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From Text to Pulpit (Daniel 1:1-21)

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Study of the Passage

Text and Translation

1:In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2**The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the house of God and he caused them to be brought to the land of Shinar to the house of his god and placed them in the treasure house of his god.

3The king told Ashpenaz, chief of his officials, to have some of the sons of Israel from the offspring of the royalty and from the nobles brought—**4**young men without any defect, good looking, insightful in all wisdom, knowing all knowledge, understanding, and knowledgeable—to serve in the king's palace and to teach them the literature and tongue of the Babylonians. **5**The king assigned them by word daily from the rich food of the king and from the wine that he drank. They were to be nurtured for three years and at the end of them they were to stand before the king. **6**Among them were from the sons Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael,

and Azariah. **7**The chief of the officials determined names for them: he determined for Daniel, Belteshazzar; for Hananiah, Shadrach; for Mishael, Meshach; and for Azariah, Abednego. **8**But Daniel determined in his heart that he would not defile himself with the rich food of the king and the wine that he drank. Therefore, he sought the chief of the officials so that he would not defile himself. **9**Now God had given Daniel kindness and compassion before the chief of the officials. **10**But the chief of the officials told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and your drink. Why should he see your faces distressed unlike the other young men your age? You would thereby cause me to owe my head to the king." **11**Daniel then said to the steward whom the chief of the officials had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, **12**"Please test your servants for ten days. Have them give us vegetables and water and let us eat and drink. **13**Then have them look at our appearance before you and the appearance of the young men who eat the rich food of the king and do with your servants in accordance with what you see." **14**So he listened to their word and tested them for ten days. **15**At the end of the ten days it was seen that in appearance they were better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the rich food of the king. **16**So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

17To these four young men God gave knowledge and insight in all literature and wisdom. And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. **18**At the end of the days that the king said for them to be brought in, the chief of the officials brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. **19**The king talked with them, and none was found among all of them like

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they stood before the king. **20**In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten hands above all the magicians and enchanters in all his kingdom.

21And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Situation and Purpose

The passage describes a setting in which Daniel and his three friends might easily have become discouraged and compromised their commitment to God. Judah and Jerusalem had fallen to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Articles used in the worship of the LORD were even taken and placed in the temple of the gods of Babylon's king. Daniel and his three friends were carried off into exile in Babylon. These events could have discouraged them and undermined their faith in God. They were also selected along with other elite young men to enter into a training program that would qualify them for service to the king of Babylon. However, they were given new names and assigned food and drink that was not in accord with their dietary regulations. This opportunity could have encouraged them to compromise their commitment to God. This setting reflects a general situation among later readers in which they also were living under foreign domination and had experienced difficulties that could have undermined their faith and opportunities that could have threatened their commitment. The purpose of this passage was to encourage later readers to continue to trust in God and remain committed to him.

Literary Context and Role

This passage is located in the first half of the book of Daniel, which contains stories from the exile. These stories are arranged in chronological order. This passage stands first among these stories because it explains how Daniel and his three friends—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—became exiles in Babylon and attained prominent positions of service to King Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, this passage provides part of the historical background for the remainder of the book. This passage begins the stories from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. These stories reveal a development in Nebuchadnezzar's attitude toward God. Though the two halves of the book of Daniel are distinct in form, both repeatedly emphasize one basic message—God is sovereign and faithful to help his people even when foreign kings oppress them. This passage introduces this message by revealing God's sovereignty and faithfulness even in the fall of Jerusalem, the exile of the inhabitants, and the conscription of young men to serve the king.

Form and Function

This passage can be generally classified as historical narrative. The key elements of historical narrative are setting, characters, and plot. Through identifying with the characters in their setting the readers are enabled to enter into the experience of God's people in history and learn from their experience as the plot develops. The setting of the story is Babylon during the exile. The main characters of the story are Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The readers would have readily identified with these four young men and their discouraging and enticing circumstances (see

Situation and Purpose). As the plot develops the faith and commitment of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah would be commended to the readers as God is revealed to be in control even in defeat and exile and Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are aided by God and succeed in Babylon (see Strategy and Structure).

