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DANIEL'S PROMOTION IN THE BABYLONIAN COURT

Daniel 1:8-21

Main Idea of the Text: The Lord's people are to set themselves apart for Him.

I. THE TEXT

a. Context

- i. Daniel 1 outlines the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Whereas we are used to stable boundaries and peace treaties, the ancient world was filled with conquest and a perpetually reshaping map. Nebuchadnezzar exiles Jehoiakim (Dan 1:2), removes (and likely destroys) objects of worship (Dan 1:2), and deports and indoctrinates youth of Hebrew nobility (Dan 1:3-4)
- ii. It's possible that Daniel & the Hebrew boys were castrated. If so, Nebuchadnezzar literally cut off the lines of Hebrew nobility. They were the reeducated in language (Sumerian, Akkadian, & Aramaic) and literature.

b. Outline

i. **Daniel Resolves to Keep Himself Pure (Dan 1:8-16)**

1. Daniel's Holy Resolve (Dan 1:8)

- a. "But" contrasts all of Nebuchadnezzar's activity with Daniel's resolve.
- b. Daniel plans to subvert Nebuchadnezzar's purposes. Though Nebuchadnezzar can change Daniel's physical address and call him by a new name, he cannot change Daniel's allegiance. He can break down the walls of Jerusalem, but not Daniel's heart.
- c. The outward change of names was superficial. Though he was externally Babylonian, his inner-man belonged to God. Physically, he appeared Babylonian, but he was a spiritual Jew.
- d. Key Word: "Defile" means to make oneself unclean. Commentators debate over the reasoning for Daniel's refusal. Were the menu items unclean? Unlikely. Were they sacrificed

to idols? Likely. Did Daniel simply refuse on principle? Possibly. Sharing a meal in the ancient world signified covenantal relationship.

2. God's Favor (Dan 1:9-10)

- a. Cause & effect relationship: "Daniel resolved... God gave favor."
- b. Repeated word: "Gave" occurs in Dan 1:9, 12, 16, 17

3. Daniel's Proposal (Dan 1:11-13)

- a. Daniel must have known that God would miraculously vindicate him. Ten days isn't enough time to make a tremendous physical difference.

4. The Test & God's Vindication (Dan 1:14-16)

- a. God clearly vindicates Daniel, so the steward allows them to continue the diet.
- b. The passage isn't teaching us that veggies are better than bread. You shouldn't base your diet on these verses.

ii. God Gifts Daniel with Wisdom & Daniel is Promoted (Dan 1:17-21)

1. God Gives Extraordinary Ability (Dan 1:17)

- a. God overruled the circumstances of Daniel's capture to bring about his purposes. (Dan 1:17)
- b. God elevates them in knowledge, wisdom, and skill.
- c. God especially gifts Daniel with the ability to understand dreams and visions.

2. The Youths Stand Before the King, Surpassing All Others (Dan 1:18-20)

- a. "at the end of the time" After the 10 days.

3. Daniel's Long Faithfulness (Dan 1:21)

- a. Daniel remained in the Babylonian, and eventual Persian court for 66 years.

c. Key Observations

i. The Sovereign Hand of God

1. “Gave” occurs five times in chapter 1.
2. The overwhelming theme of the entire book is the invisible, yet almighty power and will of God.

ii. The Faithfulness of God’s People

1. A sub-theme of the first half of Daniel is the faithful resolve of his people who are suffering.
2. Daniel becomes a model, or paradigm of Christian faithfulness under pressure.

d. Summary of the Passage

- i. Daniel 1:8-21 tells of God’s elevation of Daniel to the Babylonian court through Daniel’s faithfulness to honor the Lord.

II. THE TRUTH

a. Central Theological Theme(s)

- i. The faithful resolve of God’s people in the face of persecution and temptation.
- ii. Sovereignty continued.

b. Confession of Faith & Creeds

i. 1689 LCF

1. Chapter 13 – Of Sanctification

- a. 13:1 “They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

2. Chapter 16 – Of Good Works

- a. 16:2 “These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life.
3. Daniel’s resolve (Dan 1:8) demonstrates that the Lord has set Daniel apart for Himself, and that Daniel determined to be faithful to his God. This faithfulness began in the spirit but inevitably worked itself out into Daniel’s words and deeds.
4. Distinguishing between Justification & Sanctification

Justification	Sanctification
Change in your status before God	Change in your own nature
Removes guilt of sin	Removes pollution of sin
Legal declaration	Personal transformation
Outside the sinner	Inside the sinner
An event, not a process	A process, not an event
Complete and without degrees	Continual transformation into holiness
Righteousness is imputed	Righteousness is infused
God alone justifies us	We cooperate with God in sanctification
Perfect at the first moment	Not perfect until death
Equal in all	Not the same in all believers
Passive	Active
Cannot decrease in degree	May decrease in degree
Instantaneous	Progressive
Removes guilt of sin	Removes the ruling power of sin
Gives the right to life	Fits you to enjoy and experience life
By faith alone	By faith working through love, keeping law
Not by sanctification	By using your justification
Satisfies the law as a covenant	Looks to the law as a rule of walking

c. Development from the Text

- i. About God: God both expects and enables personal holiness in His people. (Dan 1:9)
- ii. About Humanity/God’s People: Personal holiness begins in the heart. Daniel “resolved,” (Dan 1:8). External acts of piety are worthless if our spirit doesn’t not honor the Lord.
- iii. Chair Passages: Leviticus 11:44, 10:10; Exodus 40, 20:8; Deuteronomy 7:1-6; Hebrews 10:10; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 3:15.

d. Redemptive-Historical & Christological Connections

- i. Redemptive Historical Connections

1. Sanctification

a. Old Testament

- i. Originally, all creation was sanctified. (Gen 1-2)
- ii. The Fall plunged the cosmos into profanity. (Gen. 3:14-19)
- iii. Redemption & sanctification are central to the Pentateuchal narratives and Mosaic Covenant (ceremonies, sabbaths, intermarriage, etc.)
- iv. The Prophets were sent to warn Israel of covenant unfaithfulness because the nation had embraced idolatry.

b. New Testament

- i. The Son of God was sanctified from conception (Luke 1:35), and by His Father for ministry. (John 10:36, 6:38) His entire life was sanctified obedience. (Phil 2:5-11)
- ii. We are made holy through the sacrifice of Christ and we are therefore called saints. (Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor 6:11; 1:2) Our union with Christ, and the holiness conferred upon us comes because the Holy Spirit has sanctified us. (2 Thess 2:13-14)

2. Other Connections

- a. Revelation 2:10 – References the 10-day trial of Daniel in the letter to the church at Smyrna
- b. Proverbs 2:6 & 2 Timothy 2:7 – The Lord is the one who grants understanding.

ii. Christological Connection

1. Like Daniel, Jesus Christ was tempted with a meal yet refused in obedience to God. (Matt 4:1-11)

e. Key Theological Truth

- i. God's people are to set Him apart as holy in their hearts, honoring Him by their desires and actions—even in the face of persecution and death.