

Honor God and He will Honor You

Text: Daniel 1:9-21

Introduction:

1. This chapter contains a tremendous challenge concerning living in purity in a wicked and hostile environment. Daniel is a tremendous example of a man who would not compromise on his godly convictions. He did not have a price tag on his Bible-based convictions and would not succumb to “situation ethics”.
2. As an unknown poet put it:

Some ships go east, and some go west,
Before the wind that blows;
It's the set of the sail, and not the gale;
That determines the way it goes.
3. Daniel is an example of the truth of the words of God found in 1 Samuel 2:30 – *“...for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”*
4. In this lesson we will study further details of the stand Daniel took and how he was blessed and rewarded by God for that stand.

I. Daniel's Examination (Vs. 9-14)

Daniel's convictions were put to the test!

A. The Protesting of his convictions (Vs. 9-10)

1. Relationship (9) – the protest from someone with whom Daniel had a good relationship (Vs. 9). It is always harder to stand when it brings you into conflict with someone you are bonded to than someone you don't get along with. Standing for God requires patience and persistence. Many stand for a brief time only to compromise later.
2. Reason (10) – the protest sounded plausible. Living according to the Word of God does not seem reasonable or sensible from the world's perspective.

B. The Proving of his convictions (Vs. 11-14)

1. The proposal (11-13)
 - a. Daniel was not afraid to have his convictions put to the test. This reveals the faith he had in God and His Word. He was not in any doubt as to whether it was best to obey God or not. He had complete confidence that the truth would bear up under scrutiny *“...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* (1 John 5:4)
 - b. Daniel was enabled of God to take his stand wisely and respectfully. We need God's wisdom and grace when applying

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our convictions in various situations we find ourselves faced with in our lives.

- c. 'pulse' = things sowed; vegetables.
 - d. 'water' = good substitute for wine! "Water never made anyone drunk or debased. Water does not cause crime and ruin homes. But "wine" does all those things." (Butler)
2. The approval (14)
 - a. God's hand was at work in this rulers' heart (Vs. 9) Remember the theme of the Book – God reigns!
 - b. Prov. 21:1 *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."*

II. Daniel's Vindication (Vs. 15-17)

A. Superior in Appearance (Vs. 15-16)

1. The countenances of Daniel and his three friends revealed that godliness pays. The world assumes we will be worse off for obeying God rather than going along with the crowd (Vs. 10) but **time** reveals the truth. Have you ever noticed the difference between a life the devil gets a hold of and a life the Lord gets a hold of? They may look similar to start with and many claims will be made that the ungodly youth will be successful. But follow them on the road of life and look at them both in 10 or 20 years from now.
2. Sin makes its mark on the countenance. Jeremiah 6:15 *"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, **neither could they blush:**"*

B. Superior in Aptitude (Vs. 17)

1. God was the source of this wisdom (James 1:5).
2. Faithfulness to God's Word imparts much wisdom. David could testify in Psalm 119:100 *"I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."* Knowing the One True God opens a whole dimension of wisdom and knowledge unknown and unavailable to the natural man.
3. Illustration: The story is told about some young people who walked into a high school class that was taught by a godless professor. In one of his lectures he said, *" Will all of you who believe the myths of the Bible please stand?"* Several stood. Then he added *"Now this semester I am going to free you from this religious Bible nonsense. I have read the Bible, and it is certainly written by bunch of mixed up men."* One young Daniel spoke up, *" Sir, the Bible is God's letter to Christians, and if you are confused it's because you're reading somebody else's mail."* (Denis Lyle)

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III. Daniel's Promotion (Vs. 18-21)

A. The Reward of Position (Vs. 18-20)

1. Nebuchadnezzar reviews the students after their three years of training. He found them to be better than all the other students (Vs. 18) and all the other wise men in his whole realm (Vs. 20). To what degree were they superior? Tenfold! God rewarded them for each of those ten days of faith and testing by making them ten times better.
2. Psalm 75:6-7 *"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."*
3. Note: Sometimes it doesn't turn out like it did with Daniel. Sometimes we suffer loss for our stand. Not all are preserved in such circumstances. For example, Jeremiah and Peter were delivered from prison whereas James was killed with the sword. In either case, God is perfect and faithful and our part is to be true to Him, leaving the results in His hands. Either way, whether promoted or persecuted, God will honor those who honor Him (See Heb. 11:32-40. Note the 'others' in this list)

A. The Reward of Continuation (Vs. 21)

1. Daniel outlived rulers and the Babylonian regime. *"...bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days..."* (Psalm 55:23)
2. Daniel lived to witness the fulfillment of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy being fulfilled with the decree of Cyrus, setting free the people of God to return to the promised land.
3. "He saw the seventy-year captivity begin. He saw it end. We see him standing in the shadows as that small band of pioneers set out for the Promised Land, an old man, his finger pointing to Jeremiah's scroll and his hand raised in thanksgiving and prayer." (Phillips)
4. Those who live for God have the privilege of witnessing the Mighty works of God being performed.

Conclusion:

1. Do you have godly, Bible-based convictions?
2. At what point will you sell out on those convictions? Or will you like Daniel, resolve in your heart, to stand irrespective of the cost?