



Why Was Daniel So Special? (Part II)

Daniel 2:47: (NASB) *The king answered Daniel and said, surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.*



Dare to be a Daniel!

A few weeks ago we began looking at the life of Daniel the prophet beginning at the time he was about 17 years old and taken prisoner by the Babylonian Empire. What we saw was a boy who displayed solid integrity, faith and focus as he navigated his way through the muddy waters of captivity and idolatry to shine out as a light of God in a very dark place. Stay with us as we observe him grow up and grow into a man, a leader of uncompromising strength and passion for his God.

Please refer to "Why Was Daniel So Special? (Part I)" from our program broadcast on April 6, 2014.

A quick review: Daniel was from the tribe of Judah. He was favored of God and blessed with a heart for God. He was taken captive around 17 years old to a foreign land to live, work and serve with no apparent hope of freedom. He was only physically in the lion's den once, but all of his recorded experiences were really "Lion's Den Experiences" in terms of lessons learned.

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:
CAPTIVITY

Once we are engulfed in captivity
(and we all are),
our first decision must be to set our intention
on fidelity to our spiritual heritage.

They are captives, yet they are to receive royal rations of food and wine and an education! What was this really? It was the subtle indoctrination of idolatry for the purpose of creating loyal subjects to the idolatrous King himself! It was the removal of your identity and heritage and replacing it with a new name, a new language, a new belief system - a new life. Would they simply blend in or stand for the principles they believed in?

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:
CONSCIENCE

We, like Daniel, are strangers.
Do we meld into the "foreign country"
and draw our nourishment from it,
or do we draw our strength
from the will of our Father
based on principle and promise?



This would have been the fourth year that Daniel was in Babylon. For the first two years, King Nebuchadnezzar reigned alongside his father, Nabopolassar, who was an invalid at the time and died after the second year of Daniel's presence in Babylon. The King dreamed a dream and demanded to know the answer, but would not tell his wise men what it was.

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:

FAITH

To speak of faith and to live in faith when all things are in order is one thing - to publicly speak of faith in a hostile environment and to live in that faith in such an environment is faith in action.

So, Daniel dramatically revealed the dream, its source and its interpretation, which was more than asked for. He basically told the King: You are being given a look into the future, beginning with your kingdom and ending with the kingdom of God overspreading the earth forever and ever!

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:

PUBLICITY

Because deep and abiding faith stands on principle, publicity does not stroke the ego. It merely becomes a tool to draw all eyes to the source of its strength - the Almighty God and His plan.

This is a short test - like the "five minutes of fame test" that we all at one time may experience.

Here is where our first program left off: Notice how at this point each of these lessons become bigger, as the tests of Daniel's character progress.

How did Daniel react once he "hit the big time?" How would you react?



Daniel 2:46-49: (NRSV) ⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, worshiped Daniel, and commanded that a grain offering and incense be offered to him. ⁴⁷The king said to Daniel, truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery! ⁴⁸Then the king promoted Daniel, gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

So, Daniel is rewarded as the King recognizes that the God of Daniel is the God of all gods. It

is important to remember that *the King is here expressing a great appreciation of the Almighty and His power*, for over time he is destined to forget.

Daniel's heritage rings true! "Daniel" means "judge of God." His Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, means "Bel's prince," meaning "whom Bel (the Babylonian god) favors." Daniel truly was the judge of God and NOT Bel's prince!



Daniel would now spend many years in a lofty position of responsibility, power and even glory in Babylon. The gift of this elevation was received into a heart that was only motivated by devotion to Jehovah God.

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:

FAME AND FORTUNE

Such recognition as this only comes as a result of bold and decisive action. So often our initial response to such praise and honor will reveal the truest fabric of our heart. Prepare from the inside out so that fame and fortune, should they come, will merely be reflected in your life as a changed outward circumstance and not a change of heart!

Are we prepared "from the inside out" when fame and fortune may come our way?



Remember the years of preparation that the Apostle Paul was given before he actually preached?

Acts 14:8-18: (NASB) ⁸At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰said with a loud voice, Stand upright on your feet. And he leaped up and began to walk. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, The gods have become like men and have come down to us. ¹²And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

There was an immediate and adoring public reaction - what would YOU do?

¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of, they tore at their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out ¹⁵and saying, men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; ¹⁷and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness. ¹⁸Even saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

People want what they want - this is a great lesson in staying true to your convictions! Both Daniel and Paul are shining examples of how to behave when things are going really well in our lives.



Life is suddenly great -
power, authority and comfort!
...What could possibly go wrong?



This is the period between Daniel's elevation to high standing and the fall of King Nebuchadnezzar into madness. This is a period of about 30 years. During this time, the only event recorded is the fiery furnace incident (which was about 20 years into this period) of which Daniel was not a part - remember DANIEL WAS NOT IN THE FURNACE - just his companions - but his influence was certainly there. Let us remember that all four of these Hebrews were in positions of honor and respect. Perhaps being in office some 20 years would tend to make you comfortable and maybe a little sloppy...or would it?



"The Three
Hebrews in the
Fiery Furnace," by
Pieter Aertsen
Oil on canvas –
c. 1552
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam

Daniel 3:1-6: (NRSV)

¹King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ²Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent for the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to assemble and come to the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up....When they were standing before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, ⁴the herald proclaimed aloud, You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.



We can only speculate to whom this image was built. Was it built to the King himself or to one of the gods of Babylon? Whatever it was we know the challenge set before Daniel's three companions, Hananiah (Babylonian name Shadrach), Mishael (Babylonian name Meshach) and Azariah (Babylonian name Abednego). They didn't have Daniel with them as they faced the blatant dilemma of idol worship. They had served the King faithfully for 20 years. What a crossroads!

(Source: Biblical commentary by A. O. Hudson) The height was 60 cubits, the breadth 6 cubits. Both numbers are consistent with the sexagesimal number system used by the Babylonians. That is, a base 60 system. (Today a base 10 system is customary, but we still divide an hour into 60 minutes, and a circle into 6 x 60 degrees, from the Babylonian system.) These figures yield a ratio of height to width of 10 to 1, which would be a very narrow image relative to the height. Yet the ancients depicted their gods exactly this way. The figurines of Baal that come mainly from Syria and Palestine are good examples ...so for Nebuchadnezzar to make a statue with these proportions would not have been unusual.

Probably the image was a representation of Marduk, the national god of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor was also named for this god.

Daniel 3:8-12: (NRSV) ⁸Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live forever! ¹⁰You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone... shall fall down and worship the golden statue, ¹¹and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. ¹²There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O king. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.

 **I will not worship that, *Daniel Experiences a Miracle, The Bible Series***

- *I cannot - I will not worship that. No!*

Not only did these Chaldeans report the three Hebrews, they did it by name. They made sure to remind the King of his appointing them and that these Hebrews' worship did NOT include of any of the gods of Babylon. Sounds like there was a great resentment built up over the years! Now it was time to stand for truth!

So, what do you do when all the work of the past 20 years suddenly is of no consequence?

Daniel 3:13-15: (NRSV) ¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar said to them, is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up?

The King's respect, fury...and forgetfulness (!) are obvious. There was a time when Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed to Daniel *truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings!*

¹⁵Now if you are ready... to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?

He gives them a second chance though he does not change the consequences of disobedience. His forgetfulness is obvious as he gives no credit to the Almighty.



So here the three are faced with the temptation of rationality. Can you imagine them thinking something like, "This is no bluff. We are at the center of attention. What good would we be to God or anyone if we were dead? Those who would replace us are surely not motivated by the same standards of right that we hold. So bow down, who is going to care? Is it really that bad? Can't we do more good to others alive?"

Daniel 3:16-18: (NRSV) ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. ¹⁷If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let Him deliver us. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.

Here is the answer **that has lived within these men all along**, in spite of the power and comfort of their Babylonian lives! "We cannot change. If our God chooses, He can deliver us. If He chooses not, then let it be known, He is God, and we will have followed Him unto death!"

