

Daniel 1:8-21**2-3-00*****“Confronting our Culture with Convictions!”*****1. Intro:**

- 1.1. **Last week:** We saw The Babylonians could change Daniel’s “home, learning, language, diet & name”...but they **couldn’t** change his **heart!**
- 1.2. **This week:** Options, decisions, choices,...life is full of them!
 - 1.2.1. 100’s a day get filtered through our minds.
 - 1.2.2. We lean on our will, our convictions, our belief system, our worldview, then we make our decision, & go for it.
 - 1.2.3. **Our decisions effect our life, they effect our tomorrow, & effect others around us.**
- 1.3. As we continue learning about Daniel he will show us “it is possible to serve God in Babylon!”
- 1.4. Was Daniel a Eunuch? (Is.39:5,7)**Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah,...“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.”**
 - 1.4.1. We don’t know for sure. He was never married.

2. DECISIONS MUST BE PURPOSED IN OUR HEART! (8a)

- 2.1. **“The *world* wants to conform you, the *Word* wants to transform you!”**
 - 2.1.1. **“*Alone* among unbelievers is when we really know where we stand!
Here is where we really find out what we are made of!”**
- 2.2. **Let your convictions confront your culture!**
 - 2.2.1. It is possible to serve God in Babylon?
 - 2.2.2. Daniel shows us not only how to **live** in Babylon, but how to **abound** in Babylon!
 - 2.2.2.1. As **Joseph** served in Egypt; **Esther** in Persia; The **young Jewish maiden** in Syria(under Naaman/2 Kings 5).
 - 2.2.2.2. **Q:** Which area of your life would you call Babylon in your life that you have been called to serve in?
 - 2.2.2.3. Don’t complain about **where** God puts you, ask Him to **use you** while you are there!
 - 2.2.2.4. **Babylon’s, are only for a season!**

- 2.3. We see Daniel & his 3 amigos don't bow to the "modern softness of compromise" we see all around us today!
- 2.3.1. Daniel surely wasn't trying to win a **popularity contest**, with his people, nor with Neb the king!
- 2.3.2. He didn't read the popular books of his day, "How to win friends & influence people"; "The Power of Positive Thinking"; or, "When in Babylon do as the Babylonians"!
- 2.3.2.1. They didn't use the famous ditty, "Everybody's Doing it!"; nor the ever popular, "I'll obey on the outside, but keep my faith on the inside!" Or here's one, "I'll just ask God to forgive me afterward!"
- 2.4. **Q:** Was Daniel making a mountain out of a molehill?
- 2.4.1. We talked about the king's food: [1] was offered to **idols** [2] included **unclean** animals (namely pork & horse in Babylon).
- 2.4.2. Daniel viewed eating that food as the 1st step toward **sp. Compromise!**
- 2.4.2.1. **Q:** Have **you** taken any 1st steps in that direction lately?
(flirtation, drinking, smoking pot, whites to stay awake at work, etc)
- 2.5. **Convictions must be made(purposed) in our heart!**
- 2.5.1. **Lk.9:23** "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."
- 2.6. Daniel didn't wait until the banquet was spread, & the delicious smell came floating down the Palace hallway, before he made his decision!
- 2.6.1. **Cinnamon Rolls!** - The Lord showed me to fast today & sure enough I get here this morning & get to the top of the stairs a whole plate of cinnamon rolls perched on the edge of our break table, the whole staff's already in devotions (did I tell you icing was dripping over the edge of each cinnamon roll?). My mind immediately asked, "how about fasting **Friday** instead of today". (Blessed is he who endures temptations...) I walked past & went to drop my books in my office when a little voice said, "How about **starting in an hour**, you're not under the law?" 3rd voice you, "had to break it on Tues cuz of a luncheon you forgot about, put it off one more day!"
- 2.6.1.1. Ohhhh the Kings Dainties were calling me!
- 2.6.1.2. But my heart was fixed & purposed!...My heart said, "NO!"
- 2.6.2. Joseph did the same w/the temptation of Potiphar's wife.
- 2.6.2.1. His mind & heart was made up before the temptation came!

