

Enemy strategy

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[0 : 00] Book of Daniel and chapter 1. I'd like today to begin a series of studies of this book of Daniel, looking at it over the next few Sabbath mornings, and looking at it in terms of both its prophetic content and also in these earlier chapters its historical content and the meaning of such for.

Now it will be necessary for yourselves to gain a background to Daniel to read something of the historical accounts both in the books of the King and of Chronicles in the Old Testament, in 2 Kings and chapters 24-25, in 2 Chronicles and chapter 36, and also in the prophecy of Jeremiah. There are very relevant chapters in the whole of Jeremiah's prophecy which give us a very necessary leading into the prophecy of Daniel, Daniel and the situation that we find in the days of Daniel.

because Daniel is set in the context of the captivity of the people of Judah. The captivity of these people under the regime of Nebuchadnezzar.

The captivity that Daniel brings before us, the situation in which Daniel is set, is a situation that is not a mere history lesson for us.

[1 : 50] We are going to see that in these chapters of Daniel and in all the accounts that he tells us of Nebuchadnezzar and the things that actually took place in history.

There is a very significant spiritual dimension to all of that. There is what we can see running right through the whole of Scripture.

because Daniel has to be seen as firmly set in this particular warfare that takes place between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

And then, the second chapter of the serpent, going right back to Genesis 3, verse 15. Where God is there saying the consequences of the fall of man and something which is to be worked out in the whole of human history.

It still with us. The cross of Christ stands at the very centre of that contest, of that conflict, of that warfare, of the battle that exists between the seed of the serpent and the Church of God.

[3 : 02] The book of Daniel is very much set within the whole framework or the whole process of that. It is to do with that whole contest, with the outworkings of the principles of truth against the principles of the kingdom and the forces and the power of darkness.

When we come to view these historical events, yet we have to give all due place to their historicity. And not to imagine that they are, as liberal scholars would suggest, something which didn't actually take place in history and are just an invention to portray a certain lesson for us.

They are spiritual truths certainly, but they are also historical events, grounded in the history that we have set before us.

And so therefore we have pitched really right into that whole context, if you like, in the very opening words of chapter 1.

Because here is Daniel setting out how he came to be in captivity in Babel. You notice he mentions there that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and deceived it.

[4 : 35] This is what we are saying in terms of both the historical and the spiritual dimension to this whole matter. It is always going to be a case of Jerusalem versus Babylon, isn't it?

Because if you read right through the Bible, including the book of Psalms and so on, you will find that Zion, Jerusalem stands for spiritual entity.

And so also does Babylon. Because if you go back again to Genesis, to the account that it gives you there in Genesis of the Tower of Babel.

That is where you find the same principle as is found in Babylon throughout the whole of Scripture, right up to and into the book of Revelation.

If you go to the Tower of Babel, you will see the aspirations of Babylon. You will see the spirit of Babylon. You will see the whole moments and purposes of Babylon in seeking to perpetuate a name that is in opposition to the name of God.

[5 : 49] In seeking to retain their own identity in opposition to God's ways. You will see that they find something in this Tower of Babel which is designed to keep themselves together and to make for themselves a name in opposition to all of God's ways and God's revealed wills.

And you know that word Babel is the very same word in Hebrew that is translated here as Babylon. And really strictly it should be translated in the same way because it's exactly the same word. It is the same entity, the same principle, the same power, the same purpose. The Tower of Babel is the spirit of Babylon.

And then if you look at what we are saying here concerning these historical dimensions. There is the whole Babylonian empire that came to both besiege Jerusalem and take its people into captivity in the city of Babylon.

They dragged them off and they set them up in Babylon to do various tasks. Then you see we have to carry the whole matter into the New Testament and into the book of Revelation.

[7 : 17] Because if you look into the book of Revelation especially chapters 14 to 18 you'll find that it describes there a certain person or personification really that it describes as Mystery Babylon.

The mother of Babylon, the mother of charlots and abominations of the earth. This particular figure that it calls Mystery Babylon that is out to devour the whole child that is born as the child that belongs to God.

