

“Faithfulness in an Evil Day”  
Daniel 1  
(Preached at Trinity, February 16, 2014)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we continue our trek into the Book of Daniel. As we consider the literary genre of Daniel we find it doesn’t perfectly fit the general pattern.
  - A. First, we can classify it as historical narrative. It is the telling of actual historic events. As I stated last week, I believe the Book of Daniel is historically accurate. Historic narrative does not lend itself to a verse by verse exposition like the epistles.
  - B. It is also classified as a prophetic book. Some have a problem with this classification. They say that Daniel was not a prophet, not in an official sense, at least not like Jeremiah or Ezekiel.  
Josephus, however, referred to him as the “greatest of the prophets” and Jesus referred to “Daniel the prophet.”  
Even if Daniel did not hold the office of prophet, the Book of Daniel does contain some remarkable prophetic material, so remarkable that there have been liberal theologians who have tried to discredit the Book by claiming it was written later—after the fact. This would deny the credibility of this book of Scripture as well as the credibility of the NT writers who quoted from it.
2. Daniel is a book full of instruction for God’s people living in every generation. It answers the question, how should God’s people live in godless times.  
Daniel was sent to live in a secular society full of paganism, a materialistic society void of any recognition of God’s rule and authority. It was a society not completely unlike our own where people refuse to acknowledge God as Lord of all.  
How does a person faithful to the living God live in such a society? Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were under tremendous pressure to conform. Their religion was tolerated as long as it was kept private; as long as it didn’t intrude into their public life. Does this sound familiar to our situation?
3. How are we to live in such a culture? These are timeless issues.  
Daniel and his three friends determined that they would serve the living God during their evil days. In the midst of corruption and defilement they remained steadfast in their faithfulness to God.  
We too must determine who we will serve. Will we compromise and bow to the idols of our age or will we remain faithful to God no matter what?
4. Tonight I want to look at this remarkable young man by the name of Daniel.  
Of Daniel himself little is known—but we have more information about him than the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel.
  - A. His Hebrew name meant “Judgment of God,” or “God is my Judge.”

- B. He was of royal heritage and was carried away into captivity as a youth. He was distinguished as a man of wisdom. After interpreting the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar he was made ruler over the province. He was further honored under Belshazzar. Under Darius the Mede he was one of the three presidents of the satraps.
- C. He continued in high office until the first year of Cyrus. Apparently he did not return to Palestine with his people but lived out his days in Babylon awaiting the resurrection at the end of days.  
**Daniel 12:13** - "But as for you, go *your way* to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise *again* for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

I. First of all, I want you to notice Daniel's Commitment

- A. Daniel was under great pressure to conform to the ways of Babylon and forget the God of Israel
  - 1. First, Nebuchadnezzar placed Daniel and his three friends under a tutor and ordered them to be indoctrinated in the literature and language of the Chaldeans.  
**Daniel 1:4 NAU** - "*he ordered him* to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans."
  - 2. Then they were enticed with all of the finest food Babylon could offer. It was food and drink from the king's own table – food fit for a king.  
**Daniel 1:5 NAU** - "The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank"
  - 3. Third, the king ordered that their names be changed – **Verse 7**. This was significant.
    - a. All four of these Hebrew children had names that would have been a continual reminder of who they were.  
**Daniel 1:6 NAU** - "Now among them from the sons of Judah were <sup>a</sup>Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah."
    - b. Daniel and Mishael had the name "El" in their names. El was the abbreviated form for Elohim.  
 Daniel = "God is my Judge"  
 Mishael = "Who is like God?"
    - c. Hananiah and Azariah both had shortened forms of Jehovah or Yahweh (יהוה) in their names.  
 Hananiah = "Jehovah is gracious"  
 Azariah = "Jehovah is my helper"
    - d. What glorious names. Every time their names were spoken they heard about their glorious God
    - e. Their new names contained stressed allegiance to the king or the king's gods. For example Meshach meant "guest of the kings" and Abed-nego meant "servant of Nebo"  
 In essence they were being told that their allegiance to their former God would now be given to Babylon. The name of God was obliterated.

