



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 18



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 -----

DANIEL PASSES THE TEST IN FAITH

^{6:16} Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. ¹⁷ And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. ¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? ²¹ Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. ²² My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. ²³ Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. ²⁵ Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶ I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. ²⁷ He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. ²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. ^{KJV} (Daniel 6:16-28)

INTRODUCTION

After a period of obscurity, Daniel was called to a nighttime feast that was interrupted by a Divine intrusion. That very night he was exalted, and the one who exalted him was slain. Also, during

that eventful evening, the kingdom of Babylon fell, as the city was besieged by a horde of Medes. Darius, fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, took the kingdom, which was given to him by

God Almighty.

Although Belshazzar lost his life, and Babylon its supremacy, Daniel was suddenly vaulted to the leading official of

OUTLINE

- ▶ DANIEL IS CAST INTO THE DEN OF LIONS (6:16)
- ▶ THE DEN IS SECURED, AND ALL FLESHLY HOPE IS LOST (6:17)
- ▶ THE KING SPENDS A SLEEPLESS NIGHT (6:18)
- ▶ THE KING GOES TO THE DEN (6:19-20)
- ▶ DANIEL RESPONDS (6:21-22)
- ▶ THE KING IS GLAD AND DANIEL IS TAKEN OUT OF THE DEN (6:23)
- ▶ THE KING DEALS WITH THE ACCUSERS (6:24)
- ▶ ANOTHER WORLD-WIDE PROCLAMATION (6:25-27)
- ▶ DANIEL PROSPERS ONCE AGAIN (6:28)

the land. He was the chief president among three, to whom all of the princes of the land reported. In the wake of his sudden promotion, king Darius made plans to promote him over the whole realm. The news of this moved Daniel's enemies to draft a special law, suited for him alone, and deliver it to the king for signature. That law forbade anyone to ask a petition of any deity or man for thirty days. The penalty for breaking that law was to be thrown into a den of lions.

With the opening of this text, Daniel has been found guilty of praying to His God in spite of the king's decree. He has not prayed one time, but three times a day. Darius has made every effort to find a way to deliver Daniel, but was not able to do so. Now, from a human point of view, all hope has withered and died. Yet, faith is not cast down to the ground.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME

This is not the first time in this book that no hope could be seen from the human point of view. **It is the Divine**

manner to remove all hope in the flesh before delivering His people.

This is seen in Noah and the ark (Gen 6), Abraham offering up Isaac (Gen 22), the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex 12), the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 14-15), and the sustaining of the Israelites in the wilderness (Deut 8:15-16). But it has also been seen repeatedly in this book.

- ▣ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are taken captive to Babylon, and placed under the control of a Babylonian prince (1:-6-7).
- ▣ Azariah, prince of the eunuch, turns down Daniel's request for a special diet, that he not defile himself (1:10).
- ▣ The four children of Judah must appear physically and mentally better before the king, although they limited themselves to a plain diet (1:16).
- ▣ Although young Hebrews, these four were compared with the wisest men in Babylon (1:19-20).
- ▣ Daniel asks for time to obtain insight into the dream of Nebuchadnezzar – what the king dreamed, and what it meant (2:16-17).
- ▣ As a young man, Daniel is made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon (2:48).
- ▣ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to bow to the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, even though they would be thrown into a burning fiery furnace as a result (3:12-18).
- ▣ Daniel is asked to interpret another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams after all

others had failed (4:18).

- ▣ Daniel is asked to read and interpret supernatural writing that appeared on the palace wall at Belshazzar's feast (5:13-15; 25;28).
- ▣ Daniel is exalted the same night Belshazzar is killed and Babylon is overthrown (5:30-31).

Which of these events could be successfully addressed in the flesh? What natural ability could possible have made Daniel and his colleagues equal to these challenges? Every possible fleshly advantage was taken away, and only hope in God remained.

Only faith was adequate for these occasions, and only faith will be adequate for the situation Daniel now faces.

Because this point is so rarely emphasized in our religious culture, I must take a moment to further develop it. **Faith does what nothing else can do.** It does not combine with any other human quality to accomplish its work, but rests in God alone. How poignantly this is brought out in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. The following things were accomplished *"by faith,"* which is the engine that drives the soul.

- ▣ Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, thereby obtaining witness that he was righteous (11:4).
- ▣ Enoch was translated without experiencing death (11:4).
- ▣ Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house, thereby condemning the world and becoming an heir of righteousness by his faith (11:7).

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Daniel is cast into the den of lions, but his faith brings protection to him. He survives – his enemies do not, by Given O. Blakely

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Abraham left his home land, and journeyed to a land, not knowing whither he went (11:8). ▣ Abraham journeyed in a promised land as in a strange land, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God (11:9-10). ▣ Sarah received strength to conceive a child in her old age, even though she was barren (11:10). ▣ Ancient believers died in faith, not having seen the promise of God | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ While in a strange land, Jacob blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come (11:20). ▣ When he was dying, Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph while worshipping God (11:22). ▣ Moses' parents hid the infant Moses, keeping him alive, even though the king had ordered him to be killed (11:23). ▣ When he came of age, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ The Israelites passed through the Red Sea on dry land (11:29). ▣ The walls of Jericho fell down flat after Israel walked around them for seven days (11:30). ▣ Rahab survived the destruction of Jericho, even though she lived there, and God had commanded it be thoroughly destroyed (11:31). |
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WHATEVER NEUTRALIZES FAITH, OR PUSHES IT INTO THE BACKGROUND, JEOPARDIZES THE SAINTS, ROBBING THEM OF THEIR RESOURCES! THERE ARE NO DIVINE RESOURCES THAT ARE NOT APPROPRIATED BY FAITH, AND FAITH ALONE CAN HOLD THEM AND USE THEM.

Who is the person willing to affirm such things are in any way possible to the flesh? Who cannot see that all hope in the flesh had disappeared when these things were accomplished?

Now we will behold yet another example of the invincibility of faith. It is still *“the victory that overcometh the world”* (1 John 5:4-5) – in fact, it is the ONLY victory that overcomes the world.

Whatever neutralizes faith, or pushes it into the background, jeopardizes the saints, robbing them of their resources! There are no Divine resources that are not appropriated by faith, and faith alone can hold them and use them. See now how Daniel will live this out, and take to heart what is declared. **This is an example of living by faith – an example that can, if received, bolster confidence and assurance, and strengthen the spiritual fabric of your character.**

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| <p>fulfilled, yet were persuaded of its truth (11:13).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Abraham moved to offer up Isaac as he was commanded, even though God had promised to bless the world through that very son (11:17-18). | <p>daughter, choosing suffering over temporary exaltation (11:24-25).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Moses forsook Egypt, was not afraid of the king, and endured while seeing Him who is invisible (11:27). |
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DANIEL IS CAST INTO THE DEN OF LIONS

“ 6:16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.”

The king has been shaken by the persistence of his nobles. Although he personally regrets the dilemma of Daniel, he can find no legal way to deliver him from the judgment he has pronounced.

Some Preliminary Observations

It should be obvious that care must be taken not to allow others to frame the decisions we make, and the circumstances under which they are to be carried out. That is to be our normal demeanor. However, as in our text, there will be times when adverse circumstances have actually been orchestrated by God Himself. I want to draw attention to this reality because of the nature of our text.

We are reading of the working of the Lord, not the mere reaction of God to the working of Darius and his nobles. From the

highest perspective, the affairs of men are being managed from heaven. I do not care to say that every single detail of human existence is determined by God. However, insofar as the activities of mortals bear upon the purpose of God, they are under His immediate management. A few examples will suffice to buttress this point to our hearts. I will confine these examples to occasions that are specifically declared to have been caused by God.

- ▣ **REHOBOAM** rejected the counsel of older and wiser men, *“for the cause was from the LORD, that he might*

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perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1 Kgs 12:15).

▶ **JOSHUA** is said to have made war for a long time against the kings of Canaan, because there was not a city that made peace with them. The Holy Spirit explains that circumstance in these words: *“For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses”* (Josh 11:20).

▶ **SAMSON** once sought a wife from among the Philistines. His parents rebuked him, saying he should seek a wife from among the chosen people. Once again, the Spirit explains the situation: *“But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel”* (Judges 14:4).

▶ **DAVID** once numbered Israel, causing a great plague to come against them. One text affirms that Satan *“provoked David to number Israel”* (1 Chron 21:1). Another credits the deed to David’s own will (2 Sam 24:3-4). However, over and above it all, the Lord was at work. It is written, *“And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah”* (2 Sam 24:1).

▶ **AHAB** once called his prophets to inquire about where he should go. The prophets all united, telling him to go up to Ramothgilead and surely he would prosper (1 Kgs 22:12). However, an inspired prophet named Micaiah revealed what had really occurred. *“Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee”* (1 Kgs 22:20-23).

Thus God is represented as working *“all things according to the*

counsel of His own will” (Eph 1:11). This is a high view, and relates to the execution of an eternal purpose, not the mere minutia of daily life. In this text, God is ordering the affairs of Darius’ kingdom in order to provide His people a lasting example of His power and protection. **This is an example of God working all things together for the good – not only the good of Daniel, but ours as well.**

DANIEL IS CAST IN THE DEN

“Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions.” Another version reads, *“So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den.”*^{NIV}

The word of the king was carried out immediately. You will note they had

is wise to remain where we are! This is precisely what Daniel does. He abides with God where he is.

A WORD OF COMFORT FROM THE KING

“Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.”

Before the sentence is carried out, Darius has a word for Daniel. It is a good word, and was obviously given to the king by God Himself, though Darius probably was not aware of it. Before Daniel is thrown into the den of lions, God gives him a word, speaking it through the very king through whom his sentence had been issued.

Thy God

Darius recognized the God of

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no difficulty finding Daniel. He did not hide, or flee from the country. There are times when leaving the country is proper, as when Moses fled from Egypt (Ex 2:15). There are times when the city must be left, as when Saul left Damascus by being lowered over the wall in a basket (Acts 9:25). In both of those cases, however, the work of the individuals was intended to be in another area. In our text, the work of Daniel has not yet been completed in Babylon. He sensed this, and therefore stayed where he was.

This is the same attitude Paul promoted to those who were caught in the dilemma of slavery. *“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather”* (1 Cor 7:20-21). Until the Lord calls us to another area, it

heaven as Daniel’s God. He was not Daniel’s God by ownership, but by profession and service. Darius was aware of Daniel’s devotion to the Lord by his refusal to cease to pray because of a kingly edict. Over and above the country in which he lived, and the king whom he served, Daniel had a God.

Serving Continually

Other versions read, *“whom you constantly serve,”*^{NASB} and *“ . . . whom you serve continually,”*^{NIV} *“whose servant you are at all times,”*^{BBE} and *“whom you have served so faithfully.”*^{NJB}

Daniel would not alter his life toward God because of the demands of men.

