

People That Do Know Their God

These are indeed the end times. Jesus said, **“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come – Matthew 24:14.”** And Habakkuk declared: **For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (2:14).** I have heard men of God say that the wealth in the hands of the heathen will be turned over the believers for the propagation of the Kingdom of God in these end days. Something similar happened during the time of the return of the Israelites back to Judah and Jerusalem after the 70 years of exile in Babylon.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god – Daniel 1:1-2. Then further down in **Daniel 5:1-4**, King Belshazzar brought the gold goblets which had been taken from the temple of God and he and his nobles, wives and concubines used them for drinking wine. Of course, God’s judgment fell on him and his kingdom was taken from him that night (**Daniel 5:30**). Why would God allow stuff from His temple be put in the temple of the Babylonian idols in the first place?

Using my reference bible, in the book of Ezra, there was a record of the decree issued by King Cyrus that said: **Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God – Ezra 6:5.** Thus when the Israelites returned to Judah after the 70 years in exile, the articles of gold and silver were given back to them. It became clear to me that God was just using the temple of the Babylonian idols as a storage place.

Another discovery was that as a result of the opposition brought about by the leaders of the Tran-Euphrates against the returned exiles, King Darius issued his own decree: **Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid**

out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. **Ezra 6:8-10** In addition to the original temple articles being returned, a heathen king contributed extensively to the building of the temple of God.

The rebuilding of the temple after the exile was possible through the return of the articles of gold and silver taken from the temple of God years ago and the wealth of the Babylonian kingdom (**Ezra 5**). I am yet to do a study on the claim that God is going to deliver the wealth into the hand of believers in these last days for the spread of the Gospel. Yet one thing is certain, the good news of Jesus as well as the glory of God is going to be spread to the entire world. So whether taking the gospel to all nations will be through the miraculous signs and wonders or through financial prosperity to gain access to million through technology or a combination of both is unclear to me. However, I am sure that God is going to use His people to spread this good news of Jesus: ... **the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits – Daniel 11:32 (KJV)**.

In studying the life of Daniel, I realized that Daniel was a catalyst in the events leading to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after the exile. In **Daniel 1:8**, it was recorded: **But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself (KJV)**. As a result of his commitment and sacrifice, God reward him with wisdom and understanding ten times better than his peers (**Daniel 1:17-20**). As I studied Daniel's life further, I saw that his steadfast fellowship with God, his spirit of excellence that he displayed in his secular work and his usage of the abilities God blessed him with brought glory to God. The four kings whom Daniel served under all acknowledged the greatness of God through the various miracles and interpretation of dreams God performed through Daniel.

Daniel was able to tell King Nebuchadnezzar his dream and also interpreted it for him. And the second dream Daniel interpreted for the king came to pass immediately and exactly. Both times, Daniel stated that he was able to do these extraordinary things only through God alone. In the end, King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged and declared: **... I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation... Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble – Daniel 4:34-37.**

For King Belshazzar, Daniel was able to read and interpret the inscription on the wall which no one in all Babylon could read. Daniel was not among the enchanters, astrologers and diviners brought in to decode the inscription; but the reputation he had gained during Nebuchadnezzar's time made the king send for him (**Daniel 5:10-13**). The speech Daniel gave King Belshazzar as he read and interpreted the inscription exalted God and he refused to take any reward: **Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means – Daniel 5:17.** That night the judgment God melted upon King Belshazzar came to pass as Daniel foretold.

King Darius became the next king whom Daniel served under as one of the three administrators. **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 – Daniel 6:3.** The bible recorded that his fellow administrators and the satraps were jealous of his success and tried to bring him down. But **...they could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God – Daniel 6:4-5."** Therefore, they got the king to make a law that no one should make any request to any god except the king for 30 days. Of course, **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 – Daniel 6:10. The administrators and the satraps reported Daniel to the king and he was thrown in the lions' den. God delivered Daniel from the lions and King Darius issued a decree: **...in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end... – Daniel 6:26."**

The only thing said about Daniel service under King Cyrus (the king after Darius) was that **"...Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian – Daniel 6:28."** From **Ezra 5:13**, the decree King Cyrus published about the return of the articles of gold and silver was issued in his first year as king. According to the MacArthur Study Bible, *"Daniel bridges the entire 70 years of Babylonia captivity (ca. 605-536 B.C.; cf. 1:1 and 9:1-3); ...Ezra led the second return from Persia (ca. 485 B.C.)...."* By the time the King Darius in Ezra wrote his decree (years after Daniel), the God of heaven was still very much revered in Babylon:

Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail, so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. Ezra 6:8-10

Daniel had so distinguished himself in Babylon and had publicly attributed all his successes to God, that he was a big testimony to the four kings. Through Daniel, God was exalted and feared not just by the kings he served under but also by the kings who came after him. In these days, we need to let the world see our God through us. It all started for Daniel when **"the king ordered Ashpenaz... to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility-- young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians... They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service – Daniel 1:3-5."** Obviously, Daniel

was privileged. The good news is that in Christ, **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus – Galatians 3:26-28."**

Daniel went the extra mile when he **"purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank... – Daniel 1:8 (KJV)."** According to MacArthur Study Bible, *"the pagan food and drink was devoted to idols; to indulge was to be understood as honoring these deities... foods that God's law prohibited were items that pagans consume."* For Daniel to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine would be disobedience to God's law. What are those things that are *the king's meat and drink* in our lives: internet, television, games, relationships, work, etc? Whatever those things are, we need to purpose in our heart to lay them aside: **...Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles... – Hebrews 12:1.** Daniel did not just desire in his heart not to defile himself, he went ahead to do something about it. He asked the official assigned to them, **"Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink – Daniel 1:12."** He replaced the king's meat and wine with vegetables and water (which had not been defiled with idolization). It would have been foolishness for Daniel to reject the king's meat and wine and starved himself to death. We need to find out from God what our *vegetables and water* are. What readily comes to mind is reading the Word, prayer, fasting, serving, etc. If we resolve to give up those things that constitute the *king's meat and wine* in our lives, then we must replace them with *vegetables and water*.

Daniel was the spoke person for the three other Jews youth: Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. From the wording of the account, the idea to refrain from eating the king's meat and wine seemed to originate from Daniel. It is possible that it was he who got his three friends to go along with him. How contagious is our faith? Do we encourage other believers in their faith walk with our lives? When Daniel and his friends eat only vegetables and drank water for 10 days; **at the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food – Daniel 1:15.** As a result, they were given only vegetables and water for the entire

3 years of their training. And God rewarded them: **to these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom – Daniel 1:17-20.** God is not a respecter of persons and He is the same yesterday, today and forever. God will always reward us for our obedience and faithfulness towards Him. **You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised – Hebrews 10:36.**

Daniel's spiritual gifting was that he could **understand visions and dreams of all kinds – Daniel 1:17.** He freely utilized this gifting to the glory of God. When he was about to reveal and interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him, he said, **"No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries – Daniel 2:27 – 28"**. Years after, when King Belshazzar displayed irreverence in using the goblets from God's temple, Daniel did not hesitate to rebuke him. **"O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor... But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven... – Daniel 5:18, 22-23."** He was bold and courageous in declaring the counsel of God even to the king of the most powerful nation on earth who had the authority to order his death for such words. **We have different gifts, according to the grace given us – Romans 12:6.** We need to use whatever gift God has blessed us with to honor Him and to bless others.

Accounts of Daniel's dedication to service in his secular work were remarkable. It was recorded: **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 – Daniel 6:2.** Out of jealousy, when his fellow administrators tried to find grounds for charges against him in the way he conducted his work, they were

unsuccessful. **They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent – Daniel 6:4.** Wow, what a testimony! Can people around us say that about us? **Do you see a man skilled** [and diligent – Amplified Bible] **in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men – Proverbs 22:29.** Daniel was skilled and diligent and he indeed served before kings; what about us?

Daniel 11:32 capsulated Daniel's life: **but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.** He had a relationship and constant fellowship with God. When King Darius issued the decree to have everyone pray to only him for 30 days, the bible recorded: **three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before – Daniel 6:10.** New American Standard Version says: **...and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously – Daniel 6:10.** Daniel knew the God he served, he was strong and he did exploits. That was why he was a catalyst in the events leading to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after the exile.

These are the last days. **And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come – Matthew 24:14; for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea - Habakkuk 2:14.** What are we doing to establish the will of God on earth as it is in heaven (**Matthew 6:10**)? Like Daniel, we need to know God so that we can be strong and do exploits.