

Daniel 5

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's sovereignty and plan in the world, and the consequences of ignoring or rejecting God's will.

Duration: 36:55

Scripture: Daniel 5:22-23, Daniel 5:25-28, Daniel 5:30-31, Luke 16:19-31, Romans 6:23

Topics: "Daniel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Belshazzar from the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the unexpected and being spiritually ready to leave this world at any time. The preacher highlights how God's actions and messages can grab people's attention and bring about change. He also mentions the departure from God's will and the need for God to act in due time. The sermon concludes with a prayer for guidance in living according to God's will and a reference to the song 'There to Be a Daniel.'

Transcript

I'd like for us to look in the book of Daniel this morning, chapter 5. So often we're reminded that there are many historians that think that perhaps we're heading into a time of, might even refer to it as the golden age, with all of the great scientific things that are being developed and all of the things that are being accomplished, that we're just standing on the brink of a new great day in the history of mankind. I would be inclined to like to believe that, if it were not for what we read in Scripture. The Apostle Paul, if we interpret these days to be the last days, Paul says they will be perilous times.

They will be distressing times. They will be times that put a lot of pressure upon people. You know, if you look at your television set and if you read the newspapers and get those accounts of what's happening in the world today, I'd have to say it's a very violent world we live in today.

There's such an increase in violence. If it's not on a national level, it's on a local level. Crime seems to be on the increase.

Doing all that we can to try to combat those that live those lives in rebellion of the law of the land. I'm trying to call to mind some of the things that are happening in the golden age. I'll be very honest with you.

I'm not in agreement with what they see for the future. It seems to me that things are not getting better. If you followed the thinking of those that are given to secular humanism and you look at what man has achieved, you can't deny there have been giant steps taken as far as mankind developing things that are in the world, exploring things that are in the world, bringing to light things that we never knew before.

But when I look at all of those things in the light of what we have in scripture and think about what God has done, it seems like a drop in the bucket. I don't want to minimize what God has created in mankind. We are the highest order of things that God created.

We can be God-like. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, he has a divine design for each one of us. He wants each one of us to be conformed to the very likeness of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's a wonderful thought, to be like Christ, to be like the Son of God, to have the mind of Christ, a mind that was dedicated to doing the will of the Father perfectly. You couldn't be inspired to seek anything higher than to do the will of God. Yet we are living in a world in which the secular humanists would tell us it is getting better and man is getting smarter and we don't need God.

Man can do anything God can do and maybe do it better. That's the thinking of the humanists. Put a lot of confidence in what man can do.

I don't hear a lot of talk about all of the evil things that men do sometimes. I think when you look at a book like the book of Daniel, we get a little picture of mankind living at a time in history long ago, over 2,000 years ago. We get a little picture of how ambitious people were.

Nations were very ambitious. War, the taking of things from other people and other nations. They didn't always take gold and silver.

In this case, in the book of Daniel, you are brought face to face with the value that was placed upon human life and people that were promising young people. They looked upon that as having great value, and they took that resource and they took it back home with them and they used it. Someone might think, as we recount in the book of Daniel, of just one incident in which Daniel, a very promising young man, was a part of the nation of Israel, the chosen people of God.

Babylon, a great and powerful nation, had invaded that land, had taken captive a people, had destroyed a lot of the things that were a part of that culture, and someone would say, you know, they knew what they were doing. Well, let me qualify that by saying they had been brought into a position where, because of what they were doing, God is in control and he is using them to bring about the fulfillment of his plans and purposes. God raises up and God puts down.

If you are a sovereignist and you believe in the sovereignty of God, you must know that God is in control. Many people today think that everything is out of control. Oh, no.

God is still upon his throne, and God is ruling sovereignly over all of the affairs of mankind. You say, what's happening over in Iraq, the very setting for what we are about to read this morning? You mean to tell me that all of the things that are happening there is a part of a divine plan and purpose of God? God controls everything. Oh, men are given freedom sometimes to act and behave in a way that is far removed from what is ideal as far as the plan of God, but God allows even those like Pharaoh of old.

You remember Pharaoh of old, and he hardened his heart, and one day God said, that's enough, and he hardened Pharaoh's heart. Here we have a nation that because of their power, because of their ability to conquer and take control of not only their own lives, but the lives of many others, in this case the nation of Israel. God has allowed this because he is using this nation, using the leaders of that nation to discipline his people because of wrongdoing.

