

# CONQUERING COMPROMISE

## Daniel 1:1-21 Sermon

### OUTLINE:

- I. THE DILEMMA vvs. 1-7
  - A. A New Home vs. 1-2
  - B. A New Knowledge vs. 3-4
  - C. A New Diet vs. 5
  - D. A New Name vs. 6-7
- II. THE AIM vvs. 8-16
  - A. Their Dedication vs 8-9
  - B. Their Desire vs 9-14
- III. THE UPGRADE vvs. 17-21
  - A. Their Experience (vvs. 15-16)
  - B. Their Excellence vvs. 17-20
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### Introduction:

In the early part of this century, an American ship was wrecked off the Sicilian Isles near the coast of England. The sea had been calm and the weather clear, but the vessel was caught in a treacherous current that slowly lured it off course. Before the captain and crew realized what had happened, the ship crashed into the rocks.

- In life, too, powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and carry to shipwreck. Spiritual drifting is usually a slow and imperceptible process. We know it has occurred when we have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth that we once knew.

Compromise is defines as

1. a settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting or opposing claims, principles, etc., by reciprocal modification of demands.
2. The result of such a settlement.

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### 3. Something intermediate between different things

-Often, life is filled with compromises. We are given a choice as to how we will live our lives and what path we are going to follow through life. When we come to these times of decision, it is imperative that we make godly choices.

Because the choices we make at the crossroads of life will determine our usefulness to God and our effectiveness in His kingdom work.

-Our text today is about four men who came to a time of decision in their lives. They could either compromise and “go with the flow” or they could stand their ground and live for the Lord. The circumstances they faced and the decisions they made set the course for the rest of their lives.

-Since this incident occurred, the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have stood tall as the names of great heroes of the faith. And, what about Daniel? Who would have heard of Daniel if he had compromised at this early stage of life? His name would be unknown to modern man, and we would never have received this wonderful book. With that in mind, it is good to be able to say that these young men stood their test and as a result, we are all blessed this morning.

-As you and I go through life, there will always be times when we are going to have to make decisions to do the right thing. When these times come, and they most certainly will, we will either decide to go with God despite the cost. Or, we will choose to compromise. The truths contained in this passage will help us as we face the serious crossroads of life. This morning, I would like to speak for a little while on this thought, **Conquering Compromise**. My prayer is that we can glean the strength that we need to always make our stand for the Lord.

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### **Read Daniel 1:1-7:**

**Daniel 1:1-7 (NASB):** <sup>1</sup>In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim (**Ja-hoih kim**) king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup>And the Lord handed Jehoiakim king of Judah over to him, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar (**Shee-nar**), to the house of his <sup>[a]</sup>god (some translations say gods), and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his <sup>[b]</sup>god.

<sup>3</sup>Then the king told Ashpenaz (**Ash-pen-as**), the chief of his <sup>[c]</sup>officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the <sup>[d]</sup>royal family and of the nobles, <sup>4</sup>youths in whom there was no impairment, who were good-looking, suitable for instruction in every kind of expertise, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability to <sup>[e]</sup>serve in the king's <sup>[f]</sup>court; and he ordered Ashpenaz to teach them the <sup>[g]</sup>literature and language of the Chaldeans (**Cow-de-ans**). <sup>5</sup>The king also allotted for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and ordered that they be educated for three years, at the end of which they were to <sup>[h]</sup>enter the king's personal service. <sup>6</sup>Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. <sup>7</sup>Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abednego (**A-bed-nego**).

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The first thing we see here is that:

### I. THE DILEMMA

vvs. 1-7

A. These young Hebrew men faced several problems. Each of these had the potential to derail them and lead them off on a spiritual tangent.  
-However, the problems they faced were not that different from those we face daily in our world.

1. **A New Home** vs. 1-2- These young men had been brought up in and around Jerusalem, and they were constantly reminded of their God and of His importance to life. The Temple with its sacrifices was *there*. The priests and the scribes were *there* teaching. The prophets were preaching the message of Jehovah *there*. **Now**, they are slaves and have been hauled off to Babylon. *Here*, they are surrounded by heathen worship, heathen images, and heathen people. It would be easy to conform just to fit in.

**(Illustration)** For the Christian, the danger is just as real. It is easy to be spiritual in church. It is easy to be godly around godly people. However, **when we separate from the godly influences around us, we are placing ourselves in a dangerous position.** We are opening up our lives to the possibility of compromise. Therefore, it is important that we are consistent in our church attendance, as mentioned in Hebrews 10:25<sup>1</sup>. It is essential that we surround ourselves with God's people, (1 Cor. 15:33) It is easy to

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<sup>1</sup> 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

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compromise and conform with the world when we are away from the influence of godliness.

