



HOPE IN THE RUINS: Faith in Exile

August 16, 2026 | Pastor Kirk Walters
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¹ During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god. ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. ⁴ "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." ⁵ The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

Daniel 1:1-5 NLT

If you can't choose your circumstances, you can choose your faithfulness.

1. Babylon (The World) Will Try to Redefine You

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Daniel 1:1-2 NLT

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families ... ⁴ "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men ..."

Daniel 1:3-4 NLT

⁶ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen ... ⁷ The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names: Daniel was called Belteshazzar. Hananiah was called Shadrach. Mishael was called Meshach. Azariah was called Abednego.

Daniel 1:6-7 NLT

Babylon can change your location, but it doesn't have to change your identity.

2. Faithfulness Begins with a Settled Heart

But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king.

Daniel 1:8a NLT

If your heart is settled before God, your life can stand under pressure.

3. Faithfulness Does Not Require Harshness

He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.

Daniel 1:8b NLT

¹² "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. ¹³ "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men ..."

Daniel 1:12-13 NLT

The world doesn't need more angry Christians trying to be noticed - it needs faithful Christians who are brave enough to live differently.

4. God Honors Faithfulness in Exile

At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king.

Daniel 1:15 NLT

God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.

Daniel 1:17 NLT

Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.

Daniel 1:21 NLT

God may not remove you from Babylon immediately, but you can be faithful there.