

"Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times"

Part 1

Daniel 1

Introduction: While we were in Wyoming we attended church in a town called Jackson. The church was a Bible Church and when we were there the Pastor was away and the man who was to fill in became sick and so they called on another man who had 1 hour and 15 minutes notice. The man spoke on the subject of the sovereignty of God in light of what is happening in our world today.

He began by talking about "fear" in the lives of believers. He asked the church of about 45 what it was that they feared the most. He then began to share how he lives in fear because of all that is happening in our world today. All of that made me think and it led me to the message which we are going to look at today and the messages which we shall consider the next couple of weeks.

Before I start into the message which we shall look at today let me first of all remind you of some very important points.

1. As believers we are not to live in fear.

2 Timothy 1:7

⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2. God is working out His plan and there is nothing that can stop Him.

Isaiah 14:26-27

²⁶ This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

²⁷ For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Isaiah 40:15, 17

¹⁵ Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

¹⁷ *All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.*

Daniel 20:20-21a

²⁰ *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

²¹ *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:*

I could go on with verses but you get the idea from these about how God is in control working out His plan.

We also know that our world is moving toward the kingdom of the Anti-christ which will be established during the Great Tribulation. Now as believers we also know that we will not be here for the tribulation but we shall be raptured away as the Bride of Christ before the Anti-christ is revealed.

Now many declare that God must come back very soon due to the conditions in our nation but there is no promise in the Bible that we as believers in the United States will not go through difficult and trying times. God never made a covenant with the USA!

We also know that in our nation we are under the judgment of God and that can be seen with what is recorded in Romans 1. Our nation has suppressed the Truth of God and pushed Him to the side and therefore God has removed the moral restraints and we are seeing the DEPRAVITY of man manifest within our nation. Let me show you something which Paul recorded in 2 Timothy 3.

2 Timothy 3:1

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

The word "perilous" means "savage" or "hard to bear".

As this world funnels down to the reign of the anti-christ we can expect that things are going to grow more difficult. Now there are many people who do not want to believe this and it is a foreign thought for them to think that God would ever allow difficult times to fall upon the church which exists within the USA.

Illustration:

While we were away I listened to a message by Michael Yousseph and he spoke of a question that many people ask him in this country. The question is, "Why do good people suffer?" His response to that is that we should be asking a different question, "Why do sinful people receive blessings from God?"

The bottom line is that we do not deserve the blessings of God because we are not "GOOD" but instead we are sinful.

I want to walk you through some verses in Daniel 1 so that we might be prepared when times become "PERILOUS" in our lives. As we look at Daniel's life we can see a young man who experienced living in difficult times because of the judgment of God.

I. The Consequences

Notice Daniel 1:1

I wish we had more time to look at every thought connected with this verse but we are not studying the book of Daniel so we will just get the high points here.

Nebuchadnezzar was an instrument of judgment in the hands of God.

Jeremiah 27:6-8

⁶ And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

⁷ And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

⁸ And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Now let me show you why God brought this judgment.

2 Kings 24:1-4

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

² And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah

to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

³ Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

⁴ And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

So the judgment came upon the people because they had rebelled against God.

Application:

We are also living in a nation that has rebelled against God and for that reason we are already experiencing the judgment of God.

Illustration:

This is evident in many areas but it really was brought to my attention at the Creation Museum when I saw that Ken Ham had to be escorted by an armed guard. They have had many who have attended the Museum in order to scoff at the Truth of creation.

Notice Daniel 1:2

Here we see that Nebuchadnezzar took part of the vessels of the house of God back to the land of Babylon.

This is very significant. The vessels were kept in the temple and so the people of Judah trusted that they were safe under the protection of God while they were in the temple. When Nebuchadnezzar took part of them to Babylon it was a sign that God had lifted His Divine protection from His chosen people.

Now the fact that all were not taken was an extension of God's grace. This was a warning and an opportunity for the people of Judah to repent.

Jeremiah 27:18

¹⁸ But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

The offer was if the people turned back to God and to His Word then the remaining vessels would not be taken but Israel rejected the warning and all the vessels were eventually carried away.

Application:

God has also given many warnings to our nation and each one has been ignored. So just as God's protection had been lifted from His chosen people so His protection has been lifted from our nation.

Romans 1:24-28

²⁴ *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

²⁵ *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

²⁶ *For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

²⁷ *And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

²⁸ *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

This is exactly what we are seeing in our nation today. There is evidence all around us of the abandonment of God from our nation. He has lifted His protective hand and so we are seeing the manifestation of the depravity of mankind in our nation.

Notice Daniel 1:3-6

There is much to be seen here but time does not permit us to consider everything.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that Daniel and his friends who were chosen were of the tribe of Judah. This is very significant.

This was Satan working in a very subtle way. Jesus Christ would come from the tribe of Judah and so this was an attempt by Satan to corrupt the Promised Seed of Jesus Christ.

Application:

Here in this we find a very important message for you and I. From the tribe of Judah would come Jesus Christ. Satan failed to stop that from happening. So today Satan's targets are Christians and he will do all he can to stop us from living a life that will enable others to see Jesus Christ in us.

1 Peter 5:6-8

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

I want you to understand that as the darkness increases in our nation so does the Satan influence and we must not take this lightly.

Illustration:

In Wyoming there is a growing threat to hikers and the threat is grizzly bears. When we were in Yellowstone I did not understand how serious the threat was. I learned the seriousness when we went into a small town called Dubois. We had planned to hike a trail called Bonneville Pass but the hike got set back one full day which was God's grace. The locals told me how populated with grizzly this area really was. We chose to stay away because of the reports of those who knew the truth about the bears.

This reminded me of those who toy with Satan. They take him very lightly and so when he sets a trap they walk right into the trap he sets.

Conclusion:

Let me leave you with the words of Spurgeon pertaining to Satan:

"He has a way of making the worse appear the better reason; he can put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—make men believe that it is to their own advantage to do that which is causing their everlasting ruin. He can make men carry coals of fire in their bosoms, and dream that they shall not be burned; he can make them dance upon the brink of hell as though they were on the verge of heaven. Alas! fools that we are how readily do his lies prevail against us!"