

DANIEL 5

REVIEW...

- King Nebuchadnezzar Nebby wrote a letter to tell the world about his experience with God...
 - Nebby was at rest in his palace when he had a dream that was deeply troubling to him...
 - He called for all the wise men – but they could not tell him the interpretation...
 - Finally the King called in Daniel – confident he could interpret the dream!
- There was a very high tree standing in the middle of the earth – reaching up to heaven...
 - It could be seen from every corner of the planet – with lovely leaves / abundant fruit...
 - Then a watcher (*angel*) came down from heaven – chop down the tree!
 - But leave the stump – let him graze with the beasts - till 7 times have passed over him!
- The dream troubled the heart of Daniel – because the tree in the dream was Nebuchadnezzar...
 - As a result of his pride – the Most High would decree he be driven from men...
 - He would live in the wild – eat grass like an ox – sleep in the open fields...
 - Till 7 years passed – and Nebby learned the Most High rules the Kingdom of men!
- After 12 months – the king was walking around the royal palace in Babylon boasting...
 - That hour Nebby went mad – and lived out in the fields – hair and nails growing wild...
 - But after 7 years – Nebby looked up to heaven and his understanding returned to him...
 - Then not only did Nebby get his mind back – his Spirit was reborn – and he became King again!

THE FALL OF BABYLON... (3 THINGS)

- 1ST – THE WRITING ON THE WALL... VS. 1-9
 - 1st – King Belshazzar...
 - Was the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar – the son of Evil-Merodach...
 - After the death of Nebby in 562B.C. – his son Evil-Merodach only reigned for 2 years...
 - He was assassinated by his brother in law *Neriglissar* - who then took the throne...
 - *Neriglissar* only ruled for 4 years – then his son *Labashi-Marduk* took his place...
 - But *Labashi-Marduk* only reigned for 9 months – and he was assassinated...
 - Belshazzar then took the throne – restoring the kingship to the line of Nebuchadnezzar!
 - He is often referred to as the son of Nebby – but son in the Bible just refers to descendant
 - The Bible skips over the 2 ‘usurper kings’ - only listing the lineage of Nebby...
 - Even predicting that all nations would serve Nebby – his son – and his grandson!
 - **Jeremiah 27:7** – “So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.”
 - Because all authority comes from God – and He appoint Kings and rulers...
 - And often-repeated theme in the book of Daniel – and a comforting one to us today...
 - There is actually a term today – election stress – and 52% of Americans say it affects them!
 - People look at the upcoming election and it makes them lose sleep – who will win...
 - The correct answer is not the one that wins the most votes – its the one God chooses!
 - 2nd – King Belshazzar made a great feast in the city of Babylon... vs. 1
 - He invited thousands of his princes – and he drank LOTS of wine in front of them...
 - But while the king was feasting – the armies of Medo-Persia were at the gates...
 - Under the leadership of Cyrus – they had surrounded and laid siege to the city...
 - But Belshazzar was not worried – he was behind walls that were 80 feet thick...
 - He had PLENTY of food / and MORE than enough water to last for years...
 - So rather than worrying about defending the city – he threw a party and got drunk!

- So many people today live their lives in the same way – having fun / getting drunk...
 - Assuming they have nothing to fear from the judgment that is at the gates...
 - They do realize that Jesus is coming soon – and they will have to answer for their sins...
 - That is were we come in - it is our opportunity to share with them - to warn them...
 - They may mock us - they might not believe - but then again they might and be saved!
- o 3rd - Praising the Gods of silver and gold... vs. 2-4
- While Belshazzar tasted the wine – got REALLY drunk – he gave the command...
 - Bring out gold and silver vessels his ‘father’ had captured from the Temple in Jerusalem...
 - So with his princes / wives / and his concubines – they drank from the cups...
 - Praising the gods of gold / silver / bronze / iron / and wood!
 - A great example of making a foolish choice under the influence of alcohol...
 - The Bible does not say that it is wrong for others to drink alcohol – but - (*4 things*)
 - 1st - Do not to be drunk...
 - **Ephesians 5:18** – “Do not be drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit.”
 - The Bible does say it is wrong to be drunk – to loose self control...
 - Much better to be filled with the Holy Sprit!
 - When full of wine you will do things you will regret (*and not remember*)...
 - When you are full of the Spirit you will do great things for God that never fade!
 - 2nd - Remember not to stumble other brothers and sisters...
 - **I Corinthians 8:13** – “If what I eat [*or drink*] is going to make another Christian sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live, for I don’t want to make another Christian stumble.”
 - We may have the liberty – and self-control – to drink moderately - occasionally...
 - But that does not mean that everyone else around us does...
 - If my freedom in Christ causes someone else to sin - then I should not drink...
 - Do not use your freedom in Christ – to destroy the faith of someone else!
 - 3rd - Do what the Holy Spirit says...
 - Can we drink – wrong question – should we drink – right question...
 - I can drink all I want – I just do not want to drink...
 - As with all things - pray and ask the Lord if He wants me drink...
 - If I can drink with a clean conscience – then no problem...
 - If the Lord is convicting me of drinking – ask Him to take away the desire to drink...
 - **Romans 14:23** – “...for whatever is not from faith is sin.”
- o 4th – The finger of God... vs. 5-9
- That very hour a hand appeared – and wrote opposite the lampstand...
 - There is speculation if the lampstand might have been the Menorah from the Temple...
 - The hand wrote on the plaster wall – the location of a kind of de facto library ...
 - It would have been inscribed with all the mighty works and deed of the Kings...
 - The King could make out the finger as it wrote – but he could not understand the writing!
 - It was the finger of God - an interesting term used several times in the Bible...
 - It was used by the magicians of Pharaoh to describe the plagues of Egypt – **Exodus 8:19**
 - It is used to describe how God wrote down the commandment for Moses – **Exodus 31:18**
 - It was used by Jesus – to show that the Kingdom of God had arrived!
 - **Luke 11:20-23** - “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you... He who is not with Me is against Me...”
 - This is actually where we get the idiom – ‘the writing is on the wall’...
 - Carrying the idea that something ominous or bad is about to happen...
 - Just as it was for Belshazzar – the writing is also on the wall for our world today...
 - God has given us His word – FINGERPRINT – laying out the standard of truth – His LAW...

