

**DANIEL**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Daniel chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Back in Daniel chapters 3 and 4 we saw this amazing story of the conversion of a pagan King to the God of Israel, King Nebuchadnezzar! He came to not just know the Lord but he came to that saving faith in the true and living God!

And we saw how pride brought this King down so that the Lord could lift him up! He had it all and he was warned about his pride by Daniel but he refused to listen. God gave this King every opportunity to surrender his life to Him, to let go of that pride but he refused and after one year of this, he was stricken with some kind of mental disorder that made him think he was an animal! And it took seven years to break the King of his pride.

Now I know that sounds harsh, unfair for the Lord to let this go on for seven years just to get the King's attention, but if you were to ask this King now about what transpired I am sure he would tell you it was all worth it because He is with the Lord!

So when unsaved family or friends are going through a hard time, pray that God would reveal Himself to them, that through this difficult time they would look up and come to that saving faith!

As we move into Daniel chapter 5 this evening Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for some 23 years, he died in 562 B. C. and the timeframe of this chapter is 539 B. C. After the King's death the throne was taken by his son, Amel-Marduk or Evil-Merodach, who ruled for only two years. He was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar or Nergal-Sharezer. (II Kings 25:27-30, Jeremiah 52:31-34)

Neriglisar ruled Babylon for four years and is one of the princes mentioned back in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. After his death he was succeeded by his son Labashi-Marduk, who ruled for only some 9 months and he was only a child when he became King and had diminished mental capacity. Labashi-Marduk was assassinated, beaten to death by conspirators who then appointed a successor to the throne, Nabonidus. Now King Nabonidus ruled Babylon for 17 years and tried to restore some of the pagan worship.

But Nabonidus spent 10 of his 17 years as King away from Babylon. Because of that the King needed someone to co-reign with him, and thus, his eldest son Belshazzar took over and was really the ruler in Babylon. Even though he co-reigned with his father he was in control of the army and the government while his father, Nabonidus, lived primarily at the Oasis of Teima in Arabia. According to Babylonian records, Belshazzar became co-regent in the third year of Nabonidus' reign (553 B.C.) and continued in that capacity till the fall of Babylon (539 B.C.).

Now there are those who argued that there was never a King of Babylon named Belshazzar. But as we dig up new archeological finds we do see evidence for this King. John Walvoord tells us,

Until the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder, no mention of Belshazzar, whom Daniel declares to be king of Babylon, had been found in extrabiblical literature. Critics of the authenticity and historicity of Daniel accordingly were free to question whether any such person as Belshazzar existed. Since the publication of Raymond Dougherty's scholarly research on Nabonidus and Belshazzar, based on the Nabonidus Cylinder and other sources, there is no ground for questioning the general historicity of Belshazzar . . .

- John Walvoord, Daniel, the Key to Prophetic Revelation, p. 114

One more point before we get to our text and that is this multi-metallic image that King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about and Daniel revealed to him what it meant. It was a picture of world empires and that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold but his empire would not last forever. It would be succeeded by the chest and arms of silver or another world empire would take over and that is what we will see here this evening. It is as one writer put it,

That night was the night of prophetic fulfillment when God removed the head of gold from Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. That night God kept His Word, as He always does, and the record still stands as a solemn warning to any and all who attempt to defy the Almighty. Here is the last sobering scene of the downfall of a man's dynasty, the night in which the proud heart of a king was abased, when the breast and arms of silver replaced the head of gold.

- Lehman Strauss, *The Prophecies of Daniel*, p. 145

That is what we will see in our study this evening, the fall of the Babylonian Empire. And as Daniel chapter 5 opens up keep in mind that the city of Babylon has been under siege by the Medes and the Persians for several months now. They had already captured the surrounding towns and villages and now they were going after this mighty fortress, the city of Babylon itself.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Daniel chapter 5, beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**DANIEL 5****VERSES 1-4**

1. Now keep in mind that the Medes and the Persians have been invading Babylon for several months now, not the city itself but the surrounding areas. And shortly before this the Medo-Persian army, according to the Babylonia Chronical, defeated Nabonidus and the Babylonian army near Sippar, which was only fifty miles from Babylon!

And now they were at the door of the city, they were gathering their forces getting ready to attack the city of Babylon. And it is possible that many of the leaders of Babylon were in the city because of these attacks by the Medes and the Persians because the city of Babylon was a mighty fortress! Keep in mind that there were one thousand leaders in Babylon at this time!

