

## ***DANIEL 1 | Don't Drink the Kool-Aid***

### **1. Introduction.**

- a. Image: Frodo Baggins and his mates besieged by the enemy in *The Two Towers*.
- b. Need: Scared, frightened, confused, unsure of ourselves, in danger of compromise, outnumbered, frustrated.
- c. Subject: How Do We Live in Today's New Zealand When So Outnumbered and Pressured to Compromise?
- d. Text: Daniel 1
- e. Outline: Ruin, Reeducation, Resolve, Reward

### **2. Daniel at a Glance.**

- a. Daniel 1 introduces the character of Daniel provides the framework for the entire book.
- b. It shows Daniel's character formed the basis of his long and successful career as a government servant in Babylon, and as a prophet of end times events.

### **3. Ruin (Da 1:1-2).**

- a. Text.
  - (1) In the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar comes to Jerusalem and besieges it (v. 1). Nebuchadnezzar finally captures Jehoiakim (v. 2).  
Nebuchadnezzar installs Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, as puppet king (2 Ch 36:8).
  - (2) Nebuchadnezzar chains Jehoiakim and takes him to Babylon (2 Ch 36:6).
  - (3) Nebuchadnezzar also brings some of the vessels of the house of God to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god (v. 2). He places the vessels in the treasury of his god, in his palace in Babylon (2 Ch 36:7).
- b. Theology.
  - (1) Satan's kingdom often seems to be defeating God's kingdom.
  - (2) Christians of all generations ask, why does it seem like God is losing? Where is he?
- c. Today.
  - (1) In the West, God has allowed the religion of secular humanism to take over.
  - (2) Illustrations:
    - (a) No mention of the Christian faith in the government's "well-being" plan.
    - (b) No plan for a Christian chapel in the new Dunedin hospital.
    - (c) Bible in Schools effectively eliminated from public schools.
    - (d) "Science" as the basis for every decision. "I believe in science."
  - (3) With the steady decline of Christianity in New Zealand, we may wonder whether God is defeated. Maybe our faith isn't true. Maybe the atheists are right.

### **4. Reeducation (Da 1:3-7).**

- a. Text.
  - (1) Nebuchadnezzar commands to Jewish youths to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans (vv. 3-4). They are to be educated for three years (v. 5).

- (2) Among the youths are Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (v. 6). They are:
    - (a) about 15 years old, (b) separated from their parents, (c) in a strange country, and (d) under severe pressure to conform.
  - (3) Nebuchadnezzar's strategy is to reeducate and acculturate Israel's future leaders so that in 20 years, Israel will have ceased to exist. The Jews will have ceased being a distinct people. It is purposeful plan to win the hearts and minds of top Jewish youths. It's propaganda. It's peer pressure. It's public shaming. It's indoctrination.
- b. Theology.
- (1) The battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation has always the game.
  - (2) The world's agenda is to take top Christian youth and transform their worldview.
  - (3) The world system wants to shape the minds of our youth, the future leaders of the church. It wants to drive a wedge between the the worldview of parents and the worldview of their children. It wants to break apart generations from one another.
    - (a) **Mal 4:6** 6 And he [Elijah] will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.
  - (4) As in the case of Daniel (v. 5), the world tempts Christian youth with glamour. It wines and dines them and says, "This is the good life. And look, you don't need God at all."
  - (5) Believers in the world are often asked to compromise their beliefs in order to go with the flow. The peeps pressure to conform can be so great, almost unbearable. It's so tempting to jump on the bandwagon and be part of the crowd.
  - (6) See *Education, Biblical Worldview, Worldviews in Conflict, and Worldview Transformation*.
- c. Today.
- (1) Sophisticated, well-funded, global forces constantly work to win the hearts and minds of ourselves and our children.
    - (a) Mass media.
      - 1) The world system desires to grab our Christian youth at a younger and younger age (smart phones, Netflix).
      - 2) The indoctrination begins much earlier and is much more pervasive in New Zealand.
    - (b) Public education.
    - (c) University education.
      - 1) It will take three years to accomplish the worldview reeducation of the four Jewish youths. That's about how long a typical university degree takes!
    - (d) Why is there no culture war in New Zealand? Don't go down without a fight.
  - (2) Every Christian youth who enters public school or leaves home for a secular university faces the same challenge Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah faced.

## 5. Resolve (Da 1:8-16).

- a. Text.

- (1) As a 15 year old, Daniel resolves in his heart to remain loyal to God and God's plan for Israel, no matter what.
  - (2) Daniel and his mates must have been thoroughly trained by their parents, and they stuck to that training.
    - (a) In heaven, I want to meet Daniel's parents and grandparents!
  - (3) This resolution derives from Daniel's theology and spiritual discipline:
    - (a) Bible study.
      - 1) Daniel read Jeremiah.
      - 2) Quite possibly, Daniel wrote Psalm 119.
    - (b) Prayer.
      - 1) Daniel prayed three times daily toward Jerusalem.
    - (c) D group.
      - 1) Daniel stuck with three other youths. The four youths stuck together, prayed for one another, and exhorted one another.
  - (4) Daniel and his mates are not physically, educationally, or culturally separated from their peers. But in their heart and mind, they are separated. They have intentionally chosen to be loyal to the worldview of the Bible.
  - (5) Daniel is respectful to legitimate authority, but he also doesn't give in. He and his mates are not revolutionaries. They are not going to "tear down the system."
- b. Theology.
- (1) In every generation, it's the same for believers. Every generation needs men and women who:
    - (a) Are resolved to be loyal to God despite what the culture is doing.
    - (b) Are disciplined in daily Bible study and prayer.
    - (c) Are not distracted by the latest fads and fashions of culture.
    - (d) Who don't allow themselves to be brainwashed by cultural elites and man-glorifying agenda.
    - (e) Stick together and give one another encouragement.
  - (2) Illustrations.
    - (a) Eric Liddell.
    - (b) Robert Laidlaw.
- c. Today.
- (1) Daniel's resolve is a model for us today. We are Christians living in a culture dominated by Secular Humanism.
  - (2) We today must be respectful, but resolved.
  - (3) Illustrations:
    - (a) Martyn Iles.
    - (b) Bob McCoskrie.
    - (c) Stuart Lange.
    - (d) Annalise Copland.
    - (e) Sophia Coleman.
  - (4) Only by being resolved can we be salt and light.
    - (a) **Mt 5:13-14** 13 You are the salt of the earth.... 14 You are the light of the world.

## 6. Reward (Da 1:17-21).

- a. Text.
  - (1) In Da 1, God gives Daniel and his mates:
    - (a) Favour and compassion in sight of the chief of the eunuchs (v. 9).
    - (b) A better appearance than the other youths (v. 15).
    - (c) Practical learning and skill (v. 17, 20).
    - (d) Spiritual understanding (v. 17).
  - (2) Later in *Daniel*:
    - (a) Daniel experiences career success without surrendering to the world.
    - (b) Daniel's character qualifies him to receive the revelations recorded in *Daniel*.
- b. Theology.
  - (1) **Ps 1:1-3** 1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. 2 But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.
- c. Today.
  - (1) Skill. Insight.
  - (2) Promotion. Career. Public service.
    - (a) We don't have to give up our Christian identity to be good citizens of New Zealand.
    - (b) Christians should be and often are the most productive members of New Zealand society. Kiwi Christians should be and definitely are a blessing to the nation.
    - (c) We need to serve New Zealand on God's terms.
  - (3) Legacy.