- B. Nebuchadnezzar's schemes did not sway these faithful followers of God
1. He could change their names but he could not change their hearts
  2. Daniel politely refused to partake of the dainties of Babylon.  
**Daniel 1:8 NAU** - "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank"  
**Psalms 141:3-4 NAU** - "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. <sup>4</sup> Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies."  
**Proverbs 23:1-3 NAU** - "When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider carefully what is before you, <sup>2</sup> And put a knife to your throat If you are a man of *great* appetite. <sup>3</sup> Do not desire his delicacies, For it is deceptive food."
  3. It is likely that this food from the king's table had been offered up in sacrifice to their gods thus to partake of such food would be to participate in their idolatry.  
C.F. Keil wrote: "The reason for their rejection of it was that the heathen at their feasts offered up in sacrifice to their gods a part of the food and the drink, and thus consecrated their meals by religious rite; whereby not only he who participated in a meal participated in the worship of idols, but the meat and the wine as a whole were the meat and the wine of an idol sacrifice."
  4. The bottom line was quite simple. Daniel was determined not do anything that would dishonor his God.
- C. This should speak loudly to us
1. Our generation is continually seeking to conform us to its ways
    - a. The media is continually indoctrinating us. This is how homosexuality has gained acceptance. This is why adultery is no longer seen as sinful.
    - b. Materialism engulfs us. It is everywhere. Like the delectable delights of Babylon they are continually held before us.
    - c. In addition, truth is being polluted by relativism. History is being rewritten. Science and education and government are the gods of deliverance. And these are the things being taught to the children of our generation.
  2. Satan has always offered the pleasures of sin if we follow him  
**Genesis 3:4-5 NAU** - "The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."  
**Matthew 4:8-9 NAU** - "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; <sup>9</sup> and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."  
    - a. Satan is cunning and crafty. He was surely behind the pride and deceits of Nebuchadnezzar.

- b. He still bombards us with his lies. He has convinced the world today that there is no such thing as sin. As long as it brings us pleasure it is permitted no matter how perverted and defiled.
- 3. As the small remnant, the minority called God's people we must declare boldly, "We are servants of the Living God."  
We don't buy into your lies. We are not interested in your ways. We will not serve your gods. Your delicacies will not entice us.

## II. God's blessing upon the faithfulness of Daniel

### A. Daniel gained the favor of men

- 1. The way we live our lives has consequences. It affects how people view us.  
**1 Peter 2:12 NAU** - "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation."  
**Luke 2:52 NAU** - "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."  
**Proverbs 3:1-4 NAU** - "My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; <sup>2</sup> For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. <sup>3</sup> Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup> So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man."
- 2. Notice the attitude and actions of Daniel
  - a. He was steadfast in his faithfulness to God. He was uncompromising.  
**Verse 8** - "Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself"  
**ESV** - "Daniel resolved"  
**KJV** - "Daniel purposed in his heart"  
Daniel had determined standards in his life that were uncompromising.
  - b. But notice his demeanor. He was not pugnacious. He didn't have a self-righteous attitude. He was polite and respectful.  
**Daniel 1:8 NAU** - "so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself."  
**E.J. Young** – "At this point and throughout his life Daniel exhibits himself as a true gentleman. He never yields in devotion to principle, but he does not permit devotion to principle to serve as a cloak for rudeness or fanaticism. He was a true hero of the Faith."
  - c. This had a positive effect upon his attendant.  
We must be unwavering in our commitment to God. But this doesn't mean we have to be hard or mean spirited. God's people should be gracious and kind, gentle and patient.

- B. Daniel enjoyed the blessing of wisdom and piety and the favor of God
1. The favor we enjoy with others is both the result of our actions and the result of the blessing of God  
**Daniel 1:9 NAU** - "Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials"
  2. God uses our behavior to change hearts  
**1 Peter 2:12 NAU** - "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation."  
**1 Peter 3:1-2 NAU** - "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup> as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."  
**Matthew 5:16 NAU** - "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
  3. Daniel also enjoyed the outward blessings of God for his faithfulness  
 God blessed his steadfastness. We find the supernatural attendance of God in the lives of these Hebrew children.
    - a. God blessed them with wisdom  
**Daniel 1:17 NAU** - "As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams."  
**Psalms 119:97-100 NAU** - "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. <sup>98</sup> Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. <sup>99</sup> I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts."
    - b. God blesses his people with abundant wisdom. But to the foolish, they become even more dull of understanding  
**Matthew 13:12 NAU** - "For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."
    - c. God also blessed them physically. Their appearance was by Divine order  
**Daniel 1:15 NAU** - " At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food."  
**Daniel 1:19 NAU** - "not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah"  
**Daniel 1:20 NAU** - "As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* conjurers who *were* in all his realm."

- d. Righteousness has an effect even upon our bodies  
**Proverbs 3:7-8 NAU** - "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup> It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones."  
 Sin likewise has an effect – David wrote:  
**Psalm 32:3 NAU** - "When <sup>a</sup>I kept silent *about my sin*, <sup>b</sup>my <sup>1</sup>body wasted away Through my <sup>2c</sup>groaning all day long."  
**Psalm 38:3-7 NAU** - "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin. <sup>4</sup> For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. <sup>5</sup> My wounds grow foul *and* fester Because of my folly. <sup>6</sup> I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. <sup>7</sup> For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh."

#### Conclusion:

1. I closed last time by calling attention to Augustine's great work called *The City of God*. He wrote in it: "Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, 'Thou art my glory and the lifter up of my head.'" To which city do you belong?
2. Joshua wrote, "Choose you this day whom you will serve" God demands faithfulness. Jesus commanded His followers to carefully consider the cost. **Luke 14:28-30 NAU** - "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"
3. God's people are of a different sort. We stand out. We stand apart.