The city of Babylon spread over 15 square miles with the Euphrates River flowing diagonally across it. Also, the walls of the city were 350 feet high, 80 to 87 feet thick, and they extended some 35 feet below the ground. The walls were so thick they could have six chariots drive abreast on them!

They also had some 250 towers on these walls that extended another 100 feet in the air. And like I have said, they had the Euphrates River running through the city which supplied them with water and they had enough food to last them 20 years without ever opening the gates of the city.

It was impressive and I am sure Belshazzar thought he was safe, that no army would ever get through those walls and even if they surrounded the city for 20 years, they had enough food and water to last them! Thus, in defiance of this army that has surrounded them; the King had this drunken feast with all kinds of women as well entreating them. And for the leaders who were there and really for all the people who saw this going on, it was an encouragement to them that they did not have to worry, the walls will stand, this Medo-Persian army will not break through!

2. Now please don't get the idea that when they were drinking the wine it was like a formal gathering and they were not getting drunk. In fact, the word that is used for "**tasted**" implies that they were also enjoying the inebriating affects that the wine produced in them. They were drunk and yet they soon would be awakened out of this drunken stupor they were in. It is as Proverbs 20:1 says, "**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.**"

3. Now it is one thing to mock other armies but this King did more than that, he mocked the true and living God. How did he do that? By taking the drinking vessels that some seventy years earlier Nebuchadnezzar took from the Temple in Jerusalem and he brought them back to Babylon with him.

These vessels were stored and displayed as the spoil of their victories. But now we see Belshazzar take them out of storage and use these vessels of the living God to toast their gods with. It is as Paul said, "**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**" Hebrews 10:31. And the King was now going to find this out!

4. As you read this story you need to understand that the fall of this nation was only hours away and yet they were partying like there was no tomorrow. The reality was, there was no tomorrow for them! And yet, they were totally blinded to the judgment that was coming.

How could they have known what was coming? Because God revealed to King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream that this kingdom would not last forever but that it would be overtaken by the Medo-Persian Empire. But they did not believe it and in the end, they found out that God does not lie!

Look at our nation and the moral depravity we are in! Look at our nation and look at how self-consumed we are! Look at our nation that calls good evil and evil good! And look at our nation and how we are turning our backs on the Jewish people, the nation of Israel!

And as you look at people today they are doing just whatever they want, they are mocking God and the tragedy is, they are not even aware that the judgment of God is coming and I believe it is coming quickly!

As Christians, we need to awaken out of our stupor and see what time it is. We are going to have a great party, a great banquet with Jesus, but now there is work to be done. Take advantage of the time you have and stand up for righteousness.

Remember what Paul said in Romans 13:11-14, **“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”**

Paul is admonishing us to wake-up out of our spiritual sleep for the Lord's return is drawing close. In other words, our time is limited, it is short, don't waste it but use it for the Lord – walk accordingly.

Paul, in Ephesians 5:14-16 tells us, **“Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”** It is hard to do anything productive when you sleep, thus, let's awaken to what God has for us and walk as He leads us!

5. Now this big banquet hall may have been found by archaeologists. They have uncovered this large room some 56 feet wide, some 173 feet long. And midway in this long hall, along the wall, was a niche where the King might have sat. The wall behind him was made of plaster and could be the place in which God wrote His message to Belshazzar as we shall see.

#### VERSES 5-9

1. Pride comes before the fall and that is what we are seeing here. Belshazzar was very prideful. He looked down upon this invading army and threw a party in defiance of what they could do. He looked down, mocked the true and living God by drinking from the vessels of God.

But how quickly that changed! During the great feast trouble comes in the form of a hand which writes on the wall by the King. The fun had ended abruptly as the King's countenance turned from a rosy red to an ashen white and his knees began to knock together in fear.

This fearless King, who threw a party in defiance of the enemy that was laying siege against him and his kingdom and then desecrated the Temple vessels, was now shaking in his boots or sandals!

And the cry went out to bring in all the wise men in Babylon to interpret this writing, but to the King's dismay they could not help interpret this writing. The King knows he is in trouble, but how much trouble? And what was this King going to do if his wise men could not help him? Let's read on and see!

### VERSES 10-12

1. The queen, in hearing all the turmoil going on, responds to this trouble. Now the queen, most likely Belshazzar's grandmother and Nebuchadnezzar's widow, Amytis, saw the true God's transforming power in her husband.

