

DANIEL 1:1-21 – Stand.

1-2: After a long siege against Jerusalem, the city walls were breached, the city destroyed, and the Temple burned in the year 586 BC.

3-7: The best and the brightest of Jerusalem's young men; Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, born into the royal family, Judah, possibly in line to be Kings, are chosen to be groomed civil service.

- **Daniel** (*God is my judge*) changed to **Belteshazzar** (*Bel's prince*),
- **Hananiah** (*Beloved by the LORD*) changed to **Shadrach** (*Illumined by Sun-god*),
- **Mishael** (*Who is as God*) was changed to **Meshach** (*Who is like Venus*),
- **Azariah** (*The LORD is my help*) was changed to **Abed-Nego** (*Servant of Nego*).

The purpose of the food, names and education was to totally indoctrinate these young Jewish men so as to forget God. Undoubtedly, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to communicate to these young men, "look to *me* for everything."

Similarly, Satan uses a similar strategy against believers today, wanting to indoctrinate us into the world system. Satan wants us to: Feed on what the world offers, Identify ("name") ourselves in reference to the world, Educate ourselves in the ways of the world

I. (8-13) Stand in God.

To **defile** means *polluting* or *staining*; Daniel **requested** that he might not **defile himself**, explaining the *spiritual* basis for his request. He didn't make it seem that he wanted to avoid the king's food out of other reasons.

"By [Jewish] standards to share a meal was to commit one's self to friendship; it was of covenant significance."

Daniel made a courageous decision -

- The *king* ordered the menu. Rejecting the menu was rejecting the king, and could result in severe punishment, even murder.
- Refusing the food might have branded them as being *uncooperative*, and *spoiled all chances of advancement* (many other Hebrew youths *did* eat the food).
- The *food itself* was no doubt attractive, and seemed a much better alternative than eating a vegetarian diet and water for three years.
- Mere *distance* made this challenging. Separated from family and home, it was easy to compromise.
- It was easy to *think that God had let them down* by allowing them to be carried away into Babylon.

"Be ready for a bad name; be willing to be called a bigot; be prepared for the loss of friendships; be prepared for anything so long as you can stand fast by Him who bought you with His precious blood." (Spurgeon)

Habakkuk 3:17-19 - *Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.*

Joshua 24:15 - *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

Proverbs 15:16 - *Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.*

Psalms 84:10 - *For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

1 Corinthians 16:13 - *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*

Philippians 4:1 - *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*

II. God Stands For Us.

God granted them all they needed to serve in Babylon; intellectual and spiritual insight.

Genesis 39:21 - *But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

2 Chronicles 16:9 - *"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."*

Hosea 10:12 - *Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness on you.*

Job 19:25 - *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth;*

Revelation 3:20 - *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*