

General Topics :: DANIEL; AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING FOR JESUS IN A GODLESS WORLD

DANIEL; AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING FOR JESUS IN A GODLESS WORLD - posted by Woodard, on: 2011/8/19 12:25

TITLE: DANIEL, A CAPTIVE WITH CONVICTIONS

TEXT: DANIEL 1:1-20

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INTRODUCTION:

Daniel, like many of the young people in America today, was born in a time when his nation had turned its back on the Lord and were serving false gods and living godless lives. The Prophet Jeremiah was called by the Lord to warn the nation to repent and return to the Lord or face severe judgment at the hands of the Babylonian Armies and for 40 years he was faithful to his heavenly calling. His repeated warnings to his nation fell on deaf ears and hard hearts, but in the midst of this Apostasy the Scriptures tell us of at least 6 different people who Jeremiah must have influenced, (Baruch, Jeremiah's personal secretary, the Prophet Habakkuk; Daniel and his 3 Hebrew fellow captives) which kept the torch of Faith lit for the coming generations. It is more than likely that Jeremiah may not have even realized that his ministry had influenced this hand full of people, four of which were just teenagers, who would rise to become great heroes of the Faith.

One of these 6 was the Prophet Habakkuk, who the Lord called to publish a written warning to the nation about 20 years after Jeremiah began his preaching ministry. About two years later and approximately 22 years into Jeremiah's ministry, King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian Army made their first of three raids on the Nation of Judah. During this first raid Nebuchadnezzar captured several of the choice people and youth of the nation and took them as captives back to Babylon. Many of these would become menial slaves in the kingdom, but some of the choicest of the young men were put through 3 years of higher Babylonian Education in which the students would have any and all of their past religious faith and loyalties erased from their hearts and minds and replaced with the faith of the false gods of the land, as well as learning the necessary subjects needed to be an administrator in the Kingdom. With this new faith also came the demand for a new and complete loyalty to the King and His Government as supreme. Once their training was completed they would then be ready to take their place as equipped and trusted servants in Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom.

Four of these youths were Daniel and the famous three Hebrew children. Daniel and his companions were probably around the age of 15 or 16 years old when taken captive, making them born about 6 or 7 years after Jeremiah began his ministry to Judah. Of these four, Daniel becomes the most prominent, and the greatest example of how we as Christians are to live for Jesus as Strangers in a Foreign Land.

America today, like Judah of Daniel's day, has forsaken the Lord and is now facing the similar fate as did Judah. Like Daniel, our young people are faced with a different America than their parents grew up in. America today is Babylon to our young people. The powers that be are trying to cleanse the Lord from the minds and hearts of a generation and bring them into servitude to Satan and his kingdom. Maybe no greater model exists today for our young people who seek to be true to Jesus in a godless world, than Daniel. Let's look at Daniel's life and encourage our youth today to emulate his example.

I. DANIEL'S CHALLENGES

The very first thing we see as we look at the life of Daniel is the challenges that he faced as a youth, a youth that was a believer desiring to live for the Lord. Every youth faces many challenges, but none as much as those youth, who like Daniel, desire to be loyal to their Lord in the midst of a godless generation. Daniel faced four particular challenges in his day.

A. The Challenge of a Secular Education

Nebuchadnezzar knew that the first thing that had to be done was to win the minds of the young people, and to do that they would be placed in a Secular Education system in which their God, the True and Living God was eliminated and humanism and secularism would be drummed into their minds until they had been transformed from a Christian World View to a Secular View. That is exactly what children have faced since the 60's, when the Bible and Prayer were eliminated from our educational system, and replaced with the doctrines humanism and secularism.

Abraham Lincoln said that the philosophy of the generation in our schools today will be the philosophy of the generation that is running our government tomorrow, and that is where we are at today in America.

The generations that have been raised in our schools which had the Bible and Prayer removed are now the very people that are removing the Bible and Prayer from the rest of our society.

America and the Church will not survive with parents continuing to put their children under the counsel of the ungodly all week long, , and then on Sunday giving them one or two hours under the pitiful preaching in our powerless pulpits in America, while never opening the Bible or bending a knee for family devotions in the home. No wonder we are losing the battle for the minds of our young people.

B. The Challenge of Sinful Enticements

Nebuchadnezzar, like Satan, had enough smarts to understand that it would be much easier to win these young men over to his gods and government if he baited the hook with attractive, sinful enticements. The King's wine and meat, not the school lunches, but the King's own rations were offered them. Yet, Daniel's God had said in His Word that these things were sinful for the Child of God to partake of.

