

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL 5-6

A pastor was attending a Bible Study Conference one weekend and was absent from his church.

He asked his secretary to place a notice in the Sunday bulletin that would explain his absence.

She meant to type, "Our pastor is away attending a Study Conference." But when she typed "*Study*" she left off the "y" - so that the announcement read, "Our pastor is away this week attending a *Stud* Conference."

And to make matters worse the remainder of what she typed read, "Please, keep him in your prayers."

Tonight in Daniel 5 we're going to *study* about a *stud* conference - a party gone wild, complete with wine and women, thrown by the Babylonian king Belshazzar.

It's a party that got *out of hand* and was interrupted by *the hand of God!* A blasphemous Babylonian throws a *bash*, that the Almighty decides to *crash!*

As we'll see God gets a backhanded invitation to the banquet and makes His presence known in an unusual way... Let's join the party already in progress....

Chapter 5, "Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand." Twenty-three years pass between chapters 4 and 5. Nebuchadnezzar is dead and his throne is occupied by a grandson, Belshazzar.

And for the last 20 years Babylon has been at war with the Medes and Persians. For the previous two of those years the city of Babylon has been under siege.

Yet despite the onslaught Belshazzar felt that the Babylonians were invincible - the city impregnable.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, gives us impressive details as to the fortifications of the city of Babylon

The city was 15 miles square - surrounded by a double wall separated by a 30' moat. The outer wall was 311' high and 87' thick. You could line eleven cars abreast on top of the wall. The wall had 250 watch towers, some soaring upwards an additional 100'.

Even by modern standards the walls were an impressive piece of high-rise architecture.

Under the walls the Euphrates River flowed, providing Babylon with its own water supply. Historians report the city had the food reserves to last 20 years.

No wonder Belshazzar felt smug and self-assured.

And to show-off his confidence the king hosts a banquet. Here's the scene, while the enemy is *outside plotting*, Belshazzar and Co. are *inside partying!*

Incidentally, archeologists believe they've found the actual banquet hall where Belshazzar's party was held.

In the ruins of Babylon they've discovered a room connected to the King's palace - 56' wide by 173' long.

And across from the main entrance, *in the longer wall*, there was a double niche where they believe the king's throne sat.

The long wall was covered with white plaster made up the backdrop for what happens next...

“While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

The banquet quickly turned into a drunken orgy.

Most Oriental kings didn't drink in public and their sexual antics were restricted to their harem. But here it seems Belshazzar disregards all regal protocol.

Apparently, Belshazzar was a hard-drinking playboy.

The king's immorality was bad enough, but what tips the scales in God's eyes is when Belshazzar brings out the vessels from the Jewish Temple. When his grandpa, Nebuchadnezzar, conquered Jerusalem he took the holy vessels from the Temple to Babylon as trophies of his victory. These were the sacred saucers, and the dedicated dishes, and the consecrated cups.

God's law commanded that the utensils used in the Temple service were to be used for no other purpose than the service of Yahweh. Belshazzar knew that, but in his arrogance and defiance he deliberately defiles these holy vessels. *He turns them into beer mugs.*

Imagine a party, where the host uses communion treys and cups he's stolen from church, and mockingly serves whiskey to his guests - *communion cups as shot glasses*. He toasts his prostitutes with communion cups. That's exactly what Belshazzar was doing...

Verse 4, "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone."

Secular records show that Belshazzar's father, King Nabonidas, was extremely superstitious. He had stolen the idols of surrounding cities and brought them to Babel to supposedly protect him against his enemies.

No doubt Belshazzar's ballroom was adorned with these idols. Now he has the audacity to add the sacred vessels of Yahweh to his collection of worthless gods.

Now verse 5, "In the same hour (the very moment they put God's vessels to their polluted lips) the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." Most of us are familiar with handwriting on the wall. It's done in crayon by our kids or grandkids. But this handwriting on the wall is by the finger of God.

Talk about immediate sobriety! The king had no need for a stiff cup of coffee. The hand of God sobered him.

Think of it, in a backhanded kind of a way Belshazzar had invited God to his party. If he didn't want God to show up he should've never toyed with what God called sacred. He

should've never thumbed his nose in God's face. Now God crashes his party!

Imagine the tension that would fill this room if suddenly a mysterious finger appeared and wrote on our long wall a message addressed specifically to us!

“Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him (God had thrown a wet blanket over the party), so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.”

This is descriptive language, “*The joints of his hips were loosened*” is a King James way of saying, “it scared the stuffing out of him.” Belshazzar's problem wasn't too many party prunes. He got divinely inspired diarrhea. This scared him to death! In addition to soiling his britches, we're told his knees knocked!

Which brings up one of my favorite jokes... There once was a British navy captain... One day his cabin boy ran to his quarters to inform him a Spanish galleon was just off the starboard bow. The captain barked, “Fetch me my red vest and sound the battle stations.”

Days later the boy again came with news of two Spanish galleons off the port side. Captain ordered, “Fetch me my red vest and sound the battle stations.”

One day the cabin boy asked the captain why he always wore his red vest into battle. The brave captain replied “Sonny, I wear my red vest in case I sustain a injury in battle. I don't want my men to see their captain bleeding and let a wounded captain discourage them.”

The next day the boy ran into the captain's cabin shouting, "*Captain, Captain, the entire Spanish Armada is on the horizon.*" To which he replied, "Sonny, fetch my red vest, AND MY BROWN PANTS, and sound the battle stations." That was Belshazzar!

Verse 7, "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." Now all the king's wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change."

This queen was probably the queen-mother. We're not certain, but this could've been Queen Amytis, the widow of Nebuchadnezzar. Earlier in their marriage Amytis became homesick for the green hills of the country where she'd grown up. To alleviate her nostalgia for home, Nebuchadnezzar built for her enjoyment what became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

But here the queen is the person who recalls Daniel.

She tells King Belshazzar, “There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.

And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father - your father the king - made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.” Nebuchadnezzar was probably his grandfather - but since there’s no word for “grandpa” in Chaldean, any male ancestor was called “father.”

“Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

It seems the brash Belshazzar had forced Daniel into retirement... *Didn't think he needed his godly counsel.*

And maybe you have friends who have retired you.

They've rejected you since you became, *as they put it, “a religious fanatic.”* Since you became a Christian they no longer have any use for you and your input.

But that doesn't mean they won't in the future!

Joseph Parker once wrote, “You will be wanted someday by Belshazzar. You have not been invited to the feast, but you will be there before it ends. The king will not ask you to drink wine, but he will ask you to tell the secret of his pain, and heal the malady of his heart.

Just wait your time, preachers. You are nobody now. Who cares for men of insight while the wine goes around and the feast is unfolding its tempting luxuries.

But the preacher will have his opportunity. They will send for him when all other friends have failed. May he then come fearlessly, independently, asking only to be a channel through which divine communication can be addressed. Then may he speak to the listening trouble of the world." Eventually you'll get your moment to speak into your lost friend's life. The day will come.

"Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah?" Daniel was so far off Belshazzar's radar, he didn't even recognize him.

The King says to Daniel, "I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.

Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing.

And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." As if worldly wealth and earthly promotion were going to motivate Daniel.

“Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.” Remember, whenever Daniel addressed Nebuchadnezzar he always did so respectfully, with proper protocol, “O King, live forever.”

Daniel knew Nebuchadnezzar was God's instrument. He loved the king. But he had no such respect for Belshazzar - this royal punk was not nearly so noble.

Daniel says in verse 18, “O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.”

As we saw in Chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar learned some profound lessons. God whittled him down to size.

“But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this.” Belshazzar knew the history, and had deliberately ignored God’s dealings.

“And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven.”
When Belshazzar brought out the Temple vessels he had deliberately picked a fight with God.

“They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.”
Wow, he doesn't mince words. Belshazzar thought he was sovereign, but God holds his next breath in his hands.

The God of heaven owns this man. He's a puppet.

“Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.”

These are all Aramaic words. “MENE” means “numbered.” “TEKEL” is “weighed.” “UPHARSIN” means “divided.” The message literally, “numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided.” Now here's the question, *why were the Babylonians unable to come up with an interpretation?* Certainly, they knew Aramaic...

Some Bible teachers suspect a kind of blindness fell over them. The Talmud has a tradition that the letters were written vertically rather than horizontally, and this confused the soothsayers. We're not really sure why they couldn't read the inscription - *but Daniel could!*

He says, “This is the interpretation of each word.

MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it...
In modern lingo, **“your number is up!”** Belshazzar has had his opportunity to repent.

Ever played a board game with a timer. You turn over the vial with the sand. When the last grain falls to the bottom, **“time up!”** Well, we’re all on a timer. Today is the day of salvation, but one day the offer will be over.

Verse 27, **“TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting...”** The Hebrew word translated **“glory”** means **“heaviness.”** When stacked up against God’s glory the king lacks substance.

Belshazzar was a lightweight. He came up short...

This is the case with all of us. We might be plump physically, but spiritually we’re all anemic and gaunt. Only Jesus adds enough weight to balance our scales.

And **“PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”** **“Peres”** is singular for the plural **“Upharsin.”** It has a double meaning...

The term literally means **“divide by breaking.”** And Babylon was to be broken - conquered and divided.

But the word was also Aramaic for **“Persian”** and it was the Persians who at that very moment were invading the city of Babylon. They were minutes from assaulting Belshazzar's party and dethroning the king.

The night was October 12, 539 BC. Outside the walls of Babylon the Persian general, Ugabaru, had divided his army

into thirds. Two-thirds were stationed where the Euphrates River flowed under the city walls.

The other third had been dispatched several miles upstream to divert the flow of the Euphrates into a lake.

As the Babylonians partied-hearty the water-level of the river dropped lower and lower. By midnight the riverbed had dried up enough to begin the invasion.

Rather than *go over the walls* the Persians entered the city from *under the walls*. Because of lax security, or maybe because the guards had been bought off, the gates from the river to the city were left open, and the Persians came streaming into the city unopposed.

God's judgment was fulfilled that very night!

The Medes and Persians conquered the mighty city of Babylon without a battle - *without firing a shot!*

Today, you can go to the London museum and see a cylinder known as “[the stele of Cyrus](#)” - in which Cyrus, the Persian king, boasts of how he humbled Babylon.

Verse 29, “**Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.**”

What a hollow reward. Daniel must've laughed. In minutes Babel would no longer be run by Babylonians!

“That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.” The Jewish historian, Josephus,

tells us it was fourteen days later that Cyrus, the Persian emperor (Darius' boss), entered the city and was greeted by an old man with a lengthy scroll.

The man was Daniel. The scroll was the prophecy of Isaiah. Daniel let Cyrus read how 160 years beforehand God described his career, his methods, even his means of victory. In Isaiah 44-45 Cyrus is mentioned by name 100 years before he was born.

This so impressed Cyrus it compelled him to help the Jews return to their land just as Isaiah had prophesied.

He released the Temple treasures to the returning Jews and issued a decree financing the journey home. Talk about God turning the tables - He did it in a night!

One archeological note, for years secular sources named Nabonidas as the last Babylonian king. There was no mention of "*Belshazzar*" as we find in Daniel.

But in 1861 and 1882 cuneiform tablets were published, now known as the "*Nabonidas Chronicles*."

In these ancient documents Nabonidas names his son, Belshazzar, as his co-regent in charge of Babylon.

This confirms the historicity of Daniel, and explains why the king offered Daniel the third-ranking office in the land instead of the second. Babylon had two kings.

Before leaving Chapter 5, let me sum it up poetically, "*At the feast of King Belshazzar, and a thousand of his lords. While they drank from golden vessels, as the book of Truth records. On that night as they reveled, in the royal palace hall, they were seized with consternation, at the hand upon the wall. So*

our deeds are recorded, there's a hand that's writing now. Give your heart to Jesus, to His royal mandate bow. For the day is approaching, it must come to one and all, when the sinner's condemnation, will be written on the wall.”

Chapter 6, “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps...” These were more regional officials. The 120 satraps were “to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.”

Realize, Daniel is in his mid to late 80s, and he's still going strong... It reminds me of the lady who turned 100 years old. At her birthday party, someone asked her if she had any children. She replied, "Not yet!"

Daniel remained active as an insider in the Persian government, probably representing Jewish interests.

“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.”

It's been said, "Jealousy is the tribute mediocrity pays to excellence." And it was because of Daniel's excellence that his peers were green with envy.

In fact, in order to accuse Daniel they launch a private investigation. It's not the first time a political entity has tried to dig up the dirt on an opponent.

But to their dismay, Daniel turns up clean!

