

You are What You Eat

Part 1



Daniel 1:8

If you have your bibles, open to the book of Daniel this morning. When I was a student at Calloway County High School from 1976-1979, we basically had two choices for lunch. I'll not discuss the third choice, but one choice was to bring your own lunch. If you brought your own lunch, you ate in the gymnasium and sat on the bleachers with other kids who brought their lunch, or kids who had chosen not to eat on that particular day, but most of the students ate in the cafeteria. I will never forget walking in that cafeteria for the first time and there being this huge sign. It was billboard size; you couldn't miss it. Big letters on the wall said, "You are what you eat." That meant I was a cheeseburger and French fries. I knew what the dieticians at the high school were trying to say. They were trying to say be conscious of what choice you will make because there is a consequence down the road to the choice you make at this very moment. That sign was trying to get us to realize we could eat healthy or unhealthy today. Down the road, we would either be healthy or unhealthy based on the choice we made at that very moment. Now, that sign was not trying to get us to eat all of our green beans on our plate. That sign was trying to say be careful with the line you choose to get in today. Calloway County

gave us a choice. We had the one line, and I'll never forget it, you got a cheeseburger, French fries, and a soft drink. Then there was the other line, and if you went through that line...well, I really don't know what was in that line. I'm sure when I get to be ninety-eight, I will wish I ate in the other line because I've cut six months off my life. Really, when I was in school, a sixteen year old driving, I wasn't that interested in what I ate for lunch near as much as who I ate with at lunch. That big moment was after you went through the cheeseburger line and you came out and saw all of those tables. Where you sat was important because you were either going to sit down with somebody already there, or somebody was going to join you at that table. While you were eating, whatever you were eating, most kids were more interested in who was eating with you and who you were eating with than what you were actually eating. To sit down with someone said you were basically accepted by them and that you accepted them. It really revealed to the other students in the school who you really were. You know this to be true...the different tables, and who sat at them, clearly revealed to everyone who was who and who was not. This morning, as we open to the book of Daniel, the second sermon in our series, 'Standing in a Fallen World,' from the first six chapters of Daniel, we're going to look at verse 8. Last week, Kory introduced the series and wonderfully exegeted those first seven verses. When I listen to the sermon you heard last week, Kory revealed to us how King Nebuchadnezzar was trying to assimilate youths from the nation of Israel into Babylonian culture so that one day they would stand before him and serve him, and extensions of him, leaders in the Babylonian Empire. In order to accomplish his purpose, he had to get the Hebrew youths to forget who they were so that he could get them to act like who they were not. If you remember, to accomplish that objective, Nebuchadnezzar tried to change their identity, he tried to change their worldview, and he tried to change their standard by which they lived. Can you imagine being a youth, you've just be enrolled by Neb's personal university, Babylon State University, you find yourself now a Babylon Bomber, you've got your schedule that no longer says Daniel, it says Belteshazzar, you have science, math, chemistry, world religion, and philosophy, and you look at your meal ticket? Wow! You're going to eat what the king eats himself every day for the next three years of your life,

and when your three years are over, you're going to take a final exam, and that exam will determine where you will serve in the greatest empire of that day.

Open to Daniel 1:8. Many Bible scholars and pastors who write commentaries believe this is the single most important verse in the entire book. Because it's that important, we're going to just look at this verse and next week, we will finish part two of 'You are What You Eat.'

Scripture

"But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself."

"But Daniel..." One of the greatest "but's" in all of Scripture. Everything is going in a certain direction, according to the king's command, and then there's a wrench thrown into the mechanism.

(Prayer)

Father, please add Your blessings to the reading of this Your Word. Anoint us to speak, anoint us to listen. In Your Son's name we pray, amen.

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself." King James Version of the Bible says, "But Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself." New American Standard says, "But Daniel made up his mind." New Living Translation says, "But Daniel was determined not to pollute himself." New Century Translation says, "But Daniel decided not to pollute himself." The word, "defile," literally means not to be stained, not to be polluted, or not to be spoiled. If I'm getting the gist of this story as recorded about Daniel, when the rollcall was called in homeroom and attendance was taken, when the homeroom teacher said, "Belteshazzar," he raised his hand, "Here." Never once are we told that he drew a line in the sand and said, "That's not me. I'm Daniel. Baal is not my protector. God is my judge." There was never silence in rollcall. When Daniel was given his schedule and he saw that on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays he had algebra, chemistry, literature, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays he had world religion and PE,

