Conduct of World Monarchs, Daniel 3-6

By Charles Feinberg

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This study is the second in the series on Daniel numbers. MT 6 the conduct of world monarchies by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg dean emeritus of Talbot Theological Seminary La Mirada, California. [gap] Our study in the Book of Daniel in the series on Daniel comes now to chapters three to six. In the first of the series on chapters 1 and 2. The study was entitled the course of world monarchies in the chronological following of one after the other. Now chapters three to six the conduct of world monarchs or the world rulers. How do they conduct themselves after they are in power? Chapters three to six form quite a contrast to the second chapter whereas chapter two is distinctly prophetic in character. These portions appear to be wholly historical in nature but even historical portions of the word of God have a deeper meaning and significance even in Genesis. We come across the incident Chapter 14 of Abraham and Melchizedek the historical record may be lightly passed over but in the Psalms and in the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews the Holy Spirit indicates how much a prophetic truth was compacted in that short and condensed scene in Genesis.

So in Daniel three to six though the chapters are historical in character so well-known to every Sunday School pupil from early childhood. There is nonetheless prophetic import throughout in Chapter 2. We were permitted to view the setting up of the great imperial systems of the world to the end time. Sovereignty has been assigned to certain nations. The
question of paramount interest now is how will the nations in power conduct themselves specially the rulers. How will they act in their responsibility before the God of heaven? But as chapter two views the world monarchies in the political succession. Chapters 3 through 6 show clearly the moral character and conduct while ruling. In the third chapter as it opens we see an image of gold and Chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar had come only to the place where he worshipped the excellent wisdom in Daniel. He had not profited from the experience in the way that he should repentance and self judgment were not present in the heart of the king. Instead he instituted the grossest idolatry and that on a grand scale it was doubtless an image of himself. He had been told by Daniel that the head of the image in his dream was he himself.

Now he turns the authority given him of God to self-glorification he turns it to self exaltation of the most insulting kind in the sight of the Lord instead of just a head of gold it pleases Nebuchadnezzar that the entire image should be of gold to speak of the splendor of his kingdom the exact measurements of the monstrous thing are given 60 cubits high and six cubits wide now seven is the number of completion in the Bible and six is that which falls short of it and usually stands for man in Revelation. We read of 6 6 6 revelation 13:18 where wickedness has reached its climax here the Apex has not yet been reached in verse two the king issues a general decree for the gathering together of all the notables of the land for the dedication of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw as many a ruler has since his time that a unified religion is a powerful instrument to cement and bind a realm together. Religion must be made subservient to political aims he reasoned and so in verse 3 we see they probably stood before the image in an attitude of worship and adoration. Whatever the Mighty Monarch commanded was law and reason to them for them it must be conformity at any price.
No crime is greater at such an hour than nonconformity yet that's exactly what God asks of us where the world's system is arranged marshalled against the things of God. Romans 12 1 and 2 and verses 4 and 5 in the clearest possible terms we see it's commanded that all should worship the image the orchestra or the forerunner of the band is employed to sway the emotions placed them in the same Soulish mood as in all idolatrous practices the senses must be deadened under such circumstances under such circumstances does the first great world monarch under the Regime of the times of the Gentiles introduced idol worship instead of realizing his answerability before God he cast overboard all submission to the God of Heaven idolatry is spiritual insanity and suicide an idol is nothing in the world but it's sponsored by demon activity. What an insult to the living loving Holy God. You remember how enraged your school teacher was when she found a caricature of her on the blackboard at school. Well think of the indignity and insult to Almighty God by representing deity under an idol whether in the form of a man a beast a bird or a creeping thing.

We've said these narrative chapters a prophetic and they are. This chapter reveals that just as the times of the Gentiles began with sponsorship of idolatry. So will they terminate. And written in Revelation 13 where the world is commanded to worship the image of the beast. So Chapter 3 Verse 6 of Daniel The command is to obey not to conform is to burn persecution. Always accompanies the commands of tyrants and verse seven it is strange that no voice was lifted in protest nor did anything to desist on principle. How easily is the world swayed when it's away from God. The scripture is true that God made man upright. But he goes astray now from his very birth. In Verse 8 the non-compliance of the Hebrews could not go long without notice how easy it would have been for them to conform. For them to say they were only following
outwardly while inwardly they were still true to the living God. But no they will not swerve from
the Lord or even an outward appearance. They were accused and the original Aramaic is vivid.

They ate the flesh or limbs of the Jews spineless followers know how to carry out
their backbiting. Why Daniel is not included here we don't know no more than we know why his
companions were not on the scene in the decree of chapter 6. He may have been on business for
the king in some distant place of the Empire but it's useless to conjecture without evidence.
Notice verses 9 to 12. Notice that a sore spot with them was the way in which the king had
promoted them to high office in the province of Babylon. This seemed to make their offense all
the more glaring. The accusation is made broad enough to include the fact that they not only did
not bow to the image but they did not worship any of the gods of the king in verse 13. In true
dictatorial and tyrannical fashion Nebuchadnezzar cannot allow this slight to go unpunished
though it involves some of the highest in the empire of whose loyalty had always been assured.
Up to this point but when religion and politics are joined, hear you there is no room allowance
made for the rights of the individual conscience before the Lord.

So in verse 14 the opportunity is given for the Hebrews to recant gracefully to
comply without suffering the penalty. It would have been so much easier to fit into the picture
once another chance was given. But spiritual principles are worth all if they are worth anything
at all in verse 15 of Chapter 3. The issue is well-defined no room is possible for
misunderstanding Nebuchadnezzar is driven by the fury of the hour into a rash question in which
he places himself not his gods mark you places himself above the Lord. Now God does not allow
such challenges to go unanswered or unnoticed in Revelation 13:4 a similar challenge is thrown
down to the Lord and the answer was certain and swift in Revelation. Nineteen verses 11 to 21.
If the contest be between Nebuchadnezzar to whom God gave power in the earth and the God of
all power, then the issue is not in question were 16 this reply of the three Hebrews is magnificent beyond expression has come ringing down through the centuries.

