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Regardless of what his peers might think, or how his superiors might misjudge his actions, Daniel resolutely determined to maintain his walk of personal holiness: “*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*”—

וַיִּשָׂם דָּנִיֵּאל עַל-לִבּוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא

□

יִתְגַּדֵּל בְּפִתְחֵי הַמַּלְאָךְ וּבְיַיִן מְשֻׁתָּיו:

### **A Prototype Of Latter-Day Piety**

It was at this salient point that Daniel distinguished himself from his fellow students, who, with the exception of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, had evidently capitulated to the strong Babylonian pressure to conform (Dan. 1:3). His exceptional devotion stands out as a prototype of the latter-day piety which true believers must cultivate if they are to withstand the corrupting influences of an endtime Babylonian religious and commercial system (Rev. 17:1-6; 18:4; Rom. 12:1,2; I Jn. 2:15-17). Even now, those who are approved (I Cor. 11:19) are being distinguished from the religious rank and file by their God-given hunger for holiness of heart. Despite the suggestions of a personal devil and the ubiquitous allurements of this evil age, these individuals, like their counterpart Daniel, are firmly resolved to “perfect holiness in the fear of God”

(II Cor. 7:1) with an heart that is “established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

Unlike the secular masses, or even their religious peers (Dan. 1:3), this faithful remnant is exhibiting, like Daniel of old, an “excellent spirit” (דַּי רוּחַ יִתִּירָא בֵּיהַ) — “for a pre-eminent, surpassing spirit was in him”; Dan. 6:3, 5:12). This desire to excel in holiness (Rom.1:4) is repulsed by the rampant covetousness and sensuality which constitute the attraction of Babylon (Zech. 5:5-11; Rev. 18:3,4,11; Eph.4:17-19; 5:1-7; Col. 3:1-5; Rom. 7:7); and those who share this sentiment of Daniel resolutely refuse (Daniel 1:8) to yield to the materialism and hedonism of the Babylonianized culture of America.

### **A Separated Remnant**

Distinguished by a pre-eminent piety, a faithful group of disciples is currently emerging in holy separation from this Babylonianized religious and secular world. They embody in their experience the meaning of passages such as II Cor. 6:14-18: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not*

*the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*”

We may readily infer from this passage that Christians who forge business partnerships, contract marriages, cultivate close relationships, and otherwise fraternize with unbelievers (what about celebrating their holidays, joining their social or service clubs, fraternities, sororities, armies, teams, trade unions, etc.?) are in violation of Scripture and such mismatches will inevitably defile him (cf. II Cor. 7:1; Rev. 18:4) and disqualify him as a son or daughter (II Cor. 6:17) of the Almighty. Such brazen individuals, who unwisely insist that they will remain unaffected by friendship with Babylon, have evidently overlooked the fact that by their unwise choice of companions (I Cor. 15:33; Ps. 119:63) they reveal that they have already partaken of Babylon’s spirit (I Cor. 2:12), by sharing its aims and interests (James 4:4; I Jn. 2:15-17; Rom. 12:1,2; Jn. 15:19).

Babylon’s (the world’s) power to spot and soil the spirit of God’s people is the underlying rationale for such passages as these:

❖ Rev. 18:4- “*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*”

❖ Isaiah 52:11- “*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean [thing]; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*”

❖ I Thess. 5:23,24- “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and*

*[I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].*”

❖ Heb. 7:26- “*For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*”

❖ Ezr. 9:1-4- “*Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, [doing] according to their abominations, [even] of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of [those] lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.*”

❖ Jude 1:23- “*And others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*”

❖ Rom. 12:1- “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your*

*mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

Furthermore, we should note that the separation called for in Scripture is not limited to “primary” separation, i.e. from the world of unbelievers, but also requires that we shun professing disciples who persist in unchristlike conduct (I Cor. 5:10,11; II Thess. 3:6,14; Rom. 16:17).

### ***The Saint Becomes Seer***

As a result of Daniel’s pre-eminent purity, his prayer for wisdom and insight was heard and he was, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, permitted to peer deeper into the profound purpose of God: “*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*” (Daniel 1:17). The understanding for which Daniel is renown (Ezek. 28:3) and by which latter day saints, who follow in his train, will gain insight into the signs of their times (Dan. 11:33,35; 12:4,10), was not so much the product of painstaking study as it was a reward for spiritual purity. It is ever true that the “pure in heart” are blessed with the the ability to “see God” (Matt. 5:8). Because he had the heart of a saint (Dan. 1:8), he was given the eye of a seer.

