***Daniel and his Three Friends  
  
RV163-02***

We are studying Revelation 13:1-10. Our subject is "The Antichrist." This is segment number two.

**The False Trinity**

In Revelation 13, the apostle John is introduced to the two primary world personalities of the future tribulation era. One of these is the antichrist, who will rule over a new world order in the form of a one-world government with an economic system of international socialism, and exercise total control over the lives of people. The other personality is the false prophet who will rule over a universal New Age religion of humanism, which worships the antichrist as God, and who performs miracles to deceive people. The power over people of the antichrist and of his false prophet comes from Satan, who rules the tribulation political and religious realms through them. Thus Satan will have created in the tribulation a false trinity to counterfeit the true trinity. Satan assumes the role of God the Father; the antichrist assumes the role of God the Son; and, the false prophet will assume the role of the Holy Spirit. From the very first, when Satan fell from his position in heaven by rebelling against God, he has been motivated by the desire to counterfeit God; to be like God; and, simply to push God off His throne.

We have seen through John's vision that at mid-tribulation Satan, will be excluded from any further access to heaven, and he will be restricted to the planet earth. This means that he has three-and-a-half years of freedom left before being imprisoned at the coming of Jesus Christ at His second advent. Satan was defeated by the Lord Jesus on the cross, and now, finally, the penalty of defeat will be applied in just three-and-a-half years. Since Satan is a more careful student of the Bible than most Christians, he knows exactly what is in store for him. Satan's strategy, then, will be to indwell the antichrist, and move him to break the seven-year treaty of peace which he has made with the nation of Israel, and then to launch a worldwide persecution of the Jews.

**The Book of Daniel**

This information has been available to the human race from the time of the prophet Daniel in the era of 600 B.C. It was in Daniel 9:27 that this revelation was first proclaimed concerning a peace treaty that the antichrist will break: "And he (the antichrist) will make a covenant with the many (the Jewish people) for one week (a period of seven years), but in the middle of the week (in the middle of the seven years, after three-and-a-half years), he will put a stop to the sacrifice and grain offering (meaning that he will bring to an end the worship services that the Jews have resumed in Jerusalem), and on the wings of abominations will come one who makes desolate (referring to the fact that he will do something that will be totally destructive until complete destruction has come), one that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (meaning that God's program now is coming to a climax, and the destruction that God has decreed against the antichrist will be poured out against him."

We find from other Scripture that the abomination that he is guilty of is placing the statue of himself in the Jews' temple, and proclaiming that he is God of the universe whom all mankind must worship. So, Daniel was very clear about what was in the future. He knew what was coming. In Daniel 7:25, we may add to this: "And he (the antichrist) will speak out against the Most High God, and wear down the seats of the Highest One." Here we have had revealed to us, in 600 years B.C., that the Jewish people during the tribulation would come under an enormous persecution: "And he will intend to make alterations in times and in law, and they will be given into his hands for a time, times, and a-half time (which is a symbol for three-and-a-half years).

So, when the antichrist comes along, he will not be concerned with tradition. He will not be concerned with the laws that have governed civilizations in the past. He will be totally sovereign, independent, and despotic. He'll make his own rules, and he will have absolute authority over all mankind, because he is part of the powerful false trinity.

What Satan is going to do is to seek vengeance against God for his defeat by Michael and his angels. He's going to seek this vengeance by attempting to kill all the Jews on the earth during the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period. That will be his objective. He will not be successful in it, because if he were, then God could not keep His promise to the Jewish people to set up a Millennial Kingdom here on this earth at the Second Coming of Christ, with the Jewish people as the leading nation in that worldwide kingdom.

The antichrist himself is going to eagerly accept Satan's offer to rule over all the nations of the world on earth – the very same offer which the Lord Jesus Christ refused in Luke 4:5-8. You remember that on that occasion of the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan, in order to try to once more prevent the ultimate destiny of spending eternity in the lake of fire, tried to get Jesus Christ to sin. If the man Jesus sinned, it would have all been over, and Satan would have been in charge and secure.

