

DANIEL 6

REVIEW...

- King Belshazzar - was the son of Evil-Merodach - the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar...
 - He made a great feast in the city of Babylon – WHILE the Medo-Persians were at the gates...
 - After Belshazzar got drunk – he commanded to bring the gold from the Temple in Jerusalem...
 - That very hour a hand appeared – and a finger wrote on the plaster wall by the King...
 - When the King saw it his knees knocked – and he broke down and began to cry...
 - He called for all the wise men to come – but they could not interpret the writing!
- The Queen came and told Belshazzar not to be troubled or afraid...
 - She knew of a man in whom dwelt the spirit of the holy god – his name was Daniel...
 - Since Daniel had shown ability to interpret dreams / solve riddles – give him a call!
 - The king offered Daniel riches – 3rd ruler in the Kingdom of Babylon – to interpret the writing...
 - Daniel told the king to keep the money – and the position – because it would not last!
- Belshazzar had seen his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar humbled by the Most High...
 - Yet rather than humbling himself – he instead exalting himself above the Lord of Heaven...
 - Giving praise to the gods of gold / silver – rather than glorifying the God who gave him breath!
 - Mene – God had numbered his kingdom / Tekel – weighed him in the balance – wanting...
 - Upharsin - divided the kingdom and given over to the Medes and the Persians!
 - King Cyrus of Medo-Persia entered Babylon that night – and he killed Belshazzar!

SHUTTING THE LIONS MOUTH... (3 THINGS)

- 1ST – THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL... vs. 1-9
 - 1st – Dividing the Empire... vs. 1-3
 - Cyrus was the first King of the Medo-Persia Empire – he conquered Babylon...
 - King Darius – the name means Lord – was a ruler in the Medo-Persian Empire...
 - But 'Darius the Mede' was not Darius I – who would later be the 4th King...
 - He is thought to be the ruler Cyrus set up over the Babylonian empire – **Daniel 9:1**
 - Darius made the decision to divide the responsibilities of governing Babylon...
 - He set 120 satraps / or governors over the kingdom – to help with the responsibility...
 - Because there are only so many hours in a day - so much he could do on his own!
 - I knew a girl who know matter what you asked her to do - she would say yes...
 - She meant well - but the reality was - there was no way she could do it all!
 - Maybe it is because of pride - we think we are the only ones who can do the work...
 - Maybe it is trying to please men - thinking if we say no they will be upset...
 - Either way - when we try to do too much - we end up getting into a lot of trouble...
 - We end up burned out - tired - frustrated – likely unable accomplish anything!
 - We end up upsetting others - we are spread so thin we end up not getting anything done!
 - We keep others from being able to help out – because we do not give them the opportunity!
 - Over those 120 men – he set 3 men – and Daniel was one of them...
 - And the King thought to put Daniel over them all because he distinguished himself!
 - This was a new Kingdom – so his previous accomplishments likely counted for little...
 - The suggestion is that the same 'excellent spirit' Daniel had shown to Nebuchadnezzar...
 - He still had some 50 years later under the reign of a new King / empire!
 - Daniel did not just start well – he was a man who was consistent to the end!

- The Christian life is like a race - with a beginning and end...
- We began the race the day we believed in Jesus - it ends the day we die...
- So often as believers we start off well in our race - but we do not finish well...
- We treat it like a sprint - but after a while we get tired - distracted - and give up...
- The Christian life is not a sprint - it is a marathon...
- **Hebrews 12:1** - "[So] let us strip off every... sin that so easily hinders our progress. Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."

o 2nd – Looking for accusations... vs. 4-5

- The other governors looked for something to accuse Daniel of...
 - Likely as not these leaders were jealous of the success / prosperity of Daniel...
 - But there was nothing they could accuse Daniel of – because he was faithful (*he had faith*)!
 - The only thing they could resort to – was to accuse him concerning his faith in God!
- We need to know – when we stand up for Jesus – we are a target...
 - **Luke 22:31** - "Simon, Satan has asked to have all of you, to sift you like wheat."
 - I imagine those were VERY unsettling words to hear - 'satan knows my name'...
 - But make no mistake – if we stand up for Jesus – satan knows who we are...
 - And he will come test us - try us - to see what we are made of...
 - Get people will make false accusation against us – try and discourage us!
- All the more reason to be sure we are faithful in our walk with God...
 - I had a guy once accuse me of being unworthy to be a pastor because of past mistakes...
 - But that gave me the opportunity to share about what Jesus had done in my life!
 - Faithful does not mean we are perfect – no one is – we will make mistakes...
 - It means we have faith in God – trusting in Him / and the hope we have because of Him...
 - Then if anyone wants to make an accusation against us – we point them back to Jesus!
 - **I Peter 2:12** – "Careful to live properly among our unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse us of doing wrong, they will see our honorable behavior, and will give honor to God..."