Now it is very possible that Amytis, the widow of Nebuchadnezzar was now married to Naonidus as strange as that may sound. The reason being is that in ancient times the new King would marry widows of the former Kings in order to make their claim to the throne more legitimate.

2. Now this queen mother was not at this banquet but came after all the turmoil from this writing on the wall and no one being able to interpret it. And the queen mother knew what Daniel had done for her husband Nebuchadnezzar maybe some 60 plus years earlier; she saw how God spoke through Daniel.

And here we are some 60 plus years later and she still speaks favorably of Daniel, she recognized that the Spirit of God was upon this man. What a witness this man was and God desires that with each of us. And she reminds her grandson what Daniel is able to do, which he should have known for he too witnessed the events of his grandfather.



3. Also, Daniel is probably in his eighties at this point in his life and God is still using him. You are never too old to be used by God, and for that matter, you are never too young! God is looking for people He can work through for His glory. That means young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. He is looking for those who are available for Him to work through. May we be those people!

#### VERSES 13-16

1. Isn't it interesting on how people can mock God and the people of God until they see the handwriting on the wall or things get messy and then who do they turn to? Many times they turn to God and God's people to pray for them, to help them.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A professing Christian I once knew had lived a very undisciplined, ungodly life. He was not kind to his wife. He abused alcohol and had virtually destroyed his business. He had also been unfaithful to his wife on several occasions. We tried to get him involved in Bible studies, but he was not interested. We encouraged him to be consistent in worship, but he preferred to be at the stadium. We challenged him to read his Bible on his own daily, but he said he did not have time. He had no interest in seeking the wisdom of God for his life. He wanted to pursue pleasure.

When he realized that he was about to lose everything, he cried out to the Lord and came back to the people of the church for help. One of the members took him to a program to overcome the alcohol and drug abuse. He met with me and made a promise to meet with me weekly for discipleship. He also promised to attend church regularly on the Lord's Day for both morning and evening worship. But these turned out to be vain promises just to get his family back; he really was not interested in the wisdom of God any more than Belshazzar was. The man was soon separated from his wife and back on the bottle. He just could not see the handwriting on the wall.

- Rodney Stortz, Daniel – The Triumph of God's Kingdom, p. 83

That is a very sad story but people do that to get out of a jam and in the end, they lose. God will use difficult times to draw people to Him but many times when that trouble is over they are back to their old ways. What a powerful lesson for us to learn, draw near to God and He will draw near to you, obey His wisdom, His Words and walk accordingly!

2. So as the queen mother tells her grandson about this man named Daniel, it seems that Belshazzar's memory has now been jarred a bit and is verifying if this is the Daniel who was of the captives of Judah. And the King tells Daniel that if he can read the handwriting on the wall that he will be rewarded. He will be clothed in purple, a sign of royalty. He will be given a chain of gold, a gift given by royalty and is one of the highest honors. And lastly, he would be the third ruler of Babylon or literally rule one-third of Babylon.

3. We already talked a little about this. Nabonidus was the King of Babylon and his son, Belshazzar was co-ruling with him. Thus, Belshazzar could not offer Daniel one-half of the kingdom because he would lose everything, so he gives him one-third of the kingdom. It is amazing the details that God gives to us in His Word to confirm His Word to us and show us He is God!

#### VERSES 17-21

1. Remember that Daniel was troubled when he had to give Nebuchadnezzar bad news (Daniel 4:19). This wasn't the case here. Daniel was not impressed with this successor of Nebuchadnezzar.

Also, Daniel was not interested in the monetary gain but in speaking forth the Words of God to this King. Daniel realized that the King's time was quickly running out and he wanted nothing to do with him or his kingdom. He was going down!

2. I love what Daniel does here because before he tells this King what the handwriting on the wall means, he witnesses to him of the sovereignty of God. God is the One who is in control. He is the one who rules the nations and not Belshazzar.

And to drive home this point Daniel tells Belshazzar that it was his grandfather who learned those lessons that God was teaching him. It was his grandfather that was filled with pride and God brought him down and made him eat grass like the wild animals until his pride was broken and he knew that the Most High rules! And Belshazzar was aware of this; Daniel was just reminding him of these things.

And listen to how Daniel is going to drive this point home!

