

## Daniel – Background Glimpse

Upon opening the book of Daniel, we see the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Israel and Samaria) under great discipline. They had been destroyed as a nation in 721 B.C. by the Assyrian Empire. At the same time the Southern Kingdom of Israel (known as Judah) was also under discipline and controlled first by the Assyrians, then for a short period of time by the Egyptians, and finally by the Chaldeans. The type of discipline they had, included extreme economic adversity and military invasion by a foreign power.

We must see that no nation in history can survive when there is a continuous rejection of the divine laws of establishment. A nation marches to its own destruction when it refuses the principles of God's Truth.

Throughout the book of Daniel we see how:

1. God blesses in times of adversity. In God's Word we see many evidences of national discipline and intense suffering and yet God's care and faithfulness to the regenerate.
2. We also see that the Heavenly Father rewards spiritual faithfulness. History reveals that the Nation of Israel reached a high Spiritual peak between 516 B.C. and 323 B.C., all because of obedience to Biblical principles.
3. On the other hand, we observe that God disciplined nations as noted in the discipline of Assyria shortly before Daniel's captivity.

This wonderful book of Daniel shows us what we should do if taken over by a foreign power. If we have our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and our minds saturated with Biblical truths we cannot ever be internally conquered.

**Daniel 1:3** reveals that Ashpenaz was the minister of the royal palace, and as such, held a very high position in the Chaldean Empire. He became responsible for the selection and training of the captives and many of these young men belonged to the family of David or other families of nobility in the tribe of Judah. About 50 to 70 young boys were taken at first.

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**Daniel 1:4** itemizes what qualifications that Ashpenaz looked for when selecting the king's hostages.

- “*No blemish*” – outward perfection
- “*Well favored*” – physically handsome
- “*Skillful in wisdom*” – high IQ
- “*Cunning in knowledge*” – intellectual

These young men were to be brainwashed, learn Chaldean culture and above all to *think* like a Chaldean. When you read **Daniel 1:5**, you will see that these were no ordinary prisoners. They were to be trained for 3 years and then personally examined by Nebuchadnezzar.

Out of the dozens of young men our focus now is on only 4. (**Dan.1:6**)

- Daniel
- Hananiah
- Mishael
- Azariah

(**Dan. 1:7**) name changes:

- I. “*Daniel*” – “*God is judge*” – Daniel stands for the whole concept of *JUDGMENT* – Jesus Christ was judged for us. Acceptance – no judgment... Rejection – condemnation and judgment. Daniel was taken captive in 606 B.C, and was a very unusual young man. Aristocratic, good looking, highly intelligent, a genius, and given the greatest of all Chaldean names – Belteshazzar which means “*Bel’s prince*”. *Bel* was the Akkadian god, the ruling god, equivalent to Zeus or Jupiter.

*NOTE:* It is possible for brainwashing *not* to work – HIS Name changed to *Belteshazzar*; a heathen facade, Chaldean clothes covered him – in fact he could look like someone related to the foreign gods, but the

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inner man, *HIS SOUL*, was not changed. *HIS MIND AND SOUL HAD TRUTH – MUCH TRUTH!! AND THAT CANNOT BE OBSCURED BY A PAGAN EXTERIOR.*

- II. *“Hananiah”* means, *“The Lord is gracious.”* The members of the Trinity are gracious. Name changed to *“Shadrach”*, meaning *“Illumined by the sun god”*, another attempt to obscure the power of the Members of the Godhead.
- III. *“Mishael”* means *“Who and what is the Lord?”* God’s Grace – never earned or deserved by mankind. Mishael was taken into captivity and the name changed to *“Meshach”*, meaning *“Who and what is Ishtar (or Venus)?”*
- IV. *“Azariah”* means *“The Lord is my help.”* This young man must have had great parents who talked to him from the time he was a tiny child, placing him in the Lord’s hand, care and keeping. Now his name was changed to *“Abed-nego”*, meaning *“The servant or slave of Nego”* an Akkadian name, *“god of wisdom and education”*.

We must see here that academic training is outstanding, wonderful and for a profession, it is a must. But the wrong type of education can destroy a soul not steeped in the Word of God. By education, the Chaldeans were attempting to change Bible believing nobility into pagan aristocracy.