The youth of our day are being lured to Satan's side by more sinful enticements than any other generation has ever known. Sex, drugs, alcohol, pornography, and on and on we can go. Our youth today cannot turn the television on without being bombarded with sex, alcohol, and every form of sin imaginable. They can get on the Internet and for free, pull up and watch the most vile, degrading sex acts imaginable. Then they see those who are to be their role models; teachers, politicians, entertainers, sports figures, and even parents living sinful and godless lives before them day in and day out, and we wonder why our youth have no commitment to Jesus, and abandon the Church as soon as they get old enough to make their own choices.

The abundance of temptations, the poor role models, combined with a secular educational system, weak pulpits, and parents who are not the spiritual leaders to their children that they are meant to be are producing one lost generation after another until finally our Christian Heritage will soon be completely erased from our society. We are already seeing that very few in leadership in our government today hold a Christian World View. They not only do not have a Christian World View themselves, but are antagonistic towards all who do hold such views. Babylon is winning the battle for the minds and hearts of our children, and the situation is so desperate that only a Holy Ghost Heaven Sent Revival will save America. We are too far gone and too near the Lord's Full Judgment to have the time to raise a generation of young people for Jesus who will win the hearts and minds of our people back to the Lord. WE MUST HAVE REVIVAL TO SAVE AMERICA!!!

C. The Challenge of Social Edicts

Daniel was forced to live in a society that had now outlawed his Faith. It was now against the law of the land to pray to his God and to publicly practice his Faith. What a similar world we live in, where prayer and the Bible are all but totally banned from our society by law as well as the symbols of our Faith, such as the Cross, nativity displays, and the 10 Commandments, but we are not talking about the former Soviet Union or the godless Russia of today, but America, the Nation who once boasted of her Exceptionalism and Christian Heritage.

Our youth today, like Daniel of old are facing the Challenges of Secular Education, Sinful Enticements, and Social Edicts that now all but make Christianity an outlawed Faith in the land of "Religious Freedom".

D. The Challenge of the Suffering Entailed

Entailed is a good word to describe the other Challenge Daniel faced. Webster says entailed is defined as; "to require as a necessary consequence." The Government had not only outlawed Daniel's Faith from being practiced, the law required that anyone found breaking the law would be required to face the necessary consequences. For Daniel it would mean being thrown into the Lion's Den, lied about, and conspired against. For the 3 Hebrew Children it would mean being thrown into the Fiery Furnace in an attempt to kill them.

This generation of Christians is the first generation of Christians in America that have really been threatened by the powers that be with suffering for practicing their Faith. Fined, imprisoned, slandered, loss of jobs, etc. is quickly becoming the price entailed for being a Christian that unashamedly and boldly practices their Faith wherever they may be, regardless of what the price for doing so may be. Daniel, when told he could not pray by order of the law, went as had been his custom to his regular place and time of prayer and threw open his windows that all could see that he was continuing to practice his Faith regardless of man's law or the consequences for breaking them. How many would dare to be Daniel when facing a similar or even lesser challenge and consequences?

These are the Challenges that Daniel faced as a Teenage Christian, all alone in a Foreign Land. You too will find that this world will seem Foreign and Hostile to you if you are brave enough to defy it and declare your Faith as boldly as did Daniel. You too may find yourself facing opposition and hostility if you choose to stay true to Jesus in the face of all the challenges that are warning you not to do so.

II. DANIEL'S CONVICTIONS

Daniel's response to these challenges reveal that even as a teenager, he was a young man with some rock ribbed convictions that he was not willing to compromise, no matter what the eventual cost may be.

Very few who claim to be Christians today, whether young or old show they have such a commitment to Jesus when faced with similar challenges. As a matter of fact, it doesn't take much of a challenge to get the average professing Christian to compromise the Faith they claim to hold. I believe it was the late R.G. Lee who said; "13 drops of rain would knock 19 Baptists out of going to church". Shallow convictions should cause many to question if they are really Christians. Let's look at some of Daniel's heart-felt, Christian convictions.

A. Daniel Had Convictions About Sin

That is a rarity in our nation and churches today. May I remind you that it was also the case in Daniel's day, but it didn't keep Daniel from holding to the belief that some things are just wrong and should not be done or participated in by a real Christian.

1. Daniel knew what sin was

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the Law; for sin is the transgression of the Law."

Daniel would not partake of the Kings wine and meat because the Word of God said that he was not to do so as a Child of God. Daniel believed in the Inspiration and Authority of the Word of God. When it spoke the Lord was speaking, and when it said that there were things we were to do and not to do, Daniel believed it would be sin to defy or ignore that commandment.

