

Daniel's Prayer and God's Protection

Daniel 5:1-6:29

Key verse 6:10

“Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word and your guidance for the preparation of GLEF 2023. I pray that you may bless each person here to accept One Word into their hearts today. Bless this message and help me to deliver your Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. I pray that you may continue to bless us with your Word from the book of Daniel so that we may become faithful prayer servants and shine like the stars for ever and ever for this generation. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thanks be to the Lord who, at this GLE Forum, gives us the privilege of studying God's Word from the book of Daniel. In the last two lessons, we learned how Daniel held on to his identity and as a result received God's blessing and was able to become a very wise and high official in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was a sovereign ruler and the most powerful man in the whole world. However, when he thought in his arrogance that he had accomplished everything himself and boasted of himself, he had to receive God's training to the point of losing his mind. It was only when he humbly acknowledged God, that he was restored.

Today, in the third lesson, we get to know Belshazzar, who was light in spiritual weight, seeking only fun and entertainment and ignoring God's judgment. In contrast, Daniel was heavy in spiritual weight who feared God and lived a faithful life of prayer with God. Like Daniel, may we be heavy in spiritual weight and live a spiritually blessed life by coming to God daily through our prayer and living a life for God's glory.

1. Belshazzar's Pride and God's Judgment

Look at verse 1: "King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them." King Belshazzar was the last king of the Babylonian Empire. He was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar and reigned for about 8 years as a representative of his father Nabonidus, during his absence from Babylon.

Although the Medes and Persians were about to attack the Babylonian Empire, Belshazzar only thought of having a big party.

Let's read verse 5 together. "Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote." Just as Belshazzar was swinging one of the sacred

vessels full of wine with a loud roar and started drinking, the fingers of a hand appeared on the wall of the banquet hall. They wrote on the white wall. Belshazzar was frightened and could not continue drinking. He became paralyzed and he trembled with fear. The king, who was so superior and arrogant a moment ago, became completely helpless and unable to do anything. Worldly rulers are very limited even though they might seem very great and powerful. The king was weak and couldn't do anything in the presence of the mighty God.

This was the time for the king to repent, **to humble himself** before God and to change his attitude. But instead of seeking God, he summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners, and set a high price for reading and interpreting this writing. But when no one could solve the riddle and tell him what it meant, the king became even more frightened. He completely lost the color from his face and his 1000 nobles, now became anxious and puzzled.

Belshazzar sat in complete helplessness and fear in the face of the message of judgment, which he did not understand. He was on the verge of collapse when the queen mother remembered how God had helped the great King Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel. So she advised Belshazzar to have Daniel called. Let's read verse 13 together: "So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah?" King Belshazzar summoned Daniel and offered him a great reward if he could decipher and interpret the writing.

But Daniel refused to accept the reward; he did not want to accept anything from the wicked king because anything coming from him would perish and be very useless. He knew that his kingdom was destined for ruin and therefore all power and worldly gifts would be useless.

Even today, there are many people who are proud and abuse the sacred vessels of God. The Word of God is so often relativized and no longer highly respected by many theologians and scientists, but is twisted according to their own opinion and the spirit of the time.

May God give us reverent hearts to keep holy the sacred instruments of God that God has entrusted to us, and to live as a royal priesthood for this generation.

Instead of first reading and interpreting the words on the wall just like the king asked, Daniel first preached a message of repentance to Belshazzar. He wanted to show God's words to the king.

Let's look at verses 18-21. Daniel told king Belshazzar the story of his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, who we learned about yesterday in chapter 4. He reminded Belshazzar that God had given Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, power, honor, and glory. But God gave him a hard training that he lost his human dignity and had to live with the wild donkeys and eat grass at the level of animals. But when Nebuchadnezzar repented and humbly acknowledged God's kingship, he was restored.

Let us read verse 22 together: "But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this." Belshazzar knew very well the story of his famous grandfather. But he had not accepted the spiritual doctrine. When he did not learn, he became a fool who had to experience God's judgment.

His sin was that he **knew very well**, but did not act on it. He knew he should **humble himself**, but he didn't want to. He knew that he should recognize God as the supreme

ruler, but he wanted to be like God himself. The problem of sinners is not that they do not know, but that they do not want to learn because of their pride and arrogance.

Let us also read verse 23 together: "Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways."

Daniel rebuked the king for abusing the sacred vessels of God. He had also praised the dead idols, but completely ignored his Creator God and didn't praise the living God of heaven.

Finally, Daniel explained to the king the meaning of the writing on the wall. Let's look at verse 25. The written characters were: "Mene, mene, tekel, parsin." Daniel explained the meanings of these characters. Mene means "numbered", which means that the days of Belshazzar's kingdom were numbered. Tekel means "weighed", God had weighed him on his scales, but he was found to be too light. Finally, Peres means "divide". His kingdom would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

The Lord is a God who knows all our deeds, and by him our deeds are weighed. People think that it doesn't matter how we live our lives but God knows our deeds and we are weighed according to God's scales. Our God weighs the spiritual deeds of men and God has a different scale from the one of the world. God had also weighed King Belshazzar. As king, he was supposed to be heavy in spiritual weight. But God couldn't find any weight in him. His life and deeds were too light and had no weight before God. As a result, he had to be judged and his kingdom had to be divided. It is meaningless to live a worldly life, but it is meaningful to live as a servant and a child of God for this generation.

