



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

FEBRUARY 20, 2021

When Daniel put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Daniel that will help us put God first in our lives today?

Daniel was a young man when he was taken to Babylon, the capital of the greatest empire the world had ever seen. King Nebuchadnezzar would take the best and brightest young men as captives from the many nations he conquered. He would then indoctrinate them into Babylonian science and religion, knowing they would greatly contribute to the expansion of his kingdom. Ten thousand other young people were taken alongside Daniel and, from them, the best of the best were taken to the palace. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego were some of these.

Their first test was a biblical diet. Putting God first could have cost them all the privileges afforded them—or worse, they could lose their lives. However, these young men made a commitment in their hearts to put God first, no matter what happened. They couldn't be forced or bribed to do otherwise. They were faithful with their diets and God gave them wisdom, helping them become the top students in the Babylonian "university".

Later, Daniel would be put in charge of all other scientists, while his three friends would eventually become the top leaders of the capital city, Babylon itself. This only happened because they put God first, no matter the consequences. In fact, they were willing to be burnt alive rather than compromise. Daniel 3:17 records their words:

"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Even as an old man, Daniel would rather be thrown into a den of lions than stop praying first thing in the morning. But God came through again and Daniel lived to praise him and become the prime minister of Babylon.

Daniel put God first. His example compels us to do the same. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.