Fewer and fewer people in America believe in any absolutes today. The majority believe truth is relative. A thing that is wrong for you may not be for me, or a thing that is right for you may not be for me. This is the rationale of the homosexual movement. There is nothing wrong with it if it is right for me, so live and let live.

I would like to take every person who does not believe in Absolute Truths and strap them into the Space Shuttle, and about 5 minutes before launch time, inform them that the engineers and scientists that had designed the Space Shuttle and their flight into space did not believe in Absolute Truths, so they did not design the Shuttle, or their flight by the set rules and laws of mathematics, aerodynamics, etc., not to worry though, every one of them did what they felt was right, even though they didn't always agree on what was right or wrong, but I am sure that you will have a safe launch, a successful flight, and a safe return. Do you think they would chance their lives on that? I doubt it. I imagine they would be headed for the exits.

Yet, these same people that have accepted the lie that there is no such thing as absolute truth, feel safe to launch out into

o life and believe they will be successful and have a safe and happy ending when their time comes. They too need to come to their senses and see the foolishness of this insanity and head for the exits from this lie to save their lives and souls.

Daniel believed in Absolutes and in the Authority of God's Word, if it said a thing was sin then to him it was sin, no matter what man or the laws of man said. Many a people have tried to legalize what God has outlawed from the beginning. If God's Word calls it sin, it will always be sin, no matter what man may call it. That was a clear conviction of Daniel. Young people, Dare To Be Daniel!!!

2. Daniel knew who sin was against

"Against thee, (the Lord) thee only, have I sinned..." Daniel knew as did King David, that sin was what God said it was and when one did or failed to do as God has said that it was not only a sin, but it was a sin against God Himself. That puts sin in a different light, if it be against the Lord Himself. It is one thing to sin against another, but it is another thing when you realize that ultimately every sin is against God Himself.

3. Daniel knew sin would eventually have dire consequences upon the sinner

*Numbers 32:23 "Be sure your sin will find you out."

*Galatians 6:7 "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Moses knew that the pleasures of sin were just for a season. That is why he turned his back on the world and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. That life of sin was bound to end in destruction and Moses got out before it destroyed him, as it had already done to millions. Sinner, do not think for a moment that there will not be severe consequences for you if you break the Commandments of the Lord. It is sin and a Holy God cannot and will not tolerate any man willfully defying Him and His Commandments. All sin leads eventually to dire consequences. That is the conviction that Daniel had about sin.

4. Daniel knew that the only Atonement from sin's penalty and deliverance from sin's power was the Blood of Jesus.

At least three times Daniel reveals how the coming Anti-Christ will "...take away the daily sacrifice..." in Jerusalem when he rules during the Tribulation Period. This shows us that Daniel had a clear understanding that these sacrifices were a type of the Coming Savior and the shedding of His blood and His death upon Calvary's Cross for the sins of man. Daniel knew the only answer for man's sin was the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ that would be shed on Calvary's Cross.

B. Daniel Had Convictions About the Lord's Second Coming

The Lord had shown Daniel the course of history that will end with the Coming of the Lord to set up His Kingdom upon the earth after He has broken the powers of all the kingdoms of man.

"Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ."

From the moment the Lord showed Daniel the facts about the Coming of the Lord, he embraced it and it had a tremendous impact upon his entire life. It should impact our lives as well.

1. The Blessed Hope will motivate us to live a pure life.

Daniel knew that outside of Calvary nothing motivated a man to live a pure life as much as did the truth of the imminent return of Jesus for His own. If a woman knew she was going to have an important guest coming to her home soon, she would get her house in order and make sure it was spotless. That is the effect the Blessed Hope has upon true believers.

2. The Blessed Hope will keep your life from being filled with worry and anxieties.

The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus tells us that the Lord is in complete control of the world, and our world as well. We need not worry, we just need to be faithful to Jesus and claim His promises.

The world may look out of control, but be at rest Jesus is still on His Throne. Daniel believed that with all of his heart, and we can rest in that assurance as well.

3. The Blessed Hope will comfort your hearts when you stand at the graveside of a loved one.

Only HOPE will bring comfort at the graveside of a loved one. The Hope they are in Heaven with Jesus, "which is far better" than being here upon this troubled earth gives comfort to every broken heart who will believe it. The sure Hope that one day soon we will be together again. No wonder the Bible calls it OUR BLESSED HOPE!!

4. The Blessed Hope will give you the motivation to faithfully endure the difficulties of this life, knowing that the Lord could come and put an end to our trials and suffering at any moment.

