



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF DANIEL

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. If the person sitting next to me were captured by a foreign nation, they wouldn't last very long.
2. I am strongly influenced by the social norms where I live.
3. There are times when God chooses to stop protecting us.
4. It is within God's character to give us into the hands of the enemy.
5. God blesses us with gifts, even ones that go against His commands and are offensive to the church.

DIG DEEPER

➤ **READ Daniel 1:1-2** (NIV)

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.

» **Vs. 1: The Setting** - [Around 605 BC]

- **Judah: the Southern Kingdom** - They had remained faithful 150 years longer than the Northern Kingdom. But they lost their focus on God.

- **Jehoiakim** - Because of a prophecy a century and a half earlier, where Isaiah warned Hezekiah that some of his descendants would be carted off as officials to Babylon (Is 39:7). Based on the verbiage, it is believed that Jehoiakim gave up without a struggle.

» **Vs. 2: And the Lord delivered** -

- **the Lord - Adonai** [owner, ruler, sovereign]. This is atypical, and seems contradictory to what is happening to Judah. Normally God is referred to by his name, Yahweh. By the use of this expression, Daniel was emphasizing the dominant power or supreme authority of God, which is the consistent theme of the book. (Interestingly, the same root name for Adonai is used in verse 10 when referring to Nebuchadnezzar to show the real conflict over who has supreme authority--God or mankind.)

- **delivered** - Literally the Hebrew word *nātan*, "gave." It was not Nebuchadnezzar's military might or brilliance that brought about the downfall of Jerusalem, but it was the sovereign will of God.

« Does God really give us into the hands of the enemy? If so, what does that tell us about Him?

- **Babylonia** - (Greek alteration) "In Babylonia" is in Hebrew, "to the land of Shinar." This is a deliberate archaism.... Shinar was the site of the tower of Babel (Gn 11:1-9; 10:10), and was synonymous with opposition to God; it was the place where wickedness was at home (Zc 5:11).

➤ **READ Daniel 1:3-7** (NIV)

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.



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

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.

» **Vs. 4: The Characters -**

- **Some...from the royal family/nobility** - All young men were from the tribe of Judah and, most likely, from the line of the kings. Even if there are two classes, the likelihood is that Daniel was of royal birth. Josephus declared that Daniel and his three friends were members of Zedekiah's family.

- **New names** - Attempted divorce from their spiritual family.

Daniel [God is my judge] - **Belteshazzar** [Bel, protect his life!]

Hananiah [Yahweh is gracious] - **Shadrach** [command of Aku" (šudur-aku), the moon god]

Mishael [who is what God is?] - **Meshach** [who is what Aku is?]

Azariah [Yahweh has helped" or "will help.] - **Abednego** [servant of Nebo]

» **READ Daniel 1:8-9 (NIV)**

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 this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel,

» **Vs. 9: Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion -**

« What does this say about God? Why now? Why not earlier? Why not to all of the Israelites?

» **READ Daniel 1:17-20 (NIV)**

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.

- High intelligence and hard work alone did not account for their success, but their wisdom was God's gift. Notable, is that they had to learn agriculture, architecture, astrology, astronomy, law, mathematics, magical arts and the difficult Akkadian language.

« What does it say about God that he would even help these young men excel in even the pagan occult areas of literature and learning?

« Does God still demonstrate this selective gifting today, in a time of religious upheaval? How?

» **READ Daniel 1:21 (NIV)**

21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

- ["Until" should be translated as "through" since Daniel died in the third year of Cyrus' reign.]

This verse is here to show that God also blessed Daniel with about 95 years of life--10-15 years longer than his average contemporaries.

MY PRAYER...

1. What things are causing me to be less faithful to God than I need to be?
2. How is God still blessing me, despite the fact that I live in a fallen world?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?

