

Daniel 5 Pt 1.

Intro – Dan 1:1 context for the whole book of Dan. Battle between God and Satan. We are the people who are in the center. Siege taking place.

Verse 1 (Happened in 605BC)

Illustrates the theme of the entire book –

2 Kings – Jehoiakim (God will establish) v's Nebuchadnezzar (May Nabu protect my borderstone)

2 Cities – Jerusalem (City of Peace or foundation of peace or vision of peace) v's Babylon (confusion)

2 Names – Daniel – “God is my Judge” or “God is my Vindicator” to Belshazzar – “Keeper of Bel's Treasures”. (El v's Bel)

Neb thus far in chaps 1-4.

Now a new king on the scene. His son whose name is Nabonidus not mentioned in Bible but history. We will look at his son Bel who is taking care of Bab for his dad.

Dan 5:1. Belshazzar had 1000 no exaggeration. Big party not strange. Feasts went on for days, sometimes months, eg Esthers time King Xerxes had a party that went on for 180 days straight – much drinking, singing and plenty of unrestrained behaviour. But Bel's party never got that far.

Who was Belshazzar ?

Bel was grandson of Neb although referred to as his father in the story (v.18) – the word father in the semitic languages to which the Hebrew and Aramaic language belonged can refer to any ancestor or predecessor not just immediate father/parent. Eg. Jesus son of David.

Up until 1861 Bible critics said Bel made up by Bible writers bec no evidence from history that he existed, but then in 1861 tablet found with his name. Before this, only tablet found of last Bab ruler was Bel father Nabonidus who ruled in a city 800 kms from bab named Tema and his son Bel ruled in Bab – Nabonidus was in charge overall the kingdom of Bab. (Show pic).

Bel and friends Having a grand old time in Bel's palace – reminds me of what took place on the North Atlantic some 90 yrs ago as the Titanic made its maiden voyage.

Note some of the lessons for us today from the story to help us be prepared.

1. Mixing Truth and Error – Compromise vv. 2-4.

Read vv.2-4. Bel brings in vessels from the temple.

Why would Bel do such a thing – unheard of before this time – high act of arrogance...

Crowning act of Bel's defiance toward God was to put alcohol in the sacred vessels.

Bel orders sacred vessels brought into party to show that no man or god can raise a hand against him. (Give dimensions of wall and Bab and reserves if I can).

Persian army and Cyrus are waiting outside, digging furiously to divert the river Euphrates.

God is watching what is going on – not ignorant.

Note: Bel can't discern between truth and error when mind not clear. Dan and friends in chap 1 decided that they would only feed themselves the best diet and natural God-given diet that God first gave in Eden that they would be able to discern between truth and error.

We live in a world of sin only know the truth if mind is clear.

Last Days texts: Lk 21:34-36. Comments.

Illust: NSW Opposition leaders downfall over a few drinks and not thinking clearly, not only cost him his job but almost his life. Devil's plans to entice us and the destroy us. Say no to all alcohol – total abstinence is only safe way to go.

Bel mixed truth and error – happening in Christianity everywhere today. Mixture of truth and error. Compromise is taking place everywhere.

Common sayings, lets just keep the peace.

Illust: Compromise deadly from Dan 1 sermon.

CS Lewis in his screw tape letters said, "The safest road to hell is the gradual one-the gentle slope, the soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."

Misuse of the holy vessels. Applications.

Next time we meet we will discover that Bel knew what he was doing – he had been taught to make a clear line between the holy and the unholy.

See v.22 (last part).

God is deadly serious about how we treat holy things of God. That same day defiling holy vessels of the temple, that same day he was dead.

Eg. Uzzah touched the ark when he thought it was about to fall off and struck dead.

Eg. Nadab and Abihu used unsanctified fire to burn incense and the Lord struck them dead in the sanctuary. Many others.

We must not trifle with God.

God's Sabbath, Marriage, Tithes are all holy set apart for God's use treat them accordingly.

God's Word is holy, we should reverence it:

Ps 138:2. "For You have magnified Your Word above all Your name."

EW: "We should reverence God's Word. For the printed volume we should show respect, never putting it to common uses or handling it carelessly. And never should Scripture be quoted in a jest or paraphrased to point a witty saying. "Every word of God is pure." Child Guidance p.539.

An area that we often mix the holy with unholy is as we approach God in worship. Sensitive area but let me share some words as I must – as you will see why shortly.

Bel as we have discovered had no respect or reverence for God or the holy things of God.

We often knowingly or unknowingly fall into the same trap as we come to worship God from Sabbath to Sabbath. Let me share some thoughts from the Bible and SOP that have been helpful to me in understanding the great imp in the attitude of how we come before God on a Sabbath morning as we enter the sanctuary – and what honors and dishonors God.

Offer you some of the best Biblical and SOP counsel I have come across – hope it is as helpful to you as it has been to me.

Rev 14:6,7. God calls us to worship Him – He initiates worship.

Exod 3:5. God tells Moses, where God is present is a holy place.

Read. Ps 89:7. Reverence in church and respect for God and things of God.

How are we doing as we come before God as a community ???

I'll let you be the judge as we reflect on some much needed counsel.

Does it really matter how we approach God – or has God left it up to us to determine what is and isn't appropriate??

Reverance according to God.

Ellen White: From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred, things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts, and are being brought down to the level of common things. The reverence which the people had anciently for the sanctuary where they met with God in sacred service has largely passed away. **Nevertheless, God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.** {5 Testimonies p.491}

“Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference.”

TEXT: 1 Chronicles 16:29. Worship God in seriousness and in awe.

With what attitude and manner do we enter the house of God-the church????

EW: “When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum (dic def: “correctness of behaviour, speech, dress etc or that which is proper), passing quietly to their seats. Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers. {5T 492.1}

If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer...If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the Word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart.” {5T 492.2}

“When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The sanctuary should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions.

These should be left outside the church. God and angels have been dishonored by the careless, noisy laughing and shuffling of feet heard in some places.”

TEXT: Is 6:1-5. Holy God what it is like to be in presence of a Holy God.

Jesus saw this as very imp, He cleansed the temple at the beginning of His ministry and again at the end. Only place recorded in Bible where His anger was manifested in such an obvious external manner – raised His hand – whip in hand and overturned tables etc...

Mark 11:17. House of Prayer Jesus but made into a den of robbers – principle behind it.

Mixing holy and unholy – in whatever form God is clearly against it.

Parental Responsibility in teaching children in the house of God.

“Parents, elevate the standard of Christianity in the minds of your children; help them to weave Jesus into their experience; teach them to have the highest reverence for the house of God and to understand that when they enter the Lord's house it should be with hearts that are softened and subdued by such thoughts as these: "God is here; this is His house. I must have pure thoughts and the holiest motives....I am coming into the presence of the holy God. This is the place where God meets with and blesses His people....However, when the leaders in the church, ministers and people, fathers and mothers, have not had elevated views of this matter, what could be expected of the inexperienced children?”
{5T 494.1}

Illust: Reverance and respect shown at funerals. What about when we come before the living almighty God of the Universe???

EW: “God is to be the subject of thought, the object of worship; and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him.”

Why do I share these important thoughts with you?? I'd rather not, not very popular, I won't make too many friends over it I'm sure, may even offend some....

At the end of the service some may decide to walk out the other door.

My Responsibility as the Minister.

EW: “When a church has been raised up and left uninstructed on these points, the minister has neglected his duty and will have to give an account to God for the impressions he allowed to prevail. Unless correct ideas of true worship and true reverence are impressed upon the people, there will be a growing tendency to place the sacred and eternal on a level with common things, and those professing the truth will be an offense to God and a disgrace to religion. They can never, with their uncultivated ideas, appreciate a pure and holy heaven, and be prepared to join with the worshipers in the heavenly courts above, where all is purity and perfection, where every being has perfect reverence for God and His holiness.” {5T 500.1}

Illust: My prayer for forgiveness for I treated the pulpit, church in general with indifference – I repented before God and asked forgiveness from my previous church for the terrible example I had set.

Enough said.

Bel and mixing holy with the unholy.

As they boozed, party was crashed, big time – stunned petrified silence filled the room...

