

DANIEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Daniel chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we begin this fascinating and timely book. Some 34 years ago or so I taught my first Bible study and it was on the book of Revelation. I know, I was crazy but it did not end there. The second Bible study that I taught, right after Revelation was the book of Daniel. Talk about deep books and yet the Lord was very gracious and He saw me through that.

I loved prophecy and I still do. When I first got saved I could not get enough of prophecy because it spoke of how close we are getting to the Lord's return. Today, many have lost that love for prophecy and they are too busy to think about the Lord returning. They have lost that joy, that blessed hope and that is very disappointing. We no longer see that enthusiasm for prophecy as we did some 20 or 30 years ago!

Now when we think of the book of Daniel we think of prophecy, end times, the return of Jesus Christ to rule and reign and that is a true picture of the book of Daniel. There is no way to get around that, it is what Daniel is about and it is what the Bible is about.

But it is much more than just prophecy. Daniel is a very practical book. It will show us how a young man can be in the center of a pagan society and still live for God. This young man was not influenced by the world. And Daniel lived his entire life that way, as we shall see, and that should be a great encouragement to each of us.

It should be an encouragement for our children that they too can live in a world, a society that is very evil and yet they can live for God! You see, we can be in this world system and still stand up for God; we can still stand up for righteousness! But too often we let the world into our lives and we sink! Daniel did not do that and what an example to us to learn from!

And yes, there is much prophecy in the book of Daniel but many have a hard time with this. And prophecy is what makes this book so controversial. You see, Daniel's prophecies of world empires and the things that they did were so accurate that people say Daniel could not have written this book, it was written at a much later date, it had to be.

And they put the time of writing this book to around 164 B. C. during the troubled times of the Maccabees. This solves the problem for the so-called higher critics of the Bible. But when you look at the evidence, which they don't like to do because it puts their theories down, it clearly shows that Daniel wrote this book sometime during the sixth century B. C. Let's take a few minutes and look at the evidence to see for our self who wrote the book of Daniel and like I said, it is pretty obvious when you look at the facts.

First of all we see where some of the trouble came in denying the timeframe of the writing of this book. In the third century A. D. an anti-Christian philosopher by the name of Porphyry stated that Daniel didn't write this book in the sixth century B. C. but it was a forgery written in 50 A. D. And tragically that thought was picked-up by the so-called higher-critics of the seventeenth century and it continues on through today, the doubting of this book of the Scriptures or that it was not written by Daniel.

But, if the Bible is the inspired Word of God then we should have no problem accepting these very detailed and accurate prophecies that are found in this book. Paul even tells us that **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** II Timothy 3:16-17. That should make it very clear, but again many deny this truth. So what are the facts?

First of all, historically speaking, Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, records for us an incident that occurred during the time of Alexander the Great which will support the early authorship of Daniel. The problem though, is most of the time these people who try to discredit the Scriptures aren't interested in the truth, like I have said, but would rather believe the lies for it supports their beliefs and they are not accountable to God. And really, for many of them, in their minds there is no God!

At this point Alexander the Great was at the peak of his might, conquering whoever he wanted whenever he wanted, and he was moving to the near east and was coming to Jerusalem. And as he was approaching the city, Jaddua, the High Priest, came out to meet him and showed him a copy of the book of Daniel in which Alexander was clearly mentioned. And Alexander was so impressed by this that instead of destroying Jerusalem, he entered the city peaceably and worshiped at the Temple! That is what Josephus tells us.

Here is another one that is so clear and yet these higher critics don't even look at it. In around 285 B. C. the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and do you know what book it contains? Yes, it contains the book of Daniel. And we will see that Antiochus Epiphanes is clearly shown in the book of Daniel. So how could the book of Daniel be written in 164 B. C. when it was already part of the Septuagint translation that was translated around 285 B. C.? Because the book of Daniel was written long before that time, and as I have said, in the sixth century B. C.!

I like what Robert Dick Wilson of Princeton Theological Seminary said some two generations ago, “In the name of scholarship and for the sake of truth and righteousness it is time to call a halt on all those who presume to a knowledge which they do not possess, in order to cast reproach upon an ancient writer, as to whose sources of information and knowledge of the facts they must be ignorant and whose statements they cannot possibly fully understand, nor successfully contradict.” Absolutely!

