

Daniel at School

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for **them that honour me I will honour**; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

I Samuel 2:30

Introduction:

1. We know the texts above well, but let us assure our hearts of them by studying a man’s real life application.
2. There are four distinct clauses in our text, and each one is full of meaning and value for every one of us.

THE SETTING (1:1-2)

- A. God gave Nebuchadnezzar absolute power over the nations of the Palestine region (Jer 27:1-11).
 1. God sent Nebuchadnezzar to punish Israel for 70 years for sins (Jeremiah 25:8-14).
 2. Jehoiakim foolishly rebelled against God, so Nebuchadnezzar defeated him (II Kings 24:1).
 3. And as promised, God gave up His people to His servant, Nebuchadnezzar, even though they were His people, and only they had all the external worship of God.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar took some of the vessels from the Lord’s temple with him to Babylon.
 1. Babylon’s ambassadors had seen the vessels earlier by Hezekiah’s pride (II Kings 20:12-19).
 2. Belshazzar would blaspheme God with them in just a few years before His ruin (Daniel 5:1-4).
- C. Though Nebuchadnezzar thought his god gave him the victory, it was surely Jehovah using him!

THE FAST TRACK (1:3-7)

- A. Nebuchadnezzar sought prized recruits for his fast track program to be high officers in Babylon.
 1. Large American firms will select the best recruits for specialized training and advancement.
 2. These best of the best and brightest of the brightest were to be the king’s counselors.
 3. They were gelded as eunuchs to make them more docile, loyal, and celibate.
 4. They had room and board for three years from the king’s table while in school.
- B. Four of these children were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, from Judah’s best.
- C. He gave them Babylonian names of Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

THE COMMITMENT (1:8-16)

- A. But Daniel purposed in his heart to not defile himself with the king’s meat and wine.
 1. The first step to pleasing God is purposing in your heart not to sin, for sin comes by enticing the heart, thinking of the sin, and then doing the sin (James 1:13-16).
 2. He might have chosen to avoid the unclean meats of Moses’ law (Lev 11:1-23).
 3. He might have chosen to avoid the implicit idolatry (I Corinthians 10:19-21).
 4. He might have chosen to avoid the seductive influence (Proverbs 23:1-8).
 5. He might have chosen to avoid the temptation toward gluttony (Prov 23:20-21).
 6. He might have chosen to fast in grief over Jerusalem’s defeat (Daniel 10:2-3).
 7. We do not conclude from his choice a diet of beans, peas, and water is superior, for in fact it was inferior to the kings’ diet as ancient and modern nutrition knows, and it was to show a miracle.
 - 8.

- B. Consider various deceitful temptations Daniel resisted in purposing to obey God.
 1. He risked his life, for disobeying the king Nebuchadnezzar was usually fatal.
 2. He risked his fast track program of great privilege and pleasure while in training.
 3. He risked his fast track program of great opportunity and promotion in Babylon.
 4. He risked the peer pressure of other fast track recruits, who would ridicule him.
 5. He risked the criticism that he was not politically correct for the changing times.
 6. He risked the lives of others, for he could have cost Ashpenaz his own life.
 7. He risked the lives of other Jews, for he could have cost them all their lives.
- C. God had already arranged tender love and favor in the heart of Ashpenaz for Daniel.
- D. God blessed their ten-day trial, so that they were given freedom regarding their diet.

THE REWARD (1:17-21)

- A. God gave them – not the schooling – knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.
 1. Where do you think wisdom comes from? It comes from the Lord (Prov 2:6).
 2. And the Lord will give it to any who ask sincerely for it (James 1:5; Matt 7:7).
 3. How is this offer from the Lord inferior to His offer to Solomon (I Kings 3:5)?
 4. God gave Daniel a wonderful gift of prophecy, for his pure and purposeful heart.
- B. The four performed so well at the commencement exercises, they stood before the king.
 1. When God blesses a man with wisdom, there is no comparison to this world; for the factor of ten represents the Lord's blessing over any worldly advantage.
 2. And please note that they are here compared to experienced veterans in the field.
- C. And Daniel continued on under the blessing of God even until the first year of Cyrus.
 1. He lived long enough to see and understand the ending of the 70 year captivity.
 2. God preserved him through various kings and transfers of power and authority.
 3. He saw the commandment of Cyrus for Jerusalem and the temple to be rebuilt.
 4. He lived beyond this event, as important as it was, by another date (Dan 10:1).

Conclusion:

1. Consider Daniel's deteriorating circumstances of being taken captive from his home to a foreign nation, for such events would cause most to be destroyed, give up their faith, and doubt God's providential care.
2. We must purpose in our heart we will not sin and will always honor God, and He will take care of us.
3. Great men devise godly goals and purposes for life, and then they live according to them (Ps 119:106).
4. Our text, Proverbs 3:5-6, is indeed true; as Daniel is a historical example of practicing it and realizing it.

For Further Study:

1. Chariots of Fire
2. <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/textbook-of-textbooks.pdf>
- 3.