**The Wilderness Temptations**

In Luke 4:5-8, we have that rejection by our Lord recorded: "And he (Satan) led him (Jesus) up, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give you all this domain and its glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I will give it to whomsoever I wish.'" This is one time when the old liar was telling the truth. These kingdoms, whatever country you live in on the face of the earth, have been handed over to Satan by Adam. When Adam sinned, he gave up the dominion which God had given him over the earth, and Satan took over. So, Satan indeed runs every country on the face of the earth. Satan approves every leader who comes to the positions of authority in every country on the face of the earth. He is now, under God's sovereign control and limitations, free to run the world as he pleases. That's why we refer to the world as a system, because it includes not only government, but it includes education; it includes social life; it includes economics; and, it includes every conceivable human relationship.

Therefore, Satan says to Jesus, "If you worship me, it shall be yours." This was a very attractive offer. Jesus indeed came to rule the world. Here He could have had the crown without the cross. The question is: Will He accept that? "Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" And I hope you will not have missed that the only recourse that the God-man Jesus had to resist Satan at this point was doctrine in His human spirit. Jesus did not act out of His deity. When He walked this earth, He walked just the way you and I do, minus the sin nature. He operated on the system of the Word of God.

I find it interesting that even some Christians who have access to good biblical instruction are doctrinally ignorant. I am not surprised to find somebody within the circle of our own congregation, as happens pretty regularly, who suddenly comes up against a theological issue. They've met somebody socially. They are interested in somebody for marriage. They met somebody at work, and a discussion comes up, and they want to know something about this issue. So, I look in the catalog, and I pull out the tapes and hand them to them. They come back to me every time, and they say, "Boy, that's tremendous. I am surely enjoying that. That is marvelous. It answers all these questions. Now I going back, ready to talk."

Usually I try not to say how, "How did you like it the first time, when you sat and heard it, when it was being made?" Most of the time, they were here when this thing was being made. But we do not have the appreciation for the Lord's statement that: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." If you are a Christian who has access to being taught the Word of God, be aware of the fact that you are hearing something that maybe doesn't blow you out of your seat at the moment, but the mind of God is the most valuable possession that you have. Sooner or later, you're going to need that mind, and you're going to have to reach down in that human spirit, and God the Holy Spirit is going to bring to light what you need to know. So, please pay attention now.

The antichrist accepts the deal that Jesus refused. He takes over all the nations of the world. He doesn't do this until mid-tribulation. For the first three-and-a-half years, he is only the power around the Mediterranean Sea, in the old Roman Empire territory. Now he is the ruler from one part of this globe to the other: from north to south to east to west; from the Asian nations (the oriental nations) to the nations of Europe. The nations under the whole civilized world now become the realm of his authority.

**Ten Horns**

John sees the antichrist symbolized as a nondescript animal. He can't describe it. It's a mongrel put together. There's really no animal like that in nature. But he sees the antichrist symbolized as a nondescript animal who rises to world domination from the sea of humanity. This animal has ten horns, and on each horn is an imperial ruler's crown. We were told that these horns symbolize ten monarchs who are reigning together at one time. The ten crowned monarchs are in fact portraying a union of ten nations in a confederacy that they have formed.

**Seven Heads**

This animal also has seven heads, and we find from Revelation 17:9-10 that these seven heads represent seven kingdoms on this earth. What they do, in fact, is portray kingdoms throughout human history, which have been particularly anti-Semitic. They have been characterized by the thing that Satan is now promoting – hatred toward the Jews.

John points out that five of these empires have passed off the scene historically when he wrote. These world empires were Egypt, Syria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, and Greece. We find in Revelation 17 that one of the seven empires was in existence when John wrote Revelation, and is in existence to this day; namely, the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire broke up in about the fifth century A.D. It broke up into individual nations. The seventh anti-Semitic world empire is still future. This is the ten-nation confederacy of the tribulation. There will also be an eighth anti-Semitic world empire in the form of the ten-nation confederacy, now ruled by the antichrist.

So, here's the progression. These seven heads represent world empires who hated the Jews, and each empire absorbed something from the previous one. It went from Egypt to Syria, to Babylon, to Medo-Persia, to Greece, then to Rome, then to a future ten-nation confederacy expression of Rome, and then even to an eighth, where that ten-nation confederacy is taken over by the antichrist. This is revealed to us in Revelation 17:11-12. Let me give you that background so that you'll understand what he means by the eighth form: "And the beast which was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour."

