

DANIEL (DARE TO BE GOD'S MESSENGER)
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WEEK 1 (911337)
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SERIES: Daniel (Dare To Be God's Messenger)

TITLE: Program 3 – A Tender Heart

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Let me ask you a question... have you made up your mind? You say, made up my mind about what? About life. Have you made up your mind about how you're going to live? Have you made up your mind about what your standards are going to be? Have you made up your mind of what you're going to do in a crisis, how you're going to respond? Have you made up your mind of how you're going to respond when you're tempted? It's vital that you make up your mind. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

You know if you're going to make up your mind you have to have something to make it up with. You have to have some standard. You have to have some basis of making decisions, unless you just live totally and completely by your emotions and then you're dead in the water. Daniel was a man who made up his mind, but he didn't make up his mind on the basis of

nothing. He had a standard that helped him determine what he was going to do and what he determined to do was what set his future. Let's go to the book of Daniel. Now you remember that Nebuchadnezzar has come and besieged the kingdom of Judah. He's come to Jerusalem. And it says then the king brought these nobles from the royal household to Babylon. And it describes who they were. They were youths in whom there was no defect, who were good looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge and who had ability for serving in the king's court. And he ordered them, him to teach them the literature and the language of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them, these youths, a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abed-nego. But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. Now let's just stop there. Here you have this Jewish captive; he's a slave. Yes, he's from nobility; yes, he's from ah possibly the royal family. The Bible doesn't tell us Daniel's genealogy. And so we don't know what his roots were, but we know that he was living during the time when Jehoiakim was king. We know that Jehoiakim was a king. We saw this, that he was an evil king, that he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord. And yet here you have a young man that's living in the king's court, so to speak, and yet he wants to do what's right in the sight of the Lord. Now why on earth does Daniel want to do what's right in the sight of the Lord when the culture in which he was living was an ungodly culture? Well, you have to understand that the thing that made Daniel make up his mind was his understanding of who God was,

that self-existent God that is the ever-living God, who is, who was and who is to come. Daniel knew Him. It's very interesting if you would go back on your historical chart and you would go back from Jehoiakim, the king that was reigning during the time of Daniel, go back to king Josiah. Now Josiah was the grandson of Manasseh. And remember we saw that it was because of the iniquity of Manasseh, because he did more evil than any other king, that they were taken into captivity. But Manasseh died and just before Manasseh died he repented. He had a change of mind. Then his son reigned for a very short time and he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like Manasseh, his grandfather. I want you to go to 2 Kings, chapter 22 while I talk to you. Okay, and so he ruled, and then Josiah became king when he was eight years old. Go to 2 Kings, chapter 22. It says Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. All right now, if you go back to this period in history, you're going to see that in all probability Daniel was living at that time. Now we think that Daniel was fifteen or sixteen when he went into captivity because of just following the years and for as long as he lived. So we think that he was probably about fifteen or sixteen. We know that he was youth. We know that youths were between fifteen and twenty years of age and so he would have been living during the time of the affect of Josiah. Now Josiah became king when he was eight years old. In verse three it says now it came about in the eighteenth year of king Josiah that the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe to the house of the Lord. And he sent him up to take an inventory of the house of the Lord, to see the condition that it was in because he wanted to repair the house of the Lord. So as he went in to look at the condition of the house of the Lord, and then report it to the king, he found something in the house of the Lord that he took to the king. And in verse 8 it says this: Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to the king who read it. And as he read it in the presence of the king it came about in verse 11, that when the king heard the words of this book,

that he tore his clothes. He was in anguish because for the first time Josiah, in his eighteenth year, when he was 26 years old, for the first time he heard the Word of God. He had never heard it before. He had a heart for God and he went about the land and he was trying to get rid of the idols, but now, now he has read the Word of God and he has a confirmation for what was in his heart because what was in his heart was to honor God as God. He had a fear of God, but now he's got the support of the Word of God. Because when Shaphan found the book, it was the book of the law. It was Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. And he would read about the blessings and the cursings. He would read about the judgments that God said would come upon them if they did not obey Him, if they did not listen to Him. And he also read about the blessings that could be theirs if they would listen to the Word of God, if they would obey the Word of God. It was a matter of what? Making up their mind. Make up your mind. Are you going to listen to Me? If you are I will bless you. Are you going to disobey Me? If you do I will have to curse you. I have to do that because I am God. I have set before you life and death. I have set before you blessing and cursing; now choose life that you might live and that I might bless you abundantly. Josiah heard the words of the book and this is what he said, Go and inquire of the Lord, verse 13, for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written in it. Our fathers didn't listen. Our fathers didn't make up their mind that they were going to obey God. They didn't listen. And because they didn't listen the wrath of the Lord is against us. And it says so Hilkiah the priest, and all these other people, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her. And she said to them, this is a woman. Very rarely do you see a woman in this position in the Old Testament or in, even in the New Testament. And she said to them,

thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, thus says the Lord: Behold I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. Now we know that He is going to do this because this is what's happening in the book of Daniel in the third year of Jehoiakim when Nebuchadnezzar comes down and besieges Jerusalem. It is because they have disobeyed. It is because of the evil of Manasseh. It is because of the prophecy that Jeremiah gave the people in Jeremiah 25, as we have looked at. And yet they covered their ears. They stuck their fingers in their ears and they said I don't want to hear it. And you may not want to hear it, but it doesn't stop it from happening. It doesn't stop it from happening. What stops the judgment of God from happening is our obedience. It's our repentance. It's our turning around. It's our doing what God tells us to do beloved. It's making up our mind, I am going to believe God. I am going to obey God. That's what it is precious one. Do I sound adamant? Forgive me; but it's the passion of my heart that you and I make up our mind that we are going to listen to God and we are going to do what God says and we are not going to compromise ourselves, even though we find ourselves in a strange environment or in a culture that is totally and absolutely contrary to the culture that God would have us live in. We're to make up our mind that we're going to be men and women of God. And so she says this is what God is going to do. Evil is going to come. It is guaranteed it is going to come. He says because, Huldah says that God says, because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place and it shall not be quenched. Listen, wrath is coming. It's fire and it will not be quenched. You say, then he just goes ahead and lives as if it's coming. No, no, wait until after the break and you hear the but in this prophecy that is coming because it will bring you great encouragement beloved, great encouragement. All you have to do is make up your mind that God is God and you're going to serve Him

and you're not going to compromise no matter the pressure. We'll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Like it or not beloved, God's hand of judgment is coming. It is coming upon this world. It is coming upon this nation. God is going to have to judge us because our cup of iniquity is full, but there is hope. Listen to what Huldah the prophetess spoke to Josiah the king under the inspiration of the Lord and be encouraged. She said this is what's going to happen, she's speaking as God is speaking, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not quenched. But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus you shall say to him, thus says the Lord God of Israel, regarding the words which you have heard, because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard and I would mark that like I mark listen, when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and you have wept before Me, I truly have heard you, I have seen your heart. I have seen the tenderness of your heart. I have seen what has happened when you've heard My word and I've seen the anguish as you've torn your clothes. I've watched as you have wept before Me. And I see that you're grief stricken because you've hurt My holiness, because your people have been in great sin, the sin of your grandfather Manasseh, the sin of your father. I've seen you. I've heard you weep. Because of that I'm not going to bring judgment in your lifetime. Therefore behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, neither shall your eyes see all the evil which I will bring on this place, because you listened, because you heard what I said. It says then the king sent, 2 Kings, chapter 23, and gathered to him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of the Lord and to all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and

all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing the words of the book of the covenant, which was found in the house of the Lord. All the people were there, all the people, the mommas, the daddies, the children. Daniel, Daniel heard the words of the book of God. Daniel heard as they read from morning until evening the words of the book. And that young heart stood there and listened and believed, believed. That's why Daniel knows not to eat the king's food. That's why Daniel knows not to drink the king's wine. You say, but what's wrong with it? God had set for His people certain restrictions that would keep them as a separate people. We find out later as we get into history and come down with all of our scientific marvels and the things that we have learned, we see that these dietary laws protected them, healthwise, because they didn't have refrigeration, because they didn't have these other things. But listen; those were to keep them as a separate people. Those were to keep them as a people that were distinguishable from all the other people on the face of this earth. And he knew that there were certain ways that food was to be prepared. He knew that they couldn't eat certain foods and so he determined that he was not going to defile himself. He also knew enough because he was being taught the literature of the Chaldeans and because of the worship of their gods that this food often times was sacrificed, offered to the gods and he wasn't going to eat food that was sacrificed to gods. He wasn't going to drink wine that was poured out as a libation to other gods that were not gods. He was going to be true to his God. And so therefore he makes up his mind and he comes up with a plan. But what I want you to see is why he makes up his mind. How he's able to come up with a plan. He comes up with a plan and that plan in essence is: give us nothing to drink, but water, give us nothing to eat, but vegetables and herbs. He's going to eat those. He's not going to eat the things from the king's table. Now when he comes up with this plan, the official says to him, no, no, no. That's not going to work, because what's going to happen if you do that and you end up getting sick or being pale or sickly or weak or that, it's going to cost me my head. He says no, I've got a plan. Ten days, you trust me and

see what happens in ten days. Now what was Daniel doing? Daniel was acting on what he knew about God. Daniel was acting on the fact that when we obey God it brings blessing to our life. It doesn't mean we're not going to suffer. But, God still blesses because in the midst of that suffering we know that we're suffering because we're walking in obedience to the Word of God, to the will of God, walking in the Spirit, in that self-control, because we've made up our mind that we're going to be what God wants us to be. Beloved, we're living in a culture that is so saturated with sin. I mean we're just soaked with sin. It's like there's been a deluge and, and, and, and ah, the heavens have, have poured down, (not God's heavens), but it has rained sin upon us and it has gotten deeper and deeper and deeper and we're standing in sin and afterwards there's just the stench of all that dampness and the mildew of it all and it's all over us. And we've got to determine that we are not going to live that way, that we are going to get in to the ark of obedience, the safety of the Word of God and so that we stand in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation, but we stand in righteousness. We make up our mind that the culture is not going to impact or influence us, but we're going to impact our culture, that we're going to be salt. And salt stops the spread of corruption; that we're going to be light and light dispels darkness. It shows that darkness was there because all of a sudden when the light goes on you can see things as they really are. Daniel was God's man. And the decision that he made at that point in his life was the decision that was going to set the course for the rest of his life. You're going to see it. This is not the only time that he has to make a hard decision. As he matures you see him making some harder decisions, but you never see Daniel wavering. You never see him waver. As you read through the book of Daniel, you never see Daniel sinning. You never see him overtly compromising. You never see him trying to walk in that Babylonian world and in the world of reality, which is the world of God. You never see him do that. And you're not to do it either. Make up your mind; let it be according to God's Word.