

v8 “In making his request, Daniel was polite and tactful. Believers today may disagree with official policies and even with each other, but they should follow Daniel’s example in disagreeing in an agreeable fashion” (Miller 1994: 67).

### APPLICATION

“A gospel parallel to this story would be Jesus’ words to his disciples about being salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Both of these are images that speak of involvement combined with distinctiveness. The light must shine out into the darkness, of which it is the antithesis. The salt has to be combined with that to which it gives taste, or that which it preserves, but has to keep its saltiness if it is to be effective” (Lucas 2002: 58).

“Well, it was a small thing. Yet that is just the point. For it is in the small matters that great victories are won. This is where decisions to live a holy life are made—not in the big things (though they come if the little things are neglected), but in the details of life. If Daniel had said, “I want to live for God in big ways, but I am not going to make a fool of myself in this trivial matter of eating and drinking the king’s food,” he never would have amounted to anything. But because he started out for God in small things, God used him greatly” (Boice 2003: 22).

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How does your world resemble Babylon? What issues do you face that are similar to those Daniel faced? In what ways do your actions compare unfavorably with those of Daniel?

How does Daniel live in light of God’s sovereignty? In what ways does your life reflect an unwavering conviction in the sovereignty of God? In what ways does it not?

### SOURCES CITED

Boice, James Montgomery. *Daniel: An Expository Commentary*, 2003.  
Lucas, Ernest C. *Daniel*. *Apollos Old Testament Commentary*, 2002.  
Miller, Stephen R. *Daniel*. *New American Commentary*, 1994.

## DANIEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

### OUTLINE OF DANIEL 1

- I. The Lord blesses faithful exiles who honor the covenant (1:1-21).
  - A. Historical background: Babylon subjugates Judah (1:1-2)
  - B. Characters introduced: Four young Judeans are brought into the Babylonian court (1:3-7)
  - C. The test: Daniel and his friends separate from the Babylonian diet and thrive (1:8-16)
  - D. Characters evaluated: Four young Judeans prove superior to all of the Babylonian wise men (1:17-20)
  - E. Historical background: Judah outlasts Babylon (1:21)

### THE PURPOSE OF DANIEL 1

1. This chapter establishes the Lord’s sovereignty over the nations even in Judah’s exile.
2. This chapter demonstrates Daniel’s faithfulness to the covenant in not eating defiled foods.
3. This chapter shows that God’s hand is upon these four men.
4. This chapter explains how Daniel is able to understand dreams.
5. This chapter reveals not only that Daniel and his friends are superior in every matter of wisdom but that such was recognized by the Gentiles.
6. This chapter begins with the subjugation of Judah to Babylon but concludes with the triumph of Judah (in the person of Daniel) over Babylon.

## DIFFICULT ISSUES

*Why did Daniel refuse to eat the royal food and wine (1:8)?*

Some believe it was purely a matter of keeping the OT dietary laws, yet this does not account for his refusal to drink wine. Others believe it was because he did not want to eat food sacrificed to idols, yet even the vegetables that Daniel ate would have been defiled. Better: Daniel was separating himself from the Babylonians in a most basic way that reminded him every day who he was.

*Was the superior appearance of Daniel and his friends owing to the inherent quality of the food or to a supernatural work of God (1:15)?*

God's hand of blessing was clearly on these men, yet their good health may be understood as God working through natural means.

## CONNECTIONS IN DANIEL 1 TO SCRIPTURE

Daniel 1 shows the fulfillment of prophecies of Judah's exile by Babylon (Jer 13:9; 23:6; Hab 1:6). Indeed some of Hezekiah's very descendants were taken as captives as Isaiah predicted (Isa 39:6-7).

Daniel and his friends are not just exiles in any kingdom; they are in the heart of the anti-God empire. While this will become apparent as the book unfolds (chs. 2-5), the author already makes it clear in chapter 1 with reference to "Shinar" (1:2), an archaic reference which reminds the reader of Nimrod (Gen 10:9-11), the tower of Babel (Gen 11:2), the king who carried off Lot (Gen 14:1), and the treasure that Achan desired at the cost of his life (Josh 7:21). A later reference to Shinar is in Zechariah's vision of the home of wickedness (Zech 5:11), and Revelation concludes with God's final conquest over evil as Babylon is destroyed (Rev 17-18).

The vessels that Babylon carried off (1:2) and that were later desecrated by Belshazzar (5:2-4) had previously been seen by the Babylonian envoys to Hezekiah (Isa 39:2-4) and are specifically mentioned as being restored by Cyrus (Ezra 1:7-11).

The "times of the Gentiles" referenced by Jesus in Luke 21:24 began with the Babylonian conquest of Judah mentioned in Daniel.

## NOTES

Daniel 1 "sets out the basic issue that underlies all the stories: can a Jew function successfully as a courtier to a pagan king and still remain loyal to the God of Israel?" (Lucas 2002: 50).

v5 "Young comments: "Plato, *Alcibiades* 1:121, states that the education of Persian youths began in their 14th year, and Xenophon, *Cy.*, 1, 2 mentions the 16th or 17th years as the close. The [Persian] Avesta says that a student for holy training should go to a master for three years." Montgomery relates, "Much later in the old Pers. territory a three years' course was the vogue in the famous Nestorian school at Nisibis." It is reasonable to suppose that the Babylonian training period was similar to that of the Persians and other peoples" (Miller 1994: 63).

Hebrew Name	Meaning	Babylonian Name	Meaning
Daniel	God is my judge	Belteshazzar	Bel guard his life
Hananiah	Yahweh has been gracious	Shadrach	Command of Aku
Mishael	Who is what God is?	Meshach	Who is what Aku is?
Azariah	Yahweh has helped	Abednego	Servant of Nabu

v8 "Daniel and his friends avoided the luxurious diet of the king's table as a way of protecting themselves from being ensnared by the temptations of the Babylonian culture. They used their distinctive diet as a way of retaining their distinctive identity as Jewish exiles and avoiding complete assimilation into Babylonian culture (which was the king's goal with these conquered subjects). With this restricted diet they continually reminded themselves, in this time of testing, that they were the people of God in a foreign land and that they were dependent for their food, indeed for their very lives, upon God, their Creator, not King Nebuchadnezzar" (ESV Study Bible).