

Daniel The Man Highly Esteemed by God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon is about the importance of emulating the faithfulness, discipline, and humility of Daniel, a man highly esteemed by God. It highlights the need to seek insight from the Holy Spirit, lead others to righteousness, and be an encourager and protector in the church. The sermon emphasizes the significance of fasting, prayer, and seeking God's wisdom in building a new covenant church. It also underscores the importance of being disciplined in one's lifestyle, avoiding sin, and seeking honor from God rather than from men.

Scripture: Daniel 10:12, Daniel 12:3, Daniel 9:3, Daniel 6:10, Daniel 11:32, Daniel 7:15, Daniel 1:8, Daniel 10:13, Daniel 12:13

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Seeking God's Wisdom"

Description

This sermon is about the importance of emulating the faithfulness, discipline, and humility of Daniel, a man highly esteemed by God. It highlights the need to seek insight from the Holy Spirit, lead others to righteousness, and be an encourager and protector in the church. The sermon emphasizes the significance of fasting, prayer, and seeking God's wisdom in building a new covenant church. It also underscores the importance of being disciplined in one's lifestyle, avoiding sin, and seeking honor from God rather than from men.

Transcript

So, we continue our study on the subject of new covenant men who lived in the Old Testament times. We have already considered Job, Abraham, Moses, Elisha, and these men, they were not perfect. Job, you see how he complained against God and of course God forgave him.

Abraham made mistakes calling Sarah his sister. Moses also made mistakes. He got upset with the people and struck the rock twice.

And Elisha also, we don't know much about his life, but we know once when somebody made fun of him saying, go up, go up, you bald head, made fun of his bald head and said, why don't you also go up like Elijah? It says he turned around and I think he brought a curse upon them. And some says in 2 Kings 2, 24, he cursed them and two female bears came and ate up 42 of those young people. Now I wouldn't, I don't know whether that was right or not.

I don't think it was, but however, so he made mistakes. Okay. But when we come to certain people in the Bible, it says almost nothing is recorded bad about them.

Joseph is one of them. But even with Joseph, I feel it was a mistake that he made in boasting about his dreams to his brothers that caused a lot of problems. But now we want to think about another man about whom I can't find any mistake at all in the Old Testament.

And that's Daniel. Amazing man. You read through the whole book and you don't find a single thing wrong that mistake that he ever did.

Of course, he was a failing man like all of us, but an amazing testimony. There's one thing written about Daniel in Daniel chapter 10, when an angel comes and says to him in Daniel 10, 11, O Daniel, a man of high esteem, a man who is very precious, desirable to God. Boy, what a testimony.

One whom God desires, just like men desire for gold and things like that. God desired Daniel. And when he was a young man, a man highly esteemed by God, very precious in God's eyes, a challenge to us.

And Daniel was the man who began the movement of God's people out of Babylon, back to Jerusalem. He lived through the entire period of the captivity. He must've been a young man when the Israelites were taken in captives to Babylon, maybe 17 years old.

70 years later, when he's past 87, nearly 90 years old, he's still faithful praying that God's people will go back to Jerusalem. He's a picture of those people whom God is choosing today to lead people out of Babylonian Christianity into a new covenant church. The Jerusalem is a picture of the new covenant church.

Babylon is a picture of corrupt backslidden Christianity, where the preachers are all after money. You read in Revelation 17 and 18, the fundamental principle of Babylon is money. In Revelation chapter 17, you read the Babylon, the religious Babylon being hand in hand with the political leadership.

And you find a lot of that in Christendom also today. Religious leaders getting involved with corrupt political leaders for their own gain in some way, and thinking that they are serving God by influencing these political leaders. But the political leaders we read in Revelation 17, they use Babylon just for their own purpose and they destroy them.

Political leaders are using religious people, even Christians just for their own purposes. And we need to be alert to that and not be fooled by all these religious people who support politicians who are corrupt. And then in chapter 18, you read of Babylon as entirely a business system.

Merchants of the earth weep when Babylon is destroyed, our profits are gone. So whatever Christianity becomes a means of financial gain and profit, that is Babylon. Any preacher who has made money through preaching the gospel is part of Babylon.

Paul never made money through preaching the gospel, he supported himself. John Wesley, I think it was, who said that if you have become rich through preaching the gospel, you've gone astray. No, and yet so many people that are in the world today who make money through preaching the gospel, pastors and preachers.

The best way to serve the Lord today is like Daniel, like Paul. Daniel was not a full-time worker being supported by others, he supported himself. He was working in a government office and he was a prophet of God and he was the main force that started the movement of God's people out of Babylon to Jerusalem.

And I believe that's the type of person God's looking for. Those who will work today, earn their own living, not be dependent on anyone financially. I'm not saying you cannot receive a birthday gift or any gift that people give you, we are not legalistic, but we don't depend on people, that's the point, we must support ourselves.

And that's, Daniel is a great example there. And yet he fasted and prayed and began the movement that started the process of the people of the Jewish people going back from Babylon to Jerusalem. Though he never himself lived to reach there, he started the process which led to Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah all going and finally building the temple.

So there's a great example for us. And he's also a picture of what the book of Revelation calls overcomers. You know, to all the churches in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3, the Lord speaks to the overcomers, to him who overcomes I'll grant this, so in that church, that was the church, they were all born again believers, but in the midst of the church there were some who were overcomers.

In all of those seven churches, the message of the Lord is to him who overcomes I'll give this. And Daniel is an example of those overcomers. Those overcomers are pictured in Revelation chapter 14 as the 144,000 who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

There's a difference between that and the group mentioned in chapter 7, which is a great multitude. The main difference is that it's not a question of numbers, but in Revelation 7, it says a great multitude which cannot be numbered. Revelation 7, 9, heaven is going to consist of a great multitude.

And I think many of them were babies who died and were aborted. And they're all there from every nation, tribe, and tongue standing before God, millions and millions of people. But what can they say? Our salvation is due to the Lamb.

We washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, verse 10 and verse 14 of Revelation 7. That's all their testimony. But when it comes to the overcomers in Revelation 14, that's a much smaller number. The number 144,000 is not the point.

The point is this is a number that can be counted compared to the other number which cannot be counted. There are many people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the overcomers who accomplished God's purpose are a small number that can be counted. And they are the ones who were not defiled by the earth and not defiled by corrupt Babylonian Christianity and who followed the Lamb wherever he went.

They were redeemed from out of the earth. A wonderful passage in Revelation 14, 1 to 5. Daniel is a forerunner of that category because we see a similar situation there in the Old Testament. And he was a young man.

Many people were called by the Lord when they were young. Joseph was 30, and he was 17 when God called him. And Jeremiah was a young man, we read in chapter 1. Ezekiel was 30 years old when God called him for a ministry.

And Daniel was probably only 17 years old when God called him, between 17 and 20. And as a young man, we read here, the Bible says it's good for a man to bear the yoke when he's young, Lamentations 3, 27. So all of you young people, I want you to be challenged by this example of Daniel.

It says here in verse 8, a decision that all young people should take and all believers. He made up his mind that he would not defile himself, Daniel 1, verse 8, with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank. What was he concerned about? There were laws given by God through Moses in the book of Leviticus chapter 11, that they should not eat certain types of meat.

They should not eat meat which has got the blood inside it, Leviticus 17, 10. And they should not drink wine when it is fermented and stirring itself up in the cup, Proverbs 23, 31. There were verses like this, forbidding you from drinking fermented alcoholic wine and certain meats which are not good.

And he studied the word, that's the main thing we see there. He would not have known this if he had not studied God's word. He knew what the law said.

And these are all small commandments. These are not the big 10 commandments and the 10 commandments, there's nothing about food. So it's not enough just to keep the big commandments.

He studied the small commandments and he didn't say, well, this is against the 10 commandments, but he said, no, God's word forbids me from drinking this wine, which is fermented. God's word forbids me from eating this pork, which is provided here and there's food with the meat with the blood in it. I'm going to avoid it.

Now, people are going to say, don't be legalistic, man. These are all silly rules. It was given to Israelites when they were in the wilderness.

No, they were God's laws. And that's the primary mark of an overcomer. He is careful about God's laws, even the smallest one of them.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 19, whoever cancels one of the least of these commandments, why did he talk about the least? Because the test of a person's obedience is not that he keeps the big commandments, don't murder, don't commit adultery. No, the test of a person's obedience is in keeping the small commandments. Whoever cancels one of the least of these commandments and teaches others saying, oh, well, that's not serious.

Don't worry about keeping that. That's not the main thing in scripture. He will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever keeps and teaches the smallest commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. So even if you're not a great preacher, why don't you become great in the kingdom of heaven like this, by keeping the smallest commandment, of course, that includes the biggest ones and teaching others to keep the smallest ones. And you find in Christendom today, there's such compromise.

For example, Jesus has taught very clearly against divorce and remarriage. But there are so many believers and so many pastors who've divorced, remarried, divorced people, remarry, and they even become pastors and preachers. Where is Christendom gone? Or for example, take a commandment like women should pray with their heads veiled.

Very small commandment. You look around all the churches around in most countries, and you don't see them veiling their heads. And even in places where they do veil their heads, it's just a ritual.

They don't understand what it means. And men who don't veil their heads, they don't understand what that means that their head is unveiled. Because they are careless.

If you read 1 Corinthians 11, it's very clear. Who obeys these small commandments? Those who are overcomers. And who insists that in your church, you must keep these commandments.

When you pray and prophesy, a woman must veil her head, and a man must not veil his head. Those who obey little commandments, they're called great in the kingdom of heaven. There's an attitude I find among Christians, oh, that's small.

It doesn't matter. Jesus said, baptizing the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Matthew 28, verse 19 and 20. But there are people who baptize in the name of Jesus.

Okay, it doesn't matter. That's not a serious thing. Okay.

Well, you disobey the commandment of God, you're going to be least in the kingdom of heaven, even if you get there. But Daniel was concerned about the smallest commandment. That's the first lesson we need to learn from the life of Daniel.

A man was highly esteemed by God, because he kept the smallest commandment. You can follow in his footsteps. He determined in his heart that he would not compromise, even in the smallest little things.

And it's not just that I won't bow down to idols. That's fine. But I will obey God in the smallest things.

So you find here that even when everybody else, you know, all the other Jews around sitting at the table, they were eating everything. They were probably telling Daniel, come on, man, don't be so sticky. Don't be a legalist, sticking about these small things.

You know, you can get abused like that, that you're being a legalist when you try to be concerned about the small things. Obedience to God's small commandments is not being legalist. No.

The question is not whether the command is big or small. The question is who commanded it. If it's almighty God, ruler of heaven and earth who has commanded it, if it's my heavenly father who has commanded it, I don't care whether it's a small one or a big one.

That's what makes the commandment important. Who commanded it? That's Daniel's attitude. And if you want to be an overcomer, begin there.

Stand up for God in the midst of all the opposition, all the people at the table, there were many people, Jews selected, and they enjoyed it, all that food. Daniel said no. Now I want you to see here, because Daniel said no, we read here that three other people, Hananiah, Daniel 111, Mishael, and Azariah also joined him.

We know them today as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They're Babylonian names, but they were originally Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Daniel 111. Here's a picture of how a New Testament church gets formed, New Covenant church.

Tremendous lessons in the book of Daniel. One man takes a stand for God and God brings out almost out of the woodwork three people who stand for him. Now Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah did not have the courage to stand on their own.

They were waiting for a Daniel to take a stand. And when they saw one man take a stand, they said, hey Daniel, we're joining you. I believe around the world, in every country, there are many Hananiahs, Mishaels, and Azariahs who really want to obey God, really want to start a New Covenant church, really want, are fed up with Babylonian Christianity, but they don't have the boldness and the courage and the anointing to start a New Covenant church.

