

Daniel 1 – Class Study (CSB Version)

Introduction

Daniel 1 introduces the **faithfulness of God’s people in exile**. It shows how Daniel and his friends remained **obedient to God** despite cultural pressure in the Babylonian court. The chapter sets the tone for the **entire book**, highlighting themes of **faith under trial, wisdom, divine favor, and God’s sovereignty**.

Key Themes:

- Faithfulness in a foreign culture
- God’s provision and wisdom
- Obedience and holiness
- Sovereignty of God over human authority

Historical Background:

- Daniel and other young men of Judah were taken during the **first deportation to Babylon (605 BC)** under King Nebuchadnezzar.
 - Babylonian policy: train exiles in **court etiquette, Babylonian language, literature, and idolatry** to serve the empire.
 - Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah represent **faithful Jews resisting assimilation**.
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Daniel 1:1–2 – Babylonian Exile Begins

Scripture (CSB):

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 of the house of God. He brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the articles in the treasury of his god.

Word Study & Notes

- **Shinar** – Ancient name for southern Mesopotamia, location of Babylon (Genesis 10:10).
- **“House of God”** – Refers to the temple in Jerusalem. God’s sacred objects were **plundered**, emphasizing **divine sovereignty** over nations.

Historical/Cultural Insight

- Babylon’s conquest reflects the **prophetic warnings of Jeremiah** (Jeremiah 25:1–11).
- Taking sacred articles to Babylon was both a **political victory** and a **religious humiliation** for Judah.

Theological Insight

- God permits Babylonian conquest to fulfill His purposes while demonstrating that **He is sovereign over nations**(Daniel 2:21).

Cross-References

- 2 Kings 24:1–2 – Babylonian conquest of Judah.
- Jeremiah 27:6 – God allows nations to serve His plan.
- Isaiah 39:6–7 – Foreign rulers will carry off treasures of the temple.

How/Why Questions

1. Why do you think God allowed Jerusalem to be captured?
2. How does the removal of temple articles demonstrate God's sovereignty?
3. What can we learn about trusting God when our "sacred spaces" are violated?

Application

- Recognize God's sovereignty even in apparent defeat.
 - Trust God's plan when your personal or spiritual "treasures" are threatened.
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Daniel 1:3–7 – Training in Babylon

Scripture (CSB):

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and 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—and to teach them the literature and language of the Babylonians.

5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from his own table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they would enter the king's service.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from Judah.

7 The chief official gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

Word Study & Notes

- **Aptitude for every kind of learning** – Hebrew: *chokmah*; practical and intellectual wisdom.
- **New names** – Renaming signified **Babylonian identity** and submission to their gods (cf. Acts 11:26; Saul → Paul).

Historical/Cultural Insight

- Young men of noble lineage were trained to serve in **Babylonian bureaucracy**, combining court etiquette, military training, and idolatrous rituals.
- Name changes symbolized **assimilation and cultural pressure**.

Theological Insight

- God calls believers to maintain **faithfulness and identity**, even under pressure to conform (Daniel 1:8).

Cross-References

- Exodus 20:3–6 – Avoid other gods despite cultural pressures.
- Romans 12:2 – Do not conform to the pattern of this world.
- 2 Kings 24:15 – God uses exile to refine and preserve His people.

How/Why Questions

1. Why was renaming an important tool for Babylonian assimilation?
2. How did Daniel and his friends maintain their identity despite new names?
3. What pressures today challenge us to compromise our faith?

Application

- Guard your spiritual identity under cultural pressures.
 - Recognize that God can preserve holiness in difficult environments.
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Daniel 1:8–16 – Faithfulness in Obedience

Scripture (CSB):

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the king’s food or wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself.

9 God gave Daniel favor and compassion with the chief official.

10 But the chief official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. If he sees you looking worse than the young men your age, you will endanger my life.”

11 Then Daniel said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

12 “Please test your servants for ten days with vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the king’s food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.”

14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of ten days, they appeared healthier and better nourished than all the young men who ate the king’s food.

16 So the guard continued to allow them to follow their own diet, and to the king’s table he allowed no change in their appearance or in their ability.

Word Study & Notes

- **Defile (Hebrew: *tum’ah*)** – ceremonial or moral impurity, including food associated with idols.
- **Favor and compassion** – God intervenes to bless faithfulness, even in political hierarchies.

Historical/Cultural Insight

- Refusing royal food was **risky** because it could be seen as rebellion.
- Daniel’s negotiation shows **practical wisdom coupled with faithfulness**.

Theological Insight

- God honors obedience with **protection, favor, and visible blessing**.
- Faithfulness often requires **courage and strategic wisdom**.

Cross-References

- Leviticus 11 – Dietary laws and holiness.
- Proverbs 3:5–6 – Trust God for guidance in difficult situations.
- 1 Peter 2:12 – Conduct before unbelievers brings glory to God.

How/Why Questions

1. Why did Daniel refuse the king’s food?
2. How did God’s intervention demonstrate His sovereignty and care?
3. How can we balance faithfulness with wisdom in modern cultural pressures?

Application

- Stand firm in obedience to God, even when others may not understand.
 - Pray and trust God to honor faithfulness in tangible ways.
 - Use wisdom and diplomacy to maintain integrity without unnecessary conflict.
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Daniel 1:17–21 – God’s Reward for Faithfulness

Scripture (CSB):

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and learning in every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.

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 spoke with them, and among all of them, none was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they served in the king’s court.

20 As for Daniel, he remained until the first year of King Cyrus.

21 Daniel had understanding and wisdom; and he had insight into visions and dreams for all the time of the kings of Babylon.

Word Study & Notes

- **Understanding visions and dreams** – God gave Daniel **supernatural insight**, later used for interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s visions.
- **Service in the king’s court** – demonstrates God’s blessing of faithfulness with influence and opportunity.

Historical/Cultural Insight

- God’s favor made Daniel and his friends stand out among trained Babylonian elites.
- Their influence spanned multiple kings, showing **long-term blessing of integrity**.

Theological Insight

- God rewards obedience with **wisdom, favor, and influence**.
- Spiritual gifts and abilities are linked to **faithfulness and integrity**.

Cross-References

- James 1:12 – Faithful endurance is rewarded.
- Exodus 33:12–17 – God’s presence brings favor and guidance.
- Matthew 25:21 – Faithfulness leads to commendation and responsibility.

How/Why Questions

1. How did God reward Daniel’s obedience?
2. Why is faithfulness sometimes more important than immediate results?
3. How does God’s blessing enable us to influence others for His purposes?

Application

- Trust God to reward faithfulness in His timing.
 - Seek wisdom and insight through obedience and prayer.
 - Remember that integrity in small matters prepares you for greater responsibility.
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Summary of Daniel 1

Key Lessons:

- God is **sovereign over nations** and circumstances.
- Faithfulness requires **courage, obedience, and integrity**.
- God blesses faithfulness with **favor, wisdom, and influence**.
- Maintaining holiness and identity in a foreign culture demonstrates **trust in God**.

Discussion Questions for Reflection:

1. What “cultural pressures” challenge your faith today?
2. How can Daniel’s approach to compromise teach us about strategic obedience?
3. How does God’s provision encourage boldness in living faithfully?