

The Book of Daniel

The Sovereignty and Faithfulness of God in Catastrophe

Daniel 1:1-8

1. The Domination and Plunder of Jerusalem (vs.1-2)

These two verses set the scene for the first chapter, as well as the entire book. The kingdom of Judah is effectively subdued and will soon be entirely removed (2 Ki 25:8). This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Hezekiah (2 Ki 20:16ff) and of the promised judgment of God if the nation did not follow the Lord (cf. Deut 28:36–37, 49–68). Because of the Israelites continued penchant for idolatry, the Lord had them exiled into a nation which was the center of idolatry in a land historically famous for idolatry (cf. Gen 11:1; Zech 5:11).

2. The Deportation and Indoctrination of the Sons of Israel (vs.3-7)

In addition to taking the treasure of the temple, the Lord had prophesied that the young men in the royal family would serve the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20:16-18; Isa 39:5-7). Nebuchadnezzar was intentionally giving these young boys many privileges while seeking to have them conform to his culture by controlling where they lived, what they ate, what they were taught, and what they were to be called.

3. The Devotion and Operation of Daniel (v.8)

A. Daniel's Decision

He knew what God had commanded concerning food (Lev 11:1ff), and that this was a specific action required of him in Babylon which would be contrary to God's commands. He and his friends had the conviction to be uncompromising where there was no room for compromise.

B. Daniel's Action

Daniel sought to live at peace in his new situation even though he could not obey all of what he was to do (cf. Rom 12:18). He actively sought out a way to be faithful to God while living in his new environment.