

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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Volume 12, Issue 4

September 2015

What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 7)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

We have spent the last several months looking at the Tragedy of Lot. As we saw, there is much to learn from the terrible decisions he made and the consequences that came in his life. I pray that we will learn from his errors and will avoid those same kind of decisions and results in our own life. Now we turn to a complete contrast of Lot—**The Triumph of Daniel**. There are others that could stand in contrast to Lot, but remember that these two are linked together because they both “*sat in the gate*.” As we quickly go through Daniel’s life, I pray that we will learn and try to imitate his wonderful characteristics.

There are several things about Lot and Daniel that stand in contrast one to another. I will briefly mention these and then look at the passages in Daniel that we will focus on. One contrast is that nothing found in Genesis is commendable about Lot while in Daniel nothing is said against him. From Lot’s first decision in Genesis 13 through the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 19, Lot’s life is a total failure. If it were not for II Peter 2 describing him as righteous, there would be no evidence that he did stand right in God’s sight. Just looking at his selfishness and his acceptance of wickedness would make us think that he himself was wicked. May God help none of us to be thought of as wicked because our life appears that way.

But Daniel is completely the opposite. From his first decision in chapter 1, he desires to follow God. He is willing to go against the king’s demands, and along with his three friends, ask to do something in obedience to God’s commands when everyone else, including the other Jews, simply gave in to the king. Throughout his long life, the pattern is the same—he always does what is right. At one point he will

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be thrown in a den of lions, but he still does what is right. In fact, when looking for something to charge Daniel with, his enemies say that the only way to get him in trouble is in relation to his God. What a statement! O that others would look at us and find nothing to accuse us of except our allegiance to God. Throughout his life Daniel always did what was right. That is not to say that he was sinless, but his sin is not recorded in Scripture. He and Joseph are the only Bible characters whose life is recorded in detail (at least ten chapters) about whom no sin is mentioned. Moses disobeyed God and could not go into the Promised Land, David committed adultery and murder, Paul argued with Barnabas, and there are many other examples. But Daniel stands as right with God as humanly possible. Let us learn from his life and imitate him.

One other contrast that I will mention concerns the phrase “*sat in the gate*.” Both men sat in the gate, but the manner in which they arrived there was completely different. Lot is the perfect example of being in the world and of the world, while Daniel is the perfect example of being in the world but not of the world. Lot had a choice about going into Sodom and in spite of the comments made by God right in the midst of his choosing Sodom, he still chose to go. As we saw when we discussed those verses, Lot should have stayed away. The wickedness of Sodom was great, so great that God said so. Lot should have seen it as well and stayed out of it. He did not have to go there. It was his choice. He made it and lived to regret it.

Daniel, however, had no choice about being in Babylon. He was taken as a captive. Although the wickedness of Babylon is not described in detail in the book of Daniel, one could argue that in many ways Babylon was almost as wicked as Sodom. Later Babylon would be destroyed as prophesied in Jeremiah and Ezekiel because of their pride and wickedness. But Daniel did not look at Babylon and want the riches of Babylon. All he cared about was serving God. If serving God meant being an advisor to the king, then so be it. He would advise the king while being wholeheartedly devoted to God. His physical presence was in Babylon, but Babylon never took root

in his heart. His heart, his whole being, was completely reserved for God. We are in the world, but may the world never be in us! Many would say that there is no way that we can live holy lives in this day and time, but Daniel did in his day, and he did not have the promise of the continual indwelling of the Holy Ghost, nor did he have the completed Word of God. Daniel lived right in the sight of God in spite of a wicked culture. We have no excuse! If Daniel did it, so can we. Let us now consider some thoughts about The Triumph of Daniel.

First, we will consider His Determination. Daniel 1:8 says, “*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.*” This has always been one of my favorite portions of Scripture. I can remember now hearing messages over thirty years ago in chapel as the preacher would try to encourage us to be like Daniel and not defile ourselves with the things of this world. I am not trying to brag or lift myself up, but I honestly desired to do as Daniel did. I wanted to completely give myself to God and stay away from the things of the world. Some teenagers would say, “We have to hear this again.” But I honestly never tired hearing about Daniel. I will admit that there are some passages that I do get tired of hearing messages from, but not from Daniel. What a statement is made in that verse. It should be one that all believers should want to imitate. We may call another verse our life verse, but Daniel 1:8 should run a close second. All of us should have it emblazoned in our hearts—Purpose to stay pure in the sight of God!

Ponder deeply some of the words in this verse. First, we will consider the word purposed. One source said, “The basic root idea of purpose is to put or place something somewhere; it is used literally, figuratively, inferentially, and elliptically.” I found that there are at least a half dozen utilizations of this word, two of which seem to apply in this verse: 1) To place in a location—“Daniel placed his heart in the place of purity;” 2) To set aside for special purposes—“Daniel

set aside his heart to remain pure for God.”

Now that we have this lengthy definition, let us consider it a little more so we can understand what Daniel did and what we should do. In the literal sense, purpose means to put or place something somewhere, such as putting the box on the table. But you cannot literally put or place your heart (your inner man) somewhere, so the word is used here in a figurative sense. Of the different uses that I found for the word purpose, two of them stood out to me and I wrote them out above. Notice the first one again: 1) To place in a location. We use this idea all the time when we talk about putting something somewhere, such as the idea I used earlier about putting the box on the table. But Daniel did not literally place himself on the table or anywhere else. But he placed it somewhere. Using the word figuratively, I wrote above, “Daniel placed his heart in the place of purity.” I hope this helps us understand what Daniel is doing. I am not changing the words of Scripture. I am trying to help us come to a full understanding of what Daniel did. Daniel determined to remain pure. When the occasion arose that he was commanded to defile himself he said that he would not do it. Why? Because he had purposed in his heart not to defile himself. He had placed his heart (his whole being) in the place of purity. May God help us to do the same thing.

It is very easy in our modern world to become defiled. We must, as children, teenagers, young adults, middle aged adults, and older adults, purpose not to defile ourselves. We must place our heart in the place of purity. We must pray daily that our thoughts, eyes, ears, mouth, feet, and hands will remain pure and not be defiled. Daniel knew that just the things mentioned in that verse, wine and meat, would defile him, and he was placing his heart in the place of purity. He was not going to let anything, beginning with the wine and meat, defile him. His heart, his whole life, was going to remain pure. Much in this wicked world can defile us. May we purpose not to defile ourselves before God. May we place our heart in the place of purity.

The second usage of the word is “to set aside for special purposes.” I used the following sentence to help us understand and apply the verse to us: “Daniel set aside his heart to remain pure for God.” Obviously, because we are defining one word, there is some overlap in the meanings, but I believe it will also emphasize the necessity of not defiling ourselves or being pure for God. With this thought of setting aside for special purposes in mind, think about what Daniel did. The Babylonians had no understanding of Jewish thinking, so in their mind what they were telling the captives to do was not a big deal. But Daniel knew the Word of God, and he knew that what he was being told to do was wrong in the sight of God. Daniel, long before he was brought to Babylon, had set aside his heart to remain pure for God. Now he was being told to defile himself. What was he going to do? The answer was easy; the resulting consequences may not have been, but the determination had been made long before—he was not going to defile himself because he had set aside his heart to remain pure. What about you, dear friend? Do you have the same determination as Daniel to remain pure and not defile yourself with worldly things? We will continue with this thought next month.