

CHANGING YOUR WORLD

In another message we wrote about some heroes and villains and how we should focus our attention on righteous and faithful persons - Psalm 101:6. Daniel is one of the most respected characters in the Bible, which is a comment about him 15 years after he had been in Babylon (Ezekiel 14:14). As I mentioned earlier this year, the book of Daniel is relevant for the times we are living in as it reveals to us that no matter how dire the world's situation may appear, there is a mighty God who is sovereign over all of history. In light of the principle of balance, this does not mean that everything that happens is God's will but that God's ultimate purposes in history will be accomplished. (There are two words in the Bible for 'will' which denote a clear difference and we will discuss them when we come to Daniel chapter 4.)

Nebuchadnezzar was a Babylonian king who invaded Jerusalem in 605 B.C. and took sacred vessels of gold from the temple and placed them in the house of his pagan gods (he would later get drunk drinking out of them). He also took many captives back to his land. History records that 50 to 70 young men were taken as hostages from the royal family and other nobilities in Judah. However, we only know four of them by name, for God wanted us to take notice of their exemplary lives. They were Daniel (age 16), Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Nebuchadnezzar took notice of their intelligence and good looks and chose them for his 3 year training program for his royal court. Little did he realize that God had chosen them too, as special human vessels to make a difference in the land of Shinar/ Babylon, a city formed by the rebel Nimrod many years before. It was a humanistic city devoted to paganism, pride, pleasure and prosperity. Nebuchadnezzar wanted.....

Young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. - Daniel 1:4 NIV

Entering a New World

When teens leave home to attend college or enter a work place, they are often entering a different culture from what they grew up in. Daniel and his three friends faced such a challenge. The first thing King Nebuchadnezzar did to those young men was to change their identity. Their names had included references to the God of Israel. eg. El /reference to God's name **Elohim**. The letters Ah refer to the breath of God in such names as **Yahweh**.

Hebrew names

Daniel / God is judge
Hananiah / Yah is gracious
Mishael / who is like God
Azariah / Yah is my helper

Babylonian names

Beltshazzar / Bel protect the king
Shadrach / servant of the moon god Aku
Meshach / who is like Aku
Abednego / slave of god Nebo

* to save writing time, we will now refer to King Nebuchadnezzar as Neb

The king wanted them to act and think like Babylonians. He must have sensed that his gods were more powerful than their God as he was able to capture them and bring them to his country. He would later learn the hard way, that the God of Daniel was far superior to his gods.

Those opposed to God, his people and His purposes seek to pervert their image. The first attack by satan against Jesus in the wilderness temptation was over identity.

If you are the Son of God

‘There is nothing new under the sun’ and satan has used the same tactics throughout history and even in our day. Everything he does is in opposition to the plans and purposes of God. When the communists take over a country, one of the first things they do is to separate people from their history and identity. (They have been gradually doing this in our country for nearly 100 years. Cancel culture is merely a fancy term for ‘Marxist suppression agenda’. A few years ago the message of the 3 R’s came to me from God’s Word. Here is a brief summary which we will elaborate more fully on in another message.

God’s Grand Plan for Man

(based on Genesis 1 and the message of Jesus in the New Testament.)

Reflect Man is to reflect God’s image and to be conformed to the likeness of Christ (satan seeks to distort the image of God in man, which includes gender confusion, unnatural sex practices, animalistic behavior, family disruption etc. He seduces people to sin and then turns around and accuses and condemns them for doing so.

‘The devil breaks your leg and then accuses you of limping’ - Adrian Rogers

Reign Man was designed to reign in life and live as an overcomer through the empowering presence of the Spirit of Jesus living in us.
(satan wants us caught in webs of deception, distraction, depression, disease, debt, degradation, defilement, disgrace and dependency on things harmful, illegal or immoral.)

Reproduce Man was commanded to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and to make disciples of Jesus who will also reflect Him and reign in life.

The Test of Conformity

King Neb instructed that the 4 Hebrew lads be served the royal food and wine.

***But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine,
and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.
- Daniel 1:8 NIV***

Daniel would not conform to the king’s food as it was offered to false gods. There are times when we must not conform to the ways of this world, but we should follow Daniel’s example of

doing it in a respectful manner. He also showed wisdom when he suggested a trial run of his food plan alternative of vegetables and water. After 10 days, they were interviewed by the king.

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them 10 times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. - Daniel 1:20 NKJV

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. - Daniel 1:17 NKJV

Passing early exams

In school, students first learn the basic principles of reading, writing and arithmetic. In mathematics, one must pass the test of adding, subtracting etc. before advancing to algebra or trigonometry. In God's spiritual training program, He wants us to pass the simple tests of small things before we encounter greater challenges. Daniel stood firm in the test over eating the king's tempting rich foods. Because he learned the discipline of obedience and trust towards God in the food test. he was able to later stand strong for God which enabled him to faith the fear of later becoming dinner for the hungry lions in the den.

Daniel learned that those who reverence God experience His promotion and protection. From his life we can see how true change first starts with the individual and then proceeds outwardly to influence the world around them.

For several weeks I have been pondering the similarity of cults and what is happening globally today. In our next message we will explore that subject. People all over the world are having to take a stand for freedom, facts and faith against 'gestapo' governments, globalists and greedy, power hungry profiteers.

A Daily Prayer for Personal Change

Almighty God and righteous Father, may I **REFLECT** the glorious image and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rule in me so that I may **REIGN** over all the circumstances of life. May I not only be a faithful disciple of Jesus but help me to **REPRODUCE** and make disciples for Him.

Thank you God, Faithful King! Amen.

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