

INTRODUCTION:

1. This morning, we step into #3 of our series entitled (**PP**) “Countering Culture.” | “Courage to Go Against the Culture”
2. A Series through the 1st 6 chapters of the book of Daniel... the Book of Daniel is radical
 1. We’re looking at this ancient piece of literature in the 2 portions... the 2 portions through which it’s presented
 2. It’s about the prophet & the prophecies of Daniel ... and friends...
 3. In our 1st series we consider Daniel & others (Shad, Mesh, Abe)
 1. How he (how they) lived surrendered lives to God, in the midst of living in a strange land – Babylon.
 2. Living surrendered to God = living in a way that counters culture we’re in...
3. This is such a perfect parallel to who we are as believers.
 1. (**PP**) **1 Peter 2.9-11: 9** *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10* *who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 11* *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...*
 2. (**PP**) **Romans 12.1-2 (NLT)** *1* *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. 2* *Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*
 3. As those who’ve been **SAVED** by God from our sin & given **NEW** purpose and meaning in life
 1. Our lives are not our own.... We’ve **SURRENDERED** them over to Jesus.
 1. Our values... How we define success
 2. Where we spend our time How we prioritize
 3. Jesus changes **EVERYTHING!**
 2. It’s a life that’s surrendered
 4. And the more and more we spend time w/ Jesus, the more and more we surrender to Him,
 1. Well, this life, those things that used to be so normal to us — — They become strange.
 2. Like Peter encouraged those early believers – we’re temporary residents & foreigners in this world.
4. In this series, we’ll see how Daniel truly lived a **SURRENDERED** life to the Lord in a very **STRANGE** land (Babylon).
 1. And he didn’t retreat from the world
 2. But lived a Godly life in the world & had great impact for the kingdom of God in the world... living surrendered... countering culture...
 3. (**PP**) Next week, we’ll be sharing these reminders of this truth that this book serves a pathway of example ...
5. This morning, we’re midway into Daniel ch2, together — we pick up our story in how Daniel finds himself in an unexpected, uncertain, and scary situation. It’s **PART 2**
 1. The king had a dream, wants his **DREAM TEAM** to recall & interpret for him.
 2. If not, they’ll be torn limb from limb.
 3. Daniel responded w/ wisdom & discretion

4. As he did God revealed to him the king's dream and the interpretation.
5. Last time we saw how he **processed** when he was confronted w/ an unexpected, uncertain, and scary situation
6. This morning, we'll see how **responds** through this unexpected, uncertain, and scary situation
6. We'll be in the NLT this morning.

(PP) ²⁴ Then Daniel went in to see Arioch, whom the king had ordered to execute the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to him, "Don't kill the wise men. Take me to the king, and I will tell him the meaning of his dream."²⁵ Arioch quickly took Daniel to the king and said, "I have found one of the captives from Judah who will tell the king the meaning of his dream!"

(PP) ²⁶ The king said to Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar), "Is this true? Can you tell me what my dream was and what it means?" ²⁷ Daniel replied, "There are no wise men, enchanters, magicians, or fortune-tellers who can reveal the king's secret. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future. Now I will tell you your dream and the visions you saw as you lay on your bed.

(PP) ²⁹ "While Your Majesty was sleeping, you dreamed about coming events. He who reveals secrets has shown you what is going to happen.³⁰ And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart.

1. You've gotta love how Daniel handles himself in this situation.
 1. He's in a very uncertain, and scary situation
 2. He tells Arioch that God has revealed the dream & it's meaning to him
 3. So Arioch takes him before the king — king I gotta guy for you.
 4. Neb asks Daniel, is this true?
 1. ²⁷ "There are no wise men, enchanters, magicians, or fortune-tellers who can reveal the king's secret.
 2. Arioch has got to be shaking in Babylonian sandals at this point
 1. He's thinking — WHAT!?!
 2. You told me you could interpret the dream
 5. Then Daniel says something so powerful
 1. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets...
 2. ³⁰ And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart.
2. This is a powerful lesson for all of us.
 1. Remember who Daniel is.
 2. He's a stranger living in strange land
 3. He's a young man whose seeking to live a life surrendered over the Lord in a world that is very foreign to him.
 1. Babylon — A world that is full of the world
 2. He models something for us that we must grasp as Christians living in this world.

3. (PP) Know who you ARE, know who you AREN'T

1. Did you catch the gist of what Daniel said?
2. Listen, I'm nothing... but God whose the revealer of mysteries
 1. He's revealed this dream
 2. And my confidence is not in myself, but in HIM.
3. Believers, we know who we are b/c of the WORD of God and the promises of God toward us
 - 1.FORGIVEN | FREE | FAMILY | FOCUS | FUNCTION | FUTURE**
 - 2.EPHESIANS....**
4. Now, let's pick up our storyline...

