

# The Road Less Travelled

*Daniel 1:1-21*

In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus says the road of the Christian life is a narrow road, or gate, and few go in by it. The road that leads to destruction is broad and many go in by it.

**Q1** - How do you find the road of faith that you are travelling? - fairly easy, difficult, or a mixture of both - can you explain why?

**Q2** - Why do you think many more travel “the road that leads to destruction”?

## Read Daniel 1:1-21

1. What has happened to the Hebrew people? What was God’s role in this event? How might you explain that?<sup>1</sup>
2. What forms of re-education did Nebuchadnezzar institute for Daniel and his friends? (vv.3-5; 6,7).<sup>2</sup> Why do you think this was necessary?

Do you see any countries in our world instituting such reforms today and why?

3. How did Daniel & his three friends respond to the king's dietary orders (vv.9f.)? Why?
4. How did God intervene to help these young Hebrews maintain their faith and how did the officials involved, the chief of staff and the attendant appointed by the chief of staff, respond?
5. At the end of the ten days, how did things turn out for everyone? (v.15,16) Why was it possible for this outcome to be achieved?
6. Read Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 29:4-7.<sup>3</sup> God is specific in this prophecy about how the Hebrews should live in captivity in a foreign land and under an authoritarian government system. He mentions a number of things. What are they?

---

<sup>1</sup> Israel's defeat by the Babylonians is not due to an analysis of military or political factors. God is at work in the affairs of the nations, and the message to Daniel's original audience is that He has used the Babylonians to judge His own people for their transgressions. (2 Kings 17:15,18-20; 21:12-15;24:3,4). Under the terms of the covenant made at Mount Sinai, the Lord threatened to exile His people if they were unfaithful (Lev. 26:33,39). The length of their tenure in the Promised Land in spite of their unfaithfulness is a sign of the Lord's mercy. Their unfaithfulness culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and exile of the majority of the remaining population by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. (R.C. Sproul)

<sup>2</sup> Their Hebrew names meant: Daniel - "God is my judge," Hananiah - "the Lord is gracious," Mishael - "Who is what God is?", Azariah - "The Lord is a helper." Their Babylonian names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego invoked the Babylonian gods: Marduk, Bel, and Nebo which meant; solar calf, lord, and prophet.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed understanding of God's involvement with Judah in the Babylonian exile, see Jer. 27:1-22 & 29:1-20.

How would obedience to the Lord's command help the Israelite captives survive under extreme circumstances?

7. If we adopted God's teaching to the Hebrews in captivity, how might this affect the way we live our Christian lives in our society?
8. What other help did God give to Daniel and his friends (v.17)? What does this tell us about how God responds to difficult situations in life?
9. How did Nebuchadnezzar respond to Daniel & his friends when they were brought before him? (vv.18-20) What did this do for the relationship between the foreign king and these Hebrew slaves? How might this have served God's purposes?
10. Daniel and his 3 friends were able to survive in a hostile environment, even to serve in high political positions (*see Daniel 3:30; 5:29*) within the totally pagan system of the Babylonian government for 70 years (and maintain their faith and commitment to the Lord). God calls us to live in a similar manner, growing in our faith and obedience to His Word.  
How might Daniel's experience encourage us in meeting the challenges to our faith in: (a) the pressure to compromise our beliefs and standards, and (b) how we are to interact with the society in which we live?<sup>4</sup>

### **Prayer Focus:**

How might we pray for ourselves and other Christians to keep the faith during a particularly difficult situation?

---

<sup>4</sup> A good book for reading on the 'road less travelled' is John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress." The revision of this book by Alan Vermilye is an excellent modern day English version.