



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 17



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DARIUS AND THE THIRD TESTING OF DANIEL

^{5:31} And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. ^{6:1} It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; ² And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. ³ Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. ⁴ Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵ Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. ⁶ Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ⁹ Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. ¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. ¹¹ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ¹³ Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. ¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. ^{KJV} (Daniel 5:31-6:15)

INTRODUCTION

In five chapters, we have moved from the overthrow of Jerusalem and the capture of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and

Azariah, to the slaying of Belshazzar, final king of the Babylonian empire. Some most intriguing facts were revealed in this

section, each one designed to teach us of the meticulous workings of the Lord. The kingdom belongs to Him, and He is the

Daniel's Faith is Tested when His Enemies Propose a Means of Getting Rid of Him, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ **DARIUS TAKES THE KINGDOM (5:31)**
- ▶ **DANIEL IS AGAIN EXALTED (6:1-2).**
- ▶ **DANIEL FINDS FAVOR, AND IS PREFERRED (6:3)**
- ▶ **AN OCCASION SOUGHT AGAINST DANIEL (6:4)**
- ▶ **THE ONLY WAY (6:5)**
- ▶ **A CRAFTY PROPOSAL IS SUBMITTED (6:6-9)**
- ▶ **DANIEL'S RESPONSE (6:10-11)**
- ▶ **THE ENEMIES REPORT (6:12-13)**
- ▶ **FOOLISH FOR THE FLESH, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOD TO WORK (6:14)**

“Governor among the nations” (Psa 22:28). Lest we forget these instructive facts, a brief rehearsal of them will be in order. I will only list the things specifically said about the Lord Himself, although He was unquestionably in everything that took place.

- ▶ The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand (1:1a).
- ▶ The Lord gave part of the vessels of the house of God into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (1:1b).
- ▶ God brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs (1:9).
- ▶ God gave the four children of Judah knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom (1:17a).
- ▶ God gave Daniel understanding in all wisdom and dreams (1:17b).
- ▶ God revealed the secret of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (2:19).
- ▶ Daniel saw that God changes times and seasons (2:21a).
- ▶ Daniel saw that God removes kings and sets up kings (2:21b).
- ▶ Daniel saw that God gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding (2:21c).
- ▶ Daniel saw that God reveals the deep and secret things, and knows what is in darkness, or shrouded (2:22).
- ▶ God gave Daniel wisdom and might, answering the prayer of Daniel and his friends for mercy to know the king’s dream and its meaning (2:23).
- ▶ There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets (2:28a).
- ▶ In a dream and visions, God made known to Nebuchadnezzar what would be in the latter days (2:28b).
- ▶ The God of heaven gave Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, strength, power, and glory (2:37).
- ▶ The Lord made Nebuchadnezzar ruler over men, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven (2:38).
- ▶ God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed or succeeded by another (2:44a).
- ▶ The kingdom God set up would break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, standing forever (2:44b).
- ▶ The God of heaven made known to Nebuchadnezzar what would come to pass hereafter (2:45).
- ▶ God is the God of gods, Lord of kings, and revealer of secrets (2:47).
- ▶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego confess God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, and will do so (3:17).
- ▶ God sent His angel and delivered the three from the fiery furnace. Not a hair was singed, no hurt was found on them, and the smell of fire was not on their clothes (3:27-28).
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar confesses there is no God who can deliver like this (3:29).
- ▶ Nebuchadnezzar proclaims to the world the signs and wonders God wrought toward him (4:2).
- ▶ God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that he was going to punish him for his pride and insolence (4:9-24).
- ▶ God had the king driven from among men (4:25a).
- ▶ God gave the king a beast’s heart, so that he ate the grass of the field (4:25b).
- ▶ God decreed the king would stay in the field for seven years, until he learned what God intended for him to know (2:25c).
- ▶ The Most High rules in the kingdoms of man (2:25d).
- ▶ The Most High gives kingdoms to whomever He wills (2:25e).
- ▶ The heavens do rule (2:26).
- ▶ A voice from heaven informed Nebuchadnezzar he had been deposed of his kingdom, which was fulfilled that very hour (4:31).
- ▶ God lives for ever (4:34a).
- ▶ God’s dominion is an everlasting dominion (4:34b).
- ▶ God’s kingdom is from generation to generation (4:34c).
- ▶ God fulfills His will in the army of heaven (4:35a).
- ▶ God fulfills His will among the inhabitants of the earth (4:35b).
- ▶ None can stay the hand of God (4:35c).
- ▶ None can ask God what He is doing (4:35d).
- ▶ God is the “King of heaven” (4:37a).
- ▶ All of God’s ways are truth (4:37b).
- ▶ All of God’s ways are judgment

(4:37c).

- ▶ God is able to abase those who walk in pride (4:37d).
- ▶ God gave Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, majesty, glory, and honor (5:18).
- ▶ God appoints whomever He wills over kingdoms, even the basest of men (5:21).
- ▶ The breath and ways of Belshazzar were in God's hand (5:23).
- ▶ God numbered and finished Belshazzar's kingdom (5:26).
- ▶ God weighed Belshazzar in the Divine scales and found him wanting (5:27).
- ▶ God divided Belshazzar's kingdom, giving it to the Medes and the Persians (5:28).

There are forty-eight declarations of the capability and will of the God of heaven – all within the first five chapters of Daniel. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but has been gleaned by merely glancing over the text.

The point is that these affirmations provide a background for the text before us. The great faith of Daniel that will be made known was founded upon the apprehension of these things. His perception of these realities is what enabled him to trust in the Lord with all of His heart, not leaning to His own understanding.

FAITH IS NOT SIMPLE

When people speak of “*simple faith*,” or “*simply trusting God*,” they are not speaking wisely. There is nothing simple about faith. That is why it has to “*come*” to us from God (Rom 10:17; Eph 6:23). **Faith is marvelous, not simplistic.** It postulates some knowledge of God that has enabled the believer to cast down all fear and doubt. One might cite Abraham, who believed God although he knew relatively little of Him. Yet, God had revealed Himself to Abraham in most unusual ways.

- ▶ He “*said*” to Abram “*Get thee out of thy country . . .*” (Gen 12:1-4).

- ▶ God “*appeared*” to Abram, declaring He would give him the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7-8).
- ▶ The Lord “*plagued Pharaoh And his house with great plagues*” because he had presumed to take Abram's wife for his own (Gen 12:17).
- ▶ The Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah after divulging to Abram what He was going to do, and hearing Abram's plea to save the city for the sake of at least ten righteous (Gen

Melchisdek had declared the Lord to him. It was after this exposure – after his acquaintance with the Lord – that he “*believed in the Lord.*”

IN A HEATHEN REALM

I want to underscore that all of the marvelous working of the Lord in this book occurred in a heathen realm, over which a heathen monarchs presided. The conditions were anything but favorable. From the standpoint of a Divine covenant, Daniel was living under the inferior covenant, that was destined to be replaced by a better one. The events took place

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13:10).

- ▶ God spoke to Abram after Lot departed from him, promising to give him all of the land he could see, and that He would multiply his seed (Gen 13:14-16).
- ▶ Melchizedec blessed Abram in the name of the Most High God, declaring He possessed heaven and earth, and had subdued Abram's enemies (Gen 14:18-20).
- ▶ God appeared again to Abram, declaring he himself would bear a son, who would be his heir (Gen 15:1-5). It was at this point that “*believed*” is used for the first time in Scripture. “*And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness*” (Gen 15:6).

I give this brief account to confirm that Abram did not “*simply believe*” God. He had considerable exposure to the Lord, had heard much from Him, and

during a time of Divine chastening – the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. Daniel, who is the principle mortal in this book, although eventually exalted, was among “*the captives of Judah.*” He was away from his homeland, had no access to the temple, and from a tender age was exposed extensively to Babylonian wisdom. He was not appreciated by his peers, and at the time of this chapter begins to serve under a third king. He has consistently been brought into the limelight when a crisis arose. His life has been threatened and, at this point, appears to be dwelling alone. **It is difficult to conceive of anyone being in more a challenging situation.**

The knowledge of these circumstances should bring great hope to the heart of all believers. **If you live by faith, where could you possibly be placed where the Lord could not work through you? What is there that can justify losing hope, being overly discouraged, or thinking you have been left alone?**

DARIUS TAKES THE KINGDOM

“^{5:31} And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.” The very night Belshazzar was slain, the kingdom was wrenched from the Babylonians and given to the Medes and the Persians. This is one of several instant judgments in Scripture, and is designed to assist us in fearing the Lord. We should be repulsed by any teaching, emphasis, or view of life that thrusts the knowledge of Divine judgment into the background. **It is possible to obtain a view of Scripture that rarely, if ever, gives due thought to the Lord and His**

those considering the pursuit of such knowledge worthy of their time.