In Daniel 7:8, we have a reference to the same thing: "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one." This is one of the terms for the antichrist – the little horn: "A little one came up among the ten horns, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots." He conquers three of these kingdoms: "And, behold, this one possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." So, we put Revelation and Daniel together, and the picture becomes very clear – that this ten-nation confederacy has an eighth form of expression, where the antichrist comes on. He is a powerful military figure. He's a great, charismatic figure in the world, and he amazes the world by the fact that he can conquer three of these kingdoms, and the other seven then decide to join him when they can't fight him. He then forms this eighth form of the world empire that John sees.

The world empires of history were the creation of Satan to him to oppose the kingdom of God. These empires are therefore in rebellion against God's authority. The day in which we live, of course, is clearly a time when mankind is exalting itself over God and over His laws. The hatred that these empires have for God has been expressed with the blasphemy of men claiming themselves to be gods. John sees this historical hatred toward the Holy God as being expressed with vile words of blasphemy which are inscribed on the seven empire heads. John knows that these world empires hate God. He knows that man is exalting himself as God. He lived in an empire that declared that the emperor was God, and upon pain of death and punishment, you had to worship the emperor, and once a year sacrifice to him. John understands this, and he understands that this is blasphemy when a person a human being says that he is God.

So, he sees names of blasphemy. These are vile, filthy names, that the Word of God wouldn't even record for us, that are inscribed on the heads of these seven world empires.

Please remember that the world system of Satan is clearly not the friend of God and His people. It is very easy for you and me as Christians to forget that. The world doesn't like us. If we are useful to the world, it is going to be cordial to us, and it is going to play ball with us. But at the heart, the world increasingly does not like people who stand around with a set of morals that puts them to shame. James 4:4 says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." That's a good verse to remember. Friendship with the world is to be an enemy of your Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 15:18-19, Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." You have to remember that the world does not like Christian principles. The world may be cordial to you, but the world is simply putting on a front. It actually hates you because it considers you the enemy. It considers you their enemy because you oppose the evil that they stand for.

One of the men at the pastor's conference that I attended, who was sort of the leader pulling the event together, said, "I approached the representatives of Jerry Jones, and said, 'This city has had this stadium a long time, and there's a quality of life in this city. Now you are threatening to force the courts of law to even deny the city the fact that in a restaurant you cannot serve alcoholic beverages unless you make 60% of your profit from food, and only 40% from the drinks.'" That's where Jerry Jones is out to do now – to get that declared illegal so that the Texas Stadium can be included to sell alcoholic beverages without the sale of food. He pointed out, "If that happens, you realize that any low-budget operator who can't make it on food can turn his business into a honky-tonk. The topless bars will follow. All of the degrading things will follow. Once you take that rule down, the whole city is going to find itself surrounded by this degradation, and the children who are walking our streets will be aware of it.

The legal authority who represents Mr. Jones said, "We want one thing. You get alcohol in the Texas Stadium." He didn't care about the discussion. He didn't care about the arguments. He didn't care about the quality of life. He used to be a prominent member of the city council at one time, supposedly concerned for the quality of life of this city.

As the minister was describing this discussion with him, he concluded his remarks and said, "Consequently, I consider Jerry Jones my enemy, because he is the enemy of God." That was well-said. We Christians have to understand that the antichrist, when he comes on the scene, is not going to be some drooling slob with satanic horns sticking out, and looking like some vicious monster. He is that on the inside, and the Bible portrays him as a bestial character. But I'm telling you, folks, he is going to be smooth and charismatic. He is going to be sophisticated. People are going to be drawn to him.

Look at the prominent people in the highest echelons of our government that are to this very day viewed with the highest esteem. People have great interest in what they do, and yet they're a bunch of dogs in an alley sniffing each other when it comes to the quality of their moral lives. Yet the world is caught up in adulation of them. What does that tell us about the world we live in? Yet these people are moneyed; they are cultured; they are sophisticated; they live in prominent places; they live in prominent homes; and, they have everything that their hearts could desire. Yet they are still animals in the presence of a holy God.

However, they all have religion. What they don't have is regeneration. They will even celebrate the religious holidays of Christmas and Easter. But what they have is religion. And Satan, with his false prophet, is going to give people the greatest; most attractive; and, most winsome religion the world has ever seen. The antichrist himself is going to be someone that all the world will love. But he is the enemy of God, and he will be the enemy of every true believer. He finally reveals this when he realizes that his days are numbered. Then he tears away the mask, and he goes after the Jewish people.