What are they waiting for? They're waiting for one Daniel, and there are very, very few Daniels. But if a Daniel arises somewhere, the Hananiahs, and Mishael, and Azariahs will come and join him. And where two or three are gathered together, there is a local church there that can grow, and grow, and grow with wholehearted disciples.

That's how we saw the work begin in Bangalore, in India 45 years ago. It wasn't a big number, it was two or three that God brought together, and that's how the church started. And that's how we see here, we can say this is a picture of a New Covenant church, four people.

The number didn't matter, because those people influenced the nation of Babylon, influenced the nation of Medo-Persia later on, which all the other Jews could not. A small group of a New Covenant church can be a tremendous influence for God, not influencing a country today, no, but in influencing the church in the battle against Satan. We want to shine as a light before Satan, a light in a world controlled by Satan, that God has a remnant here that stands true to him, and obey him in everything.

You see, the devil is always taunting God, saying, you don't have people who will obey you in everything. They'll obey you in the big things, and they'll ignore all the small things you're commanded. And the Lord says, no, but look at this group there.

Maybe there are only four people there, but they obey me 100%. That's what he would say in Babylon there, if the devil were to say, look at all these Jews. They're all supposed to be descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The devil says, but God, none of them are obeying you in all the little details. When they see good food, they just enjoy it. They don't care whether it's against your laws or not.

But God says, hang on, look at those four. Look at Daniel. Those three, they're obeying me even in the little things.

And I believe it's the same today that God can point out to Satan. You see here in this country and that country, not many, but a few, three, four people here and three, four people there were obeying me 100%. I want to ask you whether you're one of them, or you're one of the big crowd who calls everybody legalists and you compromise thoroughly because it's to your advantage.

Well, if you look at Christian history, you'll find that God has always begun a new movement through one man, whether it's John Wesley or William Booth or different people through the years, one man, Paul. And like that through the years, it's always been one man who stood up for God and then two or three gathered. And then one man will be hated, persecuted and made fun of, called the devil and all types of things.

But around him, there gathers a few people. Initially only two or three, but gradually the number increases. And that's how a new covenant church is formed.

That's how it's been formed throughout history. Any movement of God, anyone who stood up for the whole truth of God, anyone, for example, John Wesley stood up for holiness. And then in the 19th century, there are people who stood up for water baptism and for coming together in simplicity as a New Testament church and for evangelism among the poor and the down and outs like William Booth did.

There's always a small group and around them came people who wanted to join up with that and stand for God. And then more in this century where the truths of the baptism, the Holy Spirit and becoming a New Testament church, all these truths came up in the 20th century. It's always been that God finds one man somewhere and gathers other people around him.

That's the lesson from Daniel. And what I want to challenge you, my dear brothers, are you willing to be that one man? Not for honor. Daniel didn't do it for honor.

He didn't even know what was happening. But he said, I want to live for God. I don't care if nobody joins me.

That's the attitude. Not, I want to have the honor of starting a New Testament church. God will never use you like that because he doesn't use people who are seeking their own honor.

He doesn't use people who want to get a name for themselves. He uses people for whom who want to exalt Christ and to exalt Christ in the church. So Daniel was like that.

I want to show you an amazing thing, not only about his wholeheartedness and standing for God, but his humility. See, God had such confidence in Daniel's humility that he could say some amazing things about him. Remember there was a prophet in Babylon at that time called Ezekiel.

Daniel was much younger than him, probably 10 years or more younger than him. And Ezekiel was 30 years old and Daniel was probably 17 or 18. And God tells Ezekiel, listen to this.

In the prophecy of Ezekiel, God says in Ezekiel 14 and verse 13 and 14, he says, if a country sins against me and so on, I will destroy it. But if there are three men in that country, Ezekiel 14, 14, Noah, Daniel, and Job, they will save themselves by their own righteousness and nobody else. Noah died hundreds of years earlier.

Job died hundreds of years earlier, but Daniel was alive. Imagine including Daniel, a living young man, 20 years old, and God includes him along with Noah and Job when he says, these are the three most righteous men I can think of right now. How could God say that if he felt, oh, Daniel will get all puffed up when Ezekiel says that? Because Ezekiel was in Babylon just along with Daniel and he was prophesying and Daniel heard that and he did not puff him up.

Imagine if you heard something like that, that God included you along with Noah and Job and your name. Would it puff you up? Oh, it's wonderful. It means a tremendous challenge that God had such confidence in Daniel's humility that he knew that he would not puff him up.

God's choosing for people who will never seek their own, who will not care about their own name, who are not interested in exalting themselves, who will not get puffed up even if great prophets praise them, will fall on their face before God all the time like John and say, Lord, I'm a sinner saved by grace. That's all I am. And it's your mercy and your grace that's brought me very up.

God had that confidence in Daniel. And then I want to tell you another thing which Ezekiel said about Daniel. Listen to this.

In Ezekiel 28, we read about the origin of Satan. He was in Ezekiel 28 and verse 12. Satan is called the king of Tyre.

That was a ruler in Tyre, but the real king behind that ruler was the devil. So Ezekiel 28, 12, he talks about the devil saying you had the seal of perfection. You were in Eden, the highest of the angels.

He was in the garden of God and he was the anointed sheriff. Verse 14, Ezekiel 28, 14, he was on the holy mountain of God until pride was found in you and you were cast down. Your heart was lifted up.

Verse 17, you know, that's how the highest angel became the devil. But there's one thing said about this, Satan. Ezekiel says concerning Satan, verse 3, Ezekiel 28, verse 3, you are wiser than Daniel.

Not wiser than Solomon. Solomon was supposed to be the wisest man, humanly speaking, of human wisdom. But when it came to spiritual wisdom, God says Daniel is number one.