There is a battle going on for the truth and I think one writer summed it up nicely for us. He wrote,

The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battlefield between faith and unbelief. It admits of no half-measures. It is either Divine or an imposture. To write any book under the name of another, and to give it out to be his, is, in any case, a forgery, dishonest in itself, and destructive of all trustworthiness.

But the case as to the book of Daniel, if it were not his, would go far beyond even this. The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied, on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought. In a word, the whole book would be one lie in the Name of God. The more God, as we shall see, is the center of the whole, the more directly would the falsehood come into relation to God.

The book truly ascribes to God, that He gave wisdom to Daniel to interpret the visions of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; that He delivered the children from the burning fiery furnace and Daniel from the den of lions; that He revealed to Daniel things to come, the largest and the least, comprising successions of empires and Christ's kingdom, with some exact dates and minute details. The miracles it implies, the prophecies it avers [declares], to have been recorded by Daniel a contemporary.

Either then we have true miracles and true prophecy, or we should have nothing but untruth. An apology for the supposed forger, such as those put out by some Germans and lately in England, is utterly untenable and immoral . . .

- Edward B. Pusey, Daniel The Prophet, p. 75

The bottom line is this. If this is not from Daniel, if this is a lie, then how in the world can we trust any other book of the Bible? We would not be able to! But God has said these things and instead of listening to the snakes in the garden who say, "*Has God indeed said?*" we know that God has spoken and we need to listen!

Now there are those who still will reject this information and thus, I will go to a higher source than what we have seen already. This should save people from reading all kinds of dry commentaries explaining why Daniel did not write the book of Daniel. Jesus said in Matthew 24:15, "**Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand).**" God calls Daniel a prophet and takes an event in the book of Daniel to show us he wrote the book of Daniel.

Now if you don't believe the words of Jesus you have an even bigger problem than who wrote the book of Daniel and when was it written. And so the book of Daniel continues to confound the critiques and it confirms the Christian and what he believes!

As we have read from The nineteenth-century scholar and churchman E. B. Pusey, he had it right when he wrote, "The book of Daniel is especially fitted to be a battleground between faith and unbelief. It admits of no half-way measures. It is either divine or an imposture." How true that is.

As we will see as we go through this book, there is much prophecy in it. This book not only tells us of all the world empires from Daniel's day to the last day's world empire, but it also tells us the exact day that Jesus Christ would ride through Jerusalem as Messiah the King in His First Coming! And it also speaks of the day the Kingdom will be established, the Second Coming of Jesus, to the exact day! And the starting point for that is the Abomination of Desolation and we will cover that as we move through this great book of the Bible.

Also, the book of Daniel unlocks many of the mysteries in the book of Revelation. So I believe this is an important book for us to understand and apply to our lives! Tragically not many go through this book, from the pulpit to individuals, and they are missing some great blessings that God has for them.

Now some may wonder why prophecy is so important to us. Some are putting prophecy down today saying it is a waste of time, like I have said. Let me say this, it is important to God and thus, it should be important to us!

Over 25% of the Bible is prophetic in nature. Thus, as we read these things they will strengthen us, encourage us and it will keep us pure knowing that the Lord's return can come at any moment. John makes that point very clear when he says in I John 3:2-3, "**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**" You see, prophecy is important to us, it affects our lives, it affects how we live out our faith!

But again, some say we just can't understand prophecy so why bother with it! For example, Dr. Charles Hodge, a great theologian at Princeton in the past, made this statement,

"The subject [prophecy] cannot be adequately discussed without taking a survey of all the prophetic teachings of Scripture both of the Old Testament and of the New. This task cannot be satisfactorily accomplished by anyone who has not made a study of the prophecies a specialty. The author [that is, Dr. Hodge], knowing that he has not such qualifications for the work, purposes to confine himself in a great measure to a historical survey of the different schemes of interpreting the Scriptures prophetically."

Here is this brilliant theologian and yet, he does not feel equipped to teach on prophecy and yet, the Bible is over 25% prophetic in nature. So what do you do, skip those sections, ignore those sections? And what Dr. Hodge wrote many years ago we see many doing the same thing today and not only saying we can't understand it, but it is controversial, it does not help us in any way.

