

*“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”*

Daniel 1:8

As we return to our study on Compromising or Conviction this morning, we finally break into our text after 3 introductions. We have used the introductions in order to set forth a foundation to our sermon regarding the unshakable conviction of young Daniel. We will see; that Daniel will not compromise, but will demonstrate such a confident faith, saturated and cemented with a holy conviction. As we have seen in our first 3 introductions, Daniel, is one who will not be conformed to the world of his day, nor will he compromise, but will take a stand for his God and seeks to live a holy life because His God is holy. He lived his life as a stranger and pilgrim in this earth and when he died, he died the death of the righteous because he lived the faith of the righteous and was persuaded of God's faithfulness and God's promises and thus lived his life embracing the truths and promises of His God and confessed them as a testimony to the generation in which he lived.

This again, should remind us our own professed faith, loyalty and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. The words of Christ Himself are very challenging to us who name the name of Christ and proclaim to be believers in Him, Matthew 16:24, “*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will **come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***” Jesus Christ instructs us that anyone who calls themselves a Christian; this is the nature and meaning of their profession, that is, to come after Christ, deny yourself, take up HIS cross and follow Him. We are reminded again that this is not the aspect of lip service, but one who has true saving faith with a devotion settled in a HOLY CONVICTION. This is the essence of a sanctified heart seasoned in grace, so that, when trials, tribulations, circumstances or situations come upon us, we will steadfastly continue to FOLLOW OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH OUR WHOLE HEART! This is what caused Daniel to faithfully follow his God with his whole heart as he persevered through his trials. This does not mean that Daniel was perfect and without his individual flaws, or that he did not come short of the glory of God, but no one can or will question his sanctified CONVICTION!

As we concluded with our last sermon three weeks ago, we said Daniel and his friends will be tested to see if they will be overcomers in the faith or fearful unbelieving cowards. They will either be conquerors or cowards! I share all this so you might understand that the issue that confronted Daniel and his friends was not something light or of little matter, no, not some history narrative with a positive message, you see, the decision they will make can cause them their lives. Their stand for God would challenge them and change them forever!

Thus, in Daniel chapter 1:8, it says again, “**But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself** with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs **that he might not defile himself.**”

There are four things we have set before you:

- I. Daniel's Character Challenged.
- II. Daniel's Conviction Courageous.
- III. Daniel's Commitment Contagious.
- IV. Daniel's Continual Countenance.

## I. Daniel's Character Challenged.

The first thing we want to consider is '**Daniel's Character Challenged.**' The year is 605 B.C. six centuries before Christ; Daniel and his 3 friends are taken captives to Babylon. God gave warning after warning by His prophets that He would bring judgment; but they continued to disobey and rebel and so He finally brought forth His judgment upon Judah, the southern kingdom which was under the reign of Jehoiakim. Let me just quickly remind those of you outside Christ, Sunday after Sunday you are warned of God's judgment, that is, if you do not repent of your sins and lay hold of Christ for your salvation, judgment awaits you if you die in that state. Do understand this, God's warnings, yea His longsuffering will come to an end at some point. God by His prophets faithfully warned Judah, the Southern Kingdom of impending doom. They did not take heed to the messages given to them to turn to the Living and True God. God finally brought forth His judgment, oh to God that you would heed the message of free grace and that you would bow the knee to Christ and confess Him as your Lord. Do not die without Christ. God finally brought judgment and raised Nebuchadnezzar to take Judah into captivity. Judah's captivity was in 3 stages:

1. Daniel and his 3 friends were among the first group taken into captivity to Babylon in 605 B.C. Daniel 1:1-6.
2. In 597 B.C. a second remnant is taken to Babylon, Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) follows the reign of his father Jehoiakim. 2 Kings 24:8-16 (This included Ezekiel)
3. Finally in 586 B.C. Jerusalem falls and the temple is destroyed. Zedekiah was installed as king in Jerusalem; 2 Kings 24:17-25:21 (This included Jeremiah)

