

# Atlantic Lyman conf.1972-01 Studies in Daniel 01

by Joseph Balsan

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*The book of Daniel gives us a glimpse into the future, revealing the rise and fall of Gentile world powers and the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 56:26

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:6, Daniel 12:4, Matthew 24:14-15, John 3:3, John 3:7, Romans 5:6

**Topics:** "Biblical Prophecy", "Spiritual Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of adapting to one's surroundings and being open-minded. He mentions the challenges faced by four young men in Israel who were influenced by the culture around them. The speaker also discusses the significance of accepting God's gift of salvation and recognizing His power and generosity. He then transitions to discussing the book of Daniel, specifically focusing on the historical fulfillment of events in the first six chapters and the visions of the four empires in chapters 2 and 7. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the audience to be stirred and obedient to God in a time of spiritual decline.

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## Transcript

Well, it's good to see you all out tonight, and we hope that you'll be coming out every night. You know, as you look at this chart, perhaps it's a little confusing to you, but I think that if you keep on coming every night, I'm sure that by the time we get through, you'll have a better understanding of the Book of Daniel than you ever had before. Let us turn to Book of Daniel, chapter 1. Shall we? Daniel chapter 1. Let's make these meetings known to our friends, encourage others to come, and we'll try to limit our time so that you'll be able to get out on time too.

Chapter 1 of Daniel. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the LORD gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his God.

And he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes, children whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in

knowledge, and understanding science. And such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and tongue, and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

And the king appointed them as daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names. For he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and to Hananiah of Shadrach, and to Mishael of Meshach, and to Azariah of Abednego.

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. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king who hath appointed your meat and your drink, for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall he make me endanger my head to the king. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had said over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, prove thy servants I beseech thee ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children of the portion of the king's meat.

And as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children that did eat the portion of the king's meat.

Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

And the king communed with them, and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore stood they before the king, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus.

May the Lord bless to us the reading of his word. Shall we just look to the Lord in prayer a moment? Our Father, we desire to thank Thee tonight for all who are here to listen to Thy word, and we thank Thee for Thy Spirit whom Thou hast given us, who shows us things to come. We thank Thee that Thou hast given us the lamp of prophecy which shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts.

And so we ask Thy help and Thy blessing in ministering Thy word, that each and every one of us here may receive something from Thyself. And if perchance any unsaved should be amongst us, that Thou would use something to stir them up and seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Bless wherever Thy word goes forth, in the Savior's precious name.

Amen. Now as you look at this chart behind me, you notice it is entitled, The Outline of the Book of Daniel the Prophet. And perhaps as you look at this chart it might seem a little confusing to you at the first, but I'm sure that as we go on in the course of the messages, while we'll be able to understand it a little better.

You might say that this book of Daniel divides into two parts. In the first six chapters we have brought before us, you might say, the historical part of the book. Events that have happened in the history of this man Daniel, who was taken to Babylon as a teenager, as a very young man.

We'll look into that a little bit later. And what we have in these first six chapters is historical events that have happened in the history of these people who were captive in the land of Babylon. And then in the last six chapters, from seventh on to the end of the book, we have, you might say, the prophecies that are given to this man Daniel as he is under the reign of three different leaders.

One is Belshazzar, or one is Nebuchadnezzar. The other is Belshazzar and Darius, and also Cyrus, four kings that he was under. Now, you know, some people, of course, they have doubted that Daniel was the writer of this book, because the prophecies that are recorded in this book have been so amazingly and literally fulfilled that people say, well, it couldn't have been written beforehand.

It must have been written in the times, way in the times of after the Old Testament Canaan, you might say, had closed. Way in the times of, you might say, in the 400 years when some bright young man took the history and he recorded it. And of course, it is written under the name of Daniel the prophet.

