

Living with Confidence in Babylon, Part 2

Daniel 2

9 Basic Biblical Truths:

- God is good.
- