

Part 4 — “The Tested Genuineness of Faith” — 19 June 2022

Introduction:

Having been taken into exile, Daniel and his four friends were to experience all that the kingdom had to offer in order that they might embrace the beliefs and practices of their new home. By the king's order, they were confronted with both the benevolent and coercive powers of Babylon which sought to undermine their identity.

Main Point: Though life in exile will mean both the opportunity and the pressure to abandon the living out of our faith, it is in _____ and _____ God that we make ourselves available to Him for His service.

The Testing & Blessing of Daniel & His Friends—Daniel 1:8-21

Their Resolve (1:8-16)

Observations

1. Maintaining their identity as God's people meant Daniel and his friends avoiding becoming _____.
“defile” (ga'al - Heb.)— To make foul or pollute; to make common and thereby profane (physical, sexual, ethical, ceremonial, and religious)
 ⇒ Defilement resulted from one's actions or contact with that which was ‘unclean.’ By it, one became ritually unfit and disqualified from religious worship or service. The central issue was one's attitude and relationship to Yahweh as the covenant God and the God of all righteousness.
2 Questions: (1) *Has God _____?*
 (2) *Is what God has said _____ and _____?*
 ⇒ This was a decision that these young men had made in their _____ before the Lord.
“resolved” - Lit. ‘set his heart on’
 ⇒ It is difficult to know exactly what about the food would have caused them to become defiled:
 ‘Forbidden’ Foods? (Lev. 11) →
 Foods sacrificed to idols? (Lev. 17) →
2. The _____ in which they made their request and the specific nature of the request are both highlighted.
 ⇒ With Daniel acting as their leader, the request was made in _____ and in recognition of the concerns of the one who was in charge of them.
“test” - (na'sa Heb. ; peirazō Gk.)— To test or try; to prove the quality or wisdom of something.
“vegetables”
3. The Lord is credited with the receptivity to their request:
“God gave...” *“favor and compassion”*
4. The result of their request was that they were found to be in better condition than the others who partook of the king's food.

“God's direct intervention would have been necessary to effect this manner of observable change in so short a period—truly a demonstration of God's faithfulness to those who do His will.” —Leon J. Wood, *Daniel*

Key Point: Their genuine fear of the Lord (“_____”) meant that Daniel and his friends were young men of character who therefore had the _____ to live out their identity as God's people rather than to compromise it.

“Amidst the pagan entrapments, these godly men lived by the Word of God...Their integrity was to be a living witness to the Lord...in every word spoken...” — William VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*

The Results (1:17-21)

Observations

1. This section gives a summary of how God _____ the lives of Daniel and his friends during their three years of study and preparation.

“skill in all literature and wisdom”

2. The Lord gave particular abilities to Daniel in _____ dreams and visions.

“Daniel’s honor must also be seen in light of the emphasis put on dreams and visions in Babylonian culture...Daniel was gifted by God for dealing with such phenomena, yet he did not have to rely on the occultic methods that the king’s advisors typically did.”

—J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*

3. Having been examined by the king, they were _____ from among their peers to serve in his presence.

“the king spoke with them”

“they stood before the king”

4. The final verse conveys that they were characterized by faithfulness and service throughout the rest of their lives.

“until the first year of King Cyrus”

Key Point: Their _____ in all that was entrusted to them combined with God’s _____ and blessing meant that their lives were of great use to the Lord for the work that He was doing in Babylon.

“To God must be given the praise for all of life’s attainments, for in truth they are His gracious gifts. God, however, regularly uses means to accomplish His purpose, and we may be sure that He did here.” —Leon J. Wood, *Daniel*

Living Faithfully in “Babylon”

- During our exile, we will be faced with opportunities and pressures to live in ways that are _____ to our identity in Christ.

1 Pet. 1:7—*so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

⇒ *We often tested in these ways for the first time in our _____!*

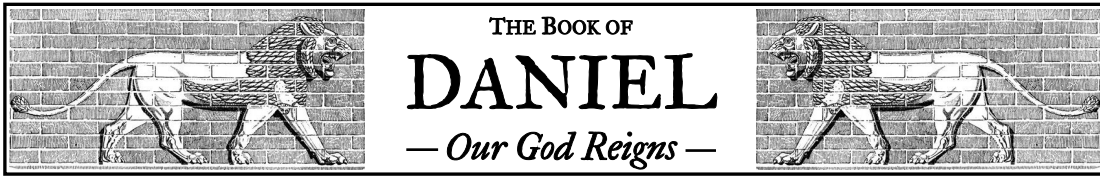
- We must remember the gospel so that we understand that we are only truly _____ from defilement in Christ.

Titus 2:14—[Jesus Christ] *who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

- We must make _____ about how to live our lives in light of the things that are true of us in Christ.

2 Cor. 6:14-18—¹⁴*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*¹⁵*What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?*¹⁶*What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I WILL MAKE MY DWELLING AMONG THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”*¹⁷*THEREFORE GO OUT FROM THEIR MIDST, AND BE SEPARATE FROM THEM, SAYS THE LORD, AND TOUCH NO UNCLEAN THING; THEN I WILL WELCOME YOU,*¹⁸*AND I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO ME, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.”*

2 Cor. 7:1—*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*



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Key Point: Their genuine fear of the Lord (**“faith”**) meant that Daniel and his friends were young men of character who therefore had the **courage** to live out their identity as God's people rather than to compromise it.

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⇒ ***We often tested in these ways for the first time in our youth!***

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