What a sad viewpoint. First of all it is God who opens up the Scripture to us by His Spirit. It is not our intellect. Think about it, I taught this book as a young Christian, maybe a few years in the Lord and that was it! God opens up His Word to us and if we try to do it apart from Him we just have the words of men!

Being controversial, if that is your excuse for not teaching on prophecy, then don't teach about Jesus being the only way to Heaven, that it is only through Him we can receive the forgiveness of sins through His shed blood because that is controversial too! Do you see how foolish that kind of logic is!

And to say that it does not help us in any way is again foolishness. Of course it does. It gives us encouragement in the days we are living in because we see that God has told us ahead of time the things that will take place and when we see them happen we can rest in the fact that He is still in control. Also, it keeps us looking upward for the return of our Lord knowing that as we look at prophecy and see these things come to pass His return is getting closer!

Also, the book of Daniel is written in both Hebrew and Aramaic languages. Many scholars point to this and say that two different writers wrote the book of Daniel. But they don't understand God and how detailed He is.

In Daniel chapters 1:1-2:4a and 8-12 they are written in Hebrew because God is speaking to the nation of Israel in the language of His people. From Daniel 2:4b-7:28 it is written in Aramaic for it is the language of the Gentile world and it is focusing on God's program for the Gentile world. Pretty simple and yet, when you want to reject God's Word you will use anything you can and instead of looking for reasons for these things, you look for excuses not to believe!

One more thing before we move on and this is from Dr. S. Maxwell Coder and he wrote,

The book of Daniel was for years made the subject of one of the bitterest, most arrogant attacks in the history of the entire anti-Bible movement. Considerable literature was written enouncing the historicity of the book being answered by other works in its defense.

From 1899 to 1917 the German, R. Koldewey, excavated the ruins of Babylon and proved conclusively that Nebuchadnezzar was responsible for the city's greatness, as claimed in the book of Daniel (4:30). Koldewey found in the remains of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar a great banqueting hall 56 feet wide and 173 feet long, with a niche opposite the main entrance for the royal throne. This was undoubtedly the setting for Belshazzar's feast (Daniel 5).

To escape the force of Daniel's remarkable fulfilled prophecies, it was said the book of Daniel was written much later than the accepted date. (Daniel foretold the fall of Babylon, the rise of the Medo-Persian empire, the conquests of Alexander the Great, the many outstanding events in the long period which followed Alexander's death to the coming to age of Rome. He predicted the coming of Christ and gave the time of His crucifixion.)

It was claimed, for example, that Greek musical instruments were listed in it several centuries too early. Babylonian records answered this by showing that Greek artisans and mercenary soldiers were employed in Babylonia in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

One of the most striking examples of the defeat of the opponents of the Word of God is to be seen in the fifth chapter of Daniel, where Belshazzar king of Babylon, is said to have been slain during a feast on the night of the city's fall. Secular historians named the last king of Babylon as Nabonidus; they said he was not present at the capture of the city, that he was not killed, but taken captive and kindly treated, and lived in retirement as a private citizen. Here, said the critics, was a clear case of error in the Bible.

No one had any idea of how the two accounts could be reconciled until Sir Henry Rawlinson discovered an inscription on a cylinder in the Euphrates valley containing the facts needed to clear up the problem. There were two kings of Babylon during Daniel's later life, a father and son. Nabonidus, who occupied a stronghold outside the city, had made his eldest son, Bil-shar-uzzer (Belshazzar), coregent, and allowed him to use the royal title. Belshazzar was slain while defending the city; Nabonidus was spared. Thus, even the apparently insignificant detail of Daniel 5:7, 29, about the prophet's being made the third ruler in the kingdom, was explained.

