Bible Study Daniel 1Bible Study Daniel Ch1 [PPT 1]

Normally I like to begin a class with a sentence or two of introduction. But not this lesson. The reason is all of chapter one is an introduction to the book of Daniel.

This book is ultimately not about Daniel or his three friends, but about God and His victory in the world. God is the only sovereign, the one who establishes both nations and men and brings them down.

In the mid 80's in Midland Texas I and another man, Gene Ball, established a new church plant. Gene brought the worship service message and I had the Sunday School lesson and the evening service.

[PPT 2] Gene's messages were from the book of Daniel, entitled "Dare to be a Daniel", from which I learned a lot. However, the main purpose of the book of Daniel is to reveal to us who God is – His way of working in the world for the good of His people. The main lesson of the book of Daniel, then, is not, "Dare to be a Daniel!"

[PPT 3] It is: "Dare to trust in Daniel's God!"

The Jews were in exile suffering under pagan rulers who cared little for God or His people. They had every reason to wonder if God was in control and if He would deal with the situation for His own glory and the good of His covenant people.

Vs1-2 NASV) [PPT 4] Based on what remains, these are two paintings of what Babylon may have looked like in the time of Daniel.

The same Hebrew word used in verse 1 for Babylon is translated as Babel in Genesis 10&11. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is a continuation or

renewing of the very first kingdom mentioned in Gen. 10 which began under Nimrod in the land of Shinar or today's Iraq, just south of Baghdad. From Gen. to Rev. Babylon always stands for man's best efforts to oppose God.

[PPT 5] Vs2 = "*And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Juda into his (*Neb's.*) hand*". This tells us that Daniels view of God is that the Lord is sovereign and in control of events.

Our God is so wise and powerful that He can allow men and women to make personal choices and still accomplish His purposes through them. When God is not permitted to rule, He will overrule, but His will is ultimately done and His name glorified.

To understand chapter one, we need to remember that God is a covenant keeping God. He had made a covenant with the people of Israel and they had accepted it. His covenant with Israel contained both blessing and curses (Deut. 28:63-64, Jer. 25:1-14) depending upon their relationship with Him. The judgement of verses 1-2 were the fulfillment of many warnings from the prophets because of the nation's sins against God (Isa 24:1-6).

God does not change and as here, God's patience has limits which may very well be near running out for the nations of our world today.

Vs 3-4) ***Why didn't Daniel have any difficulty with becoming a part of the government that defeated his own nation and destroyed the temple?***

First from verse 2 we learn Daniel knew the defeat of Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar was by the hand of God. Here we see God's judgement carried out.

Second, in chapter 9 we will learn Daniel had the book of Jeremiah with him. Jeremiah 29:4-7 told Daniel that during their time in Babylon it was

God's will for the Jew's to work for the Babylonian's benefit. Here we see God's mercy.

Verse 4 says that Nebuchadnezzar gave orders *"to teach them the ligature and the language of the Chaldeans*."

The king's goal was not just to educate these young men. He wanted them to look like Jews on the outside but be Babylonian on the inside. This is similar to the goal of many of our secular universities today. They don't care if you look like a Christian on the outside, as long as they can teach you to think like a humanist on the inside. It is Satan's goal to change every Christian's thinking until we are conformed to this present age and culture. In many ways today's society is much like the one Daniel lived in centuries ago. The world still wants God's people to conform to its standards and follow its practices (**Struggling with some in your life**?).

But beyond Nebuchadnezzar's goal the real driving force behind the deportation of Daniel was the sovereign hand of God. He sent Daniel ahead of the majority of Jews who would follow 8 to 20 years later to secure their favor and provide for their safety by putting him within the government of Babylon (Jer. 24:5-6).

Vs 5-7) The practice of changing names was a way to express sovereign control and authority over others. Some examples, God name Adam, and Adam named Eve. Adam also named all the animals (Gen. 2:20-23.) Today a wife takes her husband's last name. We can name our pets because we are their master.

All of their Hebrew names indicate their relationship to the God of Israel, which implies they had devout parents. This may help explain why these,

in contrast to the other Jewish young men remain true to God: they had godly homes in their earlier years. But their new names are combined with the names of gods of Babylon.

[PPT6]

Hebrew Name	Meaning	Babylonian Name	Meaning
Daniel	God (El) has or is my judge	[PPT7] Belteshazzar	Bel's prince (Chaldean Baal) Bel protect the king
[PPT8] Hananiah	The Lord (iah) is gracious or beloved of the Lord	[PPT9] Shadrach	Command of Aku (Sumerian moon god)
[PPT10] Mishael	who is as or [what] God (El) is?	[PPT11] Meshach	who is as Aku is? (Shach)Venus?
[PPT12] Azariah	The Lord is my help	[PPT13] Abed-Nego	servant of Nego (Nebo, son of Bel) god of wisdom

Why wouldn't Daniel and his friends consider taking Babylonian names defiling?

First, even though the Babylonian names were given to them by those in authority over them, they did not choose to use the names for themselves. In addition, God had given no command as to the type of name to be used by the Jews. Apparently, they realized that what they were called by other people would not change their walk with God. In addition, they had a godly example for accepting a foreign name, that of Joseph in Egypt.

