

Daniel 1: Preparation and Proving

Daniel and his three friends had been taken captive and transported to Babylon. They were young and bright; their challenge was to fit in quickly to Babylonian life and gain a good reputation without compromising their devotion to Yahweh.

Matt looked at 3 'P's: **Participation, Peculiar and Principled**. Jesus prayed: "they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." (John 17: 14–16)

Being Christ-followers, we need to learn how to be great influencers: light in the darkness, without losing our passion and devotion to Him.

Question 1: Participation

It says that they are taught 'the language and literature' of Babylon and were found to be "none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; ... 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." (Daniel 1: 19–20)

They didn't refuse to learn Babylonian ways. How can we in 21st-century Edinburgh be people that also gain a great reputation and fully participate in learning the customs and ways of this culture? Share some of the ways that this was different for you if you came from a different culture.

Question 2: Peculiar

We are a Peculiar people, set apart for God's purposes (1 Peter 2:9). Daniel and his friends were given Babylonian names that, instead of lifting up Yahweh, gave praise to foreign gods, trying to rob them of their Hebrew identity (Daniel 1: 6–9).

We don't normally have our names changed, but there are subtle ways the world tries to rob us of our identity in Christ. Talk about some of the ways you've experienced this in your workplace, family or friendships.

Question 3: Principled

They decided to decline to eat the food and drink of their captors, but to eat vegetables and water instead. It wasn't that they were turning 'Veggy' but wanted in this small way to exercise their right to keep to the Mosaic food laws that God had commanded them to do, thus honouring God. In Acts 10, this all changes and God gives permission to now eat whatever food is available.

Talk about comparable 'stands' that we can make today, expressing our honour to Christ, in our workplaces, families and amongst our non-Christian friends.

Pray

For each other that we may be like Daniel and his friends, who remained in Babylon (the World), were honoured as being of high integrity and learning, but didn't compromise their faith.