In my judgment, however, such quests are out of order. **The Word of God is not to be measured by the writings and analyses of mortals.** Rather, the opposite is to be the case. If the Scriptures were written by *“holy men”* who spoke as they were *“moved by the Holy Spirit”* (2 Pet 1:21), what possible reason can be adduced for engaging in an effort to determine if they are true or not? And where do such efforts end? Are they adequate to confirm the

Such thinking is too absurd to be dignified by research, or the imagination that anything valuable can be obtained by comparing them with Scripture. **Those who wish to defend such a procedure are engaged in a losing effort.**

It should not surprise us that God speaks of people largely omitted from worldly history: i.e., Moses, the holy prophets, John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and Paul. Thus, when someone raises the objection that worldly history makes no mention of Darius the Mede, we simply reply “So what!” What matter does that make. It only means they either called him by another name, or did not see him as important in history. We either believe *“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,”* or we do not (2 Tim 3:16). If we believe this, we have no interest in whether world history is in synch with Scripture or not. In the end, all of the words of men will be judged by the Word of God in the presence of God.

IS THE VALIDITY OF THE ACCOUNTS OF THE FLOOD, THE SCATTERING AT BABEL, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH TO BE GAUGED BY THE WRITINGS OF MORTAL MEN? AND WHAT OF THE ATONING DEATH OF CHRIST, HIS RESURRECTION, HIS ENTHRONEMENT IN GLORY, AND HIS PRESENT INTERCESSION FOR THE SAINTS? WHERE DOES HUMAN HISTORY STAND ON THESE PERSONS AND EVENTS?

Distinguished from Darius the Persian

This *“Darius,”* by being called *“the Median,”* or *“Mede,”* ^{NKJV} is distinguished from *“Darius the Persian,”* mentioned by Nehemiah (Neh 12:22).

The Son of Ahasuerus

Later, Daniel refers to this man as *“Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans”* (Dan 9:1 – 538 BC). This Ahasuerus was not the husband of Esther, mentioned throughout that book and was a Persian king (i.e., Esth 1:1,2,9 – 480 BC). Nor, indeed, was it the Ahasuerus mentioned in the book of Ezra (Ezra 4:6 – 458 BC).

throne of judgment. I fear this is altogether too popular in our time. However, no such view will be received when we take this passage of Scripture seriously, embracing what it says.

ABOUT DARIUS

“Darius the Median . . .” There has been a great deal of controversy concerning this man. This is largely owing to the absence of his name in profane history. Of course, throughout history there have been a number of Scriptural people whose existence was questioned because known historical records had not mentioned them. Their names, however, were eventually discovered in historical records or monuments, at which time they were recognized as valid. I will not take the time to mention these occurrences here, as knowledge of them is available to

existence of the holy angels, Gabriel or Michael, who were high ranking angels, the devil, demons, Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, or others? And what about the twelve Apostles, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Luke, and other key figures. Or, the giving of the Law at Sinai, the ascension of Jesus, or the creation of the world itself?

Are we to believe such accounts must be attested by the literature and records of this world?

Is the validity of the accounts of the flood, the scattering at Babel, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to be gauged by the writings of mortal men? And what of the atoning death of Christ, His resurrection, His enthronement in glory, and His present intercession for the saints? Where does human history stand on these persons and events?

Babylonian Captivity Ended

During the first year of Darius’ reign, Daniel understood from the books of Jeremiah that the Babylonian captivity was ended (Dan 9:1-2).

Thus we see that Darius is more noted for the time marked by his appearance rather than his kingly exploits. The captivity ended in his reign, and the Babylonian empire was ended by him also. Were it not for that, he probably would not even be mentioned.

HOW THE KINGDOM WAS TAKEN

“ . . . took the kingdom.” Other versions read, “received the kingdom,” NKJV/NASB/NRSV and “took over the kingdom.” NIV Earlier, Daniel said the kingdom would be “given to the Medes and the Persians” (5:28). **Therefore, the only reason Darius was able to take the kingdom is because it had been given to him by God.**

Historians date this fateful evening as October 12, 539 B.C.

Some Records

The following is a brief description of the fall of Babylon from McClintok and Strong’s Cyclopedia of Biblical Knowledge.

“Under the last king, B.C. 538, Babylon was taken by Cyrus, after a siege of two years, in the dead of the night. Having first, by means of its canals, turned the river into the great dry lake west of Babylon, and then marched through the emptied channel, he made his way to the outer walls of the fortified palace on its banks, when, finding the brazen gates incautiously left open by the royal guards while engaged in carousals, he entered with all his train; ‘the Lord of Hosts was his leader,’ and Babylon, as an empire, was no more.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary includes the following.

“The city had been under assault by Cyrus. In anticipation of a long siege the city had stored supplies to last for 20 years. The Euphrates River ran through the city from north to south, so the residents had an ample water supply. Belshazzar had a false sense of security, because the Persian army, led by Ugbaru, was outside Babylon’s city walls. Their army was divided; part was stationed where the river entered the city at the north and the other part was positioned where the river exited from the city at the south. The army diverted the water north of the city by digging a canal from the river to a nearby lake. With the water diverted, its level receded and the soldiers were able to enter the city by going under the sluice gate. Since the walls were unguarded the Persians, once inside the city, were able to conquer it without a fight.”

Isaiah’s Prophecy

Isaiah spoke of the demise of Babylon in violent and abrupt words. “Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy

locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms” (Isa 47:1-5).

Other prophecies of Isaiah concerning the fall of Babylon are found in chapters 13, 14, and 21 of his prophecy. God revealed much to Isaiah on this point. Those texts contain these salient expressions. “The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in

Jeremiah’s Prophecy

Jeremiah also foretold the fall of Babylon. “Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast . . . For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD . . . I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found,

AS INGENIOUS AS THE MILITARY STRATEGY AGAINST BABYLON WAS, THAT IS NOT THE REASON FOR ITS SUCCESS. THE FALL OF BABYLON HAD BEEN DETERMINED BY GOD HIMSELF, WHO ALONE IS “THE GOVERNOR AMONG THE NATIONS.” HE USED DARIUS AND THE MEDES, BUT IT WAS HIS JUDGMENT THAT BROUGHT THE CITY DOWN.

my highness . . . They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land . . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah . . . That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers . . . And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground” (Isa 13:1-3,5,19; 14:4-5; 21:9).

and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD . . . Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind; And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about . . . Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary” (Jer 50:2-3, 9-10,24; 51:1-2,58).

Concluding Remarks

As ingenious as the military

strategy against Babylon was, that is not the reason for its success. The fall of Babylon had been determined by God Himself, who alone is *“the Governor among the nations.”* **He used Darius and the Medes, but it was His**

- ▣ *“Wisdom and might are His”* (2:20).
- ▣ *“He changes times and seasons”* (2:21a).
- ▣ *“He removes and raises up kings”* (2:21).

- ▣ God’s *“dominion is an everlasting dominion”* (4:34a).
- ▣ God’s Kingdom is *“from generation to generation”* (4:34b).
- ▣ God does according to His will in *“the army of heaven”* (4:35a).
- ▣ God does according to His will *“among the inhabitants of the earth”* (4:35b).
- ▣ No one can *“restrain”* God’s hand or say to Him, *“What have you done?”* (2:35c).

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE COMPREHEND THE WORKING OF THE LORD IN THIS BOOK. IF WE FAIL TO DO SO, IT WILL NOT EDIFY US. AT THE ROOT OF EDIFICATION IS THE PERCEPTION OF THE HAND OF THE LORD. IF THAT IS NOT SEEN, THE SOUL SIMPLY CANNOT BE FORTIFIED AND MADE MATURE.

judgment that brought the city down. God uses means, but it is HE that uses them!

