

## **“Daring to Be a Daniel”**

### **Daniel 1:18-21**

INTRO:

We live in a time in our nation when the "politically correct" direction is the direction away from God. This is also true in the direction of the church today. Many embrace a direction and a purpose that is anti-scriptural. What do we do in such a situation? In **Matthew 5**, Jesus reminded us we ARE the light of the world and we ARE the salt of the earth. Both of these word pictures speak of how what we are influences what we do. Because we are a light, we illuminate, and we are conspicuous – **“A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”** Because we are salt, we create thirst and impede corruption. As attractive as these word pictures are, they are difficult to live.

A tremendous example of how we are to live in a world like ours is found in the life of Daniel. As we catch up with Daniel, he and his three friends were ripped out of their safe and secure home situations in Jerusalem and transported many miles away from home to Babylon. They were prisoners of war and were being trained to become officials in the government of the Babylonian Empire. It is in the first days of their training process we find Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. As we study this account we will find three parts to Daniel's experience.

***I. Daniel's Commitment (v. 8)***

***II. God's Immediate Blessing (V. 9-16)***

***III. God's Extended Blessing (V. 17-20)***

***I. Daniel's Commitment (v. 8)***

**Daniel 1:8** ***“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”***

A. **Verse 8** was set up by the events in **verses 3-7**. The Babylonian method of conquest was to bring the best and the brightest from the lands of conquest and integrate them into the Babylonian government. That is why they chose the best and the brightest from Judah and took them to Babylon for indoctrination.

1. We do not know exactly how old Daniel and his three friends were when they arrived in this foreign land many months journey from home. Most commentators think that they were no more than 13 or 14 years old. The King wanted them to be at an impressionable and malleable point in their lives.

2. So, here we find Daniel and his friends, young and frightened with no family or friends to comfort or strengthen them. The indoctrination program involved training in the culture and learning of Babylon (Idolatry 101 through 707).

**(v. 4)** ***“[they were to be] young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to***

***understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans."***

And it included a special diet of the best that Babylon had to offer.

3. There was a problem here. This food had a downside. It no doubt violated the Levitical diet laws that the Lord had established. To eat this food would mean Daniel and his three friends had turned their back on the true and living God.

B. What were Daniel and his three friends to do?

***"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank."***

Daniel chose not to do what everyone else was doing. Daniel made a choice – he made a decision. Daniel looked at the options that he had and he chose in full understanding of the consequences of his choice. What were his options?

1. First, he could just eat this best of the best in the land. On the positive side, eating would put him ahead professionally. The King surely wasn't going to promote a rebel rouser who disobeyed the first order given to him. Not eating would surely guarantee the king's displeasure. Kings did not make suggestions in Daniel's day. Consider the punishment for not bowing down to the image in **Daniel 3**. Eating was what everyone else was doing. Even the other boys from the finest homes in Judah were eating the King's pizza without a problem, why shouldn't he? After all, God had not treated him fairly had He? He had allowed these ruffians to drag him away from his family and take away his freedom. If God wasn't treating him fair, why should he go out of his way to obey! Besides, wasn't God sovereign and He put me, Daniel, in this situation? Therefore, it must be His will that he eat. God wasn't winning in this war anyway. The LORD may not even be paying attention.

2. Or He Could Just Say "No." There is another side of this question. To eat was to ***"defile himself."*** This is a strong word. If something is defiled, it is unacceptable to God! To eat this food would be for Daniel to sin! The choice then is clear. To sin or not to sin, that is the question. Whether to obey a king that he can see, or the King of kings Whom he cannot see. To be sure, obeying meant eating vegetables and water. That was all right, because it meant obeying God.

C. Daniel chose to suffer the consequences and to choose to obey God. Do we have the courage to make such a choice? Daniel had no guarantee God would make the consequences go away. He could have easily been signing his death warrant. Still, Daniel chose not to sin.

*Dare to be a Daniel  
Dare to stand a lone  
Dare to have a purpose firm  
Dare to make it known*

## ***II. God's Immediate Blessing (V. 9-16)***

**Daniel 1:9–16** *“Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, ‘I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.’ So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ‘Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king’s delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.’ So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.”*

A. Now what happened because Daniel obeyed? **[1]** God blessed Daniel by giving him the ear of the eunuchs in charge of his indoctrination. There is a principle here that must be stated. God will never help us sin, but He will help us obey. God blesses obedience, He condemns sin.

B. God also gave Daniel and his friends a miracle. Have you ever tried to gain weight on vegetables? So, the eunuch saved his head, and Daniel and his friends preserved their relationship with the living God. How much is your relationship with God worth to you?

## ***III. God's Extended Blessing (V. 17-20)***

**Daniel 1:17–21** *“As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.”*

A. Obeying God sometimes is thin on immediate blessings. In Daniel's case, God gave the blessing of better health, but He did not make vegetables taste like steak.

**Hebrews 10:35-36** *“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone*

***draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."***

Blessings for obedience may not be immediate.

B. Look at how God blessed Daniel and his three friends over the long haul for their immediate obedience.

1. **(v.17)** God gave them wisdom, special intellectual abilities and some supernatural ones. In short, God made sure that they advanced in their occupations.
2. **(vs.18-20)** God gave them favor with the King which they needed to serve. He made them stand out in the crowd in respect and ability.
3. **(v.21)** He gave Daniel longevity in serving the King of kings in the courtyard of the king.

Now this does not mean that if we serve God we will live in mansions here. But, it means that God is aware of choices that we make to serve Him and He rewards us for them.

One sin can destroy a life.

One act of obedience can produce great rewards – now and in the world to come.

**Hymn #378 *Only One Life***