

Daniel 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

Analysis

The prince of eunuchs changing their names represents Babylon's attempt to reshape identity. Daniel becomes Belteshazzar (Bel protect his life—invoking Babylon's god). Hananiah becomes Shadrach, Mishael becomes Meshach, Azariah becomes Abednego—all incorporating Babylonian deity names. This assault on identity through renaming attempts to erase covenant faith and replace it with pagan religion. Yet God's preservation of their original names in Scripture shows that human attempts to redefine God-given identity ultimately fail.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern conquerors regularly renamed subject peoples to assert dominance and assimilation. Name changes signified ownership and new allegiance (cf. Joseph to Zaphnath-paaneah, Gen. 41:45). The Babylonian names invoke Bel (Marduk), Aku (moon god), and possibly Nebo—major Babylonian deities. This renaming was strategic: replace Yahweh-worship with Babylonian religious identity. Yet the youths' faithfulness shows that imposed names don't change true allegiance.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Babylon's renaming strategy parallel modern attempts to redefine identity contrary to God's design?
2. What does the preservation of Hebrew names in Scripture teach us about God's determination to remember our true identity?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשֶׂם	לָהֶם	שֵׁר	הַסְרִיסִים	שְׁמוֹת	וַיִּשֶׂם
for he gave	H1992	Unto whom the prince	of the eunuchs	names	for he gave
H7760		H8269	H5631	H8034	H7760
לְדָנִי אֵל	בְּ לְטֶשֶׁאצָּר	וְלְחַנְיָהּ	שְׁדַּרְחַן	וְלְמִישָׁאֵל	
unto Daniel	the name of Belteshazzar	and to Hananiah	of Shadrach	and to Mishaël	
H1840	H1095	H2608	H7714	H4332	
מִישָׁח	וְלְעֶזְרָה	עֲבֵד	נְגוֹ:		
of Meshach	and to Azariah	H0	of Abednego		
H4335	H5838		H5664		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 5:12 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Daniel 4:8 (Parallel theme): But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

Daniel 2:49 (Parallel theme): Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

2 Kings 24:17 (Parallel theme): And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

2 Kings 23:34 (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

Daniel 1:3 (Parallel theme): 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;