



## **BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS**

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1916 ~ Four Captive Boys.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

Before we take a look at how the exiles of Judah and Jerusalem were faring in Babylon, we need to find out what happened to Jeremiah, God's prophet to all the nations of the region, and especially to Judah. The Lord had told Jeremiah to tell the people of all nations to submit to the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon if they wanted to remain in the land. As a result, Jeremiah suffered a number of indefinite prison terms because he wouldn't tell the kings and people what they wanted to hear. Rather, he gave them the words of the Lord and many particularly didn't want to hear that Jerusalem would one day be destroyed and burnt; which eventually, it was.

Some of the surviving Jews in Judah were planning to go to Egypt for safety. They asked Jeremiah to consult with the Lord about blessing their plans. Like people in every generation, they wanted the Lord's blessing on their plans that they'd already made. Though they asked the Lord where they should go and what they should do, they weren't sincere in following whatever the Lord told them. Although they promised to obey what the Lord said, they only did so if God said what they wanted to hear. This isn't the right way to seek guidance from the Lord!

Through Jeremiah, the Lord told the people that they'd find no safety in Egypt. Trusting in Egypt was the opposite of trusting in God, and was a sign of their unbelief of God's protection and provision; this was just the same as the unbelief that the Lord had punished the people of Jerusalem for. So Jeremiah gave them his final warning: if they persisted in going to Egypt, they would surely die.

After the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem and looted the city in 586 BC, they destroyed the Temple of God, the king's palace and all the chief houses in Jerusalem with fire. Most of the remaining important people of Judah and Jerusalem, including the high priest and four other senior temple officials, were captured and taken to Babylon as Nebuchadnezzar's prisoners. However, the poor people in Judah were left behind, and the army commander gave Jeremiah his freedom to go wherever he liked. If he decided to go to Babylon, he would be an honoured guest and not a prisoner. But Jeremiah decided to stay in Judah for by now, he had been in chains for so long as a prisoner that he couldn't walk any more.

Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations, which contained five laments that expressed the terrible loss and sorrow felt by the people of Judah as they saw their way of life in their homeland come to an end. However, God had set a time limit on the rule of Babylon over Judah and He'd said through Jeremiah that the exiles would one day return to their city and prosper. But in their grief, the people forgot to remember those God-given promises.

There were three groups of people taken to Babylon. In the first group taken during 605 BC, there were four young men taken, and they were known as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

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The Hebrew names for those four young royals all contained part of the Hebrew word for 'God'. But the new names given by their overseer contained the words of Babylonian gods instead. There's an implication from this that their old life back in the home country was now gone and that they were expected to integrate with Babylonian society and culture, which included learning the Chaldean language and working for the king of Babylon in his palace. Despite this, they were to receive the best of the king's food and wine while they were given 3 years of intensive instruction before being tested on their knowledge and understanding of all things Babylonian.

Daniel, in particular, didn't want to give up his worship of the true God of Judah and the training that he'd received in Judah in trusting and obeying in only Him. Daniel and his friends could have eaten the king's food and not bothered with Jewish dietary laws any more. They could have said that they would follow Babylonian religion outwardly but continue to be Jews inwardly. This is impossible for anyone of true faith. The men soon realised that King Nebuchadnezzar could change their names, home, clothes and study programs, but he couldn't change their hearts.

At great personal risk, these four young men determined to trust in their God. And because they stood up for God in this first test only early in their captivity, God also stood with them in all the tests that were to come. The decisions we make early in life often determine the course of our lives from then on. Daniel acted in a polite and humble manner towards his captors, and God caused the king's official to show favour and kindness toward him. People who claim to be Christians sometimes demand their rights when they don't have a bargaining position in the first place. This certainly doesn't honour the Lord. It's better to suffer loss of some kind rather than to stain the Lord's Name and people's belief and trust in Him.

Daniel thought of a solution to their problem of how to honour their God-directed Jewish customs while establishing a way out for both the young men and the official. But this idea would rely on God to make it work and so that's exactly what Daniel did. After only 10 days of Daniel and his friends eating vegetables and drinking water, they looked healthier than those who'd been eating from the king's rich and abundant supply of food. In Proverbs, Chapter 16, it says: "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him." So the temporary dietary arrangement remained in place for these four young men.

For 3 years, they studied hard and prepared for the king's service. God gave them great knowledge and understanding but they applied themselves to learn diligently.

Furthermore, God gave Daniel an amazing ability to interpret dreams and visions of all kinds, which was a gift that Daniel would soon need to help King Nebuchadnezzar understand the future of the world's history.

Comparisons can be drawn between Daniel in Babylon and Joseph, the son of Jacob, when he was a slave in Egypt. Both did nothing worthy of their demotion from being a prince to a slave. Both Daniel and Joseph were prisoners who did their best in all circumstances. By God's choice, they were also promoted to work in the king's palace and they remained faithful to the Lord all their lives. Yet if they'd compromised their reliance on God in any way, we may wonder what would have happened to them. Compromise is all about making concessions or accommodating somebody else's standards or rules to win their favour or protect one's own interests. Certainly God wouldn't have helped these four men in the many ways He did if they compromised and started worshipping the king and his pagan lifeless idols instead.

The Bible makes it clear that God doesn't overlook the compromise of His standards. In Psalm, Chapter 119, it says: "Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD. Joyful are those who obey His laws and search for Him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in His paths. You have charged us to keep Your commandments carefully."

Not compromising requires us to hold an unswerving submission to God and God alone, regardless of the world's concessions and pressures to conform to godlessness. We hear God's voice spoken through the reading of His Word, and we don't yield or permit any turning aside from His Words of truth. As believers in Christ, as it says in Colossians, Chapter 2, Christians must "... see to it that no one takes [us] captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

Followers of Jesus are also commanded in 1st Peter, Chapter 3, to be "... prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks [them] ... for a reason for the hope that is in [them] ... ." In other words, Christians are commanded not only to remain faithful to the Word of God, but also to defend it and correct those who are in opposition to it. God is serious about our not compromising His Word with the values of the world – and one of the reasons for this is that those outside of Christ may then "... come to their senses and escape the devil's trap," as listed in 2nd Timothy, Chapter 2.

There are those who profess to being Christians, yet live lives that are not in keeping with the precepts of Scripture; this means, such people compromise their Biblical beliefs by living like the world and agreeing with what the world says. For them, the things of the world and its physical attractions take priority over believing what the Word of God says. In Mark, Chapter 4, the Lord Jesus referred to such people as “those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the Word, and it proves unfruitful.”

There are people who, by professing to follow Christ, compromise their faith by craving worldly success and praise from their peers. Jesus scolded such people in John, Chapter 5: “No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honour each other, but you don’t care about the honour that comes from the one who alone is God.” So to compromise in our total loyalty and devotion to God is to allow something or someone else to take first place in our lives over Christ.

As true believers in Christ, we must accept God’s Word as being complete and perfect truth. The Scriptures are not only profitable for salvation of the soul, but also for sanctification and Christian growth as well. They are the road map to heaven and the road map for living a godly Christian life. They are all we need for our faith and doctrine in Christ Jesus. In Romans, Chapter 15, Verse 4b, it says: “And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.”

Daniel remained in Babylon for the rest of his life, serving the LORD faithfully for nearly 70 years. In his old age, he was able to witness the return of the 1st group of Judean people as they set out from Babylon and returned to their homeland. Certainly by his uncompromising, devoted life to serving and loving his God, Daniel will one day hear God's words to him that will likely be: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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