

CHRISTIANITY IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD: PART 2¹

I. REVIEW FROM WEEK 1

A. WE ASKED WHETHER OR NOT AMERICA WAS A XIAN NATION

B. STATE OF THE NATION

1. Increasingly Secular
2. Non-Religious
3. Non-Friendly toward Xianity—media, university, philosophy, morally

C. TWO BIG WAYS THAT XIANS HAVE RESPONDED

1. Take Back the Culture—usually political/power structures, Condemnation/Critique
2. Be Like the Culture—usually copying and consuming culture for “relevance” sake

D. WE ASKED, WHY DANIEL?

1. Daniel and other Jewish exiles are removed from Jerusalem (605 B.C.), the place of power, the place where the worship of Yahweh was favored and accepted. This is similar to the removal of Christianity from the place of favor in the U.S.
2. Daniel and his friends live in Babylon, an entirely secular city/kingdom which tries to remake them in its image.
3. Looking at how Daniel and his friends live in exile in Babylon is a better model for us today than living in Jerusalem.

II. DANIEL IN THE CITY—ENGAGED YET DISTINCT

A. DANIEL AND THE DREAM (2.25-45)

B. DANIEL’S TWO NAMES (1.7, 2.26)

1. God is my Judge
2. Bel is my god

C. CULTURAL REORIENTATION (1.5-6)

D. JEREMIAH 29—LETTER TO THE EXILES

1. Big Picture—God Did this—He acts in History and He brought you here
2. Do not pray against the city but for it
3. Do not stay out of the city but go into it
4. Shalom
5. Don’t be too encouraged or too discouraged about state of affairs here.

E. DANIEL’S FOOD (1.8-16)

¹ Some material from this class comes from Tim Keller’s sermon series on Daniel. See www.redeemer.com for more info

1. Why was the food a problem, especially in light of the names and education program discussed above?
2. How are we called to be engaged/knowledgeable and yet distinct here and now?
3. How has our world/culture shaped us into its own image? (Jokes, gossip, business practices, dress, values). How do we maintain both identities?
4. What we should learn here:
 - a. Trust that God has brought us to this place to renew us and renew the world
 - b. Politics is not a great solution (more on this later)—The prophets routinely condemn Israel for their reliance on political and military alliances rather than on the Lord
 - c. Book of Daniel all about reversal—it is political power that loses every time
 - d. When Xians achieve political power, it almost always becomes like the world
 - e. Daniel finds favor b/c of his wisdom (1.20)—we should be seeking this. It is earned over time, not simply granted by privilege
 - f. Daniel had to prove that he had something worthwhile to offer the world—He had to give the world something genuine, not a copy and not a war.

III. MEANING OF THE DREAM

- A. NOT REALLY A CODEX FOR TELLING THE FUTURE BUT A PARADIGM FOR ALL AGES
- B. NEBUCHADNEZZAR IS THE DAZZLING IMAGE, THE TOWERING FIGURE

1. Globally every human kingdom, including the U.S. is transient
2. Personally, we all want to create a dazzling, powerful image of ourselves—it's in fact what we dream about! This may be through money, power, acclaim, relationships, body image, popularity, family, charity work, etc.
3. Every human and/or personal kingdom will be brought down—every one is inherently weak, it gets weaker and less profitable as it goes—they all have feet of clay and God will bring them down. If we build our lives on anything but God, we will crumble. What is our foundation? What is the difference btw. you and colleagues who are not Xians?
4. We dream of the wrong things, the wrong kingdoms. Why? We don't know our foundation. We're dreaming of clay feet when God offers us solid rock. We don't know that we're already dazzling, towering, golden in the eyes of Christ. Otherwise, we wouldn't be so troubled like Nebuchadnezzar.

IV. THE ROCK

- A. MADE BY NO HUMAN HAND (2.34)
- B. ROCK LEAST VALUABLE MATERIAL THERE—How does the KOG come? Not like other kingdoms
- C. ROCK BEGINS SMALL BUT GROWS (2.35, 44-45)
 1. Jesus is present but has not yet made everything right
 2. Already, not yet
 3. What should we expect to accomplish politically, in our family, in our jobs?
- D. JESUS IS THE ROCK—LUKE 20.17-18—Two names, dazzling figure, worthy of worship