There is an important principle for us here. Believers are not called to take a stand on things where God has not specifically spoken, but to seek peace where no principle of God is directly violated.

[PPT 14] Rom. 12:18 says, "*Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone*".

Ultimately, it does not matter what men name us. It is the name we are given by God that matters, for in that name we find our destiny.

[PPT 15] In Luke 10:20 Jesus says: "*Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*"

These four young men decide to submit to a Babylonian government job, a Babylonian name, and a Babylonian education. In doing so they were exercising biblical submission. What is our relationship to be to our pagan government today; the same.

[PPT16] 1Pet 2:13 *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution*.

Notice my emphasis; Biblical submission is an attitude. It's an attitude which desires to obey God-given authority as an act of obedience and worship to the Lord.

Vs 8a) Apparently, other than these four, the rest of the Jewish youth in the first deportation had decided to indulge in the pleasures of the palace.

The text does not tell the exact reason why Daniel was convinced he would be defiled. Most likely Daniel's conviction was based on that the food served at the king's table would not be chosen or prepared in accordance with the standards of clean and unclean given in the Old Testament Law.

[PPT 17] *However, the Mosaic Law did not prohibit the use of wine. So, why would Daniel and his friends consider the kings wine defiling?*

If not physical, it's probably a spiritual reason. It seems that the king's wine was prepared or served in a way that involved dedication to pagan gods. If so, to drink it would be an act of worshiping that god.

Notice that in exercising godly wisdom Daniel knew the most important issue to take a stand on. Today there are numerous points of disagreement between the world's viewpoint and divine viewpoint and in that disagreement, we are to take our stand at key points. Daniel decided this was a critical point because it would cause him to be out of fellowship with God if he didn't separate from it. Daniel took a stand at this point because his desire to remain in fellowship with God over rode the desire to get along with and be accepted by the culture.

The believer should always choose the path which keeps fellowship with God even if it leads to separation from and possibly rejection from the culture.

Vs 8) Daniel and his three friends were part of the faithful Jewish remnant in Babylon. There where at least four, but out of how many?

The O.T. clearly shows that the majority of God's people have not always followed the Lord and kept His commandments. It has always been the "faithful remnant" that kept covenant.

[PPT 18] This principal also applies to the church today, since not everyone who profess faith in Jesus Christ is truly a child of God. There is a big difference between professors and confessors according to Matt 7:21-23.

Vs 9-13) Having been refused permission for a permanent change in diet by the commander of officials Daniel took the next option of a short temporary trial. The short period of ten days reduces the overseer's risk. He could end the experiment early enough, if necessary, to avoid a further change in the appearance of the youths.

Vs 14-16) Based on Vs9 the success of Daniel's trial was the result of God's grace, not the properties of the foods eaten. God blessed these four young men because they followed His word, not because they ate vegetables instead of meat. This passage should not be used to argue for the inherent superiority of vegetarian diets (Gen. 9:3; 1 Tim. 4:3-5).

Vs17) The word used for "*wisdom*" includes spiritual knowledge and the ability to apply what one knows. The same wisdom which God granted to Daniel and his friends is also available to us.

[PPT 19] Prov 1:7 "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and destruction*." But recognize that God given wisdom is like a tool, it is up to us <u>if</u> and <u>how</u> we use it. Wisdom comes to those who put God's Word into practice. It is not those who are just aware of God's truth who are wise, but it is those who act in obedience to that truth.

Vs 18-21) [PPT 20] Ps 119:98-100 *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my <u>meditation</u>. I understand more than the ancients, because I <u>keep</u> thy precepts.*

Two closing points: [PPT 21] 1) Accepting the Sovereignty of God (in your life). As an individual, Daniel did not deserve to be taken captive. We know from the record of his life in this book that he and his family had been faithful to God even before the captivity. Daniel had every reason to become bitter and angry at God, yet he understood and accepted that God was in control of these events which negatively affected him personally. Because of that, he was able to continue following God and to be a useful vessel fulfilling God's purpose.

[PPT 22] 2) God Often Works Through Adversity (in your life).

From Daniel's perspective, being captured by the Babylonians and taken almost 1,000 miles from home and absorbed into a foreign culture full of pagan influence would not have seemed like God's will. Yet it was God's will for Daniel to experience this adversity. We often have an overly simplistic understanding about how God works in our lives. His vision goes beyond our narrow view. We need to be open to the possibility that God is working as much in times of adversity as in times of blessing.

In conclusion; this book may give more material than any other O.T. book for thinking about the believer's presence in the world today. The book of Daniel provides a good lesson for thinking about the challenge of being in the world but not of the world.

[PPT 23] In John 17:15 Jesus prays "*I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one*."

We, like Daniel, find ourselves living in the times of the Gentiles. We, like Daniel, have been called to live under the authority of a government which does not believe in God or seeks to promote Christianity. We, like Daniel, are to avoid defilement, and yet submit to human government and serve it well, to the glory of God.