

## Devoted Part 1 - "Are you sure?" (7-18-21)

**Introduction:** What determines the course of your life?

"Are you sure this is where you wanna be?" - Willie Nelson

### 1) Captivity (Difficult Circumstances & Direct Consequences)

#### Daniel 1:1-2 (ESV)

(1) In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. (2) And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

**Note:** A brief history & description of God's people leading into this captivity . . .

- Israel & Judah split
- **Hezekiah's** pride (2 Kings 20)
- **Manasseh's** horrible reign (2 Kings 21)
- Judah makes an unholy alliance with Egypt
- And now the fulfillment of God's promised judgement has come

**Hezekiah's pride (2 Kings 20):** Hezekiah becomes very ill & on his death bed, God heals him!

#### 2 Kings 20:12-13 (ESV)

(12) At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. (13) And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

**Notes:** Hezekiah is showing off his stuff. But was that Israel's real treasure?

#### 2 Chronicles 32:31 (ESV)

And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to (Hezekiah) to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.

**Note:** A test for Hezekiah - a king comes seeking answers because of the healing. Hezekiah shows him all his treasure instead of his God.

#### 2 Kings 20:16-18 (ESV)

(16) Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: (17) Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. (18) And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

**Note:** Daniel's difficult situation is just like many of our own - through either unfair circumstances and/or direct consequences, he ends up in a place he'd rather not be!

#### 2 Kings 20:19 (ESV)

Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?"

**Note:** Isn't that just how we all too often react? - We live in the moment shrugging off the consequences!

## Manasseh (Hezekiah's son) - begins his Wicked Rule (2 Kings 21)

### 2 Kings 21:9-16 (ESV)

(9) But they did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel. (10) And the LORD said by his servants the prophets, (11) "Because Manasseh king of Judah has committed these abominations and has done things more evil than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols, (12) therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such disaster that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle . . . (16) Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he made Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Note:** How often do we compare ourselves to others in order to determine the health of our walk with God?

- **Hezekiah's (good king) - moment of pride** was the problem - true!
- **Manasseh's (evil king) - his wicked reign** was the problem - true!
- **Ultimately - a culture of compromise** led to captivity . . .

### 2 Chronicles 36:14-16 (ESV)

(14) All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem. (15) The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. (16) But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

**Application:** Whatever situation you are in (whether it be a time of peace or difficulty, whether you arrived there thru "unfair" circumstances or the consequences of your own choices), . . .

### Someone will reign over you - who's it gonna be?

#### 2) Living in Exile (settling into the culture/community around you, or set apart?)

### Daniel 1:3-5 (ESV)

(3) Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, (4) youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. (5) The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

**Note:** The Jewish nobility were to be groomed for service to the king, retrained in their ways & culture

- **Babylonian Culture** - They had their own way, values, and goals. Watch how they conquered . . .

### Daniel 1:2 (ESV)

(2) And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into (Nebuchadnezzar's) hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And (Nebuchadnezzar) brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

**Note:** He took the vessels and the people (best and brightest) - to serve in his kingdom!

- Babylon borrowed from other cultures that they conquered to build their own kingdom
- This is exactly the situation we are in now - the very foundation of our society is built on biblical principals and is now being used to reject the very One from whom that great treasure of truth has come!

- **Compromising Jews**

### **Daniel 1:6 (ESV)**

Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

**Note:** Possibly 2,000 were Jewish nobility like Daniel chosen for “re-education” and then service to the King. (See 2 Kings 24:14-16 for some math: 10,000 taken - 7,000 warriors & 1,000 builders/craftsmen)

**The temptation:** Become part of the surrounding culture. This was the most natural thing to survive & thrive!

**Warning:** Like RINO’s (Republican in name only), we ought to be aware of our propensity as follower’s of Jesus to become CHR-INO’s (Christians in name only).

Barnabas (and then Saul joins him) come to Antioch to lead new followers of Jesus there . . .

### **Acts 11:23, 26 (ESV)**

When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose . . . For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

### **3) Character** (Devoted - resolved not to defile himself)

**So this is the situation Daniel is in:** difficult circumstances, anti-God culture, & compromising Jews

### **Daniel 1:6-7 (ESV)**

(6) Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. (7) And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

**Note:** Daniel couldn’t control his circumstances, the culture around him, even his name was taken from him!

### **Daniel 1:8 (ESV)**

But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

**Note:** What will shape the course of your life? **Daniel chose to be devoted to God!**

- **Resolved** - “purposed in his heart”
- **Defile** - “defile, pollute, desecrate, stain, make impure”
- **Daniel might have to live here, but his life wasn’t gonna be marked by it!**

### **Daniel 1:9 (ESV)**

And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs

- **Favor** - Steadfast love (see: Psalm 136)
- **Compassion** - Tender love (warm and tender emotions, creating a safe place): literal meaning: womb

**Conclusion:** No matter the circumstances, or the culture & community around you - The true course of your life will be set by what (or who) you are devoted to!

### **Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV)**

(13) “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.