

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 8)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

Last month we began considering The Triumph of Daniel. We finished pondering the meaning of the word purpose in Daniel 1:8. We continue now looking at some of the other words in that great verse. Notice where Daniel purposed—it was *“in his heart.”* The heart here is not talking about the organ that pumps blood, but is referring to the inner man, the seat of emotions, the real you. The word heart is used this way throughout the Bible. Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 12:35, *“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”* The inside of a person is where all actions originate. Jesus would say similar things several times throughout His ministry. Daniel’s actions were good because his heart was good. If we are to do right, it must be because our heart, our inner man, is determined to do right. Somewhere, and we are given no details about Daniel prior to this, Daniel had learned what God had written in His Word. He heard it, believed it, and determined to obey it. If we are going to do right, the same pattern must be followed. We must hear the Word of God, accept it as truth, and determine to obey it. But the outward obedience will only come through a heart wholly devoted to God. Some may practice outward conformity as the Pharisees did in Jesus’ day, but it is not real. True obedience to God will come from the heart and will be manifested in outward action in the exact pattern of Daniel.

Notice what Daniel purposed in his heart—*“that he would not defile himself.”* The word defile means to pollute. When you trace the word defile throughout the Old Testament you find that defilement results from murder, vengeance, or sin in general. The word is also used to describe the result of imperfect sacrifices and the

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uncertain lineage of priests after the exile. In general, defilement is caused by any breach of moral or ceremonial law. As a result, we can determine that God said some particular sins (murder, vengeance, and imperfect sacrifices) would result in defilement. But also just about any sin in general would make a person defiled. What is the result of defilement? From Ezra and Nehemiah, defiled or polluted priests were not allowed to serve God. That alone should be a sobering warning! God does not use dirty vessels! He did not use them in the Old Testament, and he will not use them in this age either. Repeatedly throughout the New Testament, the believer is warned about sin. In Ephesians 4 and 5 alone, around 20 verses are dealing with sins that should not be in the believers’s life. II Timothy 2:21 says, *“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”* If we are going to be used of God, we must be clean. Why was Daniel so determined to remain pure and undefiled? From the meaning of the word, I think Daniel wanted to be used of God. He knew that if he defiled himself, then he would be unusable. Therefore, he determined to remain pure.

As we continue reading the verse, we find what Daniel purposed to abstain from, so that he would not defile himself. Daniel refused to partake of *“the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.”* Many have speculated as to why Daniel refused to take the meat and wine. There are portions of the Old Testament that may apply, but no Old Testament law is specifically mentioned in Daniel. Some have thought the meat was offered to idols and then served. Some have suggested that Daniel and his three friends were Nazarites, and therefore rejected the meat and wine because it would violate their vow. There are other particular laws that could be mentioned, but personally, I believe Daniel and the other three Jews rejected the offer of the meat and wine because of the verses in Leviticus 18:26-19:2. In that passage God gave a warning to the nation of Israel to be different from the other nations. He summed up the passage by saying, *“Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.”* God wanted the entire nation to be different from the other

nations. The whole nation could not attain that distinction without individuals desiring to be holy. Daniel and the other three Jews took God's Word as something to be obeyed, not just read. In combination with other commands that God had given about specific foods to avoid, Daniel determined to be holy. He did not think that God was being harsh or too demanding. He did not try to reason why God said certain foods were bad and others were good. He just determined to obey God. If God said to do it, he would do it. If God said not to do it, he would not do it. The command was given. That was enough for Daniel. He was going to obey.

That is the same attitude that we must have in the time in which we live. The Old Testament dietary laws do not apply to us, but there are many commands in the New Testament that must be obeyed. I mentioned earlier about commands in Ephesians, but there are others throughout the New Testament. If God said to do it, we should obey what God said. I John 2:15 says, "*Love not the world.*" I am not going into an explanation of that verse. I am stating it and saying that it should be obeyed. What happens if we love the world? We will be defiled and unusable by God. I Peter 1:15 says, "*Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*" The word conversation means lifestyle or way of living. God demands that every part of our life be holy (set apart for Him). If anything, whether it be music or an activity, would make us unholy, then we should not participate in it. What happens if we become unholy? We cannot be used by God. Remember, God does not use dirty vessels. Perhaps, we could mention some other verses, but I will stop with these. We must determine, as Daniel did, that we will not let anything stop us from being usable for God.

Before I go any further, let me comment about the wine. I will not go into a long discussion here, but I will say a few words. The word wine in the Bible is used to refer to both intoxicating and non-intoxicating beverages. That must be the case because sometimes wine is condemned and sometimes it is approved. One passage where it is approved is John 2 where Jesus turned the water into wine. Jesus did not turn it into an intoxicating beverage. That would be a

violation of the warnings given in Proverbs 20:1 and Habakkuk 2:15. To distribute intoxicating beverage would make Jesus a sinner. Jesus never committed a sin; He never violated any Scripture including Proverbs 20:1 and Habakkuk 2:15. Jesus would not have given out a drink that would make someone drunk.

Many in our day are no longer opposed to drinking alcohol. I have an article where an Independent Baptist preacher says that he used to oppose it, but now has changed his mind. I have said it before from the pulpit, and now write it down—he has not changed his mind, rather he has lost his mind! That preacher is older than me, but I have no respect for him. Proverbs 20:1 says, "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*" In plain language, the Bible declares that one who drinks alcohol is a fool! Some try to minimize the impact of the verse by saying it is in Proverbs. Many so-called Bible commentators and preachers are now saying that the book of Proverbs is only a collection of sayings that may or may not be true. They have downgraded the Biblical book of Proverbs to the level of the sayings of Confucius. They say that they are good sayings, but they are not always true. You can reject the truth of the Bible if you want. I accept the book of Proverbs as the very Word of God equal to the remainder of Scripture. It is God's truth in proverb form. Alcoholic beverages are still only drunk by foolish people! It was true in Old Testament times and is still true today. Much more could be said about the dangers of alcohol, but I must move on to the remainder of Daniel 1:8. Suffice it to say that the wine in Daniel 1:8 was alcoholic because Daniel refused to drink it. Daniel would have been right with God if he had drunk pure grape juice. Since he refused this beverage, it must have been alcoholic. You cannot be used of God if you drink what God has condemned. Daniel desired to remain pure, so God could use him. He rejected the alcohol because it would defile him. If we want to be used of God, we must be total abstainers of wine, beer, liquor, and any other beverage that could make us drunk. The pure believer who wants to be used of God will not drink alcohol. They will reject it like Daniel did.

The next step in The Triumph of Daniel was His Desire. The verse continues, “*Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*” Some have read this part of the verse and misunderstood what the word request means. Often we use the word request in modern English to describe something that we wish would happen, but will be satisfied if it does not. We may “request” a pay raise, but if the company does not give it, we will stay and work for the previous amount. We may “request” a job transfer, but will stay where we are if it is refused. Many other thoughts could be suggested, but I think you get the idea—it is something that we want, but we will accept the alternative. But our common understanding of “request” is not the meaning in Daniel 1:8. The Biblical word means 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. It is interesting to note that sometimes the word is translated with the English word require. It seems odd to us that a servant, Daniel, would require his master to give him something else to eat, but I mention it to show how serious Daniel was. He was not going to eat or drink what would defile him. We will continue next month.