

## Spiritual Growth Questions for February 19, 2023

1. In which situations do you find it hardest-or even feel it is impossible-to remain faithful to Christ?
2. **Read Daniel 1:1-2, 2 Kings 20:16-18.** Why is Judah being handed over to Nebuchadnezzar/Babylon? How does reflecting on Daniel's position at the start of this book encourage you to see it as a word for you in those situations?
3. **Read Daniel 4:17 & 5:21.** How does the knowledge that the Lord's hand is behind all events comfort you today, both in your own life and when you consider current world events?
4. **Read Daniel 7:11, 26-27, 8:25, 9:27.** Why do you suppose persecuted Christians gravitate toward Daniel and Revelation? How does this book of prophecy inform our present living?
5. **Read Daniel 1:3-7.** What are the most significant details we learn about Daniel and his three fellow exiles in 1:3-7? What do you think would have been the most challenging for these youths?
6. In the book of Daniel, an attempt is made to assimilate Daniel and his friends as Babylonians. How have you experienced the challenges of isolation, indoctrination, assimilation, and confusion? How did you fight to remain faithful to Christ?
7. What themes in Daniel inspire or encourage you most, and why? What are you looking forward to learning in this study? How can we pray for you this week?

**Deeper study:** **Read 2 Kings 24-25.** What do you feel are the most important background elements for the book of Daniel? Compare and contrast the scattering of God's people in Daniel 1 and Acts 8. How does God use each of these scenarios?

**Prayer:** Dear Sovereign Lord, I recognize that you have placed me right where you want me to be in this broken world. I humbly ask that you prepare and use me as your witness to the people you have placed in my life. May my identity as your child be stronger than any pressures this world may place on me. May your wisdom to me guide me through the brokenness of this life. May I reflect to others that your path, your ways, and your life is better than anything this world has to offer. May Jesus be glorified in me this week. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Please grow my faith in Jesus every day! In the name above all names, Jesus, for your glory Amen!

## Living for God in a Broken World: A Study of Daniel Daniel 1:1-7 February 19, 2023, Pastor John Lloyd

How do we live for God in ungodly times-like our own. Is it worth standing firm and obeying God when His kingdom seems so far away? How can we live courageously and confidently in nations that do not seek to live under God's rule? How is it possible to be a blessing to our nations and show the power and goodness of our God, even in a time such as ours? This is the context that Daniel found himself in. This story will exalt God as king and His kingdom in ways that will ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus. My prayer is that we will learn to live fully for God in a broken world.

Daniel 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. 3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. 6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

**Daniel fulfills prophecy:** 2 Kings 20:16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord: 17 Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. 18 And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

**Date:** Daniel spans from 605 – 536 B.C. Most likely written before 530 B.C. He was a young man of noble blood exiled from Judah during the time of King Jehoiakim (609-597B.C.) and lived thereafter at the Babylonian court. After the fall of the Babylonian empire, he served the Medo-Persian empire that succeeded it.

**Type of Literature-** Chapters 1-6 **historical** narrative of an Israelite, Daniel who served in the king's court during the Babylonian exile, chapters 7-12 **prophetical**, those early Jewish readers would have learned that their ultimate longings to be delivered, to have their exilic condition ultimately removed, would come at a great cost.

**Two Key Terms:** *Babylon* and *Exile*. (Genesis 11, Rev.14:7-8, Psalm 137:1, 8-9, Jeremiah 51 all negative about Babylon). Exile- Jeremiah 24:5b-6a. The good figs were very good, and the bad figs were very bad. Exiles are those people who have driven out by God. In the book of Daniel, then, it is the *exiles* in Babylon who are truly counted to be God's *blessed people*.

**Key Themes:** The central theme of the book of Daniel is God's sovereignty over history and empires, setting up and removing kings as he pleases (2:21; 4:34-37). Daniel and his three friends will provide examples for us how to live faithfully in exile and how to live as strangers and exiles in a world that is not their home, Hebrews 13:14. God humbles the proud and raises up the humble; even the hearts of the greatest kings are under his control. This world will be a place of torment and persecution for the saints until the end, getting worse and worse rather than better and better (ch.2,7). Yet the Lord will judge the kingdoms of this world, and bring them to an end, replacing them with his own kingdom that will never end. This kingdom will be ruled by the "Son of Man," who comes in the clouds. The saints must be patient and faithful amid a hostile world, looking to the Lord alone for deliverance. ESV Study Bible

This book shows that God intends to do more than merely judge an ungodly nation. Instead, he offers a *saving word* to those under his wrath—his deserved, settled anger. And for that, he will need his people dwelling there. They will need to be at home in Babylon, revealing God's king and kingdom in ways that ultimately find their fulfillment in Christ. David Helm

**Big Idea: Lord, help me to live an undefiled life in this broken world. May my faith grow under pressure for the glory of God! Grow my faith!**

I. God \_\_\_\_\_ His people to be \_\_\_\_\_ in a broken world.

Daniel 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

Acts 1:8, 8:1 17:26 God determined the times, and the exact places to live

The most favored books among persecuted believers around the world are Daniel and Revelation. Bob Stein "Why? Because in the end: God wins!"

**God is in control so I entrust my scatterings to Jesus! Grow my faith!**

II. Be \_\_\_\_\_ constant \_\_\_\_\_ to try and lead you away from God.

Daniel 1:3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding, learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

Three methods to erase their faith: *Isolation* vs.3, *Indoctrination* vs.4 and *Assimilation* vs.5 The goal is for the broken world to say "Our god is better and stronger than your god." (1 Pet. 4:1 Arm yourselves with the same way...)

**Worldview Questions-** Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? What's it all about? Is there a god? How can I live and die happily? What is good and evil? What would I be willing to die for? Olthuis, Worldviews

**The Lord was preparing for a greater work, not abandoning His people! Lord, please grow my faith during my time of preparation!**

III. \_\_\_\_\_ not to lose sight of your \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

Daniel 1:6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

"My identity is contingent on who I let into my story. Defilement only comes when I shut God out of my story. We must live for the eternal rather than the temporary and fading kingdoms of this world." Austin Keller

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. I John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

"By standing for God in the face of risk, we declare that possessing and declaring the grace of God are more precious to us than anything this life can offer or deny." Bryan Chappell

**God is in control! God's people are responsible to one another. What we do matters! God still expects us to be faithful to Him even in a broken world. This book is not about the greatness of Daniel and His friends. Rather it is intended to reveal God to us.**

**May my faith grow stronger by reflecting Jesus to a broken world!**