

# Week 29: Daniel in Babylon - Standing Firm in a Pagan Culture

*A Sabbath Family Bible Study*

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## Introduction

Daniel was taken from his home as a young man and placed in the heart of a pagan empire. Babylon was powerful, wealthy, and spiritually corrupt. Everything around Daniel urged compromise. But he stood firm. He refused to defile himself with the king's food, refused to bow to idols, and refused to hide his devotion to God - even under threat of death. His life teaches families today how to remain faithful in a world determined to reshape them. Daniel shows that holiness is possible, conviction is necessary, and God honors those who stand firm when culture demands surrender.

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## Scripture Reading: Selected Passages (KJV)

Daniel 1:1–21 Daniel 6:4–10, 16–23

(With commentary throughout)

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### **Daniel 1:1–7 - Captivity and Conformity**

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

*2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.*

*3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;*

*4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.*

*5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.*

*6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:*

*7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.*

**Commentary:**

Babylon sought not just bodies, but minds and identities. Renaming Daniel and his friends was an attempt to erase their heritage and replace it with pagan loyalty. Culture still works the same way today - pressuring believers to adopt new identities and values. Daniel's story begins with a warning: captivity starts subtly, through small compromises and quiet assimilation.

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**Daniel 1:8–16 - A Purpose in the Heart**

*8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

*9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.*

*10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.*

*11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,*

*12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.*

*13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.*

*14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.*

*15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.*

*16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.*

**Commentary:**

Daniel's strength came from private conviction before public courage. He decided in his heart before he acted in the world. God honored his faithfulness not by removing him from Babylon, but by preserving him within it. The lesson is simple: when families set godly boundaries early, God grants favor even in hostile environments.

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**Daniel 1:17–21 - God Honors the Faithful**

*17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*

*18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.*

*19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.*

*20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

*21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.*

**Commentary:**

Their excellence was not Babylon's achievement - it was God's reward. Daniel's faithfulness shaped his future influence. He would outlive kings, conquerors, and empires because character lasts longer than culture. God preserves the man who stands when others bow.

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**Daniel 6:4–10 - Conviction Under Fire**

*4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.*

*5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*

*6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.*

*7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm*

*decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.*

*8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.*

*9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.*

*10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

**Commentary:**

Daniel did not panic or hide - he practiced the same faith he had before the law changed. His devotion was not reactionary, but steady. A consistent walk with God prepares believers for sudden trials. Daniel didn't become courageous in crisis; he was courageous long before crisis came.

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**Daniel 6:16–23 - Delivered from the Lions**

*16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*

*17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.*

*18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.*

*19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.*

*20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?*

*21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.*

*22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*

*23 Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.*

### **Commentary:**

Daniel spent a night with lions because he spent a lifetime with God. His deliverance showed the king - and the empire - that there is no power like the God of Israel. God may not always remove trials, but He rules over them. The lions were real, but so was God's protection.

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### **Discussion Questions for All Ages**

#### **Young Children:**

- Why did Daniel not want to eat the king's food?
- How did Daniel pray even when it was dangerous?
- Who protected Daniel from the lions?

#### **Older Children & Teens:**

- What does Daniel teach about standing firm in a world that pressures us to compromise?
- Why is private devotion important for public courage?
- How can we prepare our hearts before tests come?

#### **Adults:**

- Which cultural pressures today resemble Babylon's attempts to reshape Daniel?
  - How can families build convictions that resist compromise?
  - What practices (prayer, Scripture, discipline) prepare believers for trials?
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### **Psalm Reading**

#### **Psalm 27:1–5 (KJV)**

*1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*

*2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

*3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

*4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

*5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

**Commentary:**

This psalm echoes Daniel's courage. Fear fades when the Lord is the center of a man's life. God shelters those who seek Him, even when surrounded by opposition. Daniel stood firm because his confidence rested in God, not in safety.

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 **Hymn: "Dare to Be a Daniel"**

By P. P. Bliss (1873)

**1.**

Standing by a purpose true,  
Heeding God's command,  
Honor them, the faithful few!  
All hail to Daniel's band!

**Refrain:**

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!

**2.**

Many mighty men are lost,  
Daring not to stand,  
Who for God had been a host,  
By joining Daniel's band!

**Refrain:**

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!

**3.**

Hold the gospel banner high!  
On to victory grand!  
Satan and his hosts defy,  
And shout for Daniel's band!

**Refrain:**

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!

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 **Family Application Points**

1. **Purpose Early:** Conviction must be formed before temptation arrives.
  2. **Pray Consistently:** Daniel's courage grew from daily devotion.
  3. **Resist Pressure:** Babylon cannot reshape a heart anchored in God.
  4. **Stand Firm Publicly:** Faith must be visible, not hidden.
  5. **Trust God Fully:** Deliverance belongs to the Lord, not to safety or strategy.
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 **A Sabbath Feast Prayer** (to be used later when the Sabbath meal is ready)

“Father, thank You for Daniel's courage and Your faithfulness in every generation. As we share this Sabbath meal, strengthen our hearts to stand firm in a world that opposes Your ways. Make our home a place of prayer, conviction, and holy devotion. Protect us from compromise and fill us with bold obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

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 **Closing Prayer**

“Lord, make us faithful as Daniel was faithful. Give us strength to stand firm when the world pressures us to bow, courage to pray when others hide, and conviction to honor You in every decision. Let our families shine with steadfast devotion, and may our children learn boldness from our example. Guard our hearts, anchor our homes, and guide our steps in Your truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.”