

Tuesday 1st February 2022

Daniel 1: 12 – 14 *“Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants with what you see.’ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.”*

This might seem to be an early example of vegetarianism but the proscription of meat products came well before Daniel’s time. He was a man of faith well-schooled in the Jewish law which forbade the consumption of certain foods.

Daniel and his three friends were in a tricky situation. They were part of the exiled population of Judah taken to Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Their talents, physique and intelligence had marked them out for service in king Nebuchadnezzar’s court but they were wary of getting too close to the king of a culture which did not recognise God.

They were required to eat the same food as the king but Daniel persuaded the official in charge of them to try a test of a vegetable based diet. The official needed some convincing because his head was on the line if the king was not happy about his ‘foreign’ advisors declining to eat the royal food.

With God on their side in response to their faith Daniel and his friends were judged healthier than those eating the king’s food and were allowed to continue to eat a vegetable diet. This faith which we too should emulate, was to stand them in good stead later.