

Daniel 1:1-8 (NASB)

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

- **Jer. 46:2** (Jeremiah used a Judean calendar, while Daniel used the Babylonian calendar.) There were multiple deportations of Jews to Babylon: 605 B.C. – Daniel & his friends.
- Nebuchadnezzar’s father was Nabopolassar, who died months after Daniel and his friends were deported. Except for Pharaoh of the Exodus, more is written about this foreign king than any other.

² The **Lord gave** Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the **vessels** of the house of **[the]** God; and he brought them to the land of **Shinar**, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

- **“Lord”** אֲדֹנָי (‘Adonay) = owner, ruler, sovereign, plural of majesty. N.T. equivalent = “Lord”
- **“gave”** נתן (nathan’) = to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up.
- **“vessels”** כְּלִי (kĕliy) = article, vessel, implement, utensil. Cf., **Ex.27:19; 30:27; 31:8; 2Chron.4:16; Dan.5:2**
- **“Shinar”** – **Gen.11:2; Zech.5:11**

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his **officials**, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the **royal family** and of the **nobles**,

- **“officials”** סָרִיס (cariyc) = eunuch; one castrated. Jewish law forbade castration (Dt.23:1).
- **Isa.39:6-7** ... Nebuchadnezzar was trying to control Judah without actually taking it over. The training was for political and propaganda purposes. Hostages from Judah would weaken resources there; prove useful to Babylon; and reinforce Judah’s vassal status.

⁴ youths in whom was **no defect**, who were **good-looking, showing intelligence** in every *branch* of wisdom, endowed with **understanding** and **discerning knowledge**, and who had ability for **serving** in the king’s court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the literature and **language** of the Chaldeans.

- Plato: “the education of Persian youths began in their 14th year.” Xenophon: “... closes at 16-17”
- **“defect”** מַאֻם (m’uwm) = blemish, spot, physical defect. Lev.21:20 – damaged testicles are a defect.
- **“good-looking”** מְרֵאָה טוֹב (towb mar’eh) = pleasant, agreeable appearance.
- **“showing intelligence”** שָׂכַל (sakal) = to be prudent, having insight or comprehension.
- **“discerning knowledge”** – cf. **2Chron.1:10**, Solomon

- **“serving”** עמד (*`amad*) = to stand erect.
- **“language”** – Akkadian, wedge-shaped characters in clay tablets.

5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king’s **choice food** and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be **educated three years**, at the end of which they were to enter the king’s **personal service**.

- **“choice food”** (pathbag) = Persian technical term meaning honorific gifts from the royal table.
- **“educated”** גדל (*gadal*) = to make great or powerful; frequently used of raising children.
- **“personal service”** (paniyim) = to stand before; to face; technical term for royal service.

6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah**.

- **“Daniel”** = God is my judge ⇒ **“Belteshazzar”** = Bel protect his life; prince of Bel
- **“Hananiah”** = Yahweh is gracious ⇒ **“Shadrach”** = Command of Aku (moon god)
- **“Mishael”** = Who is as God is? ⇒ **“Meshach”** = Who is as Aku is?
- **“Azariah”** = The Lord is my help ⇒ **“Abed-nego”** = Servant of Nebo, the shining one

7 Then the commander of the officials assigned *new* names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* **Belteshazzar**, to Hananiah, **Shadrach**, to Mishael, **Meshach** and to Azariah, **Abed-nego**.

⇒ **Note Nebuchadnezzar’s strategy: isolation, indoctrination, compromise, confusion.**

8 But Daniel **made up his mind** that he would not **defile** himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

⇒ **Note Daniel’s response: decisiveness, modesty, expectation.**

- **“made up his mind”** לב שומה (*suwm leb*) = to put, place, set, establish, ordain, “resolve” one’s inner man, mind, will, heart, understanding. Cf., **Gen.2:8; 6:16; 22:6,9**
- All food in Babylon was ritually unclean (Ezek.4:13; Hosea 9:3-4). By Easter standards, to share a meal was to commit to friendship ... a covenant relationship ... leading to allegiance and loyalty.