

DANIEL 1 | *Daniel's Resolve*¹

Ruin

1 In the third year² of the reign of Jehoiakim³ king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar⁴ king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.⁵ 2 And the Lord (יהוה) gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand,⁶ with some of the vessels⁷ of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar (שִׁנְרָא),⁸ to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.⁹

¹ “The legend, the story of a holy man, exists to exalt its hero and its hero’s God in the hearers’ eyes; it thus encourages them to take heed of subsequent stories of Daniel and to emulate the hero’s faithfulness, confident of his God’s power and support. ... [I]t, too, also offers encouragement as it invites the hearer to identify with these exiles. ... The court-tale is midrashic in the sense that it is shaped by earlier scriptural material, especially the story of Joseph, another young man transported to an alien land who proved the superiority of Israelite wisdom over that of pagans, not least as a dreamer and as a dream interpreter” (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 6-7).

² In 605 bc, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and Hamath and won control of Judea.

³ Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, reigned Judah from 609-598 bc (2 Ki 23:34-24:6; 2 Ch 36:4-8). Neco II of Egypt changed his name from Eliakim as a mark of vassalage. Jehoiakim was oppressive, and religious decay accelerated under his reign. He did what was evil in God’s sight (2 Ch 36:5, 8). He murdered the prophet Uriah for opposing him (Je 26:20-21) and personally burnt the scroll sent by Jeremiah (Je 36:22-26). He died in 598 bc, aged 36, on the way to captivity in Babylon (2 Ch 36:6). The reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah are a story of defeat, humiliation, submission, and exile at the hands of Egypt and Babylon. The Davidic line reigned in Jerusalem for about 400 years (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 30:21).

⁴ Nebuchadnezzar (“Nabu protect(s) the eldest son”) was the Babylonian king from 605-562 bc. He was the son of the founder of the Chaldean dynasty, Nabopolassar. He deported Jews to Babylon in 605, 597, 587/586, and 582 bc. Little is known about the last 30 yrs of his reign. He rebuilt Babylon, including the temples of Marduk and Nabs, the Ishtar gate, and new canals. He was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach.

⁵ Je 25 is a must-read here.

⁶ Jerusalem doesn’t fall because Yahweh is somehow weak or inactive. It is not due to geopolitical or personality factors. It falls as a deliberate act of Israel’s God (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 30:21). **2 Ch 36:17** 17 Therefore [Yahweh] brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand.

⁷ In the Ancient Near East, carrying off the vessels of a conquered people’s temple was a way to show its god’s had been defeated. Keep a close eye on these vessels (2 Ki 24:13; 2 Ch 36:7, 10, 18; Is 39.2-4; Je 27:18; 52.17-23; Da 5:2-3; Ezr 1.9-11)!

⁸ Shinar is a biblical name for Babylon that suggests pride, self-will, and hostility to God (Ge 10:10; 11:1-9; 14:2; Is 11:11; Zec 5:11). The tower of Babel was located there (Ge 11:2). The mindset of the Babylonians was the same as the mindset of the builders of the tower of Babel: “Let us make a name for ourselves” (Ge 11:4; cf. Da 4:30).

⁹ This first deportation took place in 605 bc (2 Ki 24:1-2; 2 Ch 36:6). Jerusalem would not be destroyed until 19 years later, in 586 bc. Daniel was serving Nebuchadnezzar in the very period he was ordering the destruction of Jerusalem. Talk about a tough spot to be in! The primary conflict of the book is apparent. Has Yahweh lost and the gods of Shinar won? Has Babylon defeated Jerusalem (cf. Re 17-18, 21-22)? The primary conflict of Daniel is not between Jews and Babylonians and Persians but between Yahweh and the gods of Babylon and Persia.

