

## Daniel: Righteous & Beloved

### Ezekiel 14: 14, 16, 18, 20, 22-23

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**Introduction:** P.O.W. Capital destroyed. King defeated. Exiled. Immersed in a foreign country, forced to learn a foreign language, assimilated with the education of a foreign country's literature, wisdom, and worldview. Given a name reflective of another country's god.

What would you do, separated from your parents, your loved ones, your neighbors, friends? What would you do when continuing to live by biblical principles makes you stand out as even more different from the new world you are in? What would you do without pastors with few people to fellowship with?

Philip P. Bliss wrote a song to challenge us with Daniel's response to his situation<sup>1</sup>:

*Standing by a purpose true, heeding God's command,  
Honor them, the faithful few! All hail to Daniel's Band!  
Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known!*

*Many mighty men are lost, Daring not to stand,  
Who for God had been a host, By joining Daniel's band!*

*Many giants, great and tall, Stalking thro' the land,  
Headlong to the earth would fall, If met by Daniel's band!*

*Hold the gospel banner high! On to vic'try grand!  
Satan and his host defy, And shout for Daniel's band!*

Daniel was a man who was true: true to his God, true to his faith, true to his duty to God and man. Daniel is the only contemporary of Ezekiel that is identified as righteous. Both Noah and Job were men from centuries before; Daniel and Ezekiel were both men of the Babylonian Exile. Both lived in Babylon. Ezekiel resided with captives; Daniel hung out with three other exiles in the courts of kings.

As the Lord contemplated men who spoke a good game but had idols in their hearts (14:3), He rejected their hypocrisy. Going to prophets to listen while estranged from God did these men no good (14:4-5). Their heart idols separated them from the Lord God (14:6-7). God viewed their attempts to inquire of prophets as ridiculous.

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<sup>1</sup> *Inspiring Hymns*. #456 "Dare to Be a Daniel."

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Such stupidity would cut souls off from God (14:8). The Lord goes on to speak of the horrendous fate of such a nation of people: famine (14:13), wild beasts (14:15), sword slaying man and beast (14:17) and disease breaking out (14:19).

God longed to see an increase of Daniel's band in such a wicked land. He desired to see righteous Noahs, righteous Daniels, righteous Jobs. God would judge Jerusalem according to His Covenant. Nevertheless, in wrath He would remember mercy (14:21-23).

This evening, as we briefly look at Daniel's righteous life, notice Daniel's dedication to the Lord was seen in his purity, his prayers, and his proclamation to kings. Daniel's righteousness characterized his life from his youth to his old age; unlike some who begin well but falter, Daniel continued to seek the Lord and serve Him throughout his life.

#### **1. Daniel's righteousness in his purity (Daniel 1:8).**

Even as a young captive in Babylon, Daniel resolved not to defile himself (1:8). Though in a luxurious environment, surrounded by temptations to the flesh, Daniel refused to succumb by partaking of things that would violate the dietary law of Moses.

Much of the Old Testament law made Israel distinct from unbelievers. Israelites were not allowed to marry unbelieving foreigners; their diet, clothing, and lifestyle were different from the pagans around them. While we no longer follow the ceremonial OT law (offering sacrifices, regulating our diet, etc), we remain a people who are separated to God from the world. We must not love the world or partake of its lusts- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).

Daniel's pursuit of purity affected his fellows (1:10). Not only did he not eat the king's food, neither did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. If you live righteously, your lifestyle impacts fellow believers who also are encouraged to live holy righteousness lives with you! Perhaps his courageous example encouraged them when they stood alone before the king's demand to bow to idols (3).

Daniel's righteousness- His desire and decision to obey God's Word- was wise. God favored Daniel with wisdom from this time; he and his friends were wiser

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than their contemporaries in their classes (1:17-20). All four men were ten times wiser than the others! God rewards the obedient with His wisdom.

#### **2. Daniel's righteousness in his prayers (Daniel 2, 6, 9)**

We often connect Daniel with his prayers prior to the lions' den, but Daniel's entire life seems to be characterized by prayer.

##### **2.1 Seeking Revelation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:17-23)**

When their lives were on the line, wise men were being killed, Daniel implored Shadrach, Meschech and Abednego to pray (2:17-18). Daniel immediately responded to their answered prayer by blessing and praising God in prayer for being the source of wisdom (21) and revealing secrets (22) as well as for giving Daniel personally wisdom and revelation (23) (2:20-23).

Daniel was careful to give God credit for His work (2:28). God alone gives kingdoms, power, strength and glory (2:37-38). God will ultimately reign alone (2:44-45).

##### **2.2 Seeking Fellowship with God thrice daily (6:10)**

Daniel spent daily time with God. Thrice a day he prayed. This helped to make him the righteous man he was, who would pray even if the king tried to forbid it. He would rather rest with the lions than be separated from his God.

**2.3 Seeking Understanding of God's Word- His Visions (9)** Daniel studied God's Word and claimed it in His prayers. His understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70 year captivity led him to pray (9:2, 24). This prayer, in turn, quotes and claims the promises of the Mosaic Covenant (9:4, 11-13). He understood from God's Word that he was speaking to a righteous God (7, 14, 16). Yet he also claimed God's mercies and forgiveness (9, 16-19) as he sought forgiveness for himself and his people.

There were times when God's Word made Daniel mourn, so he would fast and pray (10:1-2). This fasting and prayer led to an angel being sent to reveal God's Word (10:21).

#### **3. Daniel's righteousness in his proclamation to kings (Daniel 2, 4, 5)**

**3.1 Daniel determined to live righteously.** This meant he would appeal to the king's representative for permission not to eat the king's food.

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#### 3.2 Daniel's righteousness was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Nebuchadnezzar (4:9), the Queen (5:11), and Belshazzar (5:14) all recognized that "the Spirit of the Holy God" abode in Daniel. Angelic messengers proclaimed that Daniel was beloved by God (10:11; 19). Daniel was one who humbled himself and sought to understand God's Word (10:12).

#### 3.3 Daniel spoke fearlessly before the most powerful men of his day:

Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius.

This meant he could tell **Nebuchadnezzar** without fear that the mighty Babylonian king would not reign forever as the head of gold (2:39-40). Indeed, God's kingdom would crush the successor kingdoms. God's kingdom alone would reign forever (2:44-45).

Nebuchadnezzar had to confess that God knew his secret dreams and is the true God (2:47).

Though Daniel sympathized with **Nebuchadnezzar** and felt compassion for his plight (4:19), he had to proclaim that the king would be driven to the field and live as a beast until he learned that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men (4:24-25). Judgment would be tempered with mercy; the king would resume his throne (4:26). Daniel urged Nebuchadnezzar to repent, be righteous and show generosity to the poor (4:27). He truly cared for the king. Nebuchadnezzar, however, had to learn the hard way to "honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down" (4:37).

The later ruler, **Belteshazzar**, did not receive as much respect. Daniel accepted Nebuchadnezzar's promotions; he rejected Belteshazzar's attempt at bribery (5:17). Daniel also announced God's judgment on Belshazzar's pride (5:22-23), just as he had on Nebuchadnezzar's.

#### 3.4 Daniel spoke as God spoke (Daniel 7-12)

Daniel recorded what God had revealed to him. The Revealer of Secrets (God) revealed the future of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and the nations to Daniel. Daniel not only understood God's Word revealed to Moses and Jeremiah, God used him to record God's Word as revealed to Daniel through visions. Daniel's visions spoke of Persia, Greece, Rome, the Messiah, and the End Times.

**He reminds us there will be a final judgment for the wicked and an endless reward for the righteous!**