



Black History School: God's Glory...Our Story

Biblically based • Culturally relevant • Education as liberation

BHS Overview

Black History School (BHS) relates powerful stories from the past to our present. By studying the similarities between selected passages from the Book of Daniel with certain aspects of Black History, we will discover the transformative influence we can have in the world today.

Lesson Aim:

To be reminded that we are divine originals, created in the image of God, and as such we must **dare to be different**.

Better Than the King's Best

Daniel 1:8-21

⁸ But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. ⁹ Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, ¹⁰ but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. ¹⁷ **To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.** ¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ **In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.** ²¹ And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus

Discussion:

As the narrative unfolds in Daniel 1:8-21, we witness the divine favor that accompanies the courage to be different. Daniel's commitment to maintaining his identity and principles led to not only physical well-being but also intellectual and spiritual excellence. Despite initial reservations from those overseeing their care, Daniel and his friends thrived on their distinctive diet, emerging healthier and more discerning than their counterparts. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah asked to eat the diet that God prescribed in Genesis 1:29. Daniel and his friends were not simply daring to be different. They understood

the importance of obeying God. God's blessing was evident in all of their extraordinary wisdom and understanding. And, God gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams and visions.

The passage underscores the profound impact of daring to be different, emphasizing that choosing a path of obedience to God, authenticity and adherence to one's values, and gratitude for one's uniqueness can lead to extraordinary outcomes. The outcome of these four boys daring to be different encourages us to stand firm in our convictions, even when faced with societal expectations that may push us toward conformity. Christians obey Christ commands!

Black History Parallel – Katherine Johnson:

Born in 1918, Katherine Johnson's brilliance with numbers vaulted her grades ahead of her peers. She started high school at age 10 (when most children are in 4th or 5th grade), and went to college at age 15. A committed Christian, Katherine sang in her church choir and volunteered in her community. Joining NASA in the 1950s, she excelled in a white male-dominated field when it was legal to hold people back because of their ethnicity and/or gender. Undeterred by the obstacles of racism or sexism, her extraordinary mathematical calculations were essential for space missions, including the trajectory of the first American spaceflight, Apollo 11. Like Daniel and his friends, Katherine's gifts made room for her. Her story encourages us to embrace our uniqueness and pursue our dreams, no matter what obstacles may stand in our way. (Her remarkable life is highlighted in the movie Hidden Figures.)



Katherine Johnson - https://waa.engin.umich.edu/About_Katherine.html



<https://astrobites.org/2020/04/27/hidden-figures/>

Circle True or False next to each statement below:

1. **True | False:** Daniel and his friends decided to eat the rich food and wine provided by the king of Babylon.
2. **True | False:** The Babylonians changed the names of Daniel and his friends to assimilate them into their culture.
4. **True | False:** The Babylonians were initially pleased with Daniel and his friends' decision to follow their Jewish dietary restrictions.
5. **True | False:** Daniel and his friends became healthier and wiser than those who ate the king's rich food.