Thus, the traits that have been ascribed to the Living God in the book of Daniel, have been marvelously displayed in His dealings with Babylon and its kings. The revelations He has given of Himself, whether in bold proclamations or dreams, are actually lived out before us and its kings. In the recorded events themselves God is more clearly seen.

- ▣ God gives men kingdoms, *“power, and strength, and glory”* (2:3).
- ▣ He is a *“God of gods, and Lord of kings”* (2:47).
- ▣ His *“signs”* and *“wonders”* are great (4:3).
- ▣ *“The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men”* (4:25a).
- ▣ God gives the kingdoms of men to *“whomever He chooses”* (4:25b).

- ▣ God gives *“peoples”* and *“nations”* to rulers (5:19).
- ▣ God *“finishes”* kingdoms (5:26).

It is imperative that we comprehend the working of the Lord in this book. If we fail to do so, it will not edify us. **At the root of edification is the perception of the hand of the Lord. If that is not seen, the soul simply cannot be fortified and made mature.** The soul cannot be fortified by mere academic observations.

DANIEL IS AGAIN EXALTED

“6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;² And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.”

According to the prophecies of the Lord, Babylon is fallen, and is now brought into the Media-Persian empire. In His inscrutable wisdom, and in righteousness, he has shuffled the kingdoms of men. On the surface, this shuffling appeared to be the result of Median military shrewdness and Babylonian obtuseness. However, it was actually God intruding into the affairs of men, forcing Himself among them And moving history along to the fulfillment of

His own purpose.

I want to ever keep this before you because of the general lack of awareness of these things among professed church. **During the past few decades a remarkable ignorance of God has developed among the churches. It is**

grasp of the nature and purpose of God Almighty. The wisdom of men has been so vaunted God can hardly be seen. For this reason trust is being put in men, procedures, and purported principles of thought and life rather than in the Living God. This circumstance mandates a serious perusal of this book.

DURING THE PAST FEW DECADES A REMARKABLE IGNORANCE OF GOD HAS DEVELOPED AMONG THE CHURCHES. IT IS SO REMARKABLE THAT SCARCELY A PERSON CAN BE FOUND THAT HAS A SPIRITUAL GRASP OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF GOD ALMIGHTY.

so remarkable that scarcely a person can be found that has a spiritual

Darius the Mede now begins his reign. Once again, the exact time of the

events that follow is not made known, for that is not the point. Divine involvements are the issue, and the accomplishment of His purpose is the focus. Therefore, the Spirit moves to the next significant event in view of these things.

THE HIERARCHY OF MEDIAN POWER

“^{6:1} It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; ² And over these three

Neh 2:9). We might think of them as rulers over regions. This form of Persian rule is mentioned in the book of Esther. *“Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces)”* (Est 1:1).

I understand *“the whole kingdom”* to refer to the newly acquired kingdom of Babylon, and not to the whole Persian empire, of which Babylon was but a part.

golden chain of authority about his neck. While this is a mere conjecture, I do not doubt that Darius heard something of Daniel, his prophecies and wisdom. Perhaps he even heard of his declaration of the fall of Babylon, and it being given to the Medes and the Persians.

Aside from these speculations, God was working through Darius, elevating Daniel to a place of prominence. This was done in order that the Word and purpose of God might be the better known. From yet another perspective, this was God working all things together for the good of Daniel (Rom 8:28).

This should bring great encouragement to every child of God. If God can exalt a captive Jew in a new government, and through a king who did not know him, what can be done with those whose lives are *“hid with Christ in God”* (Col 3:3).

NO DAMAGE

“ . . . that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.” Other versions read, *“so that the king would suffer no loss,”* NKJV *“might have no trouble,”* DOUAY *“Should not be troubled,”* Septuagint and *“to safeguard the king’s interests.”* NJB

This could include the loss of revenue, tolls, taxes, and the likes (as illustrated in the charge leveled at the Jews in the book of Ezra 4:13). *“Damage,”* or *“loss,”* would also refer to any failure to carry out the king’s objectives, or allowing any opposition to him.

The government of Darius was not principally provided for the people themselves, but in order to the execution of the king’s will. That is the manner of worldly rule, and that is why God’s Kingdom will eventually crush all worldly kingdoms.

IT IS APPARENT THAT DARIUS, ALTHOUGH TAKING THE POLITICAL RULE, IS ACTUALLY INCIDENTAL. THE FACTS THAT ARE GIVEN CONCERNING HIM ARE BUT A CONTEXT IN WHICH DANIEL WILL BECOME THE PROMINENT MAN IN THE NEW POLITICAL REGIME.

presidents . . . ”

Our attention is immediately turned to Daniel, God’s man for the occasion. It is apparent that Darius, although taking the political rule, is actually incidental. The facts that are given concerning him are but a context in which Daniel will become the prominent man in the new political regime. Further, that prominence will be primarily spiritual – a prominence that remains profitable to the saints to this very hour.

An Hundred and Twenty Princes

Other versions refer to the *“princes”* as *“satraps.”* NKJV, NASB, NIV These were Persian viceroys over provinces into which the Persian empire was divided. Governors were under them (such as Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, Ezra 4:3,6;

Three Presidents

Other versions refer to these *“presidents”* as *“governors,”* NKJV *“commissioners,”* NASB *“administrators,”* NIV *“princes,”* DOUAY, *“supervisors,”* NAB and *“chief rulers.”* BBE These *“presidents”* would be much like the *“secretaries”* in our own government (i.e., Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, etc.). The one hundred and twenty *“princes”* were answerable to these *“presidents,”* who presided over them.

DANIEL WAS FIRST

“ . . . of whom Daniel was first . . . ” This is why God moved Belshazzar to exalt Daniel, although he himself would be killed on the very night he did so. He was compelled by God to do so. Thus, when Darius took over, he first saw Daniel clothed in royal apparel with the

DANIEL FINDS FAVOR, AND IS PREFERRED

“ ³ Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and

the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

Introductory Thought

Our text immediately deals with the elevation of Daniel and the trials associated with that elevation. Additionally, I want to set this whole

matter in proper perspective. It was during the first year of Darius' reign that Daniel *"understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem"* (Dan 9:2). Those books were the writings of Jeremiah the prophet (Jer 25:11,12; 29:10). God opened them up to Daniel's understanding.

Thus, while Daniel's rapid elevation was going on, his heart and mind were still set upon the Word of the Lord. The words that follow reflect the effect of Daniel's faith and focus.

DANIEL IS PREFERRED

"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes . . ." Other versions read, *"Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps,"* ^{NKJV} *"Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps,"* ^{NASB} *"Soon distinguished himself above all the other presidents and satraps,"* ^{NRSV} *"Daniel excelled all the princes and governors,"* ^{DOUAY} *"Daniel surpassed the presidents and the satraps,"* ^{DARBY} and *"Daniel did his work better than the chief rulers and the captains."* ^{BBE}

In this verse, the word *"preferred"* means to become chief. The idea is that he immediately began to rise to the top because of the way in which he fulfilled his duties. He was not deterred by a change in the government. **The fact that he had been in relative obscurity after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and prior to Belshazzar's feast, had not eroded his confidence, zeal, or excellent manner of work.**

Thus, the king's decision to make Daniel the *"first"* of the three presidents was justified. The work of Daniel confirmed he was suitable to hold that position. All of this was the product of his faith in and commitment to the living God. He excelled because God blessed him.

A Lesson to be Learned

When we live by faith and walk in the Spirit, we will become better at what we do in this world. Faith is in no way divorced from the every-day routines of life. **No person in Christ should be**

noted for being a bad worker, or for laziness, or for not executing their duties with faithfulness and wisdom. Nor, indeed, should any of them be advanced to places of responsibility, only to prove unworthy of such advancement. **Faith must characterize all of life!**

AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT

" . . . because an excellent spirit was in him . . ." Other versions read, *"because he possessed an extraordinary spirit,"* ^{NASB} *"by his exceptional qualities,"* ^{NIV} *"there was a special spirit in him,"* ^{BBE} *"his great ability,"* ^{NLT} and *"was so evidently superior."* ^{NJB}

Daniel was not distinguished

When it came to the handling of the affairs of the kingdom, Daniel proved to be more competent, more expert, more skillful, and more proficient. He was superior in every aspect of his duties. He did his job better, carrying out the king's will in a more precise and profitable manner. The king did not prefer him because of his looks, his education, or his professional demeanor before the people. Rather, it was because of his aptitude – an *"excellent spirit."* That aptitude was the result of Daniel's consistent faith, coming to him from God.

