

A Question of History (24:11 – 35:09)

“And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.” (Daniel 1:2)

- 1) What does Lennox mean when he says that from a secular perspective, the defeat of Judah looked like “a typical example of Darwinism in history”?^{p.9}
- 2) Yet, the first thing that Daniel says about God in his book is that he is involved in human history (and in his personal history¹).^{p.9} *Why* and *how* could he say this and not be written off as a fool?^{p.12}
 - 32:19 - So Daniel's own captivity—get this, because this is just amazing—his own captivity became evidence to him that God's Word was being fulfilled (because prophets like Jeremiah had been predicting it)
 - The morally inevitable happened.^{p.14} The punishment fitted the crime.^{p.15}
- 3) How might Daniel have responded to those who asked, “If God is real, how could a pagan emperor like Nebuchadnezzar violate the sanctity of God’s unique temple and get away with it? *Why did God do nothing?*”^{p.8}
- 4) What happened at this time in history was a result of professing believers sinking into compromise (Jeremiah 22:3-9).^{33:34} How is history in danger of repeating itself in our day?^{p.13}
- 5) “Sometimes things happen to us that we'd never have expected to happen. We'd never have asked for them. And yet years later, we look back and say, you know, I can see that God allowed that.”^{34:40} Do you have a story like this?

A Question of Values² (35:10 – 49:24)

“...along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.” (Daniel 1:2)

- 6) Why is the significance of Nebuchadnezzar taking the articles from the temple of God and putting them into the treasure house of his god?
- 7) Lennox notes that “in chapter one, Nebuchadnezzar relativizes the absolute and in chapter three he absolutizes the relative.”^{346:23} What absolute values are being (or have been) relativized in our day?^{p.34}

¹ Perhaps you've got huge questions about your history right now, tonight. You wonder, “Is God really behind what's happening to me now? Can I trust him for tomorrow and next week?” (29:10)

² The vessels taken from the temple of God to the treasure house of his god. The issue: taking something of absolute value and treating it as only of relative value.

³ Nebuchadnezzar, whether he realized it or not, was demoting God...and making him just one of any number of other possible deities.^{p.37}

- 8) Read Daniel 3. What is the connection between Nebuchadnezzar's dream in ch.2 and his golden image in ch.3?

What thing(s) of relative value has Nebuchadnezzar made of absolute value, and why? How did Daniel's friends respond to the pressure to conform?

- 9) What relative values are being (or have been) absolutized in our day?⁴

What can we learn from Daniel's friends about how to respond to contemporary pressures to conform and go along with the crowd??

Homework – Read chapter five where the vessels reappear. What does Belshazzar's use of the vessels of God say about how he valued God? Compare/contrast Belshazzar's response (and God's) in chapter 5 with Nebuchadnezzar's response (and God's) in chapter 3. Why the difference?

⁴ At the heart of postmodernism lies a patent self-contradiction. It expects us to accept, as absolute truth, that there are no absolute truths.(p.39)