**2. New Knowledge-** vs. 3-4 - These young men were taught a new language and new ways of looking at life.

(a) All their lives, they had been exposed to Jewish wisdom.

Now, they are being taught the wisdom of Babylon.

(b) They are being exposed to things they have never been exposed to before. It's a dangerous time for them. There is a lot of pressure being exerted on them to conform to the new world around them.

**(Illustration).** The same dangers face the Christian in this world today. We are constantly being exposed to new ways of thinking and are being told that our way of looking at the world, through the eyes of God in the Bible, is outdated, ancient and intolerant. There is a lot of pressure being placed on the Christian community to conform to the world's way of thinking. We are told to accept homosexuality, alcohol usage, cursing, promiscuous sexual activity, etc.

However, **God has not changed His mind about a single thing!** What He said 4,000, 3,000, or 2,000 years ago still stands today! It doesn't matter if the entire world stands against it, the Word of God is sure, it is settled, and it is right! (Psalms 119:89; Isaiah 40:8)

**3. A New Diet vs. 5** - All their lives, these four young men had lived by the dietary laws handed down by the Lord. Now, they are faced with new food. Most likely, this food was unclean, by Jewish standards, and most of the meat had probably been

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sacrificed to idols. Therefore, it would have defiled these men and made them unclean before the Lord.

**(Illustration)** As Christians, we too are faced with choices that run contrary to the best that God has purposed for us. There are decisions about our choice of entertainment, our music we listen to, choices in our personal relationships. We are confronted daily by choices to either do or not do certain things that can cause us to be defiled. Now, I am saved, and nothing will ever change that! But **the choices I make in life can either build me up or tear me down as a servant of God.** I can never be lost again, but I can become defiled and put on the shelf by God (1 Cor. 9:27). Therefore, it is extremely important that we constantly guard ourselves in this matter of what we take into our lives. (David had a good plan - Psa. 101:3))

**4. A New Name vs. 6-7** - When these young men arrived in Babylon, they came carrying wonderful names. Each name carried with it a testimony to the person of God.

- (a) Daniel - God is my judge
- (b) Hananiah - God is gracious
- (c) Mishael - God is without equal
- (d) Azariah - The Lord is my helper

When they arrived in Babylon, they were given new names.

- (a) Daniel became Belteshazzar- "Bel will protect."
- (b) Hananiah became Shadrach - "Inspiration of the Sun."
- (c) Mishael became Meshach - "Belonging to Aku."
- (d) Azariah became Abednego- "Servant of Nego."

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Nebuchadnezzar's goal was to change their identity and hopefully their way of thinking. However, it is plain to see as one reads the book of Daniel, that even though their names were changed, their character remained intact.

**(Illustration)** A. The world and the devil will try every tactic to force us to fit into their mold. However, no matter what they say to us, call us, do to us or throw at us in life, they will never be able to change what we are, (1 John 3:1-2)<sup>2</sup>! We must never forget that we are the twice-born children of the living God!

B. As we journey through life, there are going to be constant attempts by the enemy to get us to let down our guard, to conform to the world's standards and to do things we know to be wrong. However, these times of testing and trial can be weathered safely and securely. God Himself has promised to help us when we face times of testing – (1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 4:15)

C. Looking at the stand these four young men took in Babylon will help us when we are faced with a crossroads in life.

We see not only (I) **The Dilemma**, but next we see (II) **The Aim**

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<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3 <sup>1</sup>See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,<sup>[a]</sup> we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

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### II. THE AIM

vvs. 8-16

#### (Read Daniel 1:8-16)

<sup>8</sup> But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. <sup>9</sup> Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, <sup>10</sup> but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your<sup>[a]</sup> food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.”

<sup>11</sup> Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” <sup>14</sup> So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

The first thing that we see in this section is:



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**A. Their Dedication** - The Babylonians could change their homes, their diet, their names, and their education, but they could never change their hearts! These men had decided that they were going to serve the Lord, whatever the cost! It would have been easy to say, "Well, it's all right, everyone else is doing it!" Or "We had better do what the king says." Or "We'll obey the king outwardly, but we'll just keep our faith to ourselves." These options weren't good enough for these men! They were willing to commit themselves to God's will despite the consequences.

**Illustration:** Christians need this same level of determined commitment! Many of us seem to find it too easy to give in to compromise. We need to dedicate ourselves to God and His plan for our lives, even if it costs us our lives! **Our duty is to faithfully serve the Lord with all we have and are, the details are His problem.**<sup>3</sup> Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58<sup>4</sup>

**B. Their Desire** vs 9-14 - In an effort to maintain their ceremonial purity before the Lord, they requested that they not be forced to eat the king's meat. They knew they would be fed defiled and defiling foods, therefore, they requested that they be allowed to have vegetables and water for a ten-day period. Daniel and his friends knew that a vegetarian diet would not defile them, and they knew that God would honor their faith in Him. They were willing to put God to the test.

