

Intro; So far in Daniel 1, we have seen how the Jewish nation of Judah was taken captive by the Babylonian Empire, and King Nebuchadnezzar took many teenage boys of the royal and noble families, back to Babylon.

- * This was done mainly to train them and fully paganize them so they could become influential leaders and culture destroyers of their own people, when Judah's populace was relocated to Babylon some years later.
- * To reorient these teens, the king made 5 significant changes in their lives.
 - * He changed their **locality** to remove them from all the familiar things of Judaism,
 - * He changed their **authority** by placing over them a professional pagan leader
 - * He changed their **theology** by training them in all the knowledge and religious practice of that pagan culture.
 - * He changed their **morality** by putting them on the pagan diet that the king was given, to turn them away from obedience to the dietary Laws God had given the Jews.
 - * And he changed their **identity**, by removing their names that referred to Jehovah God, and gave them names that referred to pagan gods.
- * All this was done to strip their minds and hearts of their past heritage with God, and immerse them in pagan Babylonian culture. * The next passage in Chapter 1 shows us---

II. DANIEL'S REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE (8-17) [read 8-10]

- * In Jerusalem, as the siege ended and these teens boys were rounded up and taken to Babylon, they faced massive changes in their lives that made them face serious spiritual decisions.
- * And this 2nd passage reveals how Daniel and his friends handled this test of their character.
- * As King Nebuchadnezzar acted to change these boys, Daniel and his 3 godly friends chose to continue to obey God, whom they loved.
- * What they did gives us a good pattern for how to stand against wrong, and chose to do right.
- * Here we see-- Daniel's resolve (8a), Daniel's request (8b) His leader's response (9-10), Daniel's remedy (11-14), and finally - the test results (15-16).

A. DANIEL'S "RESOLVE". (8a- read)

What Daniel decided involves 3 sets of facts.

1st- Daniel (3 friends) were faced with 3 spiritual realities.

a. Eating the king's food was wrong.

, God's Law forbid Israel to eat certain foods prepared certain ways, so they would not eat like the pagans. And they were to drive the pagans out of their land, and reject their diet.

, The point was this- God created eating to sustain us, but also for fellowship, but because they pagans were so vile, God didn't want the Jews having casual social contact.

Note- Foreigners visiting Israel were to be treated kindly, even fed, but Jews couldn't eat their food. This helped the Jews influence them, but not be influenced by them.
(1Kgs 8:41-43, Psalm 67)

, Here, these boys were in a pagan land, so God didn't want them fellowshiping with pagans by eating things that were considered an act of worship to their idols.

, Daniel and his friends knew this issue was clear from God's Word.

, It wasn't hard to determine right from wrong on this issue-- IT RARELY IS.

b. They were under great pressure to conform. (In several ways)

Cultural pressure- They were 900 miles from home, in a totally pagan land.

Fear Pressure- They were under the authority of a powerful pagan king, the most powerful man in the world, and disobedience to him could mean certain death.

Promotional pressure- If they complied, they could be given the best positions in the land with greater authority, and more money and greater honor.

Peer pressure- Only these 4 boys, out of dozens of these young men took a stand.

, We can imagine that later in the barracks, these 4 boys, no doubt, faced heavy criticism for "rocking the boat",

-- and were probably accused by the others for endangering the rest of them by not complying with the program.

The 3rd reality they were faced with was-----

c. They could have compromised by making excuses.

- * Think about the excuses these teens were tempted to make to justify disobeying God.
- * Often we're tempted with the same kinds of excuses to compromise doing what's right.
- * They could have said---

- (1) "We're in a strange situation and our lives could be in danger".
We would normally obey, but God can't expect us to obey here.
(insignificant religious rules don't really apply in extenuating circumstances)
- (2) I've always been taught to respect and obey authority, so I can't disrespect this king.
- (3) "In reality, it's God who is to blame for this".
He put us here, so it must be His will for us to obey these pagan rules and be safe.
- (4) "If we refuse, we might endanger the others",
so it should be okay to disobey if it protects them.
- (5) "If we do this now, we'll be well liked and promoted, and we'll be able to help our people more when they come, and we can have greater influence on the pagans later,

Notice- All these excuses involve "situation ethics".

- * Instead of living by God's unchanging bible truth and His morals that should apply no matter the situation, they could have allowed the situation to decide their morals.
- * Situation ethics work like this-- If there's a greater benefit overall, it's okay to disobey, as long as you get the right outcome.
- * It's okay to do wrong to do right. The end justifies the means.

Sum- But in all this, Daniel and his friends made no excuses.

They knew the truth, and determined not to disobey God, regardless the consequences.

