

# DANIEL : LIVING WISELY IN BABYLON

Daniel 1:1-21

*Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. Daniel 6:3 😊*

The story of Daniel is fascinating because it reveals the possibility of godliness in the midst of ungodliness.

Daniel and his friends remained loyal to God even in the land of their captors, and in the midst of all the enticements they faced . It would have been much easier to go with flow, but they were determined not to go with the flow. They refused to compromise their godly convictions. We will consider that this morning.

Compromise appeals so strongly to the flesh ... that it demands significant courage to resist, to be godly among ungodliness, and to take a definite and positive stand to do everything out of principle , in world where everything seems to be against principle.

Let us then examine 3 exceptional qualities manifested in the life story of Daniel, who possessed an excellent spirit .

### Daniel was a man of perception

The prophet Daniel is one of the most blameless men of Scripture. He was a close friend of kings in 2 great world powers: 1) Babylonian 2) Medo-Persian. He spent most of his life in captivity.

Daniel and his three friends, along with thousands of other deportees ,were taken from their homes in Jerusalem in 605 B.C. during a siege by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

All four were intelligent, men of great aptitude ,physically fit, good-looking young men at the time of their capture, and they were likely of the royal family or nobility of Judah.

Daniel and his three friends were vetted for a three-year training program. King Nebuchadnezzar determined to train for governmental service those with the best minds among the people within his kingdom, regardless of their race.

*"Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, 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" Dan. 1:3-4.*

One of the first things that happened to these four young men was the changing of their names (verse 7).

- *Daniel—God is my Judge to Belteshazzar – Bel protect the king*
- *Hananiah—Jehovah is Gracious to Shadrach—Command of Aku*
- *Mishael—Who is what God is? to Meshach—Who is what Aku is?*
- *Azariah—Jehovah has Helped to Abed-nego—servant of Nego, also called Nebo.*

To make them forget the God of their fathers, they give them names that honored Babylonian idolatry.

The training, which was to last 3 years, was nothing but "Babylonian Brainwashing." The plan was to wash God from their minds and to impart the religious and

political ideology of Babylon . The Hebrew young men were to forget all their heritage and traditions and to become good Babylonians.

They were to learn the language and literature of the Babylonians so that they may conform to the pagan ways and culture of that idolatrous society. They were to become soft , loyal , " yes men" in the service of the king.

The challenge Daniel and his colleagues faced was assimilation at the expense of loyalty to God and their people. The subjects they would have studied probably included astrology, the study of animal entrails, rites of purification, sacrifice, incantation, exorcism and other forms of divination and magic.

These subjects would have been odious to the faith of devout Jews, as some subjects at today's secular high schools and universities might be for modern Christians.

*These young men were already gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick in understanding when they were made slaves , according to v4.*

Then in vs 17-18, having completed their 3 years of schooling in the Royal Academy, it says, *"God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom."*

Notice, in response to their loyalty to God were are told, *God gave them!* God gave them more wisdom. Intellectually they surpassed all other students by the God's grace. But with Daniel there is more: *to Daniel was given the understanding to interpret all visions and dreams.* Daniel was a man of great perception.

There is nothing wrong with learning, but we must ever be wise not to be influenced by secular wisdom, be it good or bad, to allow it to have soul-control. The apostle Paul exhorts us: *let the word of God richly dwell in.* God uses His word *to teach, rebuke, correct, and instruct His people* ( 2 Tim.3:16).

You know, in Scripture the Babylon represents the whole non-Christian world and its paganism. The world systems, which are ruled by Satan and his agents are particularly designed to seduce the youth in believing falsehoods, while they are still vulnerable, unsettled, and inexperienced in life.

Notice the change of identity for the 4 young men came before the indoctrination. Today pretty much all world

governments and all the LGBT groups work hard , hand in hand , in targeting our youth with their appalling lies that gender and identity is not based on what you were at birth, but rather on what you want it to be. They want identity change , name change , sex change and mind change .

And Satan is extremely relentless against the children which have been rooted in the faith .These were young believers in the true God , educated in the matters of the Jewish faith and the goal was to erase all that they learned and believed and to conform them. The majority of the global governments and educational institutions are increasingly gearing themselves to rid societies of Judeo -Christian values , beliefs, and principals .

God's has news for them . *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

The Babylonian braining washing is going on at every level. And primary source it emerges from is the political authorities . The governments are trickling down the " equality act " and " gendertheology indoctrination " , and other related laws that affect our jobs and livelihood. We may have to give up our jobs if we want to keep our standards.

Notice they were thought the language of the Babylonians . Language is such a strong tool to make people conform.

The cunning deception of Satan behind language and its power for conformity, is such that words are altered and softened . Think about it, we say:

- Partner opposed to wife or husband
- Unwanted pregnancy opposed to unborn human being
- Assisted dying opposed to killing
- Inappropriate opposed to wrong
- Affair opposed to adultery
- Error opposed to sin

They were thought literature of the land. The modern-day Babylonian brainwashing is evident in our schools . A simple , elementary science book will discredit the truth of creation and defend the lie of evolution.

Many textbooks , even at the kindergarten level are funded by gay organizations. Books , the internet, film , social media ,TV , radio are all powerful tools for conformity. We must be resolved not to be influenced and hold on to the truths we have been thought and learned. And to pass them on, at all costs .

