

FAITH IN EXILE

DANIEL: APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION AND EXILE FAITH | DANIEL 1:1-21 | SEPTEMBER 15/16, 2018
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"Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites... Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah." (Daniel 1:3, 6)

An Introduction to the Book of Daniel (Daniel 1:1-2)

The Enculturation of Four Exiles (Daniel 1:3-7)

The Faith-Filled Challenge to Enculturation (Daniel 1:8-16)

Daniel's Journey of Exile Faith (Daniel 1:17-21)

STUDY GUIDE:

1. When have you had to take a stand for your faith? What did it look like? What happened?
2. This week we begin a new series "Daniel: Apocalyptic Imagination and Exile Faith." In this series we will walk through the book of Daniel, learning what it means to live with faith in the midst of a culture that is at odds with our faith. Ask God to speak to you and then read Daniel chapter 1 aloud before continuing.
3. *Background:* The book of Daniel relates events that took place from roughly 605 to 536 B.C., during the time when God's people were exiled from the Holy Land. Daniel as a character is one of the exiles, who rises to importance within the reign of multiple rulers, spanning the Neo-Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires. The first half of Daniel focuses on narratives related to Daniel's life in the court of these rulers (chs. 1-6) and the second half of Daniel focuses on a series of apocalyptic visions related to the kingdoms of the earth in relation to God's kingdom (chs. 7-12).
4. What do you notice as the overall setting of Daniel from verses 1-2? You may also want to read 2 Chronicles 36 for further background.
5. What do verses 3-7 tell you about the situation in which Daniel and his friends find themselves?
6. What does Daniel do in verses 8-14? Why did he say he did this?
7. Daniel challenges the enculturation process that he and his friends are being subjected to in Babylon by taking a different approach to his diet. This probably relates not only to food, but to the sense in which some food was often given to idols as a reflection of religious identity. What can we learn about exile faith from Daniel in this situation?
8. What is the result of Daniel and his friends' decision, according to verses 15-21?
9. What is one specific thing that God is speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and pray for one another. If you are studying on your own, write it down and share it with someone.

TAKE IT FURTHER:

Here are some ways you can take your study of the book of Daniel deeper this week:

- Watch the video overview of the book of Daniel, along with other resources, put together by the Bible Project: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/daniel/>.
- Read through chapters 1-6 of the book of Daniel during the course of this week. This will give you a broader sense of the entire narrative flow of Daniel.