

The Story: Chapter 18 “Impact in Exile”

Daniel 1:1-7

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— ⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service. ⁶ Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

Daniel and his friends are living in Exile:

Living in Exile: the state or a period of forced absence from one's country or home. b : the state or a period of voluntary absence from one's country or home.

QUESTION: Can you make an impact for the **Kingdom of God** while living in exile from your home?

The obvious attitude while living in exile would be one of laziness and a whole lot of “don’t care”.

These guys were in exile, kept from their home, for about 70 years.

- They were being held captive by people that did not serve their God.
- People that didn’t even like to hear about their God.

And, this is the **response to Daniel** as they left and went back to their home, Jerusalem: (70 years later)

Daniel 6:25-28

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: “May you prosper greatly! ²⁶ “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. “For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. ²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

This attitude is totally because of what God was able to do through Daniel and his friends while in exile.

- And God was only able to do that with them because they decided that, **even though they were being held against their will**, they were still going to be faithful and serve their God.

Now here’s where that hits us:

We are also basically living in exile today:

John 18:36

³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

What does this mean for us?

- This world is not our ultimate home.
- God has a place set for us in Heaven that is our eternal home.
- We are simply passing through.

Look:

Romans 8:15-17

¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...

Our inheritance means that this world is not the end goal for us. It’s only prep time for our eternity with the Father.

Here’s the problem: Sometimes we connect with the attitude that, since this is not our home, we don’t need to worry much about what happens here.

- We’ll just get through this life and look forward to Heaven.
- If we don’t bother anyone here they won’t bother us!

Well, I have another way of seeing it: If God did not have work for you to do on this Earth, you would no longer be here.

Truth: God expects us to make an **IMPACT** for His Kingdom while we’re here.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

So, our biggest question is not, “Does God have anything for me to do while I’m stuck here on Earth waiting on Heaven?”

Our biggest question is this: “While I’m here on Earth, what kind of impact do we want to make for the Kingdom of God?”

- Do you want to just get through life and get to Heaven without causing much of a big deal?
- Or would you like to have a bunch of people at your funeral like King Darius whose lives have been changed because of the way you lived yours?

EX: There are plenty of examples of people in the Bible that died and nobody cared.

- He died and was buried with his people... blah, blah, blah...

Key for today:

Daniel and his friends give us some great insight in how we are to live if we want to make an impact for the Kingdom of God.

- We must live our lives in a way that makes an impact on this world before God takes us to be with Him in a New Heaven on a New Earth.
- Why? Because while we're here is the only time we have to help others meet Jesus so that they are with Him for all eternity as well.

How do we live in order to make an impact for God's Kingdom before He takes us home?

1. We have to **STAND OUT when others blend in.****Daniel 1:8; 11-14**

⁸ But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. . . . ¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

You cannot make an impact for God's Kingdom if you look, and live, just like everyone else.

For Us:**Matthew 5:16**

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

2. We have to **STAND UP when others bow down.****Daniel 3:1**

³ King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:4-6

⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Daniel 3:12

¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Daniel 3:15-18

¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Impact:

Daniel 3:28

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants!

We can't make an impact for the Kingdom if we are bowing down to the gods of this world.

For Us:

Colossians 3:1-2

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

3. We have to **STAND STRONG** when others give in.

Daniel 6:3-5

³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”

He truly lived “Above Reproach”.

This leads us to what we saw earlier:

Daniel 6:26

²⁶ “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

For Us:

I Peter 1:15-16

¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.

IMPACT:

Stand Out

Stand Up

Stand Strong

What kind of an impact are you making for the Kingdom of God in your time on this earth?

Daniel 1-3, 6; Jeremiah 29-31