They know the king is determined in his way and they're steadfast in theirs. So there can be no compromise and also no profit in a dispute over the matter they must obey God rather than man. It was no mean statesmen who said there was a law higher and greater than the American Constitution. When man infringes on the rights and the realm of God he is as good as shorn of his right to obedience and loyalty. In Verse 17 they are not prepared to tell how the matter is going to come out and they're not going to tell God how he should conduct the situation if God desires deliverance for them, it's well if not they realize God's wisdom is still best theirs is to obey God and leave the consequences with him. God has never disappointed his own. No matter what the outcome. And so in Verse 18 we see the respectful but firm. They have no slightest concept of obeying the king. What a testimony these young men were in that day before all the [inaudible] what a witness has been there's to all succeeding generations to this very hour. Such a confession of faith makes life worth living a thousand times over.

This is the purpose for which life was given to glorify God. Verse 19 thus far the king has displayed patience. But now that his repeated commands are openly disobeyed he is beside himself with fury. So great was his anger that he changed his entire appearance think of it to be withstood in this manner before all his subjects by these three young men in his senseless rage. The king overdid himself instead of prolonging the agony by heating the furnace seven times more than usual he actually would decrease the time of the torment and agony and in verses 20 to 23 the men who are chosen to cast the men are consumed themselves so there's no question as to the reality and effectiveness of the heat as they fell bound into the furnace. The Hebrew Children could well remember the promise of Isaiah 43:2 the flame would not kindle
upon them when they went through the fire. in Verse 24 the king was watching the proceedings from a safe distance and soon his uncontrollable rage gave way to unspeakable astonishment and of such a nature that he couldn't keep his seat before him he saw those who had been bound. He saw them loosed and walking about in Verse 25. In addition, he saw their companion a divine figure blessed be God. When his children are in the fiery furnace for his namesake. He is there.

Christ never puts forth his sheep but what he himself goes before them what a companion and we have the glorious promise of Matthew 28 18 to 20 that if we do go into all the world according to his command and do make disciples in his Blessed name. Then lo. I am with you always even to the end. The full end of the age how much have we relied on it. A preacher has said speaking on the subject of the good effects of trial. If it be true according to all finds saying that was current in the Apostolic Church. If it's true that to be near Christ is to be near the fire. It's also true that to be in the fire is to be with Christ and if we are in the furnace with the Son of Man the fire will not consume but purge and refine. You know the beautiful hymn when through fiery trials like pathway shall lie My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee. I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine like Caiaphas and Pilate Nebuchadnezzar utters words the full significance of which he may not fathom. Here is one of the pre-Incarnation visits of Christ to the earth the Angel of the Covenant the Angel of the Lord as he's called in the Old Testament. Verse 26 we read of the servants, the servants of the most high God.

Evidently he's acknowledging the supremacy of the God of the Hebrews but it doesn't mean he's forsaken his devotion to his other gods in Verse 27 Gods protection of his own was complete. Fire had no power over them as we read in Hebrews 11 34 and then Verse 28. The King singularly enough emphasizes in his better frame of mind that his word was opposed when
he tried to coerce faith. And there is a definite element of both respect and admiration for what their steadfastness of faith had been able to accomplish. Proverbs 16:7 was proved true again. If a man's ways, please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him verse 29. This would have the effect of nullifying his earlier order given in his insane pride. The very King that boasted that no god could deliver from his hand is now found giving an unsolicited testimony to the power and omnipotence of our God. And then in verse thirty they lost nothing by their faithfulness to God. These Hebrew children had their former positions restored to them. They remind us of that fateful remnant in Israel of a coming day in the Great Tribulation. They will defy the insane commands of the beast in spite of persecution and social and economic ostracism.

Blessed indeed it is to trust the faith keeping God friend yet trusting him now. Now Chapter 4 thus far in the prophecy of Daniel we've witnessed the preparation of God's servant in Daniel's faithfulness and separation from the pollution of the world. Chapter 1. Then there was present of the history of Gentile world powers in their succession as they arose and then disappeared from the scene. That was Chapter 2. The vision however gave no indication as to how these empires would conduct themselves when in sway this phase of the story is filled in by the narrative chapters of the book. The chapters were in now Chapters 3 to 6 Chapter 3 reveal that the imperial power would stifle individual liberty in matters of conscience and the authority of God in human life idolatry an insult to God would be introduced. Now our present chapter goes further into the matter in which and the way in which the emperors would rule. In job 33 14 to 18. We have set forth an important principle of divine deity. God speaks to those who have no other means to obtain the revelation of his will. How does God do it. He'll often do it in a way that bypasses man's waking hours and the normal course of human life on Earth.
Nebuchadnezzar is seen as punished with insanity for his pride he sinks to the plain of the beasts illustrating the truth of Psalm 49:6 and verses 10 to 12 man that is in honor abideth not but as the beasts of the field the parish. The contrast between the beasts life and human life introduced here is the key to the interpretation of the symbolism in Chapter 7. After Nebuchadnezzar campaigns and victories and his building a new palace in 15 days according to an heathen historian Abydenus 268 B.C. after his campaigns and victory. According to this heathen historian the events of this chapter take place in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. Evidently the vision of the great image wasn't enough to put Nebuchadnezzar in the proper position. He should have assumed before the Lord now God speaks to his conscience and heart through the vision of the great tree. We must remember that this chapter was written by Nebuchadnezzar himself as to content and preserved by inspiration by the Prophet Daniel.