Knowing that the "Lord is at hand" tells the believer that the best is yet ahead of us, no matter the tribulations we may be experiencing in the present, they will all come to an end at the return of Jesus, and that could be at any moment. A man can endure all most anything if he believes it will eventually come to an end. That is why Daniel was able to faithfully endure years of captivity and the many trials that came with it.

No wonder Titus calls the Coming of the Lord the Blessed Hope for the Christian.

C. Daniel Had Convictions About Eternity

1. Daniel saw that the Souls of all men are eternal.

Satan would like for you to believe that death will end it all, but the Bible is clear that "And it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment" There is life after death and it begins with JUDGMENT. Every man is created in the image of God. We are eternal beings as is God. There was a time that you were not, but since your conception there will never be a time when you are not!!

2. Daniel saw that there was an Eternal Heaven awaiting the saved.

tells us; "And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." This world we know is already doomed for judgment, and man is heading for death, so the Lord has prepared another home for each eternal soul. For the redeemed, (those who have put their trust in Jesus for salvation) Jesus tells us in "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The Apostle Paul tells us in "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Heaven is the Eternal Home for the Child of God. Daniel believed in a literal Heaven where the saved go upon their death to be with Jesus and the saved throughout eternity.

3. Daniel saw that there was an Eternal H-E-L-L awaiting the lost.

Daniel also believed the Lord had an eternal place for the souls of the Unbeliever. That place is H-e-l-l, and it is just as real as is Heaven. Men go there just as they do Heaven. I realize that most do not believe that any longer, but it is still in the BOOK, and people are still going their everyday even though the Apostate Church, and Christ denying world refuses to believe in H-e-l-l any longer.

D. Daniel Had Convictions About Salvation

Daniel had strong beliefs about Salvation. It is evident throughout the Book of Daniel that Daniel did not believe like so many others, that a man lived and died and that was all there was, nor did he believe that all men will end up in Heaven eventually.

1. All men must be saved.

Daniel believed that ALL men MUST have their own personal salvation experience with Jesus, the Messiah. He did not

believe that Heaven was the automatic destiny for anyone. He believed ALL MEN MUST BE SAVED to escape @#!*% and go to Heaven.

2. All men can be saved.

Daniel believed that no one will be excluded for being saved except those who refuse to come to Jesus and Him alone for salvation. affirms that salvation is both Inclusive and Exclusive. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER (all inclusive) BELIEVETH IN HIM (exclusive to believers in Jesus only) should not perish, (go to H_E-L-L) but have everlasting life. There is Everlasting life in Heaven for the Believer, and everlasting damnation in h-e-l-l for the Unbeliever. That is what the Bible teaches and that is the conviction that Daniel strongly held to.

3. All men must be saved the same way.

Daniel believed strongly that there was salvation in no other than Jehovah God. There were no other god's in Daniel's belief system except the imaginary god's that evil men had created from their own evil imaginations. Daniel knew that salvation was only through faith in the Coming Messiah that would be the Lamb of God that would sacrifice His sinless life and shed His innocent blood on the Cross to atone for the sins of mankind. Daniel believed that salvation was exclusively in Christ alone. The Name of Jesus is the ONLY NAME WHEREBY MEN MUST BE SAVED.

This foolishness that we are all serving the same God, we just give Him different names, is a damnable heresy. The Bible makes it crystal clear that the ONLY NAME that a lost sinner can call upon for salvation is the NAME of JESUS!! To trust in any other Name is to be damned for an eternity in H-E-L-L .

III. DANIEL'S COURAGE

Let me say a quick word about Daniel's courage. Daniel's convictions would have been of little value to him and others if he had not had the Courage of his Convictions. That is one thing that is sorely missing among the Lord's people today. This lack of Super-Natural courage and boldness within the Church is one of the leading reasons that we are being defeated in every moral and spiritual battle facing America today. Courage is a must if one is going to be a faithful, obedient, and a victorious Christian in this day of increasing hostility towards Jesus and His Church.

Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, at a 1978 Harvard Commencement Address said: "Must one point out that from ancient times a decline in courage has been considered the beginning of the end?"

That is why Jesus commanded His disciples in that they were not to depart from the upper room for the fields of service until they knew for certain that they had been Filled and Empowered by the Holy Spirit. The powers of darkness against the Church can only be met and overcome with the Power and the Courage of one's convictions that only the Fullness of the Holy Spirit can provide.

