

Daniel 1 – Home and Away



Warm up Names often have meaning – do you know what your name means? Do you know what the name ‘Daniel’ means?

The Big Picture What is the connection with Daniel’s name and the theme of the book of Daniel?



Reading Daniel 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 delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure-house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king’s service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility – **4** young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. **5** The 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.

6 Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

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 in this way.

9 Now God had caused the official to show favour and compassion to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, ‘I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your^{ra} food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men of 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.



Q1. When did the historical events in the book of Daniel take place (v. 1, 21)

Q2. Where did the historical events in the book of Daniel take place? (v.2)

Q3. What / whom did Nebuchadnezzar take to Babylon? (v.2, 4)

Q4. What three big changes took place in Daniel (and his friends') lives? (v.4, 5 & 7)

Q5. What was significant about the change in names? (v.6)

Q6. Daniel was willing to accept some changes (new learning, new names) but not all. How did not accepting the King's food show that Daniel's priority in life is serving God?

Q7. The key to this chapter are in verse 2, 9 and 17. How do these verses show that God is completely in control?



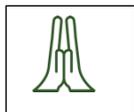
Apply understanding

Like Daniel, Christians are living as 'exiles and strangers' in this world (1Pet 1:1). How does this all relate to

our lives in school? What do you think you might do differently, if anything, having read and thought about this?

Action

Think of a situation where you need God's help and wisdom to be distinct for Him
Pray for a Christian friend at school – ask them what you can pray for them.



Prayer

Read Jesus prayer for His disciples in John 17:15-17.

Be encouraged that Jesus prays for you to live for Him in this world.

¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world

but that you protect them from the evil one.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Space for you to jot down some notes:

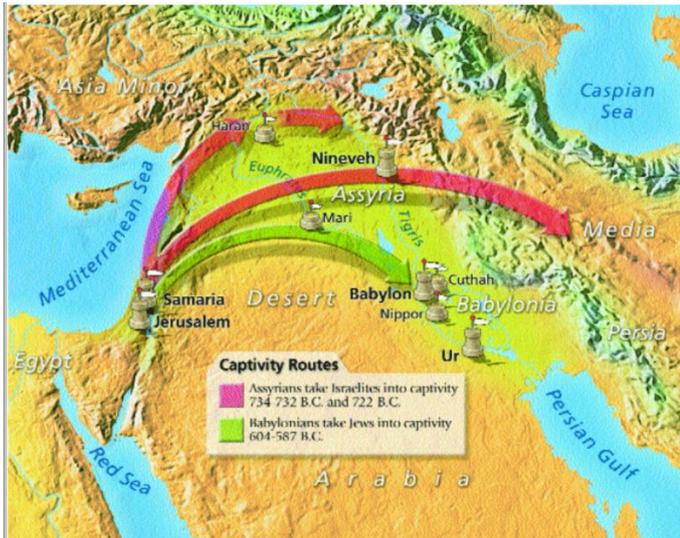
Leader's Notes

Warm Up: Daniel means 'God is my Judge'

The Big Picture: The over-arching theme of the book of Daniel is God's sovereignty. It teaches that in all circumstances of life (past, present, future) God is in control and like Daniel we can live before Him as our judge and that Jesus sits as judge over all of humanity (Acts 17:31)

Q1: The events span from 605BC (v.1) to 539BC (v.21) – about 65 years

Q2:



Q3: Articles from the Temple, members of the royal household

Q4: v.4 learning v.5 food v.7 names

Q5:

Original names worship God, New names are about Babylonian idols
Daniel – God is my judge; Belteshazzar = Bel protect his life
Hananiah – the Lord has been gracious; Shadrach = command of Aku*
Mishael – who is what God is; Meshach = Who is what Aku* is
Azariah – the Lord has helped Abednego = servant of Nebo
*moon god

Q6:

- the king's food was not in accordance with Jewish food laws; the food was offered to idols (though vegetables would also have been offered to idols)
- to eat at someone's table means to be in partnership with them, Daniel might be willing to serve under Nebuchadnezzar but was not willing to partner with Nebuchadnezzar

- whereas the new learning and new names were unpleasant and less likely to turn Daniel's heart away from God, good food is pleasurable and may more likely turn his heart away from God
- as meals are taken three times a day, there were three opportunities each day by eating different food to be reminded that Daniel and his friends were serving a different King
- vegetables and water are not as nourishing as the king's food – but the fact Daniel and his friends thrived, demonstrated that God was working a miracle and was a practical expression of their daily dependence on God for their health and ongoing lives

Q7:

v. 2 God 'gave' Judah into the hands of Babylon

Even in times of disaster, God is completely in control e.g. Covid.

God's purpose in crisis is repentance and faith to bring the unbelieving to repentance

to cause the believing to grow in faith

When Jesus died on the cross, it seemed that God's plan had failed, and yet He was completely in control as He turned what looked like defeat into complete victory over sin and death.

v.9 God 'gave' to Daniel kindness and compassion

God is in control of all circumstances, he orders circumstances for Daniel's step of faith to bring glory to God through causing the official to show favour, and causing Daniel and his friends to miraculously thrive on a simple diet.

Daniel was always very polite in his request to not have the King's food. In seeking to obey God, he was not being a trouble-maker or rabble-rouser, he asked boldly but respected authority.

v. 17 God 'gave' knowledge and understanding

Daniel and his friends' abilities are gifts from God. They didn't use their gifts for their own pride but for God's glory. As they studied in the ungodly Babylonian education system, they did it with a God-honouring mind.

Q8:

- Even in the midst of difficult situations, remember that God is in control, we serve Jesus who is the risen Saviour – pray to

God for wisdom to honour Him in the situation (Romans 8v28)

- Nothing happens by accident – God is always in charge
- In all our learning, always have a Biblical mind, think how can I honour God in my learning?
- In seeking to honour God, do so in a way that is polite and respects others (1 Peter 2:12)
- Always think how can you serve God in all circumstances, accommodating yourself as far as is possible to the situation, but also decide at what point you need to be distinct and different for God.
- Remember God came to earth, Jesus lived amongst us, He was in the world but not of the world.
- Daniel and his friends encouraged each other to stay faithful to God. It is important to have Christian friends who can encourage you to stay faithful to God.