- Warning us that His KINGDOM IS COMING – and we have one simple choice to make...
- Either we stand with Jesus – or we are opposed to him – and ominous warning indeed!
- When the King saw it his knees knocked – and he broke down and began to cry...
 - He called for all the wise men to interpret it for him – offered them riches and power...
 - But they all failed – so the countenance of the King changed – and there was confusion!
 - They could not interpret the words because they did not know God who wrote them!
 - Have you ever accidentally got a text that was intended for someone else...
 - It made no sense to you - because it was not written to you...
 - In the same way the Bible is a letter written by God to His kids – so if you are not saved...
 - Reading the Bible is like reading a text meant for someone else!
 - **I Corinthians 2:14** – “People who are not Christians can not understand... It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand.”

● 2ND – CALLING ON DANIEL... vs. 10-17

o 1st – Daniel had a reputation... vs. 10-12

- The Queen came and told Belshazzar not to be troubled or afraid...
 - This is thought to be Queen Nitocris – the wife of Nebuchadnezzar or Evil-Merodach...
 - She knew of a man in who dwelt the spirit of the holy god - 'elahh' (*Allah*)...
 - In the days of Nebby he had show great wisdom – like the wisdom of the gods - 'elahh'...
 - Nebby raised him up to be head over all the wise men of Babylon...
 - Since Daniel had shown ability to interpret dreams / solve riddles – give him a call!
- Daniel had a good reputation – something we should all seek to have...
 - This does not mean that we have to be perfect – but we should be living a Godly life...
 - What is ok for other people – is not be acceptable for us – we have a different standard...
 - Because when we step out to follow Jesus – we paint a bullseye ourselves...
 - And we do not want to give satan / world any ammunition to work with!
 - **Proverbs 22:1** - “Choose a good reputation over great riches...”

o 2nd – Not impressed by the gift... vs. 13-17

- The King called for Daniel – and reminding him he was just a slave (*captive from Judah*)...
 - Yet he was a man whose reputation became known – perhaps just recently – to the king...
 - Since no one else could interpret the writing on the wall – if Daniel succeeded...
 - He would be given riches – and made 3rd ruler in the Kingdom of Babylon...
- Daniel was not impressed with the gift...
 - He told the king to keep the money – and the position – it would not last...
 - The interpretation Daniel was about to give the King - his Kingdom was about to end...
 - Unfortunately most people today strive after riches and power...
 - They seek to be rewarded for their efforts here on earth – with fleeting gifts...
 - How much better to invest in the things of the Lord – that will never fade away!
 - 10,000 years from now in heaven - no one will care how much money we made...
 - No one will be impressed by where we worked – what care we drove...
 - But the thanks of a friend who you introduced to Jesus - will never fade away!
 - It is the things we do for the Lord that last forever – **Matthew 6:20**

● 3RD – INTERPRETING THE WRITING... vs. 18-28

o 1st – The contrast of Kings... vs. 18-23

- The Most high God had given Nebuchadnezzar majesty / greatness...
 - All nations trembled before him – he could kill at whim / raise up whom he pleased...
 - But when he became prideful – God humbled him – he went mad for 7 years...
 - Till he learned the lesson that the Most High rules over the Kingdom of men...