That is out to actually frustrate and oppose and conquer the people of the land. This mystery Babylon that is drunk as it says upon the blood of the martyrs of the slave of God.

That is the same principle now in its spiritual eyes, in its spiritual dimensions brought to the fool in the book of Revelation.

But it's the same principle through and through that runs throughout that whole contest into which the people of God in every generation acted.

[8 : 34] The spirit of Babylon lived today. The spirit of Babylon will be with us as long as this world is in existence. And it doesn't matter where you actually find it. Whether it's in the case of the northern kingdom of Israel where it's in the Assyrian Empire that came to destroy Samaria.

Whether it's as here in this Babylonian Empire that came actually to besiege and destroy Jerusalem.

Whether it's in the book of Revelation the Roman Empire with its corruption. Whether it's to the reformers as it was the papacy with its corruption. Whether it's in the uterus whether it's in rebellion and its corruption. Whether we see it in our own day in the matters of materialism.

On political muscle and machinery. All of these things can be and are the embodiment of Babylon. And it doesn't matter where we find it embodied, the principle is the same, it is Babylon and is out to devour the children of Jerusalem.

Now you see that is something which brings that whole turn in the historical matters of the book of Daniel and every other place where we find the opposition or the enmity of the Babylon principle set against the people of God.

[10 : 09] And it is that that we have to bear in mind as we study this portion of scripture and every other related portion of scripture. Babylon is at work. Babylon is entirely at work. The Babylon power, the world power, the power of the enemy is always seeking to capture and to captivate the minds of Jerusalem children.

Be sure that he is at it right now as we study these very things. And we are going to look at the book of Daniel in terms of its two sections. It is divided into two sections.

The first six chapters are very much to do with historical events and an account of Daniel's own experiences and that of his companions.

And then in the second part of the book in chapter 7 onwards we find visions of Daniel which we usually refer to as apocalyptic material.

It is the same in kind in other words as we find in the book of Revelation. And there are many things within these final chapters that are very very difficult to actually define categorically or certainly.

[11 : 39] But as we go through the chapters we will give each chapter a heading because this is one book where the chapter divisions come up in very good places. And where we find we can give each chapter a title and then divide the material up into subtitles to help us to focus our minds as we

run through the various sections of it.

We are not going to go through it verse by verse but taking it in its significant section under these particular titles. So we are calling the first chapter we could call it Faithfulness in a Foreign Land. Faithfulness in a Foreign Land. Faithfulness in a Foreign Land although the item Faithfulness of course runs through the other chapters also. But this is Faithfulness in a Foreign Land in the case of Daniel and in the case of how he reacts to the strategy of Nebuchadnezzar.

And we will divide Faithfulness in a Foreign Land up into three parts looking today at the section down to the end of verse 7 which we will call the Enemy Strategy.

Faithfulness in a Foreign Land. Then we will look next time God willing at the other two sections together probably as we find sections from verse 8 to 16 which we will call Faith Counter Strategy.

[13 : 12] The Enemy Strategy and Faith Counter Strategy and in the final part of the chapter verses 17 to 21 we can call the Outcome of the Enemy.

What is the outcome of these two things as they have pitched against each other? What is the result of that particular contest of the Enemy Strategy as against that of Faith?

Well let's look just today then at the Enemy Strategy. Now you see the question for Nebuchadnezzar really is how can he actually continue to subjugate these people?

How can he actually set about the lasting subjugation of the people of Jerusalem? It's one thing to actually besiege them and to bring some of them into captivity.

It's one thing to have the ascendancy for a day or two or for a month or two. How can he guarantee that it continues? How can he actually set about things in a way that will indeed see the future captivity of the people of Jerusalem?

[14 : 23] Now you notice the strategy first of all is to give an order that these children of Jerusalem are to be brought to Babylon.

He concentrates on young minds. He concentrates on minds that are still perhaps not fully formulated in their thinking. Minds that can actually be adapted for his own purpose.

What he's really setting about is taking certain individuals in their youth from Jerusalem, bringing them to Babylon, training them, ridding their mind of all of the past, all associations with Jerusalem, and then setting about making them faithful ambassadors of Babylon.

