

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## BOOK OF DANIEL

### STAYING COMMITTED (DANIEL 1:8-10)

#### DANIEL FELT A CONVICTION

We can't say for certain that God told Daniel not to eat the food and wine offered, but he obviously had a conviction about taking food that might have been offered to idols and was not kosher (Jewish standards)

- We should also listen to personal convictions, though they may not be majors that apply to everyone

#### IT WAS GREATER THAN DIET

Though many of these practices would change after the coming of Christ, Daniel was correct in observing the Jewish laws with food and not "defiling" himself by bowing to Babylonian culture

- He asked for a change of diet in a respectful manner, which honored others, God, and kept his convictions

#### "WHAT'S POPULAR ISN'T ALWAYS RIGHT"

Babylonian culture was in conflict to the Word of God, and Daniel could discern this and had the maturity to say no despite cultural pressure

- A spiritual gift we need to ask God for is Discernment! Do we know the Word (and God) enough to know what God does, or does not, like?

#### WHY DIDN'T HE BUCK THE NAME CHANGE AND BABYLONIAN EDUCATION?

Probably because these acts did not directly break Jewish laws, specifically rebellion to government and hunger strikes

#### WE SEE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AGAIN (V9)

Ashpenaz showed kindness and sympathy to Daniel, though it could have got him in serious trouble

#### MAKING SURE THE INVESTMENT IS HEALTHY

Though Ashpenaz wanted to accommodate Daniel's dietary request, he was afraid that he would lose his life if the young men looked malnourished

- We must understand the delicate balance of where people are, where they come from, and how we can help them get where God wants them

#### FROM UNUSUAL PLACES

God often raises up friends and protectors from odd places. We need to remember to always be gracious, loving, kind, and respectful to ALL people, not just like-minded ones.

### BELIEVING IS SEEING (DANIEL 1:11-16)

#### PLAN B

It appears that Ashpenaz sympathized with Daniel, but did not grant his wish to eat vegetarian. So, Daniel did not give up, but asked the guard on duty the same thing.

- Here we see that God worked on a second individual through Daniel, because he did grant the request to only eat veggies

#### THERE WAS A 10 DAY TRIAL RUN

The results of the test should not be a shock to Christians. Daniel believed that God would honor his obedience, so he boldly convinced the guard that the 4 men would look just as healthy as anyone else

- We all know that water and veggies is healthier than a diet of meat and wine, but this is pre-nutritional science

#### BELIEVING ALLOWS US TO SEE

C.S. Lewis said, "In science we only see notes of the poem, in Christianity we find the poem itself."

- Daniel believed in the true God, therefore he positioned himself to see the miraculous happen and to know where the credit lies.

#### SEEING IS BELIEVING

Though believing allows us to realize that God is doing miraculous things around us, seeing God's work in people's lives can nudge one into a position of vulnerability so He can work on their heart, like the guard that allowed Daniel to continue his diet.

- This is one reason why **personal testimonies are extremely important.**

#### BOLDNESS

We must be brave enough to trust God to honor His Word, bold enough to stick to our beliefs in times of discouragement, and be respectful and vulnerable enough to communicate our stories to skeptical people

### FAVOR AND INFLUENCE (DANIEL 1:17-21)

#### BLESSINGS OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Daniel and his 3 friends were blessed with greater discernment between truth and error as they were further bombarded by a pagan culture

- Let us not forget their age and removal from their family as well. Their wisdom and discernment was nothing short of miraculous

### DANIEL STOOD OUT IN A UNIQUE WAY

All 4 men had superior intellect, but only Daniel could understand and interpret dreams and visions. This came by God's revelation, not by mystical books or "skill".

- We often see an occult-like fascination with cracking codes and trying to learn how to control the supernatural. But revelation and wisdom come from a relationship with God

#### THEY ALSO HAD A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD

Because of their firm foundation, these men were actually blessed by getting to go into a system that did not believe how they did, but taught them a "worldly" wisdom and gave them a practical education

- The point is not to avoid the world, but to be insulate enough to learn valuable lessons and "spit out the bones"

#### THE BUBBLE IS NOT THE BIBLICAL MODEL

To overemphasize the point; we are not called to isolate, but to insulate. I understand the fears of parents, but it should just heighten our intensity to insulate ourselves and teach the next generation to do the same

- **What is the point of the light if it never penetrates the dark?** Scary, but they are the words of Jesus! (Matthew 5:14-16)

#### AT THE END OF THEIR TRAINING

After 3 years of education, the 4 young men were presented to king Nebuchadnezzar

- Oddly enough, the King of Kings had a similar process for His disciples. He still selects us, equips, clears barriers away so we can serve Him, and rewards us for our obedience

#### WE WILL SEE RESULTS FROM OUR OBEDIENCE

Daniel says they were "10 times better" than the astrologers and priests of Babylon

- **A day-to-day commitment to Christ will result in contentment and fulfillment.** This does not mean we have material belongings or the easiest life, but that **we can rise above our adversities and become truly successful in our callings.**

#### SERVING IN THE COURT FOR 40 YEARS (V21)

Daniel served until King Cyrus, which would have been several monarchs. No one in the Bible had as much influence in pagan nations as Daniel.

- This shows that one can achieve favor and influence in a society, culture, or workplace that is majority non-Believers

#### THE NAME REMAINED

Daniel, who had his named changed in an attempt to alter his identity, stayed strong and outlived and out "legacyed" all of the leaders of the empire he served in

- In essence, this is our challenge: To be in the world but not to conform to it, to be the light in dark places, and to honor God wherever we are in life

#### A MESSAGE THAT SAVES

- In a time of quick fixes, self-helps, and easy answers, we must learn to look up, because the only source of contentment and fulfillment comes from Jesus Christ and His Word.
- If this is a source of debate, let's examine the evidence of our choices

#### RELATIONSHIPS TAKE EFFORT

- We must learn to defend our faith
- We must be on the offensive, constantly sharing the hope of Christ through the power of our stories, and His
- We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world
- We must tap into the power of the Holy Spirit