Strategy and Structure

The passage is arranged in chronological order. First, God allows Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Jerusalem. Second, God enables Daniel and his three friends to avoid defilement. Third, God enables Daniel and his friends to succeed. Finally, God enables Daniel to endure throughout the exile. Though arranged chronologically, this structure repeatedly emphasizes the sovereignty and faithfulness of God in times of difficulty.

- I. The Lord Allows Nebuchadnezzar to Conquer Jerusalem (1:1-2)
 - A. The Siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (1)
 - B. The Lord Gives Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar's Hand (2)

- II. God Enables Daniel and His Three Friends to Avoid Defilement (1:3-16)
 - A. Opportunity and the Danger of Compromise (3-7)
 1. The king orders that elite young men be brought for training and service in his palace (3-4)
 2. The king provides food and drink from his rich food and wine (5a)
 3. The duration of the training and accountability at the end (5b)

4. The selection of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (6)

5. The chief of the officials determines new names for them (7)

B. God Enables Daniel and His Three Friends to Avoid Defilement (8-16)

1. Daniel determines not to defile himself and seeks the help of the chief of the officials (8)

2. God gives Daniel kindness and compassion before the chief of the officials (9)

3. Nonetheless, the chief of the officials does not grant Daniel's request because of his fear of the king (10)

4. Daniel appeals to the steward to test them for ten days and then act in accordance with the results (11-13)

5. The steward tests them for ten days, finds them healthier, and changes their diet (14-16)

III. God Enables Daniel and His Three Friends to Succeed without Compromise (1:17-20)

A. God Gives Them Knowledge and Insight and Daniel the Ability to Understand Visions and Dreams (17)

B. The King Finds Them to Be Superior to the Other Young Men and All of His Magicians and Enchanters (18-20)

1. They are brought before the king at the end of the time of training (18)

2. The king finds them to be superior to the other trainees (19)

3. The king finds them to be superior to all the magicians and enchanters (20)

IV. God Enables Daniel to Endure throughout the Exile (1:21)

Goldingay regards this passage as “a chiastically-shaped short story” (Goldingay, 8). His analysis brings out clearly the tensions that arise in the first half of the passage and the resolution of these tensions in the second half of the passage. I have simplified his analysis below.

1A	1-2	<i>tension</i>	Babylonians defeat Israel
2A	3-7		Young men are taken for training
3A	8-14		Daniel wants to avoid defilement and takes a test
3B	15-16	<i>resolution</i>	Daniel is triumphant in the test and avoids defilement
2B	17-20		Young men are triumphant in the training
1B	21		Daniel sees out the Babylonians

Message or Messages

God’s people should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell. God’s people should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. God’s people should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. God’s people should trust in God and remain faithful to him when

they encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

Analysis of the Details

1. The Lord Allows Nebuchadnezzar to Conquer Jerusalem

The fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is related in verses 1-2. Verse 1 describes Nebuchadnezzar coming to Jerusalem to besiege it, "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it." Nebuchadnezzar's intention was to force the city into submission. However, verse 2 clarifies that he was only able to capture Jerusalem because God enabled him to do so, "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the house of God and he caused them to be brought to the land of Shinar to the house of his god and placed in the treasure house of his god." The king of Judah was regarded as protected by God and secure. The surrender of Jehoiakim would have been a great blow to the faith of the people of Judah in God's sovereignty. The articles used in the temple were sacred and used in the worship of God. The placement of these articles in the treasure house of Nebuchadnezzar's gods would seem to indicate that his gods were more powerful than the God they worshiped. As Goldingay observes, "Removing them is thus a sign of the victory of Nebuchadnezzar and his god over the Israelite king and his god" (Goldingay, 15). Nonetheless, God is affirmed as being the Lord and giving Jehoiakim and the articles from the temple into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. As Goldingay explains, "The responses affirmed within the OT agree that the fall of Jerusalem is

not to be explained by Yahweh's impotence or inactivity. Nor, as many people today might assume, was it merely the chance outworking of political (and personality) factors. It is the deliberate act of Israel's own God" (Goldingay, 21). Though not revealed here, God's purpose was to discipline the people of Judah because of their persistent unfaithfulness. Therefore, God's people should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell.

