

Citizens & Saints Part 3 Living in a Babylonian Culture Genesis 11

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." 5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

The Star wars movies came out in 1977 when I was in the 7th grade.

- A) Like many people I was sucked into the story -
- B) Luke and Hans Solo - trying to rescue princess Leia from the Evil Empire
- C) Have to admit - I didn't like Luke at first - Kind of weak and Whiny - trying to figure out who he was.
 - 1) No one wants to be Luke for Halloween that year
- D) Now Hans Solo played by Harrison Ford on the other hand was Cool !
- E) Remember when Princess Leia - tells him she loves him - remember how he responds - I know.
 - 1) How cool is that - So confident - yes
- F) And I loved Hans Solo's side kick - Chewbacca - - coolest character - so loyal and wise -no lines
 - 1) I wanted a Chewbacca for a pet

Then there was Darth Vader: Ultimate Villain

- A) All that power and mind Control -
- B) The Most popular Halloween Costume in 1977 when Star Wars first came out
 - 1) Vader was cool

What does Star Wars have to do with what our Citizens and Saints Series

A) An interesting theme that we see in the Bible is how the People of God are always seen as this minority group

B) living in the midst of and often under tyranny of empires

C) First it was the Egyptians and then the Assyrians - Babylonians -

1) Persian - Grecian and finally the Roman Empire

D) The most definitive Empire in the OT was the Babylonian Empire

E) Today I want us to see how it started - What defined it and how it relates to the culture that we are living in today.

Remember where we started Genesis 1 - Mankind made in the Image of God

A) Image bearers - Mission Be fruitful and fill the earth - be dispersed

B) Fall - Rebellion - we will do it our way

C) The world BECOMES evil beyond belief

God floods the earth

A) Starts over with Noah Ch.9 Fill the earth and Multiply

B) Go fill the earth with my truth, beauty and goodness

1) here's my promise that I'll never destroy you all again. - RAINBOW

C) I'm making a covenant with you that this purge won't happen again. Fill the earth

D) Then in Genesis 10 you get what it's called the table of nations.

E)It's how it's how Noah's sons actually turn into nation states

In Genesis 11 we read of what took place only four generations after the flood.

A)A mighty leader named Nimrod established a kingdom in the region of Babylon (Modern day Iraq)

B)Nimrod's name means we will rebel

C)Genesis 11 mirrors The attempt of humanity in the garden to achieve power independently from God "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

Now on the surface this seems like a good thing - Man is working together in Unity - there is Ingenuity

A)But underneath the surface this is an attempt at Self Exaltation -

B)Let us build a city for ourselves - let us make a name for ourselves

C)God said - disperse and fill the earth and they say -
1) no thank you we want to stay here and build a mega city

D)we are going to build a name for ourselves - not going to do it your way - but our way.

E)We are not interesting in exalting you - we are interested in exalting us. Not exalting you.

They built the tower high into the heavens,

A)perhaps as a statement that no matter how high God made the waters next time,

B)they could ascend even higher.

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built 6 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

C)God knows when man seeks to exalt himself above God and God's plan - only results in problems

D)He has seen what happened after the fall - that led to the Flood.

7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

E)Act of love to save man from himself

8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

So the region of this split became known as the region of Babel,

A)which later became the empire of Babylon.

B)Babylon became the most powerful nation in the world.

C)At the Zenith of Babylon's power under a King by the Name of Nebuchadnezzar

D)Babylon stood as the ultimate picture of what man could achieve without God

1)TURN TO DANIEL CH.1

Now King Nebuchadnezzar was a brilliant guy, and here's one of the things that made him so brilliant.

A)NEB had an interesting strategy for strengthening Babylon through the conquering of other nations

B)When he would go into a ancient city, instead of just destroying the city and enslaving everybody,

C)He gave his commanders these instructions: Go into the city and take the best looking and the brightest young people

D)and bring them safely back to my capitol city, Babylon.

Neb's plan was to take these young men and rear them in the ways of Babylonian culture

A)To Indoctrinate them into their system of belief

B)and then employ them to influence the rest of the countrymen who had been taken captive

It is Still Satan's strategy today

A) Satan knows that the real wealth of a nation is not it's silver and it's gold – the wealth is it's youth –

B) If he can get a hold of the minds and hearts of the youth he can change a nation

C) Karl Marx declared – give me the poets and the musicians and I will take the nation.