One other Scripture I would point out to you is 1 John 3:11-13: "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, who is of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous? Do not marvel brethren if the world hates you."

So, as John stands on the seashore of this ocean, he sees this nondescript mongrel beast rising out of the sea with its ten horns, portraying the future ten-nation confederacy, with seven heads portraying seven historical empires that have been opponents of the Jewish people, and names of blasphemy on their heads.

Before we go on to verse 2, it is important that we go back to Daniel to give you some background information. It is important to realize that Daniel and Revelation go hand-in-hand. You cannot understand one book without the other, and God marvelously has given us the information. Then when we piece it together, it is awesome.

I want to remind you again that we are studying the future, but we are studying the immediate future. We're not talking about things any longer that, as in the New Testament church was a couple thousand years down the line. We are talking about our lifetime future.

**Daniel in Captivity**

Please turn to Daniel 2. ... It deals with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, who was the ruler of the Babylonian Empire. In this empire of Babylon, quite a few young men were taken captives from the country of Judah. They were taken captives to Babylon because they were smart; they were considered capable; and, they were considered suitable for government service. So, they were put in a three-year government school to prepare them to assist the Babylonian king to rule what had become an empire that covered the known world. It was a world empire. Daniel, as a young man, about 16 years of age, had been taken captive in 606 B.C. to Babylon. Along with him, they took three of his friends who were close to him: Hananiah; Mishael; and, Azariah.

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**

The governments of Satan's world system always want to dominate the lives of their citizens, as our government today wants to dominate the lives of its citizens. Therefore, when they arrived in Babylon, the first thing they did was change the names of these four young men. They changed Daniel's name to Belteshazzar, which has the word "Bel" in it, which was the pagan God of the Babylonians. They changed Hananiah's name to Shadrach; they changed Mishael's name to Meshach; and, they changed Azariah's name to Abednego. These are all pagan names honoring pagan gods, and it was the way of putting their stamp on it.

So, here was Daniel with his three friends, now called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So, now Daniel and his three friends are now there, and they are examples of what the grace of God will do in the life of a believer. They are examples of how the grace of God will advance a believer in life who is saturated with doctrine. As our friend Jack Smith likes to say: "Who has learned to metabolize the Word of God throughout his being." These three young men had their human spirits filled with Bible doctrine. That's why they stood out. That's why the king's agents immediately spotted them and said, "You're coming into government service." Others they sent into abject slavery.

These four young men were so stabilized in their souls that, in a time of great personal crises, they were able to survive with inner peace and happiness. It's easy to say that. It's easy to talk about that: "Peace and happiness – that's what God has brought to us." But along comes a deadly disease, and you're not going to live. Now we see what doctrine does. Now we see how much doctrine you really have. Now we see how much stability there is in your soul. Now we'll see how much real peace and happiness there is when you know you're checking out. Or suddenly, a great financial disaster hits your home. Where you had everything, you now have nothing. Do you still have peace and happiness? Or some valued possession is suddenly removed. Now we discover whether doctrine carries you through. Or your country is invaded by a foreign power, and you are conquered. You are the abject victim under the authority of a brutal conqueror. Do you have peace and happiness?

That's what Daniel and his three friends now faced. You're suddenly grabbed by the top of your head, and you're jerked out into captivity in another nation. Do you still have peace and happiness? Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had it all the way down the line. They were never for one moment unstable. Everything that came flying at them from Satan's world and the devil's agents, they took in stride. They were stabilized in their soul. Why? Make no mistake about it: They were taught the Word of God by their parents; by their rabbis; and, by their spiritual leaders. And when they were in Bible class, they paid attention, and they learned, and they stored the truth with positive enthusiasm within their human spirit.

As a result, these four resisted the sinful appeals of Nebuchadnezzar's court. They rejected the human viewpoint appeals of those who were training them for government service. They remained loyal to God and to the Word of God throughout their three-year course of training. Right at the very first, when they were given a course of food that was in violation of the food and sanitary laws of the Mosaic Law, they appealed to the captain in charge, and said, "We don't have to eat this kind of food and this kind of drink." The man said, "I have to keep you in good shape, or the king will take my life." Daniel knew that he was dealing with a God who had told them the truth. He knew what to eat in order to have maximum physical capacity and well-being. He said, "You let us eat that which we want for this period of time, and then you make a comparison of us. And in a very short number of days, the captain in charge admitted that: "You people look better. Your cheeks are rosy. You look healthier. You smell better. Everything about you is better over against what the rest of the students in this class. You may follow your sanitary and your food laws."