He constantly, or continually, served God. Great men and women of faith do not serve God by fits and starts. Faith must be consistent to be effective,

and faith alone can empower a person to serve God *“continually.”*

You will note this was a trait for which Daniel was noted. This was the sense in which the Lord was Daniel’s God. **He was the One Daniel chose to serve, willingly, heartily, and continually.**

Deliverance Will Come

Other versions read, *“will Himself deliver you,”* ^{NASB} *“May your God . . . rescue you,”* ^{NIV} and, *“will have to save you.”* ^{NJB}

As you can see, there is a wide

expressing his personal desire that this would happen. In the NJB, the suggestion is that **only** Daniel’s God is capable of delivering him from this judgment. There is a significant difference in these meanings. Was Darius confident God would deliver Daniel? Or, was this a mere wish he entertained because of the blunder he had made in passing the law? Or, was he saying all human hope was lost, and only a Deity could now deliver him?

Again, we must bring the Lord into our thinking. **This book is about His working, and the central man in the text is Daniel, whom God has supported and vindicated until this**

is God speaking to the prophet through the king. Whether Darius was fully aware of the capabilities of Daniel’s God is really beside the point. What he desired for Daniel is also beside the point. **This word was spoken for Daniel’s benefit, and as a prelude to his deliverance.**

We know from what follows that Darius was not himself confident God would deliver Daniel. He spent a sleepless night over this whole incident, thus confirming he had no confidence Daniel would be delivered (v 18). He also arose the next morning, going quickly to the den and asking if God was, in fact, able to deliver Daniel (v 20). I conclude, therefore, that God spoke these words through Darius, without his full knowledge of their significance. They were not the expression of a mere wish. In this case, the Lord spoke through Darius like he did through Caiaphas. Neither Caiaphas nor Darius spoke on their *“own initiative”* ^{NASB} (John 11:49-51). God was working things together for Daniel’s good.

The nobles were against Daniel alone. Therefore, the decree that went out was against him. The judgment of the king was against the man of God. **Yet, God was for Daniel, and therefore none could effectually be against him.** Thus the Lord got this word of comfort to Daniel, uttering it through the very man who was condemning him. God was working for Daniel’s good.

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT HIS WORKING, AND THE CENTRAL MAN IN THE TEXT IS DANIEL, WHOM GOD HAS SUPPORTED AND VINDICATED UNTIL THIS VERY MOMENT.

variety of meanings conveyed in the various translations. In the KJV and NASB versions, the implication is that Darius affirmed God would, in fact, deliver Daniel from the lions. In the NIV, NRSV, and RSV, the deduction is that Darius was

very moment. If Daniel is merely recounting an historical record, then we might well imagine this was an expression of Darius’ desire: i.e., “I hope your God will deliver you.” However, if this word is actually said for Daniel’s benefit, then it

THE DEN IS SECURED, AND ALL FLESHLY HOPE IS LOST

“17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.”

Here the Lord sets the stage for the furtherance of His own glory. He will confirm the foolishness of the wisdom of men, and the ultimate futility of their power and authority. He will also show us the effectiveness of faith, which connects us with Omnipotence.

A proper understanding of this

will confirm to our hearts that *“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man”* (Psa 118:8), and *“vain is the help of man”* (Psa 60:11). The awareness of this will move the believer to say with David, *“In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me”* (Psa 56:11).

A STONE AND A SIGNET

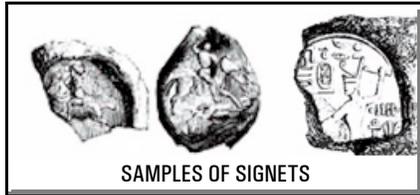
“And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords . . .”

A Stone

Every seeming advantage will now be taken from Daniel. Not only is he thrown into a den of hungry lions, he will be sealed in the tomb by a large stone. You will remember the tomb of Jesus also had a stone placed over its entrance. It was, however, different from this stone. The stone of Jesus tomb was *“rolled”* over the door, signifying it stood vertically over an entrance into which one walked (Matt 27:60). You may recall the women entered the tomb of Jesus, as well as Peter and John (Mk 16:5; John 20:3-6).

But the *“den of lions”* was different from the sepulcher of Jesus. The

stone as “*laid upon the mouth of the den*,” indicating it was a pit in the ground. Evidently the den was deep enough the lions could not leap out of it, nor Daniel climb out of it. Nevertheless, to make it even more secure, a stone was placed over the opening, removing all human hope of escape by Daniel, or rescue by any friends.



His Own Signet

A signet was a sort of royal signature that confirmed the validity of a decree or act. Its affixation on a document or article meant the power and authority of the king was behind the matter. Any violation of a decree that

bore the king’s signet was considered treason against the king. Men who had signet rings include Judah (Gen 38:18), Ahasuerus (Esth 3:10,12), Pharaoh (who gave it to Joseph – Gen 42:42), and Ahab (1 Kgs 21:8).

Christ’s tomb was also marked with a seal (Matt 27:66).

The Signet of His Lords

Each of the nobles who had drafted the law against Daniel, also put their official consent to the deed. Although subordinate to the king, each of these nobles, or “lords,” had an area of authority. Their “*signets*” carried all of the power of their office. Thus the deed of Darius also became theirs. They officially validated the judgment against Daniel.

SEEMING UNCHANGEABILITY

“ . . . *that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.*” The

purpose of the stone and its sealing was “*so that Daniel’s situation might not be changed.*”^{NIV}

Thus, from the human point of view, all hope has been removed. Daniel has been cast into a den of ravenous lions. A stone had been laid upon the mouth of the den, and the official signs of authority have been stamped upon the stone. As in the case of Paul the prisoner, and those on the ship with him, “*all hope was taken away*” (Acts 27:20).

You must see that this is God’s way of working. His deliverances are preceded by the removal of any hope of rescue from another quarter or person. In this way He receives the proper glory. It is also necessary for deliverance to come in this way because only faith can take hold of such a salvation. Human reasoning cannot do it, nor any form of intellectual superiority.

THE KING SPENDS A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

“¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him.”

The Word of God reminds us, “*the way of transgressors is hard*” (Prov 13:15). Here is a case where the king has upheld an unjust law, allowing it to condemn an innocent man. He had even had twinges of conscience about it, yet has held fast to his decision. **Law, while it is to be duly honored, is not above morality.** It is not possible to justly defend and uphold an unjust law.

Darius will later overturn the law he passed under pressure from his nobles. From the standpoint of morality, he should have overturned it as soon as he found it unjust. But, alas, he did not, and now he will toss and turn during the night because of it.

As a consequence of his unjust decision, the king will spend a restless night. It is as though the Lord will not allow him to be comfortable while Daniel,

who has faithfully served him, remains in the den of lions.

A NIGHT IN FASTING

“*Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting . . .*” The NIV reads, “*Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating.*” His deed has caused Darius to lose his appetite. First, he regretted signing the decree in the first place. Second, he lamented that he could not find a way to conveniently deliver Daniel. Third, he was filled with brokenheartedness over the whole matter. Food no longer had any appeal to him – at least not for that night.

Darius did not fast because of

repentance, or in an effort to seek the God of Daniel. It was not until **after** Daniel is delivered that he speaks in defense of Daniel’s God. Rather, he fasted because of sorrow, and his was not sorrow “*after a godly manner.*” His was the “*sorrow of the world*” (2 Cor 7:9,10). In some respects it was comely, but only according to the flesh. Some are of the opinion that Darius spent all night in prayer for Daniel’s deliverance. I do not believe such a notion can be supported. He did not know the God of Daniel, else he would never have chosen to uphold his decree against God’s man.

NOTHING PLEASANT

“ . . . *neither were instruments of music brought before him . . .*” The king

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refused any music, “entertainment,”^{NIV} or other aids for sleep. He mind was dwelling on other things, and distractions were not appealing to him.

God has so made men that fundamental needs, like food and sleep, can be willingly forfeited because of thoughts being entertained by the mind. This circumstance is brought to its highest level when thoughts and words of God are embraced by the heart and mind. It is tragic that many poor souls in our culture

rarely entertain such thoughts.

SLEEP COULD NOT BE HAD

“... and his sleep went from him.”

Other versions read, “sleep fled from him,”^{NASB} and “he could not sleep.”^{NIV}

In some respects, Darius does exhibit a sensitivity that is not common in our day. The thought of an innocent men suffering took his appetite and sleep from him. **His mind was so full of sorrowful thoughts he could not sleep.** Certainly this is just reprisal for

the thoughtless decree he issued.

I see this as the hand of God upon him, and not a mere exhibition of humanness. Here is something that can bring us consolation in the time of opposition. **God can cause the thoughts of people to dwell upon their mistakes, and live in deep regret of them.** If it is true that He “gives His beloved sleep” (Psa 127:2), it is also true that he can take it from those who have opposed Him, whether wittingly or unwittingly. Darius is a case in point.

THE KING GOES TO THE DEN

“¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou

prematurely to the den, lest Daniel’s deliverance be credited to something other than his God.

Examples of Divine Withholding

The fact that Almighty God can interfere with the decisions of men and natural occurrences should not surprise

because of Sarah Abraham’s wife” (Gen 20:18).

▣ **God did not allow Laban to harm Jacob.** “And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me” (Gen 31:7).

▣ **As Jacob and those with him traveled, God did not allow the heathen to pursue them.** “And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob” (Gen 35:5).

▣ **When Joseph was in prison, God made everything he did to prosper.** “The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper” (Gen 39:23).

▣ **When the men of Israel left the camp to meet with God three times a year, God did not allow any person to desire their land.** “For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year” (Exo 34:24).

▣ **The Lord withheld David from shedding blood and avenging**

THEREFORE, I CONCLUDE THE LORD WITHHELD DARIUS FROM GOING PREMATURELY TO THE DEN, LEST DANIEL’S DELIVERANCE BE CREDITED TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN HIS GOD.

servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”

Keep in mind that these events are being worked together by the Living God. They are all being channeled toward the revelation of the power and glory of God.

TO THE DEN WITH HASTE

“Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.” The king did not rush to the tomb during the evening, or in the darkness of the night. Sufficient time must be given to confirm the greatness of God. **Therefore, I conclude the Lord withheld Darius from going**

us. He has declared this aspect of His workings in His Word.

▣ **God withheld Abimelech from touching Sarah, even though he intended to make her his wife.** “And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her” (Gen 20:6).

▣ **The Lord shut up the womb’s of all of the women in Abimelech’s house because of Sarah.** “For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech,

himself. “Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Naba!” (1 Sam 25:26).

- ▶ **The Lord turns the king’s heart wherever He wills.** “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will” (Prov 21:1).
- ▶ **The Lord made it impossible for Israel to find the right path, even moving them to pursue false gods, yet never find them.** “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now” (Hosea 2:6-7).

Why Say These Things?

Why is it necessary to remind the people of God of these things? Why read a text like this and then go into what appears to be a theological bypath? There are sound reasons for recalling these things to our minds.

