

Daniel: The Man Even Lions Feared

By Evangelist Dea Warford

Daniel is considered one of the most righteous men of all time, according to Ezek. 14:14, and for good reason: His life and revelations provide inspiration and wisdom which remain even today, and speak some of the most important truths concerning the very last days., in which we now live. What made Daniel so special? Daniel had great wisdom: Next to Solomon, he may have been the wisest man in the Old Testament. This is evidenced by the fact when Ezekiel prophesied concerning Tyrus (who was a type of Lucifer- see Ezek. 28:12-17), he said in 28:3, "behold, thou art wiser than Daniel". King Nebuchadnezzar found Daniel and his fellow Israelite wise-men, "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in all his realm" (Dan. 1:20). Remember, magicians and astrologers in those days were considered "experts" in spiritual interpretations and revelations.

One definition of wisdom is "seeing something from God's perspective". Daniel could do this! Because of Daniel's great wisdom, he was promoted as a counselor in Babylon, the greatest nation in the world at that time. America is the greatest nation now. How our cities and states need wisdom from God too! The last generation (don't you believe we are the last?) was prophesied by Daniel as one having wise people who will teach others how to prepare for Christ's coming and survive through the last days. "they that understand among the people shall instruct many" (Dan. 11:32). How desperately Americans will need our witness, guidance, and counsel during the troubles of the last days! Of course. God gave Daniel His wisdom as a gift (Dan 1:17) and promoted him in the Kingdom of Babylon (Ps. 75:5-7; and there are many wise leaders today who are now being prepared to "instruct" this dying world. We are told to be earnest seekers of wisdom repeatedly in the Word.

Just as a medical student takes a decade or more of preparation to have the knowledge necessary to operate and save lives, we too should be taking what time we have left to diligently pursue the knowledge that will enable us to "operate" God's power and knowledge in the last days in order to save lives. Scriptures such as James 1:5, Prov. 2:2-6; 4:7, 8; 7:4; 8:11, 17, 34-36 show that wisdom can be obtained and should be our earnest pursuit. And, in fact there is a special reward in heaven promised by Daniel in 12:3 to those who seek and find wisdom; "They that be wise (or "teachers" in the Hebrew.) Teachers are those who study and prepare so they'll know things to in turn teach others. The first law of teaching is: "The teacher must know that which he would teach". I read eight chapters of the Bible a day as part of my pursuit of wisdom. I also ask God for wisdom each day, probably at least three times!

What is your present strategy to grow in wisdom? Daniel knew how to get revelation knowledge: Dan. 1:17 says "Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." He also prophesied and interpreted dreams This was a gift from God. But it wasn't automatic. Daniel fasted for revelation (Dan. 9:3, 10:1-3). The most repeatedly tried and true method of hearing from God is to fast, pray, and spend much time in His presence. Even mighty Daniel knew it took time in God's presence to obtain revelation knowledge. When the king was about to kill all the wise men unless they could tell him about the dream that he had forgotten, "Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation" (Dan. 2:16).

If you do not receive visions, dreams, and prophetic words, you need to ask yourself, "how much time do I spend in God's presence in pursuit of revelation knowledge?" "Seek and you shall find" (Matt. 7:7) is a promise. If you aren't finding, are you really seeking? God is a God who has chosen to "hide himself" ("Verily thou art a God who hidest himself" Isa. 45:15). God has also made himself invisible and hard to find. He has chosen also to make wisdom hidden and hard to find

("The glory of God is to conceal a thing. The honor of kings is to search out a matter" Prov. 25:2). God has hidden His wisdom: (1) in the Word (Ps. 119:162, "I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil; God has hidden his wisdom (2) in the "secret place" of prayer (Ps. 91:1, Matt. 6:6); And, God has hidden His wisdom (3) in Christ- "Christ... In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" Col. 2:2, 3). The Word, prayer, and a close walk with Christ: this is the pathway to true wisdom. Spend each day in the Word, much prayer, and intimacy with Jesus. Our great pursuit in life should be for a revelation from the Father of Jesus in and through our lives, and a revelation of the Father from Jesus: "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him" (Luke 10:22).

I pray verses virtually daily over myself, even as Paul prayed over the Ephesians, "that God would give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe" (Eph. 1:17-19). Try it!

Daniel did "great exploits" for God during his life: The greatest, perhaps, and most renowned is when he was thrown in a den of lions without being harmed in Dan. 6. This exploit was celebrated in the New Testament when Daniel was mentioned as one who "stopped the mouth of lions" (Heb. 11:33). This wasn't just the sovereign protection of God. The verse says "through faith" he stopped the lions. Daniel had to exercise faith when he did his exploits. Some people erroneously think when God sovereignly moves on earth in revival power it is simply a work of grace and we have little or nothing to do with it. But, the Bible again and again speaks to this: "He that ... worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:5). Again, "we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14). Further, "these signs shall follow them that BELIEVE" (Mark 16:17). Finally, even Jesus said "greater works" would follow "he that believeth" (Rom. 14:12). We should ever seek to be growing in faith (II Thess. 1:3) for sure.