Reeducation

3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch,¹⁰ to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility,¹¹ 4 youths¹² without blemish, of good appearance and skilful (שכל) in all wisdom (חִכְמָה), endowed with knowledge (דָּעַת), understanding (בִּינָה), and learning (מִדְעָה), and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature (סֵפֶר) and language (לְשׁוֹן) of the Chaldeans.¹³ 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate and of the wine that he drank.¹⁴ They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.¹⁵ 6 Among these were Daniel (דָּנִיֵּאל),¹⁶ Hananiah (חַנְנִיָּהּ),¹⁷ Mishael (מִישָׁאֵל),¹⁸ and Azariah

¹⁰ סריס comes from Akk. *ša-reši* “he who is the head.” It can mean “eunuch” (many oriental palace staff were eunuchs), but it need not (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 30:22).

¹¹ Daniel and his friends are from the Jewish royal family and/or the Jewish nobility. Isaiah foretold that Hezekiah's sons would end up as eunuchs in Babylon (2 Ki 18:17; 20:18; Is 39:7). That prophecy is now fulfilled. **Is 39:7** 7 And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Daniel may have been a descendent of Hezekiah.

¹² Older people are set in their ways. Nebuchadnezzar wants the young, who are much more impressionable.

¹³ The strategy is to reshape the worldview of the Jews by reshaping the worldview of the leaders the Jews' next generation, to Babylonise them. It is like public secular education today. Will Israel's youth compromise and give up on Yahweh and his plans for their nation? Will they gravitate to a Chaldean worldview? The Chaldean worldview holds that: (1) there are many gods; (2) the gods emerged out of a combination of freshwater (*Apsu*) and saltwater (*Tiamat*); (3) *Marduk* supplanted *Enlil* as chief of the gods; (4) the gods are stationed inside the world, not outside the world; (5) matter is eternal and existed before the gods; (6) a god arose out of the original matter and imposed order and form on the universe; (7) everyone in the universe emanates out off this god, like sunbeams out of the sun (so, in a sense, everything is god)(John C. Lennox, *Against the Flow*, 64-67). Is 47 is a brilliant chapter that gives God's estimating of the wisdom of Babylon.

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar dangles attractions before the Jewish youths so they will let down their guard.

¹⁵ Three years is a common period for tertiary education in our own day. Also, Jesus trained his disciples over a three year period.

¹⁶ “God judges, is judge” or “God is mighty” (*HALOT*, 228).

¹⁷ “Yah is gracious.”

¹⁸ “Who is like God?” (*HALOT*, 578).

(עֲזַרְיָה)¹⁹ of the tribe of Judah (יְהוּדָה).²⁰ 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names:²¹ Daniel he called Belteshazzar,²² Hananiah he called Shadrach,²³ Mishael he called Meshach,²⁴ and Azariah he called Abednego.²⁵

¹⁹ “Yah helps.”

²⁰ As among the first of the exiles, these four youths are among the good figs of Je 24:5-7 (Calvin). **Je 24:5-7** 5 Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. 6 I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down. I will plant them, and not pluck them up. 7 I will give them a heart to know that I am Yahweh, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

²¹ The new names show Nebuchadnezzar’s goal is for the youth to become true Babylonians. They are to give up their Jewish identity. All four names refer to Babylonians gods (Thomas Constable, “Notes on Daniel,” 27). The strategy is foreign education, foreign diet, and foreign names (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 30:22). **He 11:24-26** 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered the reproach of Messiah greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

²² “May Bel (Marduk) protect the life of the king.”

²³ “I have been made to feel very much afraid” or “command of Aku (the moon God).”

²⁴ “Who is like Aku (the moon god)”?

²⁵ “Servant of Nabu (the son of Marduk).” These youths are: about 15 years old, separated from their parents, in a strange country, and under severe pressure to conform. Are we resolved to live in accordance with our new identity in Jesus? See *Identity in Jesus*. Is there a practical decision or action or resolution we are to take to emphasise we are different?