Solomon said, *"a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit"* (Prov 17:27). Once before, Daniel was

KEEP IN MIND THAT DANIEL IS NOT A YOUNG MAN. HE IS NOW ADVANCED IN YEARS. THE END OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY IS IN SITE (DAN 6:1), WHICH PROBABLY PUTS DANIEL IN HIS SEVENTIES. HIS AGE, HOWEVER, HAS NOT DULLED HIS "EXCELLENT SPIRIT." HE STILL EXCELS HIS PEERS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE, OR LACK OF OFFICIAL ACTIVITY

by academic credentials (although he did have them, 1:4). Rather, it is what he accomplished in the execution of his duties that marked him out.

This is wholly at variance with the norm of the business, academic, and religious worlds. **Men are too often elevated, or given responsible positions, purely upon the basis of their academic achievements and credentials.** This was not the case with Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, or Abednego. It is not why the Apostles and Prophets were given their positions. It was not the criteria the early church used for recognizing elders, deacons, or any other God-ordained office. Neither should it be the means the church of our day uses to make critical determinations. To do so is to demonstrate a wisdom that is beneath that of Darius the Mede. This is not comely for a person in Christ.

referred to as one in whom an *"excellent spirit"* was found (5:12). In that verse, another translation reads *"keen mind."* ^{NIV} He was noted for his quick perception.

DARIUS CONSIDERS

" . . . and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." Other versions read, *"the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm,"* ^{NKJV} *"the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom,"* ^{NASB} *"the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom,"* ^{NIB} and *"and it was the king's purpose to put him over all the kingdom."* ^{BBE}

From the king's point of view, it was the *"excellent spirit"* of Daniel that moved Darius to purpose this promotion. But actually, God was behind it. I understand *"the whole realm"* to pertain to the Babylonian kingdom Darius had conquered, and not to the whole Persian

empire.

Keep in mind that Daniel is not a young man. He is now advanced in years. The end of the Babylonian captivity is in site (Dan 6:1), which probably puts Daniel in his seventies. His age, however, has not dulled his "excellent spirit." He still excels his peers, regardless of their age, or lack of official activity. In this regard, he is much like Moses.

It is a great point of concern that the modern church is often less discerning of the capacities of men of faith than Darius the Mede! **I have no doubt that**

Daniel's resume, should it be submitted for an official position, would be considered by few, if any, modern churches. Such attitudes have robbed the church, making it more reliant upon the world and its vain wisdom than upon the God of heaven. Jesus and the Holy Spirit have actually been upstaged by the world's paltry wisdom. It is difficult to conceive of a condition being more serious than that.

THE STAGE IS SET

Thus the stage has been set for another display of Divine power. As is elsewhere declared, "For the eyes of the

LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chr 16:9). The Lord is eager and most serious in this quest for one through whom He can work. He has found such a person in Daniel, and will now "strongly support" him. He will so work in Daniel's behalf, that throughout the remainder of history, his favor of Daniel will be declared to both young and old. Wherever the Scriptures are known, the record that follows will also be known. It constitutes a proclamation of God's power, and is a tribute to a man of faith and patience.

AN OCCASION SOUGHT AGAINST DANIEL

"4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any

sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom . . . " Other versions read, "sought to find some charge," ^{NKJV} "trying to find a ground of accusation," ^{NASB} "tried to find grounds for complaint," ^{NIV} "were looking for some

eliminate some of these pretentious Babylonian wise men.

Concerning the Kingdom

These wicked men were not simply looking for some moral flaw in Daniel. They knew they could not find such a defect. Rather, they sought to discredit him in matters of the State: "concerning the kingdom," ^{NKJV} "in regard to government affairs," ^{NASB} "in his conduct of government affairs," ^{NIV} and "in connection with the kingdom." ^{NRSV}

Will Daniel's faith and faithfulness transport over to his daily job? This is an area where many professed believers fail miserably, and there is no satisfactory excuse for it. **Like Daniel, those who serve the Lord are to be exemplary in their worldly affairs, whether domestic, social, or political.** Even if the circumstances are not favorable, or disruption of significant proportion has occurred, the child of God is to be found faultless – "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil 2:15). Daniel will serve as a godly example for us in this matter.

THEY COULD FIND NOTHING

" . . . but they could find none occasion nor fault . . . " Other versions read, "they could find no charge or fault," ^{NKJV} "they could find no ground of

LIKE DANIEL, THOSE WHO SERVE THE LORD ARE TO BE EXEMPLARY IN THEIR WORLDLY AFFAIRS, WHETHER DOMESTIC, SOCIAL, OR POLITICAL. EVEN IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT FAVORABLE, OR DISRUPTION OF SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION HAS OCCURRED, THE CHILD OF GOD IS TO BE FOUND FAULTLESS

error or fault found in him." At once we see the Babylonian wise men had no love for Daniel. This was particularly brought to the surface when they heard Darius was determined to make him the head over the whole kingdom. They now became his persecutors. They knew they could not oppose Daniel openly, so became creative in their efforts to bring him down.

SEEKING A FAULT CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

"4 Then the presidents and princes

cause for putting Daniel in the wrong," ^{BBE} "began searching for some fault." ^{NLT}

These men were provoked by Darius' intention to make Daniel the head over the whole realm. Although many of them knew of his spotless character, and the precision with which he declared the future, they could not bring themselves to love a Jew. Of course, tactics like this are still common in political circles. However, this is not a mere political issue. **This will prove to be an occasion where God will make known HIS preferences, and at the same time**

accusation or evidence of corruption,”^{NASB} “they could find no corruption in him,”^{NIV} and “they could find nothing to his discredit, and no case of negligence; he was so punctilious that they could not find a single instance of maladministration or neglect.”^{NJB}

This is the Spirit’s tribute to the impeccable character, faithfulness, and diligence of Daniel. It also opens up something of the meaning of “*excellent spirit*.” If there had been the slightest evidence of corruption, Daniel’s opponents would have found it. Their aim was to have him deposed from office by proving he was corrupt like themselves.

Judas, you may recall, did not conduct himself flawlessly in the business affairs of Jesus and His disciples. It is written of him, “*But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ‘hy wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.’ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it*” (John 12:4-6). No one can afford to take their relationship to Christ for granted, or imagine they are exempt from falling!

Learning from this Event

I have often heard *Christians* complain because their colleagues at work sought for a fault in them. It is not unusual to hear such people say they are not perfect, or that we all make mistakes. But Daniel will not have the luxury of excusing his critics so easily. **The truth of the matter is that believers are to see to it their enemies can find no fault in them.**

We are admonished to have “*sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*” (Titus 2:8).

Hear the word of exhortation, “*Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*” (Phil 2:14-15). Such things are to be taken seriously by us.

One more word on this matter will suffice. “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak*

evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pet 3:15-16).

If the light of believers is to shine before men, it will do so when their affairs are all in order, and their lives are conducted with obvious integrity. God is not honored when our enemies find glaring deficiencies in our lives.

HE WAS FAITHFUL

“*... forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.*” Other versions read, “*because he was trustworthy, and neither corrupt nor negligent,*”^{NIV} and “*they could not find a single instance of maladministration or neglect.*”^{NJB}

After a punctilious search for some failure pertaining to his work, it became obvious that Daniel conducted himself with total integrity and trustworthiness. He had not withheld any revenues from the king. His accounts were all in order – no sloppy bookkeeping or manners that would embarrass the king or cause reproach to him. He did not mishandle any of the affairs of State, or blunder, acting foolishly in matters of management. There simply was not a single thing they could find against him! God was glorified by his conduct.

