

Lessons from Daniel (chapters 5-6)

Your Character is your Legacy



Lesson Three – December 16, 2020

The Liberty and Captivity Models

God's goal is the Liberty Model

- ⌘ Requires the responsibility for *maintaining* self-government
- ⌘ Less than 5% of all nations have had liberty in world history
- ⌘ For four hundred years Israel had a Republic – 1450 – 1050 BC
- ⌘ Israel chose a King; and after a civil war, Israel (722) to Assyria and Judah (586) to Babylon

God still rules in Captivity Model

- ⌘ God deals with the heart of His people to serve and love captors
- ⌘ 95% of all nations in history have had monarchy / tyranny
- ⌘ Israel failed to maintain self-government, going into captivity
- ⌘ Daniel provides a model of how God prepares His people to serve their captors to produce liberty

The same principles required to produce liberty are required to maintain it

Lesson One and Two – *God's Judgment is Redemptive / Influence is better than Power*

- ⌘ Daniel, from age 14 to 57, served Nebuchadnezzar, co-ruler with his father Nabopolassar initially, reigning 44 years...
- ⌘ Daniel's wisdom (*spirit and truth*), understanding God's Word and Babylonian tyrannical rule, helped prepare a monarch to submit to God and advance His Kingdom of liberty
- ⌘ Daniel and his friends served humbly, sometimes for decades without any outward manifestation of His power
- ⌘ Daniel's *influence* of a pagan ruler to advance God's purposes was more effective than merely opposing him externally (politically or militarily)

The Problem was not Babylon, the problem was the condition of Judah



Judah (God's people) had fallen for a false message such as...
...Sure we serve other gods, but we also continue to worship Jehovah... there is no way that He would let us be humiliated at the hands of the Babylonians, a people far more wicked than we...
(Erwin Lutzer)

They (false prophets) have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying 'peace, peace,' when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown.