- Dr. S. Maxwell Coder, Home Study Series, Moody Monthly (January 1967)

We can trust God's Word and what we might not understand today or what we might not find yet historically speaking, I believe it will be revealed. Why do we doubt what God has spoken to us? We shouldn't and thus, what God has spoken prophetically will surely come to pass as we are seeing with our own eyes today! With that as our background, let's begin reading in Daniel chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

DANIEL 1**VERSES 1-4**

1. Daniel opens up by giving us the timeframe of the events that are taking place in this chapter and he is showing us how he ended up in Babylon as a captive. At this point Jehoiakim was the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And make no mistake about it; Jehoiakim was a wicked King who reigned in Jerusalem for 11 years. And Jehoiakim was a puppet King to Pharaoh Necho, the one who placed him in power.

2. Now as some read this they see a contradiction with the Word of God. You see, here in Daniel chapter 1 we are told that this took place **“in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim”** and in Jeremiah 46:2 we are told that this took place **“in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.”** So who is right and who is wrong and for that matter, does it negate the Word of God if there is this error?

First of all they are both right! You see, Daniel dated this by the Babylonian method, which calculated the date of the King’s reign at the start of the calendar year *after* he took the throne while Jeremiah used the Jewish method. No discrepancy here you just have to understand how they calculated these dates.

John Walvoord explains it like this, “It was customary for the Babylonians to consider the first year of a king’s reign as the year of accession and to call the next year the first year . . . Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology.”

3. Let me set the stage for what transpired here. According to the Scriptures we see Jeremiah send to Jehoiakim the Word of God by the hand of Baruch. And as the King was sitting by the fire Jehudi began to read from this scroll. But he only gets three or four columns into it before Jehoiakim had enough. He didn't want to hear anymore and he takes this scroll that contained the Words of God and he cuts it up and throws it into the fire, destroying it.

But understand this, God's Word will never fade away, nor will it be destroyed by the hands of men. Judgment was coming and God would give to Jeremiah these words to re-write and even more, speaking of the judgment that would come against Jehoiakim.

And so in 606 B. C., after the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians and Pharaoh Necho at the battle of Carchemish, he came against Jerusalem. No longer was Jehoiakim a puppet King for Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians but now he was going to be a puppet King for Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians!

So this first siege took place in 606 B. C. and it was during this time that Nebuchadnezzar found out that his father, Nabopolassar the King had died and thus, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon in 605 B. C. But now, when Nebuchadnezzar returned home he was going to return to Babylon as the new King of this nation. But before he returned home he took some of the nobles and some of the Temple treasures with him. In this siege we see Daniel and his three friends taken captive.

Then in 597 B. C., during the second siege upon Jerusalem, Ezekiel was taken captive along with some 10,000 other Jews.

And then finally in 586 B. C. the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, taking the rest of the people captive to Babylon, except for some of the sick, the weak, the elderly, they remained in the land.

4. So the focus here is this first siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and during this first siege by Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem we see him take to Babylon some of the Temple articles and some of the children of Israel, some of the nobles as I have said before. Now keep in mind that some 97 years or so before this event occurred, God told King Hezekiah that this would take place. God told King Hezekiah to get his house in order for he was going to die. But Hezekiah wept before the Lord. And the Lord spoke to Isaiah who told him that God was going to extend his life another 15 years. And as the King recovered, news spread and the Babylonians, not powerful at this time, sent some ambassadors with gifts and letters. And Hezekiah was very hospitable and showed them all of the treasures of the kingdom.

Because of that God said to king Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah, **“Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD. ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”** II Kings 20:17-18.

And that is what took place as we have read. Now he did not take all the Temple treasures at this time, just some of them. That did not take place until the third and final invasion upon Jerusalem! It is also possible that Daniel and his three friends were descendants of Hezekiah as we are told in II Kings chapter 20.

Now these young men that King Nebuchadnezzar took he was going to indoctrinate them into the Babylonian ways. See, they didn’t take the old guys; it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks. But the kids, they can be trained, and that was what this King was doing. They were taught the Babylonian language, the customs, and the religion of this pagan society along with an intense education program dealing with astrology, astronomy, mathematics, and-so-on.

And keep in mind that Daniel and his three friends were not young kids; they were probably somewhere around 15 to 20 years of age! Most feel that Daniel was probably around 15 years of age when he was taken captive. But what the Babylonians did was train them up so that by the end of 3 years of training they would have forgotten their past ways and be assimilated into the Babylonian culture.

