

## Devoted: The Heart to Stand

Daniel 1:1-21

Read Daniel 1:1-21 together:

- ? What is the situation in Daniel 1:1&2?
- ? What caused this situation?

For I have set my face against this city for harm and not for good, declares the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.  
Jeremiah 21:10

- ? How was Jeremiah's message to the Israelites received?
- ? What did the Israelites do to Jeremiah's written warning?

Daniel inherits the longsuffering discipline of God on Israel. God has declared that He will send Israel into captivity by Babylon for 70 to atone for their refusal to honor the Sabbath rest for the land (490 years; 70 Sabbaths ignored). Hence, 70 years of captivity for the seventy years of broken Sabbaths.

- ? How is Daniel like Christians?

Daniel finds himself as a stranger in a foreign land. Imagine the shock, the disorientation for Daniel and Israel. The kingdom of Judah was dissolved; Jerusalem was destroyed; King David's royal household deposed. There are no more offerings being offered to God as the temple lies smoldering and the people of Israel are in bondage.

- ? In what sense are Christians "strangers in a foreign land"?
- ? What specifics of the worldview around us is foreign to Christians?

We may not know quite as specifically as Israel did, but we know that every nation (OUR nation) deserves judgment. God is weaving the tapestry of history, setting up nations, and tearing down nations. All of it is for His glory!

So, how do we balance God's sovereignty with the Christian walk? Where do God's sovereignty and man's responsibility converge?

## **Sovereignty**

- ? Read Daniel 2:19-23. What can we learn of God's sovereignty from these verses?
- ? What do these verses teach about the closeness, or distance, of God from our world? Our lives?

So, there is one side of a balance: Sovereignty. But, what about the other side of the balance? Daniel's story doesn't end with this grand declaration of God's sovereignty; it goes on to show Daniel's response to God's sovereignty.

## **Settler**

Daniel understood that God is sovereign, but he also understood that he lived in a pagan culture that would do everything in its power to turn him from his God. Like Christians and God fearers throughout history, Daniel understood that he was also a "settler."

- ? Read Jer. 29:5-7. What does Jeremiah prophecy to the Israelites? What are they to do?
- ? Why? Why would God (through Jeremiah) instruct Israel to "settle in" at Babylon?
- ? What does Daniel do? Are his actions in accordance with Jeremiah's instruction from God?

Daniel excelled in all he did. He is an example of life on the ground. He studies, he learned, and he acquired skills. Daniel saw himself as an ambassador for God.

## **Servant**

Daniel is famous for his courage, his stand, his boldness.

- ? Why, do you think, Daniel refused to eat from the king's table?
- ? What do you think was Daniel's motivation?

Daniel refused the king's food because it was viewed as an act of worship of the Babylonian gods of the sun and moon. Daniel took his stand because he refused to bend his knee to anyone but God.