- ▶ There is **not** a lot of teaching these days about this aspect of God’s working among the sons of men.
- ▶ God receives the greater glory when He is more clearly and extensively seen in the record.
- ▶ The Lord has gone to great lengths to publish among the nations His greatness. He has made Himself known as a God who **makes, or causes,** things happen, both for good and for evil. This has been made known in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden, the cursing of Cain, the flood, the stopping of the building of the tower of Babel, Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, the judging of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, and countless other events.

- ▶ Faith in God presumes a personal persuasion of His power.

Therefore, I am affirming that Darius got up early in the morning and went to the den of lions because he was moved by God to do so. His sleepless night and pondering whether or not Daniel would be dead was owing to Divine influence, not mere natural thought.

According to the flesh, there was no reason to expect Daniel to survive the lion’s den. **The king could no doubt have readily forgotten any other person thrown to those ferocious lions.** Indeed, he will not have a moment of worry about some others he will throw into this den shortly.

Thus, like the women who came early to the tomb, Darius arose at the dawning of the day. The women went to honor their Lord with spices, not knowing

grief,”^{BBE} “a mournful voice,”^{DARBY} and “a grieved voice.”^{YLT}

Notice, as Darius approaches the den, he has no thought of the nobles, who had formerly threatened his reputation if he did not carry out the decree they invented. On the other hand, he has exhibited no indignation with the nobles because of the decree they moved him to sign. Right now, his sole concern is Daniel, who dominates his mind. This too is the working of the Lord.

IS GOD ABLE?

“... and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”

Darius knows there is no chance the lions’ demeanor could have changed apart from Divine intervention. He also knows Daniel possessed no natural ability to deal with lions, tame them, or subdue

THIS EVENT IS BEING MANAGED BY THE MIGHTY GOD. THAT IS PRECISELY WHY IT HAS SUCH EDIFYING POWER. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO BE EDIFIED BY RANDOM AND UNPURPOSEFUL EVENTS. IT IS THE OBJECTIVE AND RESULT OF THE EVENTS THAT GIVE THEM POWER TO EDIFY.

he had risen from the dead. Darius went to see what had happened during the night hours, during which he could not sleep.

This event is being managed by the mighty God. That is precisely why it has such edifying power. It is not possible for the people of God to be edified by random and unpurposeful events. It is the objective and result of the events that give them power to edify.

A LAMENTABLE VOICE

“And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel ...” Other versions say he cried out with a “troubled voice,”^{NASB} “an anguished voice,”^{NIV} “anxiously,”^{NRSV} “a loud cry of

them. If Daniel is alive, there is only one reason for him being so – he had been delivered by God. If he was dead, there would also be only one reason: God did NOT deliver him.

Servant of the Living God

To my knowledge, no idol or false god is ever called “living.” The thirty references to “the living God” all refer to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26,36; 2 Kgs 19:4,16; Psa 42:2; 84:2; Isa 37:4,17; Jer 10:10; 23:36; Dan 6:20,26; Hos 1:10; Matt 16:16; 26:63; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Rom 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3,16; 1 Tim 3:15; 4:10; 6:17; Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev 7:2). On the other hand, it is

Daniel is cast into the den of lions, but his faith brings protection to him. He survives – his enemies do not, by Given O. Blakely

said of idols that they have “no breath” (Jer 10:14; 51:17; Hab 2:19).

The “living God” is active, has a purpose, and is noted for His words and counsel. When, therefore, Darius says Daniel a “servant of the living God,” he is not referring to a mere religious profession. Daniel’s life was characterized by purpose – the doing of the revealed will of God. His heart and mind were devoted to the things God had revealed, for that is how you serve “the living God.”

Whom Thou Servest Continually

Daniel’s service was not sporadic, or non-continuous. He did not blow hot and cold, but was constant in his service

lamp was to burn “continually.” The showbread was to be on the table “continually.” **The truth of the matter is that God does not accept irregular or inconsistent service.**

Daniel knew this, and served the Lord continually. No aspect of his life was lived independently of God. Darius had seen this, and was duly impressed by it.

Was God Able?

Other versions read, “has your God . . . been able to deliver you from the lions?”^{NASB} “been able to rescue you from the lions?”^{NIV} and “able to keep you safe from the lions?”^{BBE}

There is an obvious tone of doubt

our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan 3:14-18). **The ability of the Almighty is not exclusively revealed through immediate rescue.** Rather, deliverance depends upon His ability – and there is a vast difference between the two.

If Daniel was NOT miraculously delivered, suffering death like John the Baptist (Matt 14:10) and James (Acts 12:2), it was only because God did not will to do so. It would have nothing whatsoever to do with God’s ability. Abel was killed (Gen 4:8), Joseph was spared (.). Several prophets were slain by Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4), yet Elijah survived her malice (1 Kgs 19:10). Zechariah the prophet was stoned to death (2 Chron 24:21-22), while Elijah was miraculously translated into heaven without seeing death (2 Kgs 2:12). Stephen was stoned and died (Acts 7:59), Paul was stoned and lived (Acts 14:19-20). **God’s ability is NOT measured by human experience, and those who attempt to do so are in serious error.** Some experience appears to contradict Divine purpose. That appearance, however, is the reflection of human frailty, not Divine intent.

As we will see, there is a heavenly objective being served by this event. God is not merely reacting to the foolish edicts of a king, or the false charges of Daniel’s enemies. This whole incident is designed to teach us about the Lord, about faith in Him, and about His preeminence among the sons of men. The whole earth is “full of His glory” (Isa 6:3), and we will now be afforded a glimpse of some of that marvelous glory.

DANIEL’S SERVICE WAS NOT SPORADIC, OR NON-CONTINUOUS. HE DID NOT BLOW HOT AND COLD, BUT WAS CONSTANT IN HIS SERVICE TO THE LORD. WHEN THE WILL OF THE LORD WAS KNOWN, DANIEL SHAPED HIS LIFE TO THAT “WILL” REFUSING TO BE TURNED FROM IT.

to the Lord. When the will of the Lord was known, Daniel shaped his life to that “will” refusing to be turned from it.

While the wicked, like those of Noah’s day, have thoughts that are “only evil continually” (Gen 6:5), those with faith continually serve the Lord.

When the Lord instituted the tabernacle service, a shadow and type of what we have in Christ Jesus, He instituted **continual** service (Ex 28:29,30,38; Lev 24:2-4). The sacrifices were to be offered “continually.” The

in the words of Darius. This is how we know he did not intentionally declare God was going to deliver Daniel when he consigned him to the den of lions (verse 16). Yet, there is a sort of spiritual instinct in Darius that moves him to inquire further into the matter of Daniel’s God. From the higher perspective, he is being moved along by the Lord. From the lower view, this is the marred, yet present, Divine image reaching out.

Darius does not have a knowledge of the Lord as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. They affirmed, “If it be so,

DANIEL RESPONDS

“²¹ Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. ²² My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in

me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.”

How will Daniel respond to the king’s interrogation? His reply will testify to us of the nature of faith, and the effect

of faithfulness. We will see what it means to “wait upon the Lord” (Psa 123:2), trust in Him with all of your heart (Prov 3:5-6, and be anxious for nothing (Phil 4:6). This is how faith works, how it impacts upon the heart of the believer, and how it

enables the trusting one to frame his speech. We are witnessing faith in action. Let us give heed to its testimony.

A RESPECTFUL REPLY

"Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever . . ."

Daniel has spent the night with lions, but we find him calm and respectful in his answer to the king. He has not been seething in anger through the night because of the injustice and malice that has been exhibited toward him. He is **not** prepared to plead his case and demand vengeance upon his accusers. Instead, he speaks with the due respect for the very man who consigned him to the lion's den.

He seeks the welfare of the king, desiring that his life be unencumbered with the sort of trials he himself has endured during the night – *"O king, live for ever!"*

An Example for Us

This is an excellent example of being *"careful for nothing,"* or being *"anxious for nothing"*^{NKJV} (Phil 4:6). Care or anxiety can precede affliction, occur during difficulty, or be in the aftermath of the trial. For Daniel, it did not occur in any of those phases. He conducted himself honorably **BEFORE** redemption in Christ, regeneration, reconciliation to God, the new birth, the destruction of the devil, or the spoiling of principalities and powers. Daniel is among those of whom it is said, *"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Heb 11:40). This is precisely why this account is so relevant to us.

The Relevance of the Account

The above circumstance is what makes this account so pertinent to us. **The power of faith prior to the New Covenant is a confirmation of its potency under Christ, where it has been brought to its vertex.** While the trial of the den of lions is unique, trial itself is not. The personal trials you undergo will be as challenging to your faith as Daniel's was to his. For that reason, you have every right to expect a strong faith to sustain you just as surely as it did him. **Your response to trial can be as positive as Daniel's was to his.** You have the same God, and the same

faith. The difference is that in Christ you have the even greater advantages of an interceding Savior (Isa 53:12; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25) and the indwelling Spirit who also intercedes for you (Rom 8:26-27).

AN ANGEL WAS SENT

"My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me . . ." Note, Darius had asked *"is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* (V 20). Now Daniel affirms the living God to indeed be his own – **his own by profession, by service, and in trust.**

His Angel

Certain students of Scripture are fond of identifying *"the Word"* (the Person of Jesus prior to His enfleshment, John 1:1,14) with various angels mentioned in the Old Covenant writings: *"angel of the Lord"* (Ex 3:2), *"His angel"* (Dan 3:28), *"angel of His presence"* (Isa 63:9), *"The Angel"* (Gen 48:16), etc. **There is neither express Scriptural**

Abraham" (Heb 2:16). The relevance to the matter we are discussing is apparent. The Word, as Jesus was referred to prior to becoming flesh (John 1:14), only took the form of those He came to help. If at any time He had taken the form of an angel, as some affirm, it could only have been to give assistance to angels, not men. That is something He is nowhere represented as doing. Additionally, to be made a messenger, which is the meaning of *"angel,"* the Word would be required to humble Himself, taking a lower position. To affirm that such a thing took place comes very close to blasphemy. The pre-incarnate Word is never depicted as in any way humbling Himself prior to becoming flesh in order to the salvation of men. There is not a syllable in Scripture that justifies such a conclusion." ^{Lesson 12}

Angels Are Dispatched from Heaven

Angels do not operate on their own, but are sent from heaven and by God on special missions. They are said to *"excel in strength,"* *"do His commandments,"* and are noted for *"hearkening unto the voice of His word"* (Psa 103:20).

The words *"He sent His angel"* are found four times in Scripture.

THERE IS NEITHER EXPRESS SCRIPTURAL TEACHING NOR SUGGESTION THAT JESUS WAS A SERVANT OR MESSENGER OF GOD TO HUMANITY PRIOR TO HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD AS "JESUS," THE SAVIOR.

teaching nor suggestion that Jesus was a servant or messenger of God to humanity prior to His entrance into the world as "Jesus," the Savior. Angels are *"ministering spirits"* (Heb 1:13-14), and such an appellation is wholly inappropriate for He who was *"with God and was God"* (John 1:1).

