

"Daniel in Exile"

Sunday Morning Message by Ray Reynolds (December 8, 2013)

Introduction: Maybe you have heard the story about a little boy that was thumbing through the old, large family Bible. As he did, a dried leaf fell out. He picked it up and ran to his mother, shouting, "Mommy, I found Adam's suit!" We have been following **The Story** from the beginning with Adam and Eve. Now we come to the stories of Daniel and his three friends. Daniel, Hanniah, Mishael and Azariah were taken from Jerusalem and renamed Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (**Daniel 1:4**), but God had a plan for them! These four teen boys were strangers in a strange land. The Apostle Peter writes in **I Peter 1:1** that God's people are strangers. Our home is the "new Jerusalem." Peter writes in **I Peter 2:11** that as we live as strangers and aliens, we must live lives honoring to God. That's what Daniel and his three friends do in Babylon. We are to be "in" the world, but not "of" the world. The book of Daniel contains three stories that show us how to live. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. Protect Your Body (Daniel 1)

- A. Daniel and his 3 friends refuse the Babylonian diet and offer a creative alternative.
- B. Daniel and his 3 friends are healthier and wiser than all the others.
- C. Daniel and his 3 friends are blessed by God as they live as strangers in Babylon.

II. Protect Your Soul (Daniel 3)

- A. Daniel's 3 friends refuse to worship an idol of Nebuchadnezzar.
- B. Daniel's 3 friends refuse to show loyalty to any other god.
- C. Daniel's 3 friends are spared from the flame and become legends.

III. Protect Your Spirit (Daniel 6)

- A. The spirit of Daniel is unscathed in the face of persecution.
- B. The spirit of Daniel is unaltered in the face of trial.
- C. The spirit of Daniel is unwavering in the lion's den.

Conclusion: We may live as strangers in a strange land, but we are compelled do good to all men. Later, in **Daniel 9**, Daniel offers a glimpse into the second coming of the Messiah. A reminder that Jesus came the first time BUT He promises to come back and take us to our true home—the new Jerusalem. Who was the fourth person in the fiery furnace? Many believe it was a pre-incarnate visitation of Jesus. Jesus was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Jesus, as we noted, promises to be with us—each one of us (**Matthew 28:20**). We can live as strangers in a strange land, and with the presence and power of Jesus, be "in" the world, but not "of" the world. Trust Him daily to be with you!