And of course, some of these so-called scholars who are really confused Bible teachers, who can't see any miracles or who can't see any prophecies as inspired of God, and who try to interpret and explain everything on the line of historical fulfillment, why, of course, they turn aside the words of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Now, you notice it's called the outline of Daniel the prophet, and we have a verse there in Matthew 24. And perhaps we could look at that verse, because it comes down to whether we will accept the testimony of our Lord Jesus himself, or whether we will listen to some of these so-called Bible scholars who can't accept some of the prophecies and some of the miracles that are brought before us in the Bible.

You notice in the 24th chapter of Matthew and the 14th verse, the Lord Jesus says, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth, let him understand. Now, I want you to notice that the Lord Jesus calls him Daniel the prophet.

The Lord Jesus thereby brings before us two divine certainties. One of them is that Daniel is the author of this book. Not some unknown scribe who assumed the name of Daniel, but Daniel himself who is brought before us in this book.

And the Lord Jesus called him Daniel the prophet, so that the prophecies that Daniel brings before us in this book are prophecies that were written and recorded before many of these things actually happened. Because Daniel was in Babylon in the time of the first Gentile empire, and he recorded these things then, as we have in the second chapter. And so, of course, he recorded for us very faithfully that there would be four great world powers who would have world dominion.

These four world powers, of course, being the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. And, of course, we know that there have been no other world powers. Germany tried to conquer the world twice and failed.

Russia dreams of conquering the world. They're going to fail. China dreams of conquering the world.

They're going to fail. God has told us that there are going to be only four great world powers. And because there are four great world powers, why there have been only four world powers, and you and I can safely accept the Word of God.

Now, you notice this chart. In chapter one, which we're going to speak about tonight, it's all by itself, as it were. Introductory, the moral condition suited to enlightenment in the ways and counsels of God.

And then we have the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters in which we have direct incidents and prophecies recorded for us. And then from the tenth to the twelfth chapters, we have a single prophecy divided into several parts that we will speak on in the course of these meetings. Now, you notice also that we have a center section in this chart, and this is called the present age or church period.

Now, you might say that in the first six chapters, all above this line has been historically fulfilled. In other words, these events actually historically took place. But those actual historical events are typical of things that are going to happen in the end time.

Now, you notice the bottom of this chart, you have the expression in every one of these little squares, the time of the end. Because what we have in these sections of the chart is all future. Now, you notice that here we have what is known as the present age, or church period, from the cross to the rapture, the revelation of the mystery, a dateless parenthesis in God's great plan.

Now, if you and I could raise this chart and connect these two lines here, so that this little period in here, which has lasted really 1900 years, if it was concealed, you might say, we would have what Daniel saw. In other words, Daniel in his prophecies did not see this period in which you and I live at the present time. This is called the parenthesis or the mystery age.

In this present period of time, which we will touch on, God is not fulfilling prophecy as we have it recorded for us in the book of Daniel, although God is preparing things for this last stage of this chart. But in this present age, by means of the gospel, God is calling souls to himself. He is saving people by means of the preaching of the gospel.

God is offering men and women salvation through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ came and he was crucified, and then God's time clock of prophecy stopped. And as it stopped, God began a new thing, and he's been doing this new thing for the last 1900 years.

In other words, he has been saving souls by means of the preaching of the gospel. And those who hear the good news of salvation, and those who accept Christ as their Savior, why, they're formed into the church. And when the church is complete by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, this portion of the chart will be fulfilled, and then we'll begin again the last part, or the times of the end, that Daniel speaks about quite frequently in his prophecy.

You notice here on this chart we have called the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles. Now if you turn to Luke chapter 21 for a moment, in Luke chapter 21 we have this expression which is used once in the Bible.

The times of the Gentiles. We have it in Luke chapter 21, and notice it tells us here in verse 24, or perhaps we could start with the 20th verse, And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them

which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Now I want you to notice that expression, the times of the Gentiles. What does God mean by that? What did the Lord Jesus mean by that? Well those of us who are acquainted with the Old Testament, we know that God dealt with one nation, didn't he? And that was the nation of Israel. They were his special people.

