

Daniel Overview

- Exiled to Babylon in mid-late **teens** lived during **four** successive **kings**... ..likely a **eunuch**
- Jesus called him a **prophet** (Matt 24) **Genre** - prophetic, history, **apocalyptic**
- **Big Ideas** 1) the **LORD rules** over every kingdom and 2) **Faithfulness** in a secular environment

The LORD rules over every kingdom

Dan 1:1 In the third year of the reign of **Jehoiakim king of Judah**, **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon** came to Jerusalem and besieged it. (2) And the **Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God**. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, **to the house of his god**, and placed the **vessels in the treasury of his god**.

- **Nebuchadnezzar came** to Jerusalem BUT the **Lord gave** the king of Judah and vessels into his hand

Faithfulness in a secular environment

(3) Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his **chief eunuch**, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the **royal family** and of the **nobility**, (4) youths **without blemish**, of **good appearance** and **skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning**, and **competent to stand in the king's palace**.

- **They were chosen because of what they already possessed** (status, appearance, wisdom, competence) - - good qualities - things that, many aspire to today but ITS NOT ENOUGH Babylon WANTS MORE of you, BABYLON WANTS ALL OF YOU - Babylon is a Battle for the heart...

.....and to **teach** them the **literature and language of the Chaldeans**. (5) The king assigned them **a daily portion of the food that the king ate**, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be **educated for three years**, and at the end of that time they were to **stand before the king**. (6) Among these were **Daniel**, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

- to RE-educate them in literature, language, access → **v6 first mention of Daniel** - a young man a **eunuch** - offered status favor access, *"blend in and gain favor, or stand firm and risk being sidelined"*

(7) And **the chief of the eunuchs gave them names**: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

- Even renaming them with titles tied to Babylon's gods, detach them from their covenant identity
 - **Daniel** - God is my judge → **Belteshazzar** (connected to Bel, "Bel protects his life")
 - **Hananiah** ("Yahweh has been gracious") → **Shadrach** (servant of the moon-god Aku)
 - **Mishael** ("Who is what God is?") → **Meshach** (who or what is Aku? The moon god)
 - **Azariah** ("Yahweh has helped") → **Abednego** ("servant of Nebo")
- **Babylon is a battle for the heart**: intended to **turn their allegiance away from God**

The Key to Remaining Faithful to God

(8) **But Daniel resolved** that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore **he asked** the chief of the eunuchs to **allow him not to defile himself**.

- **These three words** → foundational in the story of Daniel and the 3 boys - **covenant integrity**
- Though immersed in the culture of Babylon → **a red line in his heart that he would not violate**
 - **Resolve is a settled decision** of the heart that says: 'You can change my surroundings, my education, even my name, but you cannot own **my worship, my allegiance or my obedience**.

- His resolve did not make him brash or boastful...humble in his approach → trusting God vs demanding and not pointing the finger → he said **“allow me not to defile myself”**

(9) And **God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,**

- Pro 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Daniel combined wisdom and understanding along with His resolve

(10) and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, **“I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.”**

SLIDE (11) Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, (12) **“Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. (13) Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.”** (14) So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.

SLIDE (15) At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. (16) So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

- **When we trust God enough to obey when compromise seems like the easier path, we give Him room to act and show His way is better.**

Look what God did

(17) As for these four youths, **God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.** (18) **At the end of the time,** when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

- God gave them learning and skill and beyond - he enabled them to excel in the education of Babylon, but he also gave them an education that **ONLY COMES FROM GOD - understanding in vision & dreams**
- **GOD IS IN CONTROL HERE** → **God gave Judah** and vessels from His house to Babylon -- **God gave Daniel favor** with the leader of Eunuchs -- **God gave the four learning, skill, understanding**

10x →

(19) And the king spoke with them, and **among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.** Therefore **they stood before the king.** (20) And in every **matter of wisdom and understanding** about which the king inquired of them, **he found them ten times better** than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. (21) And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Daniel had a **red line in the sand - He resolved not to defile himself.**

While he lived in a secular culture that pressured him to compliance or assimilation He Resolved some things in his heart

“About two-thirds of church-involved teens drop out in young adulthood; for almost half of those who go to college, the campus move is part of the reason, and roughly 70% say their changing beliefs—shaped by the surrounding culture—pushed them away from church.”

What is your red line → where are you being pressured to compromise...

Why not let God help you succeed in the secular world without letting it take your heart

Why not let God give you favor WHILE keeping your covenant integrity intact →this is 10X