

Daniel
Part 1 – The Two Big Questions
Daniel 1.1-7

Historical Setting: Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish, threatens vassals in the area, demands allegiance from them (v.1)

Two Big Questions Daniel will keep asking for us to ponder...

Can I trust God, even in Babylon? (the answer is yes, but why?)

- He is in control – sovereign (“the Lord gave...”)
 - We may wish our lives or circumstances were different, but these are the lives we get to live
 - God uses people and problems in our world to accomplish His purposes
 - Daniel and his friends faced the temptation to believe that their lives were out of control and that their lives were in the hands of hostiles or in the maelstrom created by these impersonal forces
- He is faithful (“into the hands...”)
 - Even in His judgment, God is displaying His faithfulness
 - 2 Kings 20: Isaiah prophesies to Hezekiah about the country’s demise because he trusted in politics instead of in the Lord and cared more about himself, his comfort, and his reputation than the good of the nation
 - If I can trust God to keep the harsh parts of His word, I can trust Him to keep all of it
 - Throughout Daniel, we will see God’s faithfulness (furnace, lions, prophetic words)

Should I trust God, even in Babylon? (the answer is also yes)

Two typical responses – have to thread the needle between the ditches (elements in them make sense)

1. Forsaking

- The way of capitulation is the way the current of culture will push you and you will drift
- Kottak (anthropologist) – process of acculturation is
 - Culture teaches accepted norms and values (what)
 - Contexts are discovered for boundaries and accepted behaviors (why)
 - Person becomes accepted member of society
- Between the ditches – needed education to function in and contribute to society, but recognize that acculturation begins with education which is so often infused with values, norms, and worldviews

2. Fortressing

- Sheltering in place makes sense for a little while and in some moments (which is why this is a danger to keep an eye on)
 - But its an abdication of the church's role and the silencing of the church's voice when we fortress, and why we have ended up where we are today
- Can I live in Babylon without Babylon living in me?

Final question we all must answer: WILL I trust God, even in Babylon?