THE ONLY WAY

“⁵ *Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*”

The wicked do not cease to plot against the righteous when they can find nothing against them – even when they are ashamed of their false accusations. In the case of Jesus, His enemies sought false witnesses to buttress their fabricated case against Him (Matt 26:59-60). The Jewish council “*suborned men*” to speak against Stephen (Acts 6:11). Jewish opponents of the Gospel began spreading the word that Paul taught, “*Let us do evil that good may come*” (Rom 3:8). It is the manner of the ungodly to work at reproaching the people of God. They are creative, diligent, and

consistent in their effort.

Thus we should not think it a strange thing that Daniel’s foes refuse to abandon their efforts to discredit him.

WE WILL NOT BE ABLE

“*Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel . . .*” Other versions read, “*We shall not find any charge,*”^{NKJV} “*We shall not find any ground of accusation,*”^{NASB} and “*We will never find any basis for charges against this man.*”^{NIV}

Any effort to find fault in Daniel’s presidency was totally vain. Nothing could be found. He was consistent and faithful in all things. He was totally trustworthy,

seeking the interest of the king, and never allowing reproach to be brought against him. When they say “*this Daniel,*” they are speaking with utter contempt and disdain. They have no respect or regard for him, even though his life is spotless. Believers do well not to expect their enemies to honor them when their conduct is flawless and marked with obvious integrity and faithfulness. The world does love “*its own,*” but has no regard for the children of God. It has always been true, “*If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*” (John 15:19). Believers must not be naive in this regard. Even spotless conduct in the saints cannot move

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the world to love them.

EXCEPT

“... *except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*” Other versions read, “*unless it has something to do with the law of his God,*”^{NIV} “*unless we try something to do with the law of his God,*”^{NJB} and “*Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the requirements of his religion.*”^{NLT}

These wicked men did not think for a single moment they could induce Daniel to break the Law of his God – and that is not how they reasoned. **Rather, they were banking on the fact that he would NOT violate the Law of His God, or in any way alter the manner in which he served Him.** They knew

Daniel would not forsake or abandon any form of his allegiance to God. He would fulfill all his vows to the Lord, keep His commandments, and conduct his life with His God at its center.

Application

I have often pondered with what ease some souls are moved away from their commitments to God. All too often the slightest pressure, the most casual suggestion, or the most minute interruption moves them to turn from their dedication to the Lord. It may take the form of moving them to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb 10:25), devoting themselves to the reading of Scripture, or praying. Under worldly pressure, however, they soon forget their promises to God – when He took away their sins and accepted them

in Christ.

All of this may seem quite innocent, and wordy explanations may be offered for abandoning a commitment to the Lord. However, after all has been said and done, we have the example of Daniel before us. We do well to take heed to his manners. He was living under an inferior covenant with inferior promises (Heb 8:6). Yet, under those circumstances he towers above great numbers of professing Christians.

Such things ought not be, and no amount of fancy philosophizing can dignify the conduct of those who carry on their lives with less consistency and integrity than Daniel. We have been given more, and more is required of us.

A CRAFTY PROPOSAL IS SUBMITTED

“⁶ *Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a*

Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ⁹ *Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.*”

Now the wicked join “*hand in hand*” (Prov 11:21; 16:5) against the man of God. It is a well thought conspiracy, and Daniel’s enemies are persuaded it will

WE HAVE ALL CONSULTED

“*Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together . . .*” Other versions refer to “*All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors,*”^{NKJV} “*All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors,*”^{NASB} and “*The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors.*”^{NIV}

HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE THING THEY HAVE FAILED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION – AND THAT BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO DO SO. THEY FAILED TO RECKON UPON THE GOD OF DANIEL. THEY KNEW DANIEL WAS DEVOTED TO HIS GOD, BUT HAD NO IDEA OF HOW GOD WAS DEVOTED TO DANIEL!

Everyone is said to be represented **except Daniel** – the chief president of them all. So “*all*” the presidents were not there, only two of them. However, they spoke as though Daniel had concurred with the proposal they are about to make. They had met together and drawn up a bill for the king’s signature. It would be presented as though the king’s best interests were being considered. There was, supposedly, perfect unanimity among the appointed officials, and thus the proposal is submitted in a context of seeming interest and unity. However, it is not at all what it

royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.”⁸ *Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the*

work for their good. However, there is one thing they have failed to take into consideration – and that because they were not able to do so. **They failed to reckon upon the God of Daniel. They knew Daniel was devoted to his God, but had no idea of how God was devoted to Daniel!**

appears to be.

A ROYAL STATUTE

“ . . . to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king . . . ”

A Royal Statute

A “royal statute” is an edict from the king – a sovereign decree to be imposed upon the people. Among men, it carries unquestionable authority.

A Firm Decree

A “firm decree” is an edict that will be enforced. Some form of legal monitoring will accompany the decree, and those who violate it will be punished.

A Thirty-day Law Concerning Petitions

Other versions read, “*whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king*”^{NKJV} “*anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions’ den,*”^{NIV} and “*Give orders that for the next thirty days anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human-- except to Your Majesty.*”^{NLT}

Behold how cunningly the petition is presented. His enemies did not condemn Daniel, his practice, or his God. Also, this was the beginning of a new reign. Therefore the petition is presented so as to draw attention to the new king, and away from any competing interests.

These wicked men were not testing Daniel to see if he would really pray to his God. They already knew he would. This was designed to cast a different light upon his devotion, making it appear as though it was rebellion.

Here was a royal statute, bound upon the entire realm because of a single man. The aim of this proposal was not to

uncover others in the realm who prayed to God. **The sole purpose of this recommendation was to condemn Daniel.** From the standpoint of the officials who put it forward, there was no other reason for it.

We see here to what length the devil will go to harass and condemn the people of God. This provides some further insight into the Apostolic warning. “*Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet 5:8).

THE PENALTY ESTABLISHED

“ . . . he shall be cast into the den of lions . . . ” Thus the proposal provides for the sure death of anyone who violates the imposed decree. A request cannot be presented to anyone other than Darius the king. No supplication of any sort can be made of

SIGN THE WRITING

“Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.”

Establish and Sign the Decree

Like all executive orders, it must have the royal signature upon it. The signature of Darius would make the matter law. Immediately, Daniel’s enemies would engage in a vigil to catch Daniel praying to his God. They knew he could not change his manner, not even because of a king’s decree!

The Law of the Medes and Persians

A similar representation of the law of the Medes and Persians is found in the book of Esther. “*Write ye also for the*

WE SEE HERE TO WHAT LENGTH THE DEVIL WILL GO TO HARASS AND CONDEMN THE PEOPLE OF GOD. THIS PROVIDES SOME FURTHER INSIGHT INTO THE APOSTOLIC WARNING. “BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR”

any God or man. Only Darius may be asked for anything.

The decree was for a thirty day period, for Daniel’s enemies knew there was no possible way for him to refrain from praying for that length of time. Also, there was no need to make the law perpetual. These men were not seeking to establish a governmental policy. Rather, they were seeking to rid themselves of the presence of Daniel. It made no difference to them if anyone else prayed to the God of heaven or not.

Jews, as it liketh you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring: for the writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may no man reverse” (Esth 8:8).

The signed decree, therefore, was cast in stone, and could not, under any circumstances, be reversed. The foes of Daniel knew they had to have a law like this in order to condemn the man of God. Now they were confident of realizing success in their diabolical plan. Their hearts must have leaped with carnal joy.

DANIEL’S RESPONSE

“¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three

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times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. ¹¹ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."

Now comes the third test of Daniel's faith. It is different than the other tests. In the first test, when but a young man, his faith was tested when an unlawful diet was imposed upon him (1:3-8). In the second test, he was condemned along with all the other wise men of Babylon when king Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream he could not remember (2:13-18). Now, his faith is tested by a mandate that **forbids him to pray to his God** – a decree that outlaws asking anything from the God of heaven. Is there anything familiar about a law like this? Has not our own government passed a similar law – except it is not for a mere thirty days!

The record of Daniel's response is written for our learning. **It is designed to teach us that no person or law can be permitted to mitigate or modify our devotion to the Lord of glory.** In Daniel we will see faithfulness and steadfastness lived out to the finest detail.