(PP) ³¹ *"In your vision, Your Majesty, you saw standing before you a huge, shining statue of a man. It was a frightening sight. ³² The head of the statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, ³³ its legs were iron, and its feet were a combination of iron and baked clay. ³⁴ As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits.*

(PP) ³⁵ *The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth. ³⁶ "That was the dream. Now we will tell the king what it means.*

(PP) ³⁷ *Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor. ³⁸ He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold.*

(PP) ³⁹ *"But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to take your place. After that kingdom has fallen, yet a third kingdom, represented by bronze, will rise to rule the world.⁴⁰ Following that kingdom, there will be a fourth one, as strong as iron. That kingdom will smash and crush all previous empires, just as iron smashes and crushes everything it strikes.*

(PP) ⁴¹ *The feet and toes you saw were a combination of iron and baked clay, showing that this kingdom will be divided. Like iron mixed with clay, it will have some of the strength of iron. ⁴² But while some parts of it will be as strong as iron, other parts will be as weak as clay. ⁴³ This mixture of iron and clay also shows that these kingdoms will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other through intermarriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron and clay do not mix.*

(PP) Speak the TRUTH and speak with TACT

1. That's exactly what Daniel does
 1. He gives the king what he was looking for, the dream & the interpretation.
 2. But he does it in such a way that really models for us how we too can live a surrendered life in a strange world — what countering culture looks like...
2. Kind of a side note, but isn't interesting that Neb saw a statue?

1. What's interesting about that?
 2. Well, they're in Babylon, the capitol of idolatry. Statues everywhere.
 3. God speaks to an idolater in a language an idolater can understand.
 4. He would be familiar with the imagery, and so he sees an image.
3. What does this all mean?
1. He says, you saw
 1. Statue
 2. These represent Kingdoms
 3. And there was a BIG Rock
 2. He gives the explanation
 3. Now hang with me, we're going to work through what he sees, and what this means, and how this is a powerful PROPHECY from Neb's timeline.
 1. **(PP)** 1st we have the head of gold. Daniel says, "That's you, King. You're the head of gold."
 1. At that time he was, Neb was at his peak of glory
 2. He governed the whole world—of a nation and of a city that was called the City of Gold.
 1. About 90yrs later the historian Herodotus visited Babylon and said, "*This city has more gold than any other city I have ever visited in my life. Gold leaf on the palaces and on the public buildings. It oozed,*" he said, "*out of every pore of Babylon.*" It was the golden city.
 2. And Nebuchadnezzar had reign over that city until 539 BC when another coalition of kingdoms came together against it as represented in verse 39, " 'After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours.'
 3. Although a GOLDEN rule it lasted only 66 yrs.
 2. Then we see the Chest & Arms of Silver
 1. We're not told who that is here.
 2. It is the Medo-Persian Empire which stood for 208 yrs.
 1. A coalition of Medes and Persians under Darius the Mede, who will take the city and oust the grandson of Neb
 2. And Cyrus the Persian, will reign over the kingdom in a dual capacity.
 3. What's interesting is Darius the Mede will establish a new form of government called the tribute
 1. Where every one of his captives will be demanded that they pay him silver.
 2. Silver was the metal of that empire.
 4. This kingdom was much larger geographically.
 1. But it was weaker b/c it lacked central government.
 2. That weakness lead to a new WOLRD leader name Alexander the Great to arise.
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 3. Belly & Thighs of Bronze:
 1. In 334 BC Alexander the Great took over the Medo-Persia Empire, and the world.
 2. The Grecian Empire stood for 185 years

3. The metal that this empire was known for was bronze.
4. Historians called them the "brazen coated Greeks," because the soldiers bore a new amalgam of metal, on their chests, their breastplates, their shields, their helmets, they were covered in bronze.
5. This was so cool...
 1. According to the historian Flavius Josephus
 2. When Alexander the Great was taking over the world and he came against Jerusalem
 1. The high priest at the time came out to meet Alexander the Great w/ a scroll of the book of Daniel
 2. Showed Alexander where he was predicted, prophesied, as one who would take over the world.
 3. According to the historian, he dismounted from his horse and Alexander the Great paid homage to the God of the Jews.

4. Legs of Iron

1. Again, we're not told who this is, but if we look back at history—again, they were looking forward, it was prophecy, to us it's history.
2. The description given fits the kingdom of Rome.
 1. Rome had a rule for more than 500 yrs.
 2. The image shows a division, a split in two different legs
 3. The Roman empire divided into east and west in AD 395.
 4. And eventually, as the image would even depict, it weakened and it became brittle and fragmented.