Do you see how important it is to train up your children while they are young! We are going to deal more with that in a few minutes, but even those in the educational system know that if you can indoctrinate the children into your ways, you have them for life! The adults are much harder to change, they are more resistant!

VERSES 5-7

1. Also notice how their names were changed to make a complete transformation into the Babylonian culture.

- Daniel – God is my judge to Belteshazzar – May Bel protect his life
- Hananiah – Beloved of the LORD to Shadrach – Illumined by the sun god
- Mishael – Who is like God to Meshach – Who is what Aku is
- Azariah – The LORD helps to Abed-Nego – A servant of Nebo

You see, by changing their name they were changing their identity. Make no mistake about it, the Babylonians had this plan to change the thinking of these young men so that it would change their behavior. There is no difference today. Our society, our world has such influence upon our lives, they try to change our thinking to change our behavior and they are doing a good job.

We are being molded into the image of this world when God wants to transform our lives into His image! As we are going to see, Daniel stood strong in what he believed in and was not going to give into what he was being taught. He loved the Lord and no one was going to change that. Listen to what he did!

VERSE 8

1. As I read this I truly believe that this is the key to living out the Christian life and there is no excuse not to. Keep in mind that Daniel and his three friends were probably very young at this point, maybe only 15 or 20 years of age like I have said. And as the Babylonians try to assimilate them into the Babylonian culture, the Babylonian ways, they are tempted with the Kings food and the Kings wine.

They were being prepared for the King to serve him. And I love what Daniel says because again, this is the key in how we should live out our faith, what we should and shouldn't do is based upon this. Daniel's response was, "**But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself . . .**" Daniel 1:8.

You see, you have to decide for yourself what you are going to do? You are going to have to decide for yourself, purpose in your heart if you are going to follow the way the world is going or follow the way of the Lord. You have a choice but there is only one that is the right one and that is following the Lord!

Now Daniel could have said, "*While in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do!*" It was a precursor to the Roman thing! But he didn't. He purposed in his heart not to do these things. Proverbs 4:23 tells us "**Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.**"

What an example Daniel is to us. You see, Daniel was in the world but the world was not in him. It is like a boat, it needs to be in the water to function but once the water gets into the boat, that is when the trouble begins and the boat begins to sink and it will be sunk eventually. The same is true with us! Once you let the world into your life, once you begin to compromise your faith, you are sunk!

2. Now why was this such a problem for Daniel and his three friends, it was only meat and wine? Keep in mind that the meat that was going to be given to Daniel and his three friends were offered to the Babylonian gods and thus, Daniel did not want to defile himself with this meat! Also, there were foods that were not kosher for them to eat, food that was forbidden for the Jews to eat according to the Mosaic Law.

Paul makes this point for us as he tells us in I Corinthians 10:20-21, **“Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.”**

Also, the wine was not watered down and I am sure they let it flow to let the defenses of these captives down so they could be assimilated into the Babylonian culture. Daniel knew this would cloud his judgment and thus, he rejected the wine as well.

It is as Proverbs 31:4-5 says, **“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.”**

3. Now where did Daniel and his friends get such standards? What was the secret to their success? I mean, these are teenagers, what happened to them that caused them to live like this? I believe it was their parents! Look at the names of these young men who were born during the revival of King Josiah. It shows that their parents feared God. Daniel means “God is my judge.” Hananiah means “Beloved of the LORD.” Mishael means “Who is like God.” And Azariah means “The LORD helps.”

And as these young men were trained in the things of God I believe it stuck with them even in this very difficult time that they were in. Remember what Proverbs 22:6 says, “**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.**” That doesn’t mean they will not drift from time to time, but what you place in their hearts will stick with them and rise to the surface. And yes, they do have choices to make and they don’t always make the right ones. But if you don’t instill in their hearts the things of God you have not given them a choice! I think we see here with these young men that they not only knew the things of God, they were willing to live out their faith no matter what. They were willing to take a stand for the Lord!

