

From Babylon to Jerusalem - (Daniel) ch.6:1-28

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the symbolism of Babylon and Jerusalem, and how God fulfilled His prophecies through the life of Daniel, who influenced Cyrus to send the Jews back to Jerusalem.

Duration: 1:00:53

Scripture: Daniel 6:4, Luke 11:53-54

Topics: "From Babylon To Jerusalem"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the character of Daniel and his faithfulness in his work. Daniel was a Christian who stood out among his colleagues by being punctual, diligent, and honest. The speaker emphasizes the importance of Christians being faithful and upright in their work, without negligence or corruption. The sermon also highlights the dangers of Babylonian Christianity, which prioritizes money and entertainment over true faith. The speaker concludes by discussing how God used Cyrus as an instrument to bring the Jewish people back to their land, drawing parallels to the United Nations' role in the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Transcript

In the book of Daniel, you will remember at the end of our last study we were looking at Daniel chapter 5 and we saw the end of the Babylonian kingdom described there. And Daniel lived through the entire period of 70 years during which the Babylonian kingdom was at its height and Daniel was there to pronounce God's verdict of judgment on that kingdom of Babylon in the reign of Belshazzar and his father. Now all this was in fulfillment of the word of God which had been spoken through prophets in earlier years.

I just want to tell you something about the geography of the region that we are considering. Babylon was the capital of that empire and today it was also known as Mesopotamia that area and today it is what is known as the country of Iraq. Now when you read the scriptures you find that the Garden of Eden was located in this area at the mouth of the Persian Gulf because we read in Genesis 2 that the river Euphrates flowed down the Garden of Eden and that is in that area and we also read later on in Genesis that Abraham's hometown Ur of the Chaldees was also in this area and before Abraham was born the Tower of Babel which we read of in Genesis chapter 11 was built where Babylon was set up later on by Nebuchadnezzar.

In fact the Tower of Babel the remnants of it was right in the middle of the city of Babylon. So when God called Abraham the father of the Jewish nation out from the idolatry of the Chaldees and the Chaldees is

another name for Babylonians. The Chaldeans are the Babylonians.

He called Abraham out of the idolatry of the Chaldean nation and he went past the Tower of Babel and Babylon and came into the land of Canaan to set up a nation there which would follow the true and living God and one day when the descendants of Abraham became idolatrous themselves God sent them back to the same area where their forefather Abraham came from to Babylon as it were to tell them if you want to worship idols I'll send you right back where I called your father out from. Now all this has spiritual symbolism. The early church that we read of in Acts chapter 2 like Abraham was called out of a Babylonian religion.

The Jewish religion had become Babylonian in spirit when Jesus came particularly being headed up by the Pharisees and the early church like Abraham came out of that Babylonian system and set up a powerful church that we read of in the Acts of the Apostles pure and powerful but through the centuries just like the nation of Israel the church degenerated spiritually and so God sent the church back into a Babylonian captivity just like he sent the Jews into a Babylonian captivity. He says you can go back to where I called your forefathers out from and it is from this Babylonian captivity that we read that Daniel was the beginning of a movement back to Jerusalem and that also has spiritual symbolism for the days in which we live that God is calling people out of Babylonian Christianity to be part of his bride to be part of his true church his body and in the destruction of the Babylonian kingdom here we have a picture of that final destruction of religious Babylon that we read of in Revelation 17 and 18. I just want to show you a few Old Testament verses that prophesied the destruction of Babylon 175 years before in the prophecy of Isaiah 175 years before Babylon was destroyed in Isaiah 21 the Lord prophesied through Isaiah.

Isaiah 21 verse 2 a harsh vision has been shown to me the treacherous one still deals treacherously and the destroyer still destroys go up Elam.

Elam is another word for Persia lay siege Media this is the joint kingdom of Media and Persia which is the second world empire that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream and this is the empire that finally crushed the Babylonians but it's amazing how 175 years earlier when Media and Persia were not a kingdom at all God prophesied through Isaiah saying go up Persia and go up to conquer and the result of it is described in verse 9 now behold here comes a troop of riders horsemen in pairs one answered saying fallen fallen is Babylon and all the images of our gods are shattered on the ground God raises up one kingdom to punish another God raised up the Babylonians to punish the Jews and when the Babylonians got puffed up God raised up the Medo-Persians to punish the Babylonians and that's how it's

