



# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## Choosing to be Different

### Chapter 1

#### Goal Of Chapter 1

To help you to see how God calls you to be different in the midst of a culture that doesn't always represent God. Rather, it is our difference that helps to shape the people and the culture around us.



## Babylon

Not just an ancient city in the Old Testament, but it's also a symbolic representation of any nation or kingdom that is opposite to God's kingdom. The Tower of Babel that is mentioned in Genesis 11 is a significant connection to Babylon. In fact, the Hebrew words for Babel and Babylon are the exact same, signifying Babylon as a place of confusion and rebellion against God. Tertullian, who was an African Christian writer and apologist often referred to Rome as "Western Babylon" even though geographically they were many miles apart. For us, our country and our city can be considered a symbolic Babylon - how do we navigate the complexities and pressures to conform? According to Chapter 1, we do this by being faithful Christians and not compromising on our biblical convictions.

## Sin

Due to Judah's sin and rebellion against God, God punishes the people by giving them into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon). The Bible defines sin as a transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4), and rebellion against God (Joshua 1:18). Oftentimes we consider our sin and rebellion as a small matter, when in fact God put an entire nation in exile as a consequence to sin. God is calling each of us to be mindful of how we sin against Him. Although He is a God that is gracious and forgives, lack of repentance and changed behavior always ends in punishment, and for those who don't trust in Jesus and neglect repentance it ends in eternal wrath.

## Name Changes

- Daniel: "God is my judge" (**changed**) - Belteshazzar: "Baal protects the king"
- Hananiah: "God is gracious" (**changed**) - Shadrach: "Under the Command of Aku (the moon god)"
- Mishaël: "There is none like God" (**changed**) - Meshach: "There is none like Aku (the moon god)"
- Azariah: "God has helped me" (**changed**) - Abed-Nego: "The Servant of Nebo (the Babylonian god of wisdom)"

## Embrace Being Different

The main theme of Chapter 1 is how Daniel and his friends maintained the posture of being different and God honored that. In verse 8 Daniel made the choice not to be defiled with the king's food and asked to be put on a different diet - a choice that could have cost him his life as well as the eunuch that was in charge of them. This request was granted and at the end of 10 days, Daniel and his friends appeared to look better than those who ate the king's food. Immediately after this test God gave them wisdom to learn skills in all literature and gave Daniel the gift to interpret visions and dreams. In the end when King Nebuchadnezzar spoke with them, he found them to be 10 times sharper than all the Babylonian magicians and enchanters. God's favor rested on them all because they embraced being different.

## Questions:

- How are you doing with honoring God through repentance and turning away from sin?
- Do you find it hard or even embarrassing to be different around your friends?
- What are some wins? How have you upheld biblical conviction and what fruit have you seen from it?