4. I realize that even for us as adults it is not always easy to live like this but this is what the Lord has called us to do. Let me share this story with you to show you it may not always be easy but if you purpose in your heart not to defile yourself and bring dishonor to the Lord, it is the best thing to do no matter what may happen. We are told,

Dr. Bryan Chapell tells a story of the wife of a full-time student at Covenant Seminary. Like the wives of many seminarians, Karen was earning money to keep her husband in school and food on the table. In her case, Karen made her living as a quality-control inspector for a major pharmaceutical company.

One day, through faulty procedures, the automated machines produced a large order of syringes that became contaminated and therefore failed inspection. Karen reported the problem to her boss, but he quickly computed the costs of reproducing the order and made a “cost-effective” decision. Because so much money would be lost in replacing the syringes, the boss ordered Karen to sign the inspection clearance despite the contamination. She refused, but this did not get her off the hook.

Because of certain federal regulations, only Karen could sign the clearance forms. If Karen did not sign, the syringes could not be marketed. The boss urged and threatened, but Karen would not budge. The impasse between Karen and her superior led to a visit from the company president. He also computed the costs of reproduction and issued his decision: The forms must be signed. Karen would have the weekend to think over whether or not she would sign the clearances. The president told her that if she was still determined not to sign the forms on Monday, her job would be in jeopardy.

In fact, much more than Karen's job would be in jeopardy. This was her only means of income, and it was a well-paying job, not easily replaced. Randy's education and their family's future were severely endangered. The hopes, dreams, and career plans of many years could be shattered as a result of the choice that had to be made in the next two days. When Dr. Bryan Chapell, the seminary's president, told this story, he concluded with the following words: "For this young couple, all the theological jargon and doctrinal instruction about consecration, righteousness, and holiness suddenly came down to this one concrete decision: Could they afford to remain undefiled from the contamination the world of business practicalities urged Karen to approve?" What would you do?

- Rodney Stortz, *Daniel the Triumph of God's Kingdom*, pp. 15-16

That is the situation that Daniel and his three friends are in and I don't care how much Scripture you know because unless you are willing to live out what you know, it is empty! I don't know what you are going through tonight or this past week or month or even year but God wants you to purpose in your heart not to defile yourself and there may be a cost to it. Count the cost and apply God's Word to your life – live what you say you believe!

5. Now Daniel, this young man, goes before Ashpenaz, the chief of the eunuchs, who was responsible for the physical and mental development of these young men, and is going to request a special favor so he may not defile himself. That is a bold stand in a wicked culture that he was now living in. Let's encourage our young to do the same and may we be encouraged to do the same. The Lord will honor the stand we take not to defile ourselves but to live holy lives as He is holy!

VERSES 9-10

1. Now the chief of the eunuchs is a little nervous since he was responsible for these guys. And if the King didn't like what he saw, it could cost him his life. He doesn't want to lose his head over this thing, and I mean that literally!

2. So now the ball is back in Daniel's hands and what is he going to do since the chief of the eunuchs is concerned about what Daniel is requesting? Let's read on and see.

VERSES 11-13

1. Daniel goes to the steward who is in charge over them, Melzar, who is under Ashpenaz the chief of the eunuchs. And Daniel asks for a 10 day test to see after 10 days of eating vegetables and grain if their appearance would be better than those who ate the best food and drank the best wine. A very bold stance he took. Daniel was truly a man of faith, trusting in the Lord.

2. One other point I want to bring out here and I think is very important. Daniel did not demand anything, he was not disrespectful but he asked if they could do this. We need to remember that as we have encounters with people or if people want us to do something that we are uncomfortable with. Don't be obnoxious to them but share with them why you don't want to do this thing or partake of that thing.

Paul tells us in Philippians 1:27-28, **“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”**

The Greek word Paul uses for “**conduct**” is POLITEUOMAI (pol-it-yoo’-om-ahee) and the idea is “to behave as a citizen.” Philippi was a Roman colony and thus enjoyed all the benefits of Rome. Thus, the people were not only proud of this but they also obeyed the rules of Rome so they would not lose their statues with Rome.

Paul is calling the Philippian believers to a higher standard for they are citizens of heaven and thus they should walk according to the high calling by which they have been called. To live as faithful citizens of heaven according to God’s Word.

Think about it, one of the greatest testimonies we have to a lost world is our integrity, that what we believe has impacted our lives in such a way that it is manifested in what we say and what we do!

