

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF DANIEL

DANIEL INTRO

ISRAEL HAD BEEN CAPTURED

The northern part of Israel was taken by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and the southern part, including Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians in 622 B.C.

- God allowed the overthrow of His people because they had lived in rebellion for over 500 years

DANIEL THE PROPHET

Daniel was born in 620 B.C. and in 605 B.C. the Babylonians took over Egypt, Israel, and what was left of the Assyrian Empire. Their epicenter was the city of Babylon located in modern day Iraq. Daniel was about 17 years old when he started to record the events in this book, but finished revising them at age 90

SOME ARGUE THE TIME AND AUTHORSHIP

Because of the remarkable accuracy of events that were prophesied and took place, many have claimed this book was written in the 2nd century B.C. not the 6th

- Problematic because some prophecies came true after 2nd century B.C.

DANIEL IS WRITTEN IN 2 LANGUAGES

Chapters 1, 8-12 are in Hebrew because they deal with concerns unique to the Jews, and Chapters 2-7 are in Aramaic because they deal with matters related to the wider population of the Babylonian and Persian empires

DANIEL IS A BOOK OF PROPHECY, AND IS THE SISTER BOOK TO REVELATION

Though Daniel has moral and historical content, the content is mostly prophetic and the theme is the sovereignty (knowledge and power) of God

- Daniel purposes to predict future events which would have given hope to the Jews in captivity and to us as believers today
- Daniel acts as a key to understanding Revelation, as does Revelation to Daniel
- Daniel is apocalyptic (end of the world) and is filled with many visions and dreams.
- Chapters 1-6 Daniel interprets other people's visions, in chapters 7-12 he receives his own. First 6 chapters are historical, the last 6 are prophetic

DANIEL HAS THEMES OF HOPE AND HAVING A MORAL COMPASS

At this time, Israel was dominated with Paganism and many Jews thought the promises God made to their people were lost due to their rebellion.

- Arising from this comes God's use of His people in a culture that has turned its back on Him and have become spiritually depraved.
- A constant theme in Daniel is how one has the ability to make moral decisions in the middle of a culture that is immoral.

We see that God can use willing people to impact individuals of influence and even whole societies and cultures in times where true Believers are the minority.

CONQUEST (DANIEL 1:1-2)

Daniel is scholarly because he was one of the most educated people in the bible

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM IN 605 B.C.

Jehoiakim was the son of the righteous king Josiah, but he was an evil oppressive king. He was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire

DANIEL WAS A YOUNG MAN AT THIS TIME

Daniel was about 13 when Babylon took control of Nineveh and gained control of Western Asia, and when their conquest took Jerusalem, he was about 17-20

- Daniel was a teen when Josiah brought a huge revival to the Jewish people, and this obviously had an affect on him.

DANIEL ALSO CAME FROM A GODLY HOME

It is safe to assume that Daniel's home was stable and god-fearing because of the great revival Josiah brought. We see here that leadership is vitally important!

- **Corrupt gov'ts and negligent parents will produce corruption and negligence**, but healthy leaders produce people like Daniel.

IT WENT DOWNHILL AFTER JOSIAH.

The following kings did not honor God, but that actually made the dedication of Daniel and his friends that much more noteworthy

THE THEME OF SOVEREIGNTY ARISES IN V2

Daniel writes, "The Lord handed Jehoiakim over to him..." showing that God was in control of the overtaking of the Jews by a pagan empire

THOUGH IT LOOKS LIKE EVIL OVERCAME GOOD, THIS WAS NOT A VICTORY FOR NEBUCHADNEZZAR

God is sovereign and had a plan that would correct His people and bring Him glory

- The crucifixion wasn't a victory for Satan, but a display of God's wisdom

NEBUCHADNEZZAR TOOK THE "VESSELS"

Gold, silver, armor, banquet utensils, etc. from the temple of God were put into the treasury of the temple of his god. This fulfilled Is.39, and will show up in Dan. 5

- Look at the metaphor. This is not just an earthly battle, but a battle of deities-God against Marduk, the god of the Babylonians

AN EMPIRE THAT REBELLED AGAINST GOD

The birth of Babylon and Tower of Babel are in Gen. 11. We also see in Revelation the rebirth of Babylon as the place of final rebellion to God before Christ returns

- Jerusalem vs. Babylon is symbolic of the 2 spiritual kingdoms at battle throughout history, ending with the triumph of Christ's Kingdom

Sovereignty - *Even when things look hopeless and out of our understanding, truly believing in God is trusting that He is in control and knows what He is doing We must also know that this does not remove our responsibility to follow, act, love, and serve*

(RE)EDUCATION (DANIEL 1:3-7)

KIDNAPPED AND REEDUCATED, SIMILAR TO JOSEPH IN GENESIS

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were from the tribe of Judah and selected by Ashpenaz, the chief of the court officials, to be educated in Babylonian culture. They rose to prominence in a foreign land after becoming slaves.

THINK NAZI GERMANY

Similar to the selection of "genetically perfect" teenagers during the Nazi Regime, Nebuchadnezzar selected the brightest, most talented, attractive and athletic young men to serve in the capital of the empire

- One could see this as brainwashing, or just good leadership in regards to using talent vs. discarding it

BRILLIANT, BUT NOT IN BABYLONIAN CULTURE

It was common for royalty and "cream of the crop" individuals to serve kings that conquered them, in this case they needed to learn Chaldean (Babylonian) language, literature, history and mythology over a 3 year process

THERE WERE BENEFITS TO THIS

Though servants, this echelon of workers got to work in the capital for the king's staff and enjoyed some of the pleasures of royalty like the best training, coaching, good food and wine. This was seen as an investment into the future of Babylon

NOW WE MEET THE PROTAGONISTS

Daniel God is judge, Hananiah Jehovah is gracious, Mishael Who is what God is? Azariah The Lord helps. They were named by godly parents that chose names to reflect spiritual commitment.

RENAMING WAS A COMMON PRACTICE

Nebuchadnezzar's motive might have just been general practice, or it could have been a sinister effort to purge out all references to previous religious commitments and replace them with paganism

AN ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THEIR IDENTITY

Daniel became **Beltesshazzar**, *may Bel protect us*, Hananiah became **Shadrach**, *the moon god*, Mishael became **Meshach**, *who is what Aku is?*, and Azariah became **Abednego**, *servant of Nebo*.

- What we find our identity in is vital. When we become followers of Jesus, we take on a new name, Christian

WHERE DO WE DERIVE OUR NAME?

Daniel received his name from godly parents that knew the ways of the true God, but was now immersed in a culture that tried to reidentify him and his friends

- Without the firm foundation he received at a young age, how could these men possibly hold onto truth and have a relationship with the true God?

AGAIN, WHERE DO WE GET OUR NAME?

- We are taught to study, climb the ladder, score a touchdown, make a name for ourselves, and we wonder why we are drowning in our pursuit to find our identity!

IT'S NO WONDER WE GET THESE RESULTS

- How can our children profess Christ if we only teach them the culture of an idolatrous society?
- How can we serve if we continue to glorify self-indulgence? How can the faith survive if we don't have a desire to pray, read, sacrifice, and be obedient to God?

LOOKING FOR NEBUCHADNEZZAR

- Are we looking for the things that will try to entice us away from finding our identity in Christ? How far are we willing to go to safeguard ourselves from having our name changed? Are we able to hold on, even when people try to hijack our identity?