It's the account of the way God brought the proud king to abase himself before the God of heaven. In other words, this is the story of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and manifests how real was the operation of God's spirit in his soul is a representation of the manner in which world rule is alienated from God. How it becomes degraded and bestial beast-like in character and how it finally is brought in submission to God. At the time of the end when Christ returns visibly in his glory. Chapter 4 Verse 1. The account is moving in a special way. For this is the personal testimony as we said of the one who was the world's greatest monarch in his day. The king recognizes his sovereign of all the peoples of Earth. His address is the usual one for the East where peace is so highly prized that it finds its way into every salutation verse two the heart that has received the instruction of God is not slow to reveal to others the workings of God in His marvelous grace such testimony brings praise to God and strengthens those who hear or read it.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so Psalm 107 verse two verse 3 he had hoped for a while that this might be true of his kingdom he might have peace.

But he recognizes now that this is possible only with God in His kingdom first four the condition of the king is given before the Lord began. Special dealings with him is the condition of so many of the unsaved. It's a false peace a false security. One can so easily be lulled into a false hope as first John 5:19 tells us don't rely on such a feeling yourself. If the king is to know life and blessing in the Lord, he must be aroused and quickened out of this false complacency. Verse five again the king saw as if the first in this book a dream which greatly troubled him and frightened him. That was its purpose verse six since he had the wise men for this type of need. He immediately turned to them for help in his distress. Evidently their first failure that we read of in Chapter 2 hadn't remained with him. It's always natural for man to seek for resources and help on his own level of living. Then to turn to God those who are skilled interpreters of dreams were helpless to explain this one. Notice also that this case is different from that in Chapter 2 where the king had lost the dream.

He remembered this one but still it was beyond the powers of the Chaldeans and it must be recognized that God is the only revealer of truth and of his warnings to the king verses seven and eight as in multiplied thousands of other instances man's extremity is God's glorious opportunity when all others fail the King finally turned to Daniel. Why didn't he do so with the first. That's not told us. But calling on Daniel as a last resort surely served to impress his heart with the helplessness of man and the adequacy of the man to whom God reveals truth verse 9 in Daniel he said was the spirit of the Holy gods. To him the living God of Daniel is still just one of the gods of his realm. He speaks and thinks. Yet as a heathen. Then verse ten again the figure
employed by the Holy Spirit is important it's not the image of a man nor. The figures of beasts as in Chapter 7.

But now it's a flourishing tree in the earth and from such passages as his Ezekiel 31:3. Matthew 13 we learned that a tree symbolizes greatness in the earth earthly grandeur and power are indicated by the figure of the tree. This tree was in a most conspicuous place the very middle of the earth. Its height was impressive. It speaks of Nebuchadnezzar with the lines of his power and rule going out all the known inhabited earth verse eleven. The growth of that tree included all the earth first twelve. Here is an intimation as to why God sets up powers and rules in the earth. It's for the protection and refuge of all creatures man beasts and birds in verse thirteen holy angels are committed with the task of watching over kingdoms and carrying out the commands of God are relevant to them verses 14 and 15. Here the awe inspiring sentence is stated. Provision is made for the continuance of the rule. For there's a stump left in the earth verse 16.

This verse shows definitely that in the figure of a tree a man has been meant all the while. But this is the severest part of the sentence upon King Nebuchadnezzar his pride and haughtiness his reason is unseated he becomes like a beast to the field. He was smitten with what is known medically as lycanthropy a wolf man. After he had lost his reason. What depths are reached when man was not own and recognize his proper place before God. The passage informs us distinctly that when kings fail to admit their responsibility before God they become deranged. More than one instance is available of this for the times of the gentles man and honor abides not. But as the beast of the field which perishes as the scripture tells us this condition will cover seven times or as is generally conceded seven years in the life of Nebuchadnezzar in verse 17. We see that with God nothing is done capriciously his purposes stated Now man must know that
power and rule are not innate nor native to man but that it comes directly from God. He is the ultimate ruler overall. He is not committed to leave this sovereignty in the hands of any man regardless of the Hearts condition toward him how the rulers of the Earth would be blessed and prospered. If they all took to heart the truth of this verse, it's statesmanship and political science of the highest order. Verse 18.

The king displays great confidence in the ability of Daniel though all the rest have failed him now as before. Verse 19 it seems to us this verse reveals the heart of Daniel as much as any in the book. He knows the import of the dream how well Nebuchadnezzar deserves what is to come upon him but his heart is concerned for the king and grieved over what he must reveal to him. This was the distinctive feature of the two prophets of God. Though they must predict judgment so often they are nevertheless grieved over the chastisement of any of God's creatures the thought of this verse is that what is implied in the interpretation should overtake the enemies of the king. So dread terrifying is the meaning of what God has revealed. It was an expression of loyalty concern for the king rather than a threat to any enemies verses 20 to 22. The tree represents the king himself in his power and greatness Nebuchadnezzar has reached the height of his political strength. He possessed of Armenia in the north a large part of Asia Minor in the West Syria and at one time Egypt as well toward the south his power reached the Persian Gulf and the east the Medes and the Elamites were under his power and verses 23 and 24.

That which was spoken of in verse 17 is the decree of the watcher's the Angels is here called by Daniel the decree of the most high angels are only Gods ministers. Verse 25 the cutting down of the tree meant that Nebuchadnezzar was to be brought down to the lowest depths to be driven as a beast from men who would live among the beasts of the field eating their food and displaying their nature. This condition was to continue until the king would be brought to the
place where he realized the mighty hand of God in his rule over the earth and the freedom God exercised in giving rule to whomever it pleases him. Verse 26 the fact that the stump of the tree was allowed to remain signifies that the kingdom was not to be lost to the king for good but that God in His Grace would in time restore it to the Babylonian monarch verse 27 before the prophet concludes his words he faithfully counsels the king for his own welfare and entreating him to break off his sins by righteousness and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. This is not advice to earn salvation by works. Oh no. It's laying on the heart of Nebuchadnezzar to turn to God's righteousness and manifest this change in his life and manner of dealing with others by such action.