You wouldn't get that in this picture unless you read and understood exactly what the prophetic picture really was. But God works through nations, the subduing of one people by another people, and all of it ultimately working toward the fulfillment of plans and purposes of God in which he will install and put his Son in the position of Lord of lords, King of kings. That's our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, he's been here upon the face of the earth, and he has accomplished something that every one of us in this room, I trust this morning, you have accepted the value of what he did in fulfilling God's will to save our souls. He did it perfectly. And we call ourselves today Christians.

We're Christ ones. We have eternal life. We have spiritual life.

We're no longer under the control of the God of this world, Satan. Satan is the God of this world. We have a new master.

We have one that we are to yield the control of our lives to him and let him control our lives. God is well-pleased with that. God is well-pleased with that believer that says, not my will, thy will be done.

So this is a very interesting book in that we see people that lived in a different age, a different time and a different culture. You could say things are much like they are today as far as one nation invading another nation, taking captive people, taking resources, all of these things. But if you take that one factor that God is going to use this and is using this to discipline his people, he's making them pay for their disobedience in keeping the sabbatical year, not observing the Sabbath.

They had discarded the plans and purposes of God for his people. And because of that, he makes them pay and pay big time, 70 years of captivity for the nation of Israel in the land of Babylon under the control of those that do not honor the God that they're actually serving by disciplining his people. Daniel was one of those people.

He was a young person. The course of all of this covers, I'm told, about 70, 75 years. Daniel was there as a young man.

He was a valuable resource, and it didn't take long for him to discover that. Brilliant minds, people with values, values that people are urged to seek after for their own lives, for their own personal living. It's said like this in the first chapter, Children, in whom was no blemish.

That's Daniel. Well-favored, skilled in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, in whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. Daniel is going to be used.

He's going to be elevated to a place of authority. That kind of character in a person and that kind of wisdom in a person is to be highly valued. We encourage our Christian young people to go out into the world and develop all the talents that you have.

Not necessarily to be used in the world and for the world, but for the glory of God. I think there needs to be more emphasis placed upon parents focusing, Christian parents, focusing upon getting your sons and daughters to follow a course in life that you can be used for God in the world that we're living. You may get into politics.

There are a lot of fine young people that get into politics and serve sometimes political leaders, but we need the light wherever it can shine for the good and the glory of God. That's where Daniel is. He's in a culture in which things are happening and something's going to happen in the life of this man we're going to read about, Belshazzar.

And he recognized, at least it's brought to his attention, that somebody here that you may not have taken account of, but he can be of great help to you. Others had detected it, and no doubt he had some recognition of it. Let's read from Daniel 5, verse 1. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, drank wine before the thousands.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was in Jerusalem. And the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines drank in them.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and stone. Babylon as a city, I can't give you all the details, but it was a very impressive place, a very modern city, well laid out. Everything that could be thought of being able to live independent of outside help had been taken into account.

The river Euphrates ran diagonally through the city. Huge mammoth walls, thick as this building, surrounding that city. It had eight gates to that city.

That required quite a bit of personnel to look after those gates and to tell who could come in and who went out. On either side of the Euphrates rivers that came through that city, there were also walls with gates. It would be kind of hard to invade that city, wouldn't it? It's a self-contained environment.

They raised their own foodstuffs, had water, had learned how to control the flow of the river during flood stage, all of that. It could have made somebody that was in charge feel pretty heady. We're not vulnerable at all.

Man, we could stay here. We could stay here for years. If there was a siege that took place, we'd keep going right on, right on.

Except for one thing, the Medes and the Persians and Dyrus, they're pretty smart, too. How can we invade and get inside of that city of Babylon? I don't know who thought of it first, but it's a good idea. All we'd have to do is drive up the river and we could walk right into that city, right on the riverbed.

You know, that's exactly what they did. Now, I'm of this mind, they had inside help, too. There were some people there that helped them because the gates that led to the river, they had to be manned, and somebody went on his job.

The very night, the very time that what we're going to read about here about Belshazzar and all this celebration, this revelry, while they're having this big blowout, the Medes and the Persians are coming in on that dry riverbed because they've directed the flow of the river in another direction. You know, they walked right into the city without even firing a shot. They took it.

They took it to control of everything. Times change so radically, and that's what Belshazzar's life is all about. It reminds us, you be very careful how you govern the affairs of your life.

No man knows what another day will bring forth. What we encourage people to do spiritually, be ready, be ready to leave this world at any time. Be prepared.

We talk to people from time to time, are you prepared to leave this world? I've got plenty of time to decide on that. Man, I'm living. I'm living now.

