

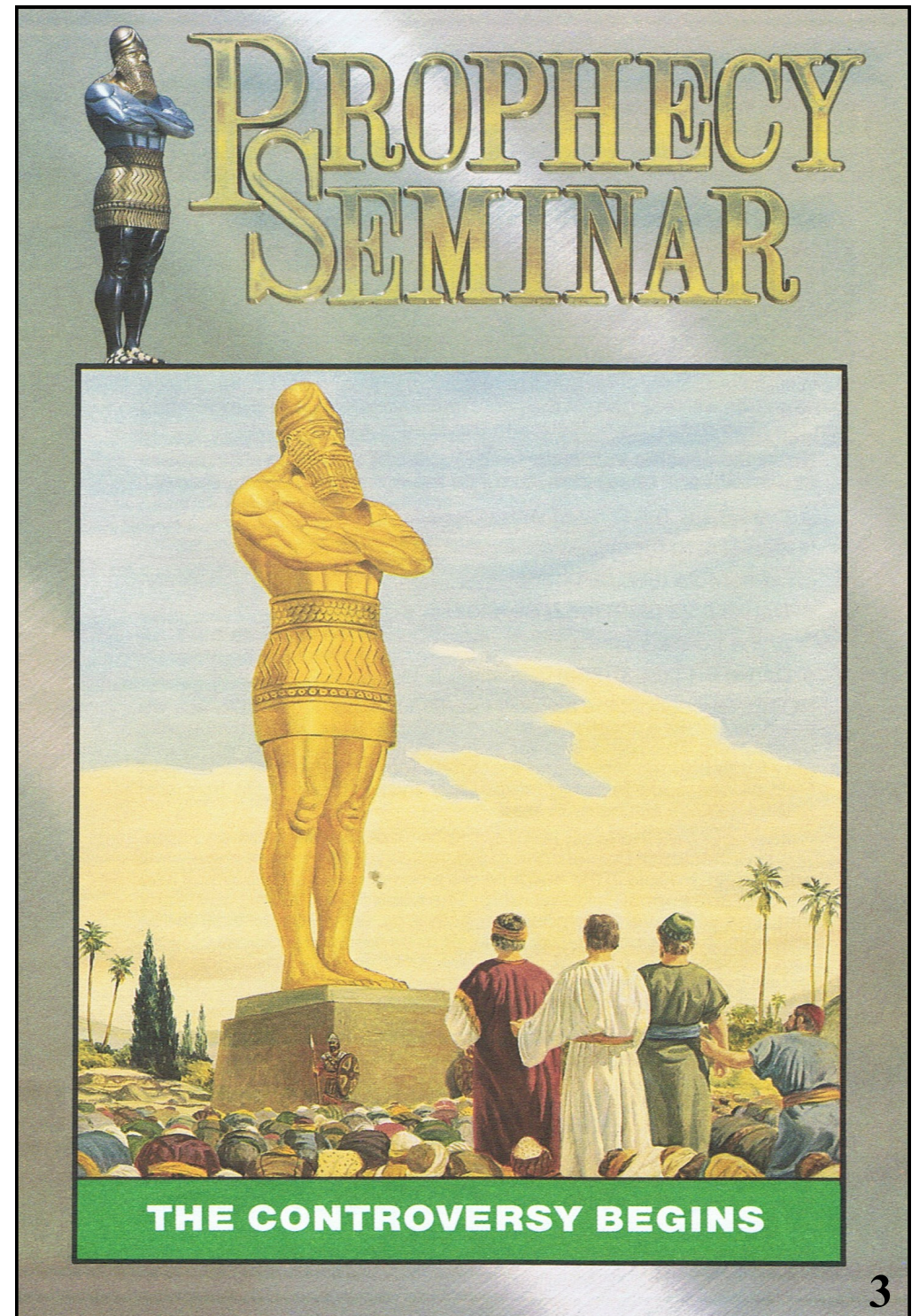
23. Do you wish to be loyal and obedient to God in the time of prosperity, that you, too, might be loyal and true to God when times of difficulty come?



