

Stand Your Ground And be prepared...God is at work!

Daniel Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

"Then the he-goat from the West grew more powerful than ever, but at the height of its strength the great horn snapped, and in its place sprouted four majestic horns, pointing to the four winds of heaven." **Daniel 8:8**

- Daniel, a Hebrew prophet whose most famous vision was his analysis of the 'handwriting on the wall' which mysteriously appeared in the palace of king Belshazzar the **night before** Persia attacked and brought the Babylonian empire to an end.
- The writing read: "*Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parsin...*" No one knew what it meant and so Daniel, a Jewish Prophet known to have great powers of interpretation was called in to decipher the words. Daniel solemnly explained to the king that the hand they had seen was the hand of God, and the writing was a message of imminent disaster:

*"The meaning of the words is this", Daniel told him, "**Mene:** God has measured your sovereignty and put an end to it; **Tekel:** you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; **Parsin:** your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians." (Daniel 5:25-28).*

- That very same night, the Chaldaean king Belshazzar was murdered, and the kingdom of Babylon fell into the hands of Darius the Mede, king of Persia.
 - A. Most Bible Scholars are convinced that a great many of Daniel's prophecies centered around the exploits of Alexander the Great and his immense but divided empire. Alexander was not the focal point of Daniel's visions, of course, but there are important things that the Holy Spirit wanted us to see in the Greek era which surrounded this important world conqueror.
 - B. The quotation which leads this chapter accurately forecasts Alexander's sudden death and the subsequent parceling out of his empire into the four Greek kingdoms that replaced his rule.
 - C. While a close relationship between Daniel's prophecies and these historical events exists, we must not forget that while it is history's purpose to explain the past, Daniel's writings tell us about a future yet unveiled. They are about the end of the world.
 - D. The Book of Daniel is a book of prophecy, not a book of history.**

The Foundation (**Daniel 5**):

1. The timing of the feast is the more amazing feature. Babylon had pretty much been defeated by the armies of Cyrus the great, only the city of Babylon was still undefeated. The nobles had retreated to the city and had planned to wait out the Persians in the safe confines of the city of Babylon.
2. **Drank wine.** Wine caused Belshazzar to do things never before done. He was given a certain boldness, which caused God to judge his kingdom.
3. **The command.** Belshazzar challenged the God of Jerusalem, by ordering the vessels taken from Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar to be brought to the party. Belshazzar would have been familiar with the stories of Daniel and his companions according to verse 22. The wine caused him to boldly challenge the God of Israel.
4. **His lords.** The party was not an ordinary party, but was wild drinking party involving his **wives** and **concubines**, the king's harem. Try to imagine the scene, music and singing, food of great abundance, dance and revelry combined with drunken proud men and their wives and girlfriends. Add to this the bold challenge to the God of Israel, and you can imagine what results.
5. **Praised the gods.** By using the items from Solomon's Temple to praise the Babylonian god's, Belshazzar was making a direct challenge to god, literally daring Him to do something.
6. **Same hour.** The same hour men arrived with the articles from the Temple in Jerusalem, at that very hour.
7. **King's countenance.** The king was just moments earlier boldly challenging the God of Israel, drinking toasts from the Temple vessels. Now his bold appearance has totally changed.
8. **Joints of his hips.** Literally he lost control. A very humiliating event for a proud king, challenging God, now in front of his guests, wives and concubines he could not control himself, today was not going to be Belshazzar's day.
9. **Knees knocked.** The king was utterly terrified of the hand and what it meant.
10. **All the king's wise men.** Again, the wisdom of the world is pitted against the wisdom of God, championed by Daniel. The wise men could not read the writing or understand what it meant.
11. In an application sense, the same goes with the Bible today. The wise men of this world cannot read the Bible and understand the words. The meaning is hidden from the skeptic who chooses to reject God's word.
12. **Daniel answered.** Daniel chief concern was God's holiness. Daniel at this point is probably close to eighty years of age. Taken as boy of around 14 to 15 years of