This was the plan of Nebuchadnezzar!

A) He would take the best looking and the smartest young people in the world and bring them back into his capitol city.

B) There he would put them in a training program

1) Where he would slowly strip away all of their culture and replace it with Babylonian culture.

C) The Result would be – that Babylon his capital city which was a magnificent city, would end up

1) Full of brilliant young people, the brightest young scholars in all the world

D) And all the best looking young people in the world

E) It was a Brilliant plan - it worked wonderfully to strengthen the power of the Babylonian empire

So, in 605 B.C. he sends his armies into the city of Jerusalem, conquers Jerusalem.

A) They go into the temple, the ancient temple that Solomon had built, pretty much destroys the temple

B) It was the Babylonian way of showing – Our god is stronger than your god

C) He enriches himself with Israel's gold, and he brings with him Israel's best and brightest.

1) And four of these people that he brought with him are very famous people you've heard of.

D) Daniel is one; the other three are his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

1) They were part of this entourage that he captured and brought to the city of Babylon.

E) These four young men with probably 50-75 other young men are around 15-18 yrs old

Imagine what that must have been like?

A) Families most likely killed – homeland defeated

Everything held dear is gone – carted off thru desert

B) Imagine coming 1500 miles across the plains of Shinar which are completely flat.

C) Suddenly you see this humungous city in the distance

1) Unlike anything you have ever seen before.

The city of Babylon was over 10 times larger than the city of Vista. 19 sq miles

A) Babylon was 200 sq miles - Massive walled city -

C)) That is what these young men were coming to - Jerusalem would be like a truck stop in comparison- Imagine

Reminded me of the Story of this Hillbilly family lived in the sticks of North Carolina

A) Visiting a Big city for the First time –

B) Consisted of a Grandpa - his wife Granny - their son and his wife - grandson

C) Pull up outside of a Big Hotel – The grandpa tells everyone to stay in the truck – check it out

D) he goes in with his 12 year old grandson.

They step inside the hotel and it is like nothing they have seen before. – Waterfalls and shops

A) Restaurant – People are coming and going

B) Then he sees this interesting small room –

C) These two shiny metal slide open - people step in the door closes -

1) when it opens again the people are gone

They stand there watching mesmerized - never seen anything like this - where did the people go

A) Suddenly the grandpa watches an older women - who looked the age of his wife - hobble up

B) The Doors open - she steps inside the doors close - she is gone

1) But this time the doors open up and out steps a much younger beautiful women...GO get granny !!

☺

That was probably what Babylon seemed like to these young men - A city of Endless possibilities

A) And These young men soon discovered that they were not going to be prisoners – PAMPERED

B) They were entering into a 3 year all expenses paid training Program.

C) A three year masters program - A free college education and a food allowance

1) that comes right off the kings table.

D) Most of these young men were probably high fiving one another.

1) We thought we were going to be tortured and killed like our parents

E) Or slaves – working in the Salt mines or copper mines – This is AMAZING!!! Live in palace eat....

For three years they would Living LARGE !

A) But understand - Their schooling was not so much to inform them in the customs.. culture of Babylon –

B) It was meant TO FORM THEM!

C) It was a slow subtle INDOCTRINATION into the The Babylonian mindset

The whole process was meant to wear down their resistance. - Weaken their resolve.

A) To slowly strip away their attachment to their homeland, their heritage,

B) Their religion and their God!

They even sought to change their identity by changing their names.

A) Took away their Jewish names – and gave them names after Babylonian gods.

- ❖ Daniel = God is Judge – changed –
Belteshazzar = Baal protects
- ❖ Hananiah = God is gracious changed to
Shadrach – illumined by Raw
- ❖ Mishael = Who is like the Lord -becomes
Meshach – Who is like Aku
- ❖ Azariah = The Lord is our help changed to
Abed-Nego (meaning *Servant of Nego*).

So let me ask you this question: How would your teenager - handle that situation?