There was a possibility that God would prolong the well-being of the king and the judgment would yet be averted from his life. Verse 28 but the timely warning went unheeded and all happened in the life of the king. Just as Daniel had said. How unchanged man can remain though he be counselled in all faithfulness verses 29 and 30. But in what did the sin of Nebuchadnezzar consist. He merely prided himself on the accomplishments in his realm but he utterly ignored the claims of God on his life he refused completely to recognize his indebtedness to God for all things. Ancient historians confirm that he had indeed beautified and adorned the old city. He'd built a magnificent palace and city walls verse 31 since the king seeks to be more than man in God's sight he at once becomes less than man all connection with God was lost. He had no more concept of God than the beast of the field. Thus he is reduced to the brute non-intelligence of the beast. Verse 32 the King became a miserable pitiful spectacle not fit to live among his subjects and fellow countrymen. It's well known what treatment is accorded the insane in Oriental countries it's only within recent years that more understanding treatment has been given them and more enlightened lands.
There's still room for improvement. The insane in those days are thought of as afflicted by God himself allowed to wander where they wish. What a picture this is of world rule. Going his own proud boastful way then enduring the judgment of a bestial character. It's madness of the worst sort to spurn the clear word of God and refuse to give God the right full honor due him but such has been the course of nations and wars during the times of the Gentiles. What happened to Nebuchadnezzar was not confined to him it's been repeated numbers of times during the course of the centuries. Verse 33 it's generally agreed that his illness was a mania as we've said known as lycanthropy. The historian of Babylon Burroughs's indicated that Nebuchadnezzar had an illness. It's remarkable that an interval is indicated in the inscription of Nebuchadnezzar in which he carried out no great public works. Verse 34 is looking up to heaven the opposite of the habit of beasts was the first symptom of the return of his reason he had been allowed to suffer the full time of the sentence.

His period of training is now over the eyes that for seven long years were glued to the earth now turn toward that God whom Nebuchadnezzar and his pride had refused to recognize in the days when possessed of his full reason. Recognition of God is the basic fundamental difference between a man and a beast. The glory of man in all ages is to recognize God and take his place relative to the sovereign of the entire universe. The king returns to him who smote him. His words now are words of praise and adoration to the omnipotent God who knows how to correct and chasten even the mightiest of Earth the God whom he had not honored before he now honors. He's quite prepared to admit the temporary nature of man's dominion and this brings into clearer relief the unending character of the dominion of God verse 35 in comparison with the power of God. The nations are as nothing he overrules in every realm heaven earth under the earth in order to bring to pass his Holy will.
No one can turn back his irresistible will. Verse 36 in one inscription Nebuchadnezzar relates that for a period of years he ceased to build or care for the canals and irrigation. There's no other. Not a single other instance of a king recording his own inactivity as soon as the king's eyes are turned to God and He Praised the lord his counsel has sought him out restored him to his former position and majesty on previous occasions the king bowed before the prophet and had sweet odors offered to him. He also sent out decrees that the God of the Jews was to be honored by all his subjects as though to add another member to the many gods of the Babylonians. But now he acts differently he turns aside from all other gods and bows before the Lord alone. He is more interested in his own relationship to the Lord praise God than in commanding what shall be the attitude of others in the matter. Verse 37 the king's outspoken Oh yes unceasing in his praise of the King of Heaven. He shows that he recognizes his true position to the ruler of the universe.

Notice he admits that God's ways are all justice he realizes that God has not dealt too severely or unjustly with him. Whatever he was called upon to endure and suffer he deserved all of it he is prepared to condemn himself that God may be justify that devastating character pride he knows now full well he's an outstanding example for all the world to see. The king has surely been brought to the place of blessing. But at what a price will it have to be something drastic in our case. We trust not come the way of faith do it now. Oh my dear friends. It never pays to set the heart against God. In the explorations of Babylon bricks were found with the impress of the name of Nebuchadnezzar the king but on one of the bricks there was also the clear footprint of a dog it had trodden on the brick while the clay was yet soft and unbaked and the impress of the foot remains there yet on many a man's nature the impress of the beast's foot is
manifest. It actually was in Nebuchadnezzar’s case. Thus we are shown once more what will be the moral conduct of the world rulers in the period known as The Times of the Gentiles.

Now chapter 5 if the student of the word of God has been disappointed thus far in the conduct of the world monarchs in their rule over the earth he has not yet reached the end of the sad tale. It was seen first of all these King sponsor advocate idolatries defy God and his claims on the individual conscience and in the next place the scriptures reveal the gentile powers become deranged in their pride and in their failure to recognize the authority of God in the affairs of the world. Now in the fifth chapter of our prophecy we’re to see another phase of the conduct of world power. more than a quarter of a century has elapsed between chapters four and five Nebuchadnezzar died after a rain of almost half a century 44 years died in 561 B.C. His son evil Merdoch came to the Babylonian throne there's a reference to him and second Kings 25 27 to 30. It's been assumed and there's much to commend it that the act of evil Merdoch is to be taken as an act of kindness to the Jews out of his regard for his father because of the wonderful way in which the God of Israel had dealt with his father evil Merdoch reigned just two years and was assassinated in a revolt led by his brother in law Neriglissar and 559 B.C.

