

Daniel—The Courage of Conviction

Daniel 1, 3 and 6

In this two-day study of the book of Daniel, my lesson is more practical than academic. By that I mean its application is in our own behavior rather than in what we teach others. Since this audience is composed of teachers, elders and for the most part full-time preachers, that is who I have in mind.

As I look at all of you I see men of courage. You are men that understand the need for courage. But I also see all of you as men who intend to grow, improve and strengthen yourselves in this work -- day by day until you are finished. So, what can we learn about spiritual courage from Daniel?

I. Various Sources of Courage.

A. Emotional.

1. Love.
2. Anger.
3. Fear.
4. Stubbornness (duty, arrogance).

E. Others.

1. Comrades.
2. Authorities.
3. Everybody (mob, majority, culture).

F. Conviction.

1. My definition: (related to the idea of being convinced)
 - (a) Strong faith to the point of absolute certainty.
 - (b) Faith that sustains confidence and determination.
 - (c) Faith coupled with hope that provides motivation to transcend the immediate for the ultimate.
2. Practical use: far from an opinion held and a belief that something is true, conviction suggests complete confidence that compels action consistent with that confidence. Action follows conviction, regardless of circumstances or consequences. For us, this conviction is Bible faith that delivers from the present, from the enemy, and from doubt and confusion. It enables one to act with an assurance, looking the enemy in the eye without flinching -- courage.

II. Daniel's Story of Courage.

- A. Training in Babylon. (Dan. 1)
 - The siege , looting and captivity
 - Selected slaves
 - Training outlined
 - Daniel's purpose (8)
 - God's blessings (9, 17)
 - Test and the outcome (11-20)
 - *"Thus Daniel continued"* for 70 years (21)

- B. Interpreting of Dreams. (Dan. 2, 4, 5)
 - 1. The critical call for interpretation (2:1-13)
 - 2. Daniel's reaction (2:14-16)
 - 3. Daniel's strength (2:17-23)
 - 4. Daniel steps up (2:24-30)

 - 5. Nebuchadnezzar honors God and calls Daniel (4:1-18)
 - 6. Daniel delivers bad news and calls for repentance (4:19-27)

 - 7. Belshazzar's feast (5:1-4)
 - 8. Hand-writing on the wall and the call for Daniel (5:5-16)
 - 9. Daniel: refuse gifts, history, king's sin & condemnation (5:17-28)

- C. Nebuchadnezzar's Image and Fiery Furnace. (Dan. 3)
 - 1. Arrogant power of the king (1-7)
 - 2. Evidence of disdain for God's people (8-12)
 - 3. Rage of a powerful man (13-15)
 - 4. Calm assurance of conviction in God (16-18)
 - 5. "...who is the god..." is answered (19-25)
 - 6. Strong conviction, even in only a few, is powerful (26-30)

- D. Plotting Enemies and the Den of Lions. (Dan.6)
 - 1. Serving God in elevated positions (1-3)
 - 2. Disdain for, in spite of the integrity and goodness of God's people (4-5)
 - 3. What the trap tells us about Daniel (5-13)
 - 4. What the king's reaction tells us about Daniel (14-23)
 - 5. Again, the world witnesses the righteous judgment of God (24-28)

- E. Daniel Prays for Forgiveness. (Dan. 9)
 - 1. Complete confidence in God (2-3)
 - 2. All confidence in God ... none in self, confession (4-12)
 - 3. Faith in God's word, promising condemnation and salvation (13-15, 1-19)
 - 4. God's response (20-27)

III. In Daniel we see a courage that:

- Stands even when everything visible, that gives, confidence is taken away.
- Sustains in unfavorable circumstances and among hostile peoples.
- Is not driven by emotion, but by confidence in God and His revelation.
- Does not care what others think or how they react - content.
- Does not fear the outcome; it just does right and leaves the rest to God.
- Is willing to be the only one - for a long time.
- Will do what is right, yielding to others, fitting in and still doing what must be done.
- Can do/say what needs to be done/said - then shut-up and wait for God.
- Keeps going and going, for life, even though things never change or improve.
- Will take responsibility, confess and ask forgiveness.
- Is willing to see fault and failure in oneself and one's own (nation).
- Can love the enemy, dread their judgment and still speak the truth.
- Tastes the bitterness and sweetness of God's message.

How can we account for Daniel's success in Babylonia and Persia?

Conclusion:

God's Commendation of Daniel -- 10:10-14

- Courage does not mean one is never afraid, discouraged, or confused -- 10:15-19
- Courage to continue until the end -- 12:4, 8-9
- Is rewarded – 12:12-13

Additional Notes:

God's purpose in the exile.

- 1) To judge His people for their unfaithfulness, sin and idolatry.
- 2) To reveal to the nations His power, omniscience and Deity. He alone is God.
 - a. No human empire is eternal.
 - b. No human empire is universal.

This is established in the work of Daniel among the nations in the palaces of kings.

- 1) Daniel is not counted among the prophets, but rather writings in Hebrew lists.
- 2) A prophet was considered:

- a. Spokesman for God
 - b. To His people
 - c. Calling for repentance. Ezekiel did this. Not Daniel.
- 3) What we see in Daniel may be similar to Moses in Egypt before Pharaoh.
 - a. “That you may know...”
 - b. Moses revealed God in great signs and wonders – His power.
 - c. Daniel revealed God in predictions about nations – His omniscience.
 - 4) Daniel served as a statesman to pagan kings, revealing and declaring God.

The character of Daniel was essential to this revelation of God to the nations.

- 1) Daniel was a man of flawless integrity in every area.
 - a. Daniel was a good servant to the king.
 - b. Daniel honored and obeyed God in all things.
 - c. Daniel faithfully lived by, held to and declared truth & righteousness.
- 2) Daniel was a man of gentle courtesy in human relationships. He exhibited a humility and meekness that allowed him a lifetime of work for the Lord in the palaces of pagan kings.