This keen, revelatory insight began to surface in the career of Daniel in most phenomenal ways, enabling him to resolve a life-threatening crisis by a recitation and interpretation of Nebudchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:28); predict the fate of a monarch steeped in sacreligious pride (Dan. 4:19-27); foresee the collapse of an ungodly empire (Dan. 5:18-31); understand, in detailed fashion, the extended course

of successive Gentile world empires down to the Second Advent of Christ (Dan. 7); preview in minute detail the persecution madness of Antiochus IV (Dan. 8); exhibit interpretive skill by noting the Divine intent in Jeremiah’s prophecy of the desolations of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:1,2); foretell the time of Messiah’s Advent and substitutionary death, along with the last seven years of human history (Dan. 9:22-27); and describe successive movements in the final battle at the end of the age (Dan. 11:36-12:13). Whether it was a penetrating glimpse into prophetic details, or a panoramic view of God’s unfolding endtime program, *Daniel was given the power to see because he, by God’s grace, had the purity to say no to sin.*

If we are to discern the successive phases of God’s will for our lives, we must, like Daniel, dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of spiritual and moral purity, without which, no man will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14), nor discern His work (Jn. 15:19; Ps. 90:16).

### ***A Profound Spirit Of Prayer***

Finally, we find Daniel’s dedication rewarded with a beautiful spirit of prayer (Zech. 12:10). In fact, his prayer life was so systematic and persistent that even a royal interdict could not deter him from the “one thing that is needful.” When, as the result of a political conspiracy, legislation was signed by King Darius forbidding the petitioning of any supposed diety but Darius for the space of one month, Daniel’s commitment to prayer remained undaunted: “*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed,*

*and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime*” (Dan. 6:10). As a result of his spiritual consistency and unflinching devotion, God rescued Daniel from the ferocity of man-eating lions and provided an example of deliverance designed to spur endtime saints to like spirituality (Rom. 15:4). As we persist in prayer, despite anti-prayer sentiment or legislation, God will likewise “deliver [us] from every evil work, and preserve us” (II Tim. 4:18). We like Daniel, will be “delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (II Tim. 4:17) to the extent that we continue instant in prayer (Rom. 12:12).

Interestingly enough, Jesus noted the inseparable relationship between pure, persistent prayer and latter day deliverance. In Luke 21:36: “*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*” It is obvious from this passage that the agony of persistent prayer will play a significant role in the endtime disciple’s ability to survive the perils of age-end conditions. Apart from heartfelt communication with God in prayer, the believer will simply lack the necessary spiritual sensitivity and stamina to avoid the satanic pitfalls of the last day. In that day, the truth of Joel 2:32 will be abundantly fulfilled: “*And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.*”

## ***Daniel, Dedication, And The Latter Days***

***Sandhill Bible Church, 4505 Sandhill Road, Auburn, AL 36830 (334) 749-6475***

The year was approximately 604 B.C. and a lone Hebrew youth of perhaps seventeen years faced a crucial moral decision in a strange and unfamiliar land. While enrolled in Nebudchadnezzar’s royal academy, where he was undergoing an intensive three-year training at the kings expense (Dan. 1:5), he was confronted with the option of compromise over a matter that would be deemed trivial by the more worldly-minded. Hid dilemma was quite simple: His daily food-fare from the royal table of delicacies included items which were forbidden by the Word of God. Would he dismiss the voice of conscience, and partake; or would he refuse to defile himself with food items which were offered in sacrifice to idols, and risk giving the impression of ingratitude toward the king’s generosity? Daniel’s heart was no doubt troubled. Perhaps his mind could not escape the many Biblical commandments which had been idelibly etched upon his soul by parental instruction, and had shaped his convictions since earliest childhood (Deut. 6:6,7). These heavenly seeds, dropped so tenderly in the warm sod of his impressionable heart, had since budded, blossomed, and had now no doubt begun to yield the precious fruit for which his parents had yearned.

Though far away in a foreign land, the instruction of his father and the law of his mother (Prov. 1:8; 6:20-23) mightily molded his thinking and conduct. These words of Scriptural instruc-



tion were now leading, keeping, talking with him (Prov. 6:22) as he faced his crucial test of obedience.

Regardless of what his peers might think, or how his superiors might misjudge his actions, Daniel resolutely determined to maintain his walk of personal holiness: “*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*”—

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