And Daniel was alive there. He was a young man and Ezekiel could say such things about him. I'm amazed at the confidence that God had in Daniel to say such things about him when he was a young man, knowing it would not puff him up.

Brother, if you're like that, you're a very, very blessed man. And so he takes a stand against the food and he discovers at the end of it that God honors him and he's selected to, he's appreciated by those who selected the ones who served the king. And I wanted to see another thing in Daniel 117.

It says here that these four young men, Daniel and Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Daniel 117, God gave them, listen to this, knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and writing and wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, wisdom, and Daniel even had understanding of visions and dreams. God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature. Yeah.

It's God who gives intelligence. If you're a young man, you've got to study in a school or a college and you've got to study hard and do well to be able to earn your living. How can you do that if God doesn't give you ability? I remember when my four sons were young and in school, I put this verse on top of that table where they sat and studied, Daniel 117.

God gave these young men knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom. And I said to my boys, claim that for yourself. If God could do that for Daniel and his three friends, he can do it for you, four of you as well.

So it's a good verse. If you train your children to be wholehearted disciples, it's not for every Tom, Dick, and Harry. For those who are willing to be wholehearted disciples, God gives you many other things as well.

So that's a great verse and also spiritual vision as well. The wonderful thing here is that God, it says in Daniel 1.9, God granted Daniel favor in the eyes of officials. And that's another thing we've experienced through the years.

When God wants to give you favor in the eyes of earthly officials, he can do it and he does it for his servants where needed. Of course, sometimes he allows us to be persecuted and killed. That's another

thing.

Now we go on to Daniel chapter two and we read about Nebuchadnezzar having a vision. And what does he do? He calls all these magicians and says, please declare my dream and its interpretation. He says, I don't know what the dream is because it's gone from me.

I don't know what the dream is, but, and the magician said, tell us what the dream is and we'll give you the interpretation. The king was shrewd. He said, these guys are crooks.

If I tell them the dream, they'll produce something and follow the interpretation. But I know if they're really in touch with God, let them tell me the dream. If you're in touch with God, they should be able to tell me the dream I had without my telling them.

Yeah. Then finally he said, got to kill all of them. These fellows can't tell me my dream.

And Daniel is also one of those leaders there. And the message went to Daniel saying, the king wants to kill you. So Daniel went in verse Daniel 2.16 and requested the king, please give me some time.

I will declare the interpretation. He asked for time because he wanted to pray along with the others. And he knew absolutely certain that God would give him the dream and the interpretation.

And what did he do? He didn't stand alone. This is the new Testament church there as it were a picture of it. Verse 17, he called his three friends.

He said, let's pray together. But two or three are gathered together in my name today. Jesus says, I'll be in the midst.

This is a forerunner of that. They came together and they prayed to God for compassion. And so Lord show us this mystery and we don't want to be destroyed.

We want to be your witnesses here. And verse 19, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. God does amazing things when he wants to pull through something.

He'll do amazing things if he finds a whole hearted group of young people. It's a great encouragement to those who want to start local churches wherever they are. And see, this is the difference between these godly men.

To me, the magicians are a picture of these Bible school professors and people who get Bible school degrees who don't know a head or tail about revelation from God. They only got head knowledge, academic knowledge of scripture, just like academic knowledge of history books and all that and chemistry books and physics books. They go to Bible colleges and study and get degrees and doctorates and become professors.

They are like these Kelly and magicians. They do it for money. You pay them a salary and they'll be your pastor and then they'll find a better church and more salary.

They go there. Daniel was not in that carrier at all. He wasn't doing anything for money.

He was seeking the glory of God. So there's a great example there of the contrast between Babylonian preachers and preachers who build the body of Christ. And Daniel comes and explains the dream and he

exalts God.

And we read here, finally, when Nebuchadnezzar saw this, when he heard this, he was absolutely amazed. And listen, it says here in Daniel 2 and 46, Nebuchadnezzar fell down on his face before Daniel and offered incense to him as if he were a God. And he said, surely your God is a God.

And the king promoted Daniel and Daniel just walked away from there. It wasn't taken up with all that. He would not accept that worship or any such thing.

Think of this. The king was the most powerful person in the world at that time, Nebuchadnezzar. Imagine if the president of your country came and fell down before you.

Oh, how many preachers will be delighted today? That's why they are not like Daniel. They are Babylonian preachers. Daniel walked away from him and said, I don't want you to worship me.

I'm not interested. He did not seek favor from the political authorities of his time, but he did help his friends. He says he made requests to the king and got jobs for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel 249.

And that's good that we use whatever influence we have in the world to help our fellow believers, especially those who are wholehearted and standing with us. But we don't want any honor or anything from them. Wonderful example, Daniel.

Then we go to Daniel chapter three, and here we don't see Daniel at all in this chapter. The king had ordered all the satrapic prefects, verse three, Daniel three, three, governors, counselors, all come because he set up a big idol and a huge idol, and everybody used to fall down and worship. And we find Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are there because they were also officers in the king's kingdom.

But Daniel is not there at all. I often wondered where was Daniel? Either he didn't go or maybe he decided to go out of town that day. And to avoid this situation, it's good to avoid situations where we may find ourselves trapped if we can.

And so he was not there, but he had done such a first class job in training these three people that they stood for the Lord, even though Daniel was not there to support them. That's the mark of a man of God who's starting a new covenant church, that he trains others in such a way that they're not dependent on this man of God all the time. Even at the very early stage, he trained them, led them up to God and taught them God's ways and told them to be strict and follow the commandments.

And then Daniel can be far away and disappear. And these people are standing true to God, just like Daniel would. No, we're not going to bow down.

You can throw us in the furnace of fire if you like, but we will not bow down. What a work he had done. A true man of God in a new covenant church trains other younger people quickly to stand for God just like he does.

Great examples we have of this great man, a new covenant man in an Old Testament time. And when they went into the furnace, they found Jesus was standing there with them, talking to them. Boy, what an experience that was.