 **They will only worship God, Daniel Experiences a Miracle, The Bible Series**

- *With all our hearts we follow You.*
- *(Yelling) Bow your heads!*
- *We seek Your presence.*
- *With all my heart I follow You; I fear You. I seek Your presence.*
- *(Yelling) Bring them!*
- *Oh my friends, your faith will be tested now.*
- *(King) Daniel! What's wrong with them? Why will your friends not bow to me?*
- *(Daniel) I assure you, Sire, they will serve you faithfully all their lives as I will, but...*
- *(King) ...But?*
- *(Daniel) But they will only worship God.*

(Note: The Bible does not state if Daniel was physically present or not.)

If we are true Christians, are we willing to stand up that firmly because that is what we are made of? Our compromises may be more subtle but just as important.

Daniel 3:19-22: (NRSV) ¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, ²⁰and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire... ²²Because the king's command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.



I will make them bow, *Daniel Experiences a Miracle, The Bible Series*

- *(King) I will make them bow.*
- *With all our hearts we follow You. We fear You. We seek Your presence.*
- *(King) When we wish to bend something that is hard and unyielding what do we do with it? We put it into the fire.*
- *Your Majesty!*
- *Take him!*
- *We fear You and we seek Your presence.*
- *Burn them!*
- *No, your Majesty!*
- *Burn them! Bring oil! Come, come -fire! Bring me fire!*
- *Hear my cry! The cords of death untangle me. The anguish of the grave consumes me. Do not ignore my tears! I am overcome with sorrow.*

Where does your mind go as you are being hoisted into the “fire” that will consume you?

Isaiah 26:3: (KJV) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Daniel 3:23-26: (NRSV) ²³*But the three men... fell down bound, into the furnace of blazing fire. ²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire? They answered the king, true, O king. ²⁵He replied, but I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god. ²⁶Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here! So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire.*

Does the King actually admit that he has been wrong in his choice of gods?



Why do they not burn? *Daniel Experiences a Miracle, The Bible Series*

- *Why do they not burn?*
- *Look! It's a miracle!*

The conclusion:

Daniel 3:28-30: (NRSV) ²⁸*Nebuchadnezzar said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.*

The King sums up the courageous and active faith he has just witnessed.

Does this convert him to full faith in the Almighty?

²⁹*Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way. ³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.*

Well, he is astounded but probably not quite converted! Though astounded (again) by the power of the Almighty and in a similar circumstance - both instances surrounded statues that symbolized great power. The first (from the King's dream) was great earthly power, shown by Daniel to be fleeting before



the great God of heaven. This second statue was probably a symbol of false spiritual power that ought not to be bowed down to, as it was just an idol.

These three companions stood as Daniel would have: firm in faith, sound in resolve, courageous in conflict. They knew what was right and had been with Daniel in a similar dilemma before this and they followed his lead.

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:

POWER AND COMFORT

Even in the context and comfort of the greatest powers of the greatest men that rule the kingdoms of this earth, there must only be one place where God's chosen ones find their rest and loyalty. Again, this is a result of an "inside out" faith that has its roots firmly in your heart and is often developed and cultivated through fellowship. Power and comfort are circumstances; faith and actions are characteristics.

In the United States, we live in a time where we have the greatest freedom in the recorded history of mankind. We can essentially do what we want if we follow basic laws. Intellectually we can go in any direction. We can physically travel nearly anywhere. We live as kings! Running water ...refrigeration ...heat ...indoor plumbing... We live in an age of power and comfort. Even in the context of the greatest time in history, we have great trials of rationalizing.



1 Peter 4:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;* ¹³*but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.* ¹⁴*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

We would not rejoice over fiery trials that come as a result of our own doing. Instead, we want to stand for something higher - for Jesus - as this will crystalize our character.

Late 3rd century/
early 4th century
Christians
depicted the fiery
furnace in the
Catacombs of
Priscilla, Rome





The three in the furnace built a lifetime of integrity so they could take a stand on that one day.

About ten years after the fiery furnace, Daniel and his friends would be in their 50's.

(Source: Biblical commentary by A. O. Hudson) King Nebuchadnezzar was now at the zenith of his glory. The "head of gold" had become the conqueror of nations. He had seen three successive pharaohs of Egypt, the rival nation, pass into death - two of them

struck down by his own hand... The proud city of Tyre, after a siege of 13 years, had been forced to capitulate. The Assyrians were no more, and their mighty city of Nineveh was a mass of broken down ruins. The Ten Tribes were scattered to the wilds of Armenia, spreading slowly outwards, and the remnants of Judah dwelt in the south of Babylon. The Holy Land laid a desolate waste.