A) Better yet how would you fair in that situation?
How are you fairing now!

B) We live in a Babylonian Culture that has been seeking to indoctrinate us for yrs

C) Change our mindset – weaken our resolve get us to forget our identity – who we are in Christ!

D) Our cultures indoctrination has changed from a slow subtle indoctrination

1) To a rapid in your face - indoctrination

E) Accept it or be canceled – be ostracized !

1) The Lines are being drawn my friends

Daniel seems to see through this plan –

A) He recognized something – many of Christians completely miss

B) Daniel seemed to realize that Compromise does not erase the tension.

1) It only weakens the resolve.

C) We tend to think: If I give in a little bit – the tension will go away –

1) I won't feel tempted anymore. WRONG !!!!

D) Daniel knew better than that!

DANIEL knew that compromise does not erase the temptation it only weakens the Resolve

A) Example: If you cheat at something once, it's way easier to cheat the second time.

B) Compromise once - easier the 2nd time

There are so many lines, that once you cross them,
A) the tension doesn't go away, it's just that your resolve is lessened.

B) Daniel saw through this plan - They've changed my clothes, they've changed my name,

C) They've changed my habits, and they've changed my schedule.

1) I see where this is going.

D) One day I will have completely abandoned everything I hold near and dear.

So Daniel decided to do something

A) Daniel made a Decision not knowing the end of the story: Didn't know – End up in the Bible See - V.8

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself

B) Nowt Defile is an interesting phrase.

1) The ancient Hebrew word defile carries the thought of *polluting* or *staining*

C) It carries the idea of ruining a completed image

1) Van Gough painting - defile it

D) When all the other young men were going with the flow of the culture.

1) Daniel said – Not me – I will Not defile myself

E) Now - We are only talking food right? Big deal?

Why would Daniel consider the king's food defiled?

A) Either offered to idols - participating in their idolatry and acknowledging their gods

B) OR it was not kosher.

C) God had instructed his people to live on a Special diet avoid certain foods like pork – meat with blood

D) Daniel said: I am not doing that!

So Daniel purposes in his heart – not going to do that He is going to make stand

A) His stand has an impact on his friends too - who also make a stand.

B) God had allowed them to be brought into this foreign land -

C) But they were not going to compromise their convictions or God's word.

Daniel and His Friends are a wonderful example for us of how to thrive as Citizens and Saints

A) In this Babylonian culture that we find

B) #1 We purpose in our hearts that we are not going to defile ourselves

C) Not swayed by Popular opinion -

#2 We Stand together

Been said - you want to go fast - go alone -

A) But if you want to go far - Go together!

B) Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, - were in it together and for the long haul.

C) Shared Conviction - stand together!!!

God blessed it - THE TEST - 10 days

A) They trusted that God would be true to them for being true to his word

B) Our problem - We often don't believe he will

C) If we are going to stand strong in our convictions it has to be based on the faith - God is faithful

Result: God Blesses their Stand and they end up being Promoted - Kings wise men

A) They have a position in the GOVT of Babylon

B) But Blessings doesn't mean Problem Free

C) Ch.2 Neb's Dream and Crazy request - Tell me the dream and the interpretation

No one Can - So Neb is going to Kill all of the Wise men - good for nothing

A) Daniel and his friends were in that group

B) So when the leader is acting irrational - what do they do?

C) Revolt? Complain? Flee?

Nope they try to be a Help!

A) How do we Thrive while living in a Babylonian Culture?

B) #3 We look for ways to serve and Help

C) This was based in Prayer: No Complaining -

D) After a time of Prayer God gives the dream and interpretation - Daniel is brought before NEB

²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, and the

soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

This Was King NEB's response:

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

But Still Challenges - Ch.3 - Statue

A)All Country Mandate -

B)#4 Stand Strong in their Convictions

C)Not Bowing

The King likes them

A)JESUS STANDS WITH THEM IN THE FIRE

LATER CH.6 - NEW LEADER

A)Jealousy - other leaders are Jealous of Daniel

B)Trick

C)Can't Pray

Daniel Prays 3 times a day and Opens the Windows

A)Not Shrinking down - I am standing up

B)God stops the mouth of the lions