Notice what Nebuchadnezzar did in verses 1 & 2. Notice also the description of those who were taken captive and specifically chosen by King Nebuchadnezzar, verses 3 & 4. So in 605 B.C. Daniel is taken into captivity to a new land that he has never been before. Daniel was about 14 years of age when this happened, some believe he could have been as old as 19, but nonetheless, he was very young when he went to

Babylon. This is what makes this story so pronounced because Daniel is not a seasoned saint of the most High God, he is a young follower of Jehovah God (Christian) and the world he knew has collapsed around him and has been totally turned upside down. His God will be challenge, his faith will be challenge, his conviction will be challenge and his life will be change forever. Many of us who are older than Daniel might not have done as well as Daniel. This story of Daniel is one of the greatest stories in the Bible that has strengthened many Christian's since it was written, but please bear this in mind, if Daniel had compromised, we would never have had this story, or maybe even the book of Daniel. Behind the scenes we give all the credit and glory to God and if Daniel was here this morning he would say amen to that. But we want to focus on the faith that sustained Daniel in this first crisis. Right off the bat his character is going to be challenged. Daniel's name means God is my judge, He knew that God would be watching and judging his every move. Nothing is known of his personal life, but apparently he descended from one of Judah's prominent families or from royal blood, verse 3. Daniel and his 3 friends came to a time of decision in their lives, not regarding salvation, he was already saved, but of taking a stand for God. They would compromise and be conformed to the Babylonian mindset and go with the flow, or they would have a holy conviction and take a stand for the God of their salvation. This particular circumstance would set the course for the rest of their lives. As you and I go through live there will be times we are going to have to make decisions to take a stand, where we will either follow the Lord wholly or compromise by conforming to this world. Daniel and his friends were put in this situation; they would either compromise or take a stand with holy conviction. This test had the potential to derail and damage their faith and lead them to spiritual digression and complacency. Dear brethren the issues and problems they face are no different from those we face on a daily scale in our present world regarding compromising.

These boys were brought up in or around Jerusalem. They were reminded of their God by the preaching of the prophets. The scribes were teaching in the Temple and the priests were ministering with the sacrifices and offerings. They were reminded of Jehovah God constantly, but now, things have changed and they have been taken captive and hauled off to Babylon. Instead of participating in true worship they are now surrounded by heathen worship, heathen images, and various idols, worldly and heathen philosophies, sounds like ABC on TV, always bashing Christians. It would be easier for them to conform and fit in their new environment, than to take a stand. How did they react or better yet, how do we react when we are surrounded by ungodly influences? It's easy to be spiritual at church when surrounded by the brethren, but, what about when we are alone or when we are in an ungodly environment, do we stand for Christ or do we cave in and compromise. Daniel and his friends were in a very hard situation, they were in an ungodly wicked environment and their faith would be put to the test. These boys were going to be taught a new language, a new religion, new knowledge, a new philosophy and would be given new names. These young men were going to be exposed to things that they have never seen or heard before that was

diametrically opposed to their faith. It was a dangerous time for them; they would be forced to conform to the new system around them or take a stand for Jehovah God.

