

**Intro;** In the first passage of Daniel 1, we saw how Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians, and to begin the occupation, they took dozens of teenage boys from the nation's top families.

\* They were taken back to Babylon, and placed in a rigorous program for 3 years to paganize them, so they could lead the rest of the Jews to follow suit, once they were brought to there.

\* As they got settled in Babylon, and began the process of being brainwashed --

## II. DANIEL REFUSED TO COMPROMISE with the act of eating pagan food which was against God's holy Law. (8-17)

A. So we saw DANIEL'S "RESOLVE" not to compromise, in v8a. Now v8b shows us --

### B. DANIEL'S REQUEST. (8b - read)

\* Determined not disobey God by eating pagan food,  
Daniel and his 3 godly friends approached Ashpenaz with a request.

\* Notice 3 things about this request.

1.

### This request was Humble and Kind.

- They made a request, not a harsh, disrespectful, belligerent, self-righteous demand.
- And Daniel didn't try to influence the larger group of boys, to mount a rebellion.
- He simply went to the right person with an appeal that wasn't rude or fanatical.

**App-** This is a good example for believers.

\* We are to stand for what's right before the world, but that doesn't mean we should be difficult, obnoxious or vicious in the way we present our beliefs or disagreements.

- **Daniel showed character and courage** by standing for his convictions, but he showed spiritual maturity by being respectful and kind toward his pagan leader.

Q- He was faithful to the Lord in a way that showed God's glory in his life to those around him. He acted as Jesus later taught -- "wise as serpents, harmless as doves".

## 2. This request was honest and direct.

- Daniel didn't wimp-out with some dishonest secondary reason such as---  
the food's too rich, it might make me sick, or-- I'm allergic to it, etc.
- If he offered a dishonest excuse that convinced his superior to give him different food,  
the end result might have been the same (he wouldn't have to eat forbidden food).
- But that would hid his godly testimony from the pagans and the other Jewish boys.
- While Daniel was considerate of Ashpenaz' authority, he didn't soften the truth.
  
- Daniel was honest and direct by calling the food "**defiling**", which fits perfectly with Lev. 11  
where God referred to eating this forbidden food as -- "detestable" (literally- "filthy").
- The word "Defile" was an offensive word. It obviously declared that what the king  
and his officials ate, was morally filthy to Daniel's God, and to Daniel.
- Daniel called sin, sin, and did not hold back the truth which could have offended the pagans.

**App-** When we're around the lost, we may face discussions or conflicts, and be tempted to dodge the truth by giving less-than-biblical comments or answers. Daniel spoke the truth.

\* This is exactly what our witness to the lost should be. Kind, but truthful and direct.

\* This can be offensive, but the it's the truth that sets a person free from their sin.

## 3. This request demonstrated their dedication to God's truth.

Q- They learned what David said in Ps. 40: 8-10 -

"I desire to do your will; your law is in my heart. I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly  
I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation.  
I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly."

\* Here David showed that when we constantly fill our hearts with God's Word,  
we'll have such a great desire to obey it, we'll develop an uncompromising spirit.

## C. THE LEADER'S RESPONSE. (9-10) Ashpenaz responded 2 ways. (1 positive- 1 negative)

1<sup>st</sup> - **He favored Daniel.** (9) (He showed "favor and sympathy"-- (deep compassion)

- Keep in mind, it would have been fairly normal for Ashpenaz to favor these 4 boys because they were chosen for having assertive strong personalities to become good leaders.
- Ashpenaz probably admired Daniel's strong convictions because this would be useful.
- It's true that even among the lost, most will respect those with strong moral convictions, and disrespect cowards with unstable character who waver, compromise, and lie.
- Daniel and his friends stood out from the group, and earned them favor and respect from their superiors, because they proved they were young men of principle.

\* **But the real reason for this leader's favor was - God's sovereignty.** (v9)

- God worked in Ashpenaz' heart, to accomplish His will through Daniel's obedient life.

**App-** Often believers think if we walk with God, we won't have friends or be favored.

- With some, this may be true, but we'll be favored by those God wants to favor us.

- We can expect God to be in control and see our lives through, when we're willing to follow and obey Him, and trust His power and grace. (**Prov. 21:1, 16:7**)

- Daniel didn't have to compromise to be safe. God kept him safe in a tough situation.

**App--** Safety is not our first priority, integrity and truth is. We are to stand for the truth and let God do what He chooses to protect us, even if we suffer for His glory.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> response- Ashpenaz feared the king.** (10)

- If these boys ate differently and came out worse than the others, he could lose his head.
- Ashpenaz' showed that his greatest fear was another man, and his own temporary life.
- Daniel's greatest fear was dishonoring God, so he obeyed Him regardless the consequences. Pr. 29:25 - "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe".

**App-** What do we fear most? Being rejected, made fun of, losing something in this life, or being persecuted somehow for living for and standing for the truth?

\* Or do we fear God's disappointment and disapproval, and losing His blessings on our life, or even God's rejection in eternity, if you're lost? (today, there's little fear of God?)

## D. DANIEL'S REMEDY. (11-14- read)

\* Notice, Daniel's suggestion showed respect by not being demanding, and demonstrated his courage, wisdom, and sense of fairness. **Notice 3 things.**

### 1. Daniel's remedy came from being Persistent.

- Daniel was refused by Ashpenaz, but that didn't keep him from trying to do right.
- They were under various guardians of smaller groups, so Daniel approached their guardian.
- This was the real test of their character. These boys could have said- "Oh well, we tried", but their righteous hearts wanted to obey, so they sought another way to do so.

