

## **The Chapel Family Bible Reading Program – June 11 - 16** ***Doing Life Together – Thriving in Babylon – Their Culture***

### **MONDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:1

**OBSERVATION:** Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon in the first wave of deportees. Now they are far from home and separated from all they have known. How will they worship God without a temple, without sacrifices, and while living among unbelievers? The world today attempts to do the same thing minus the physical captivity. There is a concerted, concentrated attempt taking place today to rewrite the Christian heritage of America. The reasoning is, I suppose, if we can just rewrite history and remove any reference to God and His hand, then the strength and influence of the Christian faith will be crippled.

### **TUESDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:2

**OBSERVATION:** What goes around, comes around. The Jews had desecrated their own temple through consorting with idols, now God allows the pagans to come in and do the same thing. From a worldly point of view it appeared that God was dead. How else to explain the looting of the dwelling place of the one true God? And that raises a crucial question: Can we trust a God who is defeated? Can you trust God when all the evidence suggests he is dead? Will you be faithful even when your world falls apart? Is your God greater than your circumstances?

### **WEDNESDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:3-5

**OBSERVATION:** It begins with a selection process aimed at the cream of the crop of Jewish teenage boys. The king assigns them to Ashpenaz, his right-hand man. Then he gives them the best education Babylon can offer. At the end of that time they would enter the king's service and be assured of high-level government positions. Mind control always begins with the young. So these three Jewish teenagers are now on the fast-track Babylonian assimilation program. It's like being given a full scholarship to MIT or like being singled out by the boss's right-hand man for special mentoring. Talk about a sweet deal, this was it. But was it?

### **THURSDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:6-7

**OBSERVATION:** Most of us know Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to the world." I love the way J. B. Phillips renders it: "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold." The world will squeeze us. We can't avoid that. But we don't have to give in to the pressure. Here, then, is the Babylonian plan to transform these young men: New Home ISOLATION / New Knowledge INDOCTRINATION / New Diet COMPROMISE / New Names CONFUSION. It's a good plan because it evidently worked with some of the Jewish teenagers. But there were at least four who stood against the tide.

### **FRIDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** 1 Corinthians 15:26

**OBSERVATION:** What an important lesson this is to all of us. Israel was defeated, but God was not defeated. God wills that his children survive and thrive in the most difficult circumstances. This is part of what Jesus meant when he said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18b). By the way, the phrase "gates of hell" refers to the realm of the dead. Many times when our loved ones die, we feel as if the world itself has come to an end and we wonder (secretly and sometimes out loud) if God has not made some terrible mistake. Or perhaps we wonder if there is any God at all.

### **SATURDAY:**

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:1-21

**OBSERVATION:** The word of exile is to rediscover the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the early Church and to apply them to life on the soil of a post-Christian world." But, this takes creativity, right, to innovate, to adapt, not to compromise, but to figure out how to be the people of God in this time and place. Here is the question of the week ... "How do we be a healthy, thriving church even in the corrosive soil of our culture?"