But, I have discovered nothing helps your faith more than experiencing again and again the faithfulness of God. An ounce of God's faithfulness outweighs a pound of unbelief: "If we believe not, ye he abideth faithful" (II Tim 2:13). This is where the importance of walking with God comes in. When we know God's ways, His Word, and His will, it is easy to believe. Thus we understand why Daniel predicted that in the last days it was "the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32). For a decade or so, the theme of so many books and conferences was "church growth". Have you noticed how lately so many books and conferences are on knowing God and prayer, etc? God is getting us ready to do great exploits, like Daniel.

Daniel lived a holy life: "Daniel purposed in his heart he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Dan. 1:8). He wouldn't drink the king's wine. Alcohol has probably destroyed more lives in America than any other thing. To chose to not drink is one of the greatest favors you can show your family and friends. "In all things, showing thyself a pattern of good works ... That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 3:7, 8). Serious Christian workers are gladly willing to drink tea instead of alcohol for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:19,22, 23, 27). Daniel also refused the king's food: such food prepared for the kings court doubtless include pork and other foods forbidden by the Law to be eaten. Much of the food, also, was probably dedicated to idols. Daniel wouldn't compromise. He would only eat vegetables!

Paul shows the same dedication when he says in I Cor. 8:13, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth". How we Christians today "compromise" our standards by the music we listen to, the movies we watch, and our lifestyles which except for our car pulling into a church parking lot once a week, often differ little from our neighbors. This has got to change,

and according to Daniel, it will in the last days: "Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end" (Dan. 11:35). A falling away will occur in the last days, most likely caused by great persecution: "that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (GR: apostasia=a deliberate abandonment from a former professed position). There will no more be shades of gray, but only white and black, saved and unsaved, saints and aint's.

Hard times cause the uncommitted to fall away from the truth. They are like the seed sown in stony ground which "have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:17).

Pressure molds and makes or else it breaks. But, God in his grace is able to bring just the right pressure. . I am flying back now from a quick trip to Eugene, Oregon to a local hospital there where one of my very first friends (from when I was four years old) was dying. Larry went to church some with me as a child. We lost touch for many years, but he visited me in Crescent City in 1971, where I was a minister of youth at the time. I led him to Christ. I can still see him down at the altar praying in the church. But he lost a son to cancer at two years of age and became a heavy smoker and a very heavy drinker. He went to drinking to consol himself, his wife says. I was holding a meeting in the Eugene area about 1997, and discovered where he was living and visited him and his family. I led him again, along with some of his family members, in the sinner's prayer. I exhorted him to start going to church. He didn't. He kept drinking and smoking. For about the last couple of years, I prayed every day for his salvation.

Finally, I got a phone call from the family saying he was wanting to see me and was at death's door. I had free air miles and quickly booked a flight. Before taking off, I talked to him on the phone I led him once again to Christ. The family had expected him to die the night before, but his brother said he felt knowing I was coming up to see him helped keep him alive. Last night at his bedside, I read the scriptures and encouraged him. God was more than willing to forgive him, but oh had he reaped what he had sown in years of abusing his body. His legs were horribly swollen, his heart was working at 7%, his kidneys and liver were failing. He had pneumonia. But, he could talk some. We joked and reminisced about our wonderful childhood experiences. He spilled juice on his shirt and though dying, (yet still proud), asked for another one. I had an extra T-shirt in the car and retrieved it and they put it on him. Thus with his estranged-wife, children, brothers, dad, and childhood friend at his side, having prayed the sinner's prayer once more at last, and clothed in my clean white T-shirt, he contentedly announced, "I feel good"! I was so glad I had come! He soon drifted into a sleep from which he never awakened.

I wish every smoker and alcoholic (and sinner for that matter) could have been there for the final moments: the families sorrow, the death rattle coming from his throat, those final few desperate gasps of breath from a mouth fully opened as though begging for just a little more earthly air, and in the very end, his bloodshot eyes suddenly opening wide as though looking to heaven as he left his miserable wasted life and macabre corpse behind for his family to cremate. Watching it all unfold was like personally being in a R-rated horror movie. What a horrific purging and "trying" it took for Larry to finally call "one of understanding" to help "make him white". I feel my clean white T-shirt as his final clothing was symbolic of what was happening spiritually. His brother, Eddie was also one of my very first friends (the day we met, he drove my tricycle into a tree and ruined it!). It was around 2 AM when they were letting me off at my motel (to sleep until 4:30 AM to take a flight home!). As I left the car, he said, "You were a tower of strength".

I had been going through the purging process for many years, I had a white shirt to clothe the dying in. I had the answers the family in their time of great trial needed. This in a microcosm, is what these last days are all about. 150,000 died and 3,000,000 were left homeless in South Asia.

Such testing times will happen in the last days in America too: "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried (refined); but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). In that hour, will you be begging someone with understanding to comfort and cloth you? Or will you be a "tower of strength" to a dying world because you have come to not only "understand" the ways of God so you can explain them to others, but have yourself come to experience them firsthand?

