

## AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

Topic: *Daniel: Faith Unfazed (1)*  
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Text: *Daniel 3, 6*  
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### Introduction

The book of Daniel consists of two halves, each with its own literary style. The first half (**Dan 1–6**) presents six stories of how God protected and promoted Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Jews who were taken captive to Babylon and trained to serve in the king’s court (**Dan 1:6-7**). The second half (**Dan 7–12**) contains apocalyptic visions and messages Daniel received from God. In this 2-part series, we will focus on the faith of Daniel and his friends and the rewards of being faithful. Early in the book (**Dan 1: 4-7**) we learned how Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, took these young men, groomed them, and were given new names. Satan uses a similar strategy against believers today, wanting to indoctrinate us into the world system, by naming us in reference to the world, feeding us what the world offers, and educating us in the ways of the world.

### Their Courage

Daniel was clear that he would not defile himself (**Dan 1:8**). The ancient Hebrew word defile carries the thought of *polluting* or *staining* (see also **Isa 59:3**, **Zep 3:1**, **Mal 1:7**). Daniel believed the king’s food would defile them for at least three reasons. 1<sup>st</sup>, it was not *kosher*. 2<sup>nd</sup>, it was probably sacrificed to idols, 3<sup>rd</sup>, eating it implied fellowship with Babylon’s cultural and religious systems. Daniel made a big deal over what appeared like a little thing, being fully aware that the only way to be on the Lord’s side is to be faithful in little things. He had a spiritual basis for his request. **Note:** Daniel did not object to the name given to him, because he knew who he was, and others could call him what they wanted. He did not object to the Babylonian education, because he knew what he believed. Daniel *did* object to the food from the king’s table because eating it was direct disobedience to God’s word. In pagan cultures most wine and meat were dedicated to the gods, so Daniel and his friends refused it.

*Daniel purposed in his heart:* He illustrated the steps we can take to face a difficult trial and glorify God before others. First, *the heart must be set*. Daniel made up his mind beforehand that he would not compromise. Second, *protest must be courteous*. Daniel politely requested, showing discretion, to be excused from the king’s table. Making a stand for Christ does not mean being obnoxious. Third, *there must be self-denial*. Daniel and his friends knew this would cost them something, yet they were willing to face the consequences. Fourth, *we must be ready to be tested*. Daniel said, put us to test.

This was a remarkably courageous decision, because rejecting the menu was rejecting the king and could result in severe punishment as Nebuchadnezzar was capable of great cruelty. He murdered the sons of one king of Judah before the king’s eyes then immediately gouged out the eyes of the king, so his last memory would always be the murder of his sons (**Jer 39:6-7**). Other rulers of Judah were literally roasted to death over a fire (**Jer 29:22**). Refusing the food might have branded them as being uncooperative and could have spoiled all chances of advancement.

### The Reward of Faith

1. **Favor and goodwill with authorities: (Dan 1:9)** God did not abandon those who stood for him. Daniel trusted God and God came through – though it was no doubt a stretching experience for Daniel and his friends. God touched the heart of those in authority, so they regarded Daniel with goodwill.
2. **Wisdom for the occasion: (Dan 1:10-13)** God also worked through the wise actions of Daniel to cultivate this goodwill. Daniel saw the situation through the steward’s eyes and addressed the official’s legitimate concerns. He would not let the official pay the price for Daniel’s conscience. He was willing to put himself and his faith in God to the test: “Put us to the test for 10 days.” (**Dan 1:12**). Daniel made a godly and wise compromise with the chief of the eunuchs, exhibiting the wisdom for the occasion. See **Jam 3:17**: *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

3. **Compassion from adversaries: (Dan 1:14)** The chief of eunuchs who had all the power in this situation agreed with their plan. Daniel and his friends seemed to be completely at his mercy. Yet God touched him, and he consented with them in this matter.
4. **Radiant outlook: (Dan 1:15)** There was no biological reason for a vegetarian diet to make them better and fatter than those who ate the non-vegetarian option.
5. **Devine promotion: (Dan 1:17-21)** These young Jewish men gave themselves to the Lord in a remarkable way and God rewarded them remarkably by:
  - a. **Blessing them with knowledge and skills:** The special intellectual ability of Daniel and his companions was not due to their diet, but to the special intervention of the Lord.
  - b. **Blessing Daniel with understanding visions and dreams:** This shows that purity of heart and faithfulness to God come before enlightenment in divine mysteries. Daniel would later receive great revelation, but now he simply showed himself a dedicated follower of God.
  - c. **Equipping them to stand firm:** These young men from Jerusalem were immersed in the study of Babylonian culture, literature, and religion; yet they remained faithful to God. Although they were in Babylon, but not of Babylon.
  - d. **Blessing Daniel with a successful career:** Daniel had a long and successful career in the worst of circumstances. He worked for tyrants who thought nothing of killing their staff and advisers. But an ungodly and spiritually toxic environment was not enough to keep him away from God. He was eventually appointed chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners (**Dan 5:11; 2:48**).

## Conclusion

Through it all, Daniel maintained a pulsating faith in the living God despite residing and serving in an ungodly environment. Even in Babylon, a place of decadence and debauchery, where idols and idolatry were in bountiful supply, Daniel was not shy to do his God thing. Daniel and his friends demonstrated that inner conviction could overcome any outer pressure, and that God-honoring convictions yield God-given rewards. Are you prepared to demonstrate such an inner conviction?