never once did he refuse to go to class. Even though in those classes they were trying to change his worldview, from a belief in one God who created everything out of nothing, who would also be redeemer of His people because He had a plan and a purpose for a Messiah who would be born and literally affect the entire world to a nation of tolerance, for what everybody believed about God. Never one time did he refuse to go to class in that private school that was very secular. But when it came to lunchtime, when class was over and before he would spend the night studying, he would enter into the cafeteria and he refused to sit down at the table and eat the same food that the king ate. What is going on? This kid is approximately nine hundred miles from home. You know what we say in our culture sometimes when you're surrounded by people not like you and there is this pressure to give in, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Do you not believe there was an adage in his day of "when in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do?" He is nine hundred miles from home, what difference are his actions going to make? There are some decisions and choices you can make and if you make the wrong choice, it's really not a big deal because it will never be known. That's why we have a city in the United States of America where its whole tourism ad is, if you come to our city, whatever you do here stays here.

A couple of years ago, Kory and I were enrolled in a Bible software training program in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It was the closest one for us to go to be trained in software program that we use to study the Bible. It's a really neat program. A storm went through Oklahoma City and they had to cancel the conference. We had already paid for it and already had our airline tickets, so they decided enroll us and transfer our airfare to the next conference, which was just a few weeks later. They sent me the email and I found out the next training conference was actually in Las Vegas, Nevada. I had heard about sin city all my life, but never had the desire to go there. Even when we would be in California, a lot of people would go to Las Vegas because it's just a short hop from there, but I never one time have I had a desire to go there. Now, it looks like I need to go there, so I authorized this through some deacons and some servants of our church, so I went there with Kory. You know if you stay in a hotel there, there are all those machines, but never one time did I lose anything. I didn't win

anything either; I kept my change in my pocket. I went straight from my hotel to the conference, and back to the hotel. Never in my life was I more conscience of who I was or who I wasn't. I guarded my mind, my eyes, and everything about me. The conference was over, we went to the airport to catch our plane, we showed the ticket handler our ID's, and as we get ready to go through the scanners another guy sitting there said, "Hey guys, did you have a big time in Las Vegas?" "Sure." "What did you do while you were here?" "Well, we spent the last five days in a church going to a conference on how to study the Bible electronically." He looked at me and Kory and said, "Sure...when you get home, tell your wives whatever you want to tell them! But what did you really do? Why were you really here?" He thought we were the most boring people to come to Las Vegas. I believe he probably went home and told his wife, "You're not going to believe what somebody told me today!" Wouldn't it have been easy for Daniel, who's been taken against his will out of his homeland, transported to another culture, enrolled in a private university on a three-year scholarship, and now have the opportunity to stand before the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar himself.

"But, Daniel resolved..." That word, resolved, in the English dictionary literally means to come to a definite decision about something. Daniel came to a definite decision, he made up his mind, he was determined, he purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself. Daniel, living as an Israelite in a Babylonian culture, knew he was holy. He knew he was pure; therefore, he made up his mind. 'I will not be unholy in this unholy environment.' Wow. Isn't that just like an Israelite? Do you remember when God gathered them at the foot of the mountain at Sanai? He gave them a strict command of 'if you, then I will.' One of the things He told them He would do is make them a peculiar treasure. When our bibles were translated into English, that word, peculiar, didn't come from the Greek; it came from the Latin. There is a Latin word from which our English word, peculiar, comes from. If you look this word up, it literally means to be a private possession with the emphasis being 'not for public use.' You have seen those signs that say, "For public use only," and then you've seen those private signs, "No admittance." As an Israelite, Daniel had been called to be a part of a group of people who were private possessions of

God, and he knew written on his heart was a sign that said, "Private Property. No Trespassing." Daniel knew that in the pursuit of holiness, he was just pursuing what God ultimately laid His hands on him for. As we study the next six chapters in the book of Daniel, and we pursue personal holiness and we talk about how to stand up and stand out in a fallen world, please understand the design of holiness is that God has set up apart just like He set Daniel apart for a purpose. I promise that even though we don't live in Babylon and we live in what we believe is still the Bible belt of the United States of America, we live in a culture that is very anti-God, very anti-Christ. What is being piped into our cars, our homes, what we're picking up in the morning and reading in the paper has a very secular non-Christian worldview. The mindset of the world is to assimilate all.