2. The Foolishness in trusting in man vv. 5-9.

The night of revelry became a night of revelation.

It was the last night of the nation's existence but the people knew it not. Lessons....

Lk 21:34,35.

Some slept and some partied. Today in the church some not living in the world really – no party in their lives asleep – and some partying and still coming to church.

In one brief moment the boastful king became a shivering, shaking and hopeless mortal.

Note: v. 6. 4 things that happen to king.

King and Elvis Presley knees....

“Pride comes before a fall.”

Unlike Neb who threatened the wise men with death if they could not come up with the goods, Bel only offers a reward. He is guilty and he knows it, judgment day has arrived...

Without even knowing what the writing said, he was troubled. His conscience troubled him.

Illust: J-L and Genevieve all I have to say is “Jamiel-Lee or Genevieve (she is a bit better at hiding the truth) and look at them and their guilt is obvious.... Jasna “Danny or Daniel...

Thank God for our conscience.

Text Bible as 2 edged sword can trouble us the Word of the Lord. Amen for that.

Message to Laodecia – not flattering, thank God.

Quote: EW on God does not messages to flatter the sinner....

EW: "God does not send messengers to flatter the sinner. He delivers no message of peace to lull the unsanctified into fatal security. He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces the soul with arrows of conviction. The ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God to deepen the sense of need, and prompt the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Then the hand that has humbled in the dust, lifts up the penitent. The voice that has rebuked sin, and put to shame pride and ambition, inquires with tenderest sympathy, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"" {DA 104.1}

Writing in Hebrew, words only have consonants, but these words were shortened versions so impossible for wise men to work it out...

King Neb first turned to wise men now grandson likewise, he will find out the same thing..

Now for the 3rd time in the book of Daniel the wise men are brought in first and yet again they fail.

vv.7 & 8. Progression of discrediting wise men of Bab.

- a. Dan 2 could not tell the kings dream but Dan could.
- b. Dan 4 – dream of tree being cut down, could not interpret the dream told to them by Neb.
- c. Dan 5 – writing on the wall and still they cannot give the king the accurate details.

Dan will called upon yet again – Dan to the rescue.

Prov 3:5,6.

King does not call in Dan and this shows how far removed he was from God – although he knew about God had plenty of opportunities as we shall find out.

The queen hears of what is going on and enters the kings banquet hall.

3. A powerful Testimony to a man of God vv. 10 – 12.

Confusion lasted awhile it seems, and news of what happened reached the queen who wasn't there. Not sure who she was, not one of his wives bec all were at the party. Some say she was Nitocris the daughter of Neb who married Nabonidus the current king of Bab whose son ruled now in Bab who is Bel. Often mother's had more influence than son in the court of the king.

Queen calmed the king with the news that Dan had already interpreted 2 dreams for King Neb (Dan 2 & 4) and she had faith in his God's track record.

Dan most probably in retirement. But at the right time God had right man ready.

Dan trusted voice spanning several decades in Bab. Jesus said, by their fruits you will know them – Dan had a lifetime of good fruit to show for his efforts.

vv.11 & 12. Spirit of the Holy God in Daniel X 2. Also, 3 times mentioned in Dan 4 by Neb see 4:8,9,18.

Phil 4:8. The fruits of the Spirit are....

Personal influence. How is it with your personal influence?

When someone is in trouble, they are not a Christian do they think of your name first for help?

Paul text ; lives are an open letter. 2 Cor 3:1-3.

God could count on Dan. Dan trusted in God.

Powerful witness for God. Dan stood up for God throughout his life in a corrupt land.

Are you standing for God in this society where moral depravity is running rife? Or are you willing to compromise – to mix a bit of the unholy into the holy life that God has called you to live ??????

Read: Rev 12:11. End of time God will have a people standing tall for Him. “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” Standing tall for Jesus, even to the point of death – no compromise with sin.

God at the end of the book says what He will do for His faithful that stand up for Him now.

Dan 12:1. Micheal shall stand up for His people.

Dan 12:13. Inheritance for faithful witnesses of Jesus not willing to compromise the truth.

Prayer.

End Pt 1.