His rule was brief and his son Labashi-marduk reigned less than a year and 555 B.C. Nabonidus usurped the throne. He was the father of Belshazzar the ruler in 538 B.C. when Babylon fell to the medes and Persians under Cyrus because of his oft repeated campaigns in the West Nabonidus left his realm in the hands of his son Belshazzar. He himself remained in Arabia opinion favors the view of the Belshazzar was related to Nebuchadnezzar through his mother. Thus in this chapter we’re coming to the end of the head of gold seen in Chapter 2 in 5:1. The king is a joint king with his father. He cares for the affairs of the kingdom at home while his father is occupied with campaigns abroad. As we said in [inaudible] in Arabia a great feast was
made at the very hour this feast was taking place. The city of Babylon was in a state of siege by Cyrus. There was an abundance of food provisions in the city.

So Belshazzar cared little about the besiegers it was probably an annual feast day in honor of some of the Babylonian deities but notice how many were there thousand. This has been thought to be an exaggeration but since excavations have been carried out at Babylon in the past century it's now certain that such a matter is not out of range at all. One historian has stated that one king of Persia furnished provisions daily for fifteen thousand men. Another historian tells us that at a festival of Alexander the Great. At that festival ten thousand men attended and they drank the usual manner of feasting which for the king to partake of food and drink apart from the nobles as in Ester 1 3. Here the king drank wine in the public manner and drank it from all appearances to great excess verse two while he was enjoying the wine and under its influence he did that which he probably wouldn't have done in his sober moments. We hope so. Anyhow it's known that men under the influence of intoxicating liquors throw so many restraining imbalances to the wind.

These vessels these had evidently been deposited in the palace as cherished trophies of conquests of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. Now the drunken King wishes to display them. What made him think of the Lord in this revelry a drunken fancy may account for it it could be that he had been warned that the prophets of Israel had for told the downfall of his kingdom by Cyrus whose armies were then besieging the city. Whatever the cause there is scarcely room for doubt that the act of Belshazzar was one of open defiance to God the Father Nebuchadnezzar is called father because in Hebrew and in Aramaic there is no word for grandfather that he might have these we read to drink therein that such holy vessels dedicated to the worship and service of the true God should be so openly and shamelessly desecrated strikes
the reverent reader of Scripture with astonishment when men are beside themselves. Nothing is
too sacred to be profane. Even women were invited to partake of the impious feast. Verse 3 they
drank and then this was an impudence of vast proportions.

It was more than enough to call down the judgment of Almighty God verse four
the repetition of the drinking is meant to bring out the heinousness the abominable character of
their vile deeds. But what was worse was that they didn't praise the living God in the drunken
revelry of course they wouldn't. But they heap praise upon their worthless gods. This was adding
insufferable insult to already unbearable injury. How senseless can man become. How low can
he stoop? How ripe can the human heart get for judgment? Well you see it here friends. Have
you noticed in recent years how the world has stepped into the sanctuary of the Faith and put
ruthless hands on some of the things of the most holy place. Was there not a song a few years
ago and title Hallelujah I'm a bum. What incongruity. The word hallelujah is one of the most
precious in the Bible it means in the Hebrew praise the Lord. Then why should it be linked with
being a bum.

Our day has carried this Impious Sacrilege into many other realms is God
unmindful of this will he not visit for such defiance such blasphemies as Jesus superstar and all
the rest he surely will visit, verse 5 the same hour suddenly unexpectedly so that the cause of
God's visitation might be manifest at profaning of his vessels in his name fingers. Not a man not
an arm. Not even the whole Hand just the fingers that seemed to carry themselves along. The site
was alarming impressive. No man could claim to have done this and the lamp stand it was over
against the lamp stand. In order to make it all the more visible. It's interesting that on the very
wall where the king was accustomed to read the accounts of his own greatness on the plaster for
the Babylonians wrote their titles their victories their exploits on slabs on the walls for
everybody to see and admire. Now on the plaster he reads the mysterious inscription which is yet
to tell him of his ultimate fall verse six the expression of the King which had reflected nothing
but hilarity brightness cheerfulness was suddenly turned to a deadly pallor.

His thoughts without knowing the full import and meaning of the message of the
handwriting he was immediately struck with misgivings and fear his terror as set forth in all the
vividness available to the writer Daniel. A few moments before the drunken King felt able to cast
all manner of insult into the face of the living God but with one turn of the hand. The king is a
mass of terror and fright verse seven he was so fear stricken that he cried out with all his might.
So the original Aramaic he cried out for the astrologists again man is turned to as the first resort
God's left out of the picture altogether. The world loves to be deceived repeatedly shuts its eyes
to the clear sunlight. To hasten a solution and reward it. The king offers the interpreter of the
handwriting. The third place in the kingdom. Belshazzar and his father held the first two
position. So the third place was the one open to offer. We can realize now how much importance
the king attached to the whole matter. verse 8 something

The writing was in a strange or supernatural script so that the wise men could not
decipher it. We understand the case. Otherwise it will appear. It would appear to us that they
could read the actual script and letters. [inaudible] but they couldn't give the meaning or
significance of the words verse 9. Now the king was more trouble than ever. What could be the
meaning of the strange message his heart warned him that the message promised him no good.
What did it actually say. It was more than annoying it was maddening. And again the word is
that the King's appearance was changed even his nobles stood in amazement. They would soon
learn that they too were involved in the impending doom. Verse ten at this tense juncture the
queen mother steps in. She was doubtless the widow of Nebuchadnezzar in verse 11 she not only
remembers Daniel but uses the very words employed by Nebuchadnezzar in addressing Daniel she counsels the king against alarm for the matter can be clarified.