While I have dealt with this subject already (Lesson #12), a single comment will suffice to affirm **this angel was not the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ.**

"It is expressly stated that Savior *"took not on Him the nature of angels"* (Heb 2:16). This has particular regard to the redemption of humanity in whose likeness He came. Thus other versions read, *"For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of*

☐ **The deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** *"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God"* (Dan 3:28).

☐ **Daniel's deliverance from the den of lions.** *"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt"* (Dan 6:22).

▶ **Peter’s deliverance from prison.** *“And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews”* (Acts 12:11).

▶ **The Revelation given to John on the Isle of Patmos.** *“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done”* (Rev 22:6; 1:1).

Other instances of the commission

Lord’s personal interest in and love for Daniel. No angel ever comes to the aid of the saints without first being sent forth by the God who beholds and cares for them.

Power Over the Lions

In all of its varied forms, nature has never proved to be a problem or challenge for the holy angels. In this case, the angel simply *“shut the lions’ mouths.”* He did not have to wrestle them down and kill them as David and Samson did (Judges 14:5-6; 1 Sam 17:34-36). The lions yielded to the angel, just as surely as Balaam’s ass did (Num 22:23). The Lord says of even the wild and uncaptured beasts, *“the wild beasts of the field are*

storm (Job 1:19). It may be the instant quelling of a fierce storm on the sea (Matt 8:26), or giving a man supernatural strength pull up the posts with the gates of Gaza, *“bar and all,”* and carry them on his shoulders to the top of a hill (Judges 16:3). **It is God who rules “in the kingdom of men” (Dan 4:17), whether it is a wilderness in which Israel is journeying, a sea upon which Paul is sailing, a king’s palace like that of Nebuchadnezzar, or a den of lions.**

The Relevance of It All

Surely any situation that has proved to be a challenge or test to you is not greater than those recorded in scripture! This is one reason why the Word of God does not major on small incidentals, daily problems, and tests that are common to all men. **Rather, the Holy Spirit places before us extreme situations, hopeless dilemmas, and uncommon challenges, to assure our hearts that our trials are quite controllable.** The children of God must learn to reason **from the greater to the lesser**, and not vice versa. It is in the strength of the greater than the lesser loses its power over us. **But when we make an attempt to begin with life’s incidentals and reason up to the higher matters of the Kingdom, we enter into confusion, and lose all confidence.**

The tendency to be occupied with incidentals is a fundamental weakness in contemporary religion. Such minutia is the subject of almost all professed expertise, workshops, seminars, and the likes. **It is imperative that believers become adept at living on a higher plain!** You may never experience anything of the magnitude of Daniel’s lions’ den experience. However, if you will duly consider what happened to him, God will give you strength to honorably respond to what happens to you.

INNOCENCY BEFORE GOD

“ . . . forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me . . . ” Other versions read, *“I was found innocent before Him,”* ^{NKJV} *“I was found innocent in His sight,”* ^{NIV} *“I was found blameless before Him,”* ^{NRSV} and *“before Him purity hath been found in me.”* ^{YLT}

First, there are some who may

BUT WHEN WE MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO BEGIN WITH LIFE’S INCIDENTALS AND REASON UP TO THE HIGHER MATTERS OF THE KINGDOM, WE ENTER INTO CONFUSION, AND LOSE ALL CONFIDENCE.

of an angel from God to earth include:

▶ **Israel’s deliverance from Egypt.** *“And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt”* (Num 20:16).

▶ **The deliverance of Hezekiah from the invading hordes of Sennacherib.** *“And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria”* (2 Chr 32:21).

The presence of an angel is always dictated by the will and purpose of Almighty God. They are never said to come by, or be controlled by, the words of a mortal man. Those who speak of commanding angels and the likes have only betrayed the wickedness of their own hearts. Only God sends angels, and they only respond to His command, or those of the Son of God.

The presence of an angel in the den, therefore, confirms the

mine” (Psa 50:11) – and angels are empowered by God.

How this was accomplished is not explained. Perhaps they lost their hunger. The Lord might have made them afraid of Daniel, reversing the course of nature. Maybe they did not even see Daniel, but were made completely oblivious of his presence. It is even possible that they saw him, maintained their hunger, but had no zeal to attack him. Whatever explanation may be preferred, it was still the angel that brought the result, not the course of nature, or a sudden twist in nature that occurred independently of Divine intervention.

Whether Daniel saw the angel, as did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we do not know. Whether he did or not, his familiarity with the Living God brought him to the conclusion his deliverance had come from heaven. **Nature does not change its course by itself.** Whenever there is a departure from the course of nature, the hand of God has been present. It may be that He has allowed Satan to cause a sudden

affirm such a state is not possible – a state of innocency before the Lord. After all, is it not written, “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:23), and “*there is none righteous, no not one*” (Rom 3:10)? Those affirmations are true. And yet, the man of God must be noted for “*handling accurately the Word of truth*” ^{NASB} (2 Tim 2:15). Too often novices spout the Word of God through a maze of ignorance rather than an illuminated mind.

While it is true that no sin is recorded against Daniel, that by no means suggests he was free from all guilt. In his prayers he identified himself with those who had transgressed: “*we have sinned*” (9:5,8,11,15). “*Innocency*” being found in Daniel, therefore, does not mean he was morally and spiritually perfect – a state Paul declared he had not reached while he remained in the body (Phil 3:12).

There are several senses in which Daniel’s innocency is declared.

- ▣ He was innocent concerning the charge brought against him: namely that Daniel had no regard for the king, or had committed a deed worthy of death. This is how God saw him – and God sees things the way they are.
- ▣ In general, his life was free from morel taint. He lived consistent with his faith, and sought no occasions to violate the will of either God or man.
- ▣ He had chosen to honor God, rather than yield to the flawed and unrighteous edicts of men.
- ▣ In heaven, Daniel was not noted for departing from the Lord or violating His will.

Note the Reasoning

It is important that we take note of Daniel’s reasoning. It is the reasoning of faith, and thus can instruct us. **The reason for his deliverance was his “innocency.”** Those who imagine that human conduct has no bearing on whether or not they receive Divine assistance do well to ponder this text.

David once said he would compass the altar, or come before the Lord, in a state of “*innocency*” (Psa 26:6). **It is the**

business of every believer to put a deliberate distance between themselves and sin. There is, in God’s estimation, such a thing as “*the innocent and righteous*” (Ex 23:7), and an “*innocent person*” (Deut 27:25). This is a moral condition in which men have “*no evil thing to say of you*” (Tit 2:8). It is being “*blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke*” (Phil 2:15).

I fear there is altogether too much

(Mark 15:7).

It is true that he had refused to obey the decree made by Darius. However, he did so because he had no other acceptable alternative. The truth of the matter is that God is not a vassal of some other deity. Nor, indeed, are there any equals to Himself (Isa 44:8). Therefore, it follows that there are both moral and spiritual obligations to “*obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). Daniel

THOSE WHO IMAGINE THAT HUMAN CONDUCT HAS NO BEARING ON WHETHER OR NOT THEY RECEIVE DIVINE ASSISTANCE DO WELL TO PONDER THIS TEXT.

flawed thinking and speaking on this subject. This condition is betrayed by such aphorisms as “nobody is perfect,” “we all sin,” “we are only human,” “we all sin a little every day,” and the likes. No person living by faith will speak in such a slipshod manner. While no understanding and truthful person will say they “*have no sin*” (1 John 1:8), neither will they devote themselves to sin or give an excuse for personal transgression.

If Daniel, prior to Christ and the New Covenant, could be innocent before God, how much more can this be said of those who are in Christ Jesus. Such have “*peace with God*” (Rom 5:1), “*no condemnation*” (Rom 8:1), and access to continual cleansing (1 John 1:7,9).

INNOCENCY BEFORE THE KING

“ . . . *forasmuch as before him innocency was found . . . also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*”

Daniel’s innocency extended to the king as well as to his God. **His failure to obey the king’s edict was not an act of rebellion, but one of honoring his God.** He has “*committed no crime*” against the king, as Barrabas did in his insurrection against the government

was, in fact, yielding to Darius’ superior. **Should Darius see fit to receive this, it certainly would yield no hurt to him, and Daniel knew it.** Daniel therefore acknowledges the truth before the king fearlessly and in faith.

A Final Word

Before leaving this section, we ought to once again note how kindly Daniel responded to the king. He did not choose to speak out against the king, drawing attention to his unjust law, contrived by Daniel’s enemies. Flesh could certainly build a strong case for responding in such a manner to a king – particularly a heathen king.

By drawing attention to his own integrity and noble motives, both of which had been fully established, Daniel made a place for the Lord to work with Darius. It is better for the “*ignorance of foolish men*” to be “*put to silence*” with “*well doing,*” rather than eloquent arguments (1 Pet 2:15).

The Lord does come to the aid of those who think enough of Him to conduct their lives within the light of His countenance. That is something you do well to believe, for it is the truth, as confirmed in this very account. **It is**

never vain to serve the Lord, and it is never right to cease to do so! Those

who seek for an excuse to avoid serving the Lord betray their unbelief, and are

immediately placed in jeopardy. Our servitude must be continuous.

THE KING IS GLAD, AND DANIEL IS TAKEN OUT OF THE DEN

“²³ Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.”

Much will be learned from the response of Darius to Daniel’s words. The extent to which God supports the godly will also be perceived, as the heart of a heathen king is seen to be in the hand of the Lord (Priv 21:1). The Lord alone can shape and control how men respond to His people. **Faith is willing to depend upon that reality, refusing to move**

heart” (Ex 8:15,32; 9:34).

After Israel had been singularly blessed by God, He said of them: *“But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation”* (Deu 32:15).

Do Not Take Them for Granted

Favorable responses to Divine manifestations are not to be taken for granted. **The people of God should never allow an institutional mind-set to cause them to despise honorable responses to the Word of God among**

something like that of Jeremiah. He also was raised up out of a dungeon into which he had been thrown. In his case Ebedmelech took some *“old rags and worn out clothes,”* telling Jeremiah *“Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes”*^{NIV} (Jer 38:11-12). I do not know if similar consideration was given to Daniel, but do not doubt such was the case. After all, God was taking care of him, not Darius!

One small note. Observe that the law against Daniel was passed in consultation with Darius’ nobles. But this is not the case Daniel’s deliverance. **There is no consultation with the nobles on this matter.** Again, it is because God is in it.

Like All Believers

In a sense, Daniel’s deliverance was much like that of all believers – a sort of type or shadow of Divine deliverance. David put it in most comforting words. *“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD”* (Psa 40:2-3).

Our own situation was much like that of Daniel, whether in initial salvation or succeeding deliverances. We had to be *“raised”* from our situation, miraculously delivered from it – else we would have remained there until we died.

