

**Introduction to Daniel: *Consequence of Compromise***  
Daniel 1:1-2

*“One compromise here, another there, and soon enough the so-called Christian and the man in the world look the same.”*

A.W Tozer

**Introduction: *Compromise*.** It’s a word we all know, not only in definition but in action. It simply means to make *mutual concessions, an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting ideas*. Now, this is certainly a good thing when it comes to our **preferences**, as anyone who’s lived with a sibling, roommate, or spouse can attest. Where to eat dinner, what color to paint the wall, who’s house to spend Christmas at, where to vacation, or who gets to take out the trash are simple illustrations of areas of potential disagreement that need both parties to give up their **opinion or preference** and find common ground. On the surface alone, none of these are **moral issues** (although the response CAN be!) and thus the consequences of getting In-N-Out vs. making something at home are low.

However, when compromise deals with *moral concessions, issues of conscience, or Biblical imperatives*, the consequences are dire. The problem that we face today is that **compromise is so rampant at this level we don’t even recognize it**. We live in a day when people are driven by their emotions, desires, and wants and will justify just about anything to get what they want. On top of this, once God is no longer the Sovereign and Moral standard and Scripture is no longer the foundation of truth and absolutes, **self takes over and becomes the new, shifting standard**. We can trace where this kind of compromise takes place on almost every level since few live by true conviction based on timeless truth and sovereign object of worship.

We see it in **personal dealings**, where the standard has become “if it doesn’t hurt anyone else”, or “if I was treated unfairly”, or “if you voted differently than me”, I have the right to retaliate, cancel, or justify any number of other evil responses. Not to mention the whole idea of integrity, who you are when no one (supposedly) sees you, or ones willingness to cheat others, be it the government in taxes, bosses in time, or a spouse in fidelity. We see it in our **government**, where expediency and pragmatism have replaced any semblance of true conviction, shifting voting records with even the slightest threat of a shift of popular opinion. Few are willing to vote or lead in a way that would risk their status, instead following the herd. But how about in the Christian world? We see this subtle compromise in our **homes** far too often, where idolatry is not recognized, where we have exchanged training our kids to be athletes more voraciously than being disciples, showing more commitment to programs outside of the church rather than the people of God’s family or church. We then wonder why young people are not functioning with a high level of conviction about loving God’s church since it was never modeled for them at home.

Carl Trueman identified a reason behind this in his book “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self”:

*“In the world of psychological man, however, the commitment is first and foremost to the self and is inwardly directed. Thus, the order is reversed. Outward institutions become in effect the servants of the individual and her sense of inner well being.*

*In fact, I might press the point further: institutions cease to be places for the formation of individuals via their schooling in the various practices and disciplines that allow them to take their place in society. Instead, they become platforms for performance, where individuals are allowed to be their authentic selves precisely because they are able to give expression to who they are “inside”.*

*For such selves in such a world, institutions such as schools and churches are **places where one goes to perform, not to be formed** — or, perhaps better, where one goes to be formed by performing."*

Charles Spurgeon identified the consequence of this over a century ago: *"I believe that one reason why the church of God at the present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church."*

We see this come into fruition today, as the church of God is tempted to **compromise on the clear truth of Scripture to accommodate cultural moral trends**, from sexuality to gender identity, not because the Bible is not clear, but because of pressure from outside of the church. The worldly wisdom states that to stay relevant, or to be loving, or to reach an unbelieving world we CANNOT cling to such antiquated codes. So instead of shining brightly in the midst of a crooked and twisted world (Phil. 2:15-16), we move the standard and become like the world. This happens slowly, with little decisions that seem innocuous, and the drift happens steadily over time, with many left wondering *"how could this happen?"*

***And there is nothing new under the sun.***

This is exactly the cumulative affect Israel/Judah found themselves in at the beginning of Daniel 1, in 605 B.C, as soldiers from Babylon marched into Jerusalem at the command of Nebuchadnezzar, taking with him the cream of the proverbial crop of young men with him, setting the stage for total domination, future dismantling, and wiping out of a once proud and powerful nation. ***How'd this happen? How does it ever happen?*** Like it always does: through slow, steady compromise.

This morning we want to look at the immediate historical setting as its presented in Daniel 1:1-2, helping frame our mind for what takes place afterward. Before looking at these 2 introductory verses, its important we remember why **understanding the history or historical context of the Bible is important:**

- **It keeps the Bible out of the *myth/legend* status** - One of the downsides of Sunday school stories is we sometimes get stuck thinking about the events of the Bible like other fables and myths - nice stories for sure, but did people in togas and sandals really exist?! (this is not true of *our* Sunday school curriculum, however). The Bible takes place in real time and space, with real people who functioned in their own culture, pressures, and trials. The more the Bible is ground in reality for us the more we will see it as relevant and true to all of life.
- **It reminds us that it is trustworthy and true** - Most modern scholars want to place the truth of Scripture UNDER modern science and historical research, seeing the Bible as something written LATER than it was, or that has no bearing on REAL scientific realities in the world (since, you know, it was written as a bunch of kids fables). But the events of Scripture correspond perfectly with the historical record, and if there is something missing, it is either because those who write history rarely like to look poorly themselves (there was nothing written by Sennacherib of Assyria after 185,000 of his troops were wiped out by an angel of the Lord, other than "we were not able to secure Jerusalem), or archaeological discoveries have yet to be made (like the "lost" city of Ai in Joshua, which some of us actually dug to find). Modern, liberal scholars cannot handle **prophecy and miracles**, which is why they cannot handle Daniel. They cannot believe that what Daniel prophesied would happen, not only happened, but happened in such detail, it would HAVE to be written much later or after the actual events. We are reminded that God is not only the author of life, but **history past and history to come**, and seeing the Bible as trustworthy in past history emboldens us to trust what is written about what will come.

- **It helps us understand prophetic & apocalyptic passages** - Daniel is explicit about how the future from 605 B.C would unfold over the next centuries, talking about 4 world kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece (and the leadership of Alexander), and Rome. What Daniel prophesied in his lifetime took place, yet there was MORE written that is still to come. Understanding history helps us differentiate between what has already happened in OUR past and what is still to come. This also helps us NOT simply cherry pick verses in the Bible to suit our goals, but rather see all of Scripture as a comprehensive story of redemptive history, unfolding to a conclusion and culminating in Christ's reign over the whole world as Her King and Lord.

#### The key components to the story:

*"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his God."***

Daniel 1:1-2

God does not always give us great detail in certain stories or events, but others He gives enough to determine specific dates, times of history, and locations. Daniel 1:1-2 thrusts us into a particular space of the center of the world. We are introduced to **2 key players** of a story, one of whom will fade out quickly. Some astute scholars will point out that Daniel 1:1 mentions the **third year** of Jehoiakim, while **Jeremiah 25:1** says this took place in the **fourth year**. This seeming contradiction is actually easily explained when we understand that in Babylonian counting, they would account for an "ascension year", meaning these two dates are really the same one. Now, let's start with Jehoiakim. **Who was this king?**

We mentioned last week that the united monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon burst apart into two, 10 tribes of the North known as Israel, and 2 tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were in the South known as Judah. The Northern tribes fell to the power and might of Assyria in 722 B.C., and Assyria moved people into the land, intermarrying, bringing their own form of government and religion, relegating these tribes to a historical blip on the radar from then on. Judah was plagued by bad kings (we'll talk about one in a few minutes), but also had reformers. **Hezekiah** turned his own heart and that of all of Judah to the Lord, which allowed them to withstand the onslaught of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib (2 Kings 19). Hezekiah was a good king, cleansing the Temple and reinstating the Passover feast (2 Chron. 29-30). But what plagued so many leaders in the Bible and today, his leadership was not passed to his son.

Manassah took the throne and reigned for 55 years, plunging Judah into wickedness like his grandparents before. His son Amon followed in his footsteps for 2 years before he was assassinated by his own servants (2 Kings 21:15-26). This led to the leadership of **young Josiah**. I say young because he was **8 years old** when he began to reign, **16 years old** when he purged Judah of idols, **20 years old** when he led a spiritual revival, and **26 years old** when restored proper worship, finding the lost Scriptures that were most likely destroyed by his grandpa (2 Chron. 34 & 35). Age is not a requirement to lead, but rather a commitment to God's Word and obedience. This made Josiah distinctive in the annals of kings in God's Kingdom.

However, even this did not stop him from dying in battle. Around **609 B.C**, Pharaoh Neco of Egypt came up north to do battle with the burgeoning nation of **Babylon under the leadership of Nabopolassar** (Nebuchadnezzar's father). He was travelling up to the city of Haran to join with weakened Assyrian forces. It is clear they did not win this battle but did in fact slow down the onslaught since Babylon did

not advance south at that point. However, on the way up north, **Josiah** went to meet Pharaoh Neco in battle at the valley of **Megiddo** (2 Chron. 35:20-27; 2 Kings 23:28-30). Because of his death, several significant things happened: 1) His son **Jehoahaz** took the throne for 3 months, but Egypt, who now made Judah its vassal, deported Jehoahaz to Egypt (2 Chron. 36:1-3). 2) Neco made Josiah's other son, **Eliakim**, king, but changed his name (because he could) to **Jehoiakim** (2 Chron. 36:4-5), beginning an 11 year reign. 3) Jehoiakim was an evil king. Neco put him under tribute, which meant he had to pay an annual tax of gold and silver which the king exacted from the people (2 Kings 23:35). At the same time he found the money and time to build himself a magnificent palace, since his dad's did not measure up (Jeremiah 22:13-14). He was a weak king, and eventually would rebel against Babylon, leading to a second deportation to Babylon.