The man is at hand to solve the mystery. From all appearances Daniel was no longer employed to the Court of the king. But it was only the queen mother who knew of him and where he could be reached but he has a wisdom she says like the wisdom of the gods a high compliment to the wisdom possessed by Danielle. It's a confirmation of the revealing power of God. Daniel's qualifications are fully set forth. So the king with confidence may consult him verse 12 since Daniel is distinguished for his excellent mind his ability to interpret dreams his knowledge of obscure things. There need be no hesitancy in calling him and laying before him the puzzling problem at hand first 13 when Daniel was summoned before the king. Probably from his home somewhere in Babylon itself the king knew very little about him and had to inquire whether he belonged to the captives from Judah whose presence he was certainly aware. First 14 he repeats now the recommendation of Daniel given him by the queen mother his grandmother first 15.

Again the monarch is in difficulty because of the helplessness of his counsel. Just as the race is not always to the swift so the solution of problems is not always to the worldly wise verse 16. This was the reward he originally offered since the matter is of such moment to him still he's willing to give it to Daniel if he can give the meaning of the handwriting on the wall her 70. Daniel's answer's not to be taken as a rebuff an insult to the king. He's merely stating that he's not acting from a desire or hope of a reward for his services with dignity. He shows he's not motivated by personal desires for gain or profit. For he had not presented himself in the matter he had been called. He offers now to do what the king requires of him without difficulty. Verse 18 the reference of the kingdom and Nebuchadnezzar was evidently meant to show the king the
difference between him and his illustrious ancestor. He had every right to learn what the dealings of God would be with him from the clear manner in which God had dealt with Nebuchadnezzar before him.

It appears he had learned little from the past history of his country. Not only of his own country but his own family it pays to learn well the lessons God has written plainly in the providential dealings with mankind. God was the sole source of the glory and honor of the Babylonian kingdom and verse 19. Daniel now sets forth how comprehensive was the power of Nebuchadnezzar the king. He was an absolute monarch with all nations under his sway had the final verdict in all matters of life and death it was within his prerogative to elevate to office and to remove from any position as well. In verses 20 and 21 even Nebuchadnezzar couldn't escape the consequences of his pride and sin the reference of course as the experience in chapter 4 of his insanity. Verse 22. Knowing these things Belshazzar, the grandson should have walked the path of humility before the Lord. One of the amazing spectacles of the world is how little men really profit from the calamities and judgments of God which have been experienced in the past and verse 23.

He had defied the very God the very Lord of Heaven who had been able to rebuke and humble Nebuchadnezzar the spirit of arrogance and defiance had characterized Belshazzar in all his reign. But now it had reached its blasphemous climax that one in whom whose hands thy breath is showing the complete control of God on his life as upon every other even in his blasphemies he was dependent upon God to give him breath all the grace of God God could have cut off his life and it at any moment and this is true of you it's true of me too the very God under whose control and permission were all Belshazzar's way he had yet not rightly acknowledged he had rather insulted and profane the things of God versus 24 and 25. The writing actually was
three words with the repetition of the first meaning [inaudible] three Aramaic words the first one repeated verse 26 to 28. In these three verses the parts of the interpretation of the handwriting are given [inaudible] is a word that many numbering [inaudible] like shekels in Hebrew is a word meaning weighing. [inaudible] is a word signifying divisions if such is the meaning of these words. Then what connected message are they intended to convey. This requires divine disclosure and revelation. The first part of the message is the days of the Babylonian kingdom were numbered. The sense here the meaning here is much like our expression. His days are numbered.

When we mean the individual doesn't have long to live. Such was the condition of the empire in that day in the reign of Belshazzar the time of his existence was so short that could easily be numbered. It's of interest friends to notice that Daniel does not state that the days of the King are numbered. Though they were also but that the duration of the kingdom was determined the doom of the kingdom is pronounced. It's soon to come to an end. It actually was brought to an end by the median and Persian invaders who succeeded with their Medo Persian kingdom. They succeeded. The Babylonian kingdom. The days of the kingdom were not only in number but the kingdom itself had been placed in the divine balances as though to determine its weight and worth. We know that the Egyptians consider that Osiris weighed the actions of the dead in a literal balance. That's idolatry. Perhaps the Babylonians had the same idolatry they had the same idea. If so it would make the picture quite pointed here but says first Samuel 2:3 The Lord is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed. God had weighed Belshazzar in the scale of his moral values to find his real worth had it found him to light like spurious gold or silver there was not true value or worth there.
One cannot live a lightweight life before men and expect to be heavyweight in the sight of God. So it is with nations as well. Interestingly enough the words for divisions and Persians are similar. The kingdom was to be broken and divided asunder and given to the Medes and Persians. This was literally fulfilled when Cyrus brought the great Babylonian Empire to an end and established in its stead the Medo Persian kingdom and Medo Persian Empire. In the years 538 to 536 B.C. Verse 29. Despite the ominous import of the handwriting and in spite of the fact that honors conferred by this Kingdom at this late hour of its existence wouldn't be worth much. The King keeps to his word. He rewards Daniel exactly as he said third in the kingdom. This is a remarkable example of the result of faithfulness. Daniel did his duty and God saw to it that he was rewarded for it. Verse 30 of chapter 5. That night.