Isn't it so strange that the God of this world is able to blind the minds of those that will not believe, will not accept this wonderful offer? Belshazzar. I'm told that in the city of Babylon, there were at least 180 places of worship, shrines to every kind of imaginable deity that you can think of. They had them.

They weren't short on religion. They had it. Religion.

If you want religion, we've got it. Pick and choose what you want. Daniel belongs to the one sovereign God that has created all things, and everything else is subservient ultimately to the divine will of our God and Daniel's God.

You have to believe that Belshazzar got a little heady about this thing. Perhaps he just got a little bit bored. The party, I'm told that sometimes these parties and these get-togethers like this could go on for days, weeks, celebrating.

I mean, it's not just an afternoon or an evening of having a little party and a get-together. Man, this went on for weeks, maybe a month. It couldn't get boring.

I mean, things are slowing down. I'm not fascinated by that anymore. Give us something new.

He comes up with a bright idea. You remember all of those vessels of gold and silver that we took out of that temple down in Jerusalem? Bring them in. We've never used them.

We're going to celebrate drinking from those vessels. That's what they did. That's what they did.

They brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem, and the kings and the princes, his wives and his concubines, they drank from them. You say, no big thing. It was just silver and gold utensils, vessels.

You be very careful how you tamper with God's things that he has sanctified and set apart for a specific purpose. These vessels were to be used in the worship of our God, the God of the Israelites. This man has no recognition of that.

He has no respect for these things. But God has taken note of it, and payday time has come. Wake-up time has come.

I often think of that poor man in the 16th chapter of Luke's gospel where it said he died and he opened his eyes being implemented. Belshazzar is going to get his eyes opened to something. I have to tell you, sadly, because we're not going to be able to read all of it, but it was too late.

Some people say, it's never too late, too late for him, because we've got the story right here in front of us. Too late for Belshazzar You know, when people preach the gospel and they try to urge people, trust Christ today, most people say, I've got plenty of time, procrastinating about this matter of trusting Christ. What a day! I've got plenty of time.

I want to think about it more. Well, something happened there that, think about it, I think if all the lights were out in this place, then over on that wall, a light appeared and a hand and a message was written on that wall over there. Hey, what is this? Just a hand now.

A message is written on that wall. It says in the 5th verse, The same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the placeta of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. The king's countenance was changed.

Hey, man, it's wake-up time. Things are going to change around here. He's startled by all of this.

If he wanted something different, he got it. And believe me, when God speaks and God acts, believe me, he gets people's attention. He's got Pharaoh's attention down in Egypt.

He can get our attention today. I'll tell you, when we realize what's going on in the world today, we see men taking all of these liberties in doing things that we know for a fact are contrary to the mind and the will of God, a departure from that which is holy and righteous. You know, you're just able to say, well, he hasn't done anything about it yet.

I do believe he will act in due time. His thoughts troubled him so that the joints of his lorns were loose and his knees smoked one against another. This king is frightened.

Something has happened that has shook him up, and we have all of the earmarks of that in what we've just read. Joints of his lorns were loose and knees smoked together, and he cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the chaldeans, the soothsayers. Give us some help here.

What's going on? I wanted the party to have a little life in it, but I didn't plan on this. This is a little too much. Bring those people in that seem to know all about these things that are so mysterious.

Well, they came in. Couldn't help him one bit. Couldn't help him.

They could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Don't know what it means. He was in more trouble.

Yeah, but the wisest people I've got around me, these people that I'm depending on to advise me, they don't know. They had a queen. He had a queen there, and she had met Daniel, and she had witnessed some of the things that this man of God was able to do.

Somebody that could do things that none of the others could do. She said, "As a man in the kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God, and in the days of thy father's 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, the astrologers, the chaldeans, and the soothsayers. It was an

excellent spirit and knowledge and understanding, interpreting of dreams, the showing of hard sentences, and the dissolving of doubts." He needs Daniel.

He needs someone like Daniel. Daniel is there sovereignly by the will of God to fulfill the purposes of God. Daniel was brought in before the king.

The king spake and said unto Daniel, "Are you that Daniel, which are to the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king of my father brought out of Jorah? Yes, I'm him. I've heard about you. The Spirit of God is in thee.

I've called in the wise men, the astrologers, and all them, so they could read this writing, make known unto me the interpretation of doubt, but they couldn't do it. But I've heard of thee. You are able to handle things like that.

You seem to have an insight into these things. You must have contact with your God." Yes, he does have contact with God. He is a man of God.

There to be a Daniel. The next chapter, of course, would remind us of that. Well, the king wanted to really treat Daniel royally.

He wanted to clothe him with scarlet, put a chain of gold about his neck, all of that. Third rule in the kingdom. Daniel answered and said before, to keep your gifts.

I don't do this for pay. I am under the control of my God. I only do those things that he wills me to do.

You keep your gifts. Give your rewards to someone else. I will read the writing and make known unto you the interpretation.

And this is what he did. He says, this is the 22nd verse, "...thou shalt not humble thine heart, though thou knewest all these things." He had a recount brought before him of what his father and grandfather had done in the past, how God had dealt with them to get their attention. He had ignored all of that, but has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven.

They have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives, thy concubines, have drunk wine in them. And thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear nor know nothing. The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

Then was the part of the hand sent from him, and this writing was written." This is the writing that was written. Mene, mene, peckle, you farsome. Daniel gets right to it.

This is the interpretation of the thing. Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. He's used you for a purpose.

Now he's through with you. This person so ungodly, it had no respect for the God that had created all things and provided salvation for all mankind. God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

Peckle, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. You want a picture there that you can see of yourself? Well, before God, God has scales that he's going to weigh what value there is in your life, how much of your life is turned toward God. Have you ever worshiped the true and the living God and given

him his rightful place in your heart and life? He's weighed you very carefully.

He's weighed you righteously and justly. You're found wanting. You just don't have to carry any weight with God at all.

You've been living for now. You've been living for this present day and age. You're a man of this world and you're limited to this world.

Isn't that a sad picture of mankind without God? Mankind without God having no weight before God. Your life. Believers in Jesus Christ are to live worthy of their calling as believers.

They're to be like Christ and their lives are to change and their lives make a difference. And God takes note of it. Oh, poor Belshazzar.

Weighed in the balances and found wanting. Perez, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. They've already taken over.

Haven't you got the news yet? You're through. You're through, says then-commanded Belshazzar. And by clothes Daniel was scarlet, put a chain of gold about his neck, made a proclamation concerning him.

This is his last act, mind you, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. The next verse you'll read is, Then that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldean saints. The wages of sin is death.

The gift of God is eternal life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about three score and two years old. I tell you, it just doesn't pay to take liberties with God and decide that you're going to live your life the way you want to live it.

It pays to know God. It pays to know the will and the mind of God. It is not God's will that any should perish.

God doesn't want to send people to hell. He wants to save them. He wants them transformed into the person of his Son.

He wants each one of us in this room this morning to one day be just like the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Would God begin to make some progress while we're still here? There'd be evidence of some Christ-likeness in our lives, the love of God which has been spread abroad in our hearts. We love each other because he loved us, gave himself for us.

Oh, that poor soul! Brother and sister, there are so many people in this world today who haven't got a serious thought in their head about God. They're just thinking about M-O-W, now. Now.

What can I have now? I want mine now! Well, I tell you what, if you get what you want now and God holds you to it, you won't like the outcome because one day those scales that Belshazzar was weighed in, you'll be found wanting. You'll be found wanting. You'll come up short! You've got to have Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in your life.

It makes you sin to new creatures in Christ Jesus. We're born again into the family of God. We have spiritual life.

Now we're able to glorify God which is the chief end of man and not live for self, not live for now. We're heading out into eternity. We're supposed to make the best of everything that God has provided for us right in the center of his will, do all that we can do today.

There are no tomorrows. It's always today. Today if you hear his voice, today if he speaks to you by his Spirit, turn your life over to him.

Turn everything over to him. I'm just a poor lost sinner. I want your Son as my Savior, and I want you to control my life from now until the day I look full into the face of the one who loved me and gave himself for me.

Oh boy, that's living! Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven, we thank thee this morning that we could take just a little look at someone in the past, someone that indeed lived his life on such a miserable level, thinking that he had it all, and he was lost, and the judgment of God fell upon him in that lost condition, and now he's lost for all eternity. Oh God, help us to measure very carefully the time that you have allotted to us, and help us to live and seek to do the mind and the will of the God who created us and provided a Savior for us.

Help us, Lord, to live our lives for the glory and honor of the loving, sovereign God who provided that wonderful person, your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. In our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

First, I think if Bobby can find music of a song that was in one of the older books that we had. Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose true, and dare to make it known. Let's stand and sing that chorus.

I think it's in the Old Choice Hymns. Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose firm, and dare to make it known.

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