**App-** When others try to motivate us to compromise our convictions, how quickly we give up will show if we are committed to purity, or just looking for an excuse to compromise.

Q- Good intentions that are not accomplished, don't produce anything of spiritual value.

- Had they compromised, they would have missed God's blessings, and made no impact on the sinful world they were engulfed in. (They did all they could to do right)

### 2. This remedy was a wise and better alternative.

- Historians say, the lavish meals from the king would have included vegetables, anyway, so it would be simple for the guard to call for less meat and wine to be prepared.
- Also, the 10-day time limit would keep their guardian from being punished if the test didn't work out; And if it worked, the guard could be praised for his initiative.
- Last and most important, This kept Daniel and friends from disobeying God.

### 3. This remedy clearly demonstrated their separation from the world.

- Daniel could have asked to be served only the kinds of meat approved by God's law, but the others might not notice that they were obeying God, and not compromising.
- Eating only vegetables, would not only mean that they were obeying God, it would also mean that the pagans and the other boys who compromised would clearly see they were obeying God.

**App-** It's important for believers to live rightly, but also that people perceive us living rightly.

\* As believers do we show spiritual weakness by trying to hide our obedience to God, or are we proud to be known as righteous before the world?



### III. THE RESULT OF DANIEL'S COMMITMENT. (17-21 - read)

- \* Because of their obedience, God elevated these 4 boys above all the others.
- \* David and Jesus taught that -- "the meek will inherit the earth".
- \* Meekness refers to controlling your spirit to be in submission to God, and if we do so, He will care for us and elevate us.
- \* Noice 5 ways God elevated these boys.

#### A. INTELLIGENCE . (17a, 20a)

- \* Babylon was the world's center of learning in that day, was advanced in many sciences and astronomy (star movements), had large libraries and world renown scholars.
- \* 3 years of college there, would normally only give these boys the ability to learn HOW to study and WHERE to find the facts they would need later.
- \* However, God gave these 4 boys the ability to learn a lifetime of information, in 3 years.
- \* V 17 and 20 say that they had **ALL** LEARNING, WISDOM, and UNDERSTANDING.
  
- \* **Vs 17 and 20 give us the words-** "Knowledge, skill, learning, wisdom, and understanding".
- \* "Knowledge" - refers to information, "understanding" refers to knowing what it all meant, and "skill and wisdom" refers to knowing how to apply that knowledge correctly.
- \* Wisdom can be secular or spiritual. The lost can be worldly wise and shrewd with people, and finances, and organization, and politics, etc.
- \* But Godly wisdom applies spiritual truth to everything we learn, see, and deal with. AND-- "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom".
- \* For knowledge to keep you spiritually safe in life, seek God and apply His truth to all things.

#### B. SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION (17b- Daniel received- understanding in visions and dreams)

- \* Babylons wise men were deeply immersed in visions, dreams, and fortune telling.
- \* In that pagan society, their limited success no doubt came from Satanic influence.
- \* But before God's Word was finished, God, at times, gave truth by visions and dreams which He does from Ch. 2 on- as He reveals to a pagan king, who the true God is.
- \* Here, God gave Daniel the ability to "understand visions and dreams of all kinds".

### C. RECOGNITION. (19a, 20- The king saw - none were equal to them, 10 times better....)

- \* All the Jewish boys graduated college, and their final exam was given by the king himself, who must have been a smart guy to ask them deep questions to test them.
- \* So it's graduation day, the king's on his throne, all the political advisors, magicians, etc. are lined up to determine just how well these boys did in their learning.
- \* They go round after round of questions, and soon, all the other boys drop out, as these 4 guys exhaust the king and all his group of "wise men", and their questions.
- \* And they prove to be the smartest sharpest 4 men by 10 to 1, in the whole kingdom.

**App.** God created everything, He created humanity and our ability to think.

- And because these boys knew God, they saw life through God's eyes (wisdom).

### D. PROMOTION (19b- they entered the king's [personal] service)

- \* Understand that when Nebuchadnezzar was taking Judah, his father the king died while in the process, and Nebuchadnezzar had to rush back home to assume the throne.
- \* He was a new king, just 3 years in office, and surrounded by his father's elderly advisors and wise men. And Ch. 2 reveals he did not trust them much at all. (phonies)
- \* So this was a good time for this young king to replace the old advisors with new ones, and these 4 boys fit the bill, so they were placed in the king's personal service. (Lit)
- \* They were not slaves, but top advisors in the land, as the rest of the book bears out.

**App-** When God is sought and honored, He gives wisdom that will cause His own to stand out among the crowd and be successful in life. Want true success? Seek God.

- But if you abandon Him, He will let you go the way of your carnal sinful mind and heart, which will believe Satan's lies, miss spiritual truth, and suffer the consequences.

### E. LONGEVITY. (21- Daniel remained until the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Darius)

\* Darius was king of Persia who conquered Babylon some 70 years later. Daniel's obedience brought him through Babylon's captivity into Persia's reign, maintaining his leadership role.

**Q-** He out-performed the scholars, out-lived his murderers, and out-lasting the other leaders.

\* And his influence brought about Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah returning to the land.

\* The meek did inherit the earth. It's not about WHO or WHERE you are, but WHAT you are.

**Q-** (L. Strauss) Daniel (friends) enjoyed the provision of divine grace, while the pagans saw God demonstrating divine power. Faithfulness, not reputation or situation, is what counts with God.