

I. Introduction. 1:1-2

- A. Daniel in the critics den. Mt. 24:15 Heb. 11:33-34
- B. The historical context: The Babylonian exile of Judah (600 BC). 1:1-2 9:11-14
II Kn. 24:1ff Dt. 28:64 29:22-28 31:17 II Chr. 36:15-21 Jer. 20:4 29:10 25:1-11
- C. Daniel writes at the end of his life (530 B.C.) 7:1 8:1 9:2 10:2 12:5 Eze. 14:14, 20 28:3
- D. We, like Daniel and his friends, are strangers and exiles in a hostile world which is trying to press us into its mold. Rom. 12:1-2 I Pe. 2:11 Heb. 11:13

II. Do not be conformed to the world. v. 3-7

- A. Having defeated Judah militarily, King Nebuchadnezzar seeks to conquer them religiously by turning the children of God into Babylonians. v. 3-7
 - 1. Personal isolation. v. 3
 - 2. Intellectual indoctrination. v. 4
 - 3. Moral seduction. v. 5
 - 4. Religious confusion. v. 6-7
- B. You and your children face the same kinds of pressures from the world.
- C. What can you do to protect yourself and your children from assimilation? Ro. 12:1-2
Ro. 6:11 Dt. 18:10-12 Acts 7:22 Ultimately we have to trust God for our kids.

III. Stand firm on principle by faith. v. 8-16

- A. Daniel faces his first big test. v. 8
 - 1. Daniel purposes not to defile himself. v. 8
 - 2. You too will be tested. Pr. 29:25
- B. Daniel pursues a solution with wisdom, tact and persistence. v. 9-13 Pr. 15:1
- C. Daniel teaches us how to live as citizens of God's kingdom in a foreign land.
 - 1. Our situation, as strangers and aliens in the world, is like theirs. I Pe. 2:11
 - 2. Daniel and his friends didn't rebel, but rather worked hard and sought to be a blessing to their captors. Jer. 29:4-7,10
 - 3. Remembering where your true citizenship lies, cooperate, but don't compromise with unbelieving authorities. Acts 5:29
 - 4. Sometimes you must take a stand to separate from the world. Ro. 12:1-2 He. 11:26
 - 5. You may be a positive influence on other believers who need a leader.
- D. Wisely and respectfully appeal to those in authority.
 - 1. Be self-controlled, kind and respectful. Js. 1:19 Pr. 25:28
 - 2. Apply the PAUSE principle from "The Peacemaker".
 - a. Prepare for peacemaking. Pr. 21:5
 - b. Affirm relationships. Phil. 4:1ff
 - c. Understand the interests of others. Phil. 2:3-4
 - d. Search for creative solutions.
 - e. Evaluate options objectively.

IV. God will honor your faithfulness to Him. v. 14-21 I Sam. 2:30

- A. The LORD miraculously intervenes to grant Daniel and his friends success. v. 14-16**
- B. Daniel and his friends excel in their final exams. v. 17-20 Ps. 119:98 Pr. 22:29**
 - 1. Why did they surpass the other trainees? v. 17 Phil. 2:12-13**
 - 2. They also learn important spiritual lessons which will help them when their faith is challenged in years to come.**
 - 3. Daniel and his friends are put into positions in which they can be a blessing both to their captors and to the people of God. v. 21**
 - 4. The greatness of God is acknowledged by the king. v. 19-20**
- C. Application.**
 - 1. Give God the glory for your physical, intellectual and spiritual success. v. 17**
 - 2. God's past faithfulness encourages present and future faith.**
 - 3. Use your influence for God's glory.**
 - 4. God's blessing is not always experienced immediately. Heb. 11:32ff**

V. Concluding Applications.

- A. We, too, are dual citizens of our nation and of heaven. Phil. 3:20**
- B. God is at work even in hard times. He has not cast off His people.**
- C. Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose firm, dare to make it known.**
- D. Where is Jesus in Daniel 1?**
 - 1. Jesus faced the greatest possible temptation and did not compromise. Mt. 4:1-11 Heb. 4:15 2:17-18**
 - 2. Jesus is perfect in wisdom. v. 19 I Cor. 1:30-31 Col. 2:3**
 - 3. Jesus dealt gently with unbelievers who oppressed Him. I Pe. 2:23**
 - 4. We need Jesus because we fall short of God's standards. I Pe. 1:19**
 - 5. Jesus makes us fit for the King's presence. Ro. 3:21ff Phil. 3:3-9**

Discussion questions

- 1. Why was Daniel in Babylon?**
- 2. Why did King Nebuchadnezzar select the Hebrew boys?**
- 3. What was Nebuchadnezzar's strategy in gaining influence over Daniel and his friends?
How does the world continue to operate in the same way?**
- 4. How can we prepare our children to resist the pressure to conform to the world?**
- 5. How is our situation like that of Daniel and his friends?**
- 6. What does Daniel teach us about cooperation with the world?**
- 7. What does Daniel teach us about when we must separate from the world?**
- 8. What does Daniel teach us about how to appeal to those in authority?**
- 9. Where can we see Christ in Daniel 1?**