To the youth especially , *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* (Rom 12:2). And that is possible only through the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We can possess all the knowledge in the world and to be of no use , if we do not know what to do with it. Wisdom is the skill of applying the knowledge we gain .

And if you lack wisdom , the bible says ask for it . *God who gives generously to all without finding fault will give it to you . Proverbs 4:7— Above all things get wisdom.*

It is the Lord who makes us proficient , competent , skilled at living in such a way to produce fruits of righteousness and to resist all falsehoods.

Daniel managed to walk the tightrope of partial cultural assimilation without religious and moral compromise. The stakes were high. Yet by God's grace, Daniel remained composed and maintained his integrity.

Even Daniel's enemies would later admit that *"they could find no grounds for complaint or any corruption,*



*because he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was found in him" (Dan. 6:4).*

## *Daniel was a man of purpose*

*"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's choice foods and wine( v8)."*

Notice carefully the first 5 words; *"Daniel purposed in his heart* Everything starts with purpose . Directly after finding himself in captivity and a challenging place of compromise *"he purposed in his heart."*

This is the matter of supreme importance. Christians who have no settled purpose in their lives, or resolve for their lives , fall into temptation easily and sin easily . They compromise easily and backslide easily.

Christians are to be people of determination , principle, and purpose .

The right purpose gives a man anchorage in the time of storm. To have committed oneself to some definite thing , or goal , is always of value in every walk of life.

In matters political, social, in all departments of human life, it is the man who has some definite purpose who is likely to arrive somewhere and achieve.

Daniel's purpose was an amazingly simple one, and yet it was noble. In the Babylonian royal court and its corruption, he says, "*I will not touch the king's choice foods ; I will not drink the king's wine!*"

We do not know for certain what that fully entailed. Some say he purposed not to defile himself with food offered to idols . That could be, Daniel would not want to violate the Mosaic dietary laws.

However, what we should also understand is that in that culture , eating the king's meant ultimate allegiance to the king. Belonging to the king would defile Daniel . So, Daniel draws the line. I will serve the king , but the king will never own me .

*"My purpose is not to defile myself."* In other words, at all costs, I will not violate my allegiance to Jehovah , my God.

Daniel's deepest purpose was loyalty to God and upholding His laws. Because he had made up his mind at the beginning, he was strong and victorious through all the coming days. If we are resolved firm and steadfast at the start, we can stand strong to the end.

In the midst of the allurements and enticements of a godless age, let every man purpose in his heart that he will be loyal to Jesus Christ and His word. Jesus Himself tells us what that universal purpose should be: *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness* (Matt. 6:33).

The first and the simple purpose to which the Holy Spirit of God invites every man to yearn for is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to aim for Christlikeness as a goal.

Purpose loyalty to Christ, affirm it; and then from that mindset you may begin to construct your life according to His word and will.

If you purpose and determine to crown Jesus Christ in your mind and heart, when the world's luring temptations come to interfere with your loyalty, you will be able to refuse and triumph over them, as Daniel and his friends did.

God favored Daniel for refusing to eat the King's food. God sovereignly softened the heart of Ashpenaz and the meat was replaced for vegetables and the wine for water.

After the 10-day test of only eating vegetables , the young lads were healthier than the others . They trusted and obeyed God and God come through for them . Take a stand for God , God will honor your stand! He will reward you .King Nebuchadnezzar found no one equal to them , and without hesitation put them in his service .

Daniel and his friends were the cream of the crop , rising to the top.

### Daniel was a man of prayer

In spite of the polluted atmosphere of the palace court , Daniel live a life of prayer and purity .

Daniel's prayer didn't just happen, he planned it. He prayed 3 times day. Again , we see him as a man of purpose. He was a determined prayer warrior .

For many of us, prayer is a hit-and-miss thing; it's a thing we do when we have time just before we eat or before we drift off to sleep. Daniel took his prayer life seriously, and he planned before he prayed.

*So, I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. (Daniel 9:3).*

This suggestive phrase tells us that he “turned away” from everything else. Daniel didn’t let things distract him when he got down to the business of prayer.

Daniel’s prayer in Chapter 9 is full of content. His prayer was full of God’s awesome , attributes and glory. The prayer consists of 2 major parts : 1) confession and 2) supplication..

When he prayed, he prayed from his heart:

*...we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (Daniel 9:5, 6)*

Daniel called a spade a spade! He was candid as he prayed, and so should we. We need to learn how to pray simple, straightforward, focused prayers, holding nothing back.

We should be honest and up front with God as we pray because He certainly is that way with us.

As Daniel prayed and confessed his sins and those of his people, he was being completely frank. It reminds us of what the psalmist said in Psalm 66:18—*If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*

It's a good idea to get sin out of the way before you pray, by the way! God won't pay attention to anything you have to say if you harbor unconfessed sin in your heart.

It is worth emulating a man like Daniel. He is remembered as a *man of perception, of purpose and of prayer.*

In Daniel 10:11, he is called "*O Daniel, a man greatly beloved,*" the angel Gabriel. Our Lord Jesus Christ and Daniel are the only two in all the bible called, "*beloved.*"

Those words to Daniel bear witness to his "*godly life.*" In this ungodly world with all its ungodliness, let us dare to be a Daniel, for he teaches how to live "*wisely in Babylon.*"

To God be the Glory!

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