

"Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times"

Part 9

Daniel 6

Introduction: Today we come back to our study in the series "Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times" and as we do we are coming to Daniel 6. Last week we looked at Daniel 5 which is really one of the most alarming chapters found in this book. I say that because we can see in chapter 5 that a nation can fall overnight. The great nation of Babylon fell in one night. They were conquered by the Medes and the Persians. The city of Babylon was surrounded by walls that were 350 feet high and 87 feet thick. The people had enough food stored up within the city for 20 years and they had the Euphrates River ran through the middle of the city. They had placed all their faith in this city and their military power. In one night everything changed. The Medes and the Persians diverted the Euphrates River and then entered through the river bed. They killed the guards who kept the gates and then they opened the gates and allowed their army to come in and within hours the Babylonian Empire was gone.

Last week we looked at the reasons for the fall of the Babylonian Empire and we also looked at the parallels between the Babylonians and our nation today.

They fell because of:

1. Immorality
2. Suppression of the truth
3. Ungodly leaders
4. Blasphemy - speaking offensively against God.

These are the very things we see within our society today which means that God will not allow this to continue. The frightening thought is that the judgment can come suddenly. Our nation is so much like Babylon in the sense that our leaders are believe because we have been a super power it cannot happen. They have confidence in our military and our intelligence.

Let me show you some verses that will help us to see that God is in control over the nations and He does as He pleases.

Daniel 4:17

¹⁷ *This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

Psalm 47:7-8

⁷ *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*

⁸ *God reigneth over the heathen [nations]: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*

Then there is this verse:

Isaiah 40:15

¹⁵ *Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.*

Here we see that the nations are as the small dust of the balance. Let me simplify this for you us so that we can grasp onto what is being said here.

God has a plan for all the ages. We are in a time today where our world is headed for the Great Tribulation. There is nothing that will stop God's plan and the USA is but a drop in the bucket compared to God's overall plan. It was the same with the Babylonian Empire. They too were but a drop in the bucket. God allowed them to come on the scene to be used by Him to accomplish His purpose and to glorify Him and then they were gone.

Now in the book of Daniel it was time for the Medes and the Persians because from them would come a man named Cyrus and it would be through Cyrus that the Jews would be sent back home from the captivity.

Isaiah 44:28 - 45:3

²⁸ *That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

¹ *Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;*

² *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:*

³ *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

Now I want you to grasp what I am about to tell you. These verses were spoken by Isaiah about 150 years before Cyrus was ever born. This means that God had a plan and He would be faithful to carry it out.

Application:

The same is true in our world and with our nation today. God has a plan and the USA will not stand in the way nor will any other nation. God is going to carry out His plan. We know that in the tribulation the world will be ruled by the anti-Christ and so as we move closer to that time this world will become more and more anti-God.

Let us now get to Daniel 6.

I. Daniel's Promotion

Notice Daniel 5:30-31

Many believe that Darius mentioned here refers to a position and not to a person's name. Some believe this is the title given to Cyrus. We cannot be sure but we do know that this Darius is 62 years old at the time he conquered Babylon.

Notice Daniel 6:1-2

Darius set over the kingdom 120 princes and then over them there were 3 presidents and we are told that Daniel was first.

Notice Daniel 6:3

Daniel was preferred above all the presidents because there was an excellent spirit in him therefore the king made him the Prime Minister of his entire kingdom. We need to take some time here and look at the "excellent spirit" of Daniel.

This means that Daniel had a pleasant personality. He was not a complainer. He did what he was told to do as long as it was not anything contrary to the Word of God. Daniel proved to be a man whom this king could work with. When I read this I realize that Daniel was a man who was content with whatever position he was assigned to. He has now been in Babylon for 70 years and he has taken all that he has learned and he has used it to honor and to glorify his God. Let me remind you what Belshazzar said concerning Daniel.

Daniel 5:13-14

¹³ Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

¹⁴ I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

No matter who was king Daniel lived his life in a way that honored God.

There is a point about Daniel that is not seen on the surface but needs to be known about Daniel and that is HE WAS A MAN OF SACRIFICE. I read one commentary in which someone pointed out that no one becomes great for God unless they are willing to sacrifice. Let me explain so that we can better understand this.

- ✓ If you are going to be a great mom for God you are going to have to make some sacrifices to invest into your family.
- ✓ If you are going to be a great father for God it will require sacrifice on your part to invest in the family.
- ✓ If a man is going to be a great Bible teacher for God he will need to make sacrifices so that he can spend time in the Bible.
- ✓ If a man is going to be a great Pastor for God he will need to be willing to make sacrifices so as to spend time in the study of God's Word and time in prayer.

The list could go on and on but you can see the point. Daniel was a great man for God and therefore we can be sure he was a man of sacrifice.

Application:

Let me just say that as the days grow darker in our nation there is a need for believers to be great for God. Let us remember that in order for us to be people who magnify and glorify our Savior we are going to need to be people of sacrifice. Paul summed it up in Romans 12.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Let me show you what attitude is produced in the person who fully surrenders to God and presents their bodies as a living sacrifice and who are not conformed by the world.

Philippians 1:12-13, 20

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

II. The Plot

Notice Daniel 6:4-5

These verses give to us a clear picture into the life of Daniel. There are several points we need to see here.

1. Let us notice the word "then".

The first word of this verse deserves our attention. It tells us when the plot was developed against Daniel. This happened after Daniel was promoted. If you remember the very same thing happened to Daniels 3 friends after their promotion in Daniel 3.

Satan hates it when God's people take a stand and when God allows them to be placed in a position where they have an opportunity to be great for God and to influence others with their Godly lifestyle. It is then that we can expect the attacks from the enemy.

2. Let us notice they could find no occasion against Daniel except it be found in the way that he served his God.

This is a wonderful statement about Daniel. They watched him very closely and there was absolutely nothing they could use against him.

Application:

This is the way we should be living our lives also in the midst of these difficult times.

Notice Daniel 6:6-9

They went through the emotions of the king. This was flattery and the king fell for it. But they had not consulted every leader for they did not consult Daniel. The law of the Medes and the Persians could not be changed. The king never thought it through.

III. The Prayer of Daniel

Notice Daniel 6:10-11

When Daniel prayed it was not out of spite for the law but it was a practice he had in his life every single day.

IV. The Prosecution of Daniel

Notice Daniel 6:12-17

Don't miss what the king says in verse 16. He had faith in Daniel's God. How did he know about Daniel's God? He learned through the testimony of Daniel as he told others of his God.

V. The Protection of Daniel.

Notice Daniel 6:18-23

Daniel was protected by the angel who shut the lion's mouths.

VI. The Penalty of the Accusers

Notice Daniel 6:24

These people were thrown in to the lion's den because under the law of the Medes and the Persians when someone was found to be guilty his entire family was punished.

Conclusion:

So what can we learn from all that we have seen in the book of Daniel?

1. God allows His children to face pressure to bring glory to Him.
2. God is in control of every situation we face.
3. God is more concerned with us honoring Him than He is for our comfort.
4. To be great for God we will need to be people of sacrifice.
5. To be great for God will mean we are hated by the world.