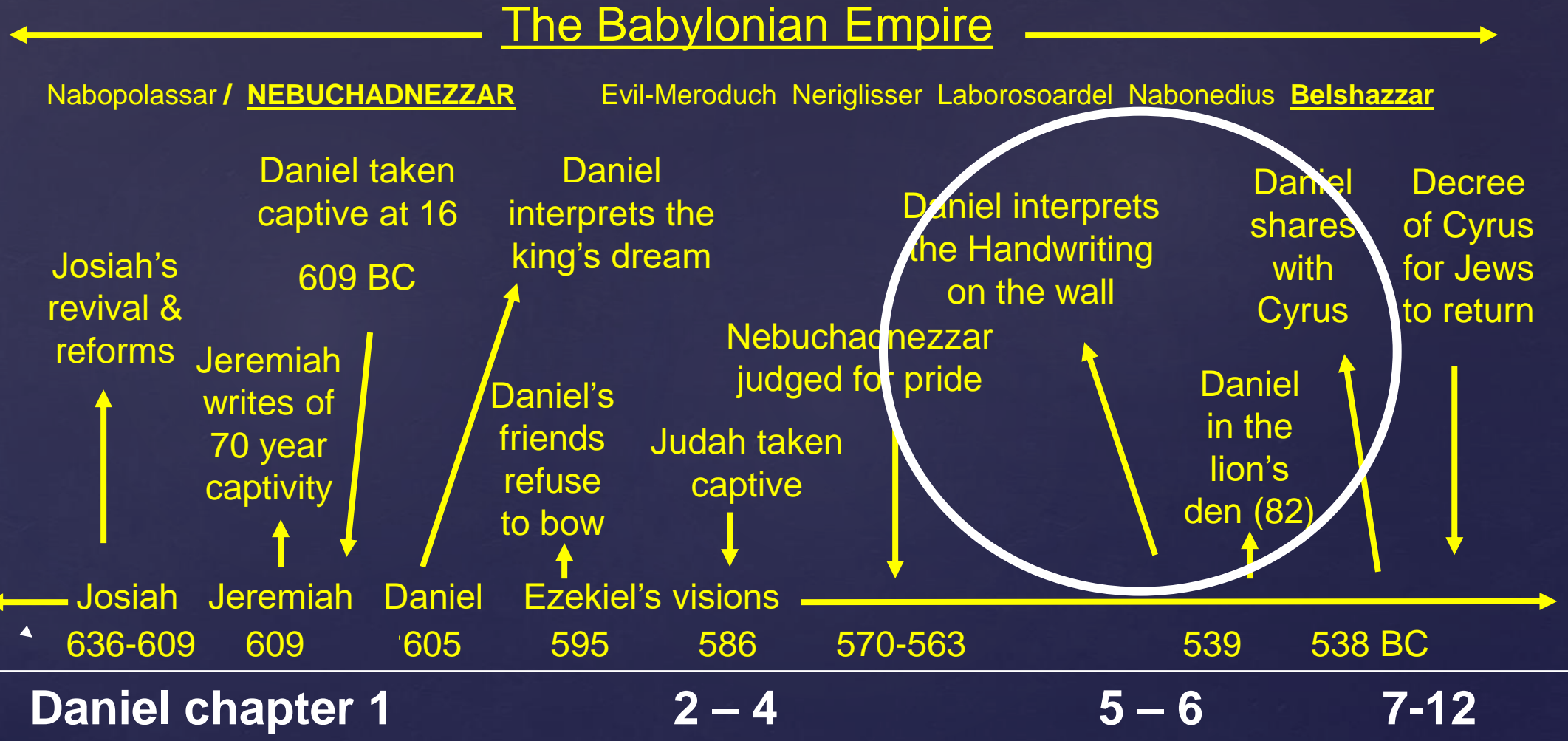
Jeremiah 6:14-15



Biblical Attitudes held by Daniel

- God sends His people into captivity to humble them, shine as lights in a dark culture, and prepare them to birth a new liberty model for coming generations (Proverbs 29:23)
- God's people are to influence their culture rather than isolate from it or assimilate with it... (John 17:15-18)
- There is a difference between associating with an evil government and participating in its evil actions and behavior... (Ephesians 5:1-14)
- God's people do not have to have freedom to be faithful; but they must uphold grace and truth so that love and humility is their primary motive... (Colossians 4:5-6)

The Babylonian Empire “An Empire of Pride”



Twenty-five years of Silent Service and Prayer

- ‡ Daniel served four monarchs after Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Meroduch (2), Neriglissar (3), Laborosoardel (1), and Nabonedius (16) for 22 more years
- ‡ Daniel embraced God's method of *incremental change*
- ‡ What did he do during this time?
 - ‡ He may have served in government; exposing evil
 - ‡ He likely spent a great deal of time in prayer

Our prayer life (reaching heaven) must exceed the level at which we wish to see God's Kingdom manifest on earth

Character is our Legacy

- Webster's 1828 definition - *A mark made by cutting or engraving... The peculiar qualities, impressed by nature or habit on a person, which distinguish him from others... we say, a character is not formed, when the person has not acquired stable and distinctive qualities.*
- Samuel Adams once wrote - *...dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy. While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties..."*