No sex scandals... No girlfriends on the side... No campaign finance irregularities... No insider trading... No political paybacks... No private email servers...

Daniel was blameless! Oh, that our enemies would have the same trouble finding a chink in our armor!

Seriously, what if a private eye spent the next 30 days turning your life upside down... *he scoured your on-line accounts - scanned your hard-drives - bugged your conversations - wiretapped your phone - put a surveillance camera on you - what dirt would he find?*

Daniel was a professional diplomat. He lived and worked in pagan politics for seven decades, yet they could find no fault. Verse 4 proves it **IS** possible to live in this world and not be polluted by it! You don't have to get down in the mud to get things done. The stream that runs through a mind and heart can remain pure.

We can stand up for God and *survive* - even *thrive*.

In fact, it's not only possible, it's what God expects!

Verse 5, "Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." This was Daniel's only "achilles' heel" - the one non-negotiable in his life. *How could they turn his devotion to God against him?*

This also shows the hatred the governors had toward Daniel. *The ole boy was pushing 90!* You've think they'd just wait for him die off. Instead, they plot a trap.

“So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter. Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.”

They found no flaw with Daniel, so they exploit the arrogance of King Darius. He's compelled to sign this idiotic decree. *Why did he sign such a terrible law?*

Think of the sick who for 30 days would be unable to ask God for healing... How about the students having to face exams on their own... Or farmers unable to pray for rain, for a whole month. It was a stupid decree!

Notice, the three tools Daniel's enemies use to persuade the king to sign this edict. These are the tools Satan uses to cause us to make rash decisions...

First, they create a **fanfare**. We're told *“they thronged before the king.”* It was designed to create confusion. Throw the king off his game. Get him discombobulated.

Second, they **falsified** the truth. They said all the governors had collaborated on this idea. We know one governor that didn't. Daniel would've never agreed.

And third, they used **flattery**. Darius was a skilled administrator, *and he liked to hear other people say so.*

All this combined: **fanfare, falsehood, flattery** caused the king, *and often prompts us*, to make bad choices.

Verse 10, **“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”** Notice, what Daniel doesn't do... *He doesn't file an appeal with the courts, or start a petition, or jam the palace switchboards with calls.* He doesn't panic.

Nor does he start making concessions in his prayer life. Imagine, he could've rationalized, **“God hears me with the window shut... I don't have to kneel to pray...”**

Instead of a counterattack or compromise, Daniel refuses to let the *fear of man* effect his *approach to God*. He doesn't alter his devotional life one iota.

Daniel just does what Daniel always does.

Over the years he' developed a pattern, a discipline of holiness. Every day, three times a day, he opened his window, cocked himself toward Jerusalem, knelt and prayed. Like the Dr. Pepper slogan, **“10, 2, and 4.”**

Notice, five things about Daniel's *habitual holiness*.

First, he had a **place to pray**. He went to his “*upper room*.” Maybe it was quieter there - above the street noise. But Daniel had a specific location designated.

Second, he had regular times or **periods for prayer**. His prayer life was recurrent and at a regular time.

Third, Daniel had a **posture for prayer**. He knelt. Nowhere does the Bible say you have to kneel to pray. But *bending our knee* can help us *humble our heart*.

Fourth, Daniel’s prayer was **pointed** at *Jerusalem, the site of the Temple*. In the OT God’s glory rested in the Temple. Thus, prayers went through Jerusalem.

Even today Jews log onto the internet and send their prayers to the Wailing Wall. They believe their prayers are more likely to be answered if pointed properly.

And as Christians we believe the same. We point or aim our prayers, not at a physical location, but our prayers are in Jesus’ name! They go through Him.

And fifth, notice Daniel’s **purpose** for prayer. He “**gave thanks before His God**.” Even though he’s sealing his death sentence by praying it’s still his duty as a child of God to give His Father thanks!

So here’re the keys to a healthy prayer life... **Place, period** (or time), **posture, point** (or aim), and **purpose**.

And realize, it’s the *habitual* that prepares you for the *unusual*. The lion’s den was an anomaly. It was a *rare* trial, but it was his *routine* that got Daniel ready.

