

Dr. Ron Armstrong • January 17, 2021
The Story: Small Doesn't Mean Unimportant

Daniel 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—

4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. **5** The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. **20** 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.

A. The story just went small.

- 1) There is no Moses leading thousands, or David leading Israel, or even Elijah calling the nation to repent. Instead, there are four guys far from home.
- 2) But small doesn't mean unimportant.
 - Over time, these small stories became known to almost everyone.
 - They each have at least one lesson God wanted us to know; most have several.
 - Most of the lessons weren't new, but God wanted them lived.

B. Let's look at a few:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. Two lessons:
 - It can't be done unless God ...
 - These kingdoms won't last. Only God's will.
- 2) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego hear the music, but won't dance to it.
 - "God can, God will, but if not, serve him anyway." Prayerfully and humbly hold to God's principles.
 - The heat is never too hot for God to walk with us.
- 3) Belshazzar (New king) sees the "handwriting on the wall."
 - Don't think that evil will last; it won't. Gal. 6:7 says, "God is not mocked. You will reap what you sow."
- 4) Daniel gets stuck with the lions.
 - God's plan can withstand lions.
 - Darkness, sorrow, and fear may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning.