

Part 3 — “The People of God in Babylon” — 12 June 2022

Introduction:

The people of God have always either lived among or been surrounded by those who worshiped other gods and engaged in idolatrous and immoral practices. Throughout Scripture they were called to faithfully worship the Lord and to avoid such practices (Deut. 18:9-14). Although they had gone into exile for failing to heed these commands, those who sought to be faithful recognized their importance as they sought to maintain their identity in a foreign land.

Main Point: The opening passage of the book of Daniel reminds us that rival kings and kingdoms have always sought to remake God’s people in their own image by both _____ and _____ them.

The Power & Authority of the King—Daniel 1:1-7

The Power of Nebuchadnezzar (1:1-2)

Observations

1. The opening remark of the book poses a problem given Jeremiah’s claims about when these kings came to power (Jer. 25:1).
2. The event that is referenced was Nebuchadnezzar’s first siege of Jerusalem in 605 BC.
3. The account describes Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Judah from two different perspectives:
 - ⇒ From an _____ perspective, Nebuchadnezzar, with the help of his gods, defeated Jehoiakim and his God.

“placed the vessels in the treasury of his god”

“Marduk” (*Bel*) →
 - ⇒ From a _____ perspective, the Lord used Nebuchadnezzar to bring about His own promised judgment upon His unfaithful people (2 Chron. 36:15-17).

“the Lord”— אֲדֹנָי (adonai)— “‘lord’ or ‘master’...[it] emphasizes the servant-master relationship and...suggests God’s authority as... One who is sovereign in His rule and absolute authority.” —The Moody Handbook of Theology

Key Point: The introduction to the book of Daniel establishes that, although God’s people find themselves under the authority of their enemies, these kings and their kingdoms are ultimately subject to the _____ power of the Most High God.

The Benevolent Authority of Nebuchadnezzar (1:3-5)

Observations

1. Many of the first captives taken to Babylon were young people from influential families.
2. The king chose those who were the best looking and who showed the most aptitude for learning.
3. They were brought to Babylon in order to experience all it had to offer and thereby to become _____ servants of the king.

“the language and literature of the Chaldeans”

“a daily portion of the food...and of the wine”
4. At a later date, the king would himself examine them to see if they were fit to serve as his _____.

Key Point: The end goal was that the captives would embrace Babylonian _____ and _____ and thereby influence others from their own nation so they might all be loyal citizens of their new kingdom.

The Coercive Authority of Nebuchadnezzar (1:6-7)

Observations

1. Their captivity and journey to Babylon would have been deeply traumatic for these young men.
2. The renaming of the men pictured the shift in their identity which the Babylonians expected of them.

“...re-naming, in biblical literature is...a sign of inferior, subordinate and dependent status; Eliakim was renamed by Pharaoh Neco as Jehoiakim (2 Kg. 23:34), and Mattaniah was changed to Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kg, 24:17).”

—P. Chia, *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*

Daniel “Belteshazzar”

Hananiab “Shadrach”

Misbael “Meshach”

Azariab “Abednego”

“The new names were meant to erase the previous identity of each of the young men and to associate them more closely with Babylonian culture and religion. Babylonian allegiance was expected to follow their new identity and enlightened education. Renaming them was the quintessential attack on their heritage and faith.” —J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*

Key Point: Their presence in a pagan city and their new names would have, on the deepest and most _____ level, challenged their understanding of their identity as God’s people.

Living Faithfully in “Babylon”

- We live in a kingdom (with an enemy ruler - John 12:31) that seeks to _____ us to its own image.

Rom. 12:2—*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- Our enemy seeks to _____ our identity.

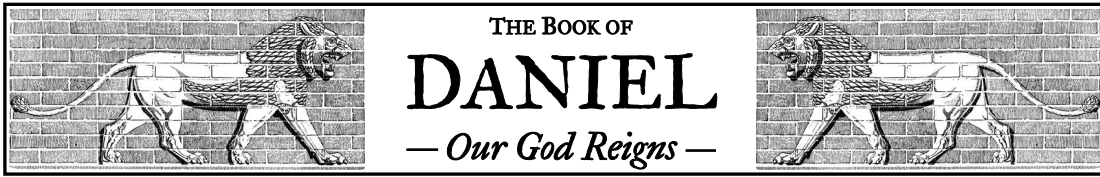
1 Pet. 5:8—*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

(1) _____ (2) _____

- We resist this knowing our true _____ and living out our true identity in our _____.

1 Pet. 2:9—*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

(1) In our _____ (2) In our _____



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Main Point: The opening passage of the book of Daniel reminds us that rival kings and kingdoms have always sought to remake God’s people in their own image by both **alluring** and **coercing** them.

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(1) Through Temptation

(2) Through Coercion

- We resist this knowing our true King and living out our true identity in our vocations.

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(1) In our Relationships

(2) In our Responsibilities