

Script - Daniel and His Friends Stand Firm

[As the scene opens, the four captives are lead across the stage while the narrator speaks. They are ordered to sit and wait for their teacher.]

Narrator: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to the city of Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord delivered the king of Judah into his hand. King Nebuchadnezzar took some of the Israelites back to Babylon. These young men were from the royal family and the nobility -- 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 Babylonian king's palace.

[The soldiers leave and Ashpenaz comes onstage]

Ashpenaz: [strongly] My name is Ashpenaz. I am your teacher. I have been commanded by King Nebuchadnezzar to teach you the language and the literature of the Babylonians. You must forget about your home. This is your new home. You must forget about your God. There are new gods here in Babylon. You need new names to show that you are Babylonian citizens.

[Ashpenaz goes to each of the young men as asks their name.]

Ashpenaz: [to Daniel] What was your name?

Daniel: My name is Daniel. It means "God is my judge."

Ashpenaz: I don't like that name. You have a new god here called Bel. Your new name is Belteshazzar. It means the god Bel protect your life.[to Hananiah] And what was your name?

Hananiah: My name is Hananiah. It means "Jehovah is gracious"

Ashpenaz: No, we cannot have anything about some unknown God called Jehovah. Your new name is Shadrach and that means "command of Aku, the moon-god."

[to Mishael] So, what was your name?

Mishael: My name is Mishael. It means "He who is what God is"

Ashpenaz: I like what that means, but we'll change to your new moon-god Aku, so we'll call you Meshach. That means, "He who is what Aku is"

[to Azariah] What's your name?

Azariah: My name is Azariah, and that says, "Jehovah is strong."

Ashpenaz: Your God, Jehovah was defeated in Israel. Your new god is Nabu, so your name is Abednego, or "servant of Nabu."

[servants come in with plates and glasses.]

Ashpenaz: Now, we have food from the King's table for you to eat.

[Daniel and friends look at the food and look concerned]

Azariah: [to Daniel] We can't eat this food. God said it was bad for us.

Mishael: And this drink is too strong.

Daniel: [to his friends] I will speak to Ashpenaz.

[Daniel gets up from the table and goes to talk to Ashpenaz]

Daniel: Sir, we cannot eat this food, it will not be good for us.

Ashpenaz: [somewhat disturbed] Now, look, Daniel. I know we are going to have some problems here, but this is not going to be one of them. This is best food we have! The king eats this food. I know you'll like it, just give it a try.

Daniel: God's law teaches us what is good to eat. Please sir, let us prove it to you.

Ashpenaz: I like you, Daniel, but I'm afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.

Daniel: Test your servants for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.

[Ashpenaz motions for the servants to come back. They take away the plates and glasses, then bring in different plates and glasses.]

Narrator: So, Ashpenaz agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

[Everyone goes off stage. The king comes on stage left and sits down with his servants on either side of him. Daniel and friends come in on stage right with Ashpenaz. Ashpenaz begins to examine them. He looks at Daniel and his friends, as they stand tall, flexing their strong muscles, running in place, looking very healthy.]

Narrator: At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

King: Come here and let me ask you some hard questions.

Narrator: The king talked with them and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, so they entered the king's service. 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.

The End