

Intro; Today we begin exploring Daniel 1, which reveals the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies and other prophets, about the spiritual failure of Judah, as they are taken by the Babylonian Empire, some 120 years after God sent Assyria to take the 10 northern tribes into captivity.

- * In this chapter we meet Daniel and his 3 friends who stand out as rare godly teens in the midst of the compromising nation of Judah.
- * Chapter 1 focuses on -- The nation's capture (1-7), Daniel's refusal to compromise (8-17) and- The result of Daniel's commitment. (18-21)

I. THE NATION'S CAPTURE . (1-7 - read)

- * This brief but revealing passage shows us **6 things** Nebuchadnezzar did in taking Judah.

A. KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR DEFEATED THE RULER- JEHOIAKIM. (1a)

- * Jehoiakim was the most wicked king Judah had. He enslaved his own people, murdered the innocent, butchered the prophet Uriah, often tried to silence Jeremiah by burning his writings, and continued child sacrifice to pagan gods, like his grandfather King Manasseh. (2 Kings 24:ff)
- * When Babylon took Judah, Jehoiakim was allowed to rule temporarily under Babylonian oversight.
- * But soon, he refused to accept the defeat Jeremiah had prophesied, and rose up against Babylon.
- * He was quickly caught, brutally executed, and thrown into the dump with a dead donkey, which was a deserving sign of complete dishonor. (Jeremiah had prophesied this Jer. 22:18-19)

B. THE KING LAID LYED SIEGE TO JERUSELEM. (1b)

- * When a nation attacked another, much of the populace would flee to their main walled city.
- * There were 2 ways to conquer another land-- Completely destroy the people and take the land, or lay siege to their main city until they surrendered, and then take the people to be slaves.
- * Babylon chose the latter, and surrounded Jerusalem, allowed no one in or out, and waited until food and water ran out, and the people were starving and desperate, and chose to surrender.
- * This siege was short, as the Jews surrendered in just 3 months.
- * But later, after Babylon took much of the populace, King Zedekiah also rebelled, held out in a siege for 18 months, which resulted in many people starving, and some even killed and ate their young children to stay alive.

(Again, this was previously prophesied about the nation, by Jeremiah in 19:7-9)

C. THE KING OF BABYLON UNKNOWINGLY FOLLOWED GOD'S PLAN. (2a)

* Notice that Daniel, who lived obediently among God's sinful people, recognized this capture as God's judgment, when he wrote this. He believed Jeremiah (1:15-16, **25:9**) (Isaiah 39:6-7)

* Reading Jeremiah shows the populace refused to believe this, thinking God would never judge them.

* But it was God who called Nebuchadnezzar **His servant**, and used him to fulfill His purpose.

App- Great nations tend to have the idea that they are indestructible. "We're great, we will never fall".

- But God can bring down any nation, even using a nation more wicked than the one being judged.

* There are 3 main reasons God finally judged Judah by giving them over to the Babylonians.

1. Judah (as Israel did 120 years earlier) had become terribly idolatrous.

- They worshipped pagan idols, setting them up at the entrance of the Temple to mix the worship of God with pagan gods, and even sacrificing their babies to the pagan god- Molech.

- Babylon was where idolatry began with Nimrod in Genesis. It was the hotbed of paganism.

- So here, by sending them to Babylon, God was in a sense saying to Judah- If you love idolatry I'll send you to the center of it, so you can see what living under paganism is really like.

2. Judah had completely rejected God's Word through His prophets.

- Israel and Judah had completely ignored and rejected God's Law through Moses, and laughed at and scorned God's prophets, and their reminders and warnings from God.

- Because God's people ignored God's Word, God finally did something to get their attention.

- And God's judgment showed them just how true and accurate God's Word is.

- The Person and will of God is not hidden. From the start God has made His will abundantly clear.

- The problem is, sinful humanity rebelliously turns from it. (**Rom. 1:18-25**)

3. They disobeyed the Sabbatical laws.

- Lev. 25-26 commanded Israel to let the land rest every 7 years. This was to be done for the good of the land, but also to teach Israel to trust God to care for them, as they obeyed. (Vacation)

- But early on, as God blessed them materially, they fell into greed, and never let the land rest for 490 years (70 sabbaticals), so 1 reason God sent them into captivity was so the land could rest for those 70 sabbatical years. (Ezra wrote of this in 2 Chron. 36:21) (Jer 25, 29)

App- God expects His children to obey. When we don't, He may bring us to obey the hard way.

Sum- Israel and Judah had fully dishonored God before the world,

so He had them taken away for their idolatry, and their rejection of God's Word.

D. THE KING ROBBED THE TEMPLE ARTICLES. (2b)

* Pagans were very zealous and superstitious about their gods, and constantly tried to appease them, to receive blessing and escape judgment, so when taking another land, they always captured the worship articles of the conquered nation to offer to their own gods-- for 3 reasons.

1. This was a gratitude offering to the god of the Babylonians.

- Their highest god was Baal, and by offering him the Jews worship articles, Nebuchadnezzar was thanking Baal for giving him the power to overcome the Jews.