VERSES 22-24

1. The indictment against Belshazzar was that he did not learn the lessons from his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. And he refused to be broken of his prideful heart, and God was going to bring him down. You see, Belshazzar had the opportunity to learn these lessons otherwise God would not have held him accountable for that information. But he rejected the truth and pride brought him down!

It is as Paul said in Romans 2:4-5, **“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”**

Today, man knows there is a God, the heavens declare it. But they suppress the truth and they are accountable for what they have suppressed. Like Belshazzar who was living in willful defiance of God, judgment is coming. Belshazzar’s love was centered on the gods of Babylon and the lavish material things. And people are no different today, they have god’s they worship and are in love with material things and they are going to find out they are in trouble!

The handwriting on the wall is still upon us today, it is called the Word of God and many ignore it or reject it but it does not change the fact that God will pour out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world!

And think about it like this, as one writer put it, “If God held Belshazzar responsible, my friend, for the ray of light which shone across *his* pathway, what will He say to men living in the blaze of light which illuminates the world today? Every unconverted man in this country has more light than Belshazzar had.” (Talbot)

2. Now let's see what this handwriting on the wall is saying to this King.

VERSES 25-28

1. Here is what the handwriting on the wall said, what God wrote and what it means.

- MENE means “to number” or “to reckon.”
- TEKEL means “weighed.”
- UPHARSIN is the plural of PERES which means “divided.”

So the literal translation goes like this, “Numbered, numbered, to light, divided.” God has not only numbered Belshazzar's days but also the Babylonian Kingdom. The reason is that they were placed in the balances of God and have come up short. The King's moral and spiritual character did not measure up to the standard of God's righteousness and his pride brought him down because he refused to repent and get right with God! And thus, the kingdom was to be divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

2. I am not sure why but today people feel that God does not judge sin. But make no mistake about it; this standard of God has not changed. If we reject Jesus Christ we will come before God being weighed in our own righteousness and we will be found short or unbalanced to God's standards. In other words, pride keeps us from God because we do not want to come to Him, we think we are okay, we are basically good people and the reality is, we are not!

And Because of that we will be divided or separated from God for eternity. God's scales are fair for He has given us the weight to meet those standards, to balance those scales, and that is Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ the scales are unbalanced and we will fall far short. It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** Praise God for Jesus!

3. Listen to what one writer had to say regarding the balances of God. He wrote,

I once knew an old man who enjoyed talking to preachers. He thought he had it all figured out. He said to me, “Now preacher, this is the way I think it is. When you come to die there is going to be a big scale out there. On this side of the scale all of the good you have ever done will be placed. All the bad you have done will be put on that side of the scale. If the good outweighs the bad, then you will get into heaven.” I would quote this verse to him: “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”

If you think you are going to accumulate enough good on one side of the scale to get you into heaven, you don't stand a chance of getting there. When you are laid on God's scales you always come up wanting. Put America on the scales of God and America is found wanting. Put your family on the scales of God. Put your personal life on God's scales. Only one thing can balance the scales in your life to God's satisfaction and that is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to get Jesus on the scales.

- John Phillips, Jerry Vines, Exploring the Book of Daniel, pp. 82-83

And think about his for a minute. Is that how a court of law works. You commit murder and the judge says, "Let's see all the good you have done in your life and we will place it on a scale to see if it outweighs this crime of murder you have committed. If it does, then you will be set free!" Of course the court system does not work that way, it does not matter how much good you have done if you have broken the law you are guilty and you will be punished.

If it is true with our court system why do with think that Almighty God, the righteous judge does things differently? He doesn't and it is only by the shed blood of Jesus that our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more and placed into the sea of forgetfulness!

#### VERSE 29

1. Belshazzar recognized that what Daniel spoke forth was the truth, even though it was painful, he honored his word and rewarded Daniel for this. But the rewards only lasted a few hours at the most and some feel only a few minutes, for as Daniel finished speaking the armies of the Medes and the Persians entered the room and began to slaughter the Babylonians!

I do find that interesting because it shows us how temporary the awards and accolades of this world are. In the kingdom that succeeded Belshazzar Daniel was also promoted, but that was due to God, not to Belshazzar. Who are we serving, who are we looking for praise from and being raised up by, the world or God?

VERSES 30-31

1. The very night that Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall Belshazzar was killed and the Kingdom was given to the Medes and the Persians. The word was fulfilled just as Daniel said. God's Word is always reliable and true.

2. Listen to what this army did to enter into the Babylonian fortress and then I will share with you what God said would happen some 160 years or so prior to this happening. We are told,

King Cyrus of Medo-Persia knew that the defenses of Babylon would not permit the entrance of his troops into that city through conventional means of warfare. It was obvious that, if Babylon were to be taken, a unique strategy would have to be employed. According to more than one ancient historian, the Medo-Persians did devise a unique strategy. The key to that strategy was the position of the Euphrates River under the massive walls of the city. On the very night that the Babylonians were reveling at Belshazzar's feast, the Medo-Persians diverted the water of the Euphrates River from its normal channel under the city walls. Once the water was shallow enough to be forded, Medo-Persian soldiers entered the river channel and walked underneath the walls into the city. The Babylonians were caught by surprise. Before many of them knew what was happening, their city had fallen to the Medo-Persians without a major battle or destruction.

- Renald E. Showers, A Commentary on the Book of Daniel, The Most High God, p. 59

Now, for whatever reason the gates that protected anyone from getting in through the Euphrates River were not locked and like I have said, this army was able to walk in and conquer the city with very little resistance. This overthrow took place on October 13, 539 BC.



Now listen to what God said some 160 years before this even took place! Isaiah describes this event, the fall of Babylon, like he was an eyewitness of the event even naming Cyrus as the leader of this Medo-Persian army.

In Isaiah 45:1-6 we read, **“Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held - to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: ‘I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.”** (KJV)

Now some may argue, “Hey, wait a minute. It says that Darius received the kingdom and not Cyrus. So is Isaiah wrong?” Please understand the name **“Darius”** means “holder of the scepter” and was a title and not his name. He was the leader in Babylon for this new World Empire.

So Darius ruled the kingdom that was formally known as Babylon and this was given to him by Cyrus immediately after the fall of Babylon, and he continued to rule for some 14 years, (539-525 B. C.). Keep in mind that Cyrus was in charge of the entire kingdom.

Also keep in mind that Ugbaru captured Babylon for Cyrus but within three weeks of his victory he died. Gubaru was appointed governor of Babylon by Cyrus and this is most likely the Darius that is spoken of in chapter 6, for he was born in 601 B. C. which would make him 62 years old just as the Scriptures say! So let's dig into Daniel chapter 6 and see the story of Daniel in the lion's den!

## **DANIEL 6**

### **VERSES 1-3**

1. Gubaru or Darius, which I will use most of the time, was in a very real sense the King over Babylon. Keep in mind that Cyrus was a Persian not a Mede like Gubaru was. Thus, this fits in with what we are told in Daniel 5:31 of Darius. He ruled Babylon while Cyrus ruled the entire kingdom as I have said.

Now as Darius takes over this area he now sets up his leaders. Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make appointments, to assemble an army, to levy taxes, and to possess palaces. And so Darius picks 120 Satraps to be in charge of the kingdom, to help assist the King. Now these 120 Satraps would not report directly to the King but to the three governors who were in charge over them.

Here is the amazing thing. As the Babylonian Empire was coming to an end, Daniel was not that important. But now in this Medo-Persian Empire he is put back into a place of honor. Most of the time when an invading army comes in they kill all the leaders of the Kingdom they have overtaken but not Daniel! In fact, He was placed in a position of leadership in this new kingdom! God's hand was surely upon him. And keep in mind that Daniel is very old at this point and yet Darius saw the fine qualities of Daniel. He saw that the Spirit of God was upon him! And in this position, the other leaders would have to report to him and the other two men who were in charge under Darius.

2. Let's look at this for a minute. When the world looks at you, what do you think they see? Hopefully an excellent spirit! Hopefully we are emanating the fragrance of Jesus. We are told in II Chronicles 16:9, "**For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . . .**"

God is looking for men and women He can use to show Himself strong through, like He did with Daniel. Not perfect people, there are none! But He is looking for those who have a single heart towards God.

Think of it like this. God is the hand and we are a baseball glove, and God is working in us so He can use us. When I bought a baseball glove I had to work it in. I strapped a ball in it so it would conform to the image of the ball. I used oil to soften the leather and make it more pliable.

God does the same with us. He is conforming us into the image of Jesus and He uses the Holy Spirit to soften us and make us more pliable. Yes, initially we may be hard, difficult to mold, but if we allow Him we will conform to fit His hand to be used by Him for His glory!

