

Introduction to Daniel

(Daniel 1:1-2)

Lesson #1

Scripture: Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Introduction:

This summer Taylor and Ryan has spent a lot of time with their grandpa in Oklahoma. Grandpa decided that this was a real important summer in which he would teach the boys some life lessons from his perspective. I'll have to admit I was curious about what kind of things he might teach them.

So when we got down there grandpa began to tell me how the boys had been working so hard all summer. He gave me a big list of all the fences that got fixed and all the lawns mowed. Grandpa explained how they were up and at um first thing in the morning, without being asked. When I heard this one my eyes lit up and I thought if that was true a miracle must have happened.

After hearing all that grandpa told me that all summer he had simply been talking to the boys about their choices, and how each choice comes with consequences. He went on to explain to them that every little decision so matter how insignificant really was important and would effect your life direction.

He explained to them to be successful in the business world you needed to start by showing up early and staying late....

You know this whole lesson for our boys would be....and is a great spiritual lesson. I couldn't help but to think of computer programming in light of all this. When your writing lines of a computer program, you make "*if, then*" statements. In other words, if you do this, then this happens....sounds a lot like real life doesn't it.....well it also sounds like our relationship with God also.

Transitional Statement:

Church, today we will be beginning a study of the book of Daniel, and for the points to be made we must first understand what it was like to be an Israelite in Babylonian captivity. We must have some understanding about consequences of Israel's many actions.

I. The history of sinful Israel

A. Straight out of Egypt

1. Israel was seen as a stubborn stiff necked people Duet 9:6
2. And by the time of Babylonian Captivity (586 BC)they had not changed
 - a. God tells Ezekiel that He is sending him to a stubborn and obstinate children. Ezekiel 2:4

B. Pharaoh wasn't the only one with a hardened heart

1. Israel wasn't open to God's direction or molding either

- a. Isa 29:16 describes Israel as a lump of clay, questioning the potters decisions.

C. Complainers...grumblers

1. Read for a while starting at Exodus chapter 14 and see if your calculator is big enough to count how many times Israel whined and complained.

D. They were always turning away from God.

1. Building golden calves or harboring idols

E. They found it especially hard to trust God.

1. At Kadesh Barnea God told them to go in and take the promise land...but the giants scared them off.
2. Time and time again they let fear rule their hearts instead of God.

F. During the period of judges after they had entered the promise land.

1. Israel was described mainly as a people who did as they saw fit in their own eyes. Judges 21:25

G. Then in monumental ignorance Israel wanted to have an earthly king over them to be like the nations that God had brought them out of to make them His own people.

1. At this time God says that Israel has rejected Him as being king over them.
1 Samuel 8:7

H. In the United Kingdom

1. We find King Saul... disobedience
2. King David...plagued with Lust
3. And King Solomon looking for fulfillment in the physical realm

I. In the Divided Kingdom

1. Jeremiah 3:6 probably says it best:

"Then the LORD said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there."

2. They intermarried with foreigners
3. They tried to approach God on their own terms. Lev 10
4. They robbed God with their offerings. Mal 3:8

5. They were not only disobedient...but openly rebellious
6. They exalting themselves Eze 17:14

J. Sinful to the core !

II. Before Israel enters into the promise land, Moses warned them that disobedience comes with consequences

A. In the covenant of blessings and cursing in Deuteronomy, chapter 28

Verse 15 says:

" But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:..."

1. And "You shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD drives you." Deuteronomy 28:37
2. Listen to Deuteronomy 28:49-52

49 " The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, 50 a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. 51 "Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed, who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish. 52 " It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you."

B. And just in case your not making the connection let's listen to Jeremiah the prophet of God tells us exactly what will happen.

Jeremiah 25:8-12

8 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, 9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. 10 'Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 ' This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

III. In 722 BC Assyria rises up and carries the 10 tribes of Northern Israel off into captivity

- A. Northern Israel dives into sin beginning with the wicked ruler Jeroboam (Son of Nebat)
 - 1. He lead Israel into idolatry ...1 Kings 12:28 made two golden calves.
 - a. Trying to improve on the Mount Sinai experience.
- B. And because of those continued sins they were carried off by Sargon II King of Assyria. 2 Kings 17:7-41
 - 1. Carrying them off with hooks in their noses as seen in 2 Chron 33:11
- C. So Northern Israel wasn't really taken captive, but conquered and dispersed.
 - 1. Never to return...Amos 5:2

IV. In 605 BC King Jehoakim is ruling over Judah and Benjamin in Jerusalem.

- A. And in one of those “*what were you thinking*” moments King Jehoakim (Josiah’s son) allied with Babylon
- B. Egypt had finally caught up with Israel and Pharaoh Necho had subjected Israel to heavy taxes under his dominance. 2 Chron 36:3,5
 - 1. So King Jehoakim in his vast earthly wisdom went running to the King of Babylon for help...He allied with him for his protection, so Israel became his vassal / servant 2 Kings 24:1-4
 - a. Which gave Israel temporary relief from Egypt
 - b. But three years latter Jehoakim tries to pull away from Babylon
- B. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon wouldn't stand for it and brought his army to Jerusalem.
 - 1. Remember...it is God who is leading Neb's heart against His own people.