Character Qualities of Daniel and Friends

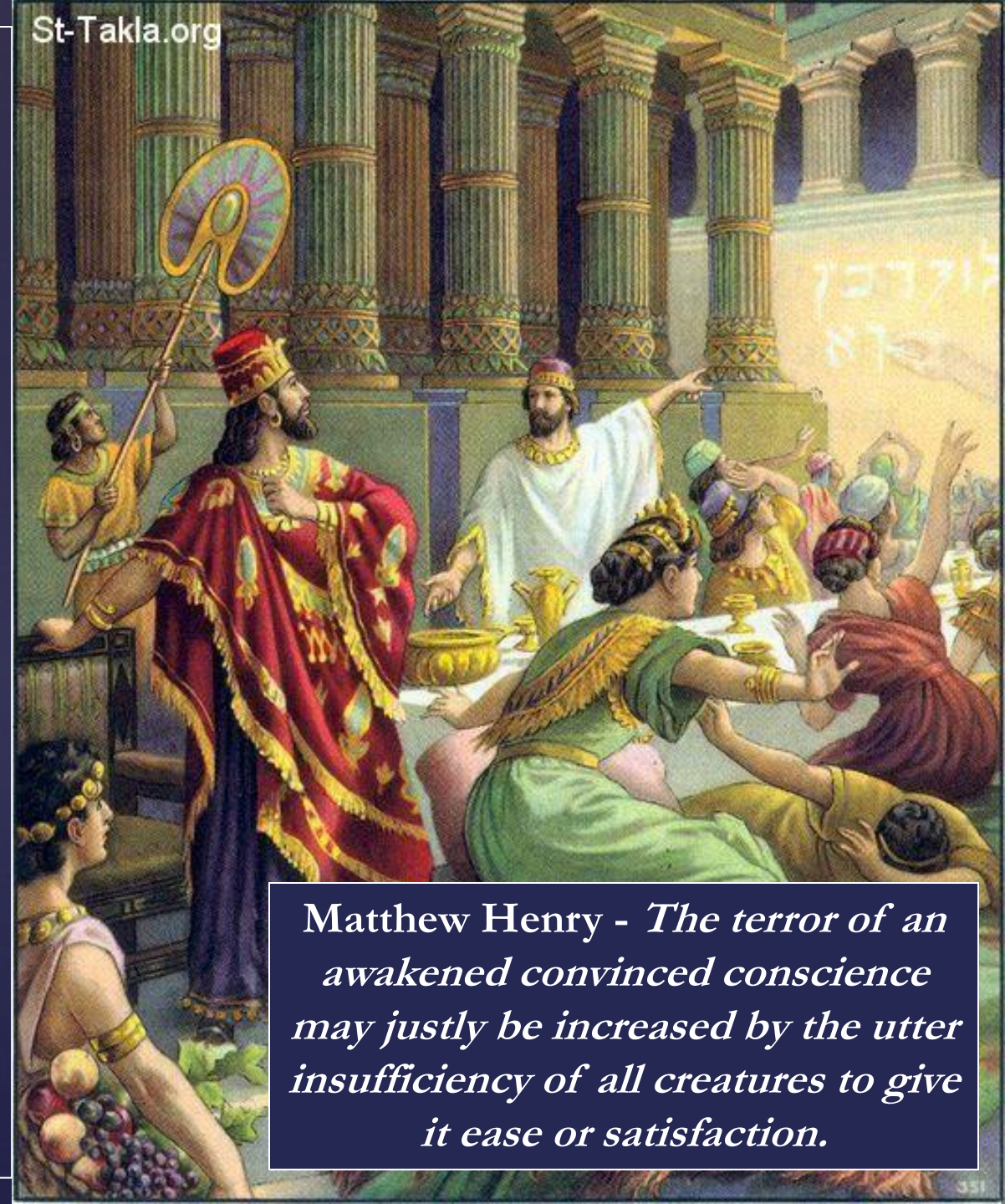
- ⌘ Christian Character is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ⌘ *Love* – expressing God’s love regardless of how it is returned
- ⌘ *Joy* – a delight of serving God in the midst of any circumstance
- ⌘ *Peace* – resting in the truth that God is Sovereign
- ⌘ *Longsuffering* – persevering regardless of how dark it might be
- ⌘ *Kindness* – treating people well though they don’t deserve it
- ⌘ *Goodness* – finding something complimentary to say to anyone
- ⌘ *Faithfulness* – walking with God & being a good team member
- ⌘ *Gentleness* – treating people by potential and not achievement
- ⌘ *Self-control* – governing attitudes and behavior from within

Jeremiah had prophesied that God would punish Babylon for its wickedness



5:2-5...while he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem... they drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared...