This is holiness. This is having been "tried" and passed the test. Another word for holiness is "wholeness". If we are still broken and desperately need mending ourselves, it is harder to help others, even as a sick person could help someone else who was sick, but with limited energy and confidence. Daniel had achieved such a level of sanctification and righteousness, that the Word doesn't mention one weakness or sin in his life. May we find great inspiration from Daniel's life and his teachings to make it through these last days.

Daniel could interpret the "handwriting on the wall": "Mini, mini, tekem, upharsin" was written on the wall with an invisible hand. None of the king's "wise men" could interpret the words, but Daniel could! He said these words predicted the end of Belshazzar's kingdom. The king died that very night! Can't we read the handwriting on the wall in today's newspapers? God is raising up men and women today like Daniel and like the "children of Issachar ... that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (I Chron. 12:32). It's interesting one of the most significant verses that prove these are the last days, is the prediction Daniel gave in v. 12:4 "Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased". There is a plane full of people joining me today "running to and fro". What a prediction of the explosion of transportation in this generation.

Monday, I had breakfast in St. Louis, Mo, and lunch in Victorville, Ca.. Just a little over a century ago, the trip would have taken treacherous months by covered wagons. And "knowledge increased" is certainly fulfilled in the computer age, when knowledge is doubling (last statistic I heard) every six months! If we are wise and see the signs of the times, we would take sobering notes from Daniel's warning in 12:1, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered". The greatest trouble in history is soon to come upon us. Daniel shows us the best way to prepare for these times ...

Daniel knew how to pray: Even after the king gave an order that anyone who prayed to any other God than the image of King Darius would be killed, Daniel as his usual custom was, "went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." (Dan 6:10). For this, he was thrown into the den of lions. His custom was "three times a day". It didn't say, he "tried" two or three times. It didn't say, when it was "convenient". No matter how busy, no matter if the cost was death, he prayed three times a day. What a lesson to those of us who save prayer for before bed, and pray a few minutes till we are too tired and then go to sleep. The last days will require a great prayer life of all Christians. "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41) was Jesus warning to every generation.

A daily devotional time is not going to be enough when the world is falling apart at the seams. Isaiah shows us prayer is the best way to prepare for the last times in Isaiah 26:9: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" and in v. 20, and 21; "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment (not in the closet shaking, but in the closet praying!), until the indignation be past. For, behold, the Lord cometh . . . to punish the inhabitants of the earth for

their iniquity". Jesus prepared himself for the cross by spending time in the garden of prayer. Dare we presume to prepare to carry our cross any other way than that which the captain of our salvation patterned for us? (Heb. 2:10 and 5:7, 8).

Daniel had a reward waiting for him in heaven: "They that turn many to righteousness (shall shine) as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. 12:3). The bottom line of all wisdom, is it results in souls being saved: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). The greatest harvest of souls in the history of the planet is soon to take place in these last days. I pray daily for God to raise up harvesters to reap the Moslem World. There are a billion Moslems without Christ. Are you preparing yourself to reap the harvests of your family, of your neighborhood? I prayed daily for Larry's salvation. When he was at death's door, he cried out for my help. Pray for the lost! Prepare yourself in anyway possible to win souls; memorizing scripture, studying books, getting formal instruction, keeping in touch with sinners and showing them love. Imagine how many people have surely come to Christ and stayed true to the way, by reading of Daniel in the lion's den, or hearing preachers preach on the last days from Daniel's prophecies.

Every one of us are writing a book, like it or not. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2). The world is watching you and reading daily the book your life is writing. I am so glad I remained an example to Larry and Ed and his family. I am so glad Ed saw me as a "tower of strength". Is your book going to have a happy ending for the sinners you are influencing daily? Daniel's book did. After so many cryptic revelations concerning the last days, Daniel cried, "what shall be the end of these things" in 12:9. He wanted an easy to understand, clear cut resolution of all God was doing in his life. He didn't get it. (No more than any of us do, as we question God "why this" and "why that"). No, Daniel had to "walk by faith and not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7) just like everyone else throughout history. Though he never saw the whole picture clearly, He was assured that his part of the picture was not in vain: "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13).

"Go thou thy way": In other words, just keep doing what you are supposed to be doing. "Occupy till I come" was Jesus way to say to his disciples, "just kept minding your business, doing your job, until the end". Do you know what your "way" is? Are you doing the things you know you should be doing? If not, Daniel (one of Heb. 11 "cloud of witnesses") would surely ask you: "Why not? I did!" "Thou shalt rest": Even in the times of the end, God's promises for protection, safety, provision and peace are still true. "Casting all your care on him for he careth for you" (I Pet. 5:7) is the first step in dealing with the "roaring lion" trying to cast us all into his lion's den. Rest is promised us even in the last days (II Thess. 1:7, Isa. 30:15,)!

"And Stand in thy lot": Daniel had an inheritance - a mansion sitting on a lot waiting for him in glory. You do too (John 14:1-3)! But, remember, your works down here determine whether it is a one room flat, or a glorious Beverly Hills-type mansion. I trust Larry made it to heaven, but he certainly made no investment in adding-on to his mansion there. Don't make the same mistake. Be like Daniel!