2. God Enables Daniel and His Three Friends to Avoid Defilement

God enables Daniel and his three friends to avoid defilement in verses 3-16. An opportunity that leads to the danger of compromise is described; then God's enabling of Daniel and his three friends to avoid defilement is related. Through God's help of Daniel and his three friends the readers are encouraged to be determined to avoid defilement like them.

An opportunity that leads to the danger of compromise. An opportunity that leads to the danger of compromise is described in verses 3-8. The king orders that elite young men be brought for training and service in his palace in verses 3-4. The king's provision of food and drink from his rich food and wine and the duration of the training and accountability at the end are described in verse 5. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are identified as being among those chosen in the first part of verse 6. The chief of the officials determines new names for them in the second part of verse 7. The critical issue was whether or not they should eat and drink the rich food and wine of the king. Most of the food would certainly have been in violation of the Jewish laws regulating diet and

both the food and the wine were probably linked to pagan worship (see Goldingay, 18-19 for a full discussion of why the rich food and wine might cause defilement). The description of the opportunity emphasizes the extent of the pressure they were under to compromise by eating and drinking. First, their portion of rich food and wine was assigned to them directly by the king, “The king assigned them by word daily from the rich food of the king and from the wine that he drank” (5). To refuse this provision of food and wine would have been direct rebellion against the word of the king, a capital offense. Second, they were all in competition for prestigious positions of employment, “to serve in the king’s palace” (4). To refuse this provision of food and wine would have threatened their future prospects. Third, they were all in competition with the elite young men of Israel. They were “the offspring of the royalty and from the nobles” (3). Furthermore, they were all “without any defect, good looking, insightful in all wisdom, knowing all knowledge, understanding, and knowledgeable” (4). To refuse this provision of food and wine would have put them at a disadvantage against others who were equally qualified and had no such qualms. Even the renaming of Daniel and his three friends by the chief of the officials subtly reflects the danger of compromise in Babylon. Their original names—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—reflect their relationship with God. However, their new names—Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—reflect the religion of Babylon (see Owens 383 for an explanation of both the meaning of their Hebrew names and their new Babylonian names). As Lucas observes, “The giving of a new name as a sign of new ownership and so, by implication, new allegiance, was common court practice” (Lucas, 53).

God enables Daniel and his three friends to avoid defilement. God enables Daniel and his three friends to avoid defilement in verses 8-16. Daniel determines not to defile himself and seeks the help of the chief of the officials in verse 8, “But Daniel determined in his heart that he would not defile himself with the rich food of the king and the wine that he drank. Therefore, he sought the chief of the officials so that he would not defile himself.” The depth of Daniel’s determination is stressed with “in his heart.” The heart is the very core of a person’s being. Thus Daniel’s determination was from the very core of his being. What is more, as Anderson observes, “Daniel’s decision to abstain from the proffered delicacies was both the touchstone of his religious commitment and the key to his extraordinary advancement” (Anderson, 6). Through his determination to avoid defilement Daniel serves as a model for readers of the appropriate response to enticements to compromise.

Verse 9 asserts that God made the chief of the officials kind and compassionate toward Daniel, “Now God had given Daniel kindness and compassion before the chief of the officials.” This is the first indication of God’s support of Daniel in this crisis. The words translated “kindness and compassion” describe the attitude that the chief of the officials had for Daniel. The extent of his compassion is especially emphasized in the Hebrew text with the plural of intensity (literally “compassions”).

However, the chief of the officials does not grant Daniel’s request because of his fear of the king in verse 10, “But the chief of the officials told Daniel, ‘I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and your drink. Why should he see your faces distressed unlike the other young

men your age? You would thereby cause me to owe my head to the king.” The chief of the officials had good reason for fearing the king. The king was his lord and he owed the king absolute obedience. Failure to obey the king would certainly result in his death. The idiomatic expression “owe my head” means that he would forfeit his life. The rhetorical question that the chief of the officials asks Daniel is introduced by the interrogative “Why.” Rhetorical questions that have the interrogative “why” normally imply that there is no good reason. Therefore, this rhetorical question is equivalent to the exclamation, “There is no good reason why the king should see your faces distressed unlike the other young men your age!”