- 2.7. **Prov.4:23** “Keep your **heart** with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”
- 2.8. In the private chamber of his heart – Daniel built a concrete wall of **conscience**, w/the mortar of **no-compromise!**
- 2.8.1. **Q:** What kind of concrete did he use for the footings?
- 2.8.1.1. The sand from **Jeremiah**; the gravel from **Hab.**; the cement from **Zephaniah**; mixed w/the water of **the H.S.**
- 2.9. **Q:** What decision do you need to make before you get into a compromising situation?
- 2.9.1. Tax season is coming up! – Is there an unhealthy relationship presenting itself to you?
- 2.9.2. “**Inner conviction** can counter any **outer pressure!**”

3. DECISIONS MUST BE ESTABLISHED IN GODS WORD! (8b)

- 3.1. He knew eating this would defile himself! – **Q:** How did he know this? Because he knew the Word!
- 3.1.1. His determination was based on his obedience to the law of God!
- 3.1.2. You can’t just make up your **own** standards!...Base them upon **His!**
- 3.2. Those who know Jesus must be ruled by a different standard!
- 3.2.1. A standard set up not by the **world**, but by the **word**; not by **Opinion Polls**, but by **Heavens Rolls**; not by the **majority**, but by **Jesus Authority**; not by **the vote of a board** but by a “**thus says the Lord!**”

4. DECISIONS MUST BE DEPENDANT UPON THE LORD!(8b-16)

- 4.1. In order to suggest this plan, Daniel had to have dependency on the Lord!
- 4.2. **(8b)** “**he requested**” - I like Daniel’s attitude: “He was **grounded** in his convictions, yet **gracious** as he stood for them!”
- 4.2.1. Often when we think of someone “Strong in his or her Convictions”, Someone comes to mind that’s, hard, unyielding or maybe even obnoxious.
- 4.2.2. But as John Phillips said, “**You don’t have to be a crank to have convictions!**”

- 4.2.3. Daniel was **polite & kind** & in no way tried to embarrass the man.
 4.2.3.1. He requested permission from his commander. – He built a bridge of understanding between himself & the commander. – He was sensitive to his dilemma. – He even left his commander with the final say! {How could he risk that? “By trusting in God, who honors those, who honor Him!”}
- 4.3. (10) Request Denied...now what?
- 4.4. (11-14) Creative Alternatives!
 4.4.1. He proposed a 10-day trial, money back guarantee!(13)
- 4.5. God the unseen director:
 4.5.1. **Neb** didn’t conquer Jerusalem...God did. (2)
 4.5.2. **Daniel** didn’t soften the chiefs’ heart...God did. (9)
 4.5.3. **The 4 youths** learning didn’t excel them in their studies...God did. (17)
- 4.6. (16) Notice we are known, in terms of moral integrity, more by what we **don’t do** than by what we **do**.
- 4.7. Ok, so they did 10 days, how about 3 years at U.o.B. “University of Babylon” with a full load?
 4.7.1. God gave them all they needed. – You can pray your way thru college! (actually you must!)
 4.7.2. I believe that this 3 years of college helped his next 75 years of his ministry.

5. **DECISIONS WILL BE REWARDED BY GOD! (17-21)**

- 5.1. (17) Because Daniel honored God(8), God honored Daniel(9,15,17).
 5.1.1. 1 Sam. 2:30 “...for those who honor Me I will honor,...”
 5.1.2. We realize we don’t have anything we haven’t received from the Lord.
- 5.2. (19) “**They served before the King**” – They were placed in positions of royal authority.
 5.2.1. They received official positions in the imperial government of Babylon. – They became the king’s **counsel & advice**.

- 5.3. (20) 10 times better – Don't settle for being “a little better” as Christians, we ought to be “10 times better” in whatever we do!
 - 5.3.1. Every store we walk in we should see the Christian employees picture as “Employee of the month!” or parked in the “Employee of the month parking stall!”
- 5.4. (21) Daniel continued... - These guys were raised up to demonstrate Babylonian Power & Supremacy!
 - 5.4.1. What's ironic is Daniel out lived...Neb, his successor, even the empire!
- 5.5. Q: What 1 aspect of Daniel's character or conduct in this chapter impresses you most?
 - 5.5.1. Q: How can you follow Daniel's example in your own life?
- 5.6. Philip Bliss said “Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand-alone. Dare to have a purpose firm; Dare to make it known!”
- 5.7. Decide in your heart today to live for Jesus!
- 5.8. Daniel focused in on the “small circle of conviction” & let God take care of the “Large circle of circumstances that surrounded him”!