

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions radio. You asked why Daniel never refers to his new name directly, only when he is writing in the third person. You wanted to know why Daniel would not refer to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego by their Hebrew names instead of their pagan names.

We are not completely sure of the reasons. One observation is that the Hebrew names of the three youths are used until the close of chapter two of the Book of Daniel. It was at that time that Nebuchadnezzar, at Daniel's request, promoted the three to be administrators over the province of Babylon. Presumably, Daniel used their Babylonian names when making this request. Using their Babylonian names avoided the inconvenience of varied foreign names (the Hebrew names) and helped to unify the mixed Babylonian court. The Babylonian names also displayed Babylonian lordship.

Because Daniel wrote his book chiefly for the Jewish people at the time, it was appropriate to use his Hebrew name. Therefore, in nearly every place where he is referred to, Daniel uses his Hebrew name, except when the words of Nebuchadnezzar are recorded about Daniel (in the third person), then the name Belteshazzar is used. Some times both names are used for Daniel, which makes the identification clear, but retains the customary Jewish name of the central figure of the book.

We hope we have shed some light on your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,  
Christian Questions Radio