

IV. QUESTIONS for Reflection

- A. Is God in control of your life? Why did you answer that way? What things need to change in order to reflect that God is in control of your life?

- B. Have you made purity a priority in your life? What are the major areas of your life where you struggle with righteous or holy living? Take time to pray over these areas, confessing them to the Lord and committing yourself to place God in control of these areas of your life.

- C. Are there difficult or hopeless situations in your life in which you are struggling to entrust into God's hands? What are those situations and why are you struggling? Take time to pray over these areas and commit them to the Lord realizing that the God of the universe, who created you, and who is in control of ALL things, is faithful to carry out His perfect purposes in your life.

- D. In what way is your life in Christ providing you opportunities to be a light in a dark world? Are there opportunities to be a light that God has or is providing for you that you have not responded to? Pray and ask that God would give you opportunities to be a light amidst this dark world and that you would have the faith and courage to step out when given the opportunity.

Living For Christ In A Hostile Culture

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 7th, 2007 • Pastor Rob Zimmermann

“DEAR FRIENDS, I URGE YOU, AS ALIENS AND STRANGERS IN THE WORLD, TO ABSTAIN FROM SINFUL DESIRES, WHICH WAR AGAINST YOUR SOUL. LIVE SUCH GOOD LIVES AMONG THE PAGANS THAT, THOUGH THEY ACCUSE YOU OF DOING WRONG, THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS AND GLORIFY GOD ON THE DAY HE VISITS US.”

1 PETER 2: 11-12 ~ (NIV)

I. The Big Picture Leading To The Book Of Daniel.

A. Judah (The Southern Kingdom) was steeped in idol worship and being led by Godless men....

- 1) Jehoiakim was in his 3rd year as King. Nothing good is recorded of this godless King who indulged himself in the erection, by enforced and unpaid labor, of costly royal palaces. He manifested an utter disregard for the best interests of his subjects. In religion, he introduced still more strange heathenish rites from Egypt.

- 2) Jeremiah, the prophet, came to the king with the divinely inspired prophecy of the King's and his nation's coming catastrophe. Jehoiakim did not like what he heard and, stopping the reading, asked for the roll of parchment, a scribe's knife, and then cut the roll in pieces... flinging them into the fire. (Jeremiah 22:18-21; 25-27)

B. Babylon conquers Israel

1) Scripture information respecting Babylon is unmistakable. Among its names it is described as "the lady of kingdoms," "the golden city," "the city of merchants," "the glory of kingdoms," "abundant in treasures," "praise of the whole earth," "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," and "the most proud." Its people were numerous, rich, commercial, idolatrous, cruel and superstitious.
(Isa. 13:19; 14:4; Jer. 51:13, 41)

2) **"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" - Daniel 4:30**

Nebuchadnezzar's question as he talked with Daniel reveals his pride and arrogance in building his magnificent capital, which he developed into one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar was bent on becoming the greatest ruler of his day and subjecting everyone to the Babylonian way of life and worship of their many gods.

- 3) After helping the Medes destroy Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar turned his eyes to attacking Egypt... who had taken control of Judah after King Josiah attempted to stop them from their conquest to help the Assyrian remnant.
- 4) Since nearly all Babylonian trade was with the West, the Babylonians could not tolerate Egyptian control of their gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, Babylon moved against the Egyptians in Judah and removed and killed King Jehoiakim during this first siege.
- 5) It was during this first incursion into Judah that Nebuchadnezzar carried off many of the articles from the temple, a large portion of the Jewish population and many of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility including Daniel and his three friends.

II. Daniel Forced To Live In A Hostile Culture

A. Imagine what it must have been like...

- 1) Out of the shadow of the Temple to a foreign land.
- 2) An unfamiliar language
- 3) An unfamiliar culture
- 4) No Personal Freedom
- 5) Forced to Assimilate

B. Nebuchadnezzar's strategy to brain wash the best and completely destroy a nation.

- 1) Change of Names
- 2) Forced to assimilate into a new culture
- 3) Eat their food
- 4) Subject to the King

III. How To Live In A Hostile Culture

A. God Is In Control

- 1) Make purity a priority
- 2) Trust God In Hopeless Situations
- 3) Faithful living produces Godly character which provides opportunities to be a light amidst the darkness.