Saul, had also received the grace to live as the first king of Israel. But he no longer followed God's will, but only his own, and did not accept God's admonitions. He lived a life of sin and for his own glory. As a result, he did not accept God's message of judgment and had to die in the war.

How can we become heavy in spiritual weight? The key to becoming heavy in spiritual weight is repentance and obedience to the Word of God. Nebuchadnezzar had also been too light in spiritual weight because of his pride. But after he repented, he was able to gain spiritual weight. Daniel had spiritual weight because **he did not live according to worldly rulers, but obeyed the Word of God.**

This message of judgment for Belshazzar was God's last warning to him. Unfortunately, he did not accept it. He still tried to honor Daniel according to his promise but he did not repent. He was killed that same night. The city gates were opened to the advancing army of the Medes and Persians and the Babylonian Empire was a thing of the past. This story teaches us that there IS too late.

So let us take **God's message of judgment seriously** and gain spiritual weight by coming to God with repentance and faith, and obeying one word of God. Daniel was not kind to Belshazzar, but severely rebuked him for his ungodly life. In this way, he

gave him the opportunity to know the truth and come to repentance by **humbling himself before God**.

Let us not live a meaningless life in this world, **but humble ourselves before God**. Let us gain spiritual weight by coming to God with repentance, obeying His Word and living a spiritual life with the mission of God. We can gain spiritual weight by receiving the word of God from daily bread and studying the Bible. Let us **humbly** study and obey the Word of God through one-to-one Bible study and be used for the spiritual revival of Germany, Europe, Turkey, Russia, and America.

2. Daniel's Prayer Life

Let's look at chapter 6 verses 1-3: "It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom." After Belshazzar's death, Darius the Mede, became king of Babylon. He appointed 120 satraps over his entire kingdom, who were subordinate to three administrators to whom they had to give an account. One of these three administrators was Daniel. He made an extraordinary impression on the king, because he far surpassed all other satraps and administrators. When the king realized that there was a higher spirit in Daniel, he wanted to entrust him with the administration of the whole kingdom.

When the other satraps and administrators heard this, they became jealous and tried to find something in Daniel that would be directed against the government.

Let's look at verse 5. The men found no corruption and no grounds for charges against Daniel because by obeying God, he was blameless. That's why they developed an evil plot against him. They watched Daniel and realized that the only way they could accuse him was through his prayer life. They persuaded the king to enforce a strict decree that for 30 days everyone should only pray to the king and to no other gods or man. The king allowed himself to be persuaded and set up the decree, which made prayer to other gods or human beings punishable by death. It now looked as if the end was coming for Daniel.

What did Daniel do in this hopeless situation? Let's read verse 10 together: "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." In this hopeless situation, Daniel did not panic. He did not exceptionally take a spiritual break for 30 days. He absolutely held fast to his prayer three times a day in the upstairs room of his house with the windows opened toward Jerusalem. He would rather risk his own life than his faithfulness to God. For him, his faith and his relationship of love and trust with God were much more important than his own life. That is why he was determined to continue praying in his upstairs room three times a day, even though he knew that his enemies were just waiting to catch him and finally had an accusation against him. Daniel held fast to what he had always done: praying to his God, praising Him and thanking Him. He prayed with God's hope for the spiritual restoration of the ruined city of Jerusalem, so he opened his window toward Jerusalem.

Do you know who Hudson Taylor is? Hudson Taylor was one of the first Christian missionaries to enter China. He was the founder of the China Inland Mission in the 19th century. Even as a teenager, he began to pray for the lost people in China. At the age of 20, he accepted God's heart for the spiritually lost people in China and arrived there as a missionary. Throughout his missionary life, he was constantly tempted to give up his prayer for the China mission when he lost his daughter, two sons, and wife due to illness. However, despite the pain of death and persecution, he firmly held onto his prayer. He faithfully fulfilled his inland mission in China till the end, leading numerous lost souls to eternal life and establishing countless missionaries for China. God blessed his prayer life by not only protecting him from several trials and dangers, but also by making him a spiritual father for numerous people in China.

One man of God and a missionary in Turkey is a faithful prayer servant for Turkey and the muslim mission. He has been faithfully serving in Istanbul UBF for the past 19 years and praying to the living God for the salvation of the lost souls in Turkey, just as Daniel prayed to God for the restoration of the ruined city of Jerusalem. Brothers and sisters in Istanbul UBF pray faithfully so that God's name may be exalted in Turkey. The Turkish territory was once a Christian territory after the spread of the word of God and the establishment of the first churches in Asia Minor by Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter as we learned from the book of Acts. We pray for the Turkish mission according to Acts 19:9-10. God gave his servant the vision for Turkey to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation so he was able to form a prayer vessel in his house church with God's hope. He is heavy in spiritual weight because he has faithfully and daily prayed to God and put his trust in God despite all trials and hardships he has faced while doing God's mission in Turkey.