There was a day in America when the temptations and opposition were far fewer than we face today. It did not take much power for a Christian to live successfully for Jesus. Those days are gone, and today we find ourselves in circumstances similar to Daniel's day, and there is no way to maintain your victory over temptation and opposition without the Power of God upon your life, and the Lord will only share His power with those to whom HE IS REALLY THE LORD OF ALL THEIR LIFE. The ones to whom Jesus is ALL, are the only ones who will know His Power and Victory in the days to come. Jesus will only Fill the Fully Submitted Heart, never the half-hearted.

ill. I once read about a young man who was crippled and confined to a wheel chair. In Church one Sunday Morning he heard his Pastor preach a challenging sermon on being sold out to Jesus. During the Invitation time he wheeled himself to the altar. After arriving at the altar the young man asked the Pastor: "Pastor, can the Lord use half a man? To which his Pastor replied: "Son, the Lord can and will use half a man who is fully surrender to Him, but he can not use a whole man who is half surrender to Him." That is why the lukewarm Church is so impotent today.

My friend if you have never experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit the Lord commands you to do so now! It is amazing what man's flesh can accomplish, but it will never give you victory in these days we live in.

IV. DANIEL'S COMPENSATIONS

Let me close by saying a word about Daniel's Compensations. Daniel paid a price at times for his faithfulness to the Lord, but the Lord's Compensations for his faithfulness far outweighed any price that he paid for remaining true to Jesus.

A. He enjoyed a "Special Fellowship" with Jesus that those who compromised never knew.

B. He enjoyed a "Special Favor" that Jesus continually gave him with others, especially those that were the powers that be. None of the compromisers knew any of this favor on their lives.

C. He enjoyed a "Special Force" with his life. What I mean by that is Daniel's life was a force for the Lord; his short time here upon the earth was not a wasted life, but a Force for Jesus. It could be said of Daniel what the Lord said of King David in Acts 13:36; "...David...served his own generation by the will of God..."

Nothing could be greater than to have the Lord use your life to be a Force for Him, while you are among the living. Too many Christians live and die and leave no hole behind them when they are gone. When you stick your hand in a bucket of water and pull it out it doesn't take even a second for the hole to fill back up. That is the way it is for many Christians when they die, it doesn't take long for their absence to be filled by another. Their lives made little impact for Jesus and their absence is barely missed.

The cost will no doubt get greater to live faithfully for Jesus in the days ahead, but my friend, as the life of Daniel shows, the Compensations from the Lord will far outweigh the costs, not only in this life, but in the life to come as well.

CONCLUSION:

In these days of increasing challenges to our Faith, we need Daniels who will not allow the world to mold them into its image. Daniels, who are willing to hold to their convictions, regardless the challenges or the consequences for doing so, Daniel's who have the courage of their convictions. Christians that are, "...strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Christians who have, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Christians who want to keep the torch of faith lit to pass on to their children and grandchildren. Christians who can say with the Apostle Paul: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Christians who want to come to the end of their lives and to be able to say about their lives what the Apostle Paul said about his time here, when he knew his time of departure was at hand; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

INVITATION:

I want to encourage each one of you that are reading this sermon to examine your life and your loyalty to Jesus. Are you a Daniel, or are you like the thousands of other young men and women that were taken to Babylon along with Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children. You never read about all of the other captives, and no doubt the reason we don't is because they were not willing to be Daniel's, they were not willing to have the courage of their convictions and risk suffering for their faith, they would rather compromise their Faith than to suffer for their Faith.

If this is you, I beg you for your sake, for the sake of our Nation, for the sake of your family, and for the Lord's sake to repent and rededicate your life to Jesus, surrender your all to Him, and allow Him to use you in this generation according to His will.

If you are lost I want to encourage you to Recognize that you are a Sinner, and the Wages of Sin is Death. If you do not get saved before you die, or before the return of Jesus for His Church, you will eventually die and go to @#!*% for all of eternity. But no one needs to die and go to @#!*%. Christ Jesus died for you, to pay for your sin. He rose from the grave and is no doubt speaking to your heart through this very message. If while you hear His voice and will reach out to Him with a Repentant heart and call upon Him, He will save you this very moment. Then you too may take up your cross and follow Jesus as did Daniel. You too can have a life that really matters. You too can live for more than Success you can live a life of Significance, a life that will matter for time and eternity.

THE CONFESSION OF A YOUNG CHRISTIAN MARTYR FROM AFRICA

“I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed, the die has been cast, I have stepped over the line, the decision has been made, I’m a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I’m finished with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, worldly talking, cheap giving and dwarfed goals. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear.

I won’t give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up for the cause of Jesus Christ. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till everyone knows, work till He stops me and when He comes for His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me because my banner will have been clear!!”

No wonder he became a Martyr!!

~JACK WOODARD

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