

# DANIEL RESTORES A NATION

**TEXT: DANIEL 5 – 6**

Introduction:

1. After the united kingdom of Israel divided, the northern kingdom persisted in rebellion against God by practicing idolatry and false worship.
2. In time, God allowed them to be conquered and taken captive by the nation of Assyria.
3. The southern kingdom of Judah eventually drifted into the same sins.
4. Thus, about 100 years later, God allowed them to be conquered and taken captive by the nation of Babylon.
5. During this time, Daniel prophesied in the land of Babylon, seeking to guide his people back to the Lord.

I. Daniel: The Den of Deliverance

- A. The name Daniel means, “God is my Judge” or “God will judge.”
- B. When Daniel was taken captive into Babylon, he was described with the word “child” – indicating that he was between the ages of 12 and 17 (Daniel 1:3-4).
- C. Though he was a young man, Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Daniel 1:8-13).
  1. This faith would continue with him throughout his captivity and the many ordeals he would face in Babylon.
  2. In many ways, Daniel was a second Joseph – sent before to prepare for the deliverance of God’s people.
- D. Darius set up 120 princes to help in overseeing Babylon (Daniel 6:1-9).
- E. Over these men, he set up three presidents – one of whom was Daniel.
  1. It should be noted that Daniel was in his 80’s at this time (or possibly in his early 90’s).
  2. Still, Daniel remained faithful and devoted to the Lord.
- F. Because of his exalted position and the favor bestowed upon him by Darius, the other presidents and princes were filled with envy and jealousy toward Daniel.
- G. Thus, they sought to find something that they could use against him.
- H. When they could not find anything against Daniel in his business affairs, they decided to use his religion against him.
- I. They devised a plot to try to ensnare Daniel.
  1. Their plan was to pit Daniel’s loyalty to God against his loyalty to Darius.
  2. They approached King Darius with flattery and announced their desire to have a law passed that would prohibit anyone from making any request of any person (god or man) other than the king himself.
  3. In other words, for thirty days, Darius would be in the place of God – or, at least, the only mediator between men and their gods.
  4. The punishment for violating this decree was to be cast into the den of lions.
  5. The king’s vanity and pride overcame his common sense, and he agreed to sign the decree.
- J. Daniel soon found out that this decree had been signed into law by the king (Daniel 6:10-17).

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- K. However, he did not let the law of the land change his devotion to God – instead, he continued to pray as he had done “aforetime.”
  - L. The men who had set this trap came together and witnessed Daniel praying to God.
  - M. So, they came before the king, reminded him of the law he had signed, and informed him that Daniel was in violation of that law – therefore, the sentence of death must be carried out.
  - N. In the end, there was nothing that the king could do but follow the law he had signed.
  - O. Thus, Daniel was cast into the den of lions.
  - P. We do not know how Daniel spent his night in the den of lions, but we do know how Darius spent his – in sleepless anxiety (Daniel 6:18-23).
  - Q. When the king went to check on Daniel, he heard Daniel speak from the den, still alive and well.
  - R. Daniel answered clearly about his deliverance from the lions.
    - 1. First, he had been delivered by God.
    - 2. Next, he had been delivered by an angel.
    - 3. Third, he had been delivered by a miracle.
    - 4. Fourth, he had been delivered by his purity and innocence.
    - 5. Finally, he had been delivered by his faithfulness (cf. Hebrews 11:33).
  - S. The king was glad for Daniel’s salvation and ordered him removed from the den of lions.
  - T. Because of his faith, Daniel came out of the den without a scratch upon him.
  - U. Following Daniel’s safe removal from the den of lions, the king commanded that those who had accused him be given the same sentence they had determined for Daniel (Daniel 6:24-28).
  - V. Then, Darius issued another decree – this one honoring the God of Daniel.
  - W. Daniel continued to prosper throughout the reign of Cyrus.
    - 1. Thus, Daniel – one of the first taken into captivity – would be allowed to see his brethren begin their return to Jerusalem.
    - 2. He would have been in his early 90’s at the end of Cyrus’ reign.
  - X. By his faithful example, Daniel taught the children of Israel how to be restored to God and to return to their homeland.
  - Y. Only by faithful devotion and obedience can a people become a blessed nation.
- II. Israel: The Writing on the Wall
- A. Daniel’s visit to the den of lion’s occurred after the nation of Babylon had fallen to the Medes and Persians under the reign of Cyrus.
  - B. The story of that fall illustrates an important lesson for the nation of Israel.
  - C. By this time in Babylon’s history, Belshazzar was the new ruler of the empire (Daniel 5:1-4).
  - D. During a great feast with his lords, Belshazzar decided to mock the God of Heaven by using the vessels of His temple for their drunken revelry.
  - E. As the revelry continued, fingers of a man appeared and began writing on a wall (Daniel 5:5-9).
  - F. While the king was praising and worshipping the false gods of Babylon, he was confronted visibly by a true supernatural being, the Almighty God.
  - G. Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, Belshazzar called for his wise men to attempt to interpret this writing.