"But, Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food or the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself." If scholars are right, if commentaries are right, if the preachers we love to see on TV, when they write their commentaries, say this is perhaps the most important sentence in the entire book then maybe we need to pause just for a few moments and think about a few things. First of all, who is this young boy named Daniel? If we go back to verse 3, we know he was either in the personal line of the royal family of Israel, meaning, it was possible that his dad or his uncle were in the direct line of the Davidic kings. Or, he's a noble. Wow! He's somebody! In other words, on this day, nobody was like me, born on *this* side of the track; everybody was born on *that* side of the track. Scholars believe that because of the numbers of kids that were taken from Israel into Babylon that enrolled in this private assimilation project of Neb, there were at least fifty to seventy-five Hebrew youths, and every one of them were of royal descent or of nobility. They were the who's who of Israel. These kids didn't have any blemish in them, no birthmark, no scars, no deformities, no abnormalities, no tattoos; they were without blemish. When you looked at these kids, you were drawn to their appearance. They were good-looking kids, smart, intelligent, skillful, and wise. They were able to comprehend foreign languages, comprehend, and speak about philosophy, literature, and language. They were competent to stand before the king, no timidity, no shyness, the ability to speak what's on their mind,

make a clear presentation. They were leader material. One day these guys were going to be an extension of King Neb, himself, and they would be given provinces and they would rule in the spirit and the law of King Neb. That's who Daniel is.

Now, why is he there? I know all of us learned this in preschool, but stick with me; I think it's important. Daniel is where he is, not because of a consequence of his choice, but because of a consequence of somebody else's choice. What I want to say to you is that in our pursuit of standing up and standing out in a fallen world, we need to understand that there is a consequence to our choices. Sometimes, instead of us having to make a wrong choice and there be a negative consequence and learn from that, if we would be wise, we can look at our situation and understand the reason I'm here isn't because of a choice I made; I'm here because of a wrong choice someone else made, so if they made a wrong choice with a negative consequence for me, the last thing I need to do is complicate the matter by me making another wrong choice on top of the wrong choice they made. While the consequence to me right now is not good, it will only get worse if I follow in the line of people who make wrong choices, because there's definitely a consequence to your choice. Does that make sense to anybody? My question is why is he here in Babylon in 606 BC, nine hundred miles from home? Ultimately, we can trace it back to a guy named Hezekiah, who is a king.

Do you remember Hezekiah? He made a wrong choice. He got an extension on life and got a visit from the son of the king of Babylon. When the son of the king of Babylon comes to Judah, Hezekiah flaunted what God had given them. He opened the temple, the storehouses, the goldmines, and every asset of the nation to the king's son, and then the son leaves. The prophet sees him leaving and goes to the king and asks who that was, and the king told him. The prophet said you surely didn't show him anything, did you? Hezekiah said I showed him everything! Because he flaunted it and took credit for it, God told him through the prophet that everything you have, and everything we have as a nation, will be his (the Babylonian king's son) possession. And, your sons...Now, in the Old Testament, please note this when doing a chronological histories, son

doesn't always mean a direct descendant of. Many times, son can mean grandson, great-grandson, great-great-great grandson; so be careful of your time charts in historical events. So he told Hezekiah he would have a son who would one day serve the king of Babylon, and he wouldn't have a family of his own. He would be made a eunuch and a slave to carry out the desires of that man.

Hezekiah dies in peace, but after he dies, he has a son who sits on the throne by the name of Manasseh, the most vile, wicked person ever to sit on a throne in the kingdom. He went back and resurrected every religion of the Canaanites. Do you remember when God sent Israel into the land of Canaan? Some people think God was being mean; He was not. He was being merciful. God said to destroy every inhabitant in the land. They were that wicked. They do not need to live, and God said to wipe them all out and make sure you burn all the altars and every artifact to their gods. Don't keep a thing. The children of Israel didn't do what God said, so all over the land of Israel, there were little pockets of these pagan gods, and Israel always had problems with that. Do you know what Manasseh did? He was the king of tolerance. He was the king who said there is value in everything, and we're not going to tell anybody no! He resurrected all of the original religions, and said hey, you in the church, we're going to be tolerant of everything. Move over Jehovah God! This big house we've built for you...we're going to put the artifacts and false gods in there right alongside You. This man reigned for fifty-five years, and he did evil in the sight of God. I cannot imagine a nation sitting under a man that liberal, that pagan, and that ungodly without it affecting the whole nation. Don't ever believe that who leads the nation does not have a direct influence on the people in the nation.