been all through the history of the world God is in charge of history another amazing thing we see in the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 44 all this is a hundred and seventy-five years before it actually happened verse 26 confirming the word of his servant and performing the purpose of his messengers it is I who says of Jerusalem she shall be inhabited and of the cities of Judah they shall be built now Isaiah said this at a time when Jerusalem was not yet destroyed he was speaking about something that was going to happen a hundred years later when Jerusalem would be destroyed and another 70 years after that when Jerusalem would be built again he's talking about something that's going to happen well into the future I will raise up her ruins again but Jerusalem was not in ruins when Isaiah

prophesied that that was something that was going to happen in the future and that had to take place only after the Jews were in captivity for 70 years and that was the period of the Babylonian kingdom but the Babylonians were not going to send the Jews back to Jerusalem so what was God going to do God was

going to destroy the Babylonian kingdom and raise up another kingdom the Medo-Persian kingdom headed up by a man called Cyrus who would send the Jews back to Jerusalem that's what we read in verse 28 it is I who says of Cyrus Cyrus was the head of the Medo-Persian army that destroyed Babylon that night and he appointed Darius his uncle who was a Mede Cyrus himself was a Persian to be the ruler over that Babylonian kingdom but Cyrus was the leader and it's amazing how Isaiah prophesied

the name of the man who was going to destroy Babylon 175 years before he actually did it is I who says of Cyrus he is my shepherd and he will perform my desire if the Babylonians don't do it all right I'll destroy them I'll raise up somebody else don't do it and he declares of Jerusalem she will be built and of the temple your foundation will be laid thus says the Lord to Cyrus his anointed it's amazing how God uses the word anointed anointed for a particular purpose what was that that he would be the instrument in God's hand to make the Jewish people come back into his land it's very similar to how in 1948 the United Nations became an instrument in God's hand to vote in favor of Israel coming back and occupying that land again it's happened in our generation well two thousand five

hundred years ago it happened once before as well when the Lord said to Cyrus it's very interesting to read this I've taken him by the right hand to subdue nations before him and notice this phrase to lose the loins of Kings and that's exactly what we read in Daniel chapter 5 that when Belshazzar saw the handwriting of the on the wall his loins were loosed it's amazing an exact fulfillment of that prophecy and to open the doors before him so that the gates will not be shut you remember in our last study I told there was sluice gates in the river Euphrates where it went through the city of Babylon and those gates were opened by Cyrus as he came through the river into the city by diverting the river outside and he came in and the Lord used him verse 2 to shatter the doors of bronze and cut

through their iron bars and he came and occupied now I want to show you another verse of Jeremiah chapter 27 this was prophesied 70 years earlier Jeremiah was the last prophet before Israel went into the Babylonian captivity and Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 27 and notice this exact fulfillment verse 6 Jeremiah 27 6 the Lord says I've given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon my servant he calls Nebuchadnezzar my servant and in that sense all the people in the world who are in authority Romans 13 1 to 5 says they are all servants of God not servants of God in the sense of proclaiming his word but servants in the sense that they have to fulfill God's purpose and all the authorities in the world though the devil may have put them in those places in one sense

they are servants of God in the sense that they serve God's purposes and mice I have given him all the wild animals to serve him and listen to this verse 7 all the nations will serve him his son that is Nebuchadnezzar and his grandson that is Belshazzar and with his grandson that will be the end of the Babylonian Kingdom until the time of his own land comes then many nations and great kings will make him that is Babylon their servant so you see God has specified there are all after Nebuchadnezzar it's going to be a son and his grandson Daniel knew that when Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar is on the throne Daniel knew this is the last king and Medo-Persia is going to take over and so we see an exact fulfillment of prophecy what we see in Daniel chapter 5 when the handwriting came

on the wall that was the end of that kingdom prophesied by Isaiah and Jeremiah turning back to Daniel chapter 5 there's just one more thing I want to point out there before we move on to chapter 6 and just by the way this is something very interesting the Babylonian Kingdom was there and the Medo-Persian Kingdom came to fight against it in today's names for these countries do you know what the Babylonian Kingdom is Iraq and the Medo-Persian Kingdom is Iran it was Iran versus Iraq just like it is in our day it's

amazing how the river Euphrates is a center of conflict as we read in the book of Revelation chapter 16 as well in the last days there's going to be conflict around the river Euphrates before the coming of Christ and we see the fulfillment of prophecy in our day and there was a