What was Daniel doing? Why was he making an issue of this? Why were these four young men standing up? Because doctrine was being violated. And they knew that if they violated doctrine, they were violating the mind of God, and they had violated the true wisdom that they had. So, they rejected this out of hand, and they were under the authority of the Babylonian teachers in charge. But that ten-day period that this test was put on, they proved that doctrine works.

**Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

So, Daniel was spiritually well prepared to meet the crisis that came suddenly upon him as the result of a royal dream given by God to King Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel 2:1-16, we have the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. In verses 1-3, the king says that he had a confusing dream, and he sought to know its meaning. The dream came repeatedly; it came in segments; and, as dreams often do, it seemed very crazy to him: In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams, and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him." Here was a man who had everything in the world. He was an absolute ruler, and he had insomnia, because he had a dream, and a dream that somehow he felt had some meaning to it. It was a dream that was not just some wild result of what he had eaten, but here was a dream that had some significance. He wanted to know what it meant.

"Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So, they came in and stood before the king."

**Dreams**

Today, the Word of God is completed in the Bible, so God no longer delivers His Word to anybody through dreams as He did in pre-scriptural times. The canon of Scripture is completed. Nothing more is to be added. All the revelation that God has to bring us, He brings us through the Word of God. Now the Holy Spirit puts His hand in our back, and He pushes us in this direction, and in this direction. And if we are responsive to that hand, and to the guidance of the written Scriptures, we go in the right direction. We will not hear voices. We will not see (as charismatics often do) some glow at the foot of their bed, giving them a message, which is a demonic spirit. Nor will we have dreams which Satan gives in order to give you a communication. It is important to understand that we're talking about something here that was valid at that time, which would not be valid today.

This dream disturbed this great man. He had no doctrine. He had no ability to meet what he was being told. So, he called in his court advisers to interpret the dream. All these men that he mentions in these various categories were in touch with the occult world. They had a contact with the demonic spirit world, and they did have access to information. But as always, they only have access to information that God will permit them to convey.

"And the king said to them, 'I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.'" The king was very clever. This priestly class and this magician class (whom he had inherited from the previous king, and who by that time were older than he was) – he suspected that they had been conning him in the past. They would tell him what the gods had to say. How did he know whether it was true or not true? That is the same question that you and I may have. Somebody may come and say, "God spoke to me." That should always cause goosebumps to come all over you. That's an arrogant statement to say. Maybe God has guided you, or God has directed you. But don't get up and say, "God told me this," because unless you heard a voice, you can't say that somebody has told you something. And if you have heard a voice, then we must find the closest doctor to help you out of your problem, because you do have a problem.

The king, because he was suspicious of these dudes, asked them to interpret the dream, so that he could have an understanding. Now, what are these guys going to say? "OK, tell us your dream, and we'll concoct something as the meaning." That was the very thing that Nebuchadnezzar did not want to let them do.

Verse 4: "Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic." Part of Daniel is written in Aramaic, probably something like chapter 2 through chapter 7. That is the part of the Daniel which deals with gentile world powers, and this was a language that was common in the gentile world. Aramaic is a language related to Hebrew.

So, the Chaldeans spoke in Aramaic, and they said, "O king, live forever. Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation." The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The command for me is firm. If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb-from-limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap." That puts a whole different picture on the business of being the king's advisor. Now the King is going to know that if you can tell him the dream, then he'll know that you have a contact with the gods. You'll know what the dream was. He said, "Tell me what the dream was, then I'll believe the interpretation you give me of the dream."

Well, furthermore, he said, "If you don't do it, I'm going to chop you up into liver, and I'm going to do the same thing your family. Then I'm going to go to your houses, and I'm going to tear them down and make them rubbish piles. And I'm going to throw you on top of it. But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you'll receive from me gifts, and a reward, and great honor. Therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation." He promises, on the other hand, that the wise men would receive great rewards if they could prove their powers by revealing the dream, and then interpreting it.