- age, he had remained in Babylon from 605 B.C. to 539 B.C., 66 years until this time. Daniel had no need for the king's reward, Daniel sought God's reward.
13. Again, God delivered to Daniel, a room full of souls to hear a message from God. If we could imagine a room full of music, revelry, drinking, boasting and lewdness brought to a sudden halt. Then transitioning to a king who loses control in front of his guests cries out in fear. Then Daniel is called, to deliver a sermon about God's plan.
 - a. Similar stories can be seen on the Titanic, moments before it struck an iceberg people in revelry unconcerned about eternity. Moments later all this changed, people were struck with fear as their security was destroyed by an iceberg.
 14. **hardened in pride.** Nebuchadnezzar had a similar problem of pride, but was humbled and learned the lesson, God rules over men, the Most High God of Israel, as opposed to the gods of the material world. **You knew.** Daniel reminds the king, in fact he hints that Belshazzar was a witness to the events in Nebuchadnezzar's life. Maybe he was a young boy, who witnessed what his grandfather's ordeal. He however, chooses ignore that part of his life, and was filled with his own pride.
 15. **Lifted up you against the Lord of Heaven.** Belshazzar was not only filled with pride, but chooses to challenge heaven itself.
 16. **God who hold your breath.** Belshazzar like most who choose to ignore God forget the very breath we breathe is from God, let alone our possessions.

Stand YOUR Ground (Daniel 6):

- A. **One hundred and twenty:** The conquest of Babylon for the most part was bloodless, few died in order for the city to be conquered. The administration of the new province Babylonian province, Chaldea would administered by capable Babylonians. Either, the Babylonian province or entire Persian/Median kingdom was up into 120 satraps or provinces.
- B. **Three governors:** These 120 provinces were divided organized under three administrators or overseers. The provincial governors or satraps were answerable to these three administrators. This division of the Persian Empire is confirmed in the book of **Ester 1:1**, here the number of provinces is stated at 127, though this is at least 50 years after **Daniel 6**.
- C. **Daniel:** Daniel would have come to immediate attention to any new Persian government. Daniel had just proclaimed the fall of Babylon when the hand appeared and wrote on the wall. In addition, Daniel would have been known for his work under Nebuchadnezzar reign. Therefore it would be logical for any new

government to seek out the assistance of well respected officials to help govern their new province. This is exactly what Persia did.

- D. Distinguished himself:** Daniel's behavior distinguished himself above all the other rulers. Daniel was beyond corruption, with any new government and new positions, corruption and bribe taking would be in the offing. Daniel more than likely would not play the game, his uprightness and righteousness would cause problems bent on reaping huge profits in a new government.
- E. Governors and satraps:** The 2 governors and 120 rulers looked for a way to take Daniel out of the picture. Daniel set an example for the faithful, who are challenged by the world system. The world wants those who trust in God to fall. When the faithful fall, the world feels justified in their unjust actions.
- a. Jesus talks about this contrast between the world and those who represent God in the world.

"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." **John 3:20-21**

- b. Daniel had no reason to fear his deeds coming to light because he lived a righteous life. This became a problem for the rulers of the world.

F. Law of his God: The last resort was to try to show Daniel disloyal by contrasting his obedience to the laws of the land verses God's command. Daniel establishes an important precedent for the believer. We are to obey the laws of the land, but when they come into conflict with the laws of God, obedience to God's law is primary. Through our obedience God can use us in this world that He may be gloried.

G. Royal Statue: Daniel again sets the example for all to follow. The question in generations to come, how are the faithful to act when laws are passed against them? This ban on prayer was passed for Daniel's sake.

H. Laws are passed today to stop the faithful in worship, should the believer obey laws that against God law. Daniel says no, he continued to pray despite the law of the land. Daniel first call was obedience to God. God used Daniel as example for all the faithful. Those in and out of persecuted lands.

I. Daniel: Daniel did not change a thing about his personal life despite the law passed by authority. Daniel challenges the law to challenge the law, but continued to do what he had done in the past despite the law. Daniel was so

faithful and consistent in his prayer life, even his enemies knew where to find him at what hour of the day.

When we choose to sever the Lord and seek to live a righteous life, Even those who would hate us are made peaceable.

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Proverbs 16:7

God was able to use Daniel because was faithful example making him a useable servant. Darius had just come to power, and he knows almost from the beginning about Daniel and his God. Daniel had a reputation, and his reputation was confirmed by his actions. Daniel was faithful even in a pit of hungry lions.