5:5-7 – ...and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers... whoever tells me its interpretation... shall be the third ruler in the kingdom... but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation...



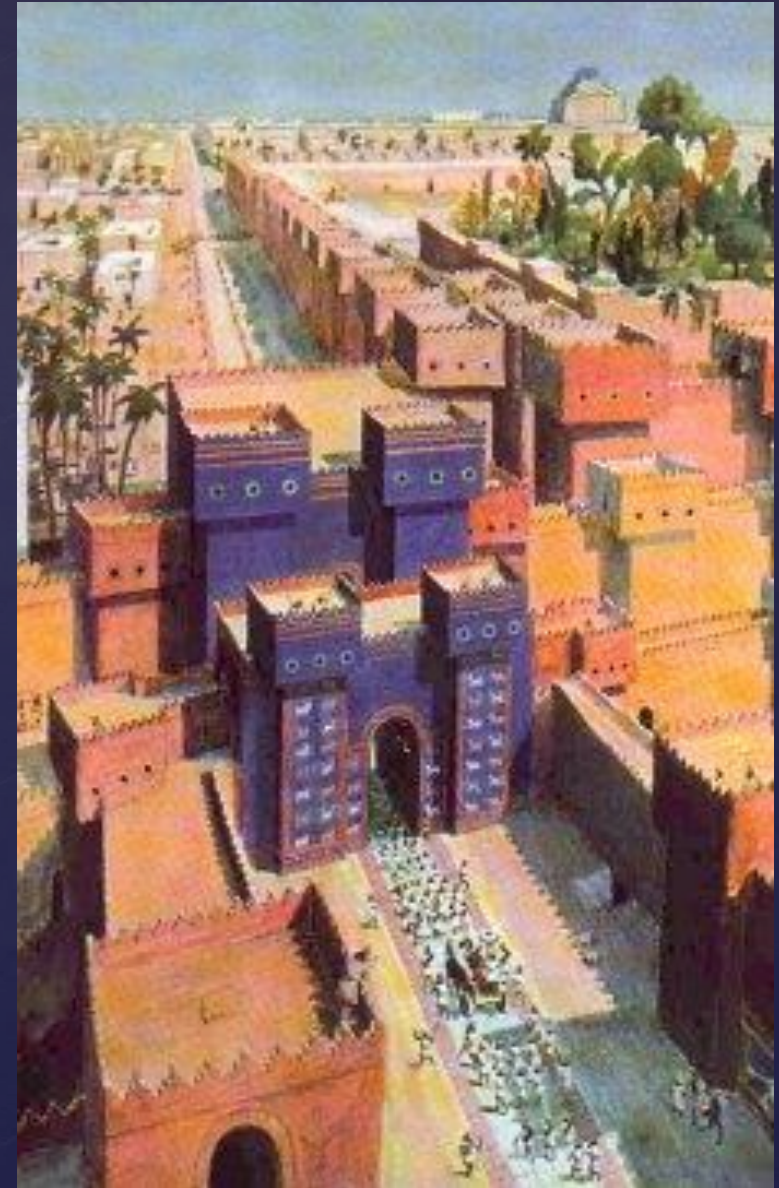
Matthew Henry - The terror of an awakened convinced conscience may justly be increased by the utter insufficiency of all creatures to give it ease or satisfaction.

Daniel is summoned after 25 Years!

5:10-11 - *The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall... there is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God*



- & Daniel, at 82, is summoned by the Queen (Nitocris?)
- & Daniel knows 70 years of captivity is about to end
- & At this moment, Cyrus is leading an army into the city after drying up the river bed!