#### VERSES 4-5

1. Because of the jealousy these men had towards Daniel they sought to find some blemish in his life that would discredit him before Darius. And these guys watched Daniel to find some fault in his life so they could bring him down. It is interesting to me that with all the effort they put forth to discredit Daniel before Darius, they found none! Simply, there were no skeletons in Daniel's closet. His enemies examined his life and found nothing to attack. That is amazing and yet, when we look at the life of Daniel we see a man who loved the Lord and His life was a witness of that!

2. The same is true for us as Christians. For many people the only Bible they will read about the true and living God is our lives. We are a testimony to them of the God we serve. And yes, there will be those who come against us, bring charges against us because of jealousy or whatever, but you love the Lord and let your life reflect the relationship you have with Him!

We are to be above reproach. Paul said in Philippians 1:10-11, **“that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”**

Also in Philippians 2:14-15 Paul said, **“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”** That is how we are to live, a life that is pleasing to God and above reproach!

Peter put it like this in I Peter 3:15-17, **“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*”** May we not have skeletons in our closet! May our life be holy and acceptable unto God and as people look at it, as they may even try to defame it, they have to make things up because we are living unto the Lord!

3. What I find interesting here is that as these men try to discredit Daniel before Darius to bring him down, they could not find any fault in Daniel’s moral character. So what did they do? They then looked to his spiritual life. They were going to find some conflict between Daniel’s religious practices, his way of life, the way he served the Lord that would go against some law of the land or they would have to come up with one that would bring Daniel down. That is what we will see next and Darius will play right into their evil plan!

VERSES 6-9

1. The word “**thronged**” literally means they, “*came with haste and tumult.*” These guys were agitated and in a hurry to put this Daniel down. And so they come before the King and attack him in an area that we all struggle in, **PRIDE!** They told the King to make a decree that the King was the only one to be consulted, worshiped for 30 days. And the penalty for not obeying was being tossed into the lion’s den!

Now when you think about it, this was truly a foolish decree to sign into law and yet the King succumbed to this flattery and signed into law this decree. If you remember in the Babylonian Empire that Nebuchadnezzar had absolute authority. He could do whatever he wanted whenever he wanted. But the Medo-Persian Empire was a constitutional government; it was inferior to the Babylonian Empire. And thus, when something was signed into law it remained law; it could not be changed, not even by the King!

VERSES 10-15

1. Please understand that Daniel was not being obnoxious, he was not trying to cause trouble, he just did what he always did, he prayed every day and not just once but three times a day. You see, I want you to understand that Daniel did not change his daily routine so he could be rebellious against the King and the laws of the land. He just continued on doing what he always did, praying three times a day facing towards Jerusalem!

Why was Daniel praying towards Jerusalem? It seems strange since the city was in rubble and the Temple destroyed by the Babylonians some 47 years earlier, in 586 B. C. If you remember during the reign of Solomon, as the Temple was being dedicated, we see a prayer that may have influenced Daniel.

In II Chronicles 6:34-40 we read, **“When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness’; and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place.”**

Also, why 3 times a day? Psalm 55:16-17 tells us, **“As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.”** Daniel not only knew the Scriptures but applied them to his life. He lived what he believed!

Now these men knew exactly what Daniel was going to do because they saw him do it every day, three times a day he prayed to His God! So their plan worked beautifully. Daniel was caught breaking the law, he was praying!

2. Even today we have people watching us. They are watching where we are praying; in school, at football games or other athletic events, graduation ceremonies, with the sole purpose to catch us breaking the law because we were praying at these events! Things have not changed much! Of this David Hocking wrote,

What would you do if you knew about this plot? Would you just shut down? After all, it was only for thirty days. You could pick up afterwards; God would understand.

In the early years of Christianity, Christians were asked to burn incense on the empire altars, saying, "Caesar is lord". Many Christians did. They said they really believed that Jesus is Lord but they were afraid because if they didn't comply, they knew their lives were in jeopardy. It would be easy just to be quiet. I think a lot of us opt for that. We decide the best thing is to be silent, don't speak up, don't say anything. Just go into hiding for a while and only say something when there is no danger.

There is always danger from the enemy wherever we stand for the Lord! The devil knows that and there is always danger. There will always be attack and we need to be prepared for it with the spiritual armor of God.

- David Hocking, Daniel, p. 115

Don't let the fear of man stop you but let the fear of God guide you. As one writer put it, "Unless you are prepared to be in the minority, and now and then to be called 'narrow,' 'fanatic,' and to be laughed at by men because you will not do what they do, but abstain and resist, then there is little chance of your ever making much of your Christian profession." (Maclaren) How true that is!