o 3rd – Appealing to pride... vs. 6-9

- The governors thronged into see the King – and began to butter him up – 'Live forever'...
 - They suggested the King pass a law – signed in writing so it could not be changed...
 - No one could petition either man or god – except the King - for 30 days...
 - If they did they would immediately be thrown into the Lions den...
 - I am sure this also made a lot of sense to the King – he was a new ruler over a foreign land...
 - This was a way of 'encouraging' the conquered Babylonians to fall into line!
 - But King Darius like the idea – it suggested he was an equal to god – so he signed into Law!
- These governors did not think much of Darius – they were just playing him...
 - They were using flattering words – and playing to his pride – to get what they wanted!
 - Be careful to place confidence in the flattery of those who want something from you!
 - **Proverbs 27:6** - "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
- And giving into pride would almost cost Darius a close friend!
 - **Proverbs 16:18** – "Pride goes before destruction, an arrogant spirit before a fall."
 - Pride can be tricky – it is not always easy to see – but it always sets us up for a fall...
 - Pride can be – I think I know it all / I am never wrong / I do not need correction...
 - Pride can also be – thinking I am nothing / being shy / pride means its all about me...
 - Whether it is arrogance / or 'false' humility – if I am the focus it is pride...
 - If I am the focus – then I am not looking to Jesus – and I am destruction is sure to follow!

• 2ND – INTO THE LIONS DEN... vs. 10-17

- o 1st - Daniel knowing the law had been signed – went home and prayed... vs. 10
 - Because Daniel was going to be obedient to law of God – before the laws of men...
 - While are called to be obedient to the government – **Romans 13:1**
 - Some Christians take that to mean we just to accept whatever a government does...
 - But we are not to idly stand by and do nothing when faced with evil leaders...
 - When a government stops listening to and following the Word of God...
 - It is our responsibility as Christians – to peacefully stand up to the government!
 - Daniel went to the upper room to seek the Lord – his prayer closet - **Matthew 6:5**
 - There is nothing wrong with a public prayer to God...
 - But we need to watch the motive of the heart - do not pray to impress others...
 - Prayer should be natural - simple conversation with God - no matter who is there!
 - Daniel opened up his window – he was not afraid to stand up for the Lord...
 - There is always a temptation to want to blend into the crowd – to be accepted...
 - But if we are not willing to take a stand for Jesus today – **Luke 12:8**
 - Then He will not stand for us before the 'Judgment seat of God'!
 - Daniel knelt and prayed towards Jerusalem – **I Kings 8:48**...
 - When Solomon dedicated the Temple – in his prayer to God he added...
 - When your people are in the land of their enemies who led them away captive...
 - And they pray to You toward Jerusalem and the temple - then hear in heaven!
 - Not that there is a special or required position when it comes to pray...
 - God does not listen to a prayer made on your knees any more than praying standing...
 - Or a special place where God listens better than others – Jerusalem is a local call...
 - It is all about our heart when we pray - we cannot have a bad prayer with the right heart...
 - If you wonder if you are praying the 'right way' - you are asking the wrong question...
 - Ask yourself why you are praying - if your motive is right - your prayer is right on!
 - Daniel prayed 3 times a day – as was his custom for his early days - **Psalms 55:17**
 - People often times talk about having quite time with the Lord in the morning...
 - You might ask – what is the best time when we should seek the Lord...
 - It is not about when we seek that Lord – the key is THAT we consistently seek the Lord!
- 2nd – Be careful what you say... vs. 11-17
 - The Governors thronged (*same word vs. 6*) in to 'find' Daniel praying...
 - They could not wait to make the accusation against him – dragging him before the King...
 - They reminded the king of the law he had just signed – that could not be altered...
 - Then accused Daniel of not 'honoring' the King – because he prayed to God 3 times a day!
 - When the King heard this he was displeased – literally his words had a bad odor...
 - And he worked all that day – until sunset – to try and undo his actions!
 - The Governors thronged Darius (*same as vs. 11*) to make sure Daniel was thrown to the Lions...
 - So the King brought Daniel to the den – but before he was tossed in...
 - He told him – the God whom you serve continually WILL deliver you!
 - Then the stone was rolled over – and the King and Governors put their seal on it...
 - This was to assure the governors the King would not come and rescue Daniel from his fate!
 - Too often in life we say something without thinking it through...
 - Then after the fact - when things have gone terribly wrong – we regret what we said...
 - So since it is easy to say something – but almost impossible to take our words back...
 - Better to think first before we speak – then face the consequence of our words!
 - **Proverbs 29:20** – “Do you see a man hasty in his words? More hope for a fool than for him.”
- 3rd – THE LIVING GOD... vs. 18-28
 - o 1st – The Repentance of the King... vs. 18

