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DANIEL, THE ONE MAN IN THE EMPIRE EQUAL TO THE CRISIS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL
NUMBER 14
DANIEL 5:11-31

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The daughter of Nebuchadnezzar was still alive at this time and was in Babylon and did not join her husband, who was in retirement in Arabia. She was the mother of Belshazzar and she heard the screams of her son down in the banquet hall and she recognized the cry as coming from her son. He was throwing one of his tantrums and his mother, Nitrocris, rushed into the banquet hall to find out what had happened.

DANIEL 5:11 "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;" Nitrocris, evidently being a believer herself, recommended to her son, Belshazzar, a man for the crisis, namely, Daniel. "There is a man in thy kingdom" were the words that she used. The man was Daniel, who was more than ready for the occasion, because for the last twenty-three years he had been forced into retirement. He had spent those years wisely, by studying and learning the Word of God. The description of him in this passage is most interesting and it is indeed a beautiful testimony of the stability of the character of Daniel. He is described here as "a man with the spirit of the Holy God" and Nitrocris realized that he was an equipped man. She knew that the secret of Daniel's power was not his native ability, but the power of the Holy Spirit in him. This is another evidence to me that Nitrocris was a believer. Zechariah 4:6 was the principle she recognized in Daniel. When she said to Belshazzar, "And in the days of thy father" the word really is "grandfather" and in this passage the word "father" always refers to his "grandfather," Nebuchadnezzar. Here she mentioned three great qualities of Daniel.

- 1st quality--"Light" and this refers to salvation. This word light indicates that Christ is the light of salvation.
- 2nd quality--"Understanding" and this means that he was not only saved but had a frontal lobe filled with doctrine.
- 3rd quality--"Wisdom" and this means that he could apply what he knew.

Then Nitrocris said of Daniel that he had wisdom "like the wisdom of Elohim." In other words, Daniel had divine viewpoint in his mind because of the Bible doctrine he had learned. Here Nitrocris gave Belshazzar a little rundown on Daniel's association with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, and she reminded Belshazzar that Daniel was first in the empire in wisdom and power during his grandfather's reign. Daniel was over all the State Department of Nebuchadnezzar and in the four department heads of his State Department Daniel stood at the top. When Nebuchadnezzar was the king, Daniel was the chief official in the empire. But after Nebuchadnezzar died, 23 years passed and Daniel had been in retirement all that time. So at this time he was somewhat out of the picture. Now some believers, after they have been prominent, cannot stand obscurity. But this is not true of Daniel. Daniel could take obscurity and he knew that he had been left alive for a purpose, and even though now he was a very old man, he was ready to be used as God

saw fit to use him. Actually, Daniel had spent 23 years in preparation for the coming of the Persians and once again Daniel would be in the ascendancy with the coming of this new empire. He kept his poise and stability through this 23 year period of obscurity. Bible doctrine was his security during the time of his popularity and it was also his security during the time of his obscurity. Any man who can maintain his equilibrium through 23 years of obscurity, has stability that only Bible doctrine can give. A principle in the New Testament that illustrates the attitude of Daniel during this 23 year period is stated in Philippians 4:11-13. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Turn to this passage for a moment.

"I have learned" is the key to this passage. Paul had learned contentment by having Bible doctrine in his frontal lobe. Circumstances did not affect the stability of Paul. Paul said, "I have learned" and it is an aorist tense and this refers to every point of time in the past in his life when he had learned doctrine through adversity, through stoning, through shipwreck, through opposition and through triumph. All of it put together had taught him how to be content. Then in verse 12 he said, "I know" and this is a perfect tense and this means that this was his permanent and abiding state. He said, "I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." So two of these experiences were adversities and two were periods of success. Now Daniel had experienced the same thing. For many years Daniel had been the chief power in the empire of Nebuchadnezzar and was the guiding influence in the entire empire. He had been the main factor in the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar and the salvation tract that Nebuchadnezzar produced. Now for 23 years he had been put aside and had lived in obscurity, but it made no difference at all. He stayed true to his Lord and therefore was prepared for any eventuality. Doctrine in the frontal lobe is the only way for a servant of the Lord to prepare himself for future service. God used a crisis to promote his prepared servant. This is the principle behind this part of the Book of Daniel.

So when Nitrocris said, "There is a man" she meant that there was a prepared man, who knew the mind of God and who walked with God and therefore he would be able to read these strange words on the wall, the latest newspaper report in the Babylonian Empire.