They were the ones to whom he gave the land of Canaan. They were the ones whom he blessed, and they were the ones to whom he subjugated the nations of Canaan. And as long as Israel was obedient to the Lord, why they had a wonderful reign in the reign of David.

Why they were conquering, and they were victorious. They were gaining much land and much possessions. And in the time of Solomon, of course, they had a glorious reign.

Why the kings came from all the world to Jerusalem, and they listened to the wisdom of Solomon. The people of Israel were wealthy. The kingdom of Solomon was a very wealthy kingdom.

And Solomon was getting away from the Lord. He married many wives, and these wives led him to worship their God. And the result was the Lord's displeasure was kindled against Solomon.

And we find that when Solomon died, we find that the Lord divided the people of Israel into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. And then we find that as Israel and Judah got farther and farther away from the Lord, the Lord sent prophets amongst them. They worshiped the idols of the nations around them.

They disobeyed God's commandments. And finally, God sent against them the Gentiles. He sent Nebuchadnezzar against them.

And Nebuchadnezzar made three invasions against the people of Israel and the land of Jerusalem. And in those three invasions, the first one in about 606 BC, when he took Jerusalem and he took many captives, amongst them was this lad Daniel, who was only in his teens at the time. And then he set a ruler over Jerusalem and over Judah.

And for a while this ruler obeyed Nebuchadnezzar, and then he led an insurrection against Nebuchadnezzar. And so in 597, when he came against Jerusalem again, and he stripped the city of the best citizens and left only the poorest citizens and left it in a very depleted state, but still he left them in their own land. And still they rebelled against him.

So 10 years later in 587 or 586 BC, he came into Palestine. He destroyed the temple. He destroyed the city of Jerusalem, took the people of Israel captive.

Now from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem has been under the dominion of Gentiles. In other words, there has not been a Jewish king in Jerusalem from the time that Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and destroyed it. And that is what is meant by the times of the Gentiles.

So that Daniel is speaking to us of the dominion of the Gentiles as world powers. And of course, we are Gentiles. Most of us here are Gentiles.

Everybody who is not a Jew, of course, is a Gentile. And we know that today Israel is only a very small power in comparison to the great world powers like the United States, like Russia, like China, and these other powers. Israel is only a very small power in comparison to these powers.

And so Daniel is primarily telling us about the period of time of the dominion of the Gentile world powers. Now of course, we're interested in that, aren't we? We're interested in what's going to happen to the United States. What's going to happen to the Western world? What's going to happen to Russia? What's going to happen in Palestine? Well, the book of Daniel is the book that gives us some of the hints about what these world powers are going to do in the future.

And notice on the bottom of this chart we have Gentile dominion abolished, Christ's kingdom established, righteousness triumphant. Now Daniel mentions the second coming of Christ, as we are going to see. He mentions the establishment of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus.

He brings before us what is going to happen to these Gentile world powers, how they are going to end, and he tells us about how Christ is going to take over his reign, but he doesn't give us too much detail about that reign. That is given to us mostly in prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah and Zechariah and other prophets like that. So Daniel deals with Gentile world powers and Gentile world powers in relation to the people of Israel.

Now I might mention for the sake of young folks who are here and who study secular history and ancient history in school, I always enjoyed studying ancient history about Hannibal and Carthage and all of those great world powers. Now they're not mentioned in the Bible. Hannibal and Carthage and some of the great world powers that men's history makes so much of are not mentioned in the Bible.

And the reason for that is because those nations were not connected up with the people of Israel. And those nations don't have much future as far as the end times are concerned. But those nations which have to do with Israel and with the end times are the chief theme of prophecy.

And that's why we find certain kingdoms mentioned in the prophecy of the Bible and others that we don't find mentioned in the book of God. Now you notice that this book of Daniel begins in this first chapter. It says, In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

And the LORD gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his God. And he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God. Now here we find where the setting for this prophecy of Daniel takes place.