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PS-03



Conflict seems inevitable. In fact, conflict is one of the central themes of Scripture, as we saw in Lesson Two. The theme of the book of Daniel, as demonstrated in the events of ancient Babylon, is this same cosmic struggle between the God of heaven and the power of evil. The book of Daniel begins with Nebuchadnezzar's seeming defeat of the true God, but ends with a tremendous victory for the God of heaven. Nebuchadnezzar is shown again and again that God is still in control of human events. Remember that the focal point of the book of Daniel is the time of the end. Therefore, the events, stories and conflicts in the book of Daniel are to have an impact on us who are living in these last days.

There are two issues over which controversy arises in the book of Daniel. These are the issues of worship and obedience. We will see them illustrated very clearly in the historical portions of Daniel. These same issues will reappear in the prophetic section of Daniel, indicating that they are to be major issues in the final conflict.

1. Name the specific instances in the book of Daniel where the issues of worship and obedience illustrate the great controversy theme.

- a. Daniel 1:8 What Daniel _____
- b. Daniel 3:10 The gold _____
- c. Daniel 4:25 insanity _____
- d. Daniel 5:23 Belshazzar's _____ of the Lord's vessels.
- e. Daniel 6:11 Daniel's _____

NOTE: Throughout the historical portions of the book of Daniel, we see how Daniel's obedience to God and worship of God is continually threatened. The issue is clear in the book of Daniel. Governments may try to impose legislation that inhibits or prohibits the worship of God or demands false worship. Only those who remain true and faithful to God will be delivered.

Remember that the focal point of the book of Daniel is the end time. The prophecies of Daniel point to the last days when these issues will arise again. People in the end time will attempt to inhibit or prohibit true worship and impose false worship. The book of Daniel tells us clearly that God will have a victorious people who will overcome all these attempts to cause them to disobey or to pervert the worship of God. The issues in the book of Daniel are worship and obedience. The issues in the last days will be worship and obedience. How important it is that each of us remains faithful to God.

2. Now do the prophecies of Daniel foretell the issue of worship and obedience? Daniel 7:25

- a. "He shall speak _____ words against the most High."
- b. "Shall intend to change _____ and _____."

He knew that if he drank the king's wine and ate the king's junk food, he would be in a drunken stupor a good share of the time. He would be in no condition to resist temptation and could not maintain his loyalty to God. Therefore, it was of utmost necessity that he eat simply if he was going to be loyal to God when the really big tests came in Babylon.

DANIEL WINS THE TEST

20. At the end of ten days, who appeared in better health? Daniel 1:14, 15

_____ and his friends.

NOTE: Those who follow God's plan always eventually win.

21. Because of Daniel's faithfulness, what did God give him? Daniel 1:17

"God gave them _____ and _____ in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all _____ and _____."

NOTE: The knowledge and skill that Daniel and his friends possessed were not only due to their diet, although that played a role, but they were also given to them by the God of heaven because of their strict obedience to His principles. God always honours His children's obedience.

22. When they took their final examinations, how much better did Daniel and his friends do than everyone else? Daniel 1:18-20

Ten _____ better.

NOTE: Daniel and his friends were the best scholars in the university. They did ten times better than anyone else in the realm. Don't miss the point! The reason they did ten times better was not that they were superior individuals, but because of their strict obedience to the God of heaven. There are many implications in this chapter for the rest of the book of Daniel. These four were not the only Hebrew youth confronted with the problem in Babylon. They were, however, the only four Hebrew youth selected for the university who remained faithful to God. They were also the four Hebrew youth who passed every other test in the book of Daniel. When we study Daniel 3 and the fiery furnace, Daniel 6 and the story of the lion's den, we see again and again that these four Hebrew youth are always faithful. Those who compromised on this first test, which seems to us to have been so very easy, evidently compromised on all the other tests that came. If we cannot remain loyal to God when the test is easy, we will not be loyal when the test is difficult. Today we live in a time of prosperity, when it is relatively easy to serve God. **If we cannot be obedient in this time, we will never be obedient when real trouble comes.**

14. What decision did Daniel and his friends make? Daniel 1:8

"But Daniel _____ in his heart that he would Not _____ himself with the portion of the king's _____ nor with the _____ which he drank."