Wonderful. And then we come to chapter four. Now the king has Nebuchadnezzar has another dream.

But again, we read Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. It says in verse five, I saw a dream, Daniel 4.5. And again, he doesn't call Daniel. He's again dependent on the wise men.

Verse six, Daniel 4.6. I call the wise men. And see, by this time, Daniel is now an older man. He's about 53 years old, or more than 50 years old.

And he doesn't project himself when he hears the king had a dream. Hey, you remember many years ago? Oh, king, I interpret him call me. No, he's there in the background.

A true man of God is like that. He's not always hanging around political leaders and wanting their favor. He's always in the background.

He says, you want me, you'll call me. But I'm not interested in coming there. And all these Bible school professors, they were called first, the magicians and the conjurers, verse four, seven, the Chaldeans, and all the pastors and all that and they could not reveal God's plan.

How true of today. This is Babylonian Christianity. Corrupt.

It does not stand true to God's word. That's interested in money and getting a salary. Jesus never got a salary.

The apostles never got a salary. No prophet in the Old Testament got a salary. No prophet went to a Bible school.

Jesus didn't send his disciples to a Bible school. Where does this new thing come from? Babylon. And the only person who went to a Bible school before he came to Christ, that's the apostle Paul.

Jesus had to send him into the desert for three years to get all that chaff that Gamaliel taught him out of his head. And yet Christendom thinks that the only way to serve God is to go to Bible school and get a salary. Well, then the apostles didn't serve God at all.

They didn't go to Bible school. They never got a salary. So you see that Daniel is a great example of a man who supported himself and revealed God's purposes.

So when this dream came finally, it says in verse 8, Daniel 4, finally Daniel. All the others have failed. There's only one man here who can tell me.

Nebuchadnezzar calls Daniel and says, please tell me what the dream means. And Daniel comes and tells him the dream. He prays.

And it's interesting. The dream was a message of judgment. The other one, the earlier one was something that almost exalted the King, but this was a message of judgment.

He says, Daniel, when he saw the dream, his thoughts, Daniel 4, 19, his thoughts alarmed him. And he told the King, don't let this alarm you. But what I've seen about you, O King, is that you, verse 25, you will be driven away from mankind and you will be with the beasts of the field.

You eat grass like the cattle and drenched with the dew of heaven till seven periods of time have passed until you recognize that almighty God, the most high rules over the realm of men, and you're not the one. And the stump that remained from the roots of the trees, your kingdom will be assured after you recognize

that it is heaven that rules. See, to give a message of judgment to the world's top ruler and not to be a compromiser, where do we find men of God like that? Like John the Baptist spoke to Herod, you cannot take your brother's wife.

Or like Elijah spoke to Ahab, you're the troubler of Israel, not me. And the way these prophets were fearless and Daniel was like that, spoke the truth. I tell you, God needs men like that who will speak the truth fearlessly and don't bother about who gets offended and leaves your church, which big shot comes into your church and gets offended.

I remember when we started a church, we had a few rich people, very few, two or three, and they were the first people who got offended and left. Praise the Lord. We were left with the poor.

And that's how the church began. It's always like that. God has chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith, James chapter two, verse five.

Remember this, if you're out to please the rich and the brave and the mighty in the world, you'll never, never build a new covenant church. And so he gives him some advice, verse 27, Daniel, imagine this prophet of God giving the world's greatest ruler some advice. Here's my advice.

Number one, give up your sins. Stop sinning. Can I tell you anything? Stop sinning.

Where are the prophets today who will go to a president or ruler of a country and say, stop sinning, sir. That's what God says. Stop sinning.

Stop telling lies and do righteousness and show mercy to the poor people. Care for those who are being afflicted, the poor and the helpless care for them. Very relevant advice needed for top leaders in all the big countries in the world today.

They're all corrupt. Those who call themselves Christians or those who are anti-Christian, they're all exactly the same. And the advice that a true prophet should give such people is the same thing here in Daniel four 27, break away from your sins, do righteousness and be merciful to the poor people who are suffering.

You know, Daniel had read what the prophet Micah had said before him. Micah six verse eight. What does God require of you, old man? Do righteously love mercy and humble yourself and walk with God.

That's exactly what he said here. And, but Nebuchadnezzar didn't listen. He was still worshiping the work of his hands.

Like Stephen said about those who worship the golden calf in Acts seven 41, they worship the work of their hands. Nebuchadnezzar said, look at this wonderful Babylon I have built, verse 30, how great it is. He worshiped the work of his hands, just like many preachers today worship the church building they've built or the people they've gathered.

Look, I've got a mega church, no different from Nebuchadnezzar. They worship the work of their hands, but God humbled such people. And you see many of these big preachers fall into adultery or something like that.

God humbles them till finally Nebuchadnezzar recognized, he says in verse 35, one of the most powerful statements of the sovereignty of God found anywhere in the Bible. And it's proclaimed by

Nebuchadnezzar, all the inhabitants of the earth are like zero. Daniel four 35, God does whatever he wants in heaven and on earth and nobody can stop him.

Nobody can ask him, what have you done? Finally he came to that place. Then we go to chapter five, Daniel is now about more than 80 years old. And Belshazzar, who they say was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, we don't know all the details about him, but he finds some words written on the wall and he's having a feast along with others with their wives and concubines, et cetera, verse two and three.

And the fingers of a man emerged in verse five, Daniel five five. And the king began to tremble, his knees began to shake, knocked together in Daniel five six. And again, does he call for Daniel who's been there 70 years? No.

Again, they call for the preachers, for the Bible school degree holders, the conjurors, the Chaldeans, the diviners. And the king said, can you please explain this to me? And none of them could do it. Yeah, they can explain the theory of the Bible, but revelation, revelation is given only to godly people, not to those who have degrees, not to those who work for money.

And then the queen came in, that's probably his mother, and said, oh king, there's a man, you remember, in the days of your father, King Nebuchadnezzar's father, probably his grandfather, and he was an extraordinary knowledge, spirit, knowledge, and insight. It's Daniel. Call him.

