

Thriving in Babylon- Making sense of evil's success.

Sermon Notes

September 15, 2019

Review:

1. Avoid being the victim, who complains, blames, and asks "why me?"
2. Resolve to move forward.
3. Fear God more than man.
4. Attitude and actions matter.

How do you make sense of evil's success? [Nero, Hitler, Mugabe, Al Queda, Boko Hiram]

Surrounded by evil with no escape.

- Babylon: Considered by the angels to be a metaphor for an evil city. **Revelation 18:2**
 - Babylon the great.
 - The "worst of the worst" Osborne
 - Similar to the use of the term "sodomy" which comes from the biblical description of highly sensual city of Sodom.
- Culture of Babylon was guided primarily by a satanic form of religion.
 - Astrology, occult, enchanter
 - Dark practices with magician-like pursuits.
 - Daniel's being taught to practice all of this!
- Nebuchadnezzar was one of the most cruel and narcissistic rulers in history.
 - Murderous
 - Quick-tempered
 - Extremely vain
- Spiritually hostile to Daniel.
 - Forced into a new name- "Belteshazzar" which means "Bel's prince".
 - Bel was another name for "Marduk" a god worshiped in Babylon.

Evil's success is limited to what serves God's plan. **Romans 9:14-24**

- Even evil leaders are raised up by God to accomplish his purposes. (17)
 - Pharaoh- because he was so cruel it helped motivate Israel to cry out to God and return to the promise land.
 - Nebuchadnezzar- he was God's tool for disciplining Judah and Hezekiah for turning away from God.
- God has the power to harden and soften a man's heart. (18)

- Sad reality: It often takes the actions of one man's hardened heart to soften another.
- God's wrath is also a great tool in revealing his great glory and mercy. (23)

Evil prevails to its own destructive end.

- God revealed himself as the true God by way of Nebuchadnezzar's harshness. **Daniel 2:10-16, 20-47**
 - Daniel prays for wisdom and for the power of God to be revealed. (20)
 - Daniel reveals the dream and its meaning. (27-28)
 - Nebuchadnezzar is humbled and declares God as *"the God of gods."* (45a-47)
- God reveals himself as the God to be worshiped by way of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance. **Daniel 3:26-29**
 - He acknowledged Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as *"servants of the most high God."* (26)
 - Declares it illegal to speak against the God of the Jews.
 - He acknowledges that no other God can save you like this. (29b)
- God reveals himself as the King of Kings through Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation. **Daniel 4:34-37**
 - Even with the warning of this humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar gloated. (30)
 - In the end, he would either be destroyed or declare God as Lord.
 - He chose to make God his king! (37)

Take aways.

1. Evil's victories will be short lived.
2. God's plan will not be hindered—evil plays into his hand and reveals the glory of God and our need for him.
3. God will be worshiped now or later.