And then you see he can bring them to set them up in strategic places throughout his empire. And he can even bring them to Jerusalem itself. And he can set them up over such provinces knowing that outwardly they may indeed be children of Jerusalem by birth.

But inwardly and in reality he wants their hearts to be called in. They want their minds and their actions to be Babylon and its interest.

[15 : 51] And you notice he doesn't just take any children. He takes a select few. He concentrates on children in whom there is no blemish.

Children that are well favoured. Children that have signs of intellectual ability. Skillful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and in understanding science.

And such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace. He's actually dealing with what we would call youths in their teens, let's say.

Not very young children. Not very young children. But children are youths just at that critical point where they can be so easily swayed one way or another. He's taking those who show great promise of ability.

Now of course we're not saying that God makes the true and lasting and good Christians only of those who have intellectual ability.

[16 : 53] Paul tells us that God has chosen the base things of the world to confound the wise. He tells us that not many noble and that not many mighty are called. It isn't by having a great intellect that you can be a good Christian.

That you can be an influential Christian. That you can be a Christ-like Christian. That doesn't depend ultimately on intellectual ability. But the point we're making is that the enemy of Jerusalem is all out to use intellectual ability.

And he is all out to seek to oppose and to seek to change those who show intellectual ability. Let's not imagine that because God doesn't choose ordinarily many mighty and many noble.

That there is no place for keen intellect in the things of God. Let's not imagine that God simply wants us to have any kind of mind and not to give a mind that seeks to wrestle with truth to the things that belong to his kingdom.

And the enemy will be about seeking select individuals that he can actually see potential in for his own ambassadors.

[18 : 13] All those to show such promise. They are going to be in the firing line of this Babylonian power as it seeks his own instruments.

And he brings these particular individuals to Babylon. You and I have to be aware that our children are certainly the target of Babylonian power.

That our children are actually open to this particular and to this very forceful and to this very plausible power.

That this power is seeking to change the minds of young people. To change the allegiance of young people. To get young people to drop all that they have been learning in Sunday schools and in homes and in church services.

So that their minds will actually be blotted out as far as things of righteousness are concerned. So that they will be good ambassadors of Babylon. And he is all of them to target them.

[19 : 24] To bring them into his captivity. Then once he has actually selected them, how does he go about programming them if we may so could it?

Well there are three things in this passage that we can see. Belong to Nebuchadnezzar's strategy. Belong to the strategy of the enemy. In seeking to use these individuals for his own purposes.

And the first of these things we can call indoctrination. We look at the end of verse 4. Verse 4 then. Whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans of course are the people of Babylonia.

People that belong to this Babylon empire. What they want to do with those particular individuals from Jerusalem is to bring them to Babylon.

[20 : 27] And teach them there the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And this is not a program of healthy education. But a program that really sets out to subvert their minds.

To actually bring their minds to be programmed in the way of Babylon thinking. With all the mass superstition and idolatry. The study of the stars and the fortunes.

And all that goes along with that that was true of Babylon. He wants to bring them to learn the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

The doctrines and the very language of Babylon. He brings these potential children, these children of potential into Babylon.

So that he can actually indoctrinate their minds. So that he can actually eradicate from their minds all that was previously taught them. So that they will now have the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

[21 : 33] And it doesn't take too much insight to look around ourselves. And to see that Babylon's power is still at work in our days. We've only got to look into our schools, in their curriculum, in their colleges, in our universities.

In all the places of education that our young people are brought up in. To see how humanistic and how atheistic principles are actually brought so clearly to bombard young people's minds.

I'm not saying by that that we should avoid sending our children or young people to be educated in college or in university or in school or whatever.

What we are saying is that Babylon's power is actually there. And it's there with this specific purpose. To actually change these people's way of thinking.

So that humanistic and atheistic principles, the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans will be the way that these young people think. What we need to do is make sure that we ourselves and our children are established, yes established, in the things of truth.

[22 : 53] Not superficially, but grounded and well grounded and established in the things that belong to our lasting salvation.