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<sup>3</sup> **Romans 12** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:58d- ,because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

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**(Illustration)** It will not always be the easiest thing, nor will it be the most popular thing for you to take your stand with God. It will not always be understood by those around you. However, it is always the right thing! If we are willing to stand our ground for the Lord, He will certainly honor our stand and bless us. Matt. 6:33<sup>5</sup>

The whole point of this section of the text is that these young men made up their minds that they were going to live for the Lord, and they allowed nothing to change them or to turn them from their purpose! As you follow them through the rest of their lives, you see they stuck to their guns more than once.

- In chapter 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were willing to die rather than compromise.
- In chapter 6, Daniel, an 80-+ year old man, risked death in the lion's den rather than compromise in his walk with God.

-What about us, do we have that same level of resolve and commitment to the Lord and His work?

-Would you be willing to die before compromising with the enemy?

**(Illustration)** There are a lot of God's children who need to recommit themselves to the Lord! There are many who have let down their guard and have compromised in one or more issues. Others are flirting dangerously close to doing the same thing. It is time for God's children to resolve in their hearts, that come what may, they will not disgrace the name of Jesus, and they will not compromise in any area of their life!

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 6 <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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-The dedication of these men can be summed up in two words: **faith and obedience**. They were willing to trust God to fulfill His promises, and they were willing to follow Him, regardless of the personal cost. What about you?

### **I. THE DILEMMA, II. THE AIM**

### **III. THE UPGRADE**

**vvs. 17-21**

#### **Read Daniel 1:17-21**

*<sup>17</sup>To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.*

*<sup>18</sup>At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup>The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup>In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.*

*<sup>21</sup>And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.*

**A. Their Experience** (vvs. 15-16)- Daniels experiment worked! God honored His Word and these men were healthier than the others. (Illustration) These 4 men knew something that many of us never get, "**If we will do as God says, He will never fail us, even in the slightest way.**"

-He will be absolutely faithful to honor His Word and His servants who trust that Word and do as He says.) Lam. 3:23; Heb. 6:13-19.

-Come what may, **you can count on the Lord!**

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**B. Their Excellence** vvs. 17-20 - After 3 years, (Notice that they maintained their **resolve** all during this time!), they stood before the king. When he interviewed them, He found that they were head and shoulders above all the others and that they were 10 times better than his wisest counselors. Again, this reminds us that God honors those who honor Him.

**(Illustration)** This does not teach that serving God faithfully will make you smart, attractive and famous. It does teach us that serving God has with it the benefit of being promoted in His work. God placed these men where He could use them in that day, and He did use them in wonderful ways for His glory. He will place us in this day and use us here and now if we will serve Him as we should. **The key is to never compromise, even in what we think is the smallest of areas!**

**C. Their Endurance vs 21** - We are not told how long Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego served in Babylon, but we are told that Daniel endured, in a place of power and prominence, for over 70 years. In fact, he was nearing 90 when he faced the lions. This just encourages me because it reminds me that no matter how long I live, or where I go in life, if I will always seek to honor the Lord, He will consistently bless me and use me for His glory.

**(Illustration)** God is always looking for vessels which He can fill up and pour out for His glory. However, to be usable, we have to be clean, and to be clean, we must learn to never be guilty of compromise - 2 Tim. 2:20-21. God's house is filled with all kinds of vessels. Some are honorable and are being

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used for His glory. Others are defiled through compromise in one or more areas of life and cannot be used. Which best describes your life?)

#### **Conclusion:**

"A giant 400-year-old redwood came crashing down one day, and they could not figure out why. The tree had survived four centuries of storms, lightning, and earthquakes--what had felled it?

-On closer inspection, investigators found that tiny beetles had found their way inside its trunk and had begun eating away its life-giving fibers, weakening its mighty bulk from the inside out."

**(Illustration)** In much the same way, the devil tries to bring Christians down through a steady drone of small, seemingly insignificant temptations. While we are fighting and resisting him in one area, he may be setting up house in another area of our lives. Satan will find ways to creep into our lives for the purpose of eroding our foundations until our fibers have become undone and we come crashing down to the ground.

-Show me a person who has fallen away from their walk with the Lord, and I will show you a person who started making compromises in his or her life long ago.

- Are there areas in your life where you have begun to let your guard down?
- Are you allowing things in you life that you used to think were wrong?

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- If you have begun the downward spiral of compromise, I am glad I can tell you that Jesus allows u-turns! He has promised us that we can find unconditional forgiveness when we come home to Him, 1 John 1:9.
- Where do you find yourself today?
  - If the little beetles of compromise are whittling away at your walk with God, then come back home and allow the Lord to put you back where He wants you to be.
- Look deep inside and do what you need to do today, and allow Him to have **His way** in your life.