

DANIEL: Life in the Present; Hope for Our Future

Chapter 1 (Dt. 6:10-15; 2 Chronicles 36:5-21; Daniel 1)

THEME: The Sovereignty of God. God will perfectly fulfill His purposes in all time & eternity.
(God is still working in the lives of His people, even during trials, pain, loss, & chastening)

Israel's captivity and destruction is predicted clearly by the Prophet Jeremiah:

Context: 605B.C. - Israel (the Covenant people of God) have rebelled against God. They were warned over and over and over (Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah)- 9 prophets ALL predicted their doom and warned them to repent!

Deuteronomy 6:10-15 "Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, ¹² then watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹³ You shall fear *only* the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. ¹⁴ You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, ¹⁵ for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; **otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.**"

- Israel had forsaken the **Law** of God, they had departed from the true worship of God and invited idolatry into their land.
- Israel, in their rejection of God and violation of His moral, levitical, and ceremonial laws fell into **moral** apostasy – a falling away into grievous sin.
- Israel had disobeyed God and rejected the **Sabbath**, and the sabbatical year of rest for the land. (Lev. 24:4-5)
- **Egypt has already assaulted Israel. They are imposing their will on Israel, replacing kings, taking taxes, people.**
- **Assyria invades and takes Israel captive. The southern Kingdom of Judah watches and they still don't heed warning**

(can you imagine a country that is losing it very soul and no one seems to care???) Legalized infanticide/abortion. Marriage is impugned; Adultery is rampant; Gay rights are celebrated; Transgenderism and non-binary personhood is lauded; Materialism is God. Yet, God's Word is denigrated. Rampant Pride; Pornography; Taking God's Name in Vain; A society living in Practical Atheism)- and the vast majority of this country does NOT care. Do you not think these national sins won't provoke God to anger? To judgment?

Roams 1:18-31 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving,

unmerciful; ³² and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, **they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**"

1 Timothy 6:9-10 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows".

Jeremiah 6:13 "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one deals falsely."

- A society that was blessed of God; provided for by God; Protected by God – and they still rebelled . . . and would NOT listen to God's voice, His pleading, the prophets – **God judged Israel. [Where is America in all this?] - If we continue to rebel, we will be wiped off the face of the earth.**

2 Chronicles 36:5-21 – The Judgment of God's People: (Historical Narrative of the Babylonian Destruction of Jerusalem, & exile of the Jews to Babylon)

"Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; **and he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God.**⁶ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze *chains* to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also brought *some* of the articles of the house of the Lord to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon. ⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and ⁹the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son became king in his place. ⁹ Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem, **and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.** ¹⁰ At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the Lord, and he made his kinsman Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

¹¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹² **He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet** ¹³who spoke for the Lord. ¹³ He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear *allegiance* by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁴ Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful *following* all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the Lord which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.

¹⁵ **The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers,** because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; ¹⁶ **but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy.** ¹⁷ Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave *them* all into his hand. ¹⁸ All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought *them* all to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. ²⁰ Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ **to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath** ²¹until seventy years were complete."

Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

A. Daniel is a story of tragedy (Israel's tragedy = punishment/death/exile; - Daniel's personal tragedy; A tragedy for the name and renown of God's glory – lost to His own covenant people. Yet, found in pagan nations among the gentiles, a remnant = Daniel)

B. Daniel is a story of Leadership

- **the lack of leadership in the Kings of Israel; 33 bad kings in Judah and Israel.** "They did evil in the sight of the Lord" – only 8 good kings "They feared the Lord"
- **Daniel's courageous leadership in the worst of times**

C. Daniel is a story of God's faithfulness (God showing that He is always with us even when in the darkest of times). God is sufficient. His Word is True (He is a promise keeper).

What do you do when you are tested? When life presses on you? When others are watching your life?

Read Daniel Chapter 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 vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his ^[a]god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his ^[b]god.

³ Then the king ^[c]ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his ^[d]officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the ^[e]royal family and of the nobles, ⁴ youths in whom 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 ^[f]serving in the king's ^[g]court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the ^[h]literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be ^[i]educated three years, at the end of which they were to ^[j]enter the king's personal service. ⁶ Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ Then the commander of the officials assigned *new* names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abednego.

Daniel's Resolve

⁸ But Daniel ^[k]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. ⁹ Now God granted Daniel ^[l]favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, ¹⁰ and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would ^[m]make me forfeit my head to the king."¹¹ But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance be ^[n]observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and ^[o]they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. ¹⁶ So the overseer continued to ^[p]withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* ^[q]literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

¹⁸ Then at the end of the days which the king had ^[r]specified ^[s]for presenting them, the commander of the officials ^[t]presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they ^[u]entered the king's personal service. ²⁰ As for every matter of wisdom ^[v]and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the ^[w]magicians *and* conjurers who *were* in all his realm.²¹ And Daniel ^[x]continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

Who Is Daniel?

What do we know about Daniel? = He was a Young man.