Resolve

8 But Daniel resolved in his heart (עָלֶי-לִבּוֹ...עִשָּׂוִם)²⁶ that he would not defile himself (גָּאֵל)²⁷ with the king's food²⁸ or with the wine that he drank.²⁹ Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself (גָּאֵל).³⁰ 9 And God gave³¹ Daniel loyal love (חֶסֶד)³² and compassion (רַחֲמִים) in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,³³ 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel,

²⁶ Lit., “established in his heart.” In Hebrew, לֵב denotes the heart anatomically, but the mind psychologically (as the seat of mental activity and decision making) more often than the emotions. Daniel is inwardly resolved in his heart and mind. His decision presumably involves standing firm when other Israelites do not (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 18). Daniel and his mates are not physically, educationally, or culturally separated from their peers. But in their heart and mind, they are separated. They have intentionally chosen to be loyal to the God and worldview of the Bible.

²⁷ “[T]o be defiled...to pollute, to desecrate...to be defiled (ritually)...to stain” (*HALOT*, 170)

²⁸ Probably pork and other unclean foods were being offered. Also, the food and drink of the palace had probably been dedicated to various Babylonian gods (Ex 34:15; Da 5:4; 1 Co 8-10; Ac 15:20, 29; Re 2:14, 20). **Ex 34:15** 15 ...Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice.... **Da 5:4** 4 They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. **Ac 15:20** 20 ...But should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols.... **1 Co 10:20-21** 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

²⁹ Daniel and his mates must have been thoroughly trained by their parents, and they stuck to that training. Their upbringing prepared them to be youths of resolve at age 15. In heaven, I want to meet Daniel's parents and grandparents. Daniel's resolution is sourced from what Daniel knows and believes about God, and invigorated through his spiritual disciplines (Bible study (Da 9:2), prayer (Da 6:10; 9:3); and his discipleship group (Da 1:11-12; 2:17-18)). What we eat and drink, like what we wear and how we speak, is an outward expression of our self-identity and commitments. These are particularly significant for groups in exile or under persecution. Daniel's abstinence symbolises his avoiding assimilation. It is common for an expatriate community to maintain its distinctiveness partly by maintaining its distinctive diet (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 19, 25). **Ro 12:2** 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the desire of God, what is good, acceptable, and perfect. **1 Jn 2:15-17** 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

³⁰ Everything that follows in Daniel's life depends on his courageous stand as a 15 year-old. It is here that Daniel becomes a hero for the ages. How important are our decisions as a teenager! Also, Daniel is respectful to legitimate authority. He and his mates are not revolutionaries. They are not going to “tear down the system.” But they also aren't going to give in.

³¹ **Ps 37:4-6** 4 Delight yourself in Yahweh, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to Yahweh, trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

³² חֶסֶד, here without the notion of moral obligation common in secular and religious contexts in the OT, is effectively a synonym for חַן “grace” (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989)).

³³ **Ge 39:21** 21 But Yahweh was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. **1 Ki 8:50** 50 ...And grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them.... **Ps 106:46** 46 He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive.

I fear (יִרָא) my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink. For why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.³⁴

11 Then Daniel³⁵ said to the overseer (מְלֻצָר) whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,³⁶

12 Test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables (זֵרְעִים)³⁷ to eat and water (מַיִם) to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.

14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. 16 So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.³⁸

Reward

17 As for these four youths, God gave³⁹ them learning (מְדָע) and skill (שִׁכְלָה) in all literature (טָפָר) and wisdom (חָכְמָה),⁴⁰ and Daniel had understanding (בִּינָה) in all visions (חֲזוֹן) and dreams (חֲלֹמִים).⁴¹

18 At the end of the time,⁴² when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.⁴³

³⁴ Conformity is the name of the game in Babylon.

³⁵ Daniel took the initiative, and his three friends followed. This is his discipleship group. Will our brave resolution for God embolden others? **Ec 4:12** 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

³⁶ The narrator insists on using the youth's Jewish names.

³⁷ זֵרְעִים (“seeds”) would cover vegetables, grain, and non-meat products generally (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989)). We should not use this passage to argue for the intrinsic superiority of a vegetarian diet (Thomas Constable, “Notes on Daniel,” 30).

³⁸ This small victory will lead to big victories. Perhaps Yahweh is still at work. Perhaps he is greater than the gods of Babylon. Perhaps Israel will maintain her identity as Yahweh's chosen people.

³⁹ “God gave” (vv. 2, 9, 17) is the gospel of this chapter (Lüthi).