2. It was a humiliation of Jehovah, the God of the Israelites.

- Pagans believed that if they could steal the holy treasures from the god of a foreign power, this proved that their own god was stronger than the god of those they conquered.

- They believed if the Jews God couldn't defend his own temple, he was powerless and useless.

3. This was a sign of God's judgment.

- While Judah arrogantly continued to deny that God would judge them, God showed them that He refused to defend them, even to the point of allowing His own temple to be robbed.

- This act was a sure sign of God's judgment, but most never admitted it. **(NOTE 2 THINGS)**

1st- Notice the Jews spiritual Apathy.

, It's Amazing that this pagan Empire, worshipping gods that didn't even exist, was extremely loyal to them, while the Jews who had the true God- ignored, rebelled, and offended Him.

, It's true that often, the world is more loyal to their sin, than believers are to their Savior.

2nd- Notice the spiritual picture between Babylon and Jerusalem. (Q)

, Vs 1 says "Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it". That describes spiritual history.

, In scripture, Babylon represents the world, the city of the devil and the world's wickedness.

, It was where Babel was built in man's pride and rebellion, and where God destroyed that effort.

, In Revelation, Babylon is the name of antichrist's final world political and religious power.

, Babylon means "city of confusion", Jerusalem means "city of peace". These cities represent the 2 kingdoms people chose to be loyal to, either Satan's kingdom or God's kingdom.

, In the end, Babylon will be destroyed, but the New Jerusalem will exist forever on God's new earth.

, In history, Babylon, which is Satan's kingdom, has been constantly laying siege to Jerusalem, which is God's kingdom, both in a general sense, in the world, and in individual lives.

, Are you living for the city of God, bringing about God's peace in your life and others, or are you living for the city of confusion and destruction which propagates sin?

3 , Judah refused to live for God's peace, so they went to the place of sin, which fit their lifestyle.

E. THE KING REMOVED THE ELITE CHILDREN. (3-4a)

* The king's chief of staff was tasked with retrieving a group of Judah's boys from the royal family, and families of nobility. (Historians claim between 75 and 100) **Note 2 things.**

1. The qualifications of these boys.

- a. They were to be “young men”, a word indicating mid-teens, so they would be impressionable.
- b. They were also to be “handsome”, with no defects. Looks counts for much in the world, and they needed to be sharp, so they could influence the other Jews to follow the king.
- c. They were to “show aptitude for learning, be well informed, and quick to understand.” (Referring to being intelligent, quick learners, smart thinkers, and wise in facts and decisions).
- d. They had to be “qualified to serve in the king's palace,” ‘Qualified’- refers to social ability, manners, able to relate with others, a firm personality. (not fearful- backward, but assertive)

Note- Nothing is said about their moral character. As long as they were good looking, popular, educated, and socially acceptable, and well liked, the world cared little about moral character.

2. The reasons the king removed these teens.

- a. They were hostages. When a nation conquered another, they commonly kidnapped the elite children to ensure that the conquered nation would obey, to protect those children.
 - Later, Jehoakim's wicked son Jehoichin rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, showing how little care he had for the lives of these teens, who were being held hostage in captivity.
- b. They were to become influential leaders. Soon, when Babylon brought the rest of the Judah, they would be far more apt to listen and follow their own kids, rather than a foreign official.
- c. They would be used as culture destroyers. You destroy the mindset, values, and morals of a culture the same way you preserve a culture. You get the kids. (Ps 78:1-8)
 - They gathered the most influential kids, brainwashed them, and brought the rest of the nation to Babylon to listen to and follow them.
 - In a few decades, the old folks would die off, which left only new generations of Jews that were fully integrated into Babylonian culture.
 - And it worked well, because later when the king of Persia allowed the Jews to return to their land, only a fragment of the Jews had any desire to inhabit their God-given land and re-establish their worship of God.

@ This leads into v4b- 7. The king's final task was to
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- * These verses show how this king took these teens from Judah, stripped them of everything they learned from their culture under God, and retrained them to be good pagans.
- * Note 5 significant changes the king made in these teen's lives.

1. He changed their locality. (3)

- He took them back to Babylon, away from their parent's influence, God's promised land, God's priests, and God's temple, and put them in fully pagan godless surroundings where they would be pressured to conform to that lifestyle.
- This is exactly what Satan seeks to do to every believer and especially our children. Christian compromise often starts when believers allow Satan to separate them from the things of God.
- Hebrews was written to Jews who were sliding back into Judaism and its works-salvation, so in 10:19-25 the writer challenged them to purity and stability and then shows that this flourishes in the context of corporate worship, and fellowship.
- In 1 Cor. 15:33-34 Paul reprimanded the sinful Corinthian believers for being too heavily involved in and influenced by, the world.

"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-- I say this to your shame.

ILL- The Amish reject cars, not for sin, but because it separates from family.(Isolation) (Cleora Karr)

- We are not to be isolated from the world but insulated from its sin.
- Part of that process is being around believers on a regular basis. We need fellowship.