

Lesson 1

Where Is God When Everything Goes Wrong?

Daniel 1

Begin today's lesson asking the Holy Spirit to illumine your mind and to teach you His precepts.

"I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."

Before we start our questions for the week, read through all of Daniel 1.

1. As the book of Daniel opens, what tragedy has occurred in Jerusalem?
Job 42:2
2. According to Jeremiah 25:1-12, had the people been warned about the impending doom?
3. What was their response to these warnings?
4. How long did Jeremiah issue his warnings?
5. How long did Jeremiah prophesy the captivity would last?

You may have noticed a discrepancy between the dates given in Daniel and in Jeremiah. There were two ways to number the years of a king's reign. In Israel, the year began when the king ascended to the throne. In Babylon, the first full calendar year after the king ascended the throne marked the beginning of his reign. Daniel used the Babylonian system.

6. As you read Daniel 1:1-2, where is God?

7. Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar brought some of the vessels of the house of God into the treasury of his god?

8. What happened in Genesis 11 on the plain of Shinar? What modern day country is located there?

9. Identify Babylon on the map at the back of your Bible. Note its proximity to Jerusalem.

10. Describe the youths who were brought as captives from Israel.

11. How were they being prepared for service to the king and how long did this preparation take?

12. Find this event on your timeline on page 77. Record Daniel's approximate age at this time and the chapter number where we find this event. Also record any details you want to remember.

13. What names did the Babylonians give to Daniel and his friends?

Daniel	→	_____
Hananiah	→	_____
Mishael	→	_____
Azariah	→	_____

In Babylon, these four youths were immersed in a pagan culture. According to Daniel 1:

14. Do you think there was any significance in changing the youths' names? If so, what?

15. Do you think this indoctrination changed their inner core of beliefs or character?

16. What implication does this have for the young people (or anyone) in our secular society today?

17. Why might the king's food and wine bring defilement according to Exodus 34:14-15?

18. What choice did Daniel make in Daniel 1:8? Did he work "within the system"?

19. As you consider Daniel and his friends' desire not to defile themselves, ask the Lord if there is something in your life that you need to avoid in order to keep yourself pure. Ask Him if there are godly habits and spiritual disciplines that He wants you to incorporate into your daily life. Take some time to listen and record here what the Lord is saying to you.

20. Who was also at work according to Daniel 1:9? And what was the outcome in Daniel 1:15-16? Discuss.

21. What gifts did God give the Hebrew youths in Daniel 1:17-20?

22. How were these young men assessed as their time of preparation ended?
23. As you think about Daniel 1 what have you learned about the sovereignty of God?
24. Take some time to read Psalm 137 which is called the Song of the Exiles and was probably written by a contemporary of Daniel who was in captivity. Write down any insights you receive from reading this psalm.
25. As you look back over this lesson about Daniel 1, what do you want to remember?
26. Consider the following scriptures and meditate on them using the prayer exercise that is explained on page 81.
- ❖ Scriptures: **1 Timothy 6:15-16**
 - ❖ Word or phrase:
 - ❖ Amplification:
 - ❖ Invitation:

Thoughts From Martha: God's Sovereignty

I definitely walked away from this lesson with an added sense of God's sovereignty -- much bigger than what He had been doing lately at 12423 Cobblestone Drive. I suppose I had previously been aware (on some distant level) that He was busy working in all your lives, too and surely out there in the world...somewhere far away...but I didn't really spend an inordinate amount of time ruminating on that truth. I guess I saw in greater depth how God is not only working sovereignly in individual lives, but how He's also working in every place where our lives intersect someone else's through His Spirit. Not only that, He's so big and so sovereign He can move His hand over entire nations all at once!

Just considering the effects of God's sovereignty in certain individual moments in times past or the here-and-now is mind-boggling enough, but we all know His sovereignty spans not only particular *moments* in the past or present, but *all* of time -- even to the establishing and removing of kings or the changing of times and epochs as it says in the second chapter of Daniel. Just try to extrapolate on God's sovereignty starting with individuals, then further out to each intersection and on out to entire nations ... and then ... spread it out over a few millenniums! Try *that* without pulling your hair out!

Yep, those little sovereign plans of His can take years and years to come to full fruition. Just ask Daniel. Sovereignty *so big*, we only stand on the fringe of comprehending what's happening around us. God can't possibly show us all the 'whys and wherefores' because the answers are many times too big to grasp. God is surely doing tremendous things in the world and in our lives -- the sum being exponentially bigger than the individual parts. He is bringing down nations and establishing kingdoms, giving favor and bestowing blessings sometimes when we least expect it! And even though we may *never* get the wide-angle, telescopic picture of our own lives, like we can when we read stories in God's Word, we can, (like Daniel) remain faithful at every juncture that presents us with an opportunity for obedience and trust that He is doing a greater work that only time and eternity will someday reveal.

To God be the glory...

Lecture Notes: