

“FAITH UNDER PRESSURE”
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
Daniel 1:1-21
“WHEN PRESSURE MEETS THE FAVOR OF GOD”

INTRODUCTION: Can you imagine the trauma of being carried away captive as a young teenager a thousand miles from home, separated from your family, and never able to return home again? How would you respond if you knew that the sins of others were the reason you were taken away? Would your faith hold up and carry you through such a difficult situation? Are you cognizant of the fact that our young people are being taken captive by unbiblical worldviews because they are not well grounded in Scripture? Does your lifestyle line up with what the Scriptures teach?

BACKGROUND: After centuries of disobeying the Lord, the people of Israel and Judah were suffering the consequences as God allowed their enemies to defeat them and take them into captivity. (Israel- 722 B.C by Assyria, and Judah- 586 B.C. by Babylon.) Daniel and his friends were taken captive to Babylon

I. OUR CHOICES IMPACT OTHERS, ESPECIALLY OUR DESCENDANTS. ARE YOUR POOR DECISIONS PUTTING OTHERS IN DANGER? (Isaiah 39) (Daniel 1:1-2)

- A. Hezekiah’s prideful decision to allow the Babylonians to see his treasures motivated them to want to return and take everything from God’s temple. (We should never let the wrong people see what we have!) (Matthew 7:6)
- B. The centuries of ignoring Sabbath rules led to the people of Judah going into captivity for 70 years. Some of the finest young Jewish citizens suffered consequences from actions initiated by their ancestors. Daniel was one of them.
- C. As Babylon systematically conquered the people of Judah, they installed a “puppet king” named Zedekiah. When he later rebelled, they killed his sons and blinded him.

II. DANIEL WAS PREPARED TO HONOR THE LORD EVEN THOUGH HE WAS IN A FOREIGN LAND WITH AN UNGODLY CULTURE. AS AMERICA BECOMES INCREASINGLY UNGODLY, WILL YOUR FAITH HOLD UP UNDER PRESSURE? (Daniel 1:3-10)

- A. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to indoctrinate the Hebrew boys to become servants of Babylon and its culture. ***Satan always wants to take God’s gifted people and use them for ungodly agendas.*** Their upbringing and commitment to the Lord gave them the courage to withstand the pressure. Are your children able to stand as biblical worldviews are being ridiculed?
- B. We must know who we are in Christ and who the Lord created us. Do not let the world change your name; you cannot change your God-given identity. We should honor these young men by using their god-given names rather than the names associated with the false gods of Babylon.
 - 1. Daniel means “God is my judge.” Belteshazzar means “Bel protects his life”.
 - 2. Hananiah means “the Lord shows grace.” Shadrach means “Inspired by Aku (moon god)
 - 3. Mishael means “who is like God?” Meshach means “who is like Aku?”
 - 4. Azariah means “the Lord is my help.” Abednego means “servant of Nebo or Nego”
- C. Daniel had purposed in his heart he would not defile himself by “eating what the ungodly world” tried to feed him. Have you decided to live by the Word of God? Daniel’s faith was used to gain favor from the chief of the eunuchs. He risked his life to accommodate Daniel! Have you learned the favor of God is better than money?

III. BELIEVERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING A GODLY LIFESTYLE (Daniel 1:11-20)

A. Daniel knew that eating from the “Lord’s Table” would produce better results than eating food dedicated to idols. Have you learned to be sustained by what the Lord wants to give you? (Daniel 1:11-14) (Malachi 1:7-8) (1st Corinthians 10:21-22)

B. The Lord will always bless those who trust Him and the processes He uses. The Hebrew boys ate vegetables rather than meat offered to idols. (God had approved certain meats in their dietary laws.) Their health advantages were evident after only ten days! You will never see results if you do not get started in the right direction. (Daniel 1:15-16)

C. The Lord will give you the ability to learn whatever you need to know IF you are committed to trusting Him with your life. (Proverbs 3:6) The Hebrew boys were given positions of influence in an ungodly kingdom because the Lord is Sovereign over all. Daniel would use his position to teach Scriptures to the wise men (Magi) so that many centuries later they were looking for the sign that would indicate the birth of Jesus the Christ. (Matthew 2:15)

1. Magicians dealt with the occult
2. Enchanters used demonic incantations to accomplish their purposes
3. Sorcerers would cast spells on others
4. Astrologers studied the movement of stars and their influence on events or people
5. Diviners used various methods in hopes of seeing future events

SCRIPTURE CONDEMNS THESE PRACTICES! (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)

D. The Hebrew boys were found to be ten times better than all those with access to demonic wisdom and powers in Babylon. Everything you need to know about the past, present, and future can be obtained through your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and by what the Holy Spirit teaches you from Scripture and revelation. (Daniel 1:20-21) (John 16:13)

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1st Corinthians 1:4-10)

Dr. Ronald J. Morrison
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