Well, the wise men proceed to press the king again: "Give us the dream." They answer a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation." This is where we suspect that these were older men who had kind of a pontifical role over this younger king, and who were in a way saying, "Now sonny, don't be ridiculous. Tell us the dream, and we'll give you the interpretation. Don't be making these outrageous demands on us. Just because you're young, don't act dumb."

The king said, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time." Nebuchadnezzar says, "I know you're stalling. Otherwise, you would have told me to dream right off, and you would have given me an interpretation. You're asking me again because you're stalling for time, trying to figure out what to do: "Inasmuch as you have seen the command from me is firm, you know that I mean what I say. Tell me the dream, or you're in for some very sad experiences. You know, that my command is firm. If you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and correct words before me until the situation is changed. Therefore, tell me the dream that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

Here, Nebuchadnezzar clearly declares that in the past he has suspected their revelations from the gods is something that they themselves made up. Well, now the wise men are becoming a little testy themselves: "The Chaldeans answer the king and said, 'There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king. Inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean." Now they're really coming down on this young king, and saying, "You should just realize what a ridiculous thing you're asking of us? No monarch has ever asked this of his court advisers. Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one who could declare it to the king except gods whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."

Now they're beginning to move in the right direction. Only the gods, only some intelligence that is superior to human intelligence could reveal the king's dream. Because of this, the king became indignant and very furious, and gave the orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. That was it. Nebuchadnezzar knew they were stalling for time. He knew they couldn't give him the dream. He knew they were trying to pass this off as something that only the gods could do. They, who claimed to represent and to speak for the gods, could obviously not tell him his dream.

So, he issued a decree: "Kill them. Round them all up." So, the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain. And they look for Daniel and his friends – to kill them. Since Daniel and his three friends were also part of the court as advisors and administrators, this death penalty was to be imposed on them. So, they go out looking for Daniel and his friends as well.

Nebuchadnezzar found that his human viewpoint resources failed him completely, as indeed you and I find when that's all we have to fall back on. In verses 14-16, Daniel is informed of the crisis at the royal court. Daniel asks the king's bodyguard, who was preparing the executions: what had happened for them to deserve such a severe penalty from the king? "Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. He answered and said to Arioch, the king's commander, 'For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?' Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. So, Daniel went in and requested of the King that he would give him time in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king."

Here, Daniel clearly falls back on the Bible doctrine in his human spirit, and with poise, he makes the appeal through Arioch to the king to delay the execution in order to allow Daniel to inquire of the true Creator God with whom he is in contact, to find what the dream was, and what the interpretation was. As a believer living at the level of super grace spiritual maturity, Daniel had no doubt whatsoever that God would direct him in solving the crisis.

That's what happens to the Christian who has matured with a full-sighted spiritual maturity structure in his soul. Not matter what comes in your life: you stand; you look at it; you wait for divine direction; and, you act accordingly. The roof can cave in on you, and you know that there is a God in heaven that controls and directs. And if that is really the truth that has grasp your soul (more than the words that you share in testimony meetings), it will very readily come to the fore: when you are dealing with life and death issues; and, when you are dealing with issues that are beyond any human control – that are so desperate that you'd do anything to change it. Yet you can't. You find that the grace of God comes through for you. When you've made a fool of yourself in the things that you have done: the sins that have crushed you; and, the sins that have injured and wounded, you find at the grace of God comes through; patches it all up; heals it up; puts it together; and, carries you forward, providing you have the power of doctrine in your soul. Why? Because now you've got something to live by. Man does not live by physical things alone, but he lives, first of all, by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

**Prayer**

What do you think Daniel is going to do? He has fallen back on the Word of God while the pagan counselors are in terror and in panic, Daniel is at peace and very stable. In verses 17-24, the king's dream is revealed to Daniel. The first thing Daniel does is he goes to his house, and he gets together with his friend Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. He tells them the matter in order that they might do what? In order that they might request compassion from God of heaven concerning this mystery. They go to prayer. They hold a prayer meeting, first of all: "So that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." They go to this living God in prayer.

They don't go running around to the counselors – all these cute guys in the religious realm who call themselves Christian counselors, who have degrees in psychology and psychiatry, which proves that they have great insights into what makes people tick, and how to solve their problems. They who run weekend seminars that give you a lot of cutesy-pooh laughs, and a lot of fun, and a lot of vacationing, and a lot of stories and experiences. You get a nice high, and you come out of there thinking that you've had a contact with God; whereas the place you have contact with God is in the morning or evening church service where the Word of God was explained, so that the counselors become obsolete the minute the Word of God crashes through into your brain, and is stored in your human spirit. You already know what to do. You already have all the mechanisms set in place to guide you. What you do now is take the appropriate steps.