3. And I think these guys loved this. They hated Daniel and they said to the King that Daniel was mocking the King, making him look like a fool by disregarding the law of the land, the law that he signed! Nothing left for the King to do but throw him into the lion's den!

Now when the King realized what happened he knew he blew it! Not that Daniel was showing the King disrespect but these men had made a fool of the King by getting him to sign into law this decree.

You see, Darius loved Daniel. He had nothing against him. In fact he worked all day to try and get Daniel out of this predicament that he himself had put him in. But to no avail he could find no loop hole in the law to spare Daniel from this terrible fate. So the King had no other choice but to place Daniel into the lion's den and that is exactly what took place.

#### VERSES 16-18

1. Darius had faith and it was faith born out of Daniel's trust in the Lord. The idea was, "Look Daniel, I did all I can do. I can't change the law. All that is left is for your God to save you! I hope He can!" I don't think that this King is expressing faith that the God of Daniel would spare him, but he was hopeful, he was wishing, he had his fingers crossed because he just wasn't sure! And all night he was awake, he could not sleep, wondering what was going to happen to Daniel!

2. We go from the luxury of the King's quarters to the lion's den and make no mistake about it; Daniel was a man of faith. I'm sure Daniel got a good night's rest with those big kitty cats! But Darius, not a man of faith, became anxious, he couldn't sleep. And that is what happens to us when we take our eyes off of the Lord, we are not at rest! We toss and turn and we are anxious, worried because we have not cast our cares at the feet of the One who loves us and can handle our problems!

3. Also keep in mind that this den of lions had a stone covering it so no one could get out and it was sealed so no one could bring Daniel out and spare his life. What happened that morning? Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 19-23

1. You can see the love he had for Daniel, how he respected Daniel. He was so troubled over this that he got up early to see if Daniel had made it through the night. And it seems that he did not break the seal because they might have accused him of getting Daniel out during the night but he brought Daniel probably out from the top opening. And there was not even one scratch on Daniel as God sent His angels to stop the mouths of the lion's! (Hebrews 11:33)

2. Now some feel that these lions were not hungry and thus, they left Daniel alone or they were old lions and maybe had no teeth! First of all we need to understand that these lions were bred for this task and kept hungry, near starving so when someone was tossed into the pit they were eaten up quickly. There would be no left overs! But the Lord was with Daniel and protected Him and Daniel rested in that fact and so can we no matter how intense the trial is!

Now if you are having a hard time with this issue of these lions being ferocious, then the next verse should put that to rest!

#### VERSE 24

1. Not frail, not weak, not toothless lions, these animals were wild and hungry. The people that were tossed in didn't even hit the ground before they were devoured. Now it is easy to see why the King threw the ring leaders in, but why their families?

First of all, according to some of the ancient writings of Herodotus and others, the Persians would execute all the man's relatives when he committed a crime worthy of death. Why did they do that? To prevent one of the relatives of the man who was put to death from rising up and assassinating the King even years down the road!

Also, I think God is showing us how sin does not only affect the person involved, but those that are close to us!

#### VERSES 25-28

1. Darius now has not only heard of the living God and what He can do, but he was an eye witness to God's power and greatness. Because of that he makes a decree so that all can hear of the true and living God as opposed to the dead idols that they were worshiping!

And here in this new kingdom we once again see Daniel continue to prosper because of his trust and faith in God. He was willing to be a vessel used by God and God used him mightily! What about you?

2. Listen again to how this chapter closes. **“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”** Daniel 6:28. Don’t think that Cyrus came after Darius. Remember that Cyrus the Persian was in charge of the whole Medo-Persian Empire while Darius was appointed by Cyrus to be the ruler over Babylon!
  
3. Chapter 6 ends the historical account and now as we move into chapter 7 next time we will deal with the prophetic visions that were given to Daniel during his life, from his captivity in Babylon into the second Gentile World Kingdom, the Medo-Persian. And they are based upon the multi-metallic image that King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of in Daniel chapter 2 that dealt with all the Gentile World Empires until the return of Christ!
  
4. Let me close with this for you to think about. I truly believe and have taught for the last 20 plus years that the man of God who is doing the will of God is immortal until the work of God is finished! Nothing can touch him or stop him. We have seen that in the life of Daniel and the same God who worked in Daniel works in us. Never forget that!