Paul also gives them some words of encouragement and accountability. He calls for them to conduct themselves in a godly way whether he is there or not but he also tells them he is watching them. Why is that, did Paul not trust them? Not at all, but again, it has to do with accountability. We should all be accountable to each other so that if we start going astray, doing something that is not pleasing to God and we don’t see it, or don’t want to see it, a brother or sister in the Lord will let us know it in love!

In fact, Paul tells us we are one in Spirit, the Spirit of God. We are one in mind; we have the mind of Christ. And we are “**striving together**” and the Greek word that Paul uses is a compound Greek word that is composed of a preposition, SUN (with) and the noun ATHLEO that speaks of competing in a contest, such as a sporting event. It is the term from which we get our English words “athlete” and “athletics”.

Here's the thing. We are a team working together for a common goal, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, seeing the kingdom of God grow. We are working together, giving it our all.

Thus, as people look at our life they should see Christ flowing from our lives. We should not get into fights; we should not be arguing with each other, we should be living peaceably with all, as much as is possible. Conduct yourself in a way that brings honor to God as Daniel did!

VERSES 14-16

1. There is no reason that they should have looked better than everyone else just because they ate grains and vegetables. This was the hand of God upon their lives. He blessed them because of their willingness not to defile themselves! What a witness this was to not only the Babylonians but to the others who were with Daniel, the other captives who were being trained in the Babylonian ways!

2. Remember Paul Harvey and how he would tell a story and then say these words, "And now for the rest of the story." Well, there is more to the story I shared with you about Karen and her predicament to sign the papers saying that the syringes had meet the standards when they did not.

We are told,

Remember Karen, forced to leave her job at the pharmaceutical company? God did bless her. Because she would not sign the clearance forms for the contaminated syringes, the order was not delivered to the customer on time. Officials at that company investigated the delay and discovered how Karen had protected them from the contaminated syringes, even at the cost of her own job. The customer then hired Karen and increased her pay.

- Rodney Stortz, Daniel the Triumph of God's Kingdom, pp. 15-16

That is what we see here with Daniel and his three friends and it is what Paul reminds us in I Timothy 4:8, "**For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.**"

The focus here is the Word of God and growing in godliness, not giving into fairy tales or things that are meaningless or even doing things that will compromise your faith. Don't become distracted from the truth, speak if forth, teach it and you will grow.

The Word that Paul uses for "**exercise**" in the Greek is GUMNASIA, (goom-nas-ee'-ah) and from it we get our English word "gymnasium" and "gymnastics." The Greeks were big into physical training and each Greek city had its own gymnasium, Gold's Gym you might say, and Ephesus was no exception.

Thus, Paul picks up on this that was familiar to them and he tells us that physical exercise isn't wrong, it helps some, but that which is more important, more beneficial is the exercising of our faith, to train up the inner man. Look at health clubs today and what you tend to find is many mirrors, why? So you can look at yourself and see how well you are doing, flexing those muscles. For us, the world is a mirror from which we can see how well we are doing as we encounter different situations and how we respond will tell us if we are growing, if the inner man is being built up!

People do spend much time and much money, lots of effort on preserving these bodies that God has given to us; it is a multi-billion dollar industry from plastic surgery, to exercise programs, to diets, to pills and-so-on. And like I said, there is nothing wrong with caring for the body that God has given to you, but I will let you in on a little secret. The moment you are born your body is moving towards disorder, decay, and death! They will go back to the dust of the earth unless the Lord comes for us before that happens!

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 4:16-18, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

You see, the outward man is perishing, wearing down but that is not who we are. We are soul and spirit and when these bodies, these tents, go back to the dust of the earth we will be with the Lord and He is preparing for us new bodies, mansions for our soul and spirit to dwell in.

And thus, our focus should be on the building up of the inner man as Paul did in his own life. In I Corinthians 9:24-27 Paul tells us, **“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”**

Just as our human body grows by eating and exercise so too does our spiritual lives or the inner man. That is done as we feed on God’s Word, as we exercise our faith, we will grow, we will mature and this is truly profitable for our lives, more so than physical exercise even though it does help some!

