

Daniel 1:3-21

November 24, 2024



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Bible Name Game

1. Form groups of four or five.
2. Think of as many Bible people as you can whose names have an important meaning or were changed by God. No Googling or asking AI!
3. After five minutes, each group will take turns naming one character.
4. The group with the most correct answers wins.

Teaching Moment

Today, we talked about Bible characters with important names or names changed by God. In the book of Daniel, Daniel and his friends (who you might know as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) had their names changed—not by

God but by the Babylonians. The Babylonians wanted Daniel and his friends to be more like them (worshiping false gods), but Daniel and his friends stayed faithful to the one true God.

The pressure they felt to conform is a pressure we still feel today. Society wants us to fit in, in ways that don't line up with what the Bible teaches. Like Daniel and his friends, we have a decision to make: we can conform to the world or stay faithful to God.

Name Changes in Today's Passage:

- Daniel ("God is my judge") became Belteshazzar ("Bel protect his life").
- Hananiah ("the Lord shows grace") became Shadrach ("command of Aku")
- Mishael ("Who is like God?") became Meshach ("Who is as Aku is?")
- Azariah ("The Lord is my help") became Abednego ("Servant of Nebo (Nego)").

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 1:3-7.

What is happening here?

What was King Nebuchadnezzar trying to do through this training?

Why would the Babylonians want to change the Judahites' names?

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 1:8-16.

What is happening in this passage?

What was Daniel doing?

How do you see God working in this situation?

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 1:17-20.

What is happening here?

What were Daniel and his friends experiencing?

How was God working?

GOING DEEPER

How is Daniel's situation like what we experience in society today?

APPLICATION

Read Romans 12:1-2. What do you think this means? How do we live in our society without conforming to it?

How can we live more like Daniel and his friends?

How can we look for God working when we go through difficult experiences or feel like we are losing?

PRAYER

Thank God for working even when life is hard. Ask Him to help you live in the world without conforming to the way the rest of the world lives. Ask Him to show our group how He wants to use you for His glory.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of the book of Daniel.

December 1, 2024 --- Daniel 2:1-23

COMMENTARY

Daniel 1:3-21

1:3. Chief of his court officials means literally "chief of the eunuchs," but since "eunuch" had come to mean "royal official," most likely Ashpenaz was not a eunuch, nor did Daniel and his friends become thus.

1:4. The Hebrew word for young men here literally means "children" or "boys" and probably refers to teenagers, a good estimate being around age 15. Chaldean language and literature refers to an ancient university-style education in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Aramaic.

1:7. Daniel and his friends, whose original names honored the God of Israel, were given other names that intended to honor the false gods of Babylon.

Daniel (“God is My Judge”) became Belteshazzar (“Bel Protect Him”); Hananiah (“God Has Been Gracious”) became Shadrach (“The Command of Akku”); Mishael (“Who Is What God Is?”) became Meshach (“Who Is What Aku Is?”); Azariah (“The Lord Has Helped”) became Abednego (“Servant of Nebo”).

1:8. The word determined means literally “set upon his heart,” referring to inner resolve. Daniel decided that he would not defile himself with a diet that included non-Kosher meat such as horseflesh and pork, or drink wine that had been offered to Babylonian gods.

1:15. The fact that Daniel and his friends looked better and healthier is not a biblical endorsement of vegetarianism (Gen. 9:3). Rather, God in His providence made them healthy and strong.

1:20. Throughout the Book of Daniel, there are six different expressions for the king’s counselors. The first two, used here, are diviner-priests and mediums. The term “diviner priests” comes from a root that means “engraver.” It refers to those who engraved Babylonian religious activities and astrological movements of the stars on clay tablets. The word “mediums” means “conjurers.” It refers to those who used spells and incantations to communicate with the spirit world.

1:21. Daniel saw the end of the exile, living until the first year of King Cyrus (539 B.C.) and even beyond that time (see 10:1, where “third year” dates to 536).