DANIEL 5:12 "Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation." Here we have more about this prepared man for the crisis. This is just as if she handed Belshazzar a card with Daniel's qualifications written down on it. He had an excellent spirit, able to interpret dreams with all the other qualifications necessary. You see, Daniel knew enough doctrine that he was prepared, if need be, to spend 24 hours a day counseling others. There is nothing else in the Bible exactly like this.

A List Of Daniel's Qualifications1. HE HAD AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT.

This refers to his human spirit and not the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit controls your life, then the human spirit knows how to stay in fellowship and produce divine good. The Holy Spirit teaches the human spirit.

2. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

He could take the truth of doctrine, which he had stored in his mind, and relate it to life.

3. HE COULD INTERPRET DREAMS.

At that time in history, God revealed much truth of the Word of God through dreams. Now Daniel understood this process. Bible doctrine was given to him quite often in dreams. So here is how he understood prophecy. This is why he could read accurately these four words that appeared on the wall at the end of that unusual banquet.

4. SHEWING HARD SENTENCES.

Doctrine can be built on doctrine and this is the way Daniel came to be able to interpret the deeper passages in the Word of God. Daniel was one day reading Jeremiah and came to that part of Jeremiah where he told that the fifth cycle of discipline would end for the Jews and after 70 years in captivity they would be permitted to go back home. He had learned how the Jews had been promised 490 years in the land provided they would give God one year in seven and allow the land to lie idle so fertility would return to the soil. But they failed to do this and God collected his 70 years while they were in captivity. They had refused this principle in the Mosaic Law and didn't let the land lie idle that seventh year so the Lord put them aside in Babylon and collected the 70 years all at once. In 516 B.C. the fifth cycle of discipline came to an end and the second temple was completed in Jerusalem. At the point of our study here in Daniel 5, we are at 539 B.C. and Daniel carefully read Jeremiah and he realized it was time to prepare the Jews to go back to Jerusalem so they could have their golden age, which they did from 516 to 323 B.C. Now Daniel saw all of this from Bible doctrine and he was able to handle "hard sentences." It takes money to invest in order for one to make money, and it takes knowledge of doctrine to understand deeper doctrine and to understand "hard sentences."

5. HE WAS ABLE TO DISSOLVE DOUBTS.

But the better interpretation of this language is "He was able to solve problems." This meant that he knew enough Bible doctrine to apply it to every situation. Doctrine solves the problems of life. No wonder, then, that Nitrocris, a born again believer herself, said, "Let Daniel be called in."

DANIEL 5:13 "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?" Enter Daniel-- the man of the hour. He had been preparing for 23 years for this experience. The Babylonian empire will fall and the Persian empire will replace it and Daniel will do a great service under Cyrus the Great of the Persian empire.

Belshazzar and his cohorts were possibly almost drunk by this time. Belshazzar had ordered that the golden vessels from Solomon's Temple be brought into the banquet hall and they filled them with wine and drank to their pagan gods out of the sacred vessels. Belshazzar said, "Art thou THAT Daniel?" He wanted to know if he was that Daniel his grandfather had brought from Jerusalem.

DANIEL 5:14 "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." Here we have again the evaluation of Daniel.

DANIEL 5:15 "And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing." He called the writing on the wall "The thing." He was so confused he didn't know what to call the writing on the wall. So to Belshazzar the four words on that wall were "The thing."

DANIEL 5:16 "And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." Daniel was promised a king's robe, a golden chain, and third place in the kingdom if he would interpret the four words on the wall. Nabonidus was first in the kingdom, but he was on a long vacation in Tema. Belshazzar was second in the kingdom, and so Daniel would be third.

DANIEL 5:17 "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." Daniel gave a very simple answer. Please notice how his answer reveals his stability. He said, "Keep your gifts." The words "Let the gifts be to thyself" is about as decent interpretation as you can give these words. "Give thy reward to another." Daniel really cut his short here but Daniel told him he would read the writing and give the interpretation. Daniel will be able to do it because he knew the principles in the Word of God. These four words were in the Chaldean language, but they are a part of the Word of God. In verses 18-21 we will have some lessons from Belshazzar's grandfather's tract. Daniel here reminded Belshazzar that he too could be saved.

DANIEL 5:18 "O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:" Please notice this--God gave this empire to Nebuchadnezzar by his grace. Then he described Nebuchadnezzar--

Majesty--this referred to the dominating personality and leadership ability of Nebuchadnezzar.

Glory----This referred to the success Nebuchadnezzar had in military battles.

Honour---This refers to the respect for Nebuchadnezzar God placed in the hearts of his subjects.