5. Feet of Iron & Clay

1. Lastly, there are ten toes at the bottom of that image partly of iron, partly of clay.
2. 10 toes, 10 toes, 10 toes — Remember 10 toes — remember that.
 1. We won't cover it all today b/c we'll get to ch7 w/ the same truth but w/ a different image
 2. You'll see a beast with 10 horns.
 1. And that same image is seen in Revelation 17, a beast with ten horns.
 2. And the angel will tell John who writes these things down, "The ten horns which you saw are ten kingdoms."
3. Ever since Daniel 2, Daniel 7, and Revelation 17, for 1,000's of years scholars have anticipated some form of a revived Roman Empire; more to say about that later.

4. Now, for us most of that is history.

1. The Babylon, Medo-Persian, Grecian, & Roman Empires
2. But, from the time this dream was given and the interpretation, it's prophecy.
3. God is in control — God knows the beginning to the end and beyond.

4. The thing I don't want us to miss is that Daniel speaks the truth w/ tact. (PP)

1. He gives the king what he was looking for, the dream & the interpretation.

2. But he does it in such a way that really models for us how we too can live a surrendered life in a strange world.
 1. Spoke truth
 2. Very clearly & very honestly he shared the truth
 3. There's a sense of serenity in how he shares the explanation
 3. He was also smart about it, *"³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor. ³⁸ He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold."*
 4. The Bible says,
 1. **Ephesians 4.15** – *speak the truth in love*
 2. **Proverbs 25.15** – *By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone*
 5. When you speak the TRUTH you can trust that God is with you, but only when is done in a way that reflects the God of truth
 1. We speak truth — And we represent a God of truth
 2. We don't want to be RIGHT and yet be WRONG at the same time.
 3. We speak the **TRUTH**, but we speak it w/ wisdom & **TACT**.
 1. Anyone ever failed in this?
 2. Anyone have kids/married ... ever worked w/ another human... been a human?
 5. Daniel explains the most memorable part of the dream for Neb.
 1. **(PP)** ³⁴ *As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits. ³⁵ The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth.*
 2. Look at how he explains it in v44
- (PP)** ⁴⁴ *"During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever. ⁴⁵ That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain."*
1. What's he talking about here? This rock, represents none other than Jesus Christ.
 1. W. Wiersbe **(PP)** *Jesus Christ will return, destroy His enemies, and establish His kingdom. The stone is a frequent image of God in Scripture and especially of Messiah, Jesus Christ the Son of God (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Matt. 21:44; Acts 4:11; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Peter 2:4–8). The phrase "without hands" is used in Scripture to mean "not by human power" and refers to something only God can do (Col. 2:11; Heb. 9:11, 24).*
 2. **(PP)** *It appears that the Roman Empire will in some ways continue until the end of the age and culminate in the rule of ten kings (Dan. 2:44; 7:24–27; Rev. 17:3, 12–18). The world will be delivered from evil, not by a process, but by a crisis, the promised return of Jesus Christ. Whatever remains of the four Gentile kingdoms, passed from one kingdom to the next, will be destroyed and turned into chaff. Then Christ will establish His kingdom which will fill all*

*the earth.*¹

2. Here's the point for us to do — counter, the culture were in... Living a Surrendered Life in Strange World

1. **(PP)** Know who you **ARE**, know who you **AREN'T**
2. **(PP)** Speak the **TRUTH** and speak with **TACT**
3. **(PP)** Build your life on the **ROCK** who **WAS** and who **IS** to come.
 1. Jesus is coming again! Amen!
 2. Let that be the rock on which we build our lives!

(PP) ⁴⁶ *Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself down before Daniel and worshiped him, and he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him.* ⁴⁷ *The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret."*

(PP) ⁴⁸ *Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men.* ⁴⁹ *At Daniel's request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained in the king's court.*

CONCLUSION & APPLICATION:

1. Daniel — lived in a strange world — world of Babylon — but, he lived a surrendered life.
2. Countering Culture by simply surrendering his life into the capable hands of God.
3. Instead of being **conformed**, he were **committed**.
 1. *One act of obedience is better than listening to 100 sermons.* – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 2. We experience the pressure to conform to worldly standards in so many ways don't we...
4. Having **purpose inside you** will help keep the **pressure outside you** from controlling you.
5. Here's the reality: **Commitment** brings **Enrichment** ... **Obedience** brings **Blessings** ... **Integrity** brings Superior **Quality** to your life
6. Surrender afresh your life to JESUS:
 1. **Realize, Recognize, Repent, Receive, & Release...**
 2. **Confess** w/ your mouth & **Believe** in your heart!

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (2000). *Be resolute* (p. 33). Colorado Springs, CO: Victor.