Daniel and his friends would be in a struggle, they will wrestle and grapple for their spiritual life and they alone would have to bear the impact of the attack. There were other Jewish children, but these 4 would be the only ones who would take a stand. They are in Babylon already in nice and perhaps lavish sleeping arrangements. There is no physical siege by a hostile army, no this is going to be a spiritual battle, there are no rams or catapults, no bows, no arrows and no swords, Nebuchadnezzar has their body's captive, but now he wants their souls, their minds, and their hearts also. They were the crème of the crop, they were good looking and without blemish. They were gifted with wisdom, knowledge and they had the ability to learn quickly. Nebuchadnezzar wanted more than their brains, he wanted their wills, their affections, their whole heart. He wants them to look and to smell like Babylon, to dress Babylonian, to speak Babylonian, to think Babylonian, to feel Babylonian, to be enthused Babylonians, he wants their all and all. Nebuchadnezzar wants to Babylonize everyone, and his approach is deceptive, determined and subtle. He wants to get them young, while they are yet children, so that will be dedicated to the Babylonian cause, he wants their whole lives. Talk about brainwashing, that's right, you see Nebuchadnezzar wants complete conformity throughout his whole empire, bar none! Secularization of a nation, wow that sounds like America in a sense, we are force to put our children at a young age in kinder garden at age 3, 4 or 5, for what? I know they will teach them the alphabet, the colors and numbers, but in a subtle way they will began to indoctrinate them early with secular humanism, to teach them all kinds of anti-Christian concepts, you know, Mary had two mommies; Johnny has two daddies, or Darwinian evolution and secular philosophies where there is no room or need for God. I mean, mention God or the Bible and they become hostile and intolerant. They do this in order to teach them at a young age that we are the master of our own destiny, the captain of our ship. I love America, but America has gotten so far away from God which brings fear because the Psalmist says in Ps, 9:17, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*" Nebuchadnezzar knows exactly what he is doing; he is taking the future leaders of Israel, vulnerable young men, away from their parents, away from their friends, away from their worship, young impressionable boys, who the king thought that their convictions were not yet settled. Nebuchadnezzar wanted them through and through Babylonian in heart, in body and in soul! He wanted them so alienated from their past and assimilated in Babylonian culture, hopefully forgetting their past. They would be broken from their upbringing and values and finally conformed to a Babylonian lifestyle.

In the midst of all this Daniel is going to be challenge by a strong influence of Babylonian culture that will defy and confront his faith. What is Daniel to do? What will Daniel do in such an ungodly environment? Daniel was going to face several problems that were going to challenge his faith with potential to shipwreck his faith and lead him

away from his God. Yes, Daniel's character will be challenged! This leads us to our second point:

## **II. Daniel's Conviction Courageous.**

Daniel has been removed to a new home, as he and his 3 friends have been hauled off to Babylon. They are going to be surrounded by ungodly influenced, by idolatry, heathen worship, heathen images, heathen people, heathen cities, heathen beliefs, heathen teachings, heathen philosophies, it would be easier to conform than to take a stand in his new home. Not only would they be moved to a new home, but they would also be taught new ideas and concepts, new knowledge. All their lives they have been exposed to godly influence, to the true and living God, but now they are going to be taught a new religion, new knowledge, new language and new lifestyle. They will be pressured to conform to all this newness which will be a very dangerous time for all of them. We are also likewise in our day, pressured to conform to new ways of thinking. The homosexual agenda is force on us; promiscuous sexual activity is set before as though it is a good thing to emulate, alcohol usage is set forth as the norm for our society, social drinking is ok they say, but binge drinking is wrong. Both are wrong, Proverbs 20:1, *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."* Hab.2:15, *"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also..."* These are just 2 of the many found in the Bible regarding drinking alcohol. All those funny beer commercials, never show you the families that have been destroyed by alcohol, they don't show all those who have been killed by drunk drivers. But pastor Joe I just have a few, it only takes a few to blur your vision. This is not a message on sobriety, no, but that society at large thinks that alcohol usage is the norm for life. Secular humanism raises its ugly head against the wisdom of God found in the Bible. We are pressured to conform to the world's philosophy on life, but bring out the Bible or mentioned God and they look at you with contempt. We are admonish tolerate their lifestyle, but they will not tolerate Christianity. They say it's old, it's an ancient religion, we need something else, something new etc. Daniel and his friends are pressured into Babylon's mindset and teaching. Not only are they given new homes, new teachings, taught a new language but they are also given a new diet. These Jewish boys had lived by the Biblical dietary laws and are now introduce to new food. This new food was unclean and most of the meat had been sacrifice to idols. Thus, it was going to defile them. More on this in a moment...