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- H. The Queen, who had not been present for the feast, heard the words of the King, and came before him to counsel him (Daniel 5:10-16).
  - I. Her advice was simple, "Let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."
  - J. So, Daniel was brought before King Belshazzar.
  - K. First, Daniel clearly pointed out the sins of Belshazzar (Daniel 5:17-29).
    - 1. He lifted himself up against the Lord of Heaven.
    - 2. He desecrated the vessels of the Temple.
    - 3. He praised and worshipped idols – false gods.
    - 4. He failed to glorify the God of Heaven.
  - L. Thus, God sent the part of the hand to write the message to Belshazzar.
    - 1. The miracle was from God.
    - 2. The writing was from God.
    - 3. The message was from God.
  - M. Following this strong rebuke to the wayward king, Daniel began to interpret the writing on the wall.
    - 1. The first word, MENE, was written twice – meaning "numbered" or "he is numbered."
    - 2. According to Daniel, the word meant that God had numbered the days of the kingdom of Babylon.
    - 3. The second word was TEKEL – meaning "weighed," "weighted," or "he is weighed."
    - 4. According to Daniel, the word meant that Belshazzar had been weighed on God's scales and come up short.
    - 5. The final word was UPHARSIN – meaning "divided" or "division."
    - 6. According to Daniel, the word meant that the kingdom of Babylon was divided and it would be given to the Medes and the Persians.
    - 7. Thus, Babylon would be broken up and conquered by another people.
  - N. Considering his calm reaction to Daniel's words, apparently Belshazzar did not realize how soon they would come to pass (Daniel 5:30-31).
  - O. That very night, Darius the Mede conquered the nation of Babylon and King Belshazzar was killed.
    - 1. Darius the Mede was a governor under Cyrus the king.
    - 2. According to historical sources, the date of this event was October 12, 539 BC.
  - P. This miraculously revealed message was the same that God had tried to make known to His people before they came into captivity.
    - 1. As they had drifted away from God, more and more of their freedom had been lost to the oppression of their leaders.
    - 2. Finally, they found themselves under the absolute tyranny of a foreign nation and the cruel domination of Babylon.
  - Q. Liberty is lost when one fails to read the writing on the wall!
    - 1. By rejecting God and His Word, Israel and Judah fell into bondage.
    - 2. When men do the same, they become slaves to Satan by their sins (John 8:32-36).
  - R. However, as Daniel demonstrated, restoration is possible by returning to and obeying the Word of God.
- III. America: The Return to Restoration
- A. In many ways, America has drifted from its founding principles.
  - B. However, it is never too late to return to them and restore what has been lost.

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- C. Thomas Jefferson stated: *"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."*
- D. Samuel Adams declared: *"The truth is, all might be free if they valued freedom, and defended it as they ought."*
- E. Each citizen must be vigilant to learn, live, and teach the principles of freedom and morality on which this country was built.
- F. This means that all must be willing to read, study, learn, and obey the Word of God.
- G. This is the only way for a country to become a blessed nation.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. Of course, these principles also apply spiritually.
- 2. One who is separated from God by sin must be restored to Him by returning to His Word.
- 3. God's plan of salvation:
  - a. Hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
  - b. Believe in Jesus (John 8:24)
  - c. Repent of sins (Luke 13:3)
  - d. Confess faith in Jesus (Acts 8:37)
  - e. Be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
- 4. God's plan of return:
  - a. Repent of sins (Acts 8:21-23)
  - b. Confess sins (1 John 1:7-9)
  - c. Pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22, 24; James 5:15-16)
- 5. Then, by living faithfully – as Daniel demonstrated – one can honor God in this life and live in His presence forever in Heaven.

**"MAY EVERY CITIZEN IN THE ARMY AND IN THE COUNTRY HAVE A PROPER SENSE OF DEITY UPON HIS MIND AND AN IMPRESSION OF THE DECLARATION RECORDED IN THE BIBLE, 'HIM THAT HONORETH ME, I WILL HONOR, BUT HE THAT DESPISETH ME SHALL BE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED'" (1 SAMUEL 2:20).**

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