Daniel appeals to the steward to test them for ten days and then act in accordance with the results in verses 11-13, “Daniel then said to the steward whom the chief of the officials had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ‘Please test your servants for ten days. Have them give us vegetables and water and let us eat and drink. Then have them look at our appearance before you and the appearance of the young men who eat the rich food of the king and do with your servants in accordance with what you see.’” The determination of Daniel is emphasized by his persistent attempts to avoid the rich food and wine of the king. His faith is emphasized by his reasonable appeal. He is absolutely convinced that if the chief of the officials allows them to eat vegetables and drink water they will fare no worse than those who eat the rich food and wine of the king. As Anderson explains, “In refusing what would appear to have been more nourishing food Daniel demonstrated that he was prepared to take the risk that God would undergird his efforts” (Anderson, 7).

The steward tests them for ten days, finds them healthier, and changes

their diet in verses 14-16, "So he listened to their word and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days it was seen that in appearance they were better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the rich food of the king. So the steward took away their rich food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables." Daniel and his three friends are found to be in better condition than the other young men. Their superior condition is stressed by the word translated "fatter." Though being fatter is not considered desirable in most cultures today, it was often regarded in the past and is even regarded in some cultures today as an indication of prosperity. In fact, the Hebrew text emphasizes how fat they were with the plural of intensity. This result is ironic. Irony often describes a result that is contrary to expectations to emphasize how extraordinary that result is. In this case, one would have expected the young men who ate the rich food and wine of the king to be fatter. The only explanation is God's intervention on their behalf. Therefore, God's people should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.

3. God Enables Daniel and His Three Friends To Succeed without Compromise

God enables Daniel and his three friends to succeed without compromise in verses 17-20. He gives them knowledge and insight and Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams; then the king finds them to be superior to the other young men as well as all of his magicians and enchanters. Through God enabling Daniel and his three friends to succeed the readers are encouraged to remain faithful without compromise like

them.

God gives them knowledge and insight and Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams. God gives them knowledge and insight and Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams in verse 17, “To these four young men God gave knowledge and insight in all literature and wisdom. And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” The extent of the knowledge and insight given to them is as well as the understanding of visions and dreams given to Daniel is stressed by the inclusive noun translated “all.” God gave them total mastery of literature and wisdom and Daniel could understand every vision and dream. Though not specifically stated, the implication of the narrative is that God has especially gifted Daniel and his three friends because they avoided defilement.

The king finds them to be superior to the other young men as well as all of his magicians and enchanters. The king finds them to be superior to the other young men and all of his magicians and enchanters in verses 18-20. They are brought before the king at the end of the time of training in verse 18, “At the end of the days that the king said for them to be brought in, the chief of the officials brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.” The king finds them to be superior to the other young men in verse 19, “The king talked with them, and none was found among all of them like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they stood before the king.” The king finds them to be superior to all his magicians and enchanters in verse 20, “In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten hands above all the magicians and enchanters in all his kingdom.” Their superiority is emphasized

both in quality and extent. The idiomatic expression “ten hands above” emphasizes their qualitative superiority. The New International Version even translates this idiom “ten times better.” The extent of their superiority is emphasized by the inclusive noun translated “all.” They were superior to every magician and enchanter throughout his kingdom. Though not specifically stated, the implication of the narrative is that they were found superior because they avoided defilement and God gave them insight, knowledge, and understanding. Therefore, God’s people should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.

4. God Enables Daniel to Endure throughout The Exile

God enables Daniel to endure throughout the exile in verse 21, “And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.” Cyrus was an important figure in Israel’s history. He issued the decree allowing the Jews to return to Palestine, ending the exile. During this time Daniel served four kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus) and three kingdoms (Babylon, Media, and Persia). Nonetheless, through all this upheaval Daniel’s status remained stable. Though not specifically stated, the implication of the narrative is that God was the basis of his stability. Therefore, God’s people should trust in God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

Application of the Message

Establishing Correspondence

Christians today often become discouraged when they encounter difficulty and are corrupted when they are enticed by opportunity. These correspondences between the original and modern situations provide a strong basis for applying the message of this passage to the contemporary context.