They had new homes, new knowledge, new diet and they will also be given new names. They arrived in Babylon with blessed godly names without any type of heathen idolatry meanings. These are the names and godly meaning of these four Hebrews:

- **Daniel – God is my judge or Elohim is my judge.**
- **Hananiah – God is gracious or mercy of Yahweh.**
- **Mishael – Who is what God is? Or who is He that is God? (God w/out equal)**
- **Azariah – The Lord is my helper or Yahweh hath helped**

When they arrived in Babylon that changed their names, they were given heathen new names.

- **Daniel's name was changed to Belteshazzar – Bel protect the king or Bel's prince.**
- **Hananiah's name was changed to Shadrach which means command of Aku (moon god).**
- **Mishael's name was changed to Meshach which means who is like Aku?**
- **Azariah's name was changed to Abednego which means servant of Nebo**

No question that these names were given to wean them away from their land and from them following the Living and True God and to adopt the religion(s) of the Babylonians.

They could change their location, they could change their knowledge, they could change their diet and they could change their names, but they will not be able to change their **HEARTS!** They were not able to change their faith. They were not able to change their obedience to God and His Word! They were going to trust God as to what He has promised in His word. They were willing to FOLLOW Him even if it cost them their lives. Yes, Daniel's conviction was courageous! What about who name the name of Christ, do you have this conviction? When it comes to taking a stand for Christ and the Bible do you have conviction? Are you a conqueror or are you a compromising Christian?

I can almost hear those around Daniel saying, come on Danny boy, what is the big deal, it's just food. Or maybe someone this morning might ask, but Pastor Joe, Daniel didn't say anything about the other things, he gave in, he compromised, he didn't take a stand on the other issues. When they trained them in the new language Daniel did not protest, when they were trained in the literature of the Babylonians, Daniel did not protest, when they were given new names Daniel did not protest, but when they put him on a new diet, Daniel drew the line, he would not conform, because he knew inwardly that the WORD of God was very specific about eating unclean meats or even worse, he knew without a shadow of a doubt that the Word of God would clearly forbid him from eating meats that were offered to idols. This was the whole issue here, obey God or obey King Nebuchadnezzar? You see, Daniel was not going give a reputation for being a trouble maker in protesting everything; that is, being self-righteous; (The worse kind of Christian is a self-righteous Christian or a hypocritical Christian) but when he had clear, very clear knowledge regarding the word of God, this is when he drew the line and said I will not defile myself with meats sacrifice to idols. Daniel and his friends were able to acclimate to their surroundings and not putting up his hands in protest to every little thing, in other words being self-righteous. He didn't care what they said or did to DANIEL, but when it became an issue of being disobedient to God, HE SAID NO, he didn't protest when they called him Belteshazzar, the name of a Babylonian idol. Daniel remained calm, he kept his cool, but when they wanted to change his diet, he very carefully drew the line and resolved in his heart that he would not indulge in that. We'll get to the specifics of the dietary laws next week, but Daniel

had great conviction and therefore took a stand. If you name the name of Christ this morning do you have convictions?

Consider this next quote, *"Daniel was not a Pharisee. He is filled with the Spirit of the Messiah. He saw the food as simply an outward sign of an anti-Jehovahist system, and that his whole way of life was being radically transformed and replaced. The menu wasn't accidental. People say to us today that they admire our religion and they are glad that has worked for us, but that it's a private matter. King Nebuchadnezzar would laugh if he heard that, because all of life for him was permeated by religion. Every meal in the royal palace was a holy meal. Everything was a gift of Nebuchadnezzar's gods. Like the victory over Israel and its God which his gods had secured, so they continued to provide for him length of life and daily food. The meals were presided over by the priests of Babylon and whenever you had a meal thanks was given to the gods who provided this food. You might sprinkle some pepper or spices as a thanksgiving to the gods before you ate. Young Daniel recognised the challenge, "What fellowship do we have with Belial? What agreement is there between the temple of Jehovah and idols ?" So Daniel defined it. There was danger in that dining hall."*

