DANIEL'S FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD

Background Reading

Proverbs 3:4-5; Matthew 24:15-28; Daniel 2:32-43, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11

Devotional Reading

Daniel 1:3-21

Central Verse

"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."
Daniel 2:21 KJV

"He controls the course of world events; He removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars."
Daniel 2:21 NLT

Key Terms

Favor—Friendly regard shown toward another especially by a superior; to show partiality toward.
Exploits—Notable, memorable, or heroic acts.
Pulse—The edible seeds of various crops (such as peas, beans, or lentils) of the legume family.

Introduction

The Book of Daniel starts out trying the faith and trust of the young man Daniel and his friends when they were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar's reign. This first invasion happened when Daniel was just a teenager. It was part of the captivity that Jeremiah prophesied about when he told Israel that they would be held in captivity for at least 70 years.

Daniel's name means "God is my judge." He was one of the major prophets that prophesied during a very turbulent time in the lives of God's people. Daniel understood that he was chosen by God and had an extraordinary purpose. Therefore, he was willing to tune in to the will of God and, because of this favor from God, God was able to change the minds of the master eunuch and the King to honor Daniel.

When God's favor is upon a believer, good comes their way, and odds get turned in their favor. Even though Daniel and his friends were held in captivity, God's unmerited favor still opened doors of opportunities for them and propelled them to success.

Discussion

During the beginning of the Book of Daniel is the story of Daniel and his friends. They were deported from Jerusalem to Babylon because God had given Nebuchadnezzar victory over the Israelite King, Jehoiakim. Though Israel was taken into captivity, they did not see themselves as being conquered, they knew that God always caused His children to triumph in Christ Jesus, so they felt that they were conquerors (Romans 8:37).

Nebuchadnezzar had spoken to Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, instructing him to bring certain people from the children of Israel, of the King's seed, and of the princes—children with no blemish who were well-favored, wise, and knowledgeable, with a good understanding of science. He wanted those who had the ability to stand in the King's palace and teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

The King also had appointed them a daily portion of his meat and wine. He wanted them to eat and drink this for 10 days and then be brought back in front of him. But Daniel knew that the King's food and drink had been offered to idols, so he purposed in his heart not to eat anything from the King's table. Daniel had found favor from the head eunuch, so he requested for him and his three friends to go for 10 days only eating "pulse" and water. The eunuch consented and allowed them to do so. At the end of the 10 days, they were checked and found to be in better health than all the other young men who had eaten the King's food. At the end of the three years, Daniel and his other friends—the three Hebrew boys—were 10 times better than the others, because they had trusted in God, who gave them favor.

God has given every believer faith and just as Daniel's faith held and kept him during his challenges, God sees and knows the times that each one lives in. He can keep each believer from falling and present them faultlessly before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 1).

It is important that every believer have a good relationship with God. Daniel did not choose to be taken away from his home to Babylon, but it happened. He was away from his parents and close relatives, but he knew that wherever he would have to go, God would be with him. Because Daniel and his three friends were committed to God, God was committed to them. When believers endeavor to be faithful to God and His ways, know that He will remain with them and give them the help and grace needed to accomplish His will.

At the final examination, Daniel and the three Hebrew boys stood healthy and unafraid before the King. They remained faithful to God and, by their demonstration of wisdom and knowledge, they gave testimony to the power of God.

Matthew 5:16 tells the believer to let his light shine before men, that they may see his good works and bring glory to the Father in Heaven. The Bible says that the people who know their God shall be *strong* and shall do great exploits.

More numerous than the sands on the shore are the Father's thoughts of love towards each believer, because they are His beloved children. And when He is pleased with believers like He was with Daniel and his friends, He gives an invitation for each believer to encounter the perfect, stunning nature of His love. For in His love, there is no striving and no fear; for they are being held in the palm of His hand.

Daniel and his friends were taught that, when they could not get to the temple in Jerusalem, to instead turn and look toward Jerusalem to pray. God would never forget nor leave them. God reminds believers that in the midst of peril, the just shall live by their faith, and because of that, God will unveil His principles and precepts for each believer to follow.

Conclusion

Daniel and the children of Israel had to make major adjustments to their lifestyles as they lived and survived in a foreign land. They had to trust in the Lord with all their hearts. Though the Jews suffered greatly and faced powerful cultural pressures in a foreign land, they maintained their national spirit and religious identity. It was a time when their faith in God was tried, but the believers knew then, as we do now, that the trying of their faith would work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope made them unashamed, because the Spirit of the Lord was with His people. By the time the captivity ended, Daniel was an old man, but God kept him and he continued to obey God during each season of his life.

Questions

1. Why was Daniel in Babylon?
2. Why did the King choose him and the other young men for special treatment?
3. How did Daniel know that the King's special treatment was not good for him and his friends?
4. How did he deal with this treatment?
5. What was the result of Daniel's faith and trust in God?

Essential Thought

When a person has God, they have everything that they need.