WHEN DANIEL KNEW

"^{10a} Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed . . . " Other versions read, *"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published,"* ^{NIV} and *"when Daniel learned that the law had been signed."* ^{NLT}

Daniel was not, therefore, present when this whole matter was presented to the king. He heard of the decree only after it had been signed into law. How will such an imposition impact upon his manner of life? How will it effect the aged prophet?

The Impact of the Decree

Lest we overlook the impact of the king's decree, consider its import. No one could ask God for **help** for thirty days. For one full month, by law, Daniel could not ask God for **understanding or wisdom**. **Grace** could not be requested from God, nor **direction**, for thirty days. No **forgiveness** could be sought, no **"daily bread,"** and no **deliverance** requested. All such requests must be addressed to Darius. All of these things

were needed – even on a daily basis. For all practical purposes, Daniel was being asked to forget God for thirty days. **By the law of the Medes and the Persians, for thirty days, he could not associate a single one of his needs or quests with the God of heaven.**

For some, that would not be too unreasonable. How will such a demand be regarded by a man who lives by faith?

THREE TIMES A DAY



The edict covered a period of thirty days. Within that time frame a single violation will result in the violator being thrown into a den of lions. The threat is very real, and there is no court of appeals, or provision for registering a complaint about the injustice of the decree. There are no "civil rights," and no organization to plead the case of the people to the king.

In fact, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, it is not possible for the signed proclamation to be reversed. Now, how will a decree like that effect the prophet Daniel?

We must remember that *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God,"* and that *"prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* ^{NKJV} (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). In this text, therefore, the Holy Spirit moves Daniel to write about himself. This is not something he took upon himself. Rather, his response was so notable before the Lord, that the Holy Spirit moved him to write it in Scripture for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I say this because some sophists have stumbled at men writing about themselves in Scripture. Other examples include Moses, who wrote that he was *"very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth"* (Num 12:3). John also wrote that he was *"that disciple whom Jesus loved"* (John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20). These accounts, as well as that of Daniel, were not self-assessments. They were written by Divine inspiration, and must be so regarded.

He Went Into His House

"^{10b} . . . he went into his house. . . " Immediately we see the decree had not the slightest impact upon Daniel's demeanor. It is as though he held utter disdain for a decree that forbade him to ask a petition of his God for thirty days. He did not go into the market place, or the king's palace, but to into his own house. That is where he was accustomed to praying, and he will not alter his manner.

Toward Jerusalem

"^{10c} . . . and his windows being open

BY THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND THE PERSIANS, FOR THIRTY DAYS, HE COULD NOT ASSOCIATE A SINGLE ONE OF HIS NEEDS OR QUESTS WITH THE GOD OF HEAVEN.

in his chamber toward Jerusalem . . . ” Daniel does not hide what he is doing. He does not close the windows so none can see him praying, for that was not his custom. **He would rather lose his life than alter a single facet of his life toward the Living God.** He will not bow to the king’s decree, just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow to Nebuchadnezzar’s image. He will not dishonor his God by closing his windows, but he has no compunctions about dishonoring the kingly edict by leaving them open.

However, his windows are not merely opened, they are open “toward Jerusalem.” There is no question about Daniel’s familiarity with Scripture. He was doubtless fully acquainted with Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple. There the wise king besought the Lord to remember prayers that were prayed toward their land, and particularly facing the Temple of God. That marvelous

way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance” (1 Kgs 8:35-36).

☐ **A SEEKING STRANGER.** “Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake; (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and **pray toward this house**; Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name” (1 Kgs 8:41-43).

☐ **IN TIMES OF BATTLE.** “If thy people go out to battle against their

with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee **toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name**: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause” (1 Kgs 8:47-49)

David also mentioned this manner of praying – toward Jerusalem and the Temple. “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship **toward thy holy temple**” (Psa 5:7). Jonah also did the same. “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again **toward thy holy temple**” (Jonah 2:4).

Thus Daniel, in the land of captivity, did precisely what Solomon had presented to the Lord. He prayed “toward Jerusalem,” the holy city, and toward the Temple of the Lord. Although he was in a strange land, his heart was in his homeland. He adjusted his circumstances to assist him to remember the city where God had placed His name (1 Kgs 11:36). By so doing, Daniel demonstrated that although he was in Babylon, and had been for many years, yet he remained a stranger in it. His citizenship was elsewhere.

Daniel was not praying to be seen of men, but was praying according to his usual manner. He did not alter it in any way – even though he was breaking the law of the land in doing so.

Upon His Knees

“^{10d} . . . he kneeled upon his knees . . . ” The posture of the aged prophet reminds me of Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple. Then Solomon “**kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven**” (2 Chr 6:13). Following his prayer Solomon “**arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven**” (1 Kgs 8:54).

This is a standard posture for people of God, and has been throughout history. Traditionally, and in hours of great need, godly men have humbled

THUS DANIEL, IN THE LAND OF CAPTIVITY, DID PRECISELY WHAT SOLOMON HAD PRESENTED TO THE LORD. HE PRAYED “TOWARD JERUSALEM,” THE HOLY CITY, AND TOWARD THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. ALTHOUGH HE WAS IN A STRANGE LAND, HIS HEART WAS IN HIS HOMELAND. HE ADJUSTED HIS CIRCUMSTANCES TO ASSIST HIM TO REMEMBER THE CITY WHERE GOD HAD PLACED HIS NAME

prayer contained at least five references to such prayers.

☐ **IN THE NORMALITIES OF LIFE.** “And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive” (1 Kgs 8:30).

☐ **IN TIMES OF CALAMITY.** “When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray **toward this place**, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good

enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and **toward the house** that I have built for thy name: Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause” (1 Kgs 8:44-45)

☐ **WHILE CAPTIVES IN ANOTHER LAND.** “Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; And so return unto thee with all their heart, and

themselves before the Lord by kneeling.

- ▶ **EZRA.** *“And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I **fell upon my knees**, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God”* (Ezra 9:5).
- ▶ **JESUS.** *“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and **kneeled down**, and prayed”* (Luke 22:41).
- ▶ **STEPHEN.** *“And he **kneeled down**, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep”* (Acts 7:60).
- ▶ **PETER.** *“But Peter put them all forth, and **kneeled down**, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up”* (Acts 9:40).
- ▶ **PAUL.** *“And when he had thus spoken, he **kneeled down**, and prayed with them all”* (Acts 20:36). *“And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we **kneeled down** on the shore, and prayed”* (Acts 21:5). *“For this cause I **bow my knees** unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph 3:14).

Three Times A Day

“^{10e} . . . three times a day, and prayed . . .” Daniel’s prayers were formal as well as fervent, and frequent as well. He not only refused to alter the manner in which he prayed, he did not reduce the number of his daily prayers. Like the parents of Moses, he was “not afraid of the king’s command” (Heb 11:23). He could confess with David, “I will not fear what flesh can do unto me” (Psa 56:4), and “I will not fear what man can do unto me” (Psa 118:6). He had the spirit of Isaiah, who was inspired to write, “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” (Isa 8:13).

Three times a day Daniel faced Jerusalem, knelt before the Lord, and

prayed. Throughout Scripture there are frequent references to three-fold prayers.

- ▶ When Elijah raised the widows son from the dead, he prayed “three times” (1 Kgs 17:21).
- ▶ David prayed three times a day: “evening, morning, and noon” (Psa 55:17).
- ▶ Jesus prayed the same prayer three times in Gethsemane (Matt 26:39-44).
- ▶ Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might be removed (2 Cor 12:8).

In praying three times a day, Daniel confirmed his dependency upon the Lord as well as His familiarity with Him. He was not willing to forfeit one of these times in order to please the king or save his life. I cannot conceive of him doing this out of a

of his life Godward. That is the circumstance the Lord chose to sanctify to our minds.

There are numerous incidents in Scripture of people who refused to obey the laws of the land – laws that went against the God of heaven and trust in him.