NO MANNER OF HURT

“ . . . and no manner of hurt was found upon him . . . ” Other versions read, *“no injury whatever was found on him,”*^{NIV} *“no wound was found on him,”*^{NKJV} *“no kind of harm was found on him,”*^{NRSV} and *“he was seen to be untouched.”*^{BBE}

Daniel had not been bruised by the plummet into the den. Nor, indeed, was there any evidence of so much as one lion

THE LORD ALONE CAN SHAPE AND CONTROL HOW MEN RESPOND TO HIS PEOPLE. FAITH IS WILLING TO DEPEND UPON THAT REALITY, REFUSING TO MOVE THOSE WHO BELIEVE TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

those who believe to take matters into their own hands.

THE KING WAS GLAD FOR HIM

“Then was the king exceeding glad for him . . . ” Other versions read, *“very pleased,”*^{NASB} and *“then was the king overjoyed.”*^{NIV}

Like a spring of water, the king’s joy overflowed. He was transcendently elated that his edict had been reversed by the God of Daniel. His own folly, which resulted from him being snared by his nobles, had been negated by the Living God. He saw it and was glad.

A Different Response

See how radically this king differed from Pharaoh. After witnessing the powerful working of the Lord, it is thrice said of him, *“he hardened his*

a people they do not think are thoroughly informed. Good responses may not always be thorough ones. Sometimes they are like beginnings that should not be despised.

TAKE HIM OUT!

“ . . . and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den . . . ” Another version reads *“gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den.”*^{NIV}

The den, then, was a sort of pit that apparently was beneath the ground. With a great stone having been laid upon the mouth of the den, there can be little doubt that great darkness was there, where neither hand nor lions could be seen with any clarity.

Like Jeremiah

The experience of Daniel is

touching him. It goes without saying, that this was not “luck,” “happencance,” or the result of Daniel’s dexterity – i.e., being able to land on his feet and avoid the hungry lions through some expert movement. This was not a young man, but old man. The fall could not hurt him, nor could the lions’ paws or teeth. In fact, there was absolutely no evidence that he had been in a pit or among ravenous lions. He had no marks or scars, no torn parts in his clothing, or bleached out facial expressions.

As with the three Hebrew children, an examination was made of Daniel. **The king did not take his deliverance for granted, for it has been ascribed to God, who sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths.** It was necessary for the evidence to support such a claim – and it most assuredly did!

A Principle to be Seen

God is honored when claims of His deliverance are supported by evidence of the same. **He is dishonored when there is some boast of rescue that appears to contradict that claim.** Those who affirm they are “saved,” or have access to and fellowship with God, ought not to have the “spot” of the world upon them (James 1:27). Their “garment,” so to speak, should not be “spotted by the flesh” (Jude 1:23).

The failure of this condition to accompany claims of Divine deliverance is like Daniel saying the mouths of the lions had been shut, while having the teeth marks of lions upon his body. It would be like Daniel saying the angel of the Lord had shut the lions’ mouths, while standing in garments that had been obviously shredded by those very lions.

BECAUSE HE BELIEVED

“ . . . because he believed in his God.” Other versions read, “because he had trusted in his God,”^{NASB} and “because he had faith in his God.”^{BBE}

The idea is that **WHILE** he was in the den, he trusted in, or depended upon, his God. His was not an empty profession, but the genuine profession of faith (Heb 10:23).

Living Faith?

Because of a word written by James, some have assumed there are two kinds of faith – living faith and dead faith.

Rather, that individual has risen no higher than the demons, who also have no works, even though they are surely convinced of the existence of God (James 2:19).

Just as a body without a spirit has no utility whatsoever, and is no person at all, so faith without works is no faith at all. When James speaks of the “*body without the spirit,*” **he is not speaking of a body in the grave, or the body after the spirit has left it.** Rather, he is speaking of a living person – one that is moving about and active in this world. In this case, for there to be a body walking

GOD IS HONORED WHEN CLAIMS OF HIS DELIVERANCE ARE SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE OF THE SAME. HE IS DISHONORED WHEN THERE IS SOME BOAST OF RESCUE THAT APPEARS TO CONTRADICT THAT CLAIM. THOSE WHO AFFIRM THEY ARE “SAVED,” OR HAVE ACCESS TO AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, OUGHT NOT TO HAVE THE “SPOT” OF THE WORLD UPON THEM

James’ words are, “*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (James 2:20,26). In this sense, the view is taken that works are a mere technicality. Faith that lacks works is, in such a case, merely a deficient faith. Those who have works, therefore, have excelled in faith, moving beyond mediocrity.

But this is not what James is saying. Faith without works is no faith at all. Such a person is not relying upon the Lord or believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

about in which no human spirit resided is an absurdity of the greatest magnitude. There simply is no such thing, nor can there be. **Neither is there such a thing as having faith without also possessing its accompanying works.**

In Daniel’s case, his faith was accompanied by a refusal to stop praying. It was also attended by submitting to be thrown into the lions’ den. Additionally, it was attached to a trust that continued through the dark night among ravenous and heartless beasts. **That is the way faith works – all the time.** Blessed are the people who have “obtained” it.

THE KING DEALS WITH THE ACCUSERS

“²⁴ And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them,

and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”

There is an unalterable law in the Kingdom of God. “*Be not deceived; God is*

not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7). **It is not possible avoid this law, or principle. The only issue is WHEN the reaping will occur.** Fortunately for the believing ones, God graciously grants “*space to*

Daniel is cast into the den of lions, but his faith brings protection to him. He survives – his enemies do not, by Given O. Blakely

repent” (Rev 2:21), in order that men might sow differently, and thus reap a good harvest. Since the Median nobles are so wicked, no such space is given to them. They will now reap what they have sown – but it will not be by themselves. Their transgression will have an impact upon their families also.

THE EVILDOERS ARE PUNISHED

“And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives . . .”

Darius was not indifferent to those who had falsely charged Daniel, even

children, **neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin**” (Deu 24:16). Thus, it is reasoned, this is purely an act of Darius, and a ruthless one at that.

While we do have occasion to rejoice this is not the consistent Divine manner, yet God has revealed such punishments do come from Him.

▣ **ACHAN.** The case of Achan provides another example of an entire family suffering for the consequences of the father. “And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took

▣ **ISRAEL AND KING SIHON.** When Israel sought to go through the territory ruled by king Sihon, the Lord hardened his heart so he would not let them pass through the land. He then delivered him into the hand of Israel. “Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain” (Deu 2:32-34).

Why??

Why are such accounts recorded in Scripture? It is certainly not because God takes delight in such things, for He does not. As it is written in Ezekiel, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” The Lord prefers and delights to show mercy (Mic 7:18). However, there are other things to consider, and the passage in Ezekiel points us to one of those additional considerations: “but [I prefer] that the wicked turn from his way and live: **turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?**” (Ezek 33:11).

OTHER EXAMPLES. There are other examples of wholesale punishment. The flood (Gen 7:21), the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites (Deu 7:1), and the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:3). Make no mistake about this, there were children and wives in those incidents.

Sin has no anesthetized men’s hearts and minds they imagine they can sin with impunity. Add to that the fact that a considerable amount supposed Christian theology understates the seriousness of sin, and the situation becomes greatly compounded. How can men be awakened to the gravity of sin, and the sureness of its penalty? How can they be made to see the seriousness of sin?

The answer is found in the recording of spiritually jolting accounts, such as the one before us. The fact that they are not the consistent way in which God has dealt with sin confirms He does not simply desire to destroy people – else He would.

SIN HAS NO ANESTHETIZED MEN’S HEARTS AND MINDS THEY IMAGINE THEY CAN SIN WITH IMPUNITY. ADD TO THAT THE FACT THAT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT SUPPOSED CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY UNDERSTATES THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN, AND THE SITUATION BECOMES GREATLY COMPOUNDED.

shaping a law so as to misrepresent him to Darius. Like the devil himself, they had “accused” the man of God, cooking up a law that would cause a distorted view of his person. The king gave them no thought when he called for Daniel. They were not in his mind when he commanded that Daniel be thrown into the lions’ den. Neither, indeed, was he thinking about them during his previous restless night. However, now he will deal with them. He will do so because God is in the matter. The Lord is vindicating his servant, just as he did in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Their children and Their Wives

Not only are the nobles consigned to the den of lions, but their families as well: “their children and their wives.” Admittedly this causes the tender person to cringe. It is most gruesome and heartless – at least from one point of view.

On the surface, this appears to violate a law God gave to Israel. “The fathers **shall not be put to death for the**

Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones” (Josh 7:24-25).

▣ **HAMAN.** The wicked man who sought to expunge the Jews in Esther’s day also caused the death of his sons. His malicious deed extended beyond his person. “Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them . . . The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand” (Esth 9:5,10).

Rather than speculating about the nature of this judgment, our hearts are to be turned toward the gravity of rejecting the truth of God or opposing His people. Such things are not to be taken lightly. Eventually God will bring such actions into judgment. Unless there has been appropriate repentance from such things, the consequences will be eternal. In the meantime, let us avail ourselves of “space to repent,” and determine **not** to “fall into the hands of the Living God” (Heb 10:31).

BEFORE THEY CAME TO THE BOTTOM

“ . . . and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.” Other versions read, “the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den,”^{NKJV} “they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones,”^{NASB} and “The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.”^{NLT}

The lions had been deprived from having Daniel as a meal. Their mouths had been shut by the Lord’s angel. However, that angel is no longer there,

RATHER THAN SPECULATING ABOUT THE NATURE OF THIS JUDGMENT, OUR HEARTS ARE TO BE TURNED TOWARD THE GRAVITY OF REJECTING THE TRUTH OF GOD OR OPPOSING HIS PEOPLE. SUCH THINGS ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. EVENTUALLY GOD WILL BRING SUCH ACTIONS INTO JUDGMENT.

but has departed from the lions’ den like the angel departed from the fiery furnace when the three children of Judah walked out of it.

Notice the radical difference in the behavior of the lions. While Daniel was in the den, they rested quietly all night with their mouths shut. Now their horrible nature is awakened, and they utterly crush the bones of multiple people before they hit the floor of the den. We do not know the number of people cast into the den, but it could well have been a considerable number.

It is as though the lions leaped up to catch the victims in their mouths, and had well consumed them before their carcasses reached the floor of the den. In a sense, this was a mercy, so that a severe penalty was paid quickly.

In view of this incident, we do well

to ponder several questions.

- ▶ How serious is it to oppose a person who puts their trust in God?
- ▶ How weighty is it to become creative in opposing those who live by faith and refuse to honor the flesh?
- ▶ How crucial is it to seek ones own way at the expense of those who believe in God?
- ▶ How pivotal is it when people attempt to create circumstances that cause the people of God to appear in an unfavorable light?
- ▶ What good thing can come from hating, despising, or looking down upon the soul who trusts in God?

Wise, indeed, is the individual who takes such matters seriously.

