

Connect 360: A Diet for Success

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- *Lesson 1 in the BaptistWay Press Connect360 unit “Faith Under Fire” focuses on Daniel 1:1-21.*

This first chapter of Daniel gives us numerous reasons to pause and ponder the rich theology of this ancient text. What lessons are we to learn from Daniel 1? How can our own lives be enriched by the story of a faithful servant who lived so long ago?

Perhaps these are important points to ponder:

(1) Even when it appears as if evil has won the day, we might later discover that God makes the forces of evil serve his greater purposes. At the beginning of the story, it seems clear that God’s people have been defeated and the Babylonians have triumphed. While the people of Jerusalem would have been crying, “Where is God in this catastrophe? Has God forgotten his people?” the reality was that God was sovereign even in the movement and the victories of enemy nations. God had already foretold all that would take place through his prophet Isaiah (39:6-7). Therefore, even Nebuchadnezzar’s victory was not by the force of his own hands. Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 36:5), and the inevitable consequence was judgment.

(2) God’s judgment leads to mercy. We must not forget that God is always faithful to his word. We are quick to rejoice that God is faithful to bless his people, but he is, likewise, no less faithful in his judgments. The ultimate purpose of God’s allowing his people to fall into foreign hands was for their restoration and rededication to being uniquely his people. Even in Babylon, Daniel fulfilled what it means “to sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land” (Psalm 137:4).

(3) God looks after those who are faithful. Daniel refused to be defiled by eating the portion “from the king’s table.” Eating the king’s rich food clearly was going to cause compromise in the lives of Daniel and his friends. Just like Daniel, it is our responsibility to neither compromise nor conform when it comes to defiling ourselves by participating in a fallen culture.

(4) God is the giver of all good gifts. Despite the fact that we know the Jewish youths were doing their best “in the Chaldean college,” the reality is God honored all of their efforts by giving them good gifts of knowledge, insight, wisdom, and understanding. And, in the special case of Daniel, the ability to interpret dreams.

Based on commentary written by Howard Batson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Amarillo, as condensed by Stan Granberry, marketing coordinator for BaptistWay Press.

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