

DANIEL Daniel 1:1-20 | August 4, 2024



SHEPHERD
CHURCH

Context:

1. Daniel was between **13 & 16** years old and living in Judah (Southern Kingdom) when Babylon conquered Jerusalem. He was kidnapped and exiled to Babylon.

Daniel 1:1–2 (The Living Bible) ¹Three years after King Jehoiakim began to rule in Judah, Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem with his armies, and the Lord gave him victory over Jehoiakim. When he returned to Babylon, he took along some of the sacred cups from the Temple of God and placed them in the treasury of his god in the land of Shinar.

2. It was a common practice for a conquering nation to “**deport**” the finest citizens and train them for service in their own government.
 - A. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were of royal nobility and were **kidnapped** and taken to Babylon to be **brainwashed** and then trained in the Babylonian culture.
 - The motive was to use their nobility and influence to persuade the captured citizens to **conform** to the new belief system of the Babylonians.

The Tension: The Babylonian culture and religious beliefs harshly **contrasted** Jewish culture and religion.

- The Babylonians were polytheistic, worshipping **many** gods.
- The Jewish people were monotheistic believing there to be only **one** true God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (GW) ⁴Listen, Israel: The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God.

The Babylonian Brainwashing.

- A. **Isolation.** The young men removed from their family, their homeland and their friends.

Daniel 1:3–4 (The Living Bible) ³Then he ordered Ashpenaz, who was in charge of his palace personnel, to select some of the Jewish youths brought back as captives—*young men of the royal family and nobility of Judah*
- B. **Indoctrination.** The young men were to be immersed in learning the Babylonian culture for 3 years.

Daniel 1:4 (NIV84) ⁴ . . . He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.
- C. **Assimilation.** The goal was not only to change their minds, but their lifestyles as well.

Daniel 1: 5 (NIV) ⁵The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service.
- D. **Confusion.** Their goal was to make them forget who they were and embrace a new identity.

Daniel 1: 7 (NIV) ⁷The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

How to Beat Cultural Brainwashing!

1. Live with **conviction** and you won’t compromise.

Daniel 1:8 (NIV84) ⁸But 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.

 - A. The meat that Daniel was being offered was **unclean** and had been offered to idols.
 - B. Daniel had **resolved** to not defile himself.
 - Convictions are always **intentional**.
 - Convictions are always formed **before** they are needed.

2. Live with **wisdom** to find God's favor.

Daniel 1:9–10 (NLT) ⁹Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel.¹⁰But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."

A. The way Daniel **acted** helped him find favor with the chief of staff.

B. The way Daniel **thought** helped him find favor with the chief of staff's official.

Daniel 1:11–14 (NIV84) ¹¹Daniel 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. ¹³Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

- Daniel knew it was appropriate to **defy** authority rather than oppose the Word of God.
- Daniel offered an **alternative** solution that was sensitive to the appointed official. (**win-win**)
Colossians 4:5–6 (GW) ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward those who are outside [the Christian faith]. Make the most of your opportunities. ⁶Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone.
- Daniel's motive was to **glorify** God, not just escape a problem.
 - What if we viewed challenges as **opportunities** for God to be glorified through us?

3. God honored Daniel's commitment to His convictions and desire to glorify God.

A. God honored them **physically**.

Daniel 1:15–16 (NIV84) ¹⁵At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶So the guard took away their choice food and . . . gave them vegetables instead.

B. God honored them **academically**.

Daniel 1:17, 20 (NIV84) ¹⁷To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning . . . ²⁰In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom.

C. God honored them **spiritually**.

Daniel 1:17 (NIV84) ¹⁷ . . . And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

D. God honored them **socially**.

Daniel 1:18-19 (NIV84) ¹⁸At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.

NEXT STEPS:

1. If you are living in an ungodly culture, it is imperative to **be immersed in the Word** of God.

Romans 12:2 (NIV84) ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Now is the time to **develop your convictions**, NOT when the pressure to conform is present.
"If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything."

2. If I am walking with God, I can **view my challenges as opportunities** to glorify God.

3. **Our relationship with God must be the catalyst for the way we live our lives.**

Matthew 6:33 (GW) ³³But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you.