

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel 1:2-8 | Session 2 | B.C. 607

In our last session together, we looked at characteristics of the man, Daniel. He was a man of purpose, prayer, prophecy, and integrity. We likewise looked at the judgments Israel faced due to their disobedience to God's law. He had promised to bless them if they obeyed Him but would send judgment if they disobeyed. God warned them 844 years earlier that He would send an enemy of *fierce countenance* against them (Deuteronomy 28:49-52). In B.C. 931 the judgments began with the northern kingdom of Israel invaded and taken captive by the Assyrians, and the southern kingdom of Judah would come under siege by king Nebuchadnezzar in three waves beginning in B.C. 607 and continuing through B.C. 586. The book of Daniel begins during the first siege of Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 607. Verse one states: *"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it."*

Verse 2—

We see the hand of God moving in world affairs in verse 2. **And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hand.** This was the Lord's doing and as mentioned above, it had been prophesied of what would happen if Israel abandoned the Lord their God (Deuteronomy 28:49-52; Isaiah 42:24). Jehoiakim gained his freedom and was able to remain on the throne in Jerusalem, for a short while, by pledging his allegiance to Babylon (2 Kings 23:36-24:1), however he was eventually bound and carried away to Babylon in chains; verse 2 records that the temple too was desecrated and **part of the vessels of the house of God** were taken and **carried into the land of Shinar to the house of Nebuchadnezzar's god** (God promised these vessels would be returned, Jeremiah 27:19-20). **Shinar** was Babylonia, first mentioned in Genesis 10:32-11:1-9 when the nations turned on God and built a great tower (the Tower of Babel) and the place where God *"confounded the language of all the earth, and the people were scattered upon all the earth."* Babel means *confusion*, and Babylon was the seat of great evil. Like all other cities mentioned in the Bible, Babylon in Scripture should always be viewed as a literal city named, Babylon¹. The city lies in ruins today, but will one day in the future be rebuilt and become the center world religion. In our Daniel passage, it was God's hand that was responsible for Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon capturing His chosen people. God can take something evil and use it for His glory (We need look no further than our own lives).

Verse 3,4, 5—

After this first siege was complete, Nebuchadnezzar instructed **Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs to bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes.** These were the nobles of Judah, likely teenagers. These boys were to be taken from their Jewish homeland, Judah, and

¹ Babylon is mentioned in 11 in the N.T. verses: Matthew 1:11,12,17; Acts 7:43; 1 Peter 5:13; Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2; 18:10; 18:21.

brought to Babylon in the *land of Shinar*. Verse 4 gives more details regarding the selection of these youth: They were those with 1) **no blemish**; probably meaning no physical defect. 2) **well favored**; nice to look at. 3) **skillful in all wisdom**; sensible as opposed to nonsensical. 4) **cunning in knowledge**; thoughtful and able to perceive what is taught. 5) **understanding science**; thinkers. In other words, well rounded boys, the best of the best in Judah. Daniel was among this group and was probably around 15 years old. The reason for the selection of these youth was **to teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans**. In other words, they were selected to be indoctrinated and brainwashed to become Chaldeans, and to forget all they had been taught in their Jewish homes.

We are seeing the very same worldly philosophy still being played out with young people today. Until about 1963, God was included in the government school classrooms. But after that time God was removed—He was not to be spoken of in a government school. Rather, the schools began to teach a nonbiblical worldview. As public education has become more and more secular (godless) the goal has always been to win over the minds of the youth. It is debated whether or not Abraham Lincoln said this, but it rings true regardless; *“The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.”* Adolph Hitler, the madman who almost controlled the world is stated to have said, *“He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future.”*

In the 1973, ten years after God was officially kicked out of U.S. public schools, this philosophy of capturing the minds of children has been prevalent. At an International Education Seminar in 1973, Harvard psychiatrist, Chester McPierce said, *“Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and **toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity**. It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the **international child of the future**.”*

On April 27, 2022, illegitimate U.S. President Joe Biden said to a gathering of teachers, *“The kids are yours when they are in the classroom.”* He added this for emphasis, *“They are all our children...they are not somebody else's children.”* So, it is not a conspiracy theory that they are coming after your children—it is happening; this is the philosophy of U.S. Education and Christian parents in particular need to wake up.

During the period from 1963 up until today this shift in America has had an effect on the Church as a whole; they have become weaker too. Pastors work overtime, not in the study of the Word of God, but trying to be relevant and often watering down the Gospel with self-help psychology. In so doing, the Bible itself has become irrelevant. Children (and most young to middle aged adults) no longer know basic Bible stories. Creation is a myth and evolution is no longer a theory, but taught as truth. Our government, universities, even so-called Christian colleges and seminaries continue to preach propaganda that influences and changes the belief systems of many, turning countless numbers of children against God and against their parents. While not being carried away to a foreign land, children

are *learning the philosophy and the tongue of the secular humanist* (the godless). To a large extent Christians in the 21st century have lost the war against the culture and many have compromised and switched sides, joining in with the world. The apostle Paul exhorts us to *“Be not conformed to this world”* (Romans 12:2). That is, don’t look like the world, don’t become like the world. Go against the flow, like we will see Daniel and his friends did just that.

Verse 6,7 —

The children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The names of these boys are an indication of their strong Hebrew upbringing, all of their names reflected the Only True God: **Daniel:** *God is my Judge.* **Hananiah:** *Yahweh is gracious.* **Mishael:** *Who is El?* And, **Azariah:** *Helped of Yahweh.* To each of these boys was given a new Babylonian name. Their changed names reflected the false gods of the Babylonians.

For Daniel, his name was changed to **Belteshazzar:** May Bel protect his life; To Hananiah, **Shadrach:** The moon god; To Mishael, **Meshach:** Who is like Aku?; and to Azariah, **Abed-nego:** Servant and worshipper of Nego. Changing one’s name indicates a token of subjection (2 Kings 23:34; 24:17). If you can win over the minds of the young people, they will become the influencers of the next generation.

Verse 8—

Not only propagandizing and brainwashing these boys, the diet of the Babylonians was **appointed** them too. We will look more into this verse next week, **But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.** Everything we do begins with a decision we make in our minds. That’s what it means, **Daniel purposed in his heart**, literally *his inner man*. Earlier we quoted Paul in Romans 12:2; he goes on to say *“be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* The body of Christ today needs to renew its collective mind; each believer must **purpose** that they will not defile themselves with the things of the world. This is what Daniel did and he did it as a teenager. How many of us who are older wouldn’t like to go back in time and correct some things in our lives? Young people can learn from Daniel to **purpose in their heart not to defile themselves with the world.** For those of us with children, or those of us who have influence over children, e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, etc., we can show them what Daniel did and challenge them to do the same.