fulfillment of it earlier when Iran overpowered Iraq in Daniel chapter 5 the one other thing I want to point out here is that verse 25 I spoke about the handwriting on the wall and I just want to tell you the meaning of these words meaning tickle and Paris mentioned in verse 26 to 28 of chapter 5 of Daniel many tickle and Paris the interesting thing I want to point out to you it's it's mentioned in the margin of the Bible here in the NASB all these words relate to money many means 50 shekels and that's how you get the word numbered numbered tickle means shekel that is one shekel that's relating to money too that means weighed an exact weight and Paris means half a shekel that is to divide the shekel into two that's very interesting that God wrote on the wall of this palace three words all

of which related to money why was that because this is how religious Babylon is built even today it is through unfaithfulness and money an unrighteous attitude to money and a love of money and of material things that Christianity degenerates into a Babylonian version of it and if a man has not conquered the power of money and the love of money in his life whatever knowledge he may have of the scriptures he will only ultimately end up building Babylon and it is impossible for a full-time Christian worker who has not been freed from the love of money ever ever ever to build Jerusalem the true Church of Christ this is why we speak so much against it I just mentioned that the handwriting on the wall against Babylon was money money money and what were they doing when Babylon was destroyed

entertainment entertainment entertainment entertainment that's the other thing you see in Babylonian Christianity money and entertainment and that's why the judgment of God comes upon it the church is not a place to make money it's not a place for entertainment Christianity is not for entertainment it's serious business Christianity is not meant to be a means of earning a living or making profits I just mentioned that in passing now we come to chapter 6 verse 1 it says here it seemed good to Darius now listen this is the new king appointed by Cyrus the leader Darius has been appointed over this whole Babylonian kingdom and we would have thought that he should have sacked all these leaders of Babylon of which Daniel was at the head but he didn't do it it seemed good to Darius to appoint

120 satraps that is sort of governors over the kingdom that they should be in charge of the whole kingdom and over them three commissioners on top of these governors and Daniel was one worth that these satraps might be accountable to them that the king might not suffer loss he was were people who collected the revenue and then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit or an excellent spirit and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom here was a man who was a captive in a sense but his work and his spirit was so excellent that the king that conquered the country recognized him as worthy of being appointed over the whole kingdom because of his uprightness and his faithfulness now I want to tell

you something Daniel came into Babylon when he was 17 and approximately and by the time the Medo-Persians took over 70 years later he was 87 years old but at 87 is just as upright and just as faithful as he was 70 years earlier I tell you there are very few people in the Christian ministry who endure till the end like that an outstanding example when Darius appointed Daniel he was 87 years old and he excelled himself which must have been over a period of time so what we read in Daniel chapter 6 is something that took place when Daniel was approximately 90 years old think of this he's an old man now but it hasn't made any difference to his spirit and it says here that Daniel was going to be appointed over the whole

kingdom which shows God's sovereignty God had a purpose for Daniel to

fulfill and I believe that God needed Daniel to influence Cyrus to send the Jews back to Jerusalem we read here in the end of chapter 6 verse 28 Daniel 6 28 Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian now with this in mind I want you to turn to a verse in the book of Ezra in the Old Testament Ezra chapter 1 and verse 1 the book of Ezra describes the movement of God's people back to Jerusalem from Babylon that's the subject of the book of Ezra and the very first verse of the book of Ezra chapter 1 verse 1 reads like this in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom saying

thus says the king of Persia Cyrus the Lord the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah whoever there is among you of all his people which people the true God's people and I asked this question where did Cyrus learn about that he didn't learn it from Persia I'll tell you that history tells us that when Cyrus was king of Persia there was a great lead religious leader in Persia called Zoroaster Zoroaster was the founder of the Parsi religion and he was there during the reign of Cyrus and you know what Zoroaster means Zoroaster means the seed of the woman that's what he called himself the seed of the woman the Messiah but amazing that this man Cyrus knew that the true God was not the one Zoroaster

preached about who influenced him it must have been only Daniel it's amazing what one man could do for God during those 70 years that's a challenge to us it's not numbers by which God does his work but by one wholehearted upright person it's amazing God's tremendous purposes for his people were fulfilled and he says let him go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of the Lord the God of Israel he is the God who is in Jerusalem it's amazing and he goes on to say in that book how Cyrus helped them with money and property and all types of things to do to build God's house in Jerusalem so we see the influence of Daniel now turning back to Daniel chapter 6 again we read in verse 4 that when Darius who was the king appointed there by Cyrus was going to appoint Daniel to be the head of the

commissioners the commissioners in satraps verse 4 began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs you see Daniel was like the chief secretary or the prime minister under the king controlling all the government affairs the administration at the age of 90 and they tried to find something because of their jealousy and we can find situations like that ourselves we're in our place of work there are people around us who are jealous and who want to find some fault some small little thing they want to find fault with us within our work in order to pull us down Daniel faced it and it's a tremendous lesson for us how we can face it as overcomers in these last days yes Daniel faced jealousy and we shall face jealousy too in the last days but it says here

