

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Are You Doing In Your Seat? (Part 10)

Genesis 19:1; Daniel 2:49

We completed last month's issue with a brief glimpse at Daniel's Declaration as he was praising God for providing the details of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation. We now move to the fourth aspect of The Triumph of Daniel. In Daniel 6:20-22, we will ponder His Distinction. We will summarize the events of chapter 6 prior to the verses that we will consider in detail.

As chapter 6 begins, Babylon has been defeated by a combined empire of Media-Persia. Nebuchadnezzar had died some years before although his death is not recorded in Scripture. He is followed by some kings that are mentioned in secular records but not in Daniel. In Daniel 5 we find that Belshazzar is serving as second in command to his father who is not present in Babylon at the time. That is why Belshazzar offers the position of "*third ruler in the kingdom*" to the one that can read and interpret the handwriting on the wall. His father is first, Belshazzar is second, and the one with great ability will be third. Of course, Daniel interprets the writing which said that Babylon would be destroyed and Belshazzar would be killed that very night. As all of God's prophecies are, this prophecy was fulfilled to the exact detail.

As Darius the Median is placed over Babylon, he sets up a system of government. As is the Median/Persian custom, they install some of the captives of the former kingdom into positions of authority. In this process, Darius sets up a tiered system. He places 120 princes over the different sections of the empire. These would serve in the same capacity of what we would call governors. (The biggest distinctions between our system and theirs is that these were all appointed by the king instead of being elected by the people and that

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they answered directly to the king's men instead of the people. In our system of government, the president has no control over the governors.) The king then provides another level between him and these princes. He creates three offices in which he installs three presidents. They are ranked as well with Daniel being the first.

Darius is very wise in establishing this system of levels in his government. I am sure that he had seen other kings who were constantly bothered by insignificant things. He also knew that divisions had to be established because Persia's empire was so big. Daniel 6:2 closes with the comment, "*And the king should have no damage.*" The word damage means to suffer, inflict loss, to hurt. Exactly what kind of damage is meant is not specified, so we can only speculate. Some writers think that it refers to financial loss. The positions are spread broad enough so that one man cannot do much without everyone else knowing about it. In this way, one person could not be stealing from the kingdom without it becoming known to others. Personally, I think the "*damage*" may have to do with Darius's time and patience. He is an older man, 62, and really does not care to be bothered with trivial matters. He does not want people coming from all over the kingdom to him. They can see these princes; if they cannot handle the problem, then they can seek the advice of the presidents; if it really is a major concern of the kingdom, then they can bring the matter to Darius. With this form, Darius is not bothered with petty matters.

Daniel 6:3 provides the reason for the circumstances that unfold in the remainder of the chapter. The verse reads, "*Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.*" Now to you and I that believe the Bible, this does not amaze us too much. We know of Daniel's past and also know that God has some prophecy to give Daniel. But put yourself in the time period in which Daniel is living. We read in Biblical records and in secular records where other kings would massacre a defeated king's entire family. No doubt they would also kill all of that king's advisors. But

as God ordained it, a kingdom defeated Babylon that had the custom of taking the best advisors and using them in their own kingdom. Because of Daniel's wisdom, he is an obvious choice for top advisor, the first president. We see God's providence in control here as it is throughout all of Daniel. As a young man, a teenager, Daniel found "*favour and tender love*" in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. Now as an older man, Daniel is still serving God and Darius saw an "*excellent spirit*" in him. Many Bible students think that close to 70 years have passed from Daniel 1 to Daniel 6. I will not give all the details as to how all of that adds up, but we do know from secular records that Nebuchadnezzar's reign lasted 40 years. The ones that followed him added over 20 years. Through all this time Daniel is faithfully serving God. What a testimony! What an example! His whole life is given in complete dedication to God. May the same be said of us!

But even though God is providentially directing everything in our lives, as He did with Daniel, that does not mean that we will not face some hard trials in our lives. Daniel had faced some in his life as we saw in chapter 1. There may have been others that are not recorded in Scripture. Now he is an old man and perhaps his most difficult trial is about to unfold. The attention and position that is given to Daniel infuriates the other presidents and princes. They are determined to eliminate Daniel, so they will be elevated in their positions.

Daniel 6:4 says, "*Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.*" What a testimony to be said of Daniel! These men were determined to get rid of him. Because they were dishonest in certain areas of their lives, they thought it would be easy to find some area in which Daniel was dishonest. How many people they had looking, it would be impossible to know. Maybe it was only them, but that would put 122 men examining every aspect of Daniel's life. They were listening to what he said

about the king, but he did not say anything against the king. They were looking at the financial records to see if he embezzled money, but Daniel was completely honest financially in all regards. On and on they looked, but they could find nothing. The word error at the end of the verse means to fail or a thing amiss. Daniel failed in nothing that they examined. The word fault means destruction or corruption. They thought it would be easy to find somewhere in Daniel's life where he was corrupt. After all they were government officials and government officials in many countries throughout history have been notorious for their corruption. But they examined Daniel's life thoroughly and found nothing.

What about your life? Do you have the same testimony as Daniel? Could your life be examined and found without error or fault as Daniel's was? Now, we will make excuses as to why this should not be expected of us, but none of those excuses are valid. Our lives should be as pure as possible. Some might comment as a woman did years ago when a preacher was preaching about living right. She said, "You're not leaving any room for backsliding." He responded, "Are you looking for room to backslide?" We want to make our path for sin as broad as possible. Instead of making excuses to sin, we ought to make every determination to live as holy as God demands of us (I Peter 1:15-16). I am not preaching sinless perfection, or the eradication of the sin nature, but I am saying that we should live as close to God as possible—so close that our lives could be examined, as Daniel's was, and sin not be so evident.

But the men had to find something, so they realized, as recorded in Daniel 6:5, that it had to be about Daniel's God. As they watched Daniel, they realized that he prayed a lot, so they convinced Darius to forbid praying to any "*God or man for thirty days.*" Not realizing the full implications, Darius signed the decree. Upon hearing of the decree, Daniel kept doing what he normally did and prayed three times a day with his windows open towards Jerusalem. The men were watching Daniel and had him arrested. Again, we see a great testimony. Man's law could not scare Daniel into neglecting to pray.

May nothing shake us from doing what is right in God's sight. God is not through with Daniel, and we see His Deliverance. In a mighty miracle, God shut the mouths of the lions, and Daniel is set free.

To sum up this message, we see **The Testimony about Lot and Daniel**. Lot is mentioned by name in II Peter 2:7-8. One time he is said to be "*just*" and two times he is said to be "*righteous*." The words mean the same thing. He is saved, but lived for the things of this world. In living that way, the verses say that he "*vexed*" his soul. The word means troubled or tormented. To put it another way, he lived a miserable life. That will be true of every believer who is devoted to the world and not to Christ. Daniel, on the other hand, is mentioned in Hebrews 11:33, though not by name. In this listing of great believers it is said that some "*stopped the mouths of lions*." Later in verse 38, it says, "*Of whom the world was not worthy*." So, what are you doing in your seat? What are you doing in your realm of influence? When others look at you, are they seeing someone devoted to the world or devoted to Christ? You can have the world and be vexed, or you can have Christ, and have the world not worthy of you. The choice is not hard. May we see a generation who refuse to be like Lot and desire to be like Daniel.