Let us read together our key verse, verse 10 one more time: "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." **May God encourage us to pray faithfully like Daniel and not give up praying for GLEF and the next generation.** Let us continue to pray faithfully for the campus mission. We believe that God will answer our prayers of raising 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams in Bonn and 7,000 spiritual leaders in New Jersey.

Let's look at verses 11-13. As Daniel continued his faithful prayer life despite the strict decree, the satraps and administrators returned to the king to accuse Daniel. When the king heard their accusation, he became very grieved. So he made every effort until sundown to save Daniel. But overwhelmed by the resistance of Daniel's enemies, the king had to follow the law of the Medes and Persians and the decree that he issued could not be changed. Eventually, Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. King Darius was so troubled by this that he could not eat or sleep all night.

Let's look at verse 19. The next day, early in the morning, the king ran to the lion's den to see what had happened to Daniel. **God had protected Daniel.** He had sent his angel to shut the mouths of the lions. God protects His people who trust Him. He blessed Daniel's faithfulness and trust by fully preserving his life.

I thank God for receiving his Word from a young age through my parents whom God sent as missionaries to Turkey. But when I was in high school, I lived according to my own worldly desires and tried to hide my sins from God when I was in church. But God

is all-knowing and He knew my deeds. Even when I was spiritually far from God and did not pray to him He protected me from the lions of this world that I was surrounded by like humanism, cigarette and alcohol consumption, homosexuality and the godless spirit of the time. I was not trying to build a deep relationship with God and did not devote my time to God through morning prayer, and even forgot to pray before food. When living according to my own lustful desires, I realized that the things in this world did not give me true joy but only made me miserable. God worked in me and taught me to come to repentance through Romans 6:13 and the global leadership empowerment forum. God continued to work in me through Hebrews 12:2 and teach me fix my eyes on Jesus and keep fighting against the temptations of this world. Today I could see how God protected Daniel because Daniel prayed faithfully to God and set his priorities in God by even risking his life to continue to pray daily. Daniel's prayer life taught me to know and firmly hold on to my priorities. I repent for not wanting to participate in GLEF this year because it is during my exam period and I was feeling very anxious that I would fail my exams because of actively attending GLEF every day. I wanted to study for my exams and prioritize my academic success instead of coming to GLEF. But I did not have peace in my heart and God helped me understand what my priorities should be through Daniel's faithful prayer life. Daniel did not give up praying even in a life threatening situation. Just as Daniel prioritized his relationship with God, I also need to faithfully and daily pray to God and prioritize my relationship with him by living a holy life before God. May God help me prioritize his mission and have faith in him in all areas of my life. May God use me for the salvation of many people and raise me up as a self-executive Bible teacher and a shepherd for Middle East Technical University students in Ankara.

I also learned to have God's hope for people in my prayer. Even though I studied the Bible with my friends, I did not pray for them with God's hope. Daniel prayed with **God's hope** and he had faith in God. He did not give up praying in the lions den. Let us follow the example of Daniel, a shepherd **who did not stop praying**. As good shepherds, may we continue praying in the lion's den for the young sheep, for their spiritual restoration and that they may receive the Holy Spirit.

While Daniel was lifted from the den unharmed, the satraps and administrators, with their children and wives, were thrown into the den because they had falsely accused Daniel. Even before they reached the ground, they perished in the hands of the lions. Daniel, on the other hand, gained great power during the reign of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. God used Daniel's testimony to move the king's heart to give such a living testimony about God to all nations on Earth. If we trust in God and live according to his will, like Daniel, we will become a living testimony through our lives to many nations. I believe that God will use my life and the lives of the next generations to become a testimony of the living God to many people in Germany, Turkey, America, and Russia.

Through today's text, we learned to take God's words of judgment seriously with a humble heart. Those who do not take up the spiritual inheritance, even though they know it, will experience God's judgement. But those who **humbly accept** God's rule with repentance and obey His Word, can be used as God's people for this and the next generation for the work of spiritual revival in the whole world. Let us not live a meaningless life of worldly fun, but gain spiritual weight by coming to God with repentance, living a faithful prayer life, obeying God's Word and, as a shepherd nation, living a spiritual life with the mission of God.

In contrast to Belshazzar, Daniel was heavy in spiritual weight because he boldly professed his faith in God through his **prayer life**. When even in a life-threatening situation he pleased God through his prayer life, not only did God save him from the lions, but also made him a blessing to the king and to the entire kingdom.

Let us follow the example of Daniel that we may be ready to risk our lives as courageous witnesses of the living God for the spiritual restoration, and experience the power of a faithful prayer life, that a large **army of God** could be raised up. Let us all form our prayer vessel, regardless of the circumstances, and prepare the environment for spiritual revival and be used by God as global spiritual leaders.

Let us read the key verse again, verse 10: “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching us from the Book of Daniel to humble ourselves and obey your Word, to become Bible teachers like Daniel and pray faithfully with God’s hope. I pray that you may raise up the next generation as powerful prayer servants for the restoration of your people in all nations. Thank you for blessing GLEF 2023 and I pray that you may continue to teach us through your Word. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.