they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption that was his testimony before his enemies in Luke chapter 11 there's the verse I want to just read it to you Luke 11 verse 53 and 54 which reminds us of this situation this is concerning Jesus Luke 11 53 and 54 it says when Jesus left there the scribes and Pharisees began to be very hostile and they were jealous of Jesus just like those Persian commissioners were jealous of this Daniel who was a Jew being appointed over them and it says these people were very hostile and began to question him closely on many subjects not to find answers they were not interested in answers but they pretended to be spiritual and to ask questions with what reason verse 54 plotting against Jesus to catch him in some word that might come out of

his mouth and when we find ourselves in situations like that in our place of work where people are plotting waiting to catch us in some one word we slipped up in we know that's we don't have to think that's something strange the men of God in the Bible went through that Daniel went through it Jesus went through it and they both overcame and God stood with them and enabled them to triumph and the same God who lifted Daniel out lifted Jesus out of the plottings of their enemies is there to help us today that's our encouragement and so we see in Daniel chapter 6 they waited and they couldn't find anything against him in his work and brothers and sisters that's a tremendous thing when people cannot find anything against us in our work a Christian who is witnessing for Christ and who comes

late to office or factory or goes out goes away for long coffee breaks like all the others slips off half an hour earlier or five minutes earlier they can find something to accuse him about but not against Daniel he was there on time in his office and he didn't go away early he didn't have any long coffee breaks or whatever breaks they had those days he was upright he was faithful in his work and it says here three tremendous statements listen to this the last part of verse 4 and God grant that can be said of every one of us in our place of work he was faithful there was no negligence and no corruption he was faithful there was no negligence negligence means he did not neglect some part of his work and he was not corrupt he never took a bribe he was fair to all the people rich or poor

made no difference showed favoritism to no one he was faithful in his work never negligent never corrupt blessed are the Christians who have such a testimony in their place of work today it's in our place of work and we are to have such a testimony and to be overcomers no doubt he suffered for it as we read later on and we shall suffer for it Jesus suffered but that made no difference at the age of 90 he was faithful like he was at 17 at the age of 90 he was free from corruption just like he was at 17 what a tremendous thing to endure till the end like this there are few who can have such a testimony so many people start off so well when they are 17 18 but after a few years they look at the corruption of people around and become like them if Daniel had looked at all the half-hearted

compromising Jews around him he would have been caught up by the time he was 25 but his eyes were not on the half-hearted compromisers around him his eyes were on the Word of God God's standards and he stood true to it no matter what the cost and brothers and sisters that's the type of person God is looking for in the world today right in our place of work Daniel wasn't a full-time worker going around preaching like some of the other prophets were Daniel was a prophet but he was a prophet who was working in a government office in a heathen country he was a unique example for us in our day there's no other example like that in the Bible of a prophet who worked in a secular job in a heathen country what better example do we need in India and in a country which is full of idols just like

India is a unique example for our country for people in secular jobs who can be prophets for God the overcomers in these last days and then these people realize this verse 5 these men said we'll never find any ground of accusation against this man unless we find it against him with regard to his religion with regard to the law of his God think of that the people in our office can say that the only thing that irritates me about this man is his religion that's the only thing in which I can find fault with because everything else he's so upright and so honest and so straightforward that we're in the footsteps of Daniel when we're like that we don't have to feel sorry for ourselves if we suffer we'll suffer sure then it says in verse 6 these commissioners and satraps came by agreement it's

amazing how people can team up together when they're jealous it says Herod and Pilate who were mutual enemies never talking to each other became friends when they wanted to kill Jesus it's amazing when

they want to finish off a man of God mutual enemies join up together I'm sure these commissioners were not the best of friends with each other but when it came to dethroning Daniel they got together and they came scheming to their boss King Darius and there can be people in our offices scheme and go to the boss and flatter him that's how many people stay in their jobs by flattery Oh King Darius live forever you're never going to die they live forever and ever and these stupid idiots who sit there believing all this flattery softening him up and then telling lies verse 7 all the

commissioners of the kingdom the prefects and the satraps the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any God or man besides you Oh King for 30 days shall be cast into the lion's den the very first word was a lie all wasn't all Daniel wasn't there in that discussion they should have said all of us except Daniel and then the king would have smelled something fishy but they told a lie and why do I highlight this fact just to show that we can face exactly similar situations in our midst where people tell lies to those who are above us flatter them scheme against us all because of jealousy and they can't find any fault against us it's our faith it's the fact that we won't

