

THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

When the Crowd Calls

TEXT: Dan. 1

Introduction: As God declared to Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came against Jerusalem as an instrument of the judgment of God upon God's own people who had abandoned their covenant with the Almighty. This severe chastening of the Lord did not come in one fell swoop, but rather in a series of assaults that stretched out over a period of twenty years.

It was not that it took four separate battles for the Babylonians to defeat Judah. Each time the Babylonians came, they won, handily and quickly. But the first three times, the King of Babylon was content to steal the valuables of the city, install a puppet king to rule as Babylon desired, and to deport some of the people back to Babylon as slaves.

In the first deportation, the finest young men and women of Jerusalem were taken back as servants to King Nebuchadnezzar. Among these was a young man named Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Even as the focus of the Word of God shifted from God's people in rebellion in Judah to God's people in captivity, so the focus of the prophetic word shifted from Jeremiah who went to Egypt to Daniel who had been carried to Babylon.

So also shall we, who are studying the Scriptures to understand God's prophetic word today, shift our attention from the Book of the Prophecy of Jeremiah to the Book of the Prophecy of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel is to the Old Testament what the Book of Revelation is to the New. Interestingly, neither can be fully understood without the other. Perhaps that is the reason that after inspiring the book, God told Daniel

Daniel 12:9 And he said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Daniel has some of the most fascinating revelations about the future of any portion of the Bible, but that is not all it is about. It also is full of messages for living today with many practical admonitions, insights, and examples. Such is the case with our text today, the first chapter of the book of Daniel. The book begins by describing...

I. A DIFFICULT TRIAL

Dan. 1:1-7 ¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought

the articles into the treasure house of his god. ³ Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, ⁴ young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. ⁵ And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king. ⁶ Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷ To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

A. Among the captives were youth and teenagers.

1. Good looking
2. Physically strong
3. Socially developed
4. Educated
5. Spiritually devoted

What if God allowed you to be captured? How do you compare?

B. **The attempt to make them conform.**

1. **New home** – college

² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

2. **New knowledge** – out with knowledge of God, in with wisdom of man

⁴ young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.

3. **New diet** – beer, drugs

⁵ And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king.

4. **New names**

⁶ Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Praise God for parents who give spiritual names.

HEBREW NAME		BABYLONIAN NAME	
Daniel	God is my judge	Belteshazar	Bel protect his life
Hananiah	YHWH is gracious	Shadrach	Commanded by Aku, the moon god
Mishael	Who is like God	Meshach	One who is like Aku
Azariah	YHWH is my helper	Abed-nego	The servant of Nego, the Babylonian god of wisdom

Each of the Hebrew names had a direct tie to the Creator God of the Bible. Each of the Babylonian names had a direct tie to a pagan Babylonian god.

Satan's attempt is the same. Make us like the world. Especially our youth.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Next we see ...

II. A DARING TEST

Dan. 1:8-16 ⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. ⁹ Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. ¹⁰ And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who *are* your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king." ¹¹ So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, *so* deal with your servants." ¹⁴ So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. ¹⁵ And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. ¹⁶ Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

A. The Respectful Appeal to Authority

When those in authority over you demand that you do something God does not want you to do, respectfully appeal to them.

Prov. 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Prov. 21:1 The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *Like* the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

No rebellion here, my friends!

B. Short time – but it worked.

C. Faith and Obedience overcome temptation

1. Eating the king's food was tempting
2. Looked good
3. Tasted good
4. Everybody else was eating

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

Thirdly, this prophetic word reveals ...

III. DIVINE TRIUMPH

Dan. 1:17-21 ¹⁷ As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. ²⁰ And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm. ²¹ Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

A. God gave them

¹⁷ As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

B. The results were 10 times better.

Why?

Because rather than be conformed, they were transformed.

Rom. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Teens, that's what we need today. Parents, that's what we need today.

Conclusion: The chapter ends with these words,

Dan. 1:21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

**Satan said, "You better follow the crowd if you want to stay around here."
But Daniel followed God and stayed longer than anyone - through 4 kings and 3 kingdoms.**

1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Only 2 people in the Bible were called "beloved" by God. Jesus and Daniel.

Dan. 10:11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

Daniel lived in the will of God and enjoyed the love of God. The consecration gave him courage. The faith made him faithful.

**Dare to be a Daniel;
Dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known!**

Invitation