

Daniel 1:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

Analysis

Nebuchadnezzar's command to Ashpenaz reveals Babylon's strategy: co-opt enemy elites through education and indoctrination. The selection criteria—'children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes'—targets the nobility who could influence the nation. This represents Satan's perennial tactic: compromise godly leadership through worldly enticement. Yet God sovereignly uses this pagan program to position Daniel for influence in the empire's highest levels.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern empires routinely took hostages from conquered territories, educating them in imperial culture to create loyal administrators. This practice combined threat (hostages guarantee good behavior) with opportunity (these youths could rise to high positions). Ashpenaz, master of eunuchs, likely oversaw the court's educational program and possibly made the noble youths eunuchs (cf. Isaiah 39:7).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Babylon's educational strategy parallel modern attempts to indoctrinate believers through secular worldview training?
2. What does God's use of pagan educational programs to position Daniel teach us about providence working through adverse circumstances?

Interlinear Text

סְרִיסֵי יוֹ	רַב	לְאַשְׁפֶּנֶז	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וַיֹּאמֶר
of his eunuchs	the master	unto Ashpenaz	And the king	spake
H5631	H7227	H828	H4428	H559
הַמֶּלֶךְ הַ	וּמִן רֶעַ	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	מִבְּנֵי י	לְהָבִיא
and of the king's	seed	of Israel	certain of the children	that he should bring
H4410	H2233	H3478	H1121	H935
וּמִן	הַפְּרִתָּמִים:			
H4480	and of the princes			
	H6579			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 39:7 (Kingdom): And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 24:15 (Kingdom): And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