NOTE: There was no question in Daniel's mind. Loyalty to God was more important than loyalty to the king. Here we see the beginning of the issue that will be illustrated again and again in the book of Daniel. God's faithful people are being brought into conflict, and the issue is obedience to God or obedience to man. Like Daniel, God's people in the end time will not hesitate to choose obedience to God over obedience to man. Daniel 1:8 is a key verse in the book. It vividly portrays why God could trust Daniel so implicitly in his experiences in ancient Babylon.

15. What did Daniel ask of the chief of the eunuchs? Daniel 1:8

"That he might not _____ himself."

NOTE: Daniel asked for an exemption — a bold request for a captive Jew!

16. How did the chief of the eunuchs view Daniel? Daniel 1:9

With" _____ and _____."

17. How did the chief of the eunuchs respond to Daniel's request? Daniel 1:10

"I _____ my lord the king."

NOTE: The chief of the eunuchs was afraid that the health of Daniel and his friends would not be as good if they did not eat at the king's table. If that should happen, he would be held responsible and most probably would be killed. No wonder he was afraid.

18. What test did Daniel suggest? Daniel 1:11-13

A ten _____ test.

19. What did Daniel and his friends request to eat during the ten-day test? Daniel 1:12

"Give us _____ to eat, and _____ to drink."

NOTE: Daniel and his friends requested a very simple Judean diet. Daniel knew that while in Babylon he would be subjected to the fiercest tests imaginable. If he was to remain loyal to God, he must live and eat simply.

NOTE: Here in the prophecies we see the issue of worship illustrated in the little horn power of Daniel 7 as he speaks great words against the Most High. We see the issue of obedience illustrated in the little horn power of Daniel 7 as he thinks to change the times and the laws. The book of Daniel is concerned with these vital issues.

DANIEL'S CAPTIVITY

The controversy begins in Daniel with the captivity of Daniel and his friends by Nebuchadnezzar. In this first chapter, we will study the amazing story of how a young man and his friends faced some very severe tests which were inflicted by a despotic ruler. We will also note the implications that these tests have for the rest of the book of Daniel. The tests described in Chapter 1 seem very mild in comparison to the much greater tests to come later in the book. But the lesson of Chapter 1 is that only those who pass minor tests will ever pass the major tests. How important, then, that we be faithful to God at all times.

3. What did Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, do to Jerusalem, the city of God? Daniel 1:1

He _____ it.

NOTE: In ancient times when kings besieged a city, they completely surrounded the city, cut off its water and food supply, and waited until the inhabitants gave up. This was a terrible ordeal for the people in Jerusalem.

4. Who allowed Nebuchadnezzar to capture Jerusalem? Daniel 1:2

The _____ of heaven.