Daniel had backbone; he would obey his God over king Nebuchadnezzar! It would be easier to conform and compromise and just fit in. What's the big deal? It's being faithful to God! To the 21<sup>st</sup> Christian, the danger is just as real. The issue at hand is are we consistent Christians or are we wishy-washy Christians. Being a consistent Christian begins with having convictions even the little things of Christianity. This is why it is very needful that we are consistent even in our church attendance. It is a very simple equation; if we are inconsistent in our church attendance our chances of compromise are greater. If you have no convictions about coming to church, you probably are a weak Christian. If you cannot get to church when the doors are open, how are you going to stand for God, for Christ, for the Bible when you are put in a very trying circumstance that will challenge you to compromise your faith? He that is faithful in little things will be faithful in bigger things. Luke 16:10 & 13, ***"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much...No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*** You want God to be faithful to you when you go through difficulties, how would you like for God to be inconsistent when you call upon Him? How would you like for God to say, when you need Him the most, "I'm so sorry my dear one, but I have family coming over, I'll get to you as soon as I can." Sad, but that is what some people do, when family comes over, they feel that they don't have to come to church. Or, "Oh, my dear one, I'm so tired; I just dealt with that issue yesterday." Sad, but many are just too tired to come to church on Sunday morning or even Sunday night, but call a bar-b-q, or lets go to the movies, our strength is renewed. Have you forgotten the words of Morbus Sabbaticus? Or, what if God would say, "What, I just helped you this morning; I need to help you again tonight?" That's what some say, we'll I went Sunday morning, what I have to go Sunday night, and then you expect me to go Wednesday night? Oh, but when we want God to help us, we want Him to help us more that once a week don't we? We want God to be faithful to us always, don't we? But we want to be faithful to Him once a week on Sunday morning. How would you like for God to point you to whatever that

excuse is that keeps you from church, when you are in trouble, that is, for you to call on that excuse when you are in trouble? Pastor Joe, you're just taking this too far, really? Turn to Deut.32:35-38 and in Judges 10:6-14. That is my point how would you like for God to point you to the excuses you give Him for not coming to church when the doors are open? Again, I know sometimes there are sicknesses and providential hindrances, but this is not what I'm speaking about. I'm talking about when we don't have a solid reason not to come to church. For over 30 years I've gone to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. My wife and I have been married 27 years and we have come to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. Hopefully we have taught our children on the importance of church attendance. When our children were sick we took turns, we didn't all stay home. I'll repeat myself here: This is why it is very needful that we are consistent even in our church attendance. It is a very simple equation; if we are inconsistent in our church attendance our chances of compromise are greater. If you have no convictions about coming to church, you probably are a weak Christian. If you cannot get to church when the doors are open, how are you going to stand for God, for Christ, for the Bible when you are put in a very trying circumstance that will compromise your faith? He that is faithful in little things will be faithful in bigger things. Luke 16:10, "***He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.***"

You might be asking, but Pastor Joe, are we commanded to go to church? I'll let the word of God answer that question, Hebrews 10:23 – 26, "*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* 24 *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:* 25 **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.** 26 *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,"*

Daniel was faithful in little things, guess what? He would be faithful in bigger things, or better yet, he would be consistently faithful or will have a continual countenance (4<sup>th</sup> point)! He would have a solid conviction for his God, that is, Daniel's conviction was without a shadow of a doubt COURAGEOUS! How about you, how about me? Are we overcomers, are we conquerors or are we compromising cowards? May God be pleased to speak to your hearts this morning?

As I conclude let me share with you the consistency of Daniel's conviction and faithfulness, turn quickly to Daniel chapter 6, the Medes and the Persians were now rulers the world as they had taken the kingdom from the Babylonians, read with me the first 5 verses. That phrase in verse 4, "**...as he was faithful ...**" just grips my heart as I see my shortcomings and inconsistencies in my life. May God grace us to be found faithful in serving Him!

Let's pray.