

# I will stand!

Lesson for Sunday, January 31, 2021

TEXT: Daniel 1

## INTRODUCTION:

- Can you remember a time when the wind was knocked out of you? *Maybe you have a personal story you can share about this!*
- We often think of “getting the wind knocked out” as a total physical thing. But have you ever had the wind knocked out of you emotionally? *You can have people share examples, or you can share another personal example.*
- Life has a funny way of throwing us curveballs when we least expect it. In a brief encounter, or a short phone call, our lives can be turned upside down.
- While we cannot predict when these times may occur, and we cannot avoid these times, we can control how we react in times of upheaval and uncertainty.
- A wonderful Bible example is the person of Daniel. Today we will begin a few lessons on familiar passages from this OT book, and we will see how he (& others) responded to the traumatic circumstances in his life.

## BIBLE STUDY:

1. A Babylonian brainwashing (vs. 1-7)
  - a. The chapter opens with Nebuchadnezzar attacking Jerusalem (604 B.C.).
    - i. Jehoiakim was king at that time. His father was the good King Josiah, but Jeh. had not followed in his father’s footsteps.
    - ii. God allowed Babylon to prevail and capture many of the Jewish people. This is a reminder that there are consequences to pay when you ignore God, even if you are God’s chosen people!
    - iii. Nebuchadnezzar took the “cream of the crop” for himself – the best young men of the nation – and deported them to the Babylonian capital.
  - b. Once Nebuchadnezzar had selected the young men, the brainwashing process began (vs. 5-7).
    - i. He made eunuchs of the young men; made them “sexless.”
    - ii. He changed their names and identities. Example: Daniel meant “God is my judge” & Belshazzar meant “worshiper of Baal.”
    - iii. He changed their dress and their language.
    - iv. The king even changed their diet – very important to a practicing Jew.
  - c. Discuss:
    - i. Daniel was probably 17 years old when all this happened to him. How do you think you would have handled these circumstances, especially as a teenager?
    - ii. How does the world try to “brainwash” Christians into doing the same things they do? How hard is it to stay true to God’s Word in 2021?
2. Daniel’s decision (vs. 8-14)

- a. Vs. 8: “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.” This is a wonderful verse, but don’t forget the position Daniel was in.
  - i. How much power did the king have in this situation? Humanly speaking, should Daniel have been afraid?
  - ii. What are some of the excuses Daniel could have used to justify compromising his beliefs in this situation? *“Look at what has happened...I’m a long way from home...no one will know, etc.”*
  - iii. Instead, he became a rebel! A rebel against sin and compromise!
- b. Daniel makes a deal that would allow him (for the immediate future) to stay true to his spiritual convictions. Notice the following:
  - i. The prince of the eunuchs worried for his own life (vs. 10). The deck was stacked against Daniel, but he pressed on. How much opposition does it take for us to back up?
  - ii. Daniel’s proposal was “give us pulse to eat” (vs. 12).
    - 1. Most likely this was basically a vegetable-based diet that probably included grains.
    - 2. Daniel offered this as a 10-day test (vs. 12).
- c. In vs. 14-15 we see the results. Daniel and his friends look better and were in better health than the others. God blessed the stand Daniel took for what was right. Discuss:
  - i. What can we take away from these results?
  - ii. Does God always reward us?
  - iii. What is our motive for standing for the Lord? Is it the reward or obedience?

#### APPLICATION:

1. How have you dealt with situations in your life when you had the “wind knocked out of you?” What can you do better in the future?
2. What excuses do we use when we want to compromise with the world?
3. We need people to stand against the wicked culture in which we live. How can we do this? What is our role?
4. God always blesses those who stand for Him – His plan is always best in the long run. How can you prepare now in order to stand for God later?