Distinguishing the Contextualized

This passage does have a significant contextual issue. Daniel and his three friends were in danger of becoming defiled by their violation of Jewish laws regulating their diet. As a result they determined not to eat the rich food and wine of the king and eat vegetables and drink water instead. However, Christians have been released from such rigid adherence to Old Testament laws regulating diet. Nonetheless, Daniel and his friends still serve as examples of remaining faithful to God when enticed by opportunity. In fact, the statements of the message of the passage in the original context are already stated in a general way that does not mention the specific threat of compromise. Therefore, the statements of the message for the contemporary context below are nearly identical to the statements of the message of the passage in the original context.

Adjusting the Message

Christians should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when

they encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. Christians should trust in God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

Proclamation of the Message

Title: HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF

Objective: The object of this message is to exhort and encourage Christians to trust in God when they encounter difficulties and remain faithful to him when they are enticed by opportunities.

Proposition: Christians should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. Christians should trust in God and remain faithful to him when

they encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

Introduction

Christians today often encounter difficulties that result in discouragement. Christians today also often encounter opportunities that entice them. Indeed, throughout the ages Satan has used trials and temptations to destroy God's people. Daniel and his three friends certainly experienced trials and temptations. They were carried away into exile when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. They could have easily become discouraged and renounced their faith in God. They were given an opportunity to train for three years and enter the service of the king. They could have easily been enticed by this opportunity and forsaken their commitment to God. However, they continued to trust in God and remained faithful to him. Indeed, they show us how we should respond to trials and temptations.

- I. Christians should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell.
 - A. Verse 1 describes Nebuchadnezzar coming to Jerusalem to besiege it.
 - B. However, verse 2 clarifies that he was only able to capture Jerusalem because God enabled him to do so.
 - C. Illustration
 - D. Application—Therefore, you should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when you encounter difficulty because the

Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell.

- II. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.
 - A. An opportunity that leads to the danger of compromise is described in verses 3-8.
 - B. Daniel determines not to defile himself and seeks the help of the chief of the officials in verse 8.
 - C. God makes the chief of the officials kind and compassionate toward Daniel in verse 9.
 - D. Daniel appeals to the steward to test them for ten days and then act in accordance with the results in verses 11-13.
 - E. The steward tests them for ten days, finds them healthier, and changes their diet in verses 14-16.
 - F. Illustration
 - G. Application—Therefore, you should determine not to defile yourselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.

- III. Christians should determine not to defile themselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.
 - A. God gives Daniel and his three friends knowledge and insight and Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams in verse 17.
 - B. They are brought before the king at the end of the time of training

and the king finds them to be superior to the other young men and to all his magicians and enchanters in verse 18-20.

C. Illustration

D. Application—Therefore, you should determine not to defile yourselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends.

IV. Christians should trust in God and remain faithful to him when they encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable them to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

A. God enables Daniel to endure throughout the exile in verse 21, “And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.”

B. Cyrus was an important figure in Israel’s history. He issued the decree allowing the Jews to return to Palestine, ending the exile. During this time Daniel served four kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus) and three kingdoms (Babylon, Media, and Persia). Nonetheless, through all this upheaval Daniel’s status remained stable. Though not specifically stated, the implication of the narrative is that God was the basis of his stability.

C. Illustration

D. Application—Therefore, you should trust in God and remain faithful to him when you encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

Conclusion

Throughout the ages Satan has used trials and temptations to destroy God's people. Daniel and his three friends certainly experienced trials and temptations. They could have easily become discouraged and renounced their faith in God. They could easily have been enticed by this opportunity and forsaken their commitment to God. However, they continued to trust in God and remained faithful to him. Indeed, they show us how we should respond to trials and temptations. You should continue to trust God and remain faithful to him when you encounter difficulty because the Lord is in control despite appearances as he was when Jerusalem fell. You should determine not to defile yourselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to remain faithful without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. You should determine not to defile yourselves when enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to succeed without compromise like he helped Daniel and his three friends. You should trust in God and remain faithful to him when you encounter difficulty and are enticed by opportunity because God will enable you to endure like he helped Daniel throughout the exile.

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