

Taken, Tested & Trusted

Living Rooted in Babylon - part 1
Pastor Bob Johnson, September 13th, 2020

I. God's P _____ & P _____

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. Daniel 1:1-2 (ESV)

Influence Insight:

**Don't be too quick to conclude God is ...
from the 'set backs' in our lives.**

II. Neb's P _____ & P _____

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. 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. Daniel 1:3-7 (ESV)

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Influence Insights:

- **It is wise to ...**
- **How we think determines how ...**

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to our first week of an 8 week small group season this fall at GPC. At GPC, we are big on small groups :). May our church family grow warmer together as we meet in small groups (face to face or computer to computer) to develop friendships and encourage each other as we let God transform our everyday lives with His Truth.

Getting Started:

Ok - just one ice breaker before we dive into our study. What is one TV show or series that you enjoyed watching (possibly binging) during this pandemic season? What made it enjoyable to watch?

Before we dig a little deeper in other passages that support last Sunday's message, let's re-read Daniel 1:1-7

What has continued to resonate with you from Sunday's message.

Digging Deeper:

Bob mentioned that throughout our time in the Book of Daniel, Daniel's life is an example and invitation of living life with God. Over and over we will see Him: Depend on God, Discern God's ways for living, show Discretion in living out God's wisdom and display Discipline to live life for God for 70 years.

Let's begin our time together like Daniel would...in dependence on God for discernment, discretion and then living out whatever He brings to us.

Just take a few moments, to recollect ourselves in the presence of God and open our hearts, our lives, our minds, and our beings to whatever it is God wants to do with us. Let us be still in God's presence. (pause)

"O God, we turn to you. We come to you in our incompleteness that you might complete us. We come to you in our brokenness that you might make us whole. We come to you in our dis-ease" that you might heal us. Help us to open the deeps of our lives to you, that in this passage and in our fellowship together you may be able to work in us that which you purpose for us in your perfect will for our wholeness. Stir our hearts, stimulate our minds, have your way with us. For all you are doing, for all you are going to do, we give you praise and thanks, in Jesus' name... Amen.

1. When you read in vs. 1-2 that it was God's idea for Judah to be besieged and taken captive including some vessels from God's house,

what thoughts about God entered your mind? What do you think God was doing?

Prior to this, we learned in that God had been speaking, leading, inviting Judah (the people of Israel) to be His people.

Read Deuteronomy 5:29; 28:25, 65-66; and Isaiah 39:6-7,

Reflecting on the above passages hundreds before Babylon attacked Judah, what do you hear God saying to the people of Israel?

Read Daniel 9:4-7 which explains why they were defeated. Why do you think they didn't heed God's warnings? What do you think is beneath their response? How do you feel about God in His loving presence allowing setbacks to happen with Judah? With you?

How do you respond to setbacks? Do they take you away from God or draw you toward God?

2. The Babylonian assimilation plan that we learned about last Sunday is also the same plan that is present in our world today and has been the Devil's plan ever since sin came into our world.

The first tactic of their 4-fold strategy was to promote isolation. What are some examples that you are aware of that show the danger of prolonged isolation? What are some positive aspects of 'non-isolation' as Christ followers from Hebrews 3:13.

The second part of the Babylonian plan was indoctrination. We live in a world where we are constantly hearing all sorts of voices and ideologies that are not true. One way to counter being swept away by a cultural current is to stay grounded in God's Word. Read Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How has God's Word shaped, rooted and kept you from being swept downstream in a cultural current?

The third tactic we saw in Daniel 1 was giving those taken captive a new identity. How we view ourselves and God is huge. Just like Judah you are God's creation and he deeply loves you...he likes you...he loves loving you. Before you "accepted Him" He radically accepted you just as you are...while you are/were a sinner Christ came for you, through His death and resurrection he justified you (declared you "not guilty"); reconciled you (made you right with God) and indwelt you with His Spirit so you can have a real, deep, personal relationship with God and love others like God loves you.

Because of this, the following on the back page is true of you if you are a follower of Christ and this identity cannot be taken away.

IN CHRIST YOU ARE: One who is created by God, One who is justified... completely forgiven, One who is sanctified...you have a new God-given capacity to experience God relationally, One who is adopted by God - He is your home, One who belongs to God - you live being loved and loving Him...desiring His will over your own, One who is always with God...not possible to be alone, One who is beloved by God - His love for you is the sun of your "identity galaxy"...this is radically transforming!

Which one of the above 7 truths are you most drawn to?

Which one listed above is most difficult to get your heart and head around?

Which one of the seven identify truths listed do you sense God inviting you to more fully embrace? Why might this be?

The fourth tactic to re-align Daniel and his friends to leave their old life and become Babylonians was imitation. This is where Daniel drew a line and chose not to cross. Like Daniel, we are called to not follow what our world encourages us to pursue and defined by. We belong to God!

Read John 14:27 and Roman 12:2.

3. Regarding what influences us the most, A.W. Tozer writes..."What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. For this reason the most portentous fact about anyone is not what they at a given time may say or do, but what they conceive God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God."

What image of God did the Israelites have?

What was Neb's image of God? How did this influence the battles they picked and the outcome of their beliefs and choices?

4. Of the 4 ways of Daniel's life we have begun to observe: Dependence on God; Discernment from God; Discretion with others; Discipline for long haul life with God which one is your attention drawn to? Which one do you feel resistant toward? Why do you think that is?

What is your image of God during this season? This answer often comes slowly and in a time of solitude and reflection. Are you willing to set aside time to be with God and let Him search your heart and reveal the Truth of this answer? This time will always yield greater intimacy with God, growth in mature-Christlikeness, and joyful peace. It's worth it.

Is there something God has for you to hear from Him, trust Him in and follow?

As we wrap up, the following is a prayer of gratitude for what God has done with our time together:

We thank you Father, Son and Spirit for this time with you, your word and these friends. We ask for the grace to live life moving from here for God's glory, our abundant life in Christ, and for the sake of the good of others. Amen