DANIEL 5:19 "And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down." This is just another reference to the glory and power of the Babylonian empire. And please notice--God gave this power to Nebuchadnezzar.

DANIEL 5:20 "But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:" Pride and lust for power destroyed Nebuchadnezzar. The old sin nature of Nebuchadnezzar developed such fantastic pride in him that it actually dethroned him for seven years. "His mind was hardened" means that for a time he went on negative volition toward God.

DANIEL 5:21 "And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: 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 ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will." This is a summary of the Nebuchadnezzar tract. We have studied this in detail, how Nebuchadnezzar fell and spent seven years as a beast in the field like an oxen and how at the end of seven years God restored him.

DANIEL 5:22 "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;" How in this passage we have the failure of the grandson. Belshazzar had the same pride as his grandfather, but he failed to put his trust in Christ like his grandfather did. Now we know that Belshazzar had read his grandfather's tract for we read, "Thou knewest all this." Belshazzar had all the facts he needed in order to be saved.

DANIEL 5:23 "But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:" This is an amazing description of Belshazzar's gross sin. "The Lord of Heaven" is Jesus Christ. The golden basins that were used to carry the blood of the animal sacrifice into the holy of holies in Solomon's Temple on the Day of Atonement are the very same vessels used here by Belshazzar in his drunken party. Those vessels had been used to portray all the truths that picture the cross and here Belshazzar repudiated all that and used them for drinking wine. So Daniel was very courageous in condemning Belshazzar. Belshazzar had completely rejected the living God.

DANIEL 5:24 "Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written." So here we have the exact date and time of the writing on the wall--it was at the very moment their drunken party had reached the climax.

DANIEL 5:25 "And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." Here are four Chaldean words. Let us look at their meaning.

"MENE" means "Numbered." Now Belshazzar could read it and pronounce it but he didn't know what it meant. It simply meant that their days were numbered and the Babylonian Empire was at an end. Their days of existence as an empire were concluded. This was the very last day of their existence and at that very hour the Persian army was entering the city in the dry river bed. The Babylonian Empire rose suddenly under Nabo Polassar when he defeated the Assyrians, and now it is going to end just as suddenly on the night of this drunken party. Time had run out for the Chaldean Empire.

"TEKEL" means "Weighed." The one who had been put in the scales was none other than Belshazzar himself. That's why we had all this information from the tract of Nebuchadnezzar. In the scales was Nebuchadnezzar on one side and God was on the other, and the scales balanced out because Nebuchadnezzar believed in Christ and was saved. But now his grandson was placed in the scales and it didn't balance out because he was an unbeliever. Since he was minus the cross it means that Belshazzar was weighed and found wanting. He was going to die that very night and spend all eternity in separation from the living God. It is the principle of John 3:18.

"UPHARSIN" is the third word--but it is misspelled here. The word is not "Upharsin" but the word is "Parsee" and it means "Persians." The Persians developed the "caste" system when they conquered India. The blackest were placed in the lowest caste and the lightest skin were placed in the highest caste and when you go to India today you will still find the light skinned people called the "Parsees." It referred to the Persians and the word means "to break in pieces." The Persians were going to take over Babylon and break their empire in pieces.

DANIEL 5:26 "This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." God called for the end of that wicked empire.

DANIEL 5:27 "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Belshazzar had failed as a wicked ruler and was entirely inadequate.

DANIEL 5:28 "PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." "Peres" is this word "Parsee" and it means to be split up. Their empire is going to be split up by the Persians. Cyrus the Great was playing it very cool at that moment, for he knew his Uncle, Darius, was a very old man and would soon die.

DANIEL 5:29 "Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom." Daniel was given the royal robe, the gold chain and the third place in the empire. At that very moment, General Gobrias and the Persian army had diverted the waters of the Euphrates River and they were at that very moment walking into the city in the dry river bed. As Daniel finished the explanation of the handwriting, they apparently broke into the banquet hall and took over the city and that night Belshazzar was slain.

DANIEL 5:30 "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." But there was one person standing there in his new royal robe with the golden chain around his neck and the third in power in the kingdom and not one Persian lifted a hand toward him. Daniel was protected by God and when the Persians took over, Daniel was the one man who helped the Persians establish their empire and he became the right hand man of Darius and later on of Cyrus the Great.

In one night Daniel was lifted from obscurity to leadership and though the Babylonian Empire went down, Daniel went right on living and giving guidance to the Persian Empire. Daniel survived because he had Bible doctrine.

And today, God needs people like Daniel to help empires survive.