Daniel had maintained this habit for years, and his enemies

had observed... Verse 11, “Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.” They staked out Daniel’s condo to catch him in the act. “And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”

Under Persian law the monarch's actions were considered infallible. Since it was impossible for him to make a mistake, he couldn't even alter his own decree.

“So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself (*he wasn't upset with Daniel, he was mad he'd been so stupid*), and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.”

Darius realizes he's been bamboozled! He works all day with his lawyers - seeking a loophole, trying to get an injunction - some way to save his friend, Daniel.

“Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.” So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke,

saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” It seems the king’s faith was genuine!

“Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.” Darius puts his royal seal on the den to insure no tampering. He may’ve been worried about foul play than the lions.

Verse 18, “Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.”

They say, “The softest pillow is a clear conscience.” If so, then Darius spent the night on a bed of nails.

“Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

Did Daniel paused a second or two for effect - *make the king sweat?* His rash decree certainly deserved it.

“Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!”

In Daniel’s reply, you sense a cheerfulness. The king in the palace spent the night in turmoil, while Daniel had been at peace with the lions. You’d expect a role reversal - Darius at peace, and Daniel restless. But Daniel rested *in the den*, as Darius worried *in his sin*.

The most peaceful place on Earth is the center of God's will, even if it places you in a den of man-eaters.

Actually, Daniel would've rested either way - either he'd be with God in heaven, or God would be with him in the den. Since it was the latter Darius could rest too.

Shakespeare put it, "Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant taste of death but once."

In verse 22 Daniel explains how God delivered, "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." An angel had struck the lions with lockjaw.

But what stopped the lions from mauling Daniel with their paws, and eating him? Apparently, God changed their temperament - made them docile. One day, He'll work the same miracle globally. Isaiah 11:6 says when Jesus returns, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb."

It reminds me of the little girl who heard Daniel's story in Sunday School. Her teacher asked the class *how could Daniel have been so brave?* The little girl answered, "Daniel wasn't afraid because he knew one of the lions was the Lion of the tribe of Judah!"

It could be that this "angel" or "messenger" was the pre-incarnate Christ. Daniel 3 said that One like the Son of God showed up in the fiery furnace - *why not in the lion's den?* Christ Himself may've helped Daniel.

And that would be an encouragement for us. 1 Peter 5:8 describes Satan as “a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.” The devil sets tricks and traps for us.

At times every Christian spends a night or two in the lions’ den. For it’s there we taste the power of the Lion of Judah. What better place to learn the Lord’s promise to you and me, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Have you ever found yourself face to face with an aggressive dog? In such a situation it’s best to exude confidence. If a dog sniffs out fear, it emboldens him.

But Daniel was fearless. *I wonder if that had the opposite effect on the lions?* His confidence in God caused them to back down. The lions might’ve feared Daniel. Daniel knew His plight would be determined by **the hand of God**, not **the claws and jaws of these lions**.

Charles Spurgeon use to say, “**It’s a good thing those lions didn’t eat old Daniel. They would’ve choked on him. Daniel was half grit and half backbone.**” Perhaps God was actually looking out for the lions. They might’ve broken their teeth on the tough faith of Daniel.

Verse 23, “**Now the king was exceedingly 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 injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.**” Note what saved him, “**because he believed in his God.**” Like us, **he was saved by faith!**

“**And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the**

den of lions - them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.” This proves Daniel’s deliverance wasn’t because the lion’s had no appetite.

“Then King Darius wrote: to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.” This is an interesting edict.

Men must tremble and fear the God of Daniel!

Proverbs 9:10 tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” Daniel’s greatest fear was not being let down into the lion’s den, but letting down His God. He feared God more than he feared the lions.

What about you? Who do you fear offending?

Darius’s decree continues, “For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end.” It’s God’s Kingdom, not Darius’ - not the kingdom of the Persians - that will endure forever.

Darius continues, “He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

It’s possible, we’ll meet Darius in heaven. Along with Nebuchadnezzar, they seemed to have a sincere faith.

Chapter 6 concludes “So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

Here's the moral of the story: don't allow yourself to be frightened or bullied by those who are determined to pick on Christianity, and oppose Christians.

Daniel didn't go out looking for a fight, but when it came to him, he was brave, had faith, and was faithful.

“Daniel was a stand up person in a bow down world.”

Let's dare to be a Daniel. Take a stand when it's your turn... and God will be with you even in the lion's den!