

"Living with a New Normal"

Daniel 1

Part 1

Introduction: Today we are going to look at a message that is for the purpose of preparing us for the up coming year. Since the Covid invasion things have really changed within our world and I suspect that things are going to continue to change as time moves on. Things are not what they were ten or even five years ago. Circumstances are changing each day and sometimes it is difficult to keep up with all the changes. It is like we have been picked out of the Old United States and placed in another country.

But in the midst of it all there are certain things that have not changed. God is still the same and His Word is still the same. Neither of these have changed and with this we must know that God's standards for His people have not changed.

Now one of the reasons for the changes is to get the world's population conditioned for the rule of the Anti-Christ. Let us keep in mind, Satan is the god of this world, so we battle with him and then we also battle the world's philosophies.

2 Corinthians 4:4

⁴ *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Ephesians 2:1-2

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

Galatians 1:3-4

³ *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*

⁴ *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

1 Peter 5:8-9

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

⁹ *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

All of this reminds us of what Paul wrote in Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

¹¹ *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

¹² ***For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

Today we are going to step into the life of Daniel to see exactly what we need to guard against in this "NEW NORMAL" with which we are faced.

I. The Historical Background

Notice Daniel 1:1

Here we see that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem. This siege stretched out for over twenty years and then in 586 BC he destroyed Jerusalem. During this time there were thousands of Jews that were deported to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:13-16

¹³ *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.*

¹⁴ *And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.*

¹⁵ *And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.*

¹⁶ *And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.*

Now I want to give you something very important to consider. There were four men taken in one of the early deportations. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These four men will play an important part in this book. Daniel will especially have an important role because he is the writer. About nine years after Daniel was deported there was another person deported that we are familiar with, and his name was Ezekiel.

Now here is what I want you to understand: God was in complete control of all that happened in the captivity. God placed Ezekiel among the exiles to minister to them while they were in Babylon, and he placed Daniel in the palace where his ministry would be to the kings that would rise to power. God strategically placed both of these men right where He wanted them to be in the midst of a foreign land.

Application:

We must understand that whatever happens in our nation we can rest assured that our God is in control. He will continue to build His church and He will never forsake us. Even in the midst of judgment He will never abandon us. It may become very difficult in the future but that does not mean that God has forsaken us. He will still work through His church no matter the circumstances. He continued to work through the Jews even in the midst of judgment.

Isaiah 43:1-3a

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

² *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

³ *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:*

Jeremiah 51:1-5

Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;

² *And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.*

³ *Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host.*

⁴ *Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets.*

⁵ **For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts:** *though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.*

Let me get you back to Daniel.

He was taken captive when he was in his teenage years. He will be removed from his land; he will be removed from his family, and he will be thrust into a foreign land. It will be a land where he will have to learn a NEW NORMAL. The language will be different, the culture will be different, and the gods will be different. At his young age Daniel will prove to be a man of great conviction. He will stay true to His God no matter the cost. He will refuse to be influenced by the cultural pressure. Daniel was a God pleaser and not a man pleaser.

Application:

We must understand that Satan and the world system is always trying to get us to conform to the culture of our day. If it can succeed, then we are rendered ineffective for the Kingdom. This is why we must be informed as to how the attacks are brought against us. Today we are being thrust into a culture that wants to reform us.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² **And be not conformed to this world:** *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

In our day we have a choice to make. Are we going to give into the pressures of society and blend with everyone else or am I going to stand alone for the Lord?

The History.

Now let us get to some interesting history. The Babylonians rose to power by overcoming the Assyrians. Each of these superpowers had different ways in which they dealt with their enemies.

Assyrians:

The Assyrians were extremely brutal in the way that they dealt with their enemies. They would go into towns and cities, and they would abuse the women, they would take the

children captive as slaves, and they would kill the men. But there was more. They would often skin the men alive, and they would collect the skins of the men. They would build pyramids out of their heads so as to frighten anyone who thought of attacking their cities. They were known for torture as they chained men tighter and used hooks placed in their jaws and noses.

Jonah 1:1-3

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

² *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

³ *But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*

One of the reasons why Jonah refused to go to Nineveh was because of their brutality.

Babylonians:

The Babylonians worked in a different way. They would work through seduction. They would capture the people and then they would lead them back to Babylon. In the case of Daniel and the Jews, they would lead them hundreds of miles through the barren land and bring them into the land. Their cities and their land would be spectacular and beautiful.

Herodotus the Greek historian describes the ancient city of Babylon.

The city of Babylon was about 200 square miles along the Euphrates River. The city was surrounded by 60 miles of walls. The walls were 300 feet high and 80 feet thick. The city had 100 brass gates and 220 high towers. The Euphrates River was split around the city to form a moat and it also ran through the city as a slow-moving peaceful river which provided a constant water source. In the middle of the city was a pyramid structure called a Ziggurat. It was a terraced structure and on each terrace was a beautiful garden. It was a flowered pyramid that reached 400 feet high. It was actually considered to be one of the 7 ancient wonders of the world.

Now let us place ourselves in the shoes of the Jews. You have been transported 900 miles through the desert and you enter this city through one of the brass gates. You stand there in complete amazement as you try to take in all the beauty. Then the Babylonians say to you, "Do you like our city? You can now live here. You can eat our food, build your houses and live right here in the safety and security of our land. You can become one of us."

The Babylonians would seduce to conform to their ways. Daniel refused to be conformed to the Babylonian ways.

Someone has said that Daniel lived in Babylon, but he never allowed Babylon to live in him.

II. The Ways of Seduction

Let us look a little closer at the ways of seduction that the Babylonians used.

1. Isolation

When Daniel was deported, he was taken away from his family and everyone he knew. The Babylonians knew that if they could isolate the captives, they would be more likely to conform to the Babylonian culture. They would remove them from everything that was their support structure. They would especially remove them from the worship of their God. The Babylonians believed that if they could separate the Jews from all of this, they would be more likely to abandon what they knew and accept their values, their gods, their practices.

Application:

This is exactly what the enemy tries to do to believers today. He wants to somehow and, in some way, separate you from the church. He wants to get you so busy that you have no time to gather together with God's people because he knows that is your support structure.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

²⁴ *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

The enemy will do all he can to separate you from prayer, Bible reading and worship. He knows if he can get you alone and isolated that he can then cause you to be molded by your worldly surroundings.

We were able to see this in the beginning of the Covid lockdowns and if the elites would have their way, they would do it again. We must stand against isolation and be sure to stay close to our support structure.

This isolation never effected Daniel. Why? Someone poured into the life of Daniel when he was young. Timothy is a good example.

2 Timothy 1:5

⁵ When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Let me just remind the parents here that this is what the world will attempt to do with your children. This is why it is so important to teach your children the Word of God and to teach them to think critically. If they are not grounded, then when they are isolated, they will be weakened and they will conform to the culture around them.

Conclusion:

Be very careful that you do not allow yourself to be isolated. Do not allow yourself to be removed from prayer and Bible study. You desperately need the Word of God to strengthen you for the battle.

Psalms 119:97-102

⁹⁷ O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁸ Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

¹⁰² I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.