- Yet Belshazzar had not humbled himself – though he knew the history of his grandfather!
- In fact Belshazzar is noted in history as being a petty and mean king...
- He killed one of his nobles because while hunting the noble killed the game before him...
- He unmanned a courtier at a banquet because one of his concubines called him handsome!
- It is far wiser to learn from the mistakes of others - rather than repeating them...
- Unfortunately sometimes we refuse to learn – so are doomed to repeat the mistakes...
- We have to go through the school of hard knocks – and learn the hard way!
- Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar had VERY similar stories – both men fell to PRIDE...
- But one was restored whereas the other was cast down and forsaken...
- Because where one LOOKED UP – the looked to the resources of this WORLD!
- Belshazzar exalting himself above the Lord of Heaven...
 - Bringing the cups from the Temple into his pagan celebration...
 - Giving praise to the gods of gold / silver / bronze / iron / stone / and wood...
 - Not glorifying the God who gave him breath – the one who owned all his ways!
 - It was not that Belshazzar did not know who God was – he had seen the proof...
 - But he rejected God because he would rather have his sin than God!
 - Giving credit to silver and gold – rather than the God who made them!
 - We might think - how foolish to trust in gold and silver – the god of wood!
 - We might argue that we are far beyond that – we are far more educated today...
 - But we forget what our money is made of – paper is a wood product...
 - Many still trust in George - \$1 / Abe - \$5 / and our favorite – Ben - \$100 to save them!
 - **Isaiah 44:19-20** - “The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, ‘Why, it’s just a block of wood! Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?’”
- o 2nd – The meaning of the writing... vs. 24-28
 - It is thought that the 3 words were written in Hebrew script...
 - Making it impossible for the Babylonians to read it – it was a different language...
 - But it was something that Daniel would have known – and been able to interpret!
 - Mene (*repeated twice*) – God has numbered your kingdom... vs. 24-26
 - The timing was no accident – 539 B.C. – 70 years after the captivity...
 - It was the time when God said the Kingdom of Babylon was going to be judged / ended!
 - **Jeremiah 25:12** – “‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.’”
 - Tekel – You have been weighed in the balance... vs. 27
 - Belshazzar – and in fact Babylon as a whole – had been weighed in the balance...
 - The idea was they had been put on a scale – and their works compared...
 - And they were found lacking – they were not good enough to escape the judgment!
 - The idea of being weighed in the balance has often been confused...
 - Leading people to think that their works will also be weighed in the balance...
 - And as long as their good works outweigh their bad works – God will accept them...
 - But Good works cannot TAKE AWAY sin - we cannot earn our way to heaven...
 - All men will be judged one day according to their works – **Revelation 20:11**
 - Not to see if they will go to heaven or hell – but to show why they will go to hell...
 - Unless their name is written in THE Book of Life - then they are saved...
 - Not because their good works outweighed their bad – because they believed in Jesus!
 - Upharsin (*they are dividing*) / Peres (*it has been divided*)... vs. 28
 - Your kingdom has been divided – and given over to two different groups...
 - It would be giving to the Kingdom of the Medes and the Persians...

- As Daniel was speaking these words – Cyrus was already entering the city...
- The Euphrates River flowed through the city of Babylon...
- Cyrus redirected the river opening up a way into the walled city on the dry riverbed!

● **4TH – THE FALL OF BABYLON... VS. 29-31**

o 1st – Gifts for Daniel...

- Belshazzar gave the purple robe / gold / and position to Daniel - but it meant very little...
 - When King Cyrus of Medo-Persia entered Babylon that night – he killed Belshazzar...
 - He took the city without a fight – it took 3 days for many in the city to learn it had fallen!
 - Darius the Mede then received the Kingdom (*of Babylon*) – he was 63 years old...
 - This Darius the Mede is not Darius I – who would later be the 3rd King of Medo-Persia...
 - This is thought to be Gubaru – a governor Cyrus set up over the Babylonians – **Daniel 9:1**

o 2nd – Prophecy from Daniel...

- When Cyrus conquered Babylon – killed Belshazzar...
 - Daniel – then an old man - walked up and showed Cyrus a Bible verse...
 - One the Prophet Isaiah written some 150 years before Cyrus was even born!
 - **Isaiah 45:1** – “This is what the LORD says to Cyrus, his anointed one... Their fortress gates will be opened, never again to shut against him.”
- Cyrus was understandably impressed – what did the God of Israel want...
 - **Isaiah 44:28** – “Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”’”
 - God gave specific instructions to Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple!
 - **Psalms 119:105** – “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
 - If you are holding a flashlight you shine it way out in front so you can see far...
 - But the Word of God is a lamp to our feet - it only shows the next step...
 - Only when we take that step - we can then see the next step to take!
 - If we knew exactly where we were going / what to do - it would not take faith!
 - **II Corinthians 5:7** – “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

o 3rd – Prayer of Daniel

- **Daniel 9:1-3** – “In the first year of Darius... I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”
- Daniel read the prophecy of Jeremiah – and understood its fulfillment was coming soon...
- His response was to ‘set his face towards God – and pray’!
- Because although he did not know the day or the hour – he wanted to be ready!
- We read our Bibles – and we see the prophecies coming true – Jesus is coming soon...
- The question is do we believe – do we respond like Daniel and go to our knees to get ready!
- When we least expect it – Jesus will come like thief in the night - **I Thessalonians 5:2**
- And if we are not ready - if we miss it - then we will be left behind...
- We need to be ready – although no man knows the day and the hour - **Mark 13:32**
- Lets live every day knowing today could well be the day we see Jesus!
- **Luke 21:28** - “Stand straight and look up, for your salvation is near!”²