

Thriving in Babylon
Refusing to Compromise
Daniel 1:1-21

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 4, 2018

I. One Person's Compromise Very Often Becomes Somebody Else's Trial

Daniel and his three friends were drug off to Babylon because of someone else's compromise decades before they were born. The Babylonian exile in 605 B.C. was a specific fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in **2 Kings 20:16-18**.

Hezekiah was more worried about the super-power of Assyria. Instead of trusting in the Lord, he tried to make an alliance with Babylon. Politics began to replace his trust in the Lord.

II. Refusing to Compromise is Not the Same Thing as Refusing to Serve or Engage with the Culture Around Us

Too many Christians are more prone to isolate than to infiltrate! When they do engage, it's more likely to be an adversarial confrontation than a civil conversation.

Christians should be the ones that are still willing to set a tone of love, humility, and conversation that includes listening to the other person.

You should care because they're created in the image of God and we're supposed to represent Jesus to them!

Daniel didn't refuse to work for the Babylonians. Perhaps he understood the sovereignty of God over history and that God has placed him there.

A. Daniel Was Willing to Submit to Really Disturbing Things

1. He was subjected to their pagan education

Daniel was subjected to three years of education in the pagan ways of Babylon.

2. He was stripped of his Jewish identity by changing their names

Their Hebrew names are listed in **v. 6** and they reminded each young man of the one, true, living God!

Daniel becomes Belteshazzar which was the name of a pagan god. Hannaniah becomes Shadrach which was the moon-god of Babylon. Mishael becomes Meshach which means 'Who is greater than Aku?', one of the Babylonian gods. Azariah becomes Abednego which means 'Servant of Nego,' another pagan god.

Daniel graciously and humbly submitted to all of this.

B. Yet Daniel Knew When to Resist

Daniel 1:8 “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...”

Daniel drew a line at some point and said, “I can’t cross over that because I have purposed in my heart not to defile myself in this culture.”

III. Refusing to Compromise Doesn’t Mean You Stop Being Humble

When our passion for God, and His truth overrides our compassion for lost people, something has gone terribly wrong in our hearts and we are no longer following Jesus.

Matthew 9:36 “When Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”

Throughout the book of Daniel you’ll see his humility in the way he respects and speaks to the wicked people he serves. Look at **v. 8** and **v.11-12**.

When you believe God is in control of who is in control, even when they’re wicked, it enables you to be respectful of who’s in control because ultimately they’re a part of God’s sovereign plan.

Romans 13:1-2 “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” (Also see I Peter 2:13-14)

God’s called us to be salt and light in the midst of Babylon and to pursue the common good of the community where He’s placed us whatever the challenges may be. See **Jeremiah 29:4-7**.

IV. Our Refusal to Compromise is Driven Far More by His Faithfulness to Us than Our Faithfulness to Him

A. You Can See How God is the One Ultimately in Control of Where We Are and Who We Are

In **v. 2, 9, and 17**, Daniel uses the same Hebrew word ‘natan,’ that means to deliver, give or set someone up in a certain position with certain authority.

God was at work in ways that are far superior to what any human being was doing.

B. You Can See How God Still Keeps His Promises Even When He Puts Us in Places We’d Rather Not Be

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

Daniel didn’t die then, but was indicating that despite all the suffering, pain, and confusion of living in exile in a pagan culture that he got to see God fulfill His promise by using Cyrus to send the Jews back to their land like Jeremiah has prophesied. See **Ezra 6:3-5** and **2 Chronicles 36:22-23**.