It's in Babylon. Daniel at this time is only probably a teenager. Daniel was, as we find here, of the tribe of Judah.

And Nebuchadnezzar, of course, the king, whenever he conquered peoples or he conquered races, why he wouldn't exterminate everybody. He would take the young people, and those young people that had possibilities, those young people that had natural abilities, those young people that had intelligence and were capable of learning the learning of the Chaldeans, those people that he thought he could incorporate into his kingdom, why he would spare these. And as in the case of Daniel here, and his three companions, who were all evidently just teenagers, why they were brought into the king's court, and they were brought into the king's court for the express purpose, as it tells us here, that they might teach them the learning

and the tongue of the Chaldeans, as we have it in the fourth verse.

And then it tells us in the fifth verse, And the king appointed them a daily portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now of course, they were not only brought into the king's court, and they were not only given the privilege of having the very highest education and privileges that the court of Babylon or the Chaldeans could afford them, but they also had the diet provided for them by the king of Babylon. He provided for them a daily portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank.

Now as you and I read this in our Bibles, it doesn't seem as though it was very much, but really the portion of the king's meat that was served to these young men, and that was served in the court of the king of Babylon, was that which was first of all offered to the idols of the gods of the people of Babylon, because the Chaldeans were idolaters. They were worshipers of false gods, and the sacrifices which they offered unto their gods were then partaken of by the people themselves. And this was what was being given to these young people who were selected from amongst Judah to this place of favor and privilege.

Now we want to remember that there were more young people of Judah than just these four. These four, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. You notice in the sixth verse it says, now among these.

Now there were many of these young people. It was not only these four. There were many of these young people.

Here they were away from their home, away from their natural or their scriptural form of worship. Here they were in a strange land. Everything in Jerusalem was broken down.

Everything there was gone. Here they were in a strange land. You know if you would have reasoned the way some people reasoned, they might have said, well we're living in terrible times.

God's worship is all broken down. The temple is destroyed. We're scattered and we're captives in the land.

Here we are amongst these people. The thing we have to do is, why when in Rome, do as Rome does? You know that's the saying. After all, you can't be too, you can't be too narrow.

You've got to be broad-minded and you've got to recognize the situation that you're in. Now you might say that another thing that was very sad was, that there were many of these young people of Israel who were going along with it. In other words, that made it all the harder for these four young men.

You know it wouldn't be so bad if all believers stuck together and if all believers maintained a stand for the Lord. But the sad thing about it is, that some go along with the thing and others, they don't seem to go along with the thing. They have convictions.

They have principles. Now God in his word, and these young men of course knew the word, they knew that God had said that they were not to partake of things which were offered unto idols. They were a people who knew the true and the living God and because of that, they were to have nothing to do with the idols of the heathen.

And even though they were in a strange land, even though there was no so-called carrying on of the worship as they knew it, why these four young men, because they believed God and because they knew that wherever they were, right was right and wrong was wrong, and times and circumstances didn't affect

or didn't change anything, why these four young men, why we find that these four young men take a stand. And of course Daniel is a leader. You know, it tells us here now among those who were of the children of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Now you notice that in all four of these names, whenever you notice a name in the Old Testament which has E-L on the end of it, E-L always means God. And whenever you have a name with I-A-H on the end of it, why it always speaks of Jehovah or John. And in all four of these young men's names, we have that these four young men were men who knew God and they were men who belonged to the Lord.

You know, as I look at these four young men's names, they tell me a little story. They tell me a story of our spiritual experience if you and I know the Lord. Daniel means the judgment of God.

That's what Daniel means. And you know, that's where we all have our beginning with God. We all have our beginning with God when the judgment of God enters into our hearts and into our thoughts.

What awakened me, first of all, to the fact that I needed a Savior? What awakened me, first of all, to the fact that I was a lost sinner and couldn't save myself? It was the judgment of God. God tells us all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God tells us we are without strength to save ourselves.