To Christian principles, to the Christian religion, biblically defined. And when you add to that the whole modern day phenomenon of media power, you can find much in that also.

Whether it's really known to us or not, or whether it's clearly definable or not. That is unquestionably the same in principle as this babble power.

And I have no doubts whatsoever in my mind that today young people are actually being bombarded by media coverage of things. And by media presentation of things that actually seeks to instill in their minds the spirit of Babylon.

Do we realize really how subtle that whole thing is? Do we realize how it's going on all the time, and many, many times without our notice, projecting things at us which are in essence the spirit of the world?

[24 : 13] When you turn on your television, or your radio, or reading, materials, whatever it is you may be reading. You may be sure that in that song, for you, usually in a way that's not easy to pick it out.

You will have enemy strategy. You will have the spirit of Babylon. You are plugging into Babylon's principles. You are actually seeing there Babylon at work in seeking to set before your mind and to dominate your mind with the language and the learning of the culture.

And there is more than that to it. Because we are living in days when the whole Church of God, physical Church as we are defining it, in its broadest terms, is itself riddled with the language and the learning of the Chaldeans.

It's sad to relate it, but that is solid fact. People who teach so-called the Word of God, who don't believe the Word to be the Word of God, who reject its authority, who don't see it as any longer relevant in the terms in which it is set down literally for our age.

People who have no hesitation whatsoever in ordaining women and homosexuals to office. And yet who will ordain God-fearers only with reluctance and with a great of suspiciousness.

[25 : 45] What is the product of unbelieving preaching? What is the product of cozy and warm presentation of things in a way that leaves people unruffled?

What kind of society are we living in? What is the consequence? What is the fruit of all this process of Babylon indoctrination? Well, it is this among many other things.

That people are conditioned to actually think of the Gospel as an un-challenging thing. To think of the Gospel as something cozy that will not trouble them, that will actually encourage them to believe that they are already Christians.

Instead of actually setting before them firmly as Paul said before us, as Daniel said before us, that if our thinking is out of line with the thinking of Scripture, then we've got to change our minds.

And changing our minds is what the Scripture calls repentance. It's not a matter of actually thinking that all is well.

[27 : 00] And that the Gospel makes no demands upon us, that there is no such thing as a change of mind, that these nasty evangelicals are the ones who should change their minds. They are the ones who are out of date and out of tune.

The word of God is clear surely on the matter. When there is an unbelieving spirit in the golden, then there will be a kindred spirit in the golden.

And we are living in days where the spirit of Babylon surrounds us, bombards us in so many ways, in so many places.

And it is all the more vital that we realize that we are living in a day when the true Church of God, at least to all appearances, is surrounded and besieged by the Babylon power of our days.

And it is all the more vital that you and I have faithfully. Now, for a man, in this world, which is not our home, that is the matter then of indoctrination, bombarding the mind with the language and with the learning of the conveyance.

[28 : 23] Then you see there is secondary, what we could call incentive. Because you notice in verse 5, the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them for three years.

This was his own projected program, it was to be for three years. And he had all very best of faith, the very same kind of food and drink as the king himself enjoyed.

That was to be given to these young people in this program of Babylonish purpose. But you see, there is an incentive in that.

There is an underhand spirit at work in that. Because really what he is saying in that is, look, can you find things like that in Jerusalem? Where can you find such sumptuous food in Jerusalem? What are the people of Jerusalem actually eating, you young people, when you are partaking of all the riches and all the delicacies and all the luxuries of Babylon?

[29 : 32] Can I not give you all of this? There is plenty more where that came from. I am not short of these supplies. That is the king of Babylon seeking incentives to set before these young people and seeking to wean them off the food of Jerusalem and seeking to actually bring them on.

It is all a particular way of thinking. Incentives, rich pickings, dangling it before your eyes and say, look, I'll give you more of that.

Providing you do as I see. And isn't that something at least of what the Lord himself experienced in the wilderness? Where Babylon power and the person of the devil himself came to him.

And you remember what he held out before them. He showed them all the kingdoms of the world that were at that moment under the prince of darkness himself.