5. Why did God allow Judah to be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar? Jeremiah 2:11-13

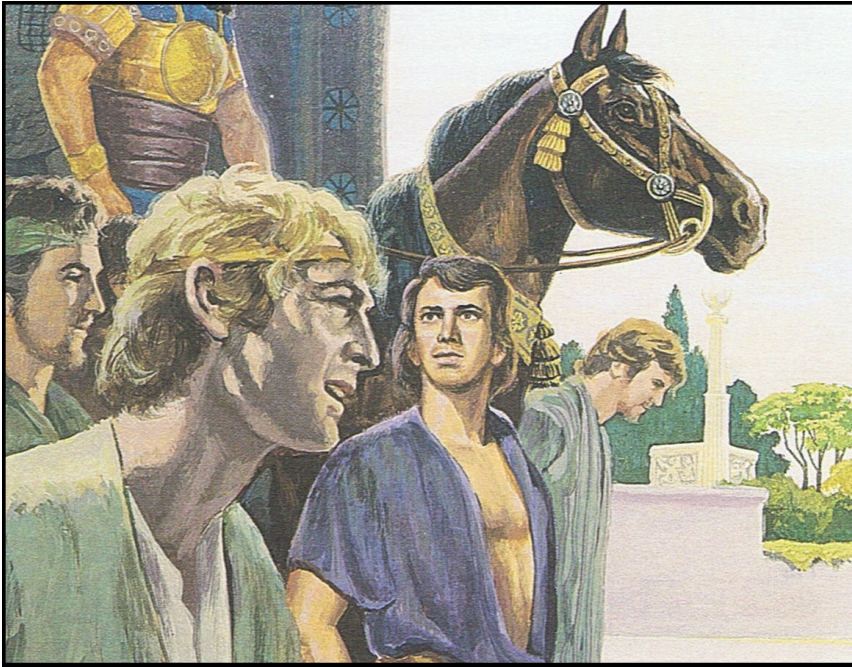
"Has a nation _____ its gods, which are not gods? ... They have _____ Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves... _____ cisterns that can hold no water."

NOTE: Through the prophet Jeremiah and other Bible prophets, God had predicted the warfare of the Babylonians against Judah because they had forsaken the Lord, had ceased to worship Him, and were disobedient to the Word of God. False worship and disobedience led to Israel's captivity.

6. Who seems to be winning the conflict as the book of Daniel opens? Daniel 1:2

The gods of _____

NOTE: The book of Daniel begins with an apparent defeat for the true God, but let us not forget that it ends with a glorious triumph for Daniel's God. Evil may appear to prosper now, but someday God's truth will magnificently triumph.



7. What kind of people did Nebuchadnezzar choose from among the captives of Judea to be educated in the schools of Babylon? Daniel 1:3, 4

- "Of the _____ descendants."
- "Young men in whom there was no _____"
- "Good looking, gifted in all _____, possessing _____."
- "Quick to _____."

8. How long was the educational process to last? Daniel 1:5

Three _____

9. Out of all the children of Judah who entered into the schooling, who are the only four youths named in the Biblical record? Daniel 1:6

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

10. What Babylonian names were given to these four youth? Daniel 1:7

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

NOTE: In an attempt to totally Babylonianize these youth, they were given new names to signify their loyalty to Babylon and to the gods of Babylon. The name, Daniel, means "God is my judge". His Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, means "Bel protects the king's life". Bel was one of the popular gods of Babylon. The name, Hananiah, means "Jehovah is gracious", while the Babylonian name, Shadrach, refers to an allegiance to the Babylonian god, Marduk. The name, Mishael, meaning "who belongs to God", became Meshach, a reference to another Babylonian god. The name, Azariah, meaning "Jehovah helps", was changed to Abednego, "servant of the god, Nabu."

DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS ARE TESTED

11. What was to be the diet for those who were selected for this special education? Daniel 1:5 (855) [855].

"The king's _____, and... _____ the which he drank."

12. What had God told the Israelites about drinking wine? Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:31

"Wine is a _____, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not "_____" Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it _____ around smoothly."

13. What foods had God forbidden the Israelites to eat that might well have been on King Nebuchadnezzar's table? Leviticus 11:2-8

The _____ animals.

NOTE: What a dilemma for these Hebrew youth! Although they were captives, they were being treated like royalty. They could even eat the king's special food and sit at his table, but to do so meant to be disobedient to the God of heaven. To fail to eat at the king's table meant to be disobedient to the king of Babylon who was treating them so favourably. Yet Daniel and his friends did not hesitate in making a decision.