

Devoted Part 6 - "Character in Crisis" (9-5-21)

Introduction: Daniel 5 - God's People in times of Turmoil & Upheaval

Context: Belshazzar is now King (most likely Neb grandson - his mother was Neb. daughter)

- His father had left him in charge & gone out to battle, has now been captured & possibly killed
- Medes & Persians are at the gate (a siege of a well-fortified city)
- (Daniel 5:1-4) - The King parties, ignoring the real and imminent danger . . .

Daniel 5:5-6 (ESV)

(5) Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. (6) Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together.

1) God hasn't forgotten His People

The King calls his advisers, enchanters, but to no avail (Daniel 5:7-9)

Daniel 5:10-12 (ESV)

(10) The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, "O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. (11) **There is a man** in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. **In the days of your father**, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, (12) because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in **this Daniel**, whom the king named Belteshazzar. **Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.**"

Note: Though Daniel had been forgotten & ignored by others, God was always with him!

Though unseen - Daniel had remained faithful and busy . . .

Daniel 7:1, 8:1 (ESV)

(7:1) In the **first year** of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. . . (8:1) In the **third year** of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

Daniel 8:27 (ESV)

And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

Don't worry about being ignored or surprised that others don't recognize the times. Instead . . .

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV)

(1) I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: (2) preach the word; **be ready in season and out of season**; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (3) For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, (4) and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (5) As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Note: Don't be discouraged or distracted - God hasn't forgotten you: be busy, be ready, be faithful

Application: God hasn't forgotten you. Fulfill the role in front of you, be aware & responsive to His Presence!

2) God defines & strengthens His People

Daniel is brought before the King . . .

Daniel 5:13-16 (ESV)

(13) Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. (14) I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. (15) Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. (16) But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

Note: Belshazzar - “I’ve heard of you, you are special, though of course you are the last one I’ve come too”

- Puffs up his importance, and offers a position of prominence, power, and wealth
- But that won’t last - Reputation & “Success” in this life shouldn’t define us & it won’t last
- The World (and sadly the church too) will want you for your gifting - don’t bite that apple!

Character is what matters . . .

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:24-26 (ESV)

(24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Note: The fruit of godly character allows you to be gifted & used in any context!

- **Who you are should be the same no matter your company or your context!**
- **This can only be produced by surrendering & co-operating with the Presence of God . . .**

Daniel is secure in who he is, & can see through the **false hope** offered by a broken kingdom . . .

Daniel 5:17 (ESV)

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation.

Note: Daniel doesn’t abandon the broken, but he is free of their enticements & power. He speaks truth!

Application: Let’s allow God to define & strengthen us, by being people of character, refined by Him!

3) God elevates & protects His People

(Daniel 5:18-28) - History lesson, Application for the present, & then God's Word for this moment . . .

- **History** (Daniel 5:18-21) - Tells the story of Daniel 4 (The Mad King)
- **Application** (Daniel 5:22-23) - Shows Belshazzar that he is repeating the mistakes of his father
- **Prophecy** (Daniel 5:24-28) - Speaks Prophetically God's message in this moment

God elevates & protects Daniel in the midst of a fallen kingdom . . .

Daniel 5:29-6:3 (ESV)

(29) Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. (30) That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. (31) And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. (6:1) It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; (2) and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. (3) Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Note: God can do what man cannot - God fulfilled & exceeded what Belshazzar offered but couldn't sustain!

- God **protects** Daniel in the midst of complete chaos - a kingdom overthrown.
- God **elevates** Daniel to have a voice in the new regime.

Do you want to have sustained lasting success in life, no matter the turmoil around you?

- Daniel didn't look for shortcuts
- He didn't complain about being ignored despite past success
- He faithfully followed God and entrusted his life and his outcomes into God's hands

So, how do we maintain success?

Godly Character - which is forged in faithful obedience as we are yielded to the Spirit of God!

Conclusion: God hasn't forgotten or abandoned you. Let Him define you & strengthen you, & throughout your life He will protect and elevate you!