Then Daniel was brought. Daniel wasn't hanging around there. He was still always in the background.

You see that? He said in chapter four, you see that in chapter four, chapter two, chapter four, chapter five. Then he comes and he says, I'll give you so many gifts. And look at this lovely word from Daniel.

Verse 17, when the king offers him, I'll give you so much authority, I'll clothe you with purple. Verse 16, I'll give you a necklace of gold, I'll give you this money, everything else. Daniel says words which every preacher should say.

Verse 17, keep your gifts for yourself. Daniel 417, give your rewards to somebody else. I'm a servant of God, I don't want anything from you.

But I want to tell you how God allowed you to be king, he says, and he proclaims the message of judgment to him saying, verse 27, you have been weighed in the scales, and you've been found deficient, and your kingdom divided to the Medes and the Persians, judgment. And that's exactly what happened. That very night, Belshazzar, verse 30, was killed.

What Daniel prophesied was fulfilled, and the Medes and the Persians took over the kingdom. Daniel knew that because he got revelation from God about the meaning of these words, but he told these people like Abraham, I will not take a shoelace from you. Like Elisha told Naaman, I don't want your gifts.

These are the mark of these men, godly men, Abraham, Elisha, Daniel, keep your rewards to yourself. I don't want any money from you. I'll tell you what God says.

Oh, that there were men like that today. Young men and older men will stand for God to support themselves financially. We don't want any honor and don't want any money from anybody else.

Then we come to chapter 6. Now Daniel is an old man, he's probably 87 to 90 years old, and now Darius has become king. He's another kingdom. You know, Babylon has been overthrown by the kingdom of

Medo-Persia, the Medes and the Persians, and usually when another kingdom takes over, they get rid of all the officials in the previous government.

Like, you know, when one government, whether it's in India or America, any country, one government takes over and overthrows the previous government, they get rid of all the officials in the previous government and say, we don't want any of you. You all served that previous party and we don't want any of you. And they'd make their own followers to be the officers there.

That's how it is in every place, and I'm sure the Persians did that too. But Darius had the sense to let Daniel still be there. He examined the work and examined Daniel and said, this man is upright.

He's not a man pleaser. I've heard that he never pleased Nebuchadnezzar. He never pleased Belshazzar.

He did what was right, upright. What a testimony for a Christian to have that I'm not supporting this politician. I'm not supporting that politician.

I'm not supporting this president or this prime minister or this person. I'm a servant of God. There are very, very few people like that in the whole world today.

An example, if you want to be a man of God like that, follow the example of Daniel. We talk about new covenant today, but this guy had more new covenant principles than millions of people who talk about the New Testament today. And Daniel appointed three commissioners, Daniel six, sorry, Darius appointed three commissioners and Daniel was one of them.

And verse three, this Daniel began distinguishing himself because he possessed an extraordinary spirit. And the king said, out of the three, I want you to appoint over you, appoint you over the whole kingdom. And the other commissioners were jealous.

The other two, they said, you've got to find some fault in him to bring him down. And they examined every detail. They examined the finances, his books, accounts, and his life.

And look at this testimony in Daniel six, verse four. It's an amazing testimony that they could not find anything, any ground of accusation or any evidence of corruption because he was faithful. No negligence or corruption was to be found in him.

70 years later, he's the same upright man. What a testimony for a Christian who works in an office. He doesn't take long coffee breaks and go around talking, wasting time.

He's faithful in his job all the time. He comes on time, works till the end, goes away on time. Nothing can be found.

He's not corrupt. He doesn't do any favoritism to anyone. He doesn't take any money unrighteously for himself.

What a testimony. He was a prophet who earned his own living. Daniel, a great example for new covenant disciples today, but persecuted by others.

And those people somehow fooled the king to sign a law that anybody who prays to any other God in the next few days will in the next 30 days must be thrown into a lion's den, verse seven and eight, and the king signed it foolishly. And he didn't know that they were trying to capture Daniel. And they went and found

Daniel and the king, and Daniel heard about this.

And they said, Daniel is praying to God. And it says here that when Daniel heard about it, what did he do? It says here in verse 10, when Daniel saw that the document was signed, Daniel 6:10, he entered his chamber and his chamber was in the roof, dark floor. He opened his window toward Jerusalem and he knelt down for all the people walking by to see him at the window praying.

He was not ashamed of it. He didn't say, well, God will hear me even if the windows are closed. So I think it'll close.

Or he didn't say, well, I think it's a bit windy today. I think I'll close the window. All these silly excuses people make to avoid being a bold witness for Christ.

It's a bit windy. Don't you think I should close the window? No. Even if it is windy, I'll open the windows because I want everybody to see that I'm not ashamed to be praying to the God of heaven.

Three times a day. And the people saw it. And they told him, the king, see Daniel is doing it.

And he was thrown into the lion's den. He didn't pray to Darius like all these other commissioners, these Bible school professors. He prayed to God and God protected him.

What you would learn in the book of Daniel is God is sovereign. Our father who art in heaven today, sovereign over our health. You can eat vegetables and drink water and he'll keep you healthy.

You can be thrown in the fiery furnace and God will protect you there. You can be thrown in the lion's den and he'll protect you there. I can imagine Daniel sleeping there with his head on one of the lions.

What a wonderful thing. Not at all disturbed. We read in 2 Timothy that Paul says about himself.

He says in 2 Timothy 4, when he was taken to court, verse 16, at my first defense, no one supported me, but everybody deserted me, Daniel 4, 16. But the Lord stood with me and delivered me, verse 17, from the lion's mouth. Not only Daniel, Paul, Daniel 2 Timothy 4, 17.

He was to be thrown to the lions. That's how they kill people in those days, Christians. But he escaped it.