2nd- Daniel was faced with the truth about decisions. (Q- 6 facts about decisions)

a. All believers face decisions that test our character.

- , These godly teenage boys grew up in sinful Judah where they had already been tested.
- , Now, in pagan Babylon the test of their moral strength is even stronger.

App- As believers, we are not of this sinful world, we are to live for the Lord and heaven.

- , This automatically means we will face pressure to compromise in moral decisions.
- , If you're going to follow Christ, Get used to being challenged to compromise.

b. The moral decisions we make, reveal our true character.

- , The idea that someone who does something bad is- "really a good person" - is hogwash.
- , The bible shows that our decisions, actions, and words come from within us and reveal what we really are in our heart. **(Mat. 12:35)**

Note- **"Daniel Resolved"** not to disobey- The word refers to the center of one's thoughts, will, emotions, and knowledge of right and wrong. Lit. "Daniel **"hearted"** not to defile himself".

- , The truth is-- Daniel and his friends had righteous **hearts**, so they chose rightly.
- , The others compromised because they had spiritually weak and ungodly **hearts**.

Q- These boys faced major sinful influences they had no control over. And this extremely powerful king was exerting great pressure for them to comply. But with all the changes, there was 1 thing the King had NO control over, their hearts.

Prov 4:23- "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

Q- "Living a godly obedient life doesn't depend on what's around you but what's within you".

c. Moral decisions either strengthen or weaken our character. (depending how we chose)

Q- Small decisions set the stage for bigger ones later, and small compromises turn into bigger ones later. A wrong decision robs you of the moral strength to do right later, just as a right decision strengthens your resolve to do right later."

, Decision making is habit forming. And it's easier to do right in little things and make that your habit, than constantly compromise and try to overcome your failures later.

, Daniel and his 3 friends decided from the beginning, to do right.

, Daniel knew you can't develop the habit of obeying, by finding an excuse to disobey.

d. Moral decisions lay the foundation for the rest of our life.

- , What we are now is the result of decisions we made in the past, and what we'll be in the future is determined by decisions we're making now.
- , Young people, listen to the godly adults, and heed their righteous influence, and make righteous decisions because what you decide now, will haunt you or bless you, later.
- , Decisions sow habits - habits produce lifestyles - lifestyles reap destinies.
Be a good spiritual farmer and get a good crop. (sow righteousness)

e. Good moral decisions result in being honored by God.

- , These 4 teens became well known, great, and top leaders, even in a large pagan empire.
 - , That didn't happen because they compromised, but because they stood and obeyed God.
- Q- The bible shows us people in stories as their lives progress, because they teach that spiritual greatness is not born, it's built through consistent obedience to God.

f. Good moral decisions should be made, before we face temptation to compromise.

- , Understand- Daniel and his friends were not ignorant or uninformed about their situation.
- , They knew full well, the historical accounts of nations being taken captive. (other tribes)
- , They heard Jeremiah's details of what would happen when Babylon came to take them, they were weeks in the siege Babylon brought, and they experienced being taken.
- , They knew what was coming, and that soon, they would be faced with disobeying God by having to comply with what Nebuchadnezzar would do to paganize them.
- , So why did they obey God but the others didn't? They decided **beforehand** to live obedient lives, so when the crisis came, they stood strong on their past decision.
- , If you wait until you're in the midst of a tempting situation to decide whether or not you will do right, you will probably fail. Undecisive people are easily influenced.
- , But good military leaders already have a plan for what to do when the attack comes.

Sum- As we face a sinful world, especially our young people, how RESOLVED are we to live for the Lord and obey Him, regardless what we face from day to day?

* Daniel and his friends had developed a life of obeying God, so they determined to obey Him, regardless what that might mean.

5 * Joshua said to Israel upon entering the land- choose today who you will serve

3rd- Daniel knew obedience to God is at the heart of knowing God.

JAMES BOYCE INCLUDES --

J.C. RYLE -- 6 reasons it was important for these boys, and us, to do right and live holy.

1. Because the voice of God in scripture plainly commands it. (1 Pet 1:13-16)
2. Because this is the one grand end and purpose for which Christ came into the world.
(Eph 5. 25-27)
3. Because this is the only sound evidence that we have a saving faith in
our Lord Jesus Christ and are true children of God. (James 2:26, Heb 12:14)
4. Because this is the only proof that we love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely.
(John 14: 15, 21, 23)
5. This is the most likely way to do good to others, by advancing the moral standard of God.
A believer who will not obey God, but chooses to live unholy, does the greatest harm
to the lost around them, by making Christianity and Christ seem phony.
6. Because our present comfort depends much on it.
The Lord promises to chasten his own, when they chose to live in sin.