That means we need to exercise our faith and at times, it does hurt, it does cause us to do things that go against the flow of our society. But God will honor that as He did here with Daniel and his three friends!

VERSES 17-21

1. I love this about our God. These guys gave themselves wholeheartedly over to the Lord and the Lord blessed them abundantly above all they could ask or think as I have said. At the end of this time, as they came before Nebuchadnezzar, the King found them ten times better than all his men of wisdom! And Daniel, besides having knowledge and skill in literature and wisdom, also understood dreams and visions, which he will use in the next chapter.

And so Daniel and his three friends were placed in positions in the Kingdom and Daniel lived into the Medo-Persian Empire, the time of King Cyrus. He was some 85 years old or more when he died, ministering in the heart of an evil culture for some 70 years and nothing bad is mentioned of him, no sin is spoken of.

2. Let me say this. There is one of the great lies of Satan that not only affects our own lives but it has trickled down to our children. And that lie is that if you serve the Lord, if you stand up for righteousness, if you stand up for God, you will be unpopular, you won't get the positions you want, no one will like you, they will make fun of you and ostracize you! Yes, it does happen at times but let me also say this.

I think we lose sight of the bigger picture and thus, that lie of Satan is just that, a lie! Look at what happened to Daniel and his three friends as they stood-up for righteousness in a pagan society. We are going to see that they were given prominent positions in the Kingdom. They were brought into favor of the other servants of the King.

Now let me also say this. Yes there will be those who will come against you when you stand up for righteousness. There will be those who reject you and don't want to be your friend. Guess what? They were not really your friend in the first place if they want you to do something that you are not comfortable in doing! Remember that fact.

That is not to say that we will never face persecution, difficulties. We will face them just as these young men did. But God will bless your faithfulness to Him. You can't give to God without God giving back to you more abundantly than you can imagine. He is a debtor to no man! The thing we must remember and share with our children is that we are not to give into the pressure and pleasure of this world. God will honor you for that! You will never lose out if you purpose in your heart not to defile yourself but you will if you choose to defile yourself!

In Jeremiah 17:7-8 we are told, **“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”**

The key is trusting in God, the promises He has given to us in His Word. I believe the lesson we should take home with us from this chapter of Daniel is that compromise is not a word that can be used in our relationship with God. We must be like Daniel and be steadfast and uncompromising in our walk with Him. Compromise may get you up the corporate ladder but it will not please God and it may not be a ladder God wants you to climb. Compromise may make you popular with a group of people but like I have said, it may not be a group of people that God wants you to be popular with, to hang with.

3. One more story and then I will close. We are told,

My friend Bryan Chapell worked for a major road construction crew in western Tennessee one summer while he was in college. It was a great paying job, and since jobs were hard to come by, it was important that he keep this one.

One morning his supervisor told him he was doing such a good job that he was going to get a special privilege. The man owned a hunting lodge nearby, and he wanted Bryan to spend a day or two at the lodge enjoying the outdoors. Bryan thanked him for the privilege but explained that he really needed the money. The boss told him that was no problem because he would keep him on the payroll.

He was off like a shot to the lake. That evening Bryan was at the lodge eating catfish when the phone rang. It was his father. When he had gotten home from work, his mother explained where Bryan was and under what arrangements. The voice on the other end of the line asked, "What are you doing collecting company pay without doing the work?"

Bryan had not thought of it that way. He didn't want to think of it that way. He argued, "Dad, I can't go back to my boss and tell him what he asked me to do is not ethical. He will be offended and fire me. How am I going not get through college if I do not have this job?"

His father answered, "I know you need this job to prepare for what you want to do. I also know what you need to prepare for life . . . and this is not it." What would you do? Bryan went home. God prepared him for life. Today he is president of Covenant Theological Seminary.

- Rodney Stortz, *Daniel the Triumph of God's Kingdom*, pp. 25-26

How you live out your faith will affect not only your life but it is also a witness to others of what you believe. Your faith is living and it is powerful in the lives of others. And understand this. As the end times have come upon us, as the return of Christ draws closer and closer, the world will become less and less tolerant to the things of God. But we need to remain firm in our beliefs. We need to - ***DARE TO BE A DANIEL!***