Oh, I know preachers won't all tell you that. I remember one time meeting a preacher up in northern Michigan and he says, oh, you're the man that preaches you must be born again. I says, well, that's what the Lord says.

The Lord says you must be born again. Have you been born again? Oh, he says, I was born again when I was sprinkled as an infant. I said, you were? You were? I says, I don't find that in the Bible.

I don't find that a few drops of water brings anyone into the kingdom of God. That you must be born of the spirit of God. He says, oh, he says, you know, one of my women was coming to your service and she said to me, what is this? Do we really have to be born again? And he said, well, I told her, you were christened, weren't you? Yes.

You were confirmed, weren't you? Yes. You take communion, don't you? Yes. Well, you're all right just the way you are.

Don't let anything disturb you. And she didn't. She listened to the word of that man and she allowed herself, unless the Lord reached her some other way, she allowed herself to be turned aside by what some man said to her.

You know, Daniel is judgment of God. Take what God says. Accept the judgment of God.

God says, you and I are sinners. God says, you and I cannot save ourselves, whether it's by being sprinkled or baptized or partaking of the elements, you and I cannot save ourselves. You know, the second name, of course, is Hananiah.

And you know, Hananiah means God, the Lord is gracious and gives. Now isn't that wonderful? The Lord is gracious and gives. And you know, that's where we come.

We find that the Lord is gracious and he gives. Yes, he gives. What did he give? He gave his son.

Yes, he gave himself to that awful death on Calvary's cross. You know, if you and I could save ourselves, Christ would never have had to die. But because you and I couldn't save ourselves, Christ had to give himself.

And now the Lord gives salvation to those who believe in him. I can never earn salvation, but I can have it as a gift. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So, the Lord is gracious and he gives. If you and I are ever to be in heaven, it's a gift. We must accept it as a gift.

We must accept his son. And then the third name, of course, Mishael, is who is like unto God. And of course, when you accept his gift, that's what you realize.

Well, who is like unto God? Why, you realize, well, the God. Why, who is like unto him? He gives. He gives salvation.

And the result is you can only wonder and marvel in worship. I know the night the Lord saved me, when I got down on my knees for my first time, was one who was saved. Well, I could just, it was praise the Lord.

Why, who is like, who is like God, who gives and who saves? And then the fourth name, Azariah, is, well, the Lord is my helper and keeper. And of course, that's what happens when the Lord saves you. Why, then you realize the Lord is my helper and keeper, don't you? Why, you realize the same one who saves you is the same one who keeps you.

And so, here we have these four young men. But you know, it tells us here, unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names, for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and to Hananiah of Shadrach, and to Mishael of Meshach, and to Azariah of Abednego. Now, I want you to notice, he wasn't satisfied with the names that though they had from, you might say, from their godly ancestry, he gives them new names.

And these new names are, you might say, associated with the gods of the heathen around. You know, I remember reading a story, hearing one story one time about a man who was preaching on the three men in the burning, firing furnace, and he was afraid he wouldn't remember their names. So, he had their names written on a card in his coat pocket, in his jacket pocket.

And sure enough, in the course of his message, why, he says, and their names were, and their names were, and he quickly Heart, Schaffner, and Mark. But their names were not Heart, Schaffner, and Mark. The names that he gave them were Shadrach, Belteshazzar, Meshach, and Abednego.

Now, you know, the world changes the names. But I don't read that Daniel or his three companions fought the changing of their names. They gave them those names.

And you and I don't have to be afraid of the names that the world gives us. Now, the world asks you, well, who are you? Well, we're Christians. Yes, but what kind of Christians are you? Are you this? Are you a Baptist? Are you a Christian? What are you? Well, we're Christians who simply gather in the name of the Lord.

Well, those people over there are peculiar. And you know, the world gives us all kinds of names. Well, you and I don't have to fret and fuss about it.