ANOTHER WORLD-WIDE PROCLAMATION

“²⁵ Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶ I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. ²⁷ He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Now we get to the heart of this

entire incident. **The Lord is making a name for Himself throughout the world.** So far as the book of Daniel is concerned, this is the **THIRD** global proclamation of the greatness of God. Nebuchadnezzar published the first when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered from the fiery furnace (3:29). He also delivered the second upon his recovery from a seven-year lesson on theology, when he had the heart of a beast and ate grass (4:1-3, 34-35).

As Paul said, God “left not Himself without witness” – GLOBAL witness (Acts 14:17). While nature is one of those witnesses, there have been multiple attestants to the Divine nature –

words that have been addressed to rational men by reasoning people.

- ▶ **THE FLOOD.** Every nation in the world came from the descendants of Noah, from which the knowledge of Divine judgment and intolerance with iniquity was declared (Gen 9:18-19).
- ▶ **THE TOWER OF BABEL.** This magnificent project was aborted by a God who was grieved by the whole work. The people were then scattered abroad “upon the face of all the earth.” They knew of Divine judgment, and doubtless spoke of it. The population of the whole earth was affected by this judgment (Gen 11:8).

- ▶ **DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.** Word of this mighty deliverance spread throughout the world (Josh 2:10; 4:24; Num 22:5; 2 Sam 7:22-23).
- ▶ **CONQUERING CANAAN.** Word of the triumph of Israel over the seven nations of Canaan was universally known (1 Chron 17:20).
- ▶ **ISRAEL THRUST FROM THE LAND OF CANAAN.** Because of their sin, the Lord thrust Israel from the land of promise, particularly in the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem. This was done that all nations might know Him (Deut 29:23-24).

truth. God has deliberately placed men in geographical places, and determined the exact time in which all men exist. His reason for doing this is that they might seek after Him. As it is written, *“From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”* (Acts 17:27).

ALL PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES

“Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell

to *“all people, nations, and languages?”*

PEACE BE MULTIPLIED

“Peace be multiplied unto you!”

These are the same words Nebuchadnezzar used to introduce his decree (Dan 4:1). This was not, therefore, a declaration of war, but a summons to sobriety and recognition of the God of Daniel. The thoughts of the king were to be embraced without being intimidated by his authority. He was not writing as a mere ruler, but as one who had seen something of the greatness of the God of Daniel. More precisely, he was being moved by the Lord to accent things the world is intended to know.

TREMBLE AND FEAR BEFORE GOD

“. . . I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before . . . God . . .” Other versions read *“must tremble and fear,”*^{NKJV} *“must fear and reverence,”*^{NIV} *“should tremble and fear,”*^{NRSV} *“dread and fear,”*^{DOUAY}

It is as though Darius was warning the people not to oppose this God or those who served Him. He does not summon men to love Daniel’s God, but to be afraid of Him – afraid to contradict Him, set about to harm His people, or speak in a derisive manner about Him.

An Application

Here is an aspect of our relationship to God that could well be clarified to the hearts of believers. Solemnly the Lord Jesus said, *“fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Mat 10:28). And again, *“But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him”* (Luke 12:5). Peter admonished us, *“Fear God!”* (1 Pet 2:17). On Patmos, John heard a voice from heaven saying, *“Fear God, and give Him glory”* (Rev 14:7).

Lest anyone imagine they are close enough to the Lord to ignore this admonition, the church at Philippi, noted for its consistent and growing faith, were told, *“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Phil 2:12). The modern church would do well to hear the decree of Darius the Mede, even though it sharply contrasts with current thrusts.

IT IS NOT THE MANNER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EXAGGERATE. WE DO WELL TO TAKE HIS WORDS PRECISELY AS THEY ARE STATED, NOT RESORTING TO LANGUAGE LIKE “THEN KNOWN EARTH,” AND THE LIKES. THIS IS A LARGE DECLARATION, AND SHOULD BE SO REGARDED.

- ▶ **THE DECREE OF CYRUS.** God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus the Persian to build the Temple of God, moving this world ruler to speak about it (Ezra 1:2; 6:3-6).
- ▶ **NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S TWO PROCLAMATIONS.** (Dan 3:29; 4:1-35).
- ▶ **DARIUS’ PROCLAMATION** (6:25-27).

in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you . . .”

It is not the manner of the Holy Spirit to exaggerate. We do well to take His words precisely as they are stated, not resorting to language like “then known earth,” and the likes. This is a large declaration, and should be so regarded. Everyone is included – *“all people.”* All political bodies are included – all *“nations.”* Every cultural body is embraced – all *“languages.”*

Nebuchadnezzar had addressed his decrees to *“every people, nation, and language”* (Dan 3:29), and *“all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth”* (Dan 4:1). Pharaoh was raised up that God’s name might be declared *“throughout all the earth”* (Ex 9:16). Israel was thrust out of Canaan that *“all nations”* might say, *“Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?”* (Deu 29:24). What will king Darius write

Without Excuse

Add to this the consistent testimonies of nature (Rom 1:20; Psa 19:1-3) **and the human conscience** (Rom 2:15), **and you can see why it is inexcusable to fail to seek the Lord!** Still more, consider that on the day of Pentecost there were *“devout men out of every nation under heaven”* (Acts 2:5), who heard and obeyed the Gospel, ultimately returning to their own lands.

One other factor accents this

THE GOD OF DANIEL

“... *the God of Daniel* . . .” That is, the God Daniel served continually, and whose Law he refused to transgress. This is the God that sent His angel and delivered Daniel. The language is not philosophical, but has resulted from what Darius has himself witnessed – the working of the Lord.

HE IS THE LIVING GOD

“... *for He is the living God* . . .” This description of God is given two times in Daniel, and both times they are spoken by Darius (vs 20,26).

Elsewhere in Scripture this expression is found twenty-eight times.

- ▣ It is associated with God speaking (Deut 5:26)
- ▣ Driving out the enemy (Josh 3:10).
- ▣ Standing for the people who served Him (1 Sam 17:26,26)
- ▣ Meeting the desires of a thirsty and longing soul (Psa 42:2; 84:2).
- ▣ Implementing His indignation against His opponents (Jer 10:10).
- ▣ Having sons among men (Hos 1:10).
- ▣ Being the Father of Christ (Matt 16:16; John 6:69).
- ▣ The creation of the heaven, earth, sea, and everything in them (Acts 14:15).
- ▣ Having a Spirit that accomplishes things in men (2 Cor 3:3).
- ▣ Walking and dwelling in His people (2 Cor 6:16).
- ▣ Having a church which is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15).
- ▣ Being the Savior of all men, especially those who believe (1 Tim 4:10).
- ▣ He gives us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17).

The “*living God*” is associated with life, activity, initiative, and

purpose. Let men cease to speak impersonally about “*the living God*,” couching their thoughts in philosophical speech and human tradition.

HE IS STEADFAST FOREVER

“... *and steadfast for ever* . . .” Other versions read, “*enduring forever*,”^{NASB} “*unchanging forever*,”^{BBE} “*eternal God forever*”^{DOUAY} and “*abiding to the ages*.”^{YLT}

“*Steadfast forever*” equates to “*eternal God*” (Deut 33:27), or “*the everlasting God*” (Gen 21:33). It speaks of a God that “*changes not*” (Mal 3:6), has no need to repent (Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29), and is “*the same*” (Psa 102:26). It

was also revealed to Nebuchadnezzar – “*shall never be destroyed*” (2:44). In the seventh chapter of Daniel, this aspect of God’s Kingdom is again revealed to Daniel – “*His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*” (7:14). It is another way of saying God’s Kingdom is “*an everlasting Kingdom*” (Psa 145:13; Dan 4:3; 2 Pet 1:11). Isaiah spoke of this Kingdom, stating the Messiah would assume its reins: “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end*” (Isa 9:6-7).

It is not possible for the Kingdom of God to be upstaged, rendered

NO PERSON, REGARDLESS OF INTELLECTUAL ACUMEN OR DISCIPLE, CAN KNOWINGLY AND DELIBERATE TRUST A VACILLATING AND INCONSISTENT GOD. BEFORE SATAN HIMSELF CAN CONSTRAIN AN INDIVIDUAL TO SERVE FALSE GOD, HE MUST FIRST CONVINCe THEM HE CAN BE TRUSTED – EVEN IF THAT GOD IS THE DEVIL HIMSELF.

is said of the God who is “*steadfast forever*,” “*great is Thy faithfulness*” (Lam 3:23). With Him there is “*no variableness, neither shadow of turning*” (James 1:17). His Word is sure, and His promises cannot fail. It means His counsel stands (Isa 46:10), and His Word always accomplishes what He sends it to do (Isa 55:11).

Faith requires a “*steadfast*” God! **No person, regardless of intellectual acumen or disciple, can knowingly and deliberate trust a vacillating and inconsistent god.** Before Satan himself can constrain an individual to serve false god, he must first convince them he can be trusted – even if that god is the devil himself.

HIS KINGDOM SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED

“... *and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed* . . .” This truth

is inadequate, or passed on to someone else. Those who “*enter*” this Kingdom now, through the new birth and the redemption that is in Christ, will transfer their membership into the world to come. It truly is an “*everlasting Kingdom*” (Dan 7:27).

HIS DOMINION SHALL BE UNTO THE END

“... *and His dominion shall be even unto the end*.” Other versions read, “*His dominion shall endure to the end*,”^{NKJV} “*His dominion will be forever*,”^{NASB} “*His dominion will never end*,”^{NIV} “*His dominion has no end*.”^{NRSV}

The words used in the KJV and NKJV (“*unto the end*,” and “*to the end*”), do not suggest “*the end*” is the terminal point of Divine dominion. The Holy Spirit has assigned to the words “*the end*” a significant meaning. While there is not perfect consistency in this matter, there is

a level of truth at which this meaning IS perfectly consistent.

- ▶ Jesus spoke of enduring to “the end” (Matt 10:22).
- ▶ The final “harvest” of souls is said to be at “the end of the world”(Matt 13:39).
- ▶ Jesus confirms believers “unto the end”(1 Cor 1:8).
- ▶ The time when all authority and power is obviously under the feet of Jesus is identified as “the end”(1 Cor 15:24).
- ▶ Those in Christ are to “hold fast the

when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all**”(1 Cor 15:24-28). That is the sense in which God’s dominion “will never end.”^{NIV}

This is a cardinal aspect of the truth that is proclaimed throughout Scripture. It is a particular point the Lord impressed upon both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. It should be well known among those professing the name of Christ. **There is no need for the comprehension of the church to be dwarfed by that of Darius the Mede!**

from going back into that situation.

As with David, Daniel was “delivered” from his “enemies” – from their intentions, and the means through which they thought to eliminate him (Psa 18:48). Like David, he was “rescued” from the ravages of his enemies – the snares and traps they had laid for him (Psa 35:17).

