

The story of Daniel in the Old Testament is particularly relevant and instructive for us as modern-day Christians. The reason why? Because Daniel's story is much like that of all Christians—in reality and in potential. And that's surely no accident.

In this series, we are looking at the highly instructive commonalities of Daniel's life in God to our lives in Christ. This is the third in that series—so let's recap the first two.

The first Daniel relevancy was “time and place.” Daniel lived during a very interesting time in the history of His chosen people. His age, his character, his disposition—all these played a part in the narrative of Daniel serving God. Likewise, every serious Christian is, by God's providence, constantly in a time and place where God can and will very effectively use them for purposes of His Kingdom.

The second Daniel relevancy was “competence.” In his own version of a company human resource initiative, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar was only interested in those who had the cherished competence in helping to advance or manage his kingdom. Likewise, Christians are best positioned to advance the Gospel and touch others for Christ in their work lives when they are highly competent. Here's the phrase I coined long ago: “The pioneering witness for Christ in the workplace is competence.” When a Jesus-follower does this, we can call that a “Daniel 1:4” Christian.

Now, on to the third relevancy! With the fall of Judah and the capture of the Jews, Daniel found himself immersed into a culture and under a government that did not honor the God of Israel. Nevertheless, Daniel's placement there and then meant he was to represent his God well there and then. In essence, Daniel was an ambassador for God to a foreign kingdom. God certainly was not surprised by this, was He?

Here's a very interesting thing in this challenging turn of events for God's people in the Old Testament: since the Israelites entered the Promised Land hundreds of years before, Daniel was the first real headliner—the first real key figure in the history of the nation of Israel—to demonstrate the purposes and outworkings of God by living in a hostile kingdom for the entirety of his adult life. For centuries, there had been judges like Gideon and Deborah...kings like David and Solomon...prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah. But all of them were working in the context of God's direct hand on God's people in the Promised Land.

You see, Daniel was in a different position—sort of a key ambassador, a representative, for God. Standing up for God's practices, purposes, and plans in the very midst of ruling kingdoms, kings, and peoples who did not follow the God of Israel. And Daniel was that ambassador over a span of many decades.

In this very way, the outworking, the unfolding of Daniel's life is a model for us in the Christian life.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians that “...we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” That's found in 2 Corinthians 5:20. In short, we Jesus-followers are ambassadors for Christ the King. Yes, we are ambassadors for the Kingdom of God.

Let's retrieve a key foundation for that. When asked by Nicodemus, Jesus said that a person must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. So here's the key point or two about the Kingdom of God. First, the Kingdom of God is “here and now” but also is made full “there and then.” That “here and now” is revealed as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God that Mark and others record: “The Kingdom of God is nigh!”

Well, then, just who is in the Kingdom right now? Born-again believers, of course! The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian believers that, “[God the Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” How amazing is that—we’ve been transferred to the Kingdom of His Son!

So we have been transferred to the Kingdom of God as born-again believers. Outrageous, but true! And actually being born-again—transformed by Jesus into a new creation—is the crucial point. That’s because many a person labelled “Christian” over the centuries is most accurately described simply as an unsaved, striving behavioralist trying to keep God’s commandments. But you and I know these behavioralists are unable to keep God’s commandments...they definitively need God’s grace.

So here’s a question about ambassadorship: has there even been a legitimate ambassador who is *not* from the kingdom he or she is selected to represent? So, born-again believers are ambassadors because of their citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

And of course, when you are an ambassador for Christ to unbelievers, then your target audience—those unbelievers—belong to the kingdoms of this world. So, from the moment you are born-again, you are a lifetime ambassador for Christ. And you are doing that “ambassadoring,” if you will, in the kingdoms of this world—most often where you are an earthly citizen. Like me, for example, a citizen of the United States and a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Dual citizenship. One eternal, one of quite limited duration.

Now, this is where we re-visit our friend Daniel. Clearly, when the southern Kingdom of Judah was sacked by the Babylonians, Daniel became part of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom. And, as we have noted, Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar and successor pagan kingdoms competently in very unique ways. But Daniel never stopped being a part of God’s core economy: his God-honoring diet, his consistent prayer life, his ability to read the handwriting on the wall, his prophetic voice.

In short, Daniel served the multiple kingdoms of this world very competently, even while simultaneously serving God and representing God very well.

Now that’s just like what we should be doing as Christians, competently, in our time and place. As ambassadors. For our entire lifetimes.

So, just like Daniel, there is no inherent conflict for the Christian. God intends that we hold dual citizenship. We do not have to separate from the world physically. No, very specifically, we are actually called to live in the kingdoms of this world, even while we live in Christ, impacting others for the Kingdom of God.

So, we are to be a light to the world...as we have already heard a few moments ago, “...we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” Wow. God actually makes his appeal through us. He could certainly do that appeal without us. But He chooses us as his adopted sons and daughters to make the appeal. That’s why we are selected to be lifetime ambassadors—to make His appeal.

So, what does your passport look like? Are you exercising the fullness of opportunities due to your dual citizenship status? That’s your privilege, you know. Now that’s incredible. Only God would do it this way!

## *A&A: Application & Action*

1. What are you doing to work to ensure that you personally are a great ambassador for Christ? Be specific.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How are you equipping others to become great ambassadors for Christ? Give examples.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Would someone who knows you well describe you as an effective lifetime ambassador for Jesus Christ? What is their evidence? How about someone who knows you less well? Evidence?