And later on when the time came, he was beheaded by Nero's order. But that's what we see here. So that's what we see in Daniel chapter 6. Now we go to Daniel chapter 7. And here again, he's more than 80 years old and he's still having dreams and visions of God.

That's wonderful to have dreams and visions of God when you're a young man. And 60 years later, 70 years later, you're still faithful to God. This is about 60 years after, still faithful to God and receiving revelation from God and God showed him many things that were going to happen in the future.

And then we go to, you know, certain visions about what is going to happen in the world in chapter 7 and chapter 8. And some of the visions, it says in Daniel 7 verse 15, distressed. Lord, is this what's going to happen in the world? But the Lord said, don't worry. Daniel 7 verse 18.

Finally, the saints of the kingdom will receive the kingdom, the kingdom forever. But till then, there'll be a lot of problems. So many different, different governments.

They're like beasts. Everyone is like a beast, lion or a bear. You know, Daniel 7 verse 4, 5. One like a leopard, verse 6. And one like a dreadful beast, verse 7. All that, all beasts, every human government is like a beast.

But finally, a man comes, verse 12, the son of man. That's the difference between all human governments and the church. All human governments are run like animals running that kingdom.

But then the church, Jesus himself takes the kingdom. And Daniel, when his spirit was disturbed, the Lord said, don't worry. The kingdom will come to God's people.

And then we come to chapter 9. Again, Daniel, we read here. He's probably around 87 years old now. He's fasting and praying, verse 3. One of the things we see here in Daniel 9, fasting and in chapter 10 also, he went into a partial fast.

It says in Daniel 10, verse 3, I did not eat tasty food or wine. When he was younger, he was fasting fully. And when he grew older, he needed food as he grew older, but he avoided tasty food.

He was disciplined in his eating. When he was 17, he was disciplined in his eating when he was 87. What a wonderful man.

He had control. He didn't allow food to run in. The Bible says in Philippians 3 about some people whose God is their stomach.

You can't be a new covenant disciple of Jesus and have your God as your stomach. Jesus alone must be your God. And it's to people who have, like Paul says, I've disciplined my body and made it my slave.

It is to such people that God speaks. If you're a slave of money, if you're a slave of food, if you're a slave of sleep, if you're a slave of sex, my brother, just forget about being a person whom God can use to build his church. No, you'll be one of those third rate people like, you know, the Gibeonites whom Joshua told them you can saw the wood and collect water, but you can't fulfill God's purposes.

No, you got to be disciplined. Paul says that in the last verse of 1 Corinthians 9. I don't want to be a castaway. I want to discipline my body.

And you find here that again and again, we read about Daniel fasting and praying. I remember in the early days when our church started, we had many times of fasting and prayer. That's where many of us were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We sought God in prayer and fasting, not knowing which way to go. Sometimes we, once we had three days, the two of us fasted for three days with only liquids to seek God, Lord, which is the direction in which we must go forward in the church. That's those are the days God guided us.

We didn't know we had no wisdom. We had nobody to guide us. We never had a spiritual father to guide us.

God guided us. And that's how I was brought to Daniel. Daniel didn't have a spiritual father either.

And he prayed and God spoke to him and you see that wonderful prayer in Daniel 9. It's a prayer trying to, which started the process for God's people to move out of Babylon into Jerusalem. Picture of this forming of the New Testament church and this burden to build Jerusalem that Daniel had is the mark of an

overcomer today. A burden to build a new covenant church.

Then you come to chapter 10 and he does a partial fast as I told you, verse 3. He did not eat tasty food. He disciplined himself in his eating. Perhaps he was old now and he needed to eat something.

He couldn't fast the way he did when he was young. That's fine. But he still disciplined himself.

And this is the place where he gets a vision. A man sits as he trembles on his hands and knees. Verse 10 is a man comes to him and says, oh, Daniel, verse 11, God esteems you very highly.

Oh, what wonderful words. Imagine, brother, if you and I could hear God saying, I esteem you very highly. I'd give anything in the world to hear that from God.

All the flattery and approval of men, even about co-workers, means nothing. That God can say to you personally, I esteem you highly. That's the only thing that matters, dear brother.

All your accomplishments and you think, I've built a Babylon, I've built a church, I've built this. It means nothing. Don't glory in the work of your hands.

Don't worship the work of your hands. Acts 7 41. Like Nebuchadnezzar, that'll always be a Babylon.

No, be highly esteemed and it says here in verse 12, Daniel 10 12, from the first day, take this word to yourself, that you set your heart on understanding and humbling yourself before God. Your words were heard and I've come in response. It came much later.

The answer didn't come immediately, but Daniel continuously humbled himself, humbled himself. And from the very first day God was watching him and he said, this is the man I've got to use him to fulfill my purpose. And he did.

It's an amazing thing that God did there through Daniel. And Daniel prays and God sends a messenger there in answer to his prayer. You know, if we want to take God's burdens, I'll tell you something.

You got to have empty hands. If your hands are full of the cares and worries of this world and how to make more money and how to advance in your profession and all that. Okay.

You can't take the burdens of God. That's for the people of the world. Earn your own living by all means, earn as much as you can live in a comfortable way.

That's all right. Advance as much as you can in your profession, but seek the kingdom of God first and his righteousness and that everything else, by all means, there's nothing wrong in going to the top of your profession, being the top of your company. If you are a CEO, fine, but don't compromise on the principles of God's kingdom.

Very, very important. Daniel went to the top. He was chief commissioner in two kingdoms.

He was like the CEO here. Then he moved and became the CEO somewhere else, but he was the most godly man of his time. What an example, top man in the highest position in the government and absolutely upright.

Others are jealous of him. It doesn't matter. God supports him.

What a testimony there. You can be like that, brother. There's nothing wrong in being high in your profession.

Like you saw, Job was the wealthiest man in the world and he was a godly man. Here we see Daniel very high in his profession, top, next to the king, but upright for God. His hands were not taken up with just the things of the world.

