

Verse 2—

We see the hand of God moving in world affairs in verse 2. **And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.** This was the Lord's doing and it had been prophesied of what would happen if Israel abandoned the Lord their God (Deuteronomy 28:45-52; Isaiah 42:24). Jehoiakim gained his freedom and was able to remain on the throne in Jerusalem by pledging his allegiance to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1), however the temple was desecrated and **part of the vessels of the house of God** were taken and **carried into the land of Shinar to the house of** Nebuchadnezzar's **god** (God promised these vessels would be returned, Jeremiah 27:19-20). **Shinar** was Babylonia, first mentioned in Genesis 11:1 when the nations turned on God and built a great tower (the Tower of Babel) and the place where God *confounded the language of all the earth, and the people were scattered upon all the earth.*

Verse 3,4, 5—

After the first siege was complete, Nebuchadnezzar instructed **Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs to bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes.** These were the nobles of Judah, likely teenagers. They would be taken from their homeland and **brought** to Babylon in the *land of Shinar*. Verse 4 gives more details regarding the selection of these youth: They were those with 1) **no blemish**; probably meaning no physical defect. 2) **well favored**; nice to look at. 3) **skillful in all wisdom**; sensible as opposed to nonsensical. 4) **cunning in knowledge**; thoughtful and able to perceive what is taught. 5) **understanding science**; thinkers. In other words, well rounded young men, the best of the best in Judah. We will see in a moment that Daniel was among this group. And the reason for the selection of these youth was **to teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.** In other words, they would brainwash these young boys to cause them to forget all they had been taught in their Jewish homes.

This is a worldly philosophy that is still played out today. Take the U.S. for example: Until about 1963, God was included in the government school classrooms. But after that time God was removed—He was not to be spoken of. Rather, the schools began to teach a nonbiblical worldview. As public education has become more and more secular (godless) the goal has always been to win over the minds of the youth. It is debated whether or not Abraham Lincoln said this, but it rings true regardless; *“The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.”*

In the 1970s, ten years after God was officially kicked out of U.S. public schools, this philosophy of capturing the minds of children has been prevalent. At an International Education Seminar in 1973, Harvard psychiatrist, Chester McPierce said, *“Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and **toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity.** It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the **international child of the future.**”* On April 27, 2022, illegitimate U.S. President Joe Biden said to a gathering of teachers, *“The kids are yours when they are in the classroom.”* He added this for emphasis, *“They are all our children...they are not somebody else's children.”* So, it is not a conspiracy theory that they are coming after your children—it is happening and Christian parents need to wake up.

During the period from 1963 up until today, the Church as a whole has become weaker too. Pastors work overtime trying to be relevant and often watering down the Gospel with self-help psychology. In so doing, the Bible itself has become irrelevant. Children (and most young to middle aged adults) no longer know basic Bible stories. Creation is a myth and evolution is no longer a theory, but taught as truth. Our government, universities, even so-called Christian colleges and seminaries continue to preach propaganda that influences and changes the belief systems of many, turning countless numbers of children against God and against their parents. While not carried away to a foreign land, children are

learning the philosophy and the tongue of the secular humanist (the godless). To a large extent Christians in the 21st century have lost the war against the culture and many Christians have compromised and switched sides, joining in with the world. The apostle Paul exhorts us to “Be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). That is, don’t look like the world, don’t become like the world. Go against the flow, like we will see Daniel and his friends did.

Verse 6,7 —

The children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The names of these boys are an indication of their strong Hebrew upbringing, all of their names reflected the Only True God: **Daniel:** *God is my Judge.* **Hananiah:** *Yahweh is gracious.* **Mishael:** *Who is El?* And, **Azariah:** *Helped of Yahweh.* To each of these boys was given a new Babylonian name. Their changed names reflected the false gods of the Babylonians.

For Daniel, his name was changed to **Belteshazzar:** May Bel protect his life; To Hananiah, **Shadrach:** The moon god; To Mishael, **Meshach:** Who is Aku?; and to Azariah, **Abed-nego:** Servant and worshipper of Nego. Changing one’s name indicates a token of subjection (2 Kings 23:34; 24:17). If you can win over the minds of the young people, they will become the influencers of the next generation.

Verse 8—

Not only propagandizing and brainwashing these boys, the diet of the Babylonians was **appointed** them too. We will look more into this verse next week, **But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.** Everything we do begins with a decision we make in our minds. That’s what it means, **Daniel purposed in his heart.** Earlier we quoted Paul in Romans 12:2; he goes on to say “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The body of Christ today needs to renew its collective mind; each believer must **purpose** that they will not defile themselves with the things of the world. This what Daniel did and he did it as a teenager. How many of us who are older wouldn’t like to go back in time and correct some things in our lives? Young people can learn from

Daniel to ***purpose in their heart not to defile themselves with the world.*** For those with children, or those who have influence over children, e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, etc., we can show them what Daniel did and challenge them to do the same.