In making this grand proclamation to all of the world, Darius speaks of a delivering and rescuing God. All the world hears about it, and Daniel himself is the evidence of the message.

Application

Our concept of salvation must include both deliverance and rescue – **getting us out of the devils domain and keeping us out.** In my judgment, there is a lop-sided teaching in our day that has inordinately emphasized getting out of the “den,” so to speak, without due recognition that we can be kept out of it.

One Further Thought

The intention of Divine deliverance and rescue is not the mere extrication of people from trouble. Rather, we are delivered and rescued in order that we might serve the Lord. Thus it is written, “That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies **might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life**” (Luke 1:74-75).

Where God is not served without fear, and in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life, there has been no purpose served by salvation – by either deliverance or rescue. **For men to fail in this service and still reign with Jesus in glory would mean God would be mocked.** That simply will not happen, and we do well to ponder that reality.

SIGNS AND WONDERS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

“ . . . and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth . . .” Other versions read, “*performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth,*”^{NASB} “*does signs and wonders in heaven and earth,*”^{BBE} “*doing signs and wonders in heaven, and in earth,*”^{DOUAY} and “*doer of*

WHERE GOD IS NOT SERVED WITHOUT FEAR, AND IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE, THERE HAS BEEN NO PURPOSE SERVED BY SALVATION – BY EITHER DELIVERANCE OR RESCUE. FOR MEN TO FAIL IN THIS SERVICE AND STILL REIGN WITH JESUS IN GLORY WOULD MEAN GOD WOULD BE MOCKED. THAT SIMPLY WILL NOT HAPPEN, AND WE DO WELL TO PONDER THAT REALITY.

confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”(Heb 3:6).

- ▶ We are admonished to “hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end”(Heb 3:14).
- ▶ The “full assurance of hope” is to be maintained “unto the end” (Heb 6:11).

In this sense, therefore “the end” refers to the termination of time and this world as we know it. Apart from unique phrases like “the end of the Law”(Rom 10:4), “the end of the commandment”(1 Tim 1:5), “the end of your faith”(1 Pet 1:9), “the end” refers to the conclusion of time.

However, this is not the intention of our text, and it ought not to be so considered. It is true that the “dominion.” or rule, of the Lord will continue to that time. But it will also extend out into eternity. Thus it is said of the Lord Jesus, “Then cometh the end,

HE DELIVERS AND RESCUES

“ . . . He delivereth and rescueth.”

Other versions read “rescues and saved,”^{NIV} “gives salvation and makes men free from danger,”^{BBE} “saves and sets free.”^{NJB} Although it may appear there is a small redundancy in these words (deliver and rescue), there is a slight, yet powerful, difference in them. “**Deliver**” puts the **accent on the** effect of being saved – being left free. “**Rescue**” emphasizes the **deliverance itself**, like being removed from the danger without experiencing any of its intended effects – i.e., leaving the furnace of fire or den of lions.

Daniel was “delivered” from the den in the sense of never again having to experience it. He was “rescued” from it in sense of being removed from it.

Now Darius had, to some measurable degree, seen that God can raise people out of things that would otherwise mean their termination. He has also seen that **God can keep them**

signs and wonders in the heavens and in earth."^{YLT}

In Heaven

There are things God does in heaven that no one else can do! Whether we are speaking of the starry heavens, or where the Father resides, the meaning is the same. Lofty angels like Michael and Gabriel can do great things – things transcendent to nature. However, their power and ability has a terminal point. There are signs and wonders at which those mighty angels marvel – and they are all done by God! God has effected a salvation, and inspired a Gospel that has intrigued the holy angels themselves (1 Pet 1:12). **He does signs in heaven!** Jesus said he beheld Satan as lightning *"fall from heaven"* (Lk 10:18). **God performs signs in heaven.** We are even told the blood of Christ was so effective, heavenly things were purified by it (Heb 9:23). **God does signs in heaven!**

If you want to view *"heaven"* as the higher portion of creation, God does signs there also. He caused a deluge to fall from heaven, the firmament emptying its copious waters upon the earth, for forty days and forty nights (Gen 7:11-12). **God works signs and wonder in heaven!** God is said to cause hail stones to fall from heaven that weighed one hundred pounds each (Rev 16:21). Once God *"hurled"* large hailstones from heaven, killing the armies of the Amorite kings (Josh 10:11). **God does signs in heaven!** Another time he caused the sun to stand still in order that Israel might win a battle (Josh 10:12). **God performs signs and wonders in heaven.** On another occasion, He caused the sun to go backward ten degrees (Isa 38:8). **He does signs and wonders in heaven!**

In Earth

God not only does according to His will in heaven, but among *"the inhabitants of the earth"* as well (Dan 4:35). Time would fail to speak of the mighty signs and wonders our God was wrought upon the earth. The cursing of Cain (Gen 4:7), the flood (Gen 7), the scattering of Babel (Gen 11), a smoking lamp and a burning furnace that passed through Abraham's divided sacrifice with miraculous fire (Gen 5:17). Then there was the conception of Isaac (Gen 21:2), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

(Gen 19), and Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26). He closed all of the wombs of Abimelech's house (Gen 20:17-18), and opened Hagar's eyes to see a well (Gen 21:19). He cause a bush to burn, yet not be consumed (Ex 3:2), changed Moses' rod into a serpent, then turned it back to a rod when he seized it by the tail (Ex 4:3-4). **The Lord does signs and wonders in the earth.**

Who can forget the stilling of the tempest (Matt 8:23-27), the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:15-21), and the countless healings performed by our Lord (Matt 12:15; Lk 6:19)! **He does signs and wonders in the earth!** And what of

Ponder the other things that Darius affirms of the Living God. He is *"living"* and *"steadfast."* His kingdom will *"never be destroyed,"* and His dominion is *"will be forever."* He *"delivers and rescues"* as well. That is what God does. That is His nature. He does all of these things according to His will – but He does them, and that is the point. For God NOT to do them would require that He deny Himself.

What would move anyone to take the last two things said of God – *"He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth"* – and affirm God no longer does this! What principle of interpretation or

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Christ's resurrection from the dead (Acts 10:40), His ascension before the disciples (Acts 1:10-11), and the sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). **He works signs and wonders in the earth!** Then there were the miracles of the twelve disciples (Mark 6:7), the seventy disciples (Lk 10:17-20), and other disciples (Mark 9:39). **He performs signs and wonders in the earth!**

This Is God's Nature

However, the point here is not merely to enumerate the signs and wonders God has wrought in both heaven and earth. That is not the point of Darius' proclamation either. **This is a declaration of the nature and character of God! It is God Himself that is being proclaimed, not merely what He does. His Person, without exception, accounts for what he does.** It is true, the Lord is known by what He does. The point here, however, is that He Himself DOES signs and wonders in heaven and earth. **That is His nature!**

form of sound reasoning would lead anyone to such a conclusion?

It is time for the church to at least come up to the level of Darius. So far as we know, he had only seen one display of these qualities – at least only one he had recognized. No doubt he had also heard what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, as well as the writing on Belshazzar's palace wall and its interpretation. **Yet he associated what he saw with who God is, not something He did periodically, or on a temporary basis.**

Application

When it comes to God Almighty, even Darius the Mede knew He was not confined to nature, but rather was inclined to work in a manner that is transcendent to it. The frequency of those workings, as well as their magnitude, is not the point. Rather, it is that God's nature moves Him to work signs and wonders above and beneath, in heaven and on earth.

Daniel is cast into the den of lions, but his faith brings protection to him. He survives – his enemies do not, by Given O. Blakely

These things are intended to spawn hope in the faithful, confirming to their hearts that they will never pass through a circumstance God does not control. Neither, indeed, will they ever be in a situation from which God cannot extricate them.

With great care, believers must avoid the attempt to formulate lifeless dogmas and powerless systems that attempt to explain what God can and cannot do – or once did and no longer does. These packaged theological systems

conclusion – at least from a human point of view. Thank God some of our twentieth century theologians were not there to further muddy the water for the people!

Take It to Heart

Whatever you may think about signs, wonders, miracles, and the likes, you need to take to heart what Darius published throughout the world. His message is intended for the United States of America, as well as Persia, India, and Assyria.

When you consider the Lord, think of Him as alive, active, and doing His will

doing so.

If you have not already been rendered utterly helpless by circumstance, it will probably not be long until you are. When you are in the bottom of the pit (Psa 40:2), or experiencing the waves of trouble (2 Sam 22:5; Psa 42:7), tell me if you do not derive comfort from the proclamation of that Median king Darius. Such comfort testifies to the truth of what he declared – truth God moved him to speak to the whole world.

DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF THE LIONS

“ . . . who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” There have been a few men who have survived an encounter with lions – very few. David did (1 Sam a7:34-36), as well as Samson (Judges 14:5-6). Benaiah tracked a lion through the snow to a pit, into which he entered, killing the lion (2 Sam 23:20).

THESE THINGS ARE INTENDED TO SPAWN HOPE IN THE FAITHFUL, CONFIRMING TO THEIR HEARTS THAT THEY WILL NEVER PASS THROUGH A CIRCUMSTANCE GOD DOES NOT CONTROL. NEITHER, INDEED, WILL THEY EVER BE IN A SITUATION FROM WHICH GOD CANNOT EXTRICATE THEM.

might serve human purposes well, but they do nothing for those who have put their faith in God.

God’s nature has not changed. Not even the most rabid contender for the cessation of miracles is willing to affirm that – and Darius is speaking of the Divine nature.

It is quite possible that men may live in a period of time when Divine workings are not evident. Gideon lived in such a time. He asked the message-bearing angel, *“where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about”* (Judg 6:13). Gideon was living in dry times.

For that matter, when the Lord Jesus was making His entrance into the world, the miracles of God had not been seen in a long time. The people were sitting *“in darkness”* (Lk 1:79), *“looking for redemption in Jerusalem”* (Lk 2:38). When the mighty prophet John the Baptist came on the scene, he *“did no miracle”* (John 10:41). It was a period of time in which the *“mighty works of God”* had not been seen for a long time. I suppose it might have been argued that God no longer worked in supernatural ways. After all, the circumstances certainly seemed to justify such a

– *“the living God.”* Think of Him as being *“enduring for ever,”* faithful, true, and unwavering in His commitments – *“steadfast for ever.”* Consider His Kingdom as a reign that will never be destroyed, rendered obsolete, or overshadowed by a greater one – *“His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”* Ponder His dominion, or rule, as extending into eternity, with no interruption whatsoever – *“His dominion will be for ever.”* When you think of the Lord, see Him as the One who delivers, and is inclined to do so – *“He delivers!”* See Him as the One who rescues, removing people from danger, bondage, and the threats of the ungodly – *“He rescues!”* Think of Him as the One who performs works that are transcendent in heaven, and supernatural upon the earth – who causes both angels and men to marvel – *“He works signs and wonders in heaven and on the earth.”*

You have not sinned in thinking of God in this manner, for this is how He has revealed Himself. In our text, He does so through Darius. Earlier in Daniel He did it through Nebuchadnezzar. He also did the same through Daniel the prophet. You have violated no principle of interpretation by embracing such things, Nor, indeed, have you become foolish for

A certain prophet who lied about his mission did not do so well. When he met a lion, the lion killed him (1 Kgs 13:24). Another man who refused to hearken to a son of the prophets, was found by a lion, which slew him (1 Kgs 20:36). Once the Lord sent lions among those who failed to fear Him, and the lions killed some of them (2 Kgs 17:25-26). Facing a single lion generally meant death, unless there was a miraculous deliverance from the Lord.