give any money for their idolatrous festivals this example for us to follow and it says here now Oh King establish the injunction you see that no man can be so stupid that nobody should make a petition of any man except to you okay but they had flattered him and softened him up and he said now establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed according to the law of the Medes and Persians which cannot be changed and these people knew that the Medes and Persians had made their King like the Pope you know the nearest to the present Roman Catholic Pope in the Bible is the Medo-Persian King when the Medo-Persian King spoke ex cathedra he was infallible he was you couldn't change it that was it forever and ever that was it you see this infallibility doctrine didn't

originate in the last century by the way it originated 2,500 years ago why is it the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be changed because that was to show that the King is infallible when he speaks that's it that's infallible and Darius was such a stupid idiot to believe that anyone who believes that today is an equally stupid idiot to think that a man can be infallible only God and his words infallible and it says here therefore King Darius signed the document you see the power of flattery it's fantastic the power of flattery Oh King live forever you're infallible now why don't you pass this law and it is all schemed against one godly man all the scheming that was going on in the office against one man who stood for God so true to the situations we find that many Christians find

themselves were uncompromising in many places today King Darius signed the document and we can say that we can face laws like this in our country which are so stupid we can say it was such a stupid law that Darius signed and we can ask ourselves is God sovereign over it was God sovereign in Daniel chapter 6 well he's sovereign even today over any law that any King Darius or anybody passes it makes no difference God can work out his purposes if he can find one upright man Daniel who will stand up for him yeah this is something similar to what we read in Revelation 13 17 where you remember in our study of Revelation we saw how the Antichrist is going to pass an order in the last days saying that no one can buy or sell unless you have the mark of the beast this is somewhat similar to that

you cannot ask anyone for anything except King Darius in other words he is God that's what the Antichrist is going to do too he sets himself up as God you need my permission and my mark to buy or sell and this is why the book of Daniel has got particular relevance to the days in which we live the last days before the coming of Christ now when Daniel knew that the document was signed verse 10 he heard about it he

entered his house the thing we see here is this he did not make the slightest difference to Daniel what a man of faith he was he was at rest anyone who makes a prayer to any other God will be cast into the lion's den and Daniel's faith was in such in God that it made absolutely no difference to him whether he was thrown into the lion's den or not he would rather go into the lion's

den with God than stay in the palace without God and that's a good position to take I'd rather be thrown out of the palace into any old lion's den and have God with me than stay in the palace without God as a compromiser blessed are those who follow Daniel here he went to his house and in his roof chamber he had his windows open toward Jerusalem and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day praying and giving thanks before his God as he had been doing previously now there are a number of things we can learn from this verse at 90 years of age he didn't think I'm too old to kneel down there are people who become too old to kneel down by the time they're 50 not Daniel he said I humbled myself before God he had his windows open toward Jerusalem that was an act of faith from Babylon

he looked westwards towards Jerusalem with his back to the Sun Babylonians turned east and worshiped the Sun he showed his back to that God and turned towards Jerusalem and in it he was praying in faith Lord through your prophet Jeremiah you said that after 70 years you'll take your people back do it Lord and here I open my windows toward Jerusalem as a symbolic testimony to the fact that I'm aiming my prayers in that direction and God you're gonna do it you're gonna do it you're gonna fulfill your work this is not just some bright idea that Daniel cooked up in his own mind let me tell you that he was praying according to the Word of God Lord you said through Jeremiah we'll come to that when we come to chapter 9 that you're going to take your people back now take them back I have faith in

you and I don't care what lions then they throw me in let the lions eat me up makes no difference take your people back now you know it would have been very easy for Daniel just to close his windows that day he normally kept his windows open and then if he had closed his windows these people could not have seen him and it would have been very easy for him to do that he could have said well it's a bit windy today I think I'll close the window and pray today it's amazing how many things the devil comes and suggests to us brother why don't you do it like this and the real reason is compromise but you're trying to think of some other reason why you don't want to take a stand for God well even if it was windy this was one day he was determined to keep his windows open he says I want these

fellows to see me that I'm not scared of any old lion's den and I don't want to hide it I want to kneel down and pray and let them see me that I couldn't care less for that for that ungodly order passed by King Darius I'd rather obey God than man and I'm gonna kneel down and pray he wasn't going to change he did not love his life unto death you know we consider that in Revelation 3rd chapter 12 verse 11 that the mark of an overcomer is he did not they do not love their lives even unto death he would lose his job he loses life made no difference he didn't love his job he didn't love his life he loved only God and that's the mark of an overcomer he doesn't love his job he doesn't love his life he loves God and if he has to lose his job his family his life he's willing to lose all of them