V. This is where our story picks up.

- A. Let's read Daniel 1:1

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.”

B. Ezekiel told them it would happen with a lavish model that he built to warn the people

1. Read Ezekiel 4:1-3

“Now you son of man, get yourself a brick, place it before you and inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem. 2 "Then lay siege against it, build a siege wall, raise up a ramp, pitch camps and place battering rams against it all around. 3 "Then get yourself an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city, and set your face toward it so that it is under siege, and besiege it. This is a sign to the house of Israel.”

C. Can you picture God’s people all cooped up behind the walls of Jerusalem scared as they see the army of Nebuchadnezzar?

1. The final siege in 586 BC lasted 2 years

a. For two years they starved to the point that they ate each other Eze 5:10

2. 1/3 of them died by famine or plague.....1/3 of them died by the sword and only a 3rd were left to scatter to the wind ...Eze 5:12

3. Sin can bring things that we can’t even imagine in our lives.

D. On the very day of the siege Ezekiel is with the captives in Babylon and God lets him know the siege has begunand allows his wife to die and tells him not to mourn her (Eze 24:1,2)...as a sign to Israel.

III. God disciplines His people by giving them into the hand of their enemy

A. Read Daniel 1:2

2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along 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 he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

B. The thing that we must get a hold of here is that God gave Jehoakim into Neb’s hand

1. He not only allowed it but ordered it to happen

2. Romans 13:1 reminds us that “...*there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*”

3. Let’s read Hebrews 12:6

*6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”*

a. Some folks think that discipline equals punishment, although it may certainly include it, discipline = training.

b. So we shouldn’t forget that God’s love is also on display here.

4. Jeremiah makes a great analogy about this in Jer 18:1-4 where God is seen as a potter and the clay hasn't come out to His satisfaction so he squashes it down and starts again.
 - a. Israel wasn't moldable
 - b. They wouldn't listen to God...

Jeremiah 25:1-7

"The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2 which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, these twenty-three years the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. 4 "And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, 5 saying, ' Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; 6 and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm.' 7 "Yet you have not listened to Me," declares the LORD, "in order that you might provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm."

C. So they were hauled off into captivity by Babylon in 3 waves.

1. Beginning in 597 BC with our story here in Daniel chapter 1
2. And ending in 586 BC with King Zedekiah
 - a. Who actually escaped through the Kings garden but was caught out in the desert and returned to Nebuchadnezzar to put his son's to death and other of Israel's nobles while he was made to watch and then had his eyes gouged out...Jer 52:11
 - b. And the city of Jerusalem was totally destroyed...Jer 39:8, 2 Kings 25:9

D. As for taking some of the vessels of the house of God...no surprise there.

1. Isaiah 39:1-6

"At that time Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. 2 Hezekiah was pleased, and showed them all his treasure

house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and his whole armory and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. 3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." 4 He said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasuries that I have not shown them."

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts, 6 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says the LORD. 725-696BC

2. What shame and humiliation to see the things held in high honor to be carried off by a pagan nation.

QUICK NOTE: Don't take what is God's.... more about that in chapter3

IV. So they went to Babylon for 70 years

A. Babylon was set between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

1. In the area of the garden of Eden which was a land of gold
2. Can you imagine how these Israelites felt as they entered Babylon as slaves
 - a. Marching through an ornate city laced with gold
 - b. Seeing their statues and carvings of lions which represented their power.

1) While being scoffed at by the people of Babylon...Isa 52:3-6

B. We can get an idea of how they felt by listening to Ezekiel minister to them by the Chebar river... in the book of Ezekiel

C. Psalms 137:1-6 gives us a good picture also.

*By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down and wept,
When we remembered Zion.
2 Upon the willows in the midst of it
We hung our harps.
3 For there our captors demanded of us songs,
And our tormentors mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
4 How can we sing the LORD'S song
In a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand forget her skill.
6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
If I do not remember you,
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.*

1. Captivity was no picnic
2. And church the fruit of sin is devastating.

V. Church sin will lead us to unimaginable places.

- A. And there it will enslave us. 2 Peter 2:19
- B. It's amazing to me how many sins we hold in the shadows of our life, fearful to confess them, while they eat away at our souls like acid.
- C. The Lord's plea today is simply to listen to His Voice.
 1. Head His warnings.

Conclusion:

The good thing about Israel in Babylon is that

- God didn't abandon them
- And He won't abandon you.

As a matter of fact He assures them through the prophet Ezekiel by the Chebar River that He can raise a valley of dry bones. Ezekiel 37

Are you spiritually parched?

Are you dried up spiritually?

Isa 40 reminds us of God's sovereignty and that we can trust Him, even in the deserts of life.

-The name Daniel means "God is my judge"....we can trust him.

If you're tired of living in the desert of sin....you can come to Jesus today.