



# Daniel: Man of Integrity

## Lesson 1

### God is in Control

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

Daniel 1:1-2

#### Introduction

- What can people do when disaster hits?
- But more importantly what can/should the **people of God** do?

#### Daniel's Day

- That's what it was like in Daniel's day.
- In Daniel's day disaster had hit. The nation of Judah had come to an end.
- It didn't happen in one sudden siege of Jerusalem.
- It happened over a long period of time
  - 1) After Solomon died the Kingdom divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) (930 B.C.) – leadership failed
  - 2) 200 years later the Northern Kingdom (Israel) fell to Assyria (720 B.C.) and disappeared from history – morality failed.
  - 3) 136 years later the Southern Kingdom (Judah) fell to the Babylonians and went into exile- personal selfishness ruled.
  - 4) This latter period was Daniel's time.

#### Daniel's Time

- The year was 605 B.C.
- Nebuchadnezzar had defeated regional power Egypt.
- Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was forced to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar (2 K. 23:34-24:1, 2 Ch. 36:4-6)

#### Tribute

- Amounted to:
  - financial tribute (the temple vessels plus taxes)
  - deportation of key leaders (the most talented and useful went first – of which Daniel was one)
  - left the poor behind with permission to take whatever land they wanted as their own as long as they lived peacefully (2 K.24:14).
- Result:
  - Fostered great loyalty among the remnant
  - Provided steady source of talent for civil service back home

#### The Message of Daniel: God is in Control

- In the midst of all this, when hopelessness fell over Judah like a blanket

- Daniel’s message was that, “God is in control”.
- God is in control of both heaven **and** earth.

### Today

- We tend to separate what God does from what we do
- God handles the spiritual stuff and we handle the natural stuff
- So we pray to God to save our souls but we often forget about Him (or just pay lip service) when it comes down to expecting God to help us with our daily life.

### The Message of Daniel: God Directs What He Controls

- God is not only in control of both heaven and earth
- But God is **also** in control of directing:
  - the natural forces of nature
  - the spiritual forces of the created order
  - the destiny of nations and
  - the care of His people
- So even though the nation of Judah falls into the hands of the Babylonians, in Daniel’s perspective this was intentional and the will of God (Dn.1:2).

### The Land of Shinar

- But when Daniel says, “God is in control”, he is saying more than just what people of faith say when bad things happen to good people.
- And Daniel hints at this when he says that Nebuchadnezzar took the temple vessels “into the land of Shinar”.
- This is a **deliberate** archaism.
- Nobody used that term in Daniel’s day. It was the land of Babylon.
- So it was a deliberate reference and reminder by Daniel of what had happened during the days when Babylon was called Shinar.
- It was a hint to the people of faith reminding them of:
  - a second front
  - a behind the scenes battle
  - a real war that was still going on, in all that they faced in Babylon.
  - It was a spiritual battle for the very **viability** of the Kingdom of God

### The Book of Daniel

- Is about this battle
- It’s been described as “the greatest book in the Bible on godless kingdoms and the Kingdom of God” (Scroggie, 1:199)
- It’s about how the godless kingdoms of the world are opposed to the Kingdom of God
- But it’s actually deeper than that
- Daniel’s about how the godless kingdoms of the world are ruled not just by godless men but are actually under the **influence** of the spiritual forces of the enemy.
- It’s also about how Daniel represents the Kingdom of God, the spiritual kingdom, which God told Adam and Eve to establish when they were in the Garden of Eden.

- And how God used Daniel to infiltrate the enemy camp, change the destiny of the Jews in exile, and ultimately prepare the way for the Messiah.

### **God's Plan for the Nations**

- In order to understand the bigger picture we need to go back to Shinar
- We actually need to go back even further, to Eden
- Because God has had a plan for the nations that starts back at the beginning.

#### **1) In the Beginning: Eden (Gn. 1:27-28)**

- God created mankind and set him in an idyllic garden called Eden. (which in Hebrew means "Pleasure" or "Delight").
- It was God's Garden of Dreams. Free of sin and full of His presence.
- Eden's location was somewhere between four rivers: the Pishon, Havilah, Tigris and the Euphrates in the modern country of Iraq.
- Not far from or even a part of what later became Babylon. (see Appendix)

#### **First Mandate (Gn. 1:27-28)**

- Here God handed out man's 1<sup>st</sup> mandate: *to be a representative of His Kingdom order in the earth.*
- The blessings and knowledge of God was to flow out of Eden into all the earth through Adam and Eve and their children.
- They were to rule and reign over the earth.
- They were to establish God's kingdom here on earth.

#### **Satan at Work (Gn. 3:6-7)**

- But Satan in the form of a serpent, masterminded the "Great Deception."
- Led to Adam and Eve sinning and God's Garden of Dreams becoming a spiritual toxic waste dump.

#### **Two Results**

- 1. Man Gave Up His Authority to Rule the Earth to Satan (Lk.4:6, Jn. 12:31)**
- 2. Satan Established a Global Command and Control Center in Eden**

#### **2) The Tower of Babel (Gn. 11:4, 6-9)**

- As we saw above, God's original plan was for man to move throughout the earth, replenish it and rule over it in the Lord's name. Of course, Satan had other plans.
- At Babel Satan got all the tribes and nations to stay put.

#### **Four Objectives**

- 1) Build a city *for themselves*
- 2) Reach heaven from an earthly platform
- 3) Make their name an object of honor and fear
- 4) Avoid being scattered throughout the earth

#### **God's Objectives**

- 1) We are never instructed to build our own city, but rather, a city "whose maker and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10).

- 2) The purpose of our lives is to bring heaven to Earth, not the other way around.
- 3) It is not our name that should be glorified, only Jesus' (Phil. 2:9-11).
- 4) From the **beginning** God's mission for man was to go throughout all the earth; govern it and develop it.

### **The Tower of Babel as a Ziggurat**

- Archaeologists have identified the Tower of Babel as a *ziggurat* - an ancient overtly occult structure.
- The tower's top was to be "in the heavens" (Gn.11:4) in order to directly commune with the demonic principalities they had agreed to serve.

### **What Babel Created**

- 1) A command and control center from which to subjugate the whole earth.
- 2) A way for Satan to gain worship and a following.
- 3) A way to **stop** the Lord from carrying out His creation mandate.
- 4) By controlling the human race Satan could then be able:
  - to preempt Messiah's coming
  - by preventing Israel's development as a nation.

### **3) Abraham's Call (Gn. 11:26-32)**

- So right after Babel, God called Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:3)
- Why? To thwart Satan's attempt at control.

### **4) Daniel's Babylon**

- And now we have come full circle.
- We are in Babylon where the Lord has willingly given Jehoiakim and Judah into the hands of the enemy He had worked so hard to stop in earlier years? Why? Why at the end of OT Times does God do this? Perhaps because:
  - His coming Messiah is an earthly Messiah but not a political one
  - He wants to show us through Daniel His Kingdom reign is spiritual not political (although Daniel has much political influence)
  - He wants to teach us how to fight for His Kingdom in spiritual ways
- The name Babylon comes from the words *Bab-ili*, or "Gateway of the Gods".
- Had over 4,000 gods associated with it.
- As we shall see as we read, Daniel was trained as a seer of the gods
- He was well versed in their operation and function.
- Yet he also understood his call.
- Despite the adverse circumstances that he faced
- Despite the turn of events that enslaved him in the **center** of Satan's camp
- Daniel, like Adam and Eve and all who follow the Lord, determined to live as **"a representative of God's Kingdom order in the earth."**

# Appendix

The Ancient Near East, 1800 to 1400 B.C.



# Assyrian and Babylonian Kingdoms, 9th to 6th Centuries B.C.





