

## DANIEL, A BOY WHO SAID "NO"

When the Babylonians, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, ruled over the Hebrews, Daniel, a Hebrew youth, was chosen as one of a select group of students who would be trained in the King's palace. We might say that Daniel was given a scholarship in Babylon. There, he was to be trained in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. While living in the palace, the students were expected to partake of various delicacies and wines which the king provided. These things were not lawful for Hebrews to eat and Daniel knew he should not accept them. Therefore, though under great pressure, he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine." (Daniel 1:8) Daniel was a boy with the courage to say "no. "

The circumstances emphasize the courage of Daniel's decision. He was away from home; beginning a new life in a strange land. His parents and former friends were not there. Too, he was a captive. The Hebrews were a conquered people. He might have given in to the despair of the times. Or, he could have reasoned, "When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do." The things offered to him were desirable. He could have enjoyed them. To these circumstances add the fact that the king would be displeased with his refusal to cooperate. The pressure to go along with the crowd was very great, but Daniel had enough conviction and courage to resist temptation.

The Bible often urges that we be courageous and strong in taking a stand for what is right. Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, be ye like men, be strong." (I Corinthians 16:13) In Ephesians 6:10, he admonished: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Timothy was told to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (11 Timothy 2:3) Those who serve in the army of God must be bold to stand up for what they know is right.

God prospered Daniel for his faithfulness. He came into the highest favor of the king. Too, he won the respect of others. Honorable men respect a person who has convictions and lives by them. Daniel also had self-respect. His own conscience could testify that he had made the right decision. We can not read of the courage of Daniel without being impressed with the wonderful way everything turned out for the best. Daniel could not have foreseen exactly what would happen. But he trusted God and committed himself into His care.

It is seldom easy to go against the crowd. Often we are confronted with circumstances that demand courage. Usually in such circumstances it is not difficult to find excuses for giving in, but like Daniel we should learn when to say no. For such courage, we are rewarded with the knowledge that we have made the right choice. Those who weaken under pressure later feel remorse; but one is never sorry for having done what he knows is right.

Solomon admonished, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." (Proverbs 1:10) It is possible that Daniel thought of this verse when Babylon's enticements were set before him. The wise king's advice and young Daniel's example should be followed by all. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Say "no" to sin.