**Daniel & The Lion’s Den (sjm 8-18-2024)**

**Special, Encouraging, Exciting & I believe Prophetic – Inspired stories from scripture**

 **Ecc 1:9** What has been will be again, what has been done, **will be done again;**

 **Gen 50:20** Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it.

 *If not us who? What about, if not now, when?*

**Recap from Last Week: The Fiery Furnace:**

**Dan 3** Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, *(100’ x 9’ wide) 55 SE of Bagdad*

**2**Then Nebuchadnezzar invited all the ranks of dignitaries to the dedication ***(great show)***

**3**They all stood before the image – ***all ready to bow their knees to a false god***

**12**There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego;** these men, O king, have **not regarded thee**: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up***. Greek – Who pay no attention to your gods or image***

**15 King -** Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; **and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?**

**16**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, **we are not careful** to answer thee in this matter.

**17**If it be so, our **God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.**

**18But even if not**, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

**19**Then was Nebuchadnezzar commanded that they should heat the furnace 7x hotter ***(no difference w/God)***

**24**Then Nebuchadnezzar was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

**25He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**

**28**Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, **Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, **and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. (their actions)**

**29**Therefore I make a **decree**, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

**30**Then the **king promoted** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

**Daniel in the Lions Den:**

**Dan 6:1-3**  Daniel set over a kingdom of 120 princes Daniel was preferred because he had an **excellent spirit**

**4 -5** **Then** – they other leaders sought accusation against him - No occasion, except the **law of God**

 **8**  The other leaders convinced King Darius to write a decree to worship him only

 **10** Daniel then went to his house, windows being open, kneeled & prayed 3x day & gave thanks to God

 *(openly prayed, as an example of a practicing Christian)*

 **12-13** then the leaders ratted Daniel out to the king

 **14** Amphld: Then, as soon as the king heard these words, he was deeply distressed [over what he had done] and set his mind on rescuing Daniel; and he struggled until the sun went down [trying to work out a way] to save him.

 **15** the leaders reminded king Darius again of his decree

 **16** then the king commanded Daniel to be cast into the lions den. “**Thy God who thou servest continually, he will deliver thee”**

 **18** Then the king went to his palace and passed the night away **fasting** & sleep went from him

 **19** Then the king arose early in the morning & went with haste to the Den of Lions

 **20** Then the king cried with an anguished voice, O Daniel, servant of the living God, **Is thy God who thy serveth continually able to save you from the Lions?**

 **22** My God sent his angel & has shut the Lions mouth, & they have not hurt me. Because before he **innocency was found in me & also before thee**

 **23** Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, & commanded that they should take Daniel out of the den. **They all saw** no manner of hurt was upon them, “**because he believed in his God”**

  **24** At the king’s command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives & children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones*.* ***(Ps 105:15 don’t touch God’s anointed)***

  **25** Then King Darius wrote to **all** the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:

 **26** I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people ***must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.***

 **“Actually Prophecy: For he is the living God & he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. 27He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”**

 **28** So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrusthe Persian.

 ***Excellent Spirit – the very best (Dairus reigned over approx. 50m)*  Excellence**: Consistent in good character, attitude, quality, and standards: Daniel was a man with an excellent spirit who was known for his faithfulness, integrity, and humility. His excellence was a result of the Holy Spirit and was evident in his actions and character:

* **Faith:** Daniel was loyal to God and his laws, even while in captivity in Babylon. He prayed three times a day and in times of crisis.
* **Integrity:** Daniel told the truth, even when it wasn't what the kings wanted to hear.
* **Humility:** Daniel was humble b/4 God & man, & didn't let his position/pride get in the way of serving God
* Discipline: Daniel disciplined his mind and body.
* Work: Daniel carried out his responsibilities.
* Righteousness: Daniel walked in right standing with God

Wisdom: Wisdom & tact will open doors of opportunity & conversations that anger and rebellion will not

 Excellent spirit is one where the Spirit of God is pre-eminent is one's life.

 **Dan 2:24** Wisdom & obedience saved many wise advisors lives

 **1 Cor 10:1 Example**: An example can also be a person, action, or thing that is worthy of imitation.

**Notes:**

**According to Daniel 6:28 in the Bible, Daniel served five kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, (Nebs son) Darius, and Cyrus. Daniel's service under these kings may have lasted nearly 70 years.**

**Daniel was a high official in Babylon who was part of the "king's seed", meaning he was of royal blood. He was taken to Babylon in 606 B.C. as part of the first wave of exiles from Judah. Daniel's captors changed his name to Belteshazzar to assimilate him into Babylonian culture. Daniel eventually became the chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and diviners.**

**Dan 2:24 Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy Babylon’s wise advisers. Daniel told him, “Don’t destroy Babylon’s wise advisers. Take me to the king, and I’ll explain the dream’s meaning to him.”**

**Psalms 75:6-7 KJV)**For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.  (7)  But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

In captivity by an evil, ungodly society, the Hebrew people were viewed by the Babylonians as the lowest class of society. Yet in the middle of all that, Daniel and his three friends grew in favor and influence with four kings in two different world systems to become powerful rulers and advisors. How as this possible in these less-than-ideal circumstances?

* The circumstances around you do not have to be **ideal** for God to promote you!

An excellent spirit will cause you to be promoted in business, in ministry, or at home with your family.

God delights in excellence, but excellence starts in the heart.

* A spirit of excellence is a **heart** attitude.
* If you are going to see promotion, you must maintain a good attitude, regardless of what other people do to you and regardless of the **circumstances**.

Your heart attitude could be hindering you from living out God’s best for your life.

**Perfectionism** (Online Definition) the tendency to demand of others or of oneself an extremely high or even flawless level of performance, more than what is required by the situation. (It is associated with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and other mental health problems.)

For three years, Daniel and his friends were groomed to serve King Nebuchadnezzar as Chaldean (Babylonian) wise men. Since Babylon was conquering nations and growing so quickly, there weren’t enough educated men to run the government. So the king began taking young, handsome men from countries he invaded and taught them the history and laws of Babylon that “they might stand before the king” and advise him. Daniel and his friends were chosen because of their youth, appearance, and aptitude.

**But to serve the king, they were expected to discard their former identity and adopt the pagan identity of Babylon.**

Everything about these men reflected their heritage and their relationship with God—even their names.

*According to Strong’s Concordance:*

* + ***Daniel*** means “judge of God”
	+ ***Hananiah*** means “Jah has favored”
	+ ***Mishael’s*** name asks “Who (is) what God (is)?”
	+ ***Azariah’s*** name declares “Jah has helped.”

The king’s official was given a very specific job. He was to strip these men of their Jewish identity and refashion them into Babylonians, starting with their names:

**(Daniel 1:6-7 NKJV)** Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (7) To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

Daniel and his friends refused to conform to the customs and behaviors of the world around them. They knew who they were. Their God-identity protected them through the trials and temptations of Babylon.

* A spirit of excellence is found in our **identity**.

**Identity** (Webster’s Dictionary) the distinguishing character or personality of an individual; sameness of essential or generic character in different instances