

Theme: Daniel serves as an example of how God sojourning exile people are to remain distinct in their faith and worship yet labor with unbelievers in the common kingdom, in order that God may use us to draw people into His redemptive kingdom.

## I. Intro – The Power of Stories

- A. Great stories - inspire; teach us how to live
- B. Iliad/Odyssey, Washington crossing Delaware
- C. Daniel is one of these - Dare to be a Daniel song
- D. Many great stories of courage, deliverance
- E. But we can miss some key points!
- F. What does Daniel actually teach us about our place?
- G. Quote by Hart on Daniel as model for us

## II. Daniels Life in Exile

- A. Daniel was a sojourning exile
  - 1. Time of exile (1:1-2)
  - 2. Daniel one of the earliest exiles (1:6)
- B. The troubles of exile in Babylon (see table)
  - 1. Old names - for Yahweh!
  - 2. New names - for Babylonian gods!
- C. How do you live as a sojourning exile?
  - 1. Remain distinct in faith and worship - no mixing
  - 2. Join in common culture to build common kingdom - mix!

## III. Daniel - Distinct in Faith and Worship

- A. Refuses to eat meat sacrificed to idols (1:8)
  - 1. Probably because sacrificed to idols
  - 2. Paul even said this was ok!
  - 3. But important to make distinction for exiles
- B. Other key examples in the book
  - 1. Refuse to worship idol (3:16-18)
  - 2. Refuse to stop praying (6:10-11)
- C. Daniel and friends refuse to compromise on faith
  - 1. Will not worship false idols
  - 2. Will not neglect to practice faith - even if against law
  - 3. Will not join in 'civic religion' - stay distinct

## IV. Daniel - Joining in Common Kingdom

- A. Excelled in Babylonian education (vv4-5; 17-20)
  - 1. To be taught Babylonian language, lit (v4-5)
  - 2. Knowledge, understanding all kinds of literature (v17)
  - 3. Ten times better (v20)
  - 4. Entered kings service - for decades (v19, 21)
- B. Showed wisdom in interactions (vv8-16)
  - 1. Asked - did not demand, protest, etc (v8)

2. Favor, but a problem (vv9-10)
  3. Daniel proposes alternative & test (vv11-13)
  4. They pass the test; given their desire (vv14-16)
  5. Story of I know Why Caged Bird Sings
  6. Wisdom is critical for God's sojourning exiles
- C. Excelled in government service to pagan kings (vv19-21)
1. Excelled so entered kings service
  2. Served for decades in this capacity
- D. This behavior (and success) is typical in the exile
1. Esther - becomes Queen, saves her people
  2. Mordecai - becomes adviser to king
  3. Nehemiah - cupbearer to king
  4. All religiously faithful, but culturally engaged

## V. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see Daniel's pattern?
1. Uncompromising in faith, worship, personal life
  2. Culturally engaged in common kingdom
  3. Van Drunen quote
- B. Are we distinct and uncompromising in faith and worship?
4. This is not an area where we can make compromises!
  5. Our worship, faith, & personal life controlled by Scripture

6. Too many churches compromise here
    - a. Pastors dressing up like TV characters
    - b. Worship looks like TV show, rock concert
    - c. Reducing prayer, communion etc. to be 'relevant'
    - d. Only teaching topics for 'felt needs'
  7. We must be guided by Scripture - not culture
- C. Are we culturally engaged in common kingdom activities?
1. Are we engaged in every area of culture?
  2. Are we engaged WITH UNBELIEVERS in every area?
  3. Example: pro-life rally - not worship service!
  4. Example: public schools
  5. Do we engage with godly wisdom - or arrogance?
  6. Will call for compromises - is not redemptive kingdom!
- D. Closing prayer
1. For uncompromising faith, worship, life
  2. For wise common kingdom engagement

## Dare To Be A Daniel - Living As God's Sojourning Exiles

Daniel 1  
 Advent Readings  
 December 12, 2010  
 Prayer  
 Genesis 12:2-3

This Daniel, the assimilated and devout prophet, may be the best model for American Christians wanting to know how to participate meaningfully in public life. Just as he lived a hyphenated life, so Christians - exiles and strangers, as the New Testament refers to them - may also be called to live lives in which they negotiate competing sets of loyalties and responsibilities. Hart, *A Secular Faith*, 256

Hebrew Name	Babylonian Name
Daniel - God is my Judge	Belshazzar - Queen of Bel, protect the king
Hananiah - Yahweh is gracious	Shadrach - I fear Aku (Babylonian moon god)
Mishael - Who is what God is?	Mishach - Who is what Aku is?
Azariah - Yahweh helps	Abednego - servant of Nego (Babylonian god of wisdom)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:16-18

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. Daniel 6:10-11

Two significant things stand out about the way in which Daniel and his friends conduct themselves as they participate so intimately in Babylonian public life. First, they never attempt to turn Babylon into something other than Babylon. They never try, for example, to turn Babylon into another Jerusalem or to impose the Mosaic law upon the Babylonian people. Babylon was part of the common kingdom, and they did not try to turn it into the redemptive kingdom founded upon the covenant with Abraham.... Second, though Daniel and his friends were intimately involved in Babylonian public life, they would not compromise their higher allegiance to God or give up the hope they possessed as citizens of the redemptive kingdom. The spiritual antithesis ran strong in their veins. Van Drunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 95-96.

### Other Great Quotes on This Topic

But with a properly high estimate of the created order, human nature, and the relative importance of civil society for maintaining order and restraining evil (at least), Christians may fruitfully participate in public life not as a site of redemption but as an essential part of their humanity. Hart, *A Secular Faith*, 257.

Participating in a secular polity, obeying the laws of a state that does not acknowledge God, and paying the taxes of a secular government do not contradict or compromise Christian faith. The reason is that God does not require the state to be Christian for it to be legitimate. Hart, *A Secular Faith*, 257.

So even while Daniel participated vigorously in the culture of his captors, even to the point of becoming a high ranking official, he drew the line at his own Jewish beliefs and practices. As difficult as it might seem, he would be part of Chaldean [Babylonian] culture but continue to worship only in the cult of Israel. Hart, *A Secular Faith*, 255-256.

Jeremiah instructed them to "seek the welfare" of Babylon, and thus Daniel and his friends do not lead culturally isolated lives but participate in education and politics in common with the Babylonians. Babylon was part of the common kingdom established by God in the Noahic covenant, and thus believers in the true God could participate in its cultural life. Van Drunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 95.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. 3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility-- 4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. 5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. 6 Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. 8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, 10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." 11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. 16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. 17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. 18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. 20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. 21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. Daniel 1:1-21