

## The Sunday School

### BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Third Quarter.

DANIEL IN BABYLON.

Lesson II.—July 9. Daniel 1:8-21.

May be used as a Temperance Lesson.

Read the Whole Chapter.

Commit Verses 17-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself, Dan. 1:8.

EXPLANATORY.

SUBJECT: THE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

I. THE TEMPTED.—In our last lesson we were looking upon Israel during the years before its final captivity, B. C. 722. Today we pass over more than a century of time, and into the kingdom of Judea, and look upon that nation at the beginning of its captivity, which came upon it for the same sins that ruined the northern kingdom.

II. THE TEMPTATION.—V. 8. PURPOSED . . . THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE . . . KING'S MEAT: i. e., food.

What was the wrong in eating the king's food? (1) The dietary might comprise articles of food, such as the flesh of swine, hares, etc., which the law interdicted to the Israelites (Lev. 11). (2) The flesh may not have been perfectly cleansed from blood, and hence forbidden by the Jewish law (Deut. 12:23-25). Jews, even at this day, have their own butchers, and regard as unclean the meat prepared in the ordinary way. (3) The universal custom among the heathen of consecrating each meal by offering a portion of it to their idols, and pouring out libations of wine in their honor. (4) The luxurious diet provided by the king would corrupt the body and diminish the vigor of the mind. NOR WITH THE WINE. He had probably seen its effects on others, and the bad company and danger into which it led. Probably these were far worse at Babylon than in Palestine.

III. HOW THE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION WAS GAINED.—Vs. 8-15.

First. HE PURPOSED IN HIS HEART. They came to a decision. They determined from principle, which must have grown out of a choice of God, and consecration to his service.

Second. They had an early religious training, as was common among the best Jews. But these boys must have had especially good home religious influences.

Third. Their sudden departure from home, to be thrown upon their own resources, probably helped them to take a decided stand for their religion and their God.

Fourth. They used wise means. HE REQUESTED THE PRINCE OF THE EUNUCHS. Ashpenaz (v. 3), into whose charge they had been committed. They thus took the wisest course possible. There was no bravado, but simply quiet, firm, and wise courage.

Fifth. "The divine favor was with him." 9. NOW GOD HAD BROUGHT DANIEL INTO FAVOR AND TENDER LOVE. (1) By influencing Ashpenaz by his spirit; (2) By producing in Daniel attractiveness of person and manners, promising talent, and a noble and lovable character. If there is tender love there must be something worthy of that love to awaken and hold it. True religion, accompanied by "the beauty of holiness," makes one very attractive. "Every good and perfect gift" came from God, but came through natural channels.

Compare the descriptions of the youth of Jesus (Luke 2:40, 52), and of John the Baptist (Luke 1:80).

Sixth. By proving the value of his course. 10. I FEAR . . . THE KING, WHO HATH APPOINTED YOUR MEAT. It was a dangerous thing to oppose the judgment of the king as to what was best for the perfect development of the young men. ENDANGER MY HEAD. Be exposed to having his head cut off in punishment for his disobedience. "In the arbitrary and despotic courts of the East, a slight disobedience is often punished with death by a capricious monarch. Nebuchadnezzar was not a man to take liberties with."

11. SAID DANIEL TO MELZAR. Not a proper name, but the melzar, the chief butler or steward, who actually furnished the food.

12. GIVE US PULSE TO EAT. Leguminous plants or their seed, as beans, peas, etc. "Grain, vegetables, herbs, opposed to flesh and more delicate food." What Daniel wanted was a vegetable diet, with water instead of wine.

15. AT THE END OF TEN DAYS, etc., as short a time as would suffice for a thorough test. The result was all that was claimed.

IV. THE CROWN OF VICTORY.—Vs. 16-21. There were several jewels in this crown.

First Jewel. The best physical condition; bodily health, strength, beauty,

energy; fitting the body for its best work and its highest joys.

Second Jewel. The finest mental powers and highest culture.

17. THESE FOUR CHILDREN, R. V. "Youths." GOD GAVE THEM KNOWLEDGE, etc. (1) Through the highest physical condition, which made their minds clear, and gave them strength for more prolonged study. (2) By imparting it to them directly, as the visions recorded later. To the higher character and more trained mind God could reveal more truth than to others. (3) By giving his blessing to their daily studies, aiding their minds by his spirit, opening wider doors to knowledge through his providence. (4) By keeping them from those vices, from conceit and selfishness, which distort the judgment and dim the perception of truth. SKILL IN ALL LEARNING. In science, in astronomy, in literature, in philosophy the Chaldeans at this time stood at the head of the world. AND WISDOM. Power to apply and use and increase this learning. All four had the learning; the special revelations were to Daniel alone. UNDERSTANDING IN ALL VISIONS AND DREAMS. Through which God revealed the future to Daniel, and also showed him the meaning of the visions which others saw.

Third Jewel. The victory over temptation improved, strengthened and ennobled the character.

Fourth Jewel. High position, like a city set upon a hill, whence they could exert the widest influence.

18. NOW AT THE END OF THE DAYS. The three years of verse 5, fixed by the king for their training.

19. THEREFORE STOOD THEY BEFORE THE KING. Were the personal advisers, and among the leading officers of the kingdom. All officers and servants "stood" when in the presence of the monarch.

20. AND IN ALL MATTERS OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING. In everything which required peculiar wisdom to understand and to explain. HE FOUND THEM TEN TIMES BETTER. Better counsellors, better informed. THEN ALL THE MAGICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS. The magicians were the learned class, the scribes, the priestly class. "The astrologers," "reasoners from the stars," were the scientific men, versed in magic and occult science.

Fifth Jewel. A long life of eminent service.

21. DANIEL CONTINUED EVEN UNTO THE FIRST YEAR OF KING CYRUS, B. C. 534, when Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, issued his edict for the rebuilding of the Temple.

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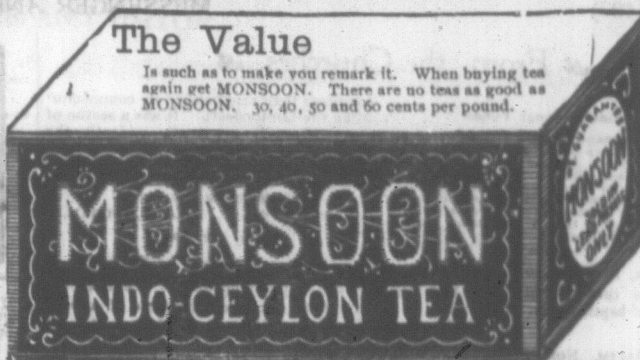
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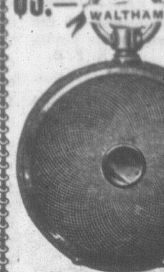
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