

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In the last program, we examined the book of **Jeremiah**. The prophet Jeremiah lived some six hundred years before the coming of the Messiah. We saw how Jeremiah warned his fellow Jews, telling them that if they did not repent of their sins and turn back to God, the army of the nation of Babylon would destroy the city of Jerusalem and take them captive. Sadly, most of the Jews listened to **the false prophets** and refused to heed Jeremiah's message. Thus we read how the Babylonian army came, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews far away to Babylon. Everything happened exactly as God had predicted through the mouth of Jeremiah, His prophet.

But the destruction of Jerusalem did not mean that God had abandoned the Jews, the people He had chosen long beforehand. God could not forget **the covenant** that He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when He said to them, "*All the peoples of the world will be blessed through you.*" God had not forgotten **His plan** to send the Redeemer into the world through the nation of Jews which descended from Abraham. Thus the Scriptures relate how God took care of the Jews in Babylon for **seventy years** until He brought them back to Jerusalem, just as He had promised. However, to hear that story, you must wait until our next program.

Today we plan to read about a young Jewish man, who was one of the captives taken to Babylon. That young man is **Daniel**-the prophet of God, Daniel. The name Daniel means *God is my judge*. That was Daniel's testimony in short. Daniel feared no one except Almighty God before whom every person must give an account one day. Daniel wasn't concerned about what men thought of him. Only God's thoughts mattered to him.

God was Daniel's judge. Daniel believed what the prophet Solomon had written long before, saying: "*Fear of man will prove to be a **snare**, but **whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.***"

God inspired Daniel to write a very profound book. **The book of Daniel** contains many revelations (prophecies) which the human mind could not invent. Only God knows what will happen in the future. Yet the prophet Daniel wrote about **the history of many nations** of the world-and he wrote their history before those nations even existed! For example, Daniel wrote how the kingdoms of Persia, and Greece and Rome would come into existence and what their kings would do. And he wrote it hundreds of years before most of these nations even existed! Also, like so many of God's prophets, Daniel wrote concerning **the first coming and the second coming of the Messiah**. Daniel prophesied that at the Messiah's first coming He would be "*cut off*"-- that is, killed as a sacrifice for sin (Dan. 9:26), but when the Messiah returns to earth He will judge the world in righteousness. Listen to the vision the prophet Daniel had concerning the Messiah's second coming:

*"As I looked, thrones were set in place, and **the Ancient of Days** took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended to him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened!*

*In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like **a son of man**, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."*

Now then, since time doesn't allow us to delve into the deepest thoughts of God contained in the book of Daniel, we will spend the rest of our time today looking at **the story of the prophet Daniel** himself.

In the first chapter of the book of Daniel, we see how Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, selected some of the **Jewish young men** in order to train them to serve in his government. He chose those who were the most handsome and intelligent--with an aptitude for every kind of learning, capable of learning the difficult alphabet and language of Babylon. **Daniel** was one of the young men whom the king chose.

Thus, Daniel began to study in the schools of Babylon. However, on the very first day, Daniel faced **a dilemma**. The great King of Babylon had decided that the young men who were part of his school must drink the best wine and eat the best food. However, this wine and food had been offered to idols. Could Daniel participate in the worship of idols? Absolutely not! Why not? Because Daniel feared **God**. Daniel preferred death to doing something that was not pleasing to God, his Lord. Thus, the Scripture says: *"But **Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way.**"*

The Scriptures relate how God rescued Daniel from that dilemma, blessed him and gave him deep knowledge and wisdom, so that the Scripture says: *"So **[Daniel] entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found [Daniel] ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.**"* Thus, for about seventy years, Daniel worked for four different kings, and God was with him.

In the time remaining today, we would like to look at **a story from the life of Daniel**-a story that shows how Daniel feared no one but God alone. We will see how Daniel was very different from the other officials who worked for the King. They were the kind of

men who habitually twisted the truth and received bribes-because the fear of God was far from their heart. However, Daniel refused all unrighteousness and falsehood, because the fear of God filled his heart. He preferred to be thrown into a den of lions rather than to displease God.

Where our story begins, Daniel was now an old man and was serving faithfully under his fourth king. The Kingdom of Babylon was no longer called Babylon, but Persia, because two nations, that is, the Medes and the Persians, had conquered Babylon and divided it in two, just as the prophet Daniel had prophesied.

In chapter six, the Scripture says:

*It pleased Darius [the King] to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now **Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities** that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.*

*At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "**We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.**"*

*So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that **anyone who prays to any God or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.** Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing*

so that it cannot be altered, in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

***Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.** Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any God or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands, in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."*

*When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and **threw him into the lions' den.** The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.*

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living

*God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, **the lions overpowered them** and crushed all their bones.*

*Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. **He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions!"** Amen.*

Did you hear what the heathen king said, after he saw how God had saved Daniel from the lions? He said, *"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must **fear the God of Daniel.** For He is the living God and he endures forever!"*

You who are listening today, do you fear the God of Daniel? Perhaps you are asking, **"Who is the God of Daniel?"** The God of Daniel is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of Daniel is the God of the prophets Moses and David. The God of Daniel is the God who has given us the Holy Scriptures. He is the God who promised to send down a Redeemer who would save sinners from a power that is stronger than the power of lions, that is, the power of Satan, and sin, and hell! The God of Daniel is **God--** the One True God!

Do you fear the God of Daniel? We are **not** asking whether you fear your friends and their thoughts, or whether you fear your ancestors and their customs, or your witch doctors or sangomas and their demands! What we are asking you is: Do you fear **God**? Do you want to please the Lord God and obey His holy Word? Daniel feared **God**, which was why he did not fear man. Daniel preferred to spend a night in the den of lions than to displease the Lord his God! How about you? Do you fear God? Do you fear Him as Daniel feared Him? Do you hate unrighteousness as Daniel hated it? Do you cherish the Word of God like Daniel cherished it? Or are you like most of the sons of Adam who twist the truth, love money, and neglect the Holy Scriptures? **Do your fear God?**

Thank you for listening. In our next lesson, we plan to look at some amazing prophecies written by Zechariah, a prophet who came after Daniel....

God bless you as you meditate on this important truth:

"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe!"