- He grew up in a good household; education was available to him; he was a good student; wise w/his time.
- He Loved the Lord
- He knew God's Word; he was a steward of what God had entrusted to him.
- He was a young man of character, counter-cultural (when his society was bent on rebellion/self-centeredness)
- Even at a young age, he was wise.
- He was blessed of God. (AGE is NOT a factor in God's calling, favor, anointing, or blessing)

1 Tim. 4:12 "Let no one look down on your **youthfulness**, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

Vs. 3: Then the king [l]ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his [l]officials, [Eunuchs] to bring in some of the sons of Israel, = [Teens] including some of the [l]royal family and of the nobles, ⁴youths in whom 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 [l]serving in the king's [l]court; - These teens were examined, tested, & scrutinized: (Looks = health, aptitude, for their wisdom (ability to understand and discern Truth.) – Example for today . . . what if your life was examined? What find??

What has gone wrong in Daniel's life?

- He has become a slave, a Refugee. Homeless
- He has Lost everything dear to him (Home, family, the country he loves, Stability, comfort, future, manhood?)
- He has become a slave and will remain one his entire life. His choice was subjugation or death.
- He has even lost his own name, his identity.

Vs 7: Then the commander of the officials assigned *new* names to them; and to **Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar**, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

- How would you react? What would be your next move? Complain? Give up? Wish you were dead?

But God had a plan for Daniel. Not just for Daniel, but for God's glory – through Daniel's life – if Daniel was willing to trust God with his whole life.

Vs. 4: and *he ordered him* to teach them the [l]literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵The king appointed for them a daily ration from the **king's choice food and from the wine which he drank**, (these teens were given the very best training, food, and opportunity for advancement and service to the pagan king) and *he appointed* that they should be [l]educated three years, at the end of which they were to [l]enter the king's *personal service*. (these teens, though slaves, though eunuchs, were to be trained to be emissaries, diplomats, wise-men, counselors, and advisors)

Daniel's Resolve: ⁸But Daniel [l]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. – Daniel chose to not eat the meat that was not prepared according to Levitical law and wine sacrificed in honor of false gods (Ex. 34:15). = **Daniel was a young man of Conviction**. (no one would have blamed him for yielding to new customs – as a slave and servant in a foreign country). Death if refused? Big risk!!

What does the Bible want us to remember and model about Daniel's life, circumstances, and behavior?

1. Daniel loved the Lord above his own life. Daniel believed in and trusted the Lord with his circumstances. **Daniel Trusted God's Word.** Daniel grew up reading from King David:

Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Psalms 119:1-10 "How blessed are those whose way is [a]blameless, Who walk in the law of the Lord. ²How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all *their* heart.

³ They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.

⁴ You have [Ⓜ]ordained Your precepts, That we should keep *them* diligently.

⁵ Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!

⁶ Then I shall not be ashamed When I look [Ⓜ]upon all Your commandments.

⁷ I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.

⁸ I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly!

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word.

¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.”

2. Daniel was wise enough to be submissive to his captors, to find the best way forward in a difficult environment (i.e. **work, school, this society)** “so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.” Daniel was polite, considerate, temperate, submissive, and honoring to his captors. = He kept a good testimony even in the hardest of circumstances.

3. Daniel was a Young man of Prayer. He trusted God and he asked God for help.

Daniel Chapter 6:10 “Daniel always prayed to God three times every day. Three times every day, he bowed down on his knees to pray and praise God.”

Vs. 9: Now God granted Daniel [Ⓛ]favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, God is in the miracle business. We should never be afraid to ask God to intervene. Nor should we be surprised when He does!! - **God sovereignly worked in the heart of a pagan jailer to accomplish His Will.**

¹⁰ and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would [Ⓜ]make me forfeit my head to the king.”¹¹ But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² “Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance be [Ⓜ]observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king’s choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.”

¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and [Ⓛ]they were fatter [Bari=stronger, healthier] than all the youths who had been eating the king’s choice food. ¹⁶ So the overseer continued to [Ⓜ]withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

Daniel trusted God. Daniel trusted God’s Word. And God proved Daniel right; God was trustworthy with Daniel’s life, health, and future. – **God used a faithful young man as a witness to a pagan world, to a gentile jailer, to the One true God’s power!!**

¹⁷ As for these four youths, **God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* [Ⓛ]literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.**

²⁰ **As for every matter of wisdom [Ⓛ]and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the [Ⓜ]magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.**

God rewarded Daniel’s faithfulness and blessed him with wisdom & understanding. Even the spiritual gift of discernment and ability to interpret visions. – why? For Daniel’s sake? No, but that through Daniel, God would accomplish His purpose. Daniel was a tool. We are tools. **May we be faithful vessels that God would use our lives to accomplish His purpose in your family, in your workplace, in your community, in THIS Church!!!**

²¹ **And Daniel [Ⓛ]continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.** = God gave Daniel a long life in the service to the king. 90 years old?

APPLICATION:

1. Daniel resolved to make the best of his dire circumstance – because He trusted God. Do you have that kind of Faith?
2. Daniel resolved to honor God above all else. What is your conviction? What do others know you to believe above all else?
3. God proved Daniel right. Where do you see God moving in your life, in your marriage, in your kids, in your career, in your future – that He wants to show His power? Where does God want to get glory in your life?
 - Where are you blocking God's blessing? Blocking His power? Blocking and robbing His glory because you are afraid? B/c you are NOT trusting the Lord in that circumstance? B/c you are bitter, complaining, hurt, discouraged, overwhelmed – and God's glory is not the Top priority in your life??
4. **Daniel is living proof that God is still working in the lives of those He loves, even in pain, loss, tribulation, and suffering.**