Daniel had the mechanism of doctrine in his soul along with his friends. The first step was to set the mechanism in motion by going to God in prayer. It was not to call up somebody and say, "Oh, could you come so I can let my hair down with you?" And you go emotionally berserk with emotional domination of the soul. Daniel went right to the issues of prayer. And what happened?

Verse 19 says, "The mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." In times of crisis, you need a friend who is worth turning to. Daniel had three real friends he could turn to. Why were they valuable friends? Because they were not clowns in spiritual matters. They were people who had the Word of God implanted within them. They were people who had the discipline and the good sense to get out of bed in the morning; to get to the church service; to walk in with a Bible; to maybe just a few notes; to pay attention; and, to absorb the Word of God on a regular basis. They had the sense to drive their cars along, and think about what they'd heard, and talk about what they heard at home with the family. They had the capacity to know that: with God, all things are possible.

Daniel knew with whom he was dealing here. And he needed the prayer fellowship of his friends. And Daniel, thank God, was not stuck with a bunch of sweet-talking, emotionally dominated yo-yos who could not help him, now that human life was hanging in the balance. He needed friends who had the spiritual capacity to break through to the living God. When this happens, Daniel just burst out into an enormous expression of praise. He recognized that God permits the rulers that Satan places in power over nations. Daniel was about to be shown the dream which was going to portray the history of the gentile world from his day to the Second Coming of Christ, because that's what the King's dream was all about.

It's what Luke 21:24 calls "the times of the gentiles," and Daniel, in his vision, receives the king's dream as well as its interpretation, and he gives God all the credit for what he is able to do in serving God. He never once says, "Boy, didn't I pull off a great campout, because I got my act together; I got my abilities together; I got all that sharpness that I have in this way; and, I put it together. Boy, didn't I pull a good camp out? You didn't pull nothing. You pulled zilch. If you had a good campout, it's because God came through and carried it through for you.

If Daniel could tell the dream and interpreted it, there was no question in his mind as to who had done it. There was no self-exaltation. There was no lust for the aggrandizement of his self-glory.

So, we close this Daniel's words of praise in verse 20: "Daniel answered and said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to him. It is he who changes the times and the epochs. He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. It is he who reveals the profound and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells within him."

Indeed, if a man of biblical honor and integrity and knowledge, comes to a position of political power, and he acts upon the knowledge of the Word of God, the people he serves will be greatly blessed, and God will honor that man. He will protect him because Satan has made a mistake in permitting that man to get into power. The devil usually doesn't make that mistake. But anybody who does that in our nation (who has been blessed with people like those who knew the Word of God; who came to political power; and, acted upon the principles of the Word of God.) – everything they touch turns to gold because God advances and prospers those who are ready with doctrine to be moved forward.

Daniel says, "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise. For You have given me wisdom and power. For now, You have made known to me what we (me and my friends) requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter."

Today, the church-age believer enjoys the power structure of doctrine stored in his human spirit, and the enablement of the indwelling Holy Spirit, through which he develops a spiritual maturity structure, so that he may learn of the king's matter. God controls the direction of all human events to fulfill His final plans. While man is in the dark about world events, God is in the light, knowing it all. How wonderful it is for us as Christians to have access to that kind of light! How tragic it is that so many Christians ignore that opportunity, and deny themselves years of enlightenment, for which they will have all of eternity to regret!

Daniel, having received the dream and meaning in a vision, then proceeds to make his requests to Arioch the captain to be taken to Nebuchadnezzar to give him the word. Verse 24: "Therefore, Daniel went into Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and spoke to him as follows: 'Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Take me into the King's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

Here you have the example again that has happened so often in history. A believer who is on track with the Word of God, and in touch because he is in temporal fellowship, saves the hides of unbelievers all around him. That's why, in times of crises, the unbelievers are going to come to you. They're going to come to you for advice. They're going to come to you for help. They're going to come to you to help them in their moment of need, because they know you have a contact with somebody who is real, where all they have is a contact with unreality. Consider yourself fortunate, and take advantage of the doctrine that God has made available to you, so that you can dare to be a Daniel.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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