- ▶ The Egyptian midwives refused to obey the king in killing the newborn Hebrew males (Ex 1:17).
- ▶ Moses’ parents refused to obey the king’s command, sparing and protecting the infant Moses (Ex 2:2-10; Heb 11:23).
- ▶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image (Dan 3:18).
- ▶ The Apostles, when commanded to do so, refused to stop preaching in the

IN PRAYING THREE TIMES A DAY, DANIEL CONFIRMED HIS DEPENDENCY UPON THE LORD AS WELL AS HIS FAMILIARITY WITH HIM. HE WAS NOT WILLING TO FORFEIT ONE OF THESE TIMES IN ORDER TO PLEASE THE KING OR SAVE HIS LIFE. I CANNOT CONCEIVE OF HIM DOING THIS OUT OF A SENSE OF OBLIGATION.

sense of obligation. Rather, this was an aspect of Daniel living by faith. He would not exclude the Lord from a solitary segment of a single day.

Application

Most *Christians* could have a great deal more discipline when it comes to the matter of prayer. They are too slipshod in this aspect of the faith-life, praying only in times of crisis. Such individuals would find it easy to acquiesce with the laws of the land against prayer. They could no doubt cite many practical reasons for giving in to the pressure of the government. But when all is said and done, **God has provided us a record of a man unwilling to yield the smallest allegiance to the king at the expense**

name of Jesus (Acts 4:18-20).

When the government requires believers to alter their faith-life, it is not to be dignified with obedience. It is ever true, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

He Gave Thanks as Before

“^{10f} . . . prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. . . .” Even though a law had been passed specifically against **him**, Daniel not only prayed but was “giving thanks to his God, **just as he had done before.**”^{NIV}

A Unique Kind of Prayer

Here is a view of prayer not generally found among the heathen.

There are some few occasions in Scripture of wicked men praising their gods. Belshazzar and his wicked host did this (Dan 5:4,23). The Philistines sacrificed to their god and rejoiced saying, "Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand" (Judg 16:23,24).

Most of the prayers to false gods are for deliverance – and they are all vain (Judges 10:14; Isa 44:17; 45:20; 46:7; Jonah 1:5). Thanksgiving is not normal for idolaters. Even when it is offered, it is based upon delusion, for their false gods are "the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell" (Deu 4:28). In fact, the heathen, who know not God, are noted for a their lack of thanksgiving (Rom 1:21).

Thanksgiving is the acknowledgment of a living and powerful God, whose will is executed for the benefit of His people. Therefore, Daniel not only prayed with "supplications," but gave thanks as well – even under great duress and relentless opposition.

THEY FOUND HIM PRAYING

"¹¹ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."

This was the hour Daniel's enemies had been waiting for. They knew Daniel would not stop praying. They were fully aware that the powerful edict from one of the most influential kings of history would not move him to make the slightest alternation in practice.

As a group, they came and witnessed the prophet praying before his open window three times a day, while facing Jerusalem. The law they had drawn up and had the king sign forbade any petition to be made to anyone but Darius for thirsty days. When they came to Daniel's house, they heard him "praying and asking God for help." ^{NIV} I gather from this that Daniel was lifting up his voice. Now, his enemies have heard him.

AN APPLICATION

There are still people within the church who alter their manners, once dictated by their faith, to please men.

Some do it because they are afraid of the repercussions of godly manners. Others do it to court the friendship of those who have actually rejected the Son of God and prefer this world to the world to come. Such people would think nothing of closing their window, or ceasing the customs they once thought necessary. It would never enter their minds to refuse to acquiesce with the judgment of sinners.

We are living in a time when the church is more and more altering its manner. Gradually its quest to please God is supplanted an accommodation to this present evil world. It is caving in to the threats of the world, and catering more and more to its demands. These constitute "perilous times."

Unless these trends are abandoned, the judgment of God in some form will be forthcoming. God will not long endure those who are more afraid of men than of Him, and who alter their manners to please their foes instead of to serve Him – particularly when they have identified themselves as His people.

THE ENEMIES REPORT

"¹² Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not

The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. ¹³ Then

maketh his petition three times a day."

THUS THE PEOPLE OF GOD MUST NOT FEAR WHAT MEN CAN DO UNTO THEM. RATHER, THEY ARE TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO THE WORK THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO DO, TRUSTING IN THE LORD WITH ALL OF THEIR HEART, AND SEEKING HELP FROM HIM AS DANIEL DID.

Daniel's enemies do not wait for the word to get back to the king. They eagerly rush to him with their facts in hand, thinking to at last rid themselves of the man of God. They have the spirit of the raging kings of the Second Psalm. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psa 2:3).

They do not have the slightest notion that they are opposing God, and heaping up His wrath against themselves. They do not believe Daniel's God can protect him. They actually believe they have struck upon an sure way to bring Daniel down to disgrace and death. But they are wrong, and so is every person who thinks they can devise successful devices against the people of God. It has always been true, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31).

signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said,

answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but

Daniel's Faith is Tested when His Enemies Propose a Means of Getting Rid of Him, by Given O. Blakely

Sometimes it may appear as though this is not true. The prophet Zechariah may be killed in the very sanctuary of God (2 Chron 24:20-22; Lk 11:51). John the Baptist may be beheaded (Matt 14:10). Stephen may be stoned (Acts 7:58). In those case, what seemed to be successful was only possible because the work of those dear brethren had been completed. As we will see, Daniels' work is not yet finished, and therefore this malicious plot will not be successful.

Thus the people of God must not fear what men can do unto them.

Rather, they are to devote themselves to the work they have been given to do, trusting in the Lord with all of their heart, and seeking help from Him as Daniel did.

CONCERNING THE KING'S DECREE

"^{12a} Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

Behold their subtlety. At first they make no mention of Daniel, but draw attention to the kingly edict, as though the whole thing was Darius' idea. First they will ensure the king's mind is turned toward his own decree and his own power.

Do Not Underestimate the Enemy!

It is imperative that the saints refuse to underestimate the craftiness or commitment of their enemies. **They are so cunning and so insistent that it will require God to deliver us from them!**

See how quickly Daniel's enemies run to the king, wasting no time. They do not wait for the next day to level their charge, but get to the evil work immediately. They do not enter the king's court in a flush of rage, but with seeming interest for the welfare of the kingdom, and with the king's reputation apparently held high. In so doing, they are following the manner of their father the devil, who also endeavors to present a sound case against the people of God (Job 1:11; 2:5; Zech 3:1; Matt 4:6).

These shrewd opponents of the

man of God are very thorough in their presentation. Did the king sign the decree? Did the decree forbid every man to ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days? Were not all petitions to be addressed to him, and that without fail? Was not the penalty clearly established that all violators would be thrown into a den of lions?

Application

Many a professed believer has been

that could not under any circumstances be altered, nullified, or changed. It appears he has no idea that there has been any violation of his decree. In fact, he may have even thought these counselors were going to ask for some sort of modification of the law. Therefore, he quickly reminds them it is unchangeable.

That is precisely what Daniel's enemies wanted to hear. Now they will present their charge against Daniel.

IT IS GOOD TO REMEMBER THAT YOUR ENEMIES WILL LOSE NO TIME IN OPPOSING YOU. IF YOU MAKE A PRACTICE OF DELAYING YOUR PRAYERS, BEING "SLOW OF HEART," AND TARDY IN YOUR RESPONSES TO GOD, YOU WILL BE OVERCOME.

overcome because he confronted the enemy in his own strength, thinking himself equal to the adversary of our souls. **Whether we are considering the devil himself, or those who are working in league with him, we must take seriously the word of the Lord.** *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world"* (1 Pet 5:8-9).

It is good to remember that your enemies will lose no time in opposing you. If you make a practice of delaying your prayers, being *"slow of heart,"* and tardy in your responses to God, you WILL be overcome.

IT IS TRUE

"^{12b} . . . The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

The king answering immediately, affirms this had been done in strict accord with the law of the Medes and the Persians. He also declares that was a law

DANIEL IS CHARGED

"¹³ Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."

"That Daniel"

Behold with what utter disdain they refer to the man of God: *"THAT Daniel."* This is the Daniel the king had exalted to be over them. It is the Daniel the king had planned to place over the whole kingdom. Now *"that Daniel,"* upon whom such favor had been placed, had been found in violation of the unchangeable law of the land!