The other thing we see in Daniel 10 is this angel comes and says to him, peace be with you. He says, you know what happened? I was coming here in verse 13, the king of Persia was withstanding me. These are evil spirits, but Michael, one of the angels came and helped me.

This is the first place in the Bible, in the New Testament at least, rather in the Old Testament, where we read about evil spirits. You don't read about these evil spirits coming with any of the others, with Abraham or in Job. It was happening there, but Job knew nothing about it.

Or with Elisha. But here, Daniel, there's a conflict with evil spirits. This man says, I was planning to come to you, but evil spirits were resisting me.

And then Michael came and helped me, Daniel 10, 13. You know, if you want to build the New Testament church, I'll tell you something, evil spirits will resist it to the nail, but God will help you to overcome. And then we come to chapter 11.

What a wonderful word here. I, Daniel, arose to be an encourager for Darius and a protection. That's a New Testament overcomer, an encourager to everybody in the church and a protection to protect the church from evil spirits.

Two great ministries. I want to be an encourager. I rise up to be an encourager and a protection for the church.

Daniel 11, verse 1. And we read here in another beautiful verse, in verse 32, in the last part of verse 32, speaking about the last days, the people who know their God will display strength and take action. The great need in the last days is people who know their God, not know the Bible, but through the Bible, know their God. The people who know God like Daniel, they are the ones who will be strong and take action for God in these last days.

Take these challenges from the book of Daniel. Finally, we come to chapter 12, the last chapter, the book of Daniel. And here we see some beautiful expressions.

In verse 1, there'll be a resurrection. In verse 2, it says, many will sleep and the dust will awake, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting destruction. Daniel 12, verse 2, speaking about the final end.

And verse 3, those who have insight, that is a revelation of the Holy Spirit, will shine brightly. The need today is for people who have revelation from the Holy Spirit. They will shine like stars, not just acknowledge.

Those who have revelation, insight from God, they will shine like the brightness of the heavens in the daytime. And those who lead people to righteousness, not those who preach wonderful sermons. Oh, I'm sorry to say that even in many of our churches, people are thinking of preaching wonderful sermons.

Oh, can I preach like this? Can I preach like that? I wish I could preach and get honor from people. But what, for a wonderful sermon you preach? No, forget it. Be one of those who lead others to righteousness.

Daniel 12, 3, those who lead people to righteousness, even if you're not a great preacher. You speak for five minutes, but you lead people to righteousness. You will shine like the stars forever and ever.

What are you seeking? Do you want insight from heaven to the Holy Spirit? And do you want to lead people to righteousness? If you don't have insight from heaven, you cannot lead people to righteousness. You just preach some wonderful sermons. People will admire you.

Oh, that was a beautiful illustration you gave. And that was a lovely example you gave. And what a wonderful way you presented it.

And all your three points were so great garbage. Seek for insight from heaven and seek to lead people to righteousness. And then we read here, the angel tells him, you know, some of the things, Daniel, you won't understand.

Some things are concealed, verse 9, till the end of time. He was willing to accept that. Lord, whatever you want to reveal to me is enough for me.

I don't want to get more than that. You revealed so much to me. I'll accept it.

And the rest, it's up to you, Lord. I'm just your servant. If you say certain things are not revealed to me, but it's going to be revealed to somebody else, oh, God bless you.

But I will go my way, verse 9. And I'll, you say this is certain things are not for me, that's fine. But many will be purged, verse 10, pure and refined. Listen to this.

But the wicked will continue to act wickedly and they will not understand. But those who have insight will understand. So the point here is, if there's sin in your life, you will not understand.

No matter how much you study, no matter how many Bible college degrees you get, when there's sin in your life, you will not understand. The wicked means those who have tolerate sin in their life, they will not understand. But Daniel, verse 13, you go your way to the end.

One day you will enter into rest. And at the end of the age, there'll be a reward for you. Humbly accept the ministry God has given for you and be satisfied with that.

But seek for insight, seek for revelation of the Holy Spirit. I tell you, there's a lot of things. I've gone quickly through this book of Daniel.

But here's a man who is highly esteemed of God. And I believe God wants young people like that who will be faithful all the way to their old age, utterly faithful. And Daniel is a tremendous example.

And God will protect you from all the evil. Don't seek honor from great men in the world or great men in the church or any such thing. Seek only to live before God's face and get honor from him.

I believe God wants you, my brother, to be in that number. If you will listen, sister, you also. God needs godly women who will support godly men.

So this is a message for women too. Because many godly men need godly wives. Yes.

And together they can build godly families. How can a godly man build a family if it doesn't have a godly wife? And how can they be an example to others? Because the Christian world is not full of single people. It's full of families.

99% of people in our church are family people. And so if a godly man today must have a family, an elder must be a husband of one wife, brought up his children well, God wants you to be one like that. And you, sister, you need to be one like that so God can give you as a wife to a godly man so that you can, together with him, build a new covenant church for the glory of God.

So please remember all that you heard in yesterday and today in these five, six messages. I pray that you'll be, you will also live like these men. What an example, these Old Testament men.

What a challenge that is for us who have so much more light and we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. May God help us. Let's pray.

Dear brothers and sisters, please think of all that you heard yesterday and today in these five messages of new covenant people in the Old Testament and ask God to help you to be challenged when you have today the Holy Spirit and the written word of God and fellowship and so many messages and people to guide you. How much higher we should be able to go than those people in the Old Testament. Repent.

Set everything right. Humble yourself. Seek after righteousness.

Stop sinning. Be merciful to others. Set everything right in your life and say, Lord, I want to be like these men.

I want to be like a Daniel, to be available to you, to build a new covenant church. Lead me to those who will join with me, two or three, who can wholeheartedly that we can be a testimony for you where we are. Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help these words to sink deep into people's hearts and not allow the devil to take it away from anybody's heart.

We commit all this to you in Jesus name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/jCn9y8yCofl.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/daniel-the-man-highly-esteemed-by-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net