Now, we are also introduced to **Nebuchadnezzar**, one of the spectacular leaders the world has ever known. In 605 B.C, Babylon faced off with the combined forces of Egypt and Assyria at **Carchemish on the Euphrates** (Jer. 46:2 gives us this information), and Neb. displayed his fierce genius as a leader by decimating both forces so badly that both nations were not heard from again for a long while and catapulting Babylon to the singular world power. After this defeat, Neb. came down to siege **Jerusalem to besiege it**, which did not take too long, but enough time to bring with him the cream of Judah's crop in terms of young leaders. During this campaign, in **August of 605 B.C**, Nabopolassar died and Neb. returned to Babylon as the crowned sovereign ruler of the world. Along with the young men, he **ransacked the Temple and treasury of Judah**, carrying back wealth that would fund building projects, including the 7th wonder of the world, his hanging Gardens. It also was a declaration that hid God, **Marduk**, was greater than the God of Judah. We will see much more of this pagan king, including his coming to grips with the living God and knowledge that the Most High rules (Dan. 4:34).

#### The main character of the story:

Now in all of this historical study, certain questions come up: *Where was God in the midst of all of this? Why did He allow this to happen? How could He let this happen? A pagan nation who came in, desecrating worship, carrying off people and wealth to the praise of their idol God...what is going on?!*

Have you ever asked similar questions of God? What is going on? Why doesn't He intervene? Why is He silent? Why is evil winning?

Here is a summary statement of all Daniel and Scripture: **"And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand."** Judah had become an enemy of God, and He had kept His promise, the promise of Leviticus 26, Deut. 28, and 1 Sam. 8. This also came specifically through **2 other prophetic promises:**

**Hezekiah** - After his reforms and delivery from Assyria, God delivered Hezekiah from illness, gifting him 15 more years of life (2 Kings 20:6). However, this led to a great downfall. A 100 years before Nebuchadnezzar came on the scene, Hezekiah was visited by a small but up and coming king from Babylon called **Merodach-baladan**, and in a show of bravado and pride, let him see all the treasures of Judah, from armory to storehouses, not thinking of the consequences of such an act. Because of this, **Isaiah prophesied**, *"Behold the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left."* (2 Kings 20:17; Isa. 39). Hezekiah naively thought this was good news, since there would be peace in his time. However, this was fulfilled by Babylon a 100 years later as Nebuchadnezzar rolled into Jerusalem emptying out those same treasure vaults. If there is one overarching theme in Daniel, it's that **pride kills, and that pride leads to compromise.**

**Manasseh** - Hezekiah's son and Josiah's grandpa was the worst of the worst. If you read his 'accomplishments' in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chron 33, you will see a laundry list of vile wickedness:

- Built altars to foreign idols like Baal and Asherah, building altars in the house of the Lord where it used to say "In Jerusalem I will put my name forever"
- He participated in the pagan ritual of **child sacrifice, killing his own sons by fire** in the Valley of Hinnom
- He used fortune-tellers, omens, sorcery, and dealt with mediums and necromancers
- He did more evil and participated in more wickedness than even the nations around whom God destroyed
- He shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, including the prophet Isaiah (according to church history)
- He most likely rid Jerusalem of any copy of the Law, to the point that his grandson had to find a hidden copy to use in leadership.

Because of all of this, God had had enough. He is longsuffering, patient, and kind, but there is a point and time where He is done. Manasseh reached that point:

*"Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such disaster that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria, and the plumb line of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. **And I will forsake the remnant of my heritage and give them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, because they have done what is evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.**" 2 Kings 21:12-15*

Even though Josiah made reforms, God's wrath still burned because of Manasseh (2 Kings 23:26), and Judah would be removed out of sight because of his sin (2 Kings 24:3). The Lord is faithful to His promise, and He will have satisfaction for His wrath. In fact, during the reign of Ashurbanipal of Assyria (or Esarhaddon if you'd like - 681-669 B.C), Manasseh was put in shackles, a hook put through lip, and was bound to Babylon.

#### The gracious hope in the story:

- **Compromise has consequence** - Compromise often if marked by slow, steady, and capitulating decisions that are a result of refusing to know and keep the commands of God. The downfall of Judah is a testament that this kind of compromise comes at a cost, not only in one's own lifetime but often arcs into generations to follow.

**One thing is clear:** *an uncompromising life will look different than most living around, will set you at odds with the culture, and will always bring blessing.*

- **When God promises, He means it** - A popular song right now professes that God is a "promise keeper". This is true. But we should shutter a bit at this reality. **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."** (Heb. 10:31). There will come a time when all will give an account and God will judge the living and dead (1 Pet. 4:5). Compromise in this life will have reverberations for the life to come.
- **God's grace redeems compromise** - One of the most powerful stories of repentance is seen in the life of Manasseh, but we either don't remember or talk about much. While in exile, **he**

**humbled himself, cried out to the God of his fathers, and was heard by his God.** God returned him to Jerusalem, and then **Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.** (2 Chron. 33:13). He came back to Jerusalem and *commanded Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel* (2 Chron. 33:16). This did not negate God's judgment, but it did change the relationship. Much like David experienced after his sin with Bathsheba, what was needed was humble repentance to restore a relationship with God, even though the consequences of compromise would still be felt in his lifetime (and generations to follow).

Are there areas in your life where you have compromised, even in little or seemingly insignificant areas? Are there areas that you know need to change but for whatever reason, you continue to justify it...I'm too busy, its not a big deal, I'll do it later? Now is the time to **humble ourselves, cry out to the Lord, and turn to the Lord with uncompromising commitment.** *What's stopping you?*