

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

Part 1: Excelling Despite the Environment

WAKING UP IN A NEW WORLD

- A. The culture shifted
 - 1. Pandemic and revealed division in our nation
 - 2. Racial / social tension
 - 3. Disruption of order
 - 4. The apparent demise of freedom of speech
- B. The scriptures foretold of these days **(2 Timothy 3:1,13-14 NLT)**
 - 1. A list of how people would act; scoffing at God, slander others, cruel, hate what is good
 - 2. But God has a plan for us to thrive - we'll have to remain faithful to what we know is true

DANIEL WAKING UP IN BABYLON

- A. Daniel may have been shocked but he was not overwhelmed **(Daniel 1:3-5 NKJV)**
 - 1. The most modern, powerful culture on the earth
 - 2. Vastly different from the God honoring culture of Israel
 - 3. Had to be immense pressure to stay in the leadership academy
- B. They changed Daniel's name but not his heart for God **(Daniel 1:6-8 NKJV)**
 - 1. Changed from God honoring names to names that reflected Babylonian gods
 - 2. But Daniel purposed in his heart - eating the king's food went against God's laws
 - 3. Handled his differences with dignity - did not rail against or condemn the culture
- C. God moved on Daniel's behalf **(Daniel 1:17,19-20 NKJV)**
 - 1. They honored God and He honored them
 - 2. God caused Daniel and friends to excel despite the environment - beyond the culture shapers

SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING TIMES LIKE THESE

- A. Be aware of the environment we are in but...
 - 1. Not awestruck - time to stop acting so shocked
 - 2. Not afraid - overly concerned with the backlash from the cancel culture
 - 3. Not ashamed - the gospel is still the power of God to salvation
- B. Purpose in our hearts to stay connected to God and His ways
 - 1. Purpose; to commit, determine to stay connected to our identity in Christ
 - 2. We can live in this culture without the culture living in us
 - 3. There are still things that stain us spiritually **(2 Peter 2:8 NLT)**
- C. By God's grace we can excel in this current environment
 - 1. We act with dignity toward others regardless
 - 2. We honor God by walking in His ways **(Psalm 1:1-3 NKJV)**