



# Kidnapped

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Daniel 1

Almost all of God's people had turned away from the Lord, so God allowed the Israelites to be kidnapped and taken to a foreign land. Daniel and his three close friends decided ahead of time to obey God no matter what.



## Day #1: Standing Out

Did you know that the stars in the sky are out during the daytime? We can't see them because the sky is so bright. But what happens at night? When the sun goes down and the sky gets dark, the stars stand out against the night sky. The stars do not change, but the darker the sky is around them, the brighter the stars seem to be. This is very much like a truth we find in the Bible:

† *Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.* - Philippians 2:15b NLT

When believers are surrounded by people who do not live according to God's will, the believers stand out like a bright star in the night sky. This was exactly what happened with the prophet Daniel and his three friends.

Daniel, along with the rest of the Israelites from Judah, had been kidnapped and taken to Babylon. The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, wanted to choose the best young prisoners to serve him.

King Nebuchadnezzar told his officials to choose young men who were healthy, handsome, smart, well educated, and quick learners. Among those chosen were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These four men loved God and followed Him even when their friends and family turned their backs on God. Their relationship with the Lord made them wise, and this was one of the things that Nebuchadnezzar was looking for. Daniel and his friends **stood out** in the land of Babylon, where people did not follow the one true God.

\* Look at the sky during the day, and then look at it again at night. When can you see the stars or the moon? Remember that when you live your life for God, you will stand out - especially when you are around those who live in spiritual darkness because they don't follow the Lord.

## Day #2: God's Way

After Daniel and his friends were chosen, they were placed in the King's training program. Here, they would learn the Babylonian language, Babylonian history, and everything they needed to know to serve the King. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to strengthen the young men's bodies as well as their minds. The King saw to it that the men were given food to eat from his table. After three years of training, the King would choose the best men to serve him in his palace.

What do you think it was like at the King's table? The King always had the best of everything in the country! What kind of food do you think the King liked to eat? Maybe there was pork and shrimp, and fancy desserts every night!

Daniel and his friends had a problem. God had clear rules, just for the Israelites, about what they were allowed to eat (Leviticus 11). Certain foods were not allowed. For example, God said that pig, rabbit, shellfish, and camel meat were not allowed. God knew what was best for His people, and He wanted them to live differently than those around them. God's way is almost always different than man's way. God's way is ALWAYS best!

† *"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine."* - Isaiah 55:8

\* What are some things that the Bible teaches that are different than what the world teaches? (Put others before yourself. Matthew 18:21-22; Be content with what you have. Hebrews 13:5; Always forgive others. Mark 12:30-31.) Remember that God's way is ALWAYS best!

## Day #3: Ahead of Time

Look at a road map. When you take a trip, you decide **ahead of time** where you want to go. When you know where you want to end up, you can take the correct roads to get there. It is the same in our lives. If we set our sights on living a godly life **ahead of time**, then we can make the right decisions to get there.

Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego had a decision to make about eating the King's food. They could obey the King, or they could obey God.

Day #3 continued:

**+** Daniel decided not to make himself "unclean" by eating the king's food and drinking his wine. So he asked the chief official for a favor. He wanted permission not to make himself "unclean" with the king's food and wine. - Daniel 1:8

Daniel and his three friends decided from the very beginning that they would not break God's law. They DID NOT sit at the table, smell the spices, taste the food, and then decide if they would follow God's rules. They decided to obey God **ahead of time!** They trusted that God's way was the best way. Even though the other men gladly ate the rich food from the King's table, these four men were determined to live God's way.

**\*** As you grow up, you will face different types of decisions. You'll decide what friends to have, and how to spend your free time. Later you may decide what shows to watch and what parties to go to. As you get older, you will make more and more decisions without your parents' help. In all that you do, decide **ahead of time** to obey the Lord.

## Day #4: A Way Out

Because he wanted to obey God's laws, Daniel asked permission not to eat the King's food. But the man in charge of the training feared the King. The official was afraid that Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego would look thin and weak if they didn't eat the King's food, so he would not give Daniel permission. It seemed that these men would be forced to disobey God. But the Bible gives us a wonderful promise:

**+** *God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out so that you can stand up under it.* - 1 Corinthians 10:13b

So Daniel spoke to one of the guards. He asked the guard to test them by giving them nothing but vegetables and water for ten days. Then the guard could compare them to the other young men to see if they looked healthy or weak. The guard agreed to try this test. God gave Daniel and his friends a "way out" of disobeying Him.

**\*** Do the maze to the right. Just as there is a "way out" of the maze, God always provides a way out of temptation! When you feel trapped by temptation, pray for God to show you the way out quickly.

There is never a time when you have to sin. God's grace gives you the power to say "No," to sin (Titus 2:11-12), and God will always give you an escape route!

## Day #5: Promise Kept

"Hey Daniel, since you're not eating it, can I have your rabbit stew?"

Daniel and his three loyal friends were determined to follow God. The other men-in-training may have talked about how great the King's food was. Perhaps Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego could smell the delicious food every day. But they ate only what God wanted them to eat. They were passing up certain foods, but they were looking forward to God's promise:

**+** *Listen to me. I'm setting a blessing and a curse in front of you today. I'm giving you the commands of the Lord your God today. You will be blessed if you obey them.* - Deuteronomy 11:26-27

At the end of the ten days, the guard came to look the men over. Amazingly, Daniel and the other three looked **better** than all the other men who had eaten the King's food! God ALWAYS keeps His promises! God not only blessed their bodies, but also their minds and their spirits. God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding of everything they studied. God gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams.

After the three-year training period, King Nebuchadnezzar was more pleased with them than any of the other men. He chose them to become his advisors. He went to them for advice when he had difficult decisions to make, because God had blessed them with great wisdom.

**\*** Re-read Deuteronomy 11:26-27 (above). Did you know that this promise is given to you, just like it was given to Daniel and his friends? When you choose to obey God, He will protect you and bless you. When you choose not to obey the Lord, you choose not to have His blessing and protection.

