

DANIEL - God Advancing His Kingdom Through Persecution

There were several deportations of Jewish captives to Babylon before and after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586BC. Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah, were part of the first deportation after the siege & capture of Jerusalem in 605BC. They were probably fifteen or sixteen years old when taken from their families to serve in Babylon. The first six chapters of Daniel is the story of how God used these men in a culture hostile to their faith to bring the knowledge of the one true living God to a heathen world. Sadly, these first six chapters are typically seen as nothing more than a string of Sunday School stories about praying hard and not getting burned up or eaten by lions. We miss the primary truth which is this: God raised up the nation of Israel to be His witness to all the world, but Israel lost sight of their mission, became totally self-centered, ending up a greater mission field than the surrounding Gentile nations. God is forced to judge His people and it appears all is lost. But here is the amazing thing about the book of Daniel that shows just how great God is: God accomplishes, through the testimony of Daniel and his three friends, while in captivity to God's enemies, what the nation of Israel failed to accomplish over hundreds of years - to make God known to the nations of the world!! Each of the first six chapters tells a separate story with a final concluding paragraph which summarizes the impact of their testimony.

Chapter	Testimony of God's Child	Impact of testimony
Daniel 1	Refused to compromise God's Word.	They caught King Nebuchadnezzar's eye for being greater in wisdom.
Daniel 2	Trusted power of prayer to interpret King's dream.	Nebuchadnezzar realized what made them greater in wisdom was the God they worshipped and he acknowledged their God is the God of gods & Lord of kings.
Daniel 3	Refused to worship any other God, resulting in being thrown into & delivered from fiery furnace.	Nebuchadnezzar issued law that anyone who spoke against Jehovah was to be cut in pieces because no other God could deliver like this. This would have resulted in all non- Jews trying to find a Jew to learn about their God. All the Jews in captivity suddenly become a witness for God.
Daniel 4	Daniel confronted the king's pride & exhorted him to repent of his sin & turn to righteousness.	The king is judged with seven years of insanity after which he humbled himself to praise, extol, & honor the true King of heaven.
Daniel 5	Daniel fearlessly pronounced judgment on King Belshazzar. (Handwriting on the wall)	God honored Daniel's word by the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by the Medo-Persian empire.
Daniel 6	Lived a consistent life of integrity which put Daniel in the lions' den.	Darius, the Mede king, issued a decree that all in the Medo-Persian empire were to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

Lessons Learned From Daniel

1. We must not make the mistake Israel made and forget the primary purpose for our lives & pregnancy center ministries: to make Christ known to others. Therefore, serving in pregnancy center ministry should not only be out of commitment to the pro-life cause but, even more, out of a commitment to the _____. Our greatest desire should be to know Christ to make Him known to others (Romans 12: 1-2 & Joshua 5: 13-15). We must always maintain the priority of living and sharing the _____ to win our clients and culture to Christ.

2. Integrity of character is the key to the success of our work because _____ to catch the eyes of a watching world and influence others is dependent upon the _____ of our lives (1 Peter 2: 9-12).

3. Faith means trusting and obeying God regardless of my _____ within me, the _____ around me, or the _____ before me (1 Peter 4: 19).

4. Persecution is used by God not only to purify His people but to bring _____ to our persecutors (1 Peter 2: 20-25).

5. When persecuted, _____ your persecutors, never _____, and wait on God to _____ (Romans 12: 14, 17-21).

6. When any earthly authority commands what is contrary to God's Word, it is the duty of Christians to practice _____ (Acts 5: 29). When Jesus said in Matthew 22: 21, "*Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, & to God what is God's,*" it is not: GOD and CAESAR as if they are an equal line of authority. It was, is, and always will be: GOD (as the higher authority)
and
CAESAR