And he said, all of these will I give you. Look at them. I'll give you them. All of them. If, if you fall down and worship me.

[30 : 49] Incentives, but they're conditional. You will have all of that if you obey him. If you become ambassadors of Babylon.

And don't you know in your own mind the steady pressure that Babylon power sets in opposing you as you seek to live the life of the Christian life.

Doesn't he say the same thing to you today? Doesn't he say to you, look to Jerusalem, look at these poor people. I can give you a lot more than these people enjoy. I can give you all the luxuries that you'll never have as a child of God.

I can give you all the rich things that you may have to your heart's content. You can have king's fair. You can dine in luxury at the king's table.

You can actually partake of all these things. And he'll say to you, look if you want to get on in the world. If you want promotion. If you want your business to thrive. If you want a better house.

[31 : 53] If you want to climb a social ladder. All of these things I'll give you. I'll guarantee you them. If you do a basis. And whatever else Daniel is.

He tells us this. And he teaches us this. That there is a way to the Torah. To the very Torah. And we're thinking even in terms of worldly positions as Daniel.

And we're thinking about it. Not just the summit of heaven that surpasses all other things. But even in terms of worldly status and position. There is a way to the top as Daniel and Joseph before him clearly demonstrate.

That doesn't actually come about by repudiating the faith. But by exercising it. Not by actually doing away with all that you've learned.

Not by turning your back upon God. Not by turning to the king's fear that Nebuchadnezzar will give you. But by actually looking to the principles of the king of kings.

[33 : 01] And to apply them in your life. Daniel trying to social ladder. Of course he did. He came to a position of eminence and power. He came to it by the fear of God.

By faithfulness in a foreign land. By rigidly adhering to his own principles.

And he will try and give you incentives. He will stand around the front of you and say, You won't get back in church.

And you have to say to him, I know I won't. That I can count all things but Lord. For one thing. For one thing that is excellent that will look God willing up to see.

The excellency of the knowledge. Of Christ Jesus my Lord. You see that is the question.

[34 : 05] And it's the question for you and I to address seriously now. Right now. Right at this moment. We've taken our place physically within the ranks of God's visible people.

Visible church. We're here today taking up a position in that visible church. Outwardly at least we are part of the children of Jerusalem.

But where is our heart? Who is our Lord and our Master? Who are we serving? Is it the King of Babel? Or is it King Jesus?

That is what it boils down to. It's not a matter simply of what we appear to be. But what we are in our allegiance. Surely you're not one of those.

There are many of them in the visible church. Surely you're not one of those that outwardly seem to be a child of Jerusalem. But who in reality inwardly do allegiance to the King of Babel.

[35 : 16] The heart is dominated by Babel and Babel. The heart is not Jesus. It's never a message.

In the grip of the enemy. Surely you are not like that. Surely you are in reality a child of Jerusalem. There is then indoctrination. And there is incentive. But there is thirdly. One other matter which he uses in his program or in his strategy.

And that is what we could call an identity crisis. Because you notice that in verse 7. The Babylon strategy is to change the names of these people.

And that's important because the names of these people are all reminders of God or some aspect of God's works. Daniel for example means the judgment of God.

[36 : 25] And these people who were so named had in their then name a reminder of their background. A reminder of their religion. A reminder of their God. Babylon wants to change that.

Babylon wants to actually revert to pagan gods. Babylon. As far as these people are concerned. And the names that they give to them are reminders no longer of God.

The God of the Hebrews. The true God. But the gods of Babylon. The idols of Babylon. And their names that are given to them. Belteshazzar.

Shadrach. Meshach. Abednego. All contain references to the idolaters practices and the superstitious ways of Babylon. And if you change your allegiance in that way you'll be welcome in Babylon.

Babylon is actually seeking those who will not just in appearances but in reality deny and effect. They are the most valuable candidates for Babylon's programming.

[37 : 28] Don't give them the pleasure of even entertaining the thought of it. Now how you might ask. Is there such a thing in our day as an identity crisis?

How do we find an equivalent to that in our own day? Well there is one thing at least. Because for so many at least. We are professing Christians.