The capture of the city so soon after the prophecy of it showed to all that there was an inseparable connection between the ascent of the king and the nation and its punishment. Cyrus showed great military ability when he diverted the river Euphrates into a new channel marched his army into the city through the dry bed while the Babylonians were still carousing at the annual feast of their gods. 31 though the city was actually taken by Cyrus. It was done in the name by the authority of Darius our signs are Iris Sykes Iris who was his uncle. Thus did great Babylon come to a disgraceful end when in its impiety it lifted and laid filthy hands on the sacred vessels of God to profane them remember that God has means of bringing the proudest down to destruction. What a tragedy of all tragedies to be way too little or to be found wanting. Someone has put it well in this way weighed in the balance and wanting weighed but no savior is there. But thy soul has been trifling weighed and found lighter than air. Only Christ can tip the scales in your favor and toward heaven. By his Calvary work now chapter 6. The cup of iniquity of the world rulers in the times of the Gentiles has not been examined to the very last drop.
These rulers have sponsored idolatry in the past. They will in the prophetic future. Chapter 2 or 3. They have become deranged by this senseless overbearing pride. In the past they will in the predicted future. Chapter 4 they become blatantly impious in the desecration of the holy things in the past and they will have foretold future. Chapter 5 The Antique Christ will so profane the sanctuary of God that it will be in that very place where he will sit and claim divine honors the sanctuary of God second Thessalonians 2. But that's not all there is yet a final dastardly touch man in his rule will finally seek to displace God altogether. When Nebuchadnezzar commanded his subjects to worship his image. He didn't specify they were not allowed to worship any other. He himself worshipped a multiplicity of gods.

But Darius goes beyond this. He forbids on pain of death any petition to the living God. All prayer must be made to him. This was giving the inalienable inviolable rights of God in heaven to puny man on earth. The account is vivid. It's well known. Verse 1 since Babylon had now been joined to Persia as a subject kingdom there was need to set rulers over the conquered Empire would have to be men of great reliability and integrity. In verse 2 we see that there would be different ranks of officers and Daniel was the highest of all. Doubtless his position in the former kingdom had caused his reputation to live on. They were to look after the affairs of the realm for the benefit of the king so that he would suffer no loss revenue wise or in any other way. First through the clear ability of Daniel made itself felt he was recognized for what he was worth by the king. So the king determined to enlarge the powers of Daniel and actually placed the whole of his realm not just Babylonia under the direction of this man of God Daniel. This was no mean elevation as can be imagined as soon as this purpose became known the fellow officers of Daniel determined on his ruin and in verse four the enemies of Daniel set themselves
to the task of finding some pretext whereby Daniel could be discredited once for all and his ruin be assured such court intrigue has been known in every kingdom and in every age.

It couldn't have escaped them that Daniel was a foreigner and of a captive people. The plan was to seek out something that could be construed as maladministration or abuse of power or neglect of duty. Then the splendid testimony is given to Daniel they could find no instance of unfaithfulness or wrong action on his part. His was an exemplary life indeed thank God. Happy is that man whose enemies can find no fault in his ways. First five they are driven to the desperate conclusion that the only way to trap Daniel would be in the matter of his religion if they could only create a situation whereby Daniel's religious scruples his convictions could be brought to appear in conflict with a clear demand or directive from the king. Their vicious and Base low purpose would be achieved. You may be sure that a great deal of planning went into the plot to undo Daniel. They also were depending on the fact that Daniel would be true to his spiritual principles at any cost. The religion of the Jews had never been declared an illegal religion and to get the king to pass a law declaring as such would have been to have revealed their designs.

They finally decided on a course which would have a strong probability of success because it would appeal in strong terms to the vanity of the king and might be construed as a good test to the loyalty of the subjects for their ruler. They proposed that for the limited time no one was to present a petition of any kind to anyone except the king. The king fell headlong into the trap and signed the decree. He could have been expected to have considered why all the sudden show of loyalty for him. Why is not Daniel among the proponents of this legislation. What may be some of the far reaching results of such a decree. Is there any selfish or Ulterior motive on the part of the officers in advocating who would stand to profit most by its enactment?
But the flattery involved was too sweet to stop for reflection. So the outrage was committed verses six and seven in the last analysis. The decree would have to be made by the king himself but the practice was evidently for them to initiate and recommend such legislation and it's whoever the intent as we know was to ensnare Daniel but they couldn't afford to be so obvious and show their hand so they had to couch the decree in very general universal terms.

The law was to exclude worship of all the Babylonian gods as well as those of other peoples. The time limit of thirty days would be sufficient for their purpose because in that time by proper spying they would be able to bring a valid accusation against Daniel that would stand up in court to make the law of longer duration might have aroused the opposition to the people of the land so that enforcement would have been impossible and the one who violates this decree will be thrown into a den of lions here we have an incidental proof of the genuineness of the [inaudible] for the Persians were not punished by fire. They were fire worshippers Zoroastrians but the Babylonians were not there therefore Nebuchadnezzar punished by the fiery furnace. But Darius did not verse eight and nine with the signature of the King. The matter became the law of the realm. Once the king enacted a law it couldn't be changed as in Esther 1:19 and 8:8.

This was peculiar to the Medes and Persians. To us it's strange that the one who made the law couldn't change it as he wished. But this viewpoint arose because they considered their monarch infallible. Once he ordained a statute there would be no need for a change. Even the King couldn't change the law. This custom did not prevail among the Babylonians. The mention of the Medes before the Persians is an incidental mark of the genuineness of the record. Though Cyrus had more real power to rule he reigned subordinate Darius the Mede after the death of Darius. The order is reversed verse ten when Daniel knew what had happened had been
done without consultation with him. He went according to his custom to pray in the usual manner. His window was not open because of display or show but that his mind could be directed as usual toward Jerusalem. All Jews in exile. Even to this day face toward Jerusalem in prayer. This is in keeping with the prayer of King Solomon at the dedication at the dedication of the temple in his day. First Kings eight the upper room was the usual prayer chamber among the Jews as in acts 1:13. Daniel took the normal position of the suppliant kept to his fixed habit of prayer three times a day. There was nothing in his actions done out of sheer contempt for the command of the king.

