

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 9)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

Last month we finished with a brief look at Daniel's Desire based upon the word requested. I mentioned that often the word is misunderstood. I have heard many explain the verse with the idea that Daniel would have gone along with whatever the prince of the eunuchs decided. But that is not the meaning of the word, nor the intention of Daniel. The word requested describes a person's earnest seeking of something or someone which exists or is thought to exist. Its intention is that its object be found or acquired. This was not some half-hearted wish from Daniel and his friends. If you trace this word throughout the Old Testament, you will find that it occurs 215 times. Sometimes it is translated with the English word require. Perhaps that helps us understand the intensity of Daniel's desire. He would not defile himself no matter what the end result would be. It may seem odd to us that Daniel would "require" his captors to provide a different kind food for him and his friends, but it shows us how important God's commands were to Daniel. With God's help, Daniel was intent on remaining pure before God by obeying all of His commands.

Daniel and his friends provide the perfect example of remaining pure in a filthy world. Everyone else was partaking of the meat and wine, including the other Jews that were brought from Judah with them. But what everyone else was doing did not influence Daniel and his friends. What mattered to them was the Word of God and obedience to it. Everyone else could participate, but Daniel and his friends were determined to stand alone and be obedient to God. Many often cite the idea that "everyone else has changed," so we may as well change too. That statement is an abomination in the sight of God! Doing right is always the right thing to do regardless of

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whether you stand alone or with a group. Besides, you are not responsible for what everyone else does, but you are responsible for your choices. Though it may seem like everyone has compromised, not everyone has. But even if everyone truly has gone the way of the world, that does not excuse your wrongdoing. Everyone in Babylon was doing things contrary to the way of God, even the other Jews brought to Babylon with Daniel and his three friends, but that did not shake their desire to remain pure in God's sight. They alone refused to partake of the meat and wine, but that did not change their determination nor desire. Some perhaps suggested to Daniel that he "just go along and not disturb the peace." They may have said, "We just arrived in Babylon. We have to do what they say. We are captives." But Daniel replied, "God said that we should not eat that meat, nor should we drink that wine. We may be in Babylon, but God's Word has not changed. I will obey God regardless of the cost." He requested that the prince of the eunuchs give him and his friends something else to eat and drink. May we have the same determination to remain pure.

Of course, many wonder what would have happened had the request been denied. I have heard some teach that Daniel and his friends would have partaken of the meat and wine if the prince of the eunuchs would have refused the request. But as I have tried to show, Daniel's "request" could only have been answered one way. Under no conditions were he and his friends going to eat and drink what God said would defile him. Verse 9 says that God worked and "*brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.*" With the conquering of nations by Nebuchadnezzar, many captives had been brought to Babylon, but none like Daniel and his friends. The request may have seemed odd and met some resistance, but Daniel suggested a test and God worked it out so that Daniel and his friends looked far better after the test than the other captives eating the meat and drinking the wine. As a result, the other captives were given the same food that Daniel and his friends were eating.

Without a doubt God was in control of every situation with

Daniel and his friends, and so moved the prince of the eunuch to yield to Daniel's request. But what if the Babylonians had insisted upon the meat and wine? Obviously we cannot know for certain, but we do have a pretty good indication from Daniel 3 and 6 as to what Daniel and his friends would have done. They would have refused to partake of the meat and wine. They would have died for their devotion to God just as they were willing to die when Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah refused to bow to the image and when Daniel prayed to God when it was against the law to do so. God miraculously spared their lives in both situations, and He may have spared their lives if necessary here at the beginning of the book, but these young men were determined to remain pure whatever the cost may have been. God rewarded their faithfulness by working in the heart of the prince of the eunuchs, but God only rewarded them because of their faithfulness. He did not arrange it so they did not have to choose. He did not make it easy for them. At this point, the Babylonians gave in, but Daniel and his friends were determined to remain pure for God under any circumstance.

To many this issue of meat and wine is a small matter. Depending on how you look at things, it may be. In some ways, there are no small sins in the sight of God. In Revelation 21:8, liars and murderers are both condemned to the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. Now most of us do not like liars, but we do not hold them to the same level of contemptibility as we do murderers. However, God will damn both of them to the same Lake of Fire. We think of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin as terrible people, but they will be in the same Lake of Fire as moral, religious people who never killed anyone. Obviously, we could argue some more as to whether there are "big" sins and "little" sins, but a lot of it depends on our perspective at the moment. I am using this discussion of "big" and "little" sins to lead to the point that there are no "big" and "little" acts of obedience. Some would say that they would never bow to an image as many did in Daniel 3. Likewise, if prayer to God was outlawed, they would firmly say that they would pray to God. However, may I remind you that the only ones who did not bow in

Daniel 3 were the same ones who did not eat the meat and drink the wine in Daniel 1. The only one who did pray to God in Daniel 6 was among the ones who did not eat the meat and drink the wine in Daniel 1. Their determination to obey God in the "little" things led to their obeying God in the "big" things. I dare say, if you will not obey God in His "little" commands, then you will not obey God when "bigger" things come around. I intentionally continue using the quotation marks around "big" and "little" because I am convinced that in God's eyes, there are no "big" and "little" commands. They are all important, and they are all equally to be obeyed. We might think that our separation from the world is only a side issue, but that is because you have stopped reading what God says in His Word about it. The meat and wine was a separation issue, but it was important to Daniel and his friends because they paid attention to what God said in His Word. Many have the attitude today that they have stopped dealing with "minor" issues and are just focused on "big" issues. That is just a way to say that they do not care about all of the Bible, just what they think is important. But **all** Scripture is inspired and **all** is profitable (II Timothy 3:16). Be careful about what you think is not important. Most of the Jews thought the meat and wine were not important, and they ended up bowing before an idol. You may do the same thing.

There is a third aspect in the Triumph of Daniel. As we go to chapter 2, we see His Declaration. Very quickly I will summarize the events of chapter 2. A year has passed and Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. He calls for his wise men to interpret the dream. They are ready to do so and ask for the details of the dream. Nebuchadnezzar says that he has forgotten the dream and then says that he expects the wise men to tell him the dream and the interpretation. If they do not, he will cut them in pieces and destroy their property. If they can tell the dream and interpretation, they will be richly rewarded. The wise men beg to know the dream, but Nebuchadnezzar refuses and seems to accuse them of lying about previous dreams. When the wise men say that Nebuchadnezzar is asking for something impossible, Nebuchadnezzar orders the wise men to be slain.

It is this occasion that provides Daniel the chance to make His Declaration. Daniel asks Nebuchadnezzar for some time, so he may find out the dream and interpret it. When Nebuchadnezzar grants the time, Daniel goes to his house and calls for a time of prayer with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. God grants their request, and the dream and the request are made known to Daniel. He responds with a great prayer of thanksgiving.

In this prayer, Daniel declares praise for *God's Person*. He says, "*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.*" He will go on to mention God's acts, but first he gives praise to God just for Who He is. His name deserves praise because it identifies Him. Daniel goes on to declare *God's Possession* by saying, "*Wisdom and might are his.*" Daniel knew that he did not know the dream and interpretation, but God had revealed it to Him. Daniel acknowledges that here and later before Nebuchadnezzar in verses 27-28. Daniel continues to declare *God's Power* as displayed in changing the seasons and setting up and removing kings. God alone is in charge of the affairs of the earth. Daniel concludes by acknowledging *God's Provision* in giving wisdom and knowledge and revealing secrets. Through this prayer, Daniel gives a great example of how we should praise God. Next month we will conclude this message about Lot and Daniel.