And the world today. They are so easily led aside and led into other ways of thinking. Other programs of education. Theologically speaking.

Other systems of belief even. And there is a carrying about therefore with every wind of doctrine. So easy to change clothes as it were.

Not just denominational clothes. But even to the extent of incorporating other systems of belief which are essentially idolatrous at their heart.

[38 : 31] And what is the outcome of that? What is the result of that? What is the result of that?

And the result of it is that we are facing a day where so many professing Christians are unsure of what they are or what they should be. What they should believe and what they should not believe.

They have got an identity crisis. They don't really know the characteristics of the Christian religion and so of the Christian life. They're not grounded in the whole aspect.

In the case of the great Christian religion, the Christian religion is the Christian religion. What they should believe and what they should not believe. They have got an identity crisis. They don't really know the characteristics of the Christian religion and so of the Christian life.

they should be, what they should believe and what they should not believe. They've got an identity crisis. They don't really know the characteristics of the Christian religion and so of the Christian life.

They're not grounded in the whole aspect of Christian doctrine and Christian teaching and biblical teaching. And the identity crisis means that they're not sure where to stand, they're not sure who to listen to. They're not sure whether this is a right soft topic, whether this is an accurate description, whether this is theologically accurate or not. They're facing an identity crisis. They don't know whether they're really Christians or whether they're not.

There's nothing more that will please the king of Babylon more than people that don't know what it is to be a biblical Christian. People that are not grounded in the Christian essentials of the faith. faith. As we'll see, God willing, in our next study, where we're dealing with faith counter-strategies to this enemy strategy, we'll see that it is important that we have all of these essential things, that we have all of these essential things, not just in our heads, not just in our heads, but in our hearts. But it's the other way as well, not just in our hearts, but in our heads. We've got to use the mind that God has given to us, whether we're theologians or not, whether we're intellectually endowed in the highest sense or not, that is not what matters.

[40 : 34] What matters is that you and I use the whole capacity that God has given to us to its full potential. We've got to wrestle with the truth itself, to learn it as well as to apply it. To apply it as well as to learn the two things stand and fall together.

And the counter-trust. And the counter-strategies will be in terms of clearly defined biblical principles. The enemy's strategy is a strategy, as we say, of indoctrination, of incentives and of an identity crisis.

And suffice to say for the moment that we've got to be on our guard against all these things.

Because while we're seeing in this particular context, young people brought aside, young people brought to Babylon, the power of Babylon, not confined to young people.

And once you might. And once you might. And once you might whatever you need. However much you listen to the gospel. However many things you've heard of the things of God's kingdom. Because when weby 401ks power comes on. Now wonder. So when they discover the seasons. Now there's a point of times that you need to understand that and what we've ever seen and have no faith. And now, interestingly enough I literally and have no proof of what happened on earth, palms toward it in the country.

[42 : 20] And exactly if we see a place where paradigm is slow. So in Representing your actions are amazing and howJesus is suggested ibn is essential ibn and he can tell Experiment al Ibn Duy complex just as■ nay. O Lord we pray that Thou would grant us grace to stand against the wiles of the devil taking all thine armour to us. We may find in thy helmet of salvation the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, shoes of the preparation of the gospel of truth, the skirt of truth, and the sword of thy spirit, the word of God, whole and adequate equipment which thou hast provided for us in thy grace and love.

Help us to use it all we beseech thee and to enable us therefore to wrestle in a way that overcomes against those principalities and powers that are designed, that have the design of frustrating and overturning us.

We thank thee for the power that is thine, for the sovereign control that is thine, for the purpose that is thine, for the overall victory that is assured for us in thine own.

We pray that Thou would give us, O Lord, to be jealous warriors, that we may find in the contests of our own lives, that we depend not upon our own strength, but upon the strength that is in Christ Jesus, yet that we may find that we shirk nobody in the interest of saving ourselves from the intensity of the water, that grant that we may seek in all things, to have Thy glory made known, and to the furtherance of Thy kingdom.

Fear us and accept us. In Jesus' name. Amen.