It was that he realized that no earthly ruler dared enter into the relationship between God and himself as a matter of fact the command of the King made no change in the spiritual exercise of Daniel. He went on as he always had verse 11. These men came upon Daniel hastily violating his privacy of devotion in order to catch him in the act of prayer to his God. Verse 12 they lost no time in bringing their complaint before the King. First they're certain they emphasized the exact nature of the decree at this stage the King couldn't be expected to have the least suspicion that Daniel was involved in any infraction of the law. They accomplished their purpose in having the king so definitely reaffirm the decree already announced. And then in verse 13 there mention of Daniel is contemptuous. They're careful also to mention him in such a way that his foreign origin is clear such a one raised as so great a position in the kingdom should have been expected to be among the first in obedience to any decree of the King. The grievous offense is that he cares nothing for the will of the king. He did not regard Darius because he did have regard for the living God. We know verse 14 that he was greatly displeased with himself for having made such a hasty decree.
He may not have known at this point that the decree was originally aimed to catch Daniel. His regard for Daniel and the unchangeableness of his laws made a distressing dilemma for him. The king searched out every possible loophole in order to save Daniel but he was trapped by his own decree. Does this not reveal the helplessness of man in another direction? He makes laws then couches them in such a way that the law which derived its existence from him is now greater than he is. Verse 15 they were taking no chance of the King by delays should change his mind or find some way to change the severity of the penalty. Their purpose was to have Daniel done away with as soon as possible the best way was to stress the unchanging law verse 16. The custom was generally to execute the sentence on the day it was pronounced. This explains why the king was so earnest in trying to find a way to help as readily as possible since it was a common belief among the heathen that the gods intervened in behalf of the righteous when they were in distress.

Darius expressed a wish that the God of Daniel whom he regarded as a god and not the God might deliver him if any god would intervene for a worthy and righteous man. It would be in such a case as that of Daniel verse seventeen. Here it's evident that the power of the monarch was not what it had been of the days of Nebuchadnezzar Darius's definitely limited by the power of the nobles who are diligent and pressing all their power. The seal of the nobles guarantee that the king would not contravene the law his seal made sure that if Daniel escaped the lions they would not put him to death some other way. Verse 18 the King knows he's been a party to the serious wrong. It lies heavily on his conscience. Neither food nor sleep is his portion through the night Verse 19 since he has spent such a night fasting and weighed down with remorse he could contain his suspense no longer. He must see whether Daniel's God had been able to deliver him so in verse twenty with a voice filled with solicitude and grief. The King
cried out he calls Daniels God the living God. He had heard Daniel refer to God in this fashion that one whom thou service continually the God he had served in captivity as at home. In time of honor and prominence in time of persecution and distress. His was a constant faith verse 21.

There's no note of anger from Daniel he may have known whose plot it was to destroy him verse 22. God has many angelic angels many angelic agencies whom he works out his will. He shut the lions' mouths there's no question that this was miraculously done Daniel was not intimating that he's sinlessly perfect but in the matter at hand he was clear before the Lord in obedience to him. He had no intention of being purposely disobedient to the king either. The disobedience of Daniel to the king was only apparent not real. He was first obedient to the Lord verse 23 though the king was powerless to reverse his own decree. He was glad that God had been able to nullify it the deliverance of Daniel is founded upon his faith to God first 24. Those who dig a pit for another usually managed to fall into it themselves. There was no deliverance for them however the king now understood the extent to which their jealousy and venom had gone even involving the monarch himself. He's right in now inflicting on the guilty the punishment they had intended for the innocent their children their wives.

This seems unbearably cruel to us. But in those days it was considered justice and customarily done in verse twenty-five. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had written to all peoples and nations so Darius does now verse 26 is not certain that Darius was asking for soul worship of the true God. But he was desirous of the god of Daniel be recognized as a God of real power and worthy of general reverence. He is the living God and always the same and to the end a remarkable phrase showing that God's kingdom rule will outlast all gentle rule in the earth verse 27 God is able to rescue as he is shown in the case of death. He works deeds which are above the natural Verse 28 again it's seen that the servant of the Lord does not suffer because of his
faithfulness to the Lord. Daniel is restored to his position of honor. The Cyrus mentioned is
cyrus the great nephew and successor of darius several spiritual truths are underlined in this
familiar yet important chapter of Daniel the calamitous results of envy is sketched clearly.
jealousy works as a cancer eating at the very vitals of the life envy leads to diabolical plans to
ruin the reputation and standing of others who appear to stand in the way of our advancement it's
reveal how blessed it is for enemies to find no source of accusation in the manner of conduct of a
righteous man.

Their only source their only course of action can be to compromise him and his
loyalty to God to the word of God. The word of God is clear as to our action political and civil
power enters into the realm of personal conscience. God is to come first always and without
exception my dear friends the chapter of Solomon showing how unchangeable and exorable can
be the law in its condemnations. Remember the law only accuses the conscious may accuse our
excuse. Only God can justify isn't the fourfold picture now completed of the conduct of the
world monarch during the time of their power. Do they rule for God? The answer couldn't be
clearer and it's in the negative. They advocate and promote idolatry with the exaltation of
themselves above God. They become deranged and as beasts until they acknowledge the power
of God to rule and overall to set up and put down in the affairs of men. They commit the ultimate
in impiety by profaning the holy things of God and they set themselves up in the place of God in
such a way as to rule out any obedience or homage to him. In each case there remains only the
righteous wrath of God. The picture is one of unrelieved failure in the extreme. There is but one,
hear one who is worthy to rule on earth it's the blessed son of God the Lord Jesus Christ who will
someday rule in earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. friend. Do you know him as your
savior if you do know him as your savior? Have you made him your lord your king your sovereign? May God grant it the Lord abundantly bless you. [End]