- Darius knew that Daniel was likely dead because of his mistake...
 - And he regretted having giving into his pride / and hastily signing the law...
 - It caused him to loose his appetite – he spent the whole night fasting...
 - He refused to be entertained – music (*concubines*) – and did not sleep the whole night...
 - Yet there was nothing he could do – but wait to see if God would spare Daniel!
- When we sin - it does not just affect our lives – it also damages others...
 - When we tell a lie – and destroy the trust of those we care the most for...
 - When we lash out in angry words when we are frustrated – and bring our love into doubt...
 - The hardest part of dealing with the damage we cause – is often there nothing we can do...
 - We are left with guilt that robs us of the joy of life – no desire to eat / be entertained...
 - It causes us to have countless sleepless nights – all because of foolish choices!
 - The best solution is not to give into pride - make hasty foolish choices / words...
 - But if / when we do – run quickly to Jesus – because He can heal and restore!
- o 2nd – Shutting the mouth of the lion... vs. 19-23
 - Darius rose early in the morning – and ran to the den...
 - He cried out – asking doubtfully (*grieved*) if had God been able to save Daniel...
 - The lions were hungry – he knew they wanted nothing more than to devour Daniel!
 - But Daniel answered – God had sent an angel to shut their mouths – **Hebrews 11:33**
 - So Darius had him lifted out of the pit – and there was not a scratch found on him!
 - God had saved Daniel from the Lions – because he had faith in God!
 - When we have faith in Jesus – the roaring lion cannot touch us - **I Peter 5:8**
 - When the disciples returned to Jesus from being sent out they were amazed...
 - They said even the demons are subject to us through your name – **Luke 10:17**
 - But Jesus did them one better - not only were demons subject to Him...
 - He had seen the fall of satan from glory - kicked out of heaven - **Revelation 12:9**
 - He fell like a flash of lightning - so quick if you had blinked you would have missed it!
 - Satan seeks to devour us - **Revelation 12:10** - wants to see us condemned to hell...
 - He has all the 'evidence' he needs - all our sins / our immoral thoughts...
 - But Jesus destroyed the power of satan - so that he has nothing to accuse us of...
 - All our sins were paid for in full on the cross - we are untouchable in Jesus!
 - With God on our side we have nothing to fear from satan - our enemy...
 - **Isaiah 54:17** - "No weapon formed against you shall prosper..."
 - **I John 4:4** - "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."
- o 3rd – The destruction of the wicked... vs. 24
 - Darius commanded the men who had accused – 'sought to devour' Daniel with their words...
 - Be brought with their wives and children – and thrown into the lions den...
 - Before they even hit the floor – the lions broke every bone – and devoured them...
 - Proving the miracle of Daniel surviving – it was not because the Lions were not hungry...
 - Also showing when we try to devour others – we ourselves are devoured!
 - **James 3:3** - "The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do."
 - When we choose to pass on the latest juicy stories - gossip...
 - When we use sarcasm - trying to be funny - but instead cutting those we love...
 - Time will heal many kinds of wounds - but words leave marks that last a lifetime...
 - We need to be careful of our words - careful who is listening to what we say...
 - **Galatians 5:15** – "If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed..."
- o 4th – The God of Daniel... vs. 25-28
 - Then Darius wrote a new decree – to all people / nations / and languages on earth...
 - Everyone must tremble and fear the God of Daniel – because He is:

- The living God who never changes / His Kingdom will never be destroyed – last forever...
- He delivers and rescues with signs and wonders – Daniel and the lions being an example!
- I am sure Daniel would rather NOT have been the example...
 - It would have been nice NOT to have to be thrown into a Den of lions for a night...
 - But it was BECAUSE of the lions – the whole world got to hear about the Living God!
 - This is a theme we have seen often repeated in the Book of Daniel...
 - **Daniel 3:29** – “Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against God...”
 - **Daniel 4:1** – “Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth... I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders!”
 - But note that in every instance it was through TRIALS that God was MAGNIFIED!
 - The fiery furnace / the madness of a king / the lions den...
 - God is rarely magnified through our lives when we are blessed...
 - Instead it is in the hardships of live / the trials – that people get to see Jesus in us...
 - If we praise God when we are being blessed – that is nothing unusual...
 - But if we praise God when life is falling apart – then the world takes note!
 - So WHEN we find ourselves in a trial we GET TO rejoice...
 - Because it means God is using us to MAGNIFY Himself to a world that needs to HOPE!
 - **James 1:2** – “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations...”