Jesus said those who love their life in this world will lose it finally and that life consists of many things it consists of my health my job my family my material possessions many things and if I love it I lose it in eternity I lose what God has for me in eternity but if I'm willing to lose it all for the sake of the Lord I'll never be the loser in eternity so Daniel knew that and the other thing we see here is that he his opening his windows toward Jerusalem was we could say the womb from which a movement was born that led God's people back to Jerusalem I say this because it has a spiritual application for us the womb from which a

true local church which is going to be the body of Christ as Jerusalem described in Revelation 19 is born in the womb of prayer of people who are burdened to

see God's people come out of Babylon into Jerusalem it doesn't come by preaching it begins in prayer the movement from Babylon to Jerusalem did not come with Daniel thinking I've got influence with Cyrus let me speak to him no he said I've got influence with God let me speak to him first he can do it my faith is in God not in Cyrus even though he was next to Cyrus Darius in the government his faith was in God he turned to God he didn't go to Darius he went to God said Lord send your people back to Jerusalem and I've often exhorted people whom I met in different parts of this country who long to see in their own town or city a pure testimony for Jesus Christ and they say we're only one or two I say never mind even if you're only one in your town or city you can form a womb from which this

body of Christ is born just like God could find a Mary in Nazareth 1900 and more years ago a womb in which Jesus body could be born today the body of Christ is to be born in a womb and it's a womb of a man who is burdened in prayer a lot of people got burdened who don't pray about it that's why they never see anything they think is to get some good preacher to our town and get him to preach something on the deeper life and we'll build a church nothing of the sort it's going to be when a man's got a burden and just like a woman carrying a baby and it's a weight on her this man's got a burden in his heart Lord this is not the place for your people this Babylonian Christianity that I see around me I want to see a pure church a church where everyone loves one another fervently a church of

people who are upright and righteous in their life pure in their thought life we do not fight and quarrel and strife we do not love money a church like this it's going to come through people who've got their windows open towards Jerusalem and I want to tell you when you begin to do that the devil's gonna throw you into the lion's den so long as you're not interested in Jerusalem you're safe but once you're beginning to be interested in a pure testimony for Christ the price you have to pay is a lion's den even today of some sort of the with hungry ravenous lions waiting to eat you up the devil roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour because he's against that testimony he's against people having their windows open towards Jerusalem today so shut that let's stay in Babylon

when God's Word is saying come out of her my people the 70 years are up long long ago come out of her it's time to come out there are people are still staying there not Daniel he was determined to provide God with a womb from which would begin a body of people who would move towards Jerusalem so that's what we see here and then we read verse 11 to 13 these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication to God of course they I don't know whether they thought that Daniel would get scared but if they knew Daniel well enough they knew that he wouldn't get scared he's going to just keep the windows open and pray in any case and they came and they saw it was just as they thought he's a bold man he couldn't care less for what King Darius or anybody else says then they

thought now we've got him they approached the king and said didn't you sign an injunction just like those pharisees were waiting to catch one word from Jesus mouth didn't you say that anyone who prays to any other god other than you oh king for 30 days is going to be cast into the lion's den the king answered and said the statement is true according to the law of the Medes and Persians so spoken ex cathedra and it cannot it's infallible that's it so he's got to be thrown into the lion's den then they answered and said all right Daniel who's one of the exiles from Judah you see they highlight the fact this fellow is not a Persian he's not a Median he's one of those fellows whom they brought from Judah one of the captives and he pays no attention to you oh king or an injunction which is

signed he keeps on praying three times a day to his god then the king see the king loved Daniel the king knew that this man is an upright man and the king Darius had a bit of uprightness in him himself he was deeply distressed and he was thinking oh what a fool I was to make that statement but even then he could have humbled himself and said well maybe I'm not infallible I'm I made a mistake and he tried even until sunset to rescue him he really wanted to help him that's just one thing I want to say here as a lesson we can learn from Darius in the book of Proverbs it tells us about fools various types of spiritual fools but then there's a statement in the book of Proverbs which says I'll tell you one fellow who's the worst fool of the lot have you heard that let me tell you who that one