But in the case of Daniel, Darius proclaims, multiple lions were faced who were unusually powerful – at the peak of their strength. The man of God did not face them on a road, or in the wilderness, but in a den prepared for them. The area was confining, the lions were ferocious, and they had all night to do their work. Yet *“God delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”* **The deed was done in Babylon, but proclaimed to the world. The proclamation did not come from a bystander, but from the world ruler, and personal eye witness of the work.**

I ask you, is it not marvelous that the Lord moved Darius to cause this decree to be published throughout the whole world? Then, as though that was not enough, He inspired Daniel to recall all of the details, writing them in a book for His people.

DANIEL PROSPERS ONCE AGAIN

“²⁸ So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.” Other versions read, *“So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian,”*^{NASB} *“So this Daniel did well in the kingdom of Darius and in the kingdom of Cyrus the Persian,”*^{BBE} *“This Daniel flourished in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian,”*^{NJB}

This is a brief summation of Daniel’s success during the dominance of the Medio-Persian empire. This was the divided kingdom represented by the arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (2:32). It was the kingdom represented by a ram with two horns (8:20). God had “divided” the Babylonian, or Chaldean, kingdom, and “given it to the Medes and the Persians” (5:28).

Many of the nobles did not survive the transfer of power, but Daniel did. He not only survived, he “prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus.” This implies that he was restored to his place of prominence – perhaps even elevated higher.

DANIEL PROSPERS

Even though I have addressed this subject in an earlier lesson, it is appropriate to say a few words about it here as well. Among the unlearned “prosper” is often taken to mean become wealthy, or in some sense well-to-do. Thus, when we read of prospering and being in good health (3 John 1:2), some think of health and wealth. But that is not the Scriptural use of the word “prosper.” In our parlance, the common word for “prosper” is succeed, or successful. Thus a persons “way,” or journey, is said to prosper, enabling him to fulfill his mission (Gen 24:40,42). As in the case of Joseph, whatever he did prospered, or was successful. He did not fail to accomplish what he set out to do, or come short in any assignment given to him (Gen 39:3,23). It is said of the righteous man, “whatever he does shall prosper” (Psa 1:3). When it comes to prospering in the world and increasing in riches, the Psalmist says of such, “these are the ungodly” (Psa 73:12). In so

speaking, he speaks of life’s normalities. **This is not the normal status of the people of God – but true prosperity can be.**

During the reigns of Darius and Cyrus, whatever Daniel put his hand to prospered, whether in the area of prophecy or executing governmental affairs. The book of Daniel will especially highlight his activity in the kingdom of God. We will learn very little concerning his activities in the government of the Medes and the Persians. **The thrust of the emphasis from this point on will be the prophetic utterances of Daniel.**

☐ **The seventh chapter** will detail a

☐ **The tenth chapter** will delineate something revealed to Daniel during the third year of the reign of Cyrus (10:1). This is the chapter that speaks of his twenty-one day prayer – a prayer that was heard the first day, yet answered twenty one days later, and the restraining influence of a spiritual force that ruled over Persia.

☐ **In the eleventh chapter** Daniel recounts how he stood to encourage and protect Darius. He does so by opening the future of Persia as it has been revealed to him by God (11:1-2). In this chapter he speaks of “*the time of the end,*” and the jostling of political powers under the mighty hand of God (11:40-45).

THERE IS NOT SO MUCH AS A SYLLABLE ABOUT HIM ACCUMULATING WEALTH, HOUSES, LANDS, OR THE LIKES. THERE IS NO MORE TALK ABOUT POLITICAL PROMOTIONS OR THE EXECUTION OF GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES. WE WILL NEVER AGAIN HEAR OF THE NOBLES, WISE MEN, OR SORCERERS THAT WERE DANIEL’S CONTEMPORARIES – NEVER AGAIN.

vision Daniel had during the first year of the reign of Belshazzar (7:1).

☐ **The eight chapter** will unfold a vision that appeared to him during the third year of Belshazzar’s reign (8:1).

☐ **In the ninth chapter** Daniel will declare what he came to understand from Jeremiah’s books of the Babylonian captivity during the first year of the reign of Darius. He will record a lengthy prayer and the answer brought to him by Gabriel (9:1-2, 21). In this chapter he also gives a remarkable and pointed prophecy of the Messiah and His appointed death (9:25-26).

☐ **The twelfth chapter** unfolds a time when the mighty angel Michael will stand up for the Jews, the children of God’s people (12:1). He speaks of unparalleled trouble, the resurrection of the dead, and glorification of the saints of God (12:1-3).

This is the Divine commentary on the prospering of Daniel during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus. **There is not so much as a syllable about him accumulating wealth, houses, lands, or the likes.** There is no more talk about political promotions or the execution of governmental responsibilities. **We will never again hear of the nobles, wise men, or sorcerers that were Daniel’s contemporaries – never again.**

Daniel is cast into the den of lions, but his faith brings protection to him. He survives – his enemies do not, by Given O. Blakely

Up until this time, Daniel only opened what other people had received. He related and interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image (chapter 2). He interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's image of the flourishing tree that was cut down (chapter 4). He interpreted the handwriting on the wall that was addressed to Belshazzar (chapter 5).

From this point on Daniel will receive special revelations. He will not be required to interpret what someone else experienced! Six chapters have been devoted to his involvement with others through Divine power. The closing six chapters will focus on him and God alone. The latter prosperity of Daniel will be greater than

his former. He will rise higher in the Spirit than he did in the flesh.

A SPECIAL OBSERVATION

Although Daniel was elevated under both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (2:48; 5:29), it is never said that he "*prospered*" during their regimes. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign Daniel appeared to have been nearly forgotten (Dan 2:26; 4:9). The same occurred during the reign of Belshazzar (5:10-16). But now, in the divided kingdom, Daniel "*prospered*," apparently doing so without interruption.

The Last Is Better

Many of God's people should take great consolation in this record. **In the Divine economy the latter is always**

more glorious than the former. The "*Second Man*" is more glorious and effective than the "*first man*" (1 Cor 15:47). The "*second*" covenant is better than the "*first*" (Heb 8:7). The "*new man*" is superior to the "*old man*" (Col 3:9-10). The new body will be vastly superior to our present one (1 Cor 15:42-44). The "*first man Adam*" is inferior to the "*last Adam*," Jesus (1 Cor 15:45). The "*new creation*" far exceeds the natural creation, which came first (2 Cor 5:17). The "*new heavens and earth*" will be infinitely better than the "*first heaven and the first earth*" (Rev 21:1).

All of this is marvelously confirmed in the latter part of Daniel's life. Here is a prophet of singular note, who closed out his life relatively alone.

CONCLUSION

The sixth chapter continues to expound the wonderful works of God. As it is written, "*He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered*" (Psa 111:4). In keeping with that revelation, **Darius was raised up to proclaim what God did in the province of Babylon.** The work was not intended to be a private and undeclared one. That is not God's manner. The Lord did not depend upon a random sharing of these events from person to person.

Whatever may be said of person-to-person witnessing, it is not always the most powerful method of getting the word out.

- ▶ In Daniel, the Lord used the decrees of global rulers (Nebuchadnezzar and Darius) to make his workings known.
- ▶ When it came to the dissemination of the Law of God, it was "*given by Moses*" (John 1:17).
- ▶ Among the Israelites, He used the mighty Prophets, who put matters in perspective and declared the determined purpose of God (Jer 7:25; Heb 1:1).
- ▶ The introduction the Savior did not

come through individuals passing among each other, declaring that He was coming. Instead, God sent a "*the voice of ONE, crying in the wilderness*," John the Baptist (Isa 40:1-3; John 1:23).

there is no place for individual witnessing. God forbid that such a thought should ever be entertained. **What I am affirming is that God has NEVER left the spreading of the message in the hands of the multitudes.** He has

AT SOME POINT, THE PEOPLE OF GOD MUST SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS BIGGER THAN THEIR OWN GROUP. NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD TO EXTEND HIS THOUGHTS BEYOND BABYLON. BELSHAZZAR HAD TO BE FORCED TO THINK BEYOND ENJOYING A TIME OF INDULGENCE. DARIUS WAS BROUGHT TO SEE HIS OWN IMPOTENCE, AND THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE LIVING GOD.

- ▶ When the Lord's hand was extended to the Gentiles, He sent a man to "*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*" (Acts 26:18).

consistently used individuals to push the knowledge of Himself into the world's extremities.

This is how we account for the prominence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It accounts for the time of the Judges, as well as the time of the kings. David, the "*sweet Psalmist of Israel*" (2 Sam 23:1) was used of God to **put into precise words the feelings of a soul that is**

I certainly am not suggesting

sensitive to God. Job was elevated to testify to the power of even a rudimentary faith, to show how much a man can endure, and yet not sin with his mouth or against God. Solomon was raised up to testify of the utter futility of world wisdom – even when it comes from God Himself. John the Baptist confirms how excellent and spiritually influential a man can be without any known earthly advantage. Paul was raised up to show how thoroughly a person can be committed to the Lord, and how much one person can do.

At some point, the people of God must see the kingdom of God as bigger than their own group. Nebuchadnezzar had to extend his thoughts beyond the empire of Babylon. Belshazzar had to be forced to think beyond enjoying a time of fleshly indulgence. Darius was brought to see his own foolishness and impotence, and the wisdom and omnipotence of the Living God. In all three cases, they were brought to see how great God is. The first and the last kings were used to proclaim this to the whole world.

That is how God works. What is declared in secret is to be proclaimed from the housetops. As our Lord Himself said, *“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops”* (Mat 10:27). **In His great Kingdom, God is looking for those who are willing to abandon everything for Him – men and women who are willing to speak by faith before having to learn the hard way like Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. Such sensitive individuals bring glory to God.**

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/20/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 1-8 of the seventh chapter. The lesson is titled, **“DANIEL’S FIRST VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS FROM THE SEA.”** Daniel now recounts a vision that he had during the first year of Belshazzar’s reign. This will be a more detailed perspective of the kingdoms of this world. Nebuchadnezzar saw them from the standpoint of the deterioration from one kingdom to another. Daniel will behold the nature, or character, of these kingdoms. At this point, we will enter into the most arresting part of Daniel’s book. 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.

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