

## PURPOSE AND PRIORITY

Daniel 1:8-21

Intro: Daniel was a young man of purpose and priority. He knew what he believed and he purposed to live by his beliefs. Daily he made important resolutions. A resolution and a decision are kin to each other, both carry the idea of making up one's mind.

Some folks make resolutions at New Years, resolutions that most do not keep. Daniel made many resolutions or decisions in his life, decisions that he kept throughout his life and you and I need to do some decision making of our own.

To resolve means, "To make a firm decision about something." It also speaks of "firmness of purpose and determination." What have you resolved about your life? Does it include living for Christ?

### I. Vs. 8-10, THE RESOLUTION OF DANIEL'S HEART

A. Vs. 8a, When the Bible says, "Daniel purposed in his heart," it means that Daniel's heart was set; it was unmovable. He would not be won over by the Babylonians, by their worldly ungodly ways. His colors were nailed to the mast.

1. If you are going to be a victorious soldier of the Lord Jesus, you are going to have to determine to be so. You are going to have to set your heart.
2. Proverbs 4:23 tells us: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."
  - a. "Keep" means: "Watch your heart, guard your heart, blockade it from evil, the principle of setting a watchman."
  - b. "Issues" meaning: "the source of, the outgoing." Your heart health spiritually will determine your life; either it will be lived for the Lord or for the devil.
  - c. Thomas Guthrie wrote concerning our need of keeping our hearts: "If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven-take alarm."
3. A heart decision is one that is made between you and the Lord. It was a personal decision. Friend, that is how it is with you and me. What we will be for the Lord, as far as our heart is concerned, is personal.

4. We need to purpose to hide the Word of God in our hearts for it is the Word of God that will guide us in making right decisions. The Bible tells the youth to hide the Bible in their hearts: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11) We also find in Psalm 119 the way for staying clean spiritually and morally: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”
    5. Daniel was determined not to defile his body with the king’s meat and drink.
      - a. By so doing, Daniel chose not to be in the “In crowd.” All around him, Jewish boys were compromising, eating meat sacrificed to idols, beef and pork, and drinking wine that had been offered to the gods of the Babylonians.
      - b. Daniel did what we need to do; he had to be negative; he had to say no. We need to say no to drunkenness, drugs, and sex out of wedlock. Just because everyone is doing it does not make it right.
- B. Vss. 8b-10, In the last part of verse eight, Daniel makes a request of the prince of the eunuchs. Daniel was not a rebellious young man who told the prince of the eunuchs that he refused to do what he was told. He was a sincere young man who requested that he not have to go against his convictions. Daniel’s plea shows that there is a right way and a wrong way to make an appeal. Daniel requested that he be allowed to abstain. Daniel had a cause worth dying for; therefore, he could live for it.
1. Vs. 9, God had moved upon the heart of the prince of the eunuchs causing Daniel to be in favor with him. “Favour” is the Hebrew word *hesed* meaning “kindness and good will.” The Hebrew word for “tender love” is *rahamim* expressing deep sympathy. The man really liked Daniel.
  2. Vs. 10, Life was cheap in Babylon and the prince of the eunuchs feared the king and feared for his life. It is sad when life becomes cheap, when life is not respected and cherished, but that is the way it was in Babylon. He feared that his head would roll. Abortion says that life is not cherished.
    - a. What if Daniel was pale and worse looking than the

other trainees?

- b. Because the prince of the eunuchs explained his position without giving an outright no. Daniel now had a chance to give a counterproposal.

## II. Vss. 11-14, REQUEST FOR A TEST OF TEN DAYS

- A. Vs. 11-13, Daniel says to Melzar who was directly over Daniel and his friends: "Put us to the test."
  1. Daniel's request was that they be put on a diet of vegetables: "the sown things" and water.
  2. Life is full of tests. Daniel had already been tested as to his faith, and he had stood firm. Now he requests that Asphenaz and Melzar put he and his friends to the test. How we respond to the tests of life, in high school, college, at work and at play reveals what we are in our heart. Purpose in your heart to live for the Lord and keep His commandments.
  3. Vs. 13, In essence, Daniel was saying you all eat the king's fare, and we will eat healthy and kosher. We will live for the King of Kings and ya'll live for an earthly king.
- B. Vs. 14, The request is granted; the test is on.

## III. Vss. 15-16, THE GRANTING OF THE REQUEST

- A. Vs. 15, God richly blessed the commitment of Daniel and his friends. They looked better than the others in the king's program. Their countenance was fairer than the others; their eyes clearer and over all they were in better shape.
  1. Young person, sin will take its toll on you. Following the way of the world will cost you.
  2. The evidence of sin is seen in the eyes: guilt and shame is seen in the face of the sinner.
- B. Vs. 16, Daniel's request was granted. This young man, Daniel, had put the will of God ahead of compliance and convenience; he was honored by the Lord. Make your commitment to Christ today.

## IV. Vss. 17-21, DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS BLESSED OF GOD

- A. Vs. 17, After three years of training, Daniel and company came out on top of the class. They are probable about twenty years old by this time.

1. God had given them knowledge, wisdom, and skill in all their studies (James 1:5). They were able to separate the wheat from the chaff because God's Word was their guide. Note: Proverbs 1:7; 9:10.
  2. God had surely blessed these youths who were sold out to Him and not the world system. Young person, do as wise king Solomon instructed: "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth..."
  3. Of the four, God gave Daniel the gift of prophecy. This gift will be very evident as we study this great book of the Bible. God had placed His hand on Daniel at an early age because of obedience.
- B. Vss. 18-19, The king asked questions, and the four answered them better than all the rest.
- C. Vss. 20-21, Although Daniel and his three friends now had Babylonian names, they were still Hebrews in their hearts.
1. Vs. 20, The so called handicap of being a believer did not keep them from being "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all the realm."
  2. Vs.21, Daniel served through the remainder of the Babylonian empire into the first part of the Persian empire under Cyrus. The first chapter of Ezra tells us of the papers that were written releasing the Israelis from captivity. Some believe that Daniel prepared these papers as his last official act in the Persian government.

Conclusion: It pays to have your purpose and priorities right. "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." Baptist Catechism.

Dr. Cecil A. Fayard, Jr.  
Jan 24, 2010