

Daniel 1 Study

1. Do you trust your national leader/s? Why or why not?

2. Imagine a time where you have been placed in a very difficult situation and have simply said 'Just trust me with this one'. What was it that was the critical agent for you to hold on or not?

The book of Daniel is apocalyptic in its genre. This means that it is a style of writing which is unique in itself. It's not prophecy although it teaches about Godly and cosmic truths about the future and beyond. It's not history although it's intertwined with a good deal of history. Apocalyptic literature is a unique style of writing which brings to light eternal reality from the throne room of God and has a cosmic, universal scope, but at the same time retaining a historic reality as well. It uses symbolism in numbers and images, through dreams and visions to express Godly truth that isn't chronological in its narrative.

Chapter one begins with an historic summary of the exile of the Southern kingdom. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom had been destroyed approximately 100 years prior under the hand of the Assyrians (about 700BC). Now Jerusalem and the Southern half is taken by Babylonia.

3. Read Daniel Ch 1 and make a mental note of the characters.

4. Name the main characters and spend a few moments talking about what part you think they play in this chapter?

- King Jehoiakim – King of Judah.
- King Neb. King of Babylon.
- Daniel
- His three mates
- God

5. 1:1-7 Taught the ways of Babylon.

From verses 1-7 we see how the great king Neb would increase the strength of his kingdom. He would choose the cream of the crop and reeducate them in the ways of the Babylonians. Daniel and his friends were either royalty or part of the elite group from Israel. They will be retrained to be leaders of Babylon, usually to be sent back as Babylonian governors of the place that was once their own.

6. What do you think would happen to God's people in this time of exile under foreign rule, knowing they have no Israel to go back to?

7. Is it true that due to the length of time between the resurrection and the return, that post resurrection Christians, as exiles in a foreign land, have been swallowed up by the false gods of secular culture, wealth and gluttony while we await the return of Christ? Back up your answer.

8. Read 1:8-16. What was Daniels response to the worldly temptations of the Babylonians?

7. What do you think worldliness is and what is the sin we commit when we give in to worldliness?

8. Why was Daniel able to stand up against this pressure?

All through the Old Testament, the Israelites most lethal temptation was to chase after the other nations and bow down to their gods. This is called idolatry. In its core, idolatry is to place your trust or hope in the ways of the world first before God. We do this in many ways but usually so that we can fill the deep need we have for security and love which can only be filled by God. In the case of the Babylonian exile, the thing that threatened the future of Israel most of all, was their lack of social and geographic security as they lost both their national identity and their land. Daniel resolved not to defile or dirty himself and place his security in the powerful ways of the world. He resisted and God blessed him even moreso, because this man of wisdom does not stand alone, he is backed up by the author of wisdom Himself. This is the wisdom, to fear God and place your trust only in him for your well being. The actions of Daniel help us to know how to resist the world.

8. Read verses 17-21. What do you think is the key idea?

By the end of chapter one the theme of the book has been cemented. On one hand we see the great kingdoms of the earth. They propose to have wisdom and power as they take other nations captive. On the other hand we see the God of creation, who stands over these nations and guides them like pawns on his chess board. The God of Israel has not been defeated, but stands sovereign as he works his purposes through the history of our world so that his name will be glorified. Israel's fall is due to her idolatry. Daniel is a man of wisdom and stands in contrast to the rulers of the world and also to Israel and her kings, because unlike them he attributes his power and wisdom only to God. True wisdom in the end is to place one's trust in the trustworthiness of an eternal and living God. The stark contrast is the futile and foolish hopes men and women have when they stand in their own strength and like all the kings and rulers of the world they will rise one day only to fall again. Our God, though will one day raise us up so that we will stand in glory with him. This should always be our hope as we wait for the return of Jesus. This is the strength that the man or women of wisdom has in the end to overcome the futile values and fleeting, temporary hopes of the world.

9. Name some practical ways you can strengthen your resolve and resist the ways of our Babylon?