If the world wants to call us whatever they want to call us, they can call us brethren and call us anything. I don't take those names because I've got only the Bible names. Christians, believers, disciples, brethren, children of God, saints.

We've got all kinds of names. But let's not worry about when the world gives us names. These three young men, these four young men, I don't read that they fought or that they protested or they tried to explain.

They were in circumstances that they couldn't do anything. But it says in the eighth verse, 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. Daniel purposed in his heart.

You know, here he was a teenager. At this time, Daniel was only a teenager away from family, away from, you might say, Jerusalem, away from a place of established worship in a heathen land surrounded, you might say, by the enemies. And here he was brought face to face with something.

Oh, the world would say, well, it's a very small thing. It's a very small thing. You know, that's what they say now.

Well, it's only a small thing. You know, the world has the habit of distinguishing, well, it's not essential. This thing is not essential.

Essential to what? We ask the question, what is it essential to? Well, it's not essential to salvation. Well, no, that's true. It may not be essential to salvation, although today I might say that there are many things that are even essential to salvation that believers are letting slip.

Why, some of the choruses that young people are singing today, examine them and ask yourself the question, does it say anything about the blood of Christ? Does it say anything about the death of Christ? Can I be saved or can I find God apart from the blood of Christ? Can you tell me whether a person can be saved apart from the death of Christ? Does it even mention Christ? Does it? People talk about finding God and coming to God and realizing he's not a God of far off, but he's a God right at hand, and they talk about finding God. But let me ask you, does it say anything about the Lord Jesus Christ in some of these hymns, in some of these songs? Let me ask you another question. Can you find God apart from the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you? Can anyone find God apart from the Lord Jesus Christ? I'm not talking about things that are not essential now.

I'm talking about things that are essential. Can a person be saved without the blood or death of Christ? Can a person come to God without the Lord Jesus Christ? He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

All I ask is examine these choruses, examine these songs, and find out whether they are bringing before you the essentials. Because I don't know any way to be saved apart from Christ, and I don't know any way to be saved apart from the blood and the death of Christ. But suppose it's not essential to salvation.

Let me ask you, a thing may be very small, and it may not be essential to salvation, but it may be essential to communion and to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. There are things that may not be essential to salvation, but they are essential to communion. I know that if I tell a little white lie, I know that communion is broken.

I know if I do some little thing, why communion is broken. It doesn't have to be anything big. And people might have said to these three young men or four young men, well, it's only a very small thing, but Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor drink of the king's wine.

You know, that's what's needed today. Young people and older ones too, who purpose in their heart, I'm going to be true to the Lord Jesus wherever I am. I'm going to be true to him.

But I want you to notice, he was also very wise when he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. He didn't come right out and say, I won't do it. I don't want anything to do with it.

You know, sometimes we make a mess of things by taking such a strong stand, and we suffer and accomplish little. Whereas Daniel, it says, he requested. He didn't come right out and say, I will not.

He came to the man, he says, can I do without this? Can I have something else instead of this? He requested. You know, sometimes I remember as a young Christian, I had a circumstance in my life. I was working in a certain place.

Jobs were scarce in those days. They were very hard to come by. And you know, Sunday morning was coming around, and I remember that the boss says, well, everybody to work on Sunday.

Well, I could understand. Sometimes things had to be done. But I requested.

I just asked. The man said to me, you'll never get away with it. You'll never get away with it.

You'll be fired. Well, instead of coming out and saying, well, I just won't work on Sunday because I'm a Christian. I won't work on Sunday.

I realized there were circumstances and times when you had to do things that you didn't want to do. I remember I went to the boss and I requested. You know, I was surprised at how gracious he was and considerate he was when he found out why.

So that instead of arousing his ire by taking a definite stance, he says, I won't do it. Why, like Daniel here. Daniel, when he requested, it says, now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear, my lord, the king who hath appointed your meat and your drink. For why should you see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king? And Daniel said to Melsus, well, prove thy servants ten days. And if after ten days, while you see that we're worse appearing than the other young men who partake of it, why then, of course, we'll see.

Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee and the countenances of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat, and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. And so he consented.

And at the end of ten days, why, Daniel and his companions looked better than those who partook of the king's meat. You know, God honors those who honor him. And not only so, but when it was all taken from them and they ate this pulse, and they didn't have to touch the portion of the idolatrous meat and the wine which they drank, it says God gave them knowledge and skill and all learning and wisdom.

You know, I think that if we honor God and if we stand for the Lord, I believe God will do the very same for us. I believe he'll do the very same for our children. He'll do the very same for us.

These young men were given knowledge and wisdom in all wisdom and learning. And to Daniel was given understanding in all visions and dreams. And I believe the lesson as we have here is the moral conditions suited to enlightenment in the ways and counsels of God.

Daniel was going to bring forth some wonderful visions, some wonderful prophecies. But you know, Daniel in his own soul and in his separation unto God was in a condition that God could communicate these things to him. You know, sometimes we wonder, well, why that man is a learned man.

That man is an educated man. Why doesn't he say these things? You know why? Because a person may be very brilliant intellectually, but if he's very careless or indifferent about the Word of God and the things of God and the things that God brings before him, God's not going to communicate to him those things that he wants to communicate. You know, we don't learn these things only through the intellect.

We learn these things as you and I are obedient to the Word of God and as our conscience is exercised by the Word of God. That is why if you and I want to understand God's Word and learn the things of God, now I don't have anything against these translations, many of them. But I want to say this, that you and I will only understand the teachings and the truths of God as you and I yield obedience to the Word of God as God communicates and makes it known to us.

The secret things of God are communicated to those who obey his Word, those who do his will, and we find that these young men, because they were obedient to God, and especially Daniel, who seems to be the leader, why God communicated to them his truth. You know it has been pointed out, but altogether too often young people going to school get so immersed in learning and studying tests and so on that they neglect the Word of God. They neglect the fellowship of God's people and a declension comes into their spiritual lives.

They suffer spiritual loss and they don't make the progress even in secular learning that they would if they would honor the Lord, give the Lord the place that rightfully belongs to him. It tells us here, it tells us at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar and the king communed with them and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hanani, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore stood they before the king and in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Just think of that, how God honored these young men even before the king, before because they stood and were decisive for him. And so the lesson for us is that God wants us in these days to decide for him, to stand for him, to be true to him, not only in the big things but in the little things as well, realizing that as we do, God will honor us and you and I will reap the spiritual benefits and the spiritual understanding that comes through obeying him. Now tomorrow night, we're going to go into chapter two and we're going to see the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and we're going to see how he foretold, Daniel foretold the four world empires that would arise and also how those world empires are going to end.

I might just mention that chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of the four empires and in chapter seven, Daniel has a vision of the four empires. One sees it as an imposing man, the other sees it as terrible beasts. The difference between God's viewpoint and man's viewpoint of the world empires.

But I'm sure that if you come tomorrow night, why, the Lord will bless you. So we pray. Our father, we desire to thank you now for thy word and these things that have been before us, we pray that they might stir and exercise our hearts.

In this day of departure, in this day of coldness of heart, in this day when so many seem to think because things seem to be falling apart, why should we hold fast to things? We pray that thou will stir up our hearts to make us realize that obedience is better than sacrifice. And no matter how dark may be the day, it's our privilege to obey thee, to live in fellowship with thee, and to learn of thee the things which thou would communicate to us. We pray that thou will bless thy word to each one.

And if there should be any amongst us tonight who still have not judged themselves, who still have not received thy great gift, we pray that this might be the night when they'll realize it's not by works of righteousness, lest any man should boast, but it's through faith, through grace, that we are saved the gift of God. Bless thy word to each one in the Savior's precious name.

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