Fifty-five years of Manasseh, and then he dies. His son sits in his place for two years, and he follows in his father's wickedness. It's now 640 BC when Ammon dies, and his son, Josiah, eight-years old, becomes king. You and I know an eight year old is not calling the shots in Israel. Somebody else is advising him, somebody else is helping him. Scripture says about him that he did not walk in the way of his father or grandfather, but he walked in the way of his father, David. We've skipped a bunch of generations. Here's

a little boy that was taught, not only about his father and his grandfather, but he was taught about his great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather, and he chose him to be the model leadership. Do you know what happened to him? Because he followed in the footsteps of his father, King David, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. The Bible says Josiah never turned to the right or the left. He stayed on the straight and narrow. He reigned for thirty-one years, which means he's going to reign to 609 BC. That's important. In the eighteenth year of his reign, which means 622 BC, he decides all this money that is being put in the temple treasury needs to be used to refurbish, rebuild, the temple because it's in disrepair. He says the carpenters are so honest that as king I don't even want a counting of the money, just whatever the people give, you use it, give it to the carpenters, and let them do the project and so they start refurbishing the temple. Remember, in this temple, there is Jehovah God, but there is every other god in the land in the temple too. You know, to redecorate, refurbish, or remodel, you have to tear some things down. So they started tearing some things down and the high priests found the Word of the Lord. This is so monumental that it's in the entire chapter in 2 Kings.

Now, what you've got to remember is we've had fifty-seven years of Manasseh and Ammon, then eighteen years of Josiah doing right, but when you go to the temple, there is no reading of the Word. There is no teaching of the Word. There's been no keeping of the Passover. This church, if I can say, is so crowded with non-Jehovah things, they don't even know where the Word of God is! It's been totally misplaced in their lives. Now they find the Word of God, the high priest gives it to the secretary, and the secretary brings it to Josiah as a book, (he just calls it a book) and it's the Word of the Lord! Wouldn't it be awesome if it were one of the original manuscripts of Moses himself? When he sees what it is, he tears his priestly clothes off and he repents before God. He has it read to him and he gets this picture of what's wrong in his nation. It's 622 BC and he decides to read it to his people. The next thing you know in the next chapter, he tears down every one of those pagan altars, he gets rid of all the priests of the false gods, and he begins to restore the nation back on its right foundation, and that is the very Law of God.

Let's fast-forward. He gets killed in a military battle in 609 BC, and for a short period of time, the man who follows him is a man by the name of Jehoahaz. He just reigns three months and he dies, and then, a king sits on the throne of Jehovah by the name of Jehoiakim, and he starts reigning in 609 BC. What did Kory teach us last week? In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, which means it is 606 BC, and there are these youths. Most biblical scholars say this word, youth, speaks of young men who were the ages of thirteen to nineteen. We don't know exactly, so let's just split the middle, and call them sixteen year olds. Now if in 606 BC, Daniel is sixteen years old, if we add sixteen years to 606 BC, we come to 622 BC. What does this mean? It means Daniel may have been born in the very year that the Word of God was found in the house of God and a righteous king began to build a nation again on the principles of the Law of God. If he wasn't sixteen, he was born just a few years before or a few years after. Do you get it? How did a young boy know not to rebel in class when they said Belteshazzar? How did he know it was ok to sit down in a literature class, a world religion, a philosophy class, and master what he was being taught, yet refuse to sit down at a table and eat from the king's food and drink his wine? How did he know these other two things would not defile him, but this would defile him? Is it possible he had the benefit of a momma or a daddy, or someone in his family, who taught him not to live by your flesh or by your gut, but to live by the very Word of God? Is it possible that when God said to Hezekiah because of what you've done, one of your children will one day serve the king and he will be a eunuch? Is it possible Daniel may have had royal flowing through his veins? Is it possible Hananiah might have, Mishael might have, and Azariah might have? Therefore, because of the royal blood flowing through his veins, and because of a belief in the revelation of God, this young man with three friends said, "I will not defile myself."

Is it possible there are some of us sitting here who know we have the royal blood of God's Son applied to our heart and our lives, we have been called children of God, we believe God has a purpose for us, but for the first time, we wake up realizing we're not living in the world our parents or grandparents, or our great-grand-parents lived in? We are not the same nation that was founded two hundred plus years ago. We are now a people

who must decide, must make a determination, must make up our mind, must purpose in our heart that I will not be stained, I will not be polluted, and I will live holy in an unholy world. I will stand up and out in a fallen world for the glory of my Lord and my Savior Jesus Christ. Young people, we will learn next week that Daniel made a choice as a teen that affected the rest of his life. Please choose right. Please choose right! Please believe God's way is best. We're going to talk about that next week. I want to ask you if at all possible to make a decision right now. Don't let anything hinder you from coming back and hearing the conclusion of You are What You Eat, and I'm going to ask us to make a decision to resolve, come to a definite decision, about standing up and out in a fallen world.