⁴⁰ “If you want to be a leader, you have to be a reader of leaders” (David Noebel, Summit Ministries).

⁴¹ Daniel's character qualifies him to receive the revelations recorded later in *Daniel*.

⁴² Three years. The youths are now about 18-19 years old.

⁴³ The narrator insists on using the four youths' Jewish names, at least in this chapter. They don't lose their Jewish identity!

Therefore they stood before the king.⁴⁴ 20 And in every matter of wisdom (חָכְמָה) and understanding (בִּינָה) about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.⁴⁵ 21 And Daniel was there⁴⁶ until the first year of King Cyrus.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ “[T]he Daniel who lives at court, stands by the side of the king, and serves the empire, is one who has taken his stand and kept himself pure; and we are challenged about our own willingness to accept an involvement in the world, but to recognize that there are points at which we have to draw a line. We are called to be citizens of two worlds, neither surrendering one citizenship by assimilation nor surrendering the other by forming a ghetto” (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 25).

⁴⁵ Daniel is following in Joseph’s footsteps. **Ge 41:33** 33 Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. **Ge 41:39** 39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Because God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. **Is 40:31** 31 But they who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

⁴⁶ Daniel served the kings of Babylon from 605 to 539 bc. He was present during the entire 70-year Babylonian captivity (605-536 bc). His service to the Babylonian and Persian governments shows believers can serve with distinction, honour, and integrity even in a government antithetical to Christianity. “Those who have to hold together the claims of the world and the claims of faith are encouraged to remember that God has been known to make it possible for people to life in this world in accordance with faith’s claims. ...It is possible to be faithful and successful in a pagan court” (John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 26-27).

⁴⁷ With this reference to Cyrus, the chapter ends on a definite high note. **Is 44:24-45:7** 24 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: I am Yahweh, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, 25 who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish, 26 who confirms the word of his servant and fulfils the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins; 27 who says to the deep, Be dry; I will dry up your rivers; 28 who says of *Cyrus*, He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose; saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and of the temple, Your foundation shall be laid. 1 Thus says Yahweh to his anointed, to *Cyrus*, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: 2 I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. 5 I am Yahweh, and there is no other, besides me there is no God.

Sermon

1. Introduction.

- a. Image: Aragorn and his allies besieged by the enemy in *The Two Towers*.
- b. Felt need: Outnumbered, surrounded, frustrated, disappointed, in danger of compromise, and losing our identity and distinctiveness, scared.
 - (1) Christianity is on the decline in New Zealand.
 - (2) In Western countries, young adults who grew up in a Christian home are abandoning the Christian faith in droves.
 - (3) Secular humanism, cultural marxism, postmodernism, and the new spirituality dominate our culture.
 - (4) In the New Zealand church, there are few solid Christian leaders in their 30s and 40s.
 - (5) The youth of our Sunday school, Rally, Tu Kaha, and worldview camps are in real danger.
 - (6) Whole denominations are bowing to pressure from the LGBTQ activists and giving up on basic biblical moral norms.
 - (7) Many Christians live lives that differ little from the surrounding culture.
 - (8) Technology sucks up our time so that we don't spend quiet time with God.
 - (9) Christianity and the God of the Bible in many ways seems to be losing.
- c. Subject: Is it possible to live a life without compromise? What does that look like? Is it worth being different?
- d. Text: Daniel 1
- e. Outline: Ruin, Reeducation, Resolve, Reward.
 - (1) In the midst of ruin, with the pressure of reeducation, those who are resolved will be rewarded.

2. Review.

3. Ruin (Da 1:1-2).

- a. Text.
- b. Theology.
 - (1) Just as God gave Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar for discipline purposes, to God gives the church into the hand of the world for discipline purposes.
- c. Today.
 - (1) In the West, God has allowed secular humanism, cultural marxism, postmodernism, and the new spirituality to "conquer" the Christian faith.
 - (2) Illustrations:
 - (a) Downgraded chapel in the new Dunedin hospital.
 - (b) No mention of religious faith in the government's "well-being" plan.
 - (c) "Science" as the basis for every decision. "I believe in science."
 - (3) With the steady decline of Christianity in New Zealand, we may wonder whether God is defeated. Maybe our faith isn't true. Maybe the secularists are right. Is God losing in New Zealand? "God, if you're real, why don't you do something? Where's the God-honouring, Jesus-following, Bible-based community we so desperately want?"

