

Series: A Purposeful Heart

DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART

DANIEL 1

Text: Daniel 1:8

Daniel 1:8

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Introduction:

God had made a covenant with the people of Israel, promising that He would care for them and bless them if they obeyed His statutes, but if they disobeyed, He would chasten them and scatter them among the Gentiles.

Leviticus 26:14-33

¹⁴ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; ¹⁵ And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: ¹⁶ I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your

enemies shall eat it.¹⁷ And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.¹⁸ And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.¹⁹ And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:²⁰ And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.²¹ And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.²² I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.²³ And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;²⁴ Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.²⁵ And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.²⁶ And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.²⁷ And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;²⁸ Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

²⁹ And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. ³⁰ And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. ³¹ And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. ³² And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. ³³ And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Daniel was barely more than a boy when the Babylonian axe fell.

Note:

1. DANIEL THE PROPHET (VS. 1-7)

- Babylonian Conquest (vs. 1-2)

Daniel 1:1-2

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

Here we find the fulfillment of what God had previously declared would soon take place through Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets. For years God had been sending prophets to the backsliding kings of Judah, warning them that this day would come. Even though the children of Israel had been His chosen people, because of their sin He was going to give them over to the power of their enemies, and their land was to lie desolate.

According to Leviticus 25 God had told Israel when they came into the land that every 7th year was to be His. For 490 years they had not kept one sabbatical year. God had told them that if they gave every seventh year to Him they would have an abundance in the sixth year to last them until the harvest in the eighth year. They evidently did not believe God and thought that they would be better off themselves.

How many Sabbath years did they miss in a span of 490 years? 70

How long were they carried away captive for? 70

Notice not only the Babylonian Conquest but also:

- The Kings Command (vs. 3-5)

Daniel 1:3-5

³ *And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his*

eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; ⁴ Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. ⁵ And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

The king's policy was to train the best people of the conquered nations to serve in his government. He could benefit from their knowledge of their own people and could use their skills to strengthen his own administration.

For the next three years, the four youths were supposed to eat the king's diet, which, of course, was contrary to the dietary laws of the Jews. No doubt the food was also offered to the idols of the land, and for the Hebrew youths to eat it would be blasphemy.

Not only do we see Babylonian Conquest and the Kings Command but also:

- The Hebrew Captives (vs. 6-7)

Daniel 1:6-7

⁶ Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: ⁷ Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

Isn't it amazing how the world does not like to recognize God's name. Each of these four boys had "God" as part of their name. The Babylonians would give them new names, new gods, and new prospects. Each of the four new names exchanged the name of God for the name of a Babylonian idol.

Daniel (which means God is my Judge) was changed to Belteshazzar (Who Bel favours)

Hananiah (God is gracious) was changed to Shadrach (Illuminated by the sun god)

Mishael (Who is as God) was changed to Meshach (Who is like Venus)

Azariah (The Lord is my help) was changed to Abednego (The servant of nego)

Maybe the Babylonians thought that if these new names would help the youths forget their God and

gradually become more like the heathens they were living with and being taught by.

Note not only “Daniel the Prophet” but also

2. DANIEL’S PROBLEM (VS. 8-9)

Daniel 1:8-9

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. ⁹ Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

- Daniel’s Request

The king wanted to force these boys to conform to the ways of Babylon. We face the same problems today. Satan wants us to be conformed to this world.

The Babylonians could change Daniels home, learning and name, but they could not change his heart. Daniel “purposed in his heart” that is his heart was fixed! Paul and Barnabas urged the early Christians in Acts 11:23 that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. This is the only way to keep from defilement.

- Eunuch’s Reluctance (vs. 10)

Daniel 1:10

¹⁰ *And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.*

The Eunuch feared to let Daniel have his way because he would be held responsible for any physical deterioration in the four young men.

Note not only Daniel the Prophet and Daniel's Problem but also:

3. DANIEL'S PROPOSITION (VS. 11-16)

Notice:

- Their Desire (vs. 11-13)

Daniel 1:11-13

¹¹ *Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. ¹³*

Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

The four Jewish students didn't threaten anyone; they didn't stage a protest, or try and burn down a building. They simply excelled in their studies, acted like gentlemen, and asked Melzar to test them for ten days. Having heard his superior's objections, Daniel proposed a reasonable alternative. The test Daniel proposed was long enough to obtain the desired results, but short enough to protect the interests of his superiors.

God's ways only need a short time to prove their worth. Ten days were all it would take to prove that God's dietary laws were superior to those of the court. To try to do what God suggests demands only faith in Him. His ways are the best ways.

Notice not only their desire but also:

- Their Diet (vs. 14)

Daniel 1:14

¹⁴ So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

Ten days later and the result of the experiment is there for all to see. The four Jewish boys were healthier in body and better looking than all the other students.

Note not only Daniel the Prophet, Daniels Problem and Daniels Proposal but also:

4. DANIEL'S PROFIT (VS. 17-21)

Notice:

- Spiritual Revelation (vs. 17)

Daniel 1:17

¹⁷ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

God gave these four young men a suitable and swift reward. He “gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” Here were men that God could trust with learning. They were like sponges; they soaked up knowledge with ease.

- Royal Elevation (vs. 18-20)

Daniel 1:18-20

¹⁸ Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. ²⁰ And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than

all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

They stood before the king for inspection. Nebuchadnezzar tried the men with hard questions and it soon became evident that four young men outranked all of the others.

Close:

How did all this happen? Daniel purposed in his heart.