

In our last lesson, we talked about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. They stayed faithful to God and would not worship the golden image made by King Nebuchadnezzar. They were thrown into a fiery furnace. They trusted God to save them and God sent an angel to save them from the fire.

Many years passed and Daniel was an old man. He was more than 80 years old. Belshazzar became the new king in Babylon. Belshazzar was a grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar.

King Belshazzar gave a big feast to honor a thousand of his officers. (Dan. 5:2) King Belshazzar had been drinking too much wine. He told his servant to get the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple in Jerusalem. The temple vessels were made of silver and gold. They were to be used only for God's purposes. But, the king used them to drink from.

Suddenly, a hand appeared and started writing something on the wall. (Dan. 5:5) King Belshazzar was afraid when he saw it. He did not know what to think. The writing read, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN". The king told his servant to get his wise men to tell him the meaning of the handwriting. (Dan. 5:7) None of the king's wise men could tell him the meaning of the words.

The queen remembered Daniel. She reminded the king that Daniel had been chosen by his father to be an officer. She reminded him of how Daniel was able to interpret dreams. Daniel was brought before the king. (Dan. 5:13) King Belshazzar offered Daniel great gifts if he could tell him the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.

Daniel began by telling King Belshazzar that he had done wrong against the Lord. (Dan. 5:23) He told the king that he had brought vessels from the Lord's Temple and used them for himself. Those vessels were to be used only to serve the Lord. Daniel told the king he was worshipping his own idols and did not worship God.

Then Daniel told him the meaning of the handwriting on the wall. This is the meaning of each word.
“Mene: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;”
“Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;”
“Peres: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (Dan. 5:26-28)

That meant that King Belshazzar was in trouble. His kingdom was about to end. The kingdom would be taken away from Belshazzar and given to the Medes and the Persians.

King Belshazzar immediately gave Daniel the important position of third ruler in the kingdom. (Dan. 5:29) They clothed Daniel in purple. They put a chain of gold around his neck. The king made a proclamation saying that Daniel was the third ruler in the kingdom.

That same night, King Belshazzar was killed. The Babylonian kingdom was finished and a new kingdom would begin.

The new kingdom starting was the Medo-Persian Kingdom. A man named Darius the Mede was made ruler over Babylon. (Dan. 5:31) Darius made Daniel one of his three governors. Darius had 120 satraps who were rulers in Babylon. But the satraps ruled under the three governors. Daniel was a very good and faithful man.

Daniel stayed faithful to God. It made the other governors and the satraps angry. Wicked men do not like to see men be so good and faithful. The governors and satraps tried to think of some way to get rid of Daniel. They could not find anything Daniel was doing wrong as governor. They had to find something wrong in another way. The other governors knew Daniel prayed to God every day. They had a plan.

The other governors went to King Darius. They persuaded the king to make a decree. The decree said that no one could call on any god or king for 30 days. They could only call on King Darius. The decree said that if anyone did, they would be thrown into the lion's den. (Dan. 6:7) The decree was written out, and King Darius signed it. (Dan. 6:8-9) By their law, a decree could not be changed once it was official.

Daniel knew about the decree. Daniel stayed faithful to God and prayed every day. Daniel went home and prayed like he always did giving thanks to God. (Dan. 6:10) Daniel knelt by his opened window three times that day and prayed to God. The other governors saw Daniel praying. They knew their plan was working. They went to King Darius and told him about Daniel. When Darius heard this, he was sad that he had made such a decree. (Dan. 6:14)

King Darius could do nothing else but tell the men to throw Daniel in the lion's den. They had tricked King Darius. He had not known what the governors were planning when they convinced him to sign the decree. King Darius told the men to get Daniel and throw him into the lion's den. King Darius spoke to Daniel. The king said, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." (Dan. 6:16)

There were many lions in the den. They were not fed. Being so hungry made them very mean. Daniel was thrown into the den with the hungry, roaring lions. Then the guards rolled a stone over the opening. (Dan. 6:17)

The Lord sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They did not hurt Daniel. God protected Daniel from death.

Through the night, King Darius did not eat or sleep. He thought of Daniel in the lion's den. He hoped the God of Daniel would save him.

Early the next morning, King Darius hurried to the lion's den. He called out to Daniel to see if God had saved him. (Dan. 6:20) Daniel answered the king. Daniel said to him, "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me." (Dan. 6:22)

King Darius commanded the guards to get Daniel out of the pit. Daniel was not injured at all. The king was happy Daniel was alive and not hurt. Daniel was saved because he had believed in his God.

King Darius made a new decree. He said that all people should fear the God of Daniel. King Darius said that Daniel's God was the true and living God. The king said the kingdom of God would never be destroyed. (Dan. 6:26)

The king gave a command for the men who tricked him. The men were thrown into the lion's den. The hungry, roaring lions killed them.

Daniel had been given many visions. Some of the visions were of the future of the nations that would follow Babylon leading up to the time of Christ and His Kingdom. Daniel had a vision of four beasts. Each beast represented a world empire. The lion represented the first kingdom of Babylon. The bear represented the second kingdom which was the Medo-Persian kingdom. The leopard represented the third kingdom which was Greece. There was a terrible Beast with ten horns. It represented the Roman Empire. God would set up His kingdom in the time of the fourth kingdom. These prophecies showed that the plan of God would be carried out. There were other prophecies that spoke of the time of the coming kingdom of Christ.