4. Reeducation (Da 1:3-7).

- a. Text.
- b. Theology.
 - (1) The battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation is always the game. The world's agenda is to take top Christian youth and transform their worldview. The world system wants to shape the minds of our youth, the future leaders of the church. It wants to drive a wedge between the the worldview of parents and the worldview of their children. It wants to break apart generations from one another.
 - (2) As in the case of Daniel (v. 5), the world's strategy is threefold: (1) education; (2) entertainment; and (3) identity. It tempts Christian youth of every age not just with ideas, but with glamour. It wines and dines them and says, "This is the good life. And look, you don't need God at all."
 - (3) We are often asked to compromise our beliefs and just go with the flow. The pressure to conform is great. It's so tempting to jump on the bandwagon and be part of the crowd.
- c. Today.
 - (1) Sophisticated, well-funded, global forces constantly work to win the hearts and minds of ourselves and our children through public education, news media, entertainment media.
 - (2) Every Christian youth faces the same challenge Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah faced (whether they are homeschooled or not).

5. Resolve (Da 1:8-16).

- a. Text.
- b. Theology.
 - (1) Believers of every generation must:
 - (a) Develop a biblical worldview and understand God's plan for history.
 - (b) Resolve in their heart to be loyal to God despite what the culture is doing.
 - (c) Say no to certain things in the culture that will mean they are assimilating.
 - (2) Illustrations: Eric Liddell; Robert Laidlaw?
 - (a) **1 Sa 2:30** 30 ...Those who honor me I will honor....
 - (3) A delicate balance between respect for authority and an "audience of One" is required. God's people need wisdom on where to draw the line.
- c. Today.
 - (1) Daniel's resolve is a model for us today. We must come to believe in our heart of hearts that the biblical worldview is true to the exclusion of all others. We must be respectful, but resolved. The question for Daniel and for us is "not which city we live in so much as which city we live for. In this sense, the Bible is a tale of two cities."⁴⁸
 - (2) Illustrations: Annalise Copland in high school; Sophia's refusal to dance.
 - (3) Tu Kaha and our worldview camps are intended to produce Daniels.

⁴⁸ John C. Lennox, *Against the Flow*, 51.

6. Reward (Da 1:17-21).

- a. Text.
- b. Theology.
 - (1) In the midst of ruin, with the pressure of reeducation, those who are resolved will be rewarded. Like Daniel, believers of all ages may experience success and contribute positively in the world without surrendering to the world. See *Christ and Culture*. This message was particularly important for the original audience—Jews living in the times of the Gentiles (490 years +).
 - (2) God gives discipline. To believers resolved to be loyal to him, he gives grace and compassion from unexpected sources. He gives those same individuals learning, skill, wisdom, and understanding as they wait for the future messianic kingdom.
- c. Today.
 - (1) We don't have to give up our Christian identity to be good citizens of New Zealand. In fact, often Christians are often the people who provide the most positive impact in New Zealand society. Kiwi Christians should be and definitely are a blessing to the nation. We must continue to serve on God's terms, not on the culture's terms.

7. Application: How Do We Produce Daniels and Daniellas?

- a. Stable home life.
- b. Mental health.
 - (1) This past Monday, the CDC [released](#) its 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey report. Out of 17,000 US high school students surveyed in late 2021, nearly 60 percent of teen girls reported persistent sadness or hopelessness.
- c. Clear, hopeful preaching and teaching that connects with the next generation.
- d. Biblical literacy through personal Bible study.
- e. Worldview camps.
- f. D groups.

8. Congregational Response.

- a. Pray for all those who currently teach or mentor the next generation.
- b. Pray for all members of the next generation (we're at the beginning of the school year).