Of the Captivity of Judah

Further attention is drawn to Daniel by pointing out he is really not one of *"us"*— he is a foreigner in the land. But he is no mere visitor or sojourner. He is one of the *"captives"* of a military campaign. Disobedience to the king would not be allowed from any Mede or Persian. It surely would not be allowed from any Babylonian, whose nation had recently been conquered by Darius. Much less,

therefore, should insolence be tolerated from a captive man from Judah.

Does Not Regard Thee

Thus Daniel is represented as having no regard or respect for the king. All the more, considering his position, should Daniel be required to honor the word of the king! He had been exalted and given special favor. Now he has shown his true colors by thinking more of his God than of the

one who exalted him to prominence and favor. According to his enemies, Daniel *“pays no attention to you . . . or to the decree you put in writing.”*^{NASB} These words are calculated to stir up the anger of the king, whose authority, it is affirmed, has been deliberately challenged by Daniel.

Three Times a Day

These foes are not presenting a single violation of the law, although

that would be sufficient to incur condemnation. **Daniel has not disobeyed the king once, but is doing so three times every day! In a month he would break the law ministry times!** He is, according to these men, living in a state of rebellion against the king, disdain for his person, and disobedience to his law. Surely, the enemies must reason, this will turn the king against Daniel.

FOOLISH FOR THE FLESH, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOD TO WORK

“¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.”

Now the king suddenly perceives he has, in fact, been trapped – moved to make a foolish decree. He should have been more alert to the vileness of these counselors – but it was too late now. A real dilemma has now been created by a foolish decree.

DISPLEASED WITH HIMSELF

“¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself . . . ” The words of the decree, actually framed by the officials and designed to make the king displeased with Daniel, **instead made him displeased with himself** – *“sore displeased,”* or *“deeply distressed.”*^{NASB} Other versions read, *“the king was very angry with himself for signing the law,”*^{NLT} and *“The king was deeply grieved at this news.”*^{NAB}

The king had acted in haste, relying too much on the wisdom of his counselors. His pride had gotten the best of him, moving him to make a foolish decree, like Jephthah made a foolish vow

(Judges 11:30-36). **It is interesting that the king was not displeased with his wicked counselors who put forth the suggestion in the first place.** However, because he is the king, and because he should have been more wise, he is presently *“sorely displeased”* with himself. The great weight of responsibility rested upon him, and he knew it.

At this point, the king does not yet see the intentions of the counselors was not to bring the king’s honor, but rather the destruction of Daniel. However, this will become apparent to him later (6:24).

Application

King Darius was not the last person to become displeased when facing the consequences of his own decision. At some time, nearly all people have had to face the results of foolish decisions, words, and deeds. **We do well to learn from accounts like this to live in the power of faith instead of the wisdom of men, or the emotion of the moment.**

There is a natural decline in the human capacity to think, respond, and purpose. When men are not motivated by faith and the fear of the Lord, they tend to become foolish. When they move away from thought and due consideration into the realm of feeling and emotion, they become more foolish still. If they are moved by the thoughts and emotions of others rather than their own, they fall into a bottomless pit of

corruption. **It is time to bring faith, and thinking that is motivated by faith, into a prominent position in the churches.** There is no need for those in Christ to fall into the same snare as Darius the Mede.

HE TRIED TO DELIVER DANIEL

“ . . . and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.” Other versions read, *“set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him,”*^{NASB} *“he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him,”*^{NIV} and *“he tried to find a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.”*^{NLT}

Within a very brief period of time, Daniel had fully justified the king’s trust in him. You may recall Nebuchadnezzar made no effort to save Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. Nor, indeed, did he seek a way to exonerate them or change the law he had made. But this was not the case with Darius. He was diligent to find any way possible to *“get Daniel out of this predicament.”* This reveals what a high estimation he placed upon the man of God.

We are not told what measures he sought. Perhaps he tried to find some technicality in the law that would allow for the edict to be changed. Maybe he sought a precedent for

treating an exceptional man differently. At any rate, no way was found.

This is a most remarkable incident. **Here was a monarch with unspeakable power, yet he could not set aside the law of the land.** Not only that, this law had been devised by calculating men, who were seeking the removal of a single individual.

In some ways, the incident is similar to Pilate's trying of Jesus Christ. After being warned by his wife to have nothing to do with "*this just man*," Pilate sought to find a convenient way to release Jesus, but could find none that suited him. **In his case, the law of the land was not the point, but the will of the people.** However, in both the case of Pilate and that of Darius, the Lord was working being the scenes. The mighty God of heaven was orchestrating the affairs of men in order to bring glory to His holy name.

A SAD REMINDER

"¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

When the men realized the king was having second thoughts on the matter, they gathered together for the final assault. They threw the law of the Medes and Persians in his face. "*Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, 'Remember, O king, that*

according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'" ^{NIV} Now they press the battle, showing the wickedness of their own hearts. **They are**

their own popularity and position among men. Thus in the Revelation, John is shown a depiction of world government that shows it to be a ruthless "*beast*" (Rev 13:1-2). That is precisely

THUS RIGHT AND WRONG ARE NOT LONGER THE ISSUE. THE LAW, IN THIS CASE, HAS SUPERCEDED MORALITY. IT NOW REQUIRES THE DEATH OF A MAN WHO HAS DONE NOTHING THAT IS OF ITSELF WRONG OR IMMORAL.

intimidated by the presence and person of Daniel, and will spare no effort to get rid of him.

In giving this subtle reminder, these men are suggesting Darius' reputation will be tarnished if he goes against the law of his own people. As the rumor of his vacillation circulated through the empire, a great disrespect would no doubt be developed for him. How are people to feel about a king who changes his mind, and does not abide by the law he himself professes to honor?

Thus right and wrong are not longer the issue. The law, in this case, has superceded morality. It now requires the death of a man who has done nothing that is of itself wrong or immoral.

That, of course, is the nature of the governments and kings of this world. **Eventually, they are willing to do what is wrong in order to maintain**

why the Kingdom of God will decimate every single one of them, just as God has declared. "*And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever*" (Dan 2:44). Those who have an inordinate affection for the governments of this world, regardless of their origin and present manner, do well to remember this.

THE STAGE IS SET

Thus the stage is set for the working of the Lord. He has dried up every human resource, and taken away every conceivable way to deliver Daniel in the flesh, or by human authority. Now, the events are set for the Lord to work for His own glory, the deliverance of Daniel, and the edifying of His people. The Lord will reveal His devotion to and consistent love for His people.

CONCLUSION

Is it really true, "*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the*

kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

you falsely, for my sake" (Mat 5:10-11)?

Indeed it is! This passage will affirm that the decisions of our enemies **are not the final word.** The laws of the land, corrupt though they may be and powerful though their rulers may be, **are not the determining factor.** God IS the "*Governor among the nations*" (Psa 22:28). He does according to His will "*among the inhabitants of the earth,*" which before Him "*are reputed as*

EVENTUALLY, ALL MEN ARE LIKE DARIUS — THEY ARE HELPLESS TO DO WHAT GOD ALONE CAN DO. THEY CANNOT EFFECT DELIVERANCE, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE. FAITH MUST BE IN GOD!

nothing” (Dan 4:35). The Lord DOES “*know how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*” (2 Pet 2:9). That is a reality our hearts must grasp.

Even though Darius was kindly disposed toward Daniel, it would have been entirely out of order for the prophet to trust him, or put his

confidence in him. It is still true, “*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man*” (Psa 118:8). That is true even if men are inclined toward us, and energetically seek ways to benefit us. **Eventually, all men are like Darius – they are helpless to do what God alone can do.** No amount of earthly learning or influence can change that condition. They cannot effect deliverance, even though they

are in positions of authority and have great influence and power. Faith must be in God, with whom all things are possible! It is marvelous to be persuaded of this.

Daniel knew this, and depended upon it. Darius did not. Daniel knew this, the Babylonian wise men did not. The question is, do you know it in your heart and by faith?

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/6/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 16-28 of the sixth chapter. The lesson is titled, **“DANIEL PASSES THE TEST.”** After being challenged to either cease from praying to God for a season, or be thrown into a den of ravenous lions, Daniel makes his choice without hesitation. In this lesson we will see how he passed the test of his faith. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

*The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801*

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (ALHutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

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