

## **“Daniel: Mission Impossible?”**

### *Daniel 1*

In 605 BC the Babylonian army under king Nebuchadnezzar marched west to conquer the world, which included the nation of Israel. Daniel and his friends, only teenagers, were torn from their land and taken to the capital city of Babylon as captives. Uprooted from their familiar home and religious setting and immersed in an alien culture, these young people were immediately faced with what it meant to live faithfully in a setting that was unsympathetic and even antagonistic to their faith. Daniel 1 tells us both the pressures they faced and how at least four of them responded to those pressures.

### **Opening Question** (choose one)

- Recall a significant move, transition or loss in your life. What did you find most disorienting? What did you find most stabilizing?
- As a teenager, what was the farthest you were ever away from home?

### **Study Questions**

- 1) **Read Daniel 1.** Compare the main cause of the Babylonian conquest according to verse 1 and verse 2. Would it make any practical difference who the main cause of Judah’s defeat and exile was? Why or why not?
- 2) How were these young Israelites chosen for the king’s special service? What specific program & tactics were used to assimilate these young Jews into the Empire (vv.3-7)?
- 3) What program or tactics in our day pressure us to assimilate us to the ways of the world?
- 4) Daniel said “yes” to studying topics that would have been forbidden back home (e.g. astrology, magic—Dt. 18<sup>10-12</sup>), but said “no” to most of the royal food (v.8). Are you most surprised by what he said “yes” to, or by what he said “no” to?
- 5) Do you think he was making a big issue out of a minor problem? Why or why not?
- 6) What steps did Daniel take to provide a creative alternative to the king's plan (vv. 11-14)?
- 7) What influences in your life/work did (or do) you want or need to resist?
- 8) What impressed the king most about Daniel and his three friends (v.19)? What impresses you about them?
- 9) What made a seemingly impossible mission (i.e. thriving in Babylon) suddenly seem possible?
- 10) How can this group pray for you in a challenge you are facing?