

Doing hard things well Pt 1

Daniel 1:1-7

- If you are challenged by people who say “The Bible is fake and can’t be trusted” all you have to do is refer them to the book of Daniel. More than any other book in the Bible Daniel is perhaps its most prophetic, for in understanding it allows you to grasp the teaching that God is Sovereign, and in doing so while it confounds and confuses the critics it will bring comfort to you the believer. How so?
- In the book of Daniel God reveals history that had yet to happen for him to write, such as the fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, Kingdoms that had yet to rise in power much less be toppled and conquered, and still he describes them in detail centuries before these things would happen. He spoke of “the time of the end” that outlines both the coming of the Messiah and the Antichrist.
- He speaks of symbolic visions of beasts, statues, and Heavenly figures like “The Son of man” to reveal God’s Sovereignty over the earth and its Kingdoms, using imagery that is found in the book of Revelation to describe the end times and its signs. But as Prophetic as Daniel is it’s still very practical, its an example to all of us about how to live Godly in a world that celebrates ungodliness, and yet remain pure and effective.

V1-7

- **V1-2** for decades the prophets had warned the rulers of Judah that their idolatry, immorality, and injustice, would lead to the nations ruin. The Prophets saw the day coming when God would bring the Babylonian army into Judah and destroy Jerusalem and its temple, and take the people captive to Babylon. A century before the fall of Jerusalem the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed this very message Ch 13, 21, 39, and Micah Isaiah’s contemporary shared this same message in **Mic 4:10**.
- The Prophet Habakkuk in **Hab 1:2-4, 12-17**, couldn’t understand how God would use the godless Babylonians to chasten His people, and Jeremiah actually lived long enough to see these prophecies that he made come true. In a practical sense the fall of Jerusalem looked like the triumph of pagan gods over the true the God of Israel Jehovah, especially after Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple and took its sacred furnishings back to Babylon and placed them in the temple of his own god.

- **1 Pet 4:17** this is what people miss even Christians judgment must first start where? At the house of God, Israel was God's people, He had made a Covenant with them that He would care for and bless them if they obeyed His statutes, and if they decided they wouldn't then He would chasten them and scatter them among the ungodly > **Deut 4:25-31**. In 722 B.C. The Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians, one hundred and thirty six years later around 586 B.C. the Southern Kingdom didn't learn the lesson and falls to the Babylonians, but here where it gets interesting.
- Almost twenty years before in 605 B.C. the Babylonians had put Judah to tribute where they would come and take from them the outwardly best of their young men. So the King's sons, his court's children, and the upper class of Judah had to give them their children to stop them from taking Judah and Jerusalem over completely.
- This is so like the enemy, he acts as if you can appease him, but you can't, you try and bargain and barter with him, and all your doing is giving him more and more of yourself, until finally he takes it all. Babylon had no intentions on giving Judah its freedom, this was just delaying the inevitable, so in the first of three deportations Daniel was taken, and this is where we are going to pick up the story.
- In the first two verses were given information that describes the times that Daniel is living in > **the practical V1**- Nebuchadnezzar has besieged Judah, in this he has surrounded the capital Jerusalem with his armies, cut off supplies from entering, and is forcing surrender through starvation and isolation, this went on for over ten yrs. So first they **bargained with them**, then they **compromised to them**, and now they are **surrounded by them**, even though they tried to **appease them** wow!
- **The spiritual V2**- The Lord gave them over, **Jer 36:23-31**- Jehoiakim was the King who when he received the scroll of prophecy from Jeremiah that God would deliver Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hands he cut it up and threw it into the fire, as if that would invalidate what it said. People have been doing this since forever, they don't like what it says let's ban it, if that doesn't work let's ignore it, that doesn't work let's change its meaning, but no matter what they try it still speaks loudly.
- **V3-4** Babylon is playing the long game, when this first happened it was almost eight years before the siege, Daniel was taken in 605 B.C., the siege happened in 597 B.C. and Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. the enemy will systematically break you down. Let's examine his system of indoctrination > **1st** he wants them young, **2nd** good looking, **3rd** smart, all so they can teach them their ways, this is how diabolical the enemy is.

- Getting them young does two things > **1st** its easier to get them to forget what they've already been taught, **2nd** being young they'll have more time to indoctrinate others. Now being good looking and smart adds to that as people love to follow those who outwardly appear like they have it all together.
- Look at the magazine covers, the advertisements, the models they use, you don't see any blemishes, if there are they air brush them out. Look at congress, the senators, the first thing they tell you is where they've gone to school, and what they've accomplished, this means they know what their doing and you should listen.
- **V5-7** in order to do this the Babylonians knew they needed to make some changes in the lives of these young men, so lets > **1.** Change their diets, **2.** Change their names. In the natural what happens to our bodies, our tastes, our dependencies, if you take a small child from their mother at an early age after some years whoever it is that is supplying their needs they become attached and dependent upon, and even if their biological parent is reintroduced they are a stranger to them.
- That's in the practical what about the spiritual? What happens when your spiritual diet changes from edifying- reading, studying, praying, fellowshipping, serving, to the carnal- gossiping, backbiting, lying, justifying, mocking, before long our perspective changes, and our appetite begins to crave for that which its been feeding on regularly (the flesh).
- Close with this Nebuchadnezzar knew centuries ago what the true wealth of any nation is, and its not its money, or its gold, or its natural resources, but it is its youth. If I can get them to hand over their young then I'll have a whole generation that I can mold into only knowing what I've taught them and not the truth. Notice he also changes their names, for in doing so he now can change their identities. In doing this they will not know who they are or where they came from, only what I teach them.