For seven or eight years now the King, having measurably pacified his widely spread empire, had been devoting himself to the erection of adornment of the wonderful buildings for which both he and the city became famous. Temples and palaces, roads and canals, parks and gardens, all grew quickly under the inspiration of his fiery enthusiasm.

Just as Daniel prophesied 30 years earlier, King Nebuchadnezzar is at his zenith of power.



A caller suggests: We need to be "A.O.A." We need to ASK, be OPEN, and ACT. God helps the Christian in our "everyday lion's den," but we must remember to pray, to listen and be open to what God inspires, then walk without fear into the den. God is in the midst of our actions.

The "Lion's Den Lesson" of:

INTEGRITY

True integrity can only be fully appreciated after the fact, for it is in hindsight that we are able to observe all of the moving parts that were affected by the actions of such integrity.



**The King now has a widespread empire, peace and cultural development.
Does he thank God now?**

This next chapter begins with the words of the King himself, recounting his experience:

Daniel 4:1-9: (NRSV) ¹*King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages that live throughout the earth: May you have abundant prosperity!* ²*The signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me I am pleased to recount.* ³*How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his sovereignty is from generation to generation.*

This certainly sounds like a different king - a God-honoring king! What happened?

⁴*I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living at ease in my home and prospering in my palace.* ⁵*I saw a dream that frightened me; my fantasies in bed and the visions of my head terrified me.* ⁶*So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, in order that they might tell me the interpretation of the dream.* ⁷*Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not tell me its interpretation.*

- The King is in peace, has had military success, has power and is surrounded by magnificence.
- He has another dream that is a puzzlement to all the “wise” of his court.



⁸At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream: ⁹O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that you are endowed with a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Hear the dream that I saw; tell me its interpretation.

- Daniel is then called in and he is introduced as “Daniel” in the retelling of the account.
- Daniel’s other name is used in the account, showing how far down the path of idolatry the King had gone.
- The King credits Daniel with *a spirit of the gods* which confirms the idolatry.

Daniel 4:10 -16: (NRSV) ¹⁰Upon my bed this is what I saw; there was a tree at the center of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹The tree grew great and strong, its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the ends of the whole earth... ¹³I continued looking, in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and there was a holy watcher, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He cried aloud and said: Cut down the tree and chop off its branches, strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit...¹⁵But leave its stump and roots in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let him be bathed with the dew of heaven, and let his lot be with the animals of the field in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶Let his mind be changed from that of a human, and let the mind of an animal be given to him. And let seven times pass over him.



“Nebuchadnezzar,”
by William Blake
copper plate –
c. 1795
Tate Britain, London



“In the Lion’s Den,” from the play, *Daniel in Babylon*

*In the lion’s den it’s black and white
Your fate is sealed
Can’t put up a fight
In the lion’s den you can’t avoid it
There’s real danger
In the lion’s den it is almost night
Nothing matters now
Just accept your plight
In the lion’s den it can destroy you
There’s real danger*



*There is no mercy in the lion's den
No second chances to begin again
Just trust in God right until the end*

The Lion's Den Experiences in the Christian's life are the experiences we are faced with literally each and every day to take a stand and make decisions in accordance with the will of Christ. It is a life and death test for us. We can only pass the test if our Christianity is from the inside out.

Daniel's response:

Daniel 4:19: (NRSV) *Then Daniel, who was called Belteshazzar, was severely distressed for a while. His thoughts terrified him. The king said, Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or the interpretation terrify you. Belteshazzar answered, my lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies!*

God had blessed Daniel with instant knowledge of this dream, and it was BAD NEWS! Daniel was troubled by it. We can see his attachment to the King in his distress in his response. So, what will he do? He will do what Daniel always does as we have seen over his 30 years in Babylon - he will act in accordance with faith and integrity, *but that is a story for another day...*

*So, why was Daniel so special?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Just a little bit more of the writings of A.O. Hudson to help paint the picture:

First, some more detail on the golden image...

