

The OLD Testament

The Power of Hope – Daniel – part 2

Introduction:

1. The United Kingdom of Jerusalem is the name given to the Israelite kingdom of **Israel** and **Judah**, during the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, as depicted in the Hebrew Bible – between 1050 BC and 930 BC - Rehoboam was the king after Solomon
2. In the account of **1 Kings and 2 Chronicles** he was initially king of the United Kingdom of Jerusalem, but after the ten northern tribes of Israel rebelled in 932/931 BC to form the independent Kingdom of Israel (Samaria), under the rule of Jeroboam, Rehoboam remained as king only of the Kingdom of Judah, or the Southern Kingdom.
3. The Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom and scattered all the people
4. Then the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar deported the Jews after they had conquered Jerusalem in 597 BC.”
5. In 586 BC, Judah itself ceased to be an independent kingdom, and the earlier deportees found themselves without a homeland, without a state, and without a nation.
6. The deportees were the prominent people of Judah – the people of the land were allowed to stay

An Excellent Spirit:

1. The movie called “To end all wars” *“start preparing for the next war”*
2. We Christians who are in a war against sin, the world, and the devil, experience something similar.
3. Daniel and his companions are great reminders of how we can remain holy, even in times of distress, pain, and suffering.
4. Daniel’s life and ministry bridge the entire 70-year period of Babylonian captivity
5. There is a parallel between Daniel and us
6. Just as Daniel, we are living in a world that is hostile to us and yet Daniel was a witness in the culture – a living testimony to God’s glory
7. Daniel and his companions are great reminders of how we can remain holy, even in times of distress, pain, and suffering.
8. Were given new names – Daniel – *“The Lord will be my judge”*
9. Things did not turn out the way that he had planned – there is a whole world of heartbreak in the words ***“...came to Jerusalem and besieged it”***
10. **Verse 2** outlines the primary cause of the exile
11. Taken to Shinar – see **Genesis 10** - - story of the Tower of Babel
12. This is a battle between the city of God and the city of man, between Jerusalem as representatives of God’s people and Babylon, the land of Shinar, the land of ziggurat, the land of false gods, the city of this world, the city of man, and those opposed to God.
13. The sacred vessels were taken to the house of Nebuchadnezzar’s god’s
14. **Dan. 4:17** ***“..... to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men”***
15. Joseph - ***“You planned evil against me; God planned it for good” (Gen. 50:20)***
16. What do we do when we end up in Babylon?
17. Babylon is where you find yourself when things don’t turn out the way you thought

18. Although sometimes our sin may have led us into a difficult situation, sometimes stuff just comes out of the left field – no warning or thought of anything happening to us
19. **Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”**

Honor – His deepest value:

1. Spiritually resilient people resolve to honor their deepest values.
2. They refuse to live as passive victims of circumstances beyond their control - to get tangled up in stuff that would cause them to betray their deepest commitments.
3. **Verse 8 – “Daniel determined ...”**
4. You see it is important who you associate with – what you watch – what you do because that stuff will slowly seep into your spirit if it is contrary to God and His Word
5. The way I think about the world is also tied to the way I worship.
6. Instead of changing the names, our culture is redefining words that matter to our faith and trying to change how we spend our time.
7. Becoming relevant?

Community – his commitment:

1. Spiritually resilient people are committed to live in community.
2. Daniel had his small group and this small group of believers would change a nation
3. Julius Segal – a primary researcher in the area of resiliency writes about Admiral James Stockdale – **GBUS**. These Vietnam POW’s were a community
4. Where community is so difficult people will risk their lives for a moment of it
5. But deep friendships, spiritual intimacy do not come easy – you have to fight for them
6. People in this room need to “*hear the code*”

Meaning and Purpose – his understanding:

1. Spiritually resilient people know that their lives and even their suffering has meaning and purpose in the eyes of God.
2. People give up when they are suffering has no meaning or purpose.
3. People who commit suicide or give up on a situation all say “*there is no point in going on – there is no reason for me to keep on living*”
4. There is a major character that keeps on getting mentioned – *God*.
5. God was up to something in Babylon - in the place of great suffering
6. Whatever you are going through – God is there – whatever Babylon you may find yourself in – God is there with you.
7. Don’t give up! God has promised *NEVER* to leave you nor abandon you!
8. We view our trials as isolated nightmares - God sees them from a different perspective.
9. They are in fact important and connected punctuation marks in the biography of grace he is writing in our lives.

Sing a Song in a strange land:

1. ***Ps 137:1-3 “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for or there our captors requested a song; our tormentors demanded songs of joy: “Sing us a song of Zion”***
2. So finally, the central question of the book of Daniel is “***How can a Christian sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?***”
3. This is directly applicable to where we are today.
4. We can look to the Lord – He is our hope – irrespective of what is out there

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