is it's good for us to know Proverbs 29 verse 20 worse than any other spiritual fool is this one do you see a man who is hasty in his words hasty in writing a letter to someone who's written a harsh letter to you he's the worst fool of the lot it says there's more hope for all these fools I've spoken of in this book than for that man not much hope for him no hope for him at all all these other fools there's not much hope but this fellow absolutely no hope at all a true man of God is never hasty in his matters or in his words he's got self-control he can wait those who believe will not make haste it says in Isaiah 28 16 he who has faith will not make haste that's something we can learn from Darius not to make haste in decisions that we take lest we regret later on then we don't know what

to do see this particularly with young people who think that they know so much they're so hasty won't even listen to their parents quick in doing something and then regret well the king regretted and we read here in verse 15 then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king recognize oh king it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes can be changed that's it you spoke it as an infallible king and now you can't change it I just want to say here something concerning vows that we may have taken or made in our unconverted life there are some Christians like that who in their unconverted life have made certain promises and vows maybe they belong to certain secret societies or some type of promises and vows that they made

which now that they have come to the light they discover was not the will of God can they go back on that vow they made certainly they can because God is above every organization or person to whom we have made a vow and in our unconverted days we may have done some stupid things and made some stupid vows and now we have come to the Lord you don't have to feel bound by something which you know is disobedience to the word of God for example if you promised some boy or girl that you'd marry him or her then you got converted and that person's not converted you know the word of God says you are not to marry an unbeliever 2nd Corinthians 6 14 you can go back on that promise you made because now you're a Christian you don't have to feel bound to disobey God's word and go into a life of misery

you can pull back on it or any other unscriptural ungodly vow that you ever made in your life and Darius should have done that how can I throw this man this godly upright man to the den of lions he said well forget the laws of the Medes and the Persians the law of God's more important than that I can't throw him to the lion's den he could have done that he didn't do it well there's something else we can learn and we read in verse 16 to 18 that the king gave orders reluctantly and Daniel was brought and cast into the lion's den and the king spoke and said to Daniel well your God whom you constantly serve will himself deliver you he said that but he didn't really believe it because it says here in verse 18 he couldn't sleep there are some people who say a lot of big things but when they

don't sleep at night you know that they don't don't really have much faith oh yeah your God will deliver you but if you really believe that he just slept peacefully the only one who slept peacefully that night was Daniel

he was all right he knew that his God would take care of him in the lion's den and the stone was brought just like at the tomb of Jesus after his death you know the Pharisees came to Pilate and said you better seal that tomb because something will happen so it says here the king sealed it they brought a stone and covered up the den and sealed it and so that nothing could be changed so the king went off to his palace and he spent the night fasting no entertainment brought him in his sleep fled from him well he loved Daniel all right but he didn't have much faith and we

read here then the king arose with the dawn at the break of day and went in haste to the lion's den and when he came near the den to Daniel he cried out of the troubled voice he's still not sure whether Daniel is dead or alive and he said to Daniel, Daniel sir the living God let me are you still alive as your God whom you constantly serve being able why he just said in verse 16 that he was able to deliver him but he's like a lot of believers today has he done it and when you hear he's done it oh then he must be really alive with God yeah well we're not followers of Darius we are followers of Daniel Daniel speak to the king spoke to the king oh king live forever may God my God send his angel and shut the lion's mouth now we've been seeing in the book of Daniel the sovereignty of God we've

seen his sovereignty over governments over forces of nature over physical health in the bodies of those young people and now we see his sovereignty over animals and over the entire animal kingdom not only hungry lions but like it says in Luke chapter 10 verse 19 over serpents and scorpions and all the evil things that crawl around the earth and the mad dogs and everything else every animal or creature that you're ever afraid of everything lizards and rats and everything he's sovereign over it all it's a wonderful book the book of Daniel the sovereignty of God over everything you name it and it's in the book of Daniel God's sovereign over it everything that can bring fear to our hearts my health read chapter 1 power forces of nature window fire read chapter 3 animals read chapter 6

governments rulers read chapter 2 chapter 4 chapter 5 it's all there and he shut the lion's mouth they haven't harmed me in as much as I was found innocent and also toward you oh king I have committed no crime you see a good conscience is the best pillow to sleep on did you know that and Daniel had a good pillow he may have had one of the lines of the pillow as well but but he also had a good conscience to sleep that night and that's the thing that gives us a peaceful sleep at night well maybe I lost my job maybe I lost something else but at least I got a good conscience praise God brother that's worth everything in the world a good conscience and he had a good conscience never done anything wrong the king was very pleased gave orders for Daniel to be taken about of the den and so