(Source: A. O. Hudson) The height was 60 cubits, the breadth 6 cubits. Both numbers are consistent with the sexagesimal number system used by the Babylonians. That is, a base 60 system. (Today a base 10 system is customary, but we still divide an hour into 60 minutes, and a circle into 6 x 60 degrees, from the Babylonian system.) These figures yield a ratio of height to width of 10 to 1, which would be a very narrow image relative to the height...Yet the ancients depicted their gods exactly this way. The figurines of Baal that come mainly from Syria and Palestine are good examples ...so for Nebuchadnezzar to make a statue with these proportions would not have been unusual.

Probably the image was a representation of Marduk, the national god of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor was also named for this god. The common version rendering of his name is Evilmerodach. (2 Kings 25:27), but the transliteration from the Babylonian is usually given as Amel-Marduk.

Babylon was built with millions of burned bricks, and it is likely the furnace mentioned was used for the firing of large amounts of brick. Some describe these as large beehive shaped kilns with an opening at the top, and a side door for inserting and withdrawing the bricks. The three Hebrews would have been familiar with the furnace, and knew the King did not threaten in vain.



Second, some more on the political and cultural setting of the image and the fiery furnace:

King Nebuchadnezzar was now at the zenith of his glory. The "head of gold" had become the conqueror of nations. He had seen three successive pharaohs of Egypt, the rival nation, pass into death-two of them struck down by his own hand... The proud city of Tyre, after a siege of 13 years, had been forced to capitulate. The Assyrians were no more, and their mighty city of Nineveh was a mass of broken down ruins. The Ten Tribes were scattered to the wilds of Armenia, spreading slowly outwards, and the remnants of Judah dwelt in the south of Babylon. The Holy Land laid a desolate waste.

For seven or eight years now the King, having measurably pacified his widely spread empire, had been devoting himself to the erection of adornment of the wonderful buildings for which both he and the city became famous. Temples and palaces, roads and canals, parks and gardens, all grew quickly under the inspiration of his fiery enthusiasm.... Every street corner and public square boasted statues and sculptures executed in stone or bronze; the temples and public buildings were adorned with richly painted representations of historic events in Babylonian history and mythology; the libraries were replete with books dealing with every conceivable subject - inscribed clay tablets which have proved to be the most imperishable of all written records. The King's own passion for recording all his actions and his feelings toward his gods, taken together with the vivid intimate pictures given us by Daniel, make Neb. better known to us than any other king of antiquity.

Picture him now, a little above sixty years of age, in his own domestic circle, with the Median wife whom the historian says he dearly loved and their family. Avil-Marduk (who succeeded him as king)... Nitocris, the mother of Belshazzar and another daughter whose name is not recorded. Daniel on his frequent visits to the great palace... would have noticed with growing apprehension the changing disposition of the king-feverish exultation and pride in his achievements, forgetful of the great miracles wrought by the God of Heaven whom he had once been so ready to acknowledge, his increasing devotion to the service of Bel, the deity of Babylon. The incident of the fiery furnace was some ten years in the past; the dream of the great image more than thirty years; and the visible evidence of his work, crowned by the mighty temple which his own enthusiasm had done so much to complete, was steadily driving the nobler impulses from his mind.

Third, a little food for thought on heroism... The idea of a hero is probably overused these days. The kind of hero that we want to look in upon is what I think of as a "Lifetime Hero" - someone who lives above and beyond his fellows for an extended period and leaves a life legacy of heroism behind him. Daniel was one such hero. Consider the following "Five C's of Heroism" as a template for heroes like Daniel:

The Five C's of Heroism:

1. Conscience - one that is finely tuned
2. Circumstances - such that require heroic acts
3. Cause - one that is noble
4. Courage - above that of normal people
5. Conviction - that burns deeply within and dictates one's actions

Psalms 91:1-16: (NASB) ¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say to the LORD, my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust! ³For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His



faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. ⁵You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; ⁶Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. ⁷A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. ⁸You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. ⁹For you have made the LORD, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. ¹⁰No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. ¹¹For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. ¹²They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. ¹³You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. ¹⁴Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known my name. ¹⁵He will call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. ¹⁶With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation.

May God bless YOUR heroic efforts of faith!