5:22 – But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this (his father Nebuchadnezzar’s testimony)



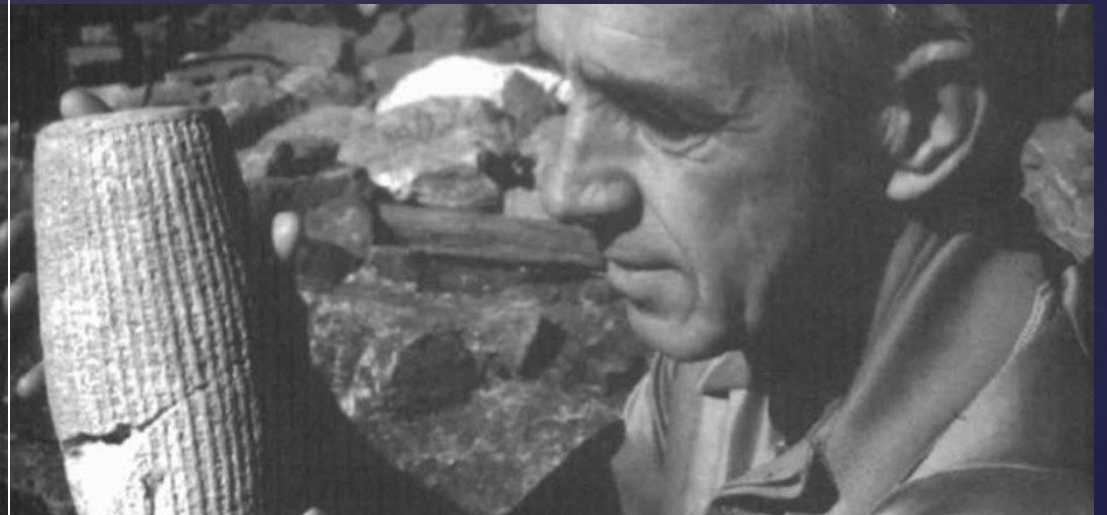
5:23 – And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you... and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

*5:27-28 - Mene:
God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it.
Tekel: you have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting.
Peres: your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.*

Daniel, Isaiah, Cyrus and the rule of Persia

- Daniel becomes the ruler of Babylon for about one hour
- He is introduced to Darius, and his reputation has gone before him
- Then he is introduced to Cyrus, and tutors him in the sovereignty of God and that it was God who chose him to punish Babylon

Isaiah 44:24-28 - Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer... I am the Lord... Drives diviners mad... Who says to Jerusalem, 'you shall be inhabited' Who says to the deep, 'be dry' Who says of Cyrus, 'he is my shepherd' saying to Jerusalem, 'you shall be built,' and to the temple, 'your foundation shall be laid.



Daniel prays as he had been doing almost 70 years!

6:1, 3 – *Darius... set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, whom Daniel was one... then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps... an excellent spirit was in him...*



6:5, 10 – *then these men said, ‘we shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God....’ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.*

Daniel fears not Persian law, resting in God's will!

6:11-12,14 – *Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the decree... And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him...*

6:15-16 - *'Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.'* So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, *'your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.'*



6:18-19 – Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.



6:22 – ... My God sent His angel and shut the lion's mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O King, I have done no wrong before you.



6:25-28 - To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever, His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

Lesson Three – *Character is your Legacy*

Daniel's character gives him a reputation that is his legacy

- ⌘ Daniel, from age 58 to 83, served four monarchs before Cyrus defeated Babylon, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy...
- ⌘ Though serving behind the scenes, he is called forth to pronounce the demise of Babylon on the day of its defeat
- ⌘ He then instructs Cyrus from Isaiah who prophesied 160 years prior that he would be used to punish Babylon
- ⌘ He serves Darius, and though deceitfully accused, God displays His power, rescuing him from the Lion's Den at 84!

Suggested “homework”

⌘ Read Daniel, chapters 5-6

⌘ Ask God to give each of us faith that the character He is forming will produce a lasting effect for generations!