Daniel was brought out and no hurt was found on him they examined him think of the stupidity of these people they thought the lions must have scratched him somewhere or the other to see no injury on him and here's the reason it was not automatic that's the point I want to emphasize it was not automatic it was by faith he trusted in his God now I want you to turn to Hebrews chapter 11 and read this there Hebrews 11 33 it says that by faith you know Hebrews 11 is full of faith and it says here Hebrews 11 33 by faith there are certain people who conquered kingdoms performed acts of righteousness obtained promises and by faith shut the mouths of lions by faith the mouth of lions were shut we don't see that in Daniel but it is explained in Hebrews 11 33 that the angel shut the lion's mouth but

it was Daniel's faith that kept that lion's mouth shut here is an example given us in Hebrews 11 that Daniel is an example for us to follow and Hebrews 12 1 says we have such a great company of witnesses all the ones listed in Hebrews 11 of which Daniel is one who shut the mouth of a lion by faith and if we have faith the mighty sovereignty of God will work on our behalf against forces of nature against physical sickness

against animal the animal kingdom against nebuchadnezzars and rulers and big shots and everything to fulfill God's purpose for our life see what it says in 2nd Timothy 4 what Paul says 2nd Timothy 4 he says in verse 16 of 2nd Timothy 4 at my first events no one supported me here was Paul alone just like Daniel everyone deserted me may it not be counted against them and

you can find yourself in situations like Paul where everybody deserts you and you're standing alone for God somewhere but you won't be alone brother sister verse 17 the Lord stood with me blessed are those who can say that if you got a good conscience and faith faith and a good conscience he said that earlier in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 19 faith and a good conscience if you have that God will stand with you 2nd Timothy 4 17 and strengthen me so that the Gentiles might hear my proclamation in the last part of verse 17 I was delivered out of the lion's mouth they were going to throw me into the Roman amphitheater to the lions but I escaped it see he got him he escaped from a lion's den too that didn't mean Paul lived forever he says in verse 8 the time of my departure is at hand verse 6 to

8 I'm already my time has come verse 6 he was beheaded no we don't live forever God has his time and when our days are fulfilled he removes us and Paul did not have a natural death he died as a martyr but my point is God's plan was not for him to die in the amphitheater eaten up by lions his plan was for him to be beheaded and so even Nero could not throw Paul to the lions that applies even today no one can do anything to us outside of the will of God if we have faith then we read further in Daniel 6 then the king gave orders and brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel and threw them with their children and their wives to the lion's den see this is real hedonism let me get my revenge on these fellas who put me into a difficult situation and accused Daniel and I'm sure Daniel

never approved of that act of throwing his accusers and their innocent wives and children into the lion's den it says the lion overpowered them and crushed all their bones and so we see God standing with this tremendous man man of God in his hour of testing and just like the angel of the Lord stood with Shadrach Meshach and Abednego in the fire and Daniel had missed that experience God gave him an experience in the lion's den where the same angel of the Lord came and sat with Daniel so that Daniel could sleep peacefully we read that in the New Testament too in Acts 12 verse 6 when Peter was imprisoned the day before he was to be beheaded it says that night Peter slept blessed are those who can sleep when you know you're going to be beheaded tomorrow morning that shows you got faith and it

shows you got a good conscience and then Darius the king wrote to all the people and nations verse 25 of Daniel 6 may your peace abound I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble the heathen fear and tremble Christians love and serve Darius didn't believe in loving and serving God he had only still had only that heathen concept this is a powerful God we better fear and tremble he's the living God enduring forever his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed his dominion will be forever he delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders well whatever his lacks may be I'll tell you one thing in which Darius had more faith than many Christians verse 27 he says God can deliver God can rescue and God can perform signs and wonders I wonder how many

Christians believe that today that God can deliver God can rescue and God can perform signs and wonders in heaven and earth he has delivered even Daniel from the power of the lions there is a difference of course between the testimony of a heathen and a testimony of a Christian a Christian doesn't believe only if God delivers a Christian says like Job Job 13 verse 15 even if God slays me I will trust in him it's not a question of whether God delivers me from the lions or doesn't deliver me he is still God and may our faith be like that whether God delivers me or doesn't he's just the same I love him just as much

and I'll serve him just as much one thing I know he will perfect my path in his perfect will no Nebuchadnezzar no Cyrus no Darius no jealous commissioners can ever frustrate God's

plan for my life if his plan is deliverance he'll deliver me if my time is up he'll fulfill that this is the God we serve so Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian may God help us to follow in his footsteps

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