong that they worshipped and praised Him no matter the circumstances.

Their very names are indicative of their godly upbringing and spiritual heritage. The name Daniel means *God is my judge*, and Hananiah means *YHWH shows grace*. The name Azariah means *YHWH helps*, and Mishael means *Who is like God?* The Babylonians (sometimes called the Chaldeans) attempted to eradicate the boys' heritage by changing their names and educating them in the culture of the land. The names of the gods of Babylon were actually incorporated into the names of the Hebrew children; the Chaldeans intended to **obliterate** Jewish culture from their minds and memory. Just as Joseph had his name changed in Egypt (Genesis 41:45), so Daniel's name was changed to *Belteshazzar* (Daniel 1:7), meaning *Bel, protect his life!* (*Bel*, also called *Marduk*, was the chief god of Babylon). Hananiah's name was changed to *Shadrach*, meaning *under the command of Aku* (the Babylonian moon god). Azariah's name was changed to *Abednego*, a name meaning *servant of Nego/Nebo* (or Nabu, the god of learning and writing). Finally, Mishael's name was changed to *Meshach*, probably meaning *who is like Aku?* (the moon god).

The changes in names were intended to **induce** them to adopting the customs of Babylon and destroy their connection to their old nationality. Not only were their names changed, but their new forms of education, language, and diet (Daniel 1:4-5) were intended to impress upon them the permanence of their captivity. For three years, they were bombarded by Babylonian customs and culture. Nevertheless, their faith stood firmly in the midst of paganism and **debauchery**.

Complete these activities.

1.1 List the Hebrew names of Daniel and his three friends, their original meanings and the new names given in Babylon.

a. _____ means _____ changed to _____ .
b. _____ means _____ changed to _____ .
c. _____ means _____ changed to _____ .
d. _____ means _____ changed to _____ .

1.2 What were the six requirements for the young men entering the king's service?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____
f. _____

1.3 List the four things used to bombard the Hebrew boys with Babylonian culture.

a. _____ c. _____
b. _____ d. _____

Choose the correct answer.

1.4 The Lord mentions the righteousness of Daniel with that of Noah and _____ .

a. Abraham b. David c. Job d. Moses

1.5 Daniel may have been a descendant of godly King _____ , who was of the lineage of King David.

a. Zedekiah b. Josiah c. Jeroboam d. Hezekiah

1.6 As a young boy Daniel probably saw the righteous reforms of King _____ who smashed all idols within his kingdom.

a. Solomon b. Josiah c. Habukkuk d. Zephaniah

1.7 Two of the most important Babylonian gods were Nebo and _____ .

a. Mark b. Venus c. Marduk d. Zeus

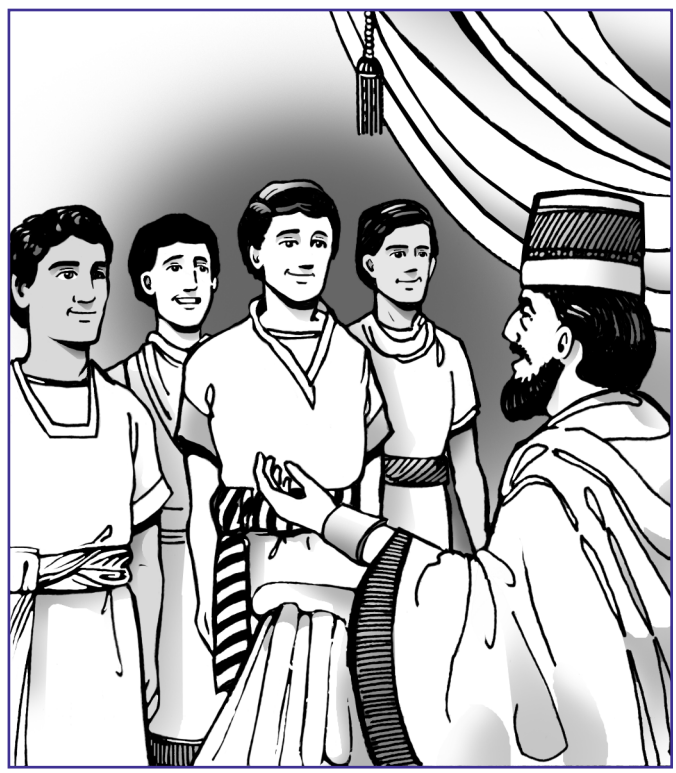
Under Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's devotion to God's law was clearly exhibited in his decision not to defile himself with the king's meat and wine. The food was most likely not prepared according to God's Law and likely consisted of unclean animals.

The custom in heathen kingdoms was to sacrifice food and drink to their gods, consecrating their meals by a religious rite. First Corinthians 10 indicates that such sacrifices were made to demons, and in Daniel's day, partaking would have involved self-defilement. Most of the Hebrew youths compromised God's principles and partook of the king's provisions (Daniel 1:10-15), but Daniel and his three friends did not.

Daniel was courteous and gentle in offering an alternative to those in authority over him. He did not outright refuse the food, but humbly requested that he and his companions be permitted to try another course. Ashpenaz did not grant their request because he feared for his own life. So Daniel then pressed his case with the second in command, Melzar, who consented to their plan for a limited ten days. They would eat vegetables and drink water, then if their countenances did not appear fairer and their flesh fatter than that of the other captives, Melzar could do as he pleased. The Lord's intervention on their behalf was **evinced** by their healthiness. Thus, their diet was secured for the full three-year period of their preparation.

When their training was complete, Daniel and his three companions were found to be far superior to the other captives. Nebuchadnezzar declared Daniel and his friends were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in Babylon. The moral is: never compromise God's Word, but be gentle and pleasant.

Shortly after Daniel and his friends were elevated to high positions, Nebuchadnezzar honored himself by erecting a colossal statue on the plane of Dura that was ninety feet high and nine feet wide. At the dedication ceremony, all the princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counselors, sheriffs, and rulers of his kingdom were gathered together and instructed to bow down to it; however, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused. Certain Chaldeans accused Daniel's **compatriots** of insurrection and ingratitude. Nebuchadnezzar's wrath decreed death in a furnace to those who would not comply with his regulation. Considering their youth, captivity in an idolatrous land, and position before the earth's mightiest monarch, their answer was amazing. With no powerful friends to support them and with a promised horrendous death, they stood steadfast and testified of their trust in God. When the king, full of fury, commanded that they be cast into the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual, the



Daniel* and His Three Companions before King *Nebuchadnezzar