

Corresponds to Program 76-78

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

Daniel 1 – Parts 1-3 STUDY GUIDE

DANIEL 1 – PART 1

Daniel 1:1, 2

In addition to Daniel, we are going to look at Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, three books that give us a picture of the history of Israel leading up to the captivity of God's people.

Isaiah predicted that the sons of Israel's princes would be taken captive into Babylon and become eunuchs (Isaiah 39:6, 7). Isaiah also identified the sins and abominations that were taking place in Israel, including the eating of animals that God had taught were unclean and not to be eaten (Isaiah 66:15-17). This reflects on the compromise that Daniel and his friends refused to make regarding the king's food (Daniel 1:8-10). Other captives from Judah appeared to have no problem eating the king's food most likely, as Isaiah reveals, because they had already been eating it before being taken into captivity. Crisis does not produce character, it reveals it. Unlike their fellows, Daniel, Mishael, Azariah, and Hananiah had been faithful to God in Judah and continued to be faithful in captivity.

God humbled Himself before the nations and allowed His people to be taken captive for their own good, to distinguish the good from the bad among His people (Jeremiah 24:1-7). We see God doing this often in the Bible in order to separate the gold from the dross, the wheat from the tares (Isaiah 1:25; Matthew 13:40). God's true followers are not only in His church but also in Babylon (Revelation 18:4), and He calls His true followers in every fold to follow Him. They will hear His voice, join with God's people, and come into one fold just as Nebuchadnezzar eventually did. Just like God humbled Him-

self to reach Nebuchadnezzar, Jesus humbled Himself to reach the entire world (John 10:14-18).

Daniel 1:8

Daniel found God's purpose for him, and determined to follow it. And even though Daniel was made a eunuch, he would go on to have many spiritual children, begotten in Christ through the words given to Daniel for us (Galatians 4:19; Philemon 1:10).



“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

JOHN 10:16

DANIEL 1 – PART 2

Daniel 1:1

This verse unlocks the conflict between the king of the north and the king of the south in Daniel 11:40. In the prophetic book of Ezekiel, Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Babylon, is identified as the “king of the north” who will come against Jerusalem with chariots and horsemen. He is also called a “king of kings” (Ezekiel 26:7). Again in the book of Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar and the families of Babylon are identified as the king of the north who will come against God's people (Jeremiah 25:8, 9). Yet before Nebuchadnezzar can do this, he must first deal with Egypt, the king of the south, who comes against him in an attempt to aid

Jerusalem (Jeremiah 46:1, 2, 13). This is the same scenario we find in Daniel 11:40, 41. The king of the south comes against the king of the north. The king of the north then defeats the king of the south and enters the glorious land. So in the early prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we see a type of the latter prophecy pointing to the end-time powers of the kings of the north and south and the glorious land. More on this in our study of Daniel 11.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Daniel 1:8 DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART

John 10:15 I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP

Hebrews 8:10 I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND

Matthew 13:40 THE TARES ARE GATHERED AND BURNED

Hebrews 8:10

The Word of God is the ultimate truth that God is seeking to lead us to understand, both individually and personally. The responsibility of pastors, teachers, and evangelists is to direct people to Jesus and the Word of God. As we focus on Jesus, Who is the Word, the Holy Spirit teaches us and leads us to the truth, and shows us things to come (John 16:13-15).

Daniel 1:4-7

Babylon wants to completely transform God's people. Different names represent characters, and Babylon wants to change our characters. Different foods undermine our health and intelligence. Different education undermines our culture and morality. Spiritual Babylon wants to change everything about God's people to make them fit into its identity and culture. God calls us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1, 2). Instead of being stripped of our identity in Christ by the culture of spiritual Babylon today, we are called to ask the Holy Spirit to write God's Law on our minds and character.

The world under the devil is attempting to change us so that we reflect his evil, immoral character, instead of God's pure, righteous character. Despite all the devil's efforts, we do not need to be conformed to this world. Daniel did not conform to the Babylonian culture. Even the Babylonian name given to Daniel did not stick. Eventually, Daniel was no longer known as Belteshazzar, the name Nebuchadnezzar gave him, but was recognized as Daniel. If we, like Daniel, follow God and not Babylon, the culture and character of this world will not stick to us, just like it did not stick to Daniel. Name is synonymous with character. Each of us will be given a new name that corresponds with our new character in Jesus Christ. It will be a name, a character, that is unique to us, a name that no one else will know (have) but us (Revelation 2:17; Genesis 32:28).

DANIEL 1 - PART 3

Daniel 1:5-16

When we look closely at verses 6 and 10, we find the idea of the remnant of God's people. Daniel and his three friends were "among" many others of his "sort" or people who were taken captive into Babylon. Unlike the vast majority of captives, Daniel and his friends purposed to be faithful to God. They stood out from among the rest of his people, faithful to God's Word, a small group or remnant from among the many whom God called to be His people.

We also see that God's faithful people ate healthy food and it showed. They ate healthily and they looked healthy. Some folks eat "healthy" and look unhealthy. This is true in a spiritual sense also. Eating spiritually healthy food will reflect in our physical and spiritual natures.

Jeremiah 15:11

This verse contains a promise that was fulfilled in Daniel 1:9. God has promised to entreat the enemies of His people to treat His people better. We have a part to play in seeing that promise fulfilled. When we feel good, when we are healthy, happy, and holy, that creates a positive atmosphere around us. This atmosphere generates good back to us as we reflect God's goodness and blessings out to others. Daniel's spirit of health, happiness, and holiness led the prince of the eunuchs to take a chance with him and grant a test of Daniel's health principles at the risk of his own life. When we are healthy, happy, holy people, there will be those who may not follow God, but they will do as this eunuch did for Daniel. They will take a chance for us, perhaps at the risk of their own lives.

Summary

God knew what He was doing when He let Nebuchadnezzar take His people captive into Babylon, along with the vessels of His temple. God was humbling Himself before the nations so that people like Nebuchadnezzar could be won to heaven. Everything God allowed was foretold and prophesied ahead of time. God's people could be ready for the crisis if they were willing to listen to His prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Many refused to listen and prepare, living life as if God had not given them warning and instruction. But Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah listened, prepared, and were ready for captive evangelism. They discovered God's purpose for their lives and chose to be faithful to Him. Then God used them in a mighty way to vindicate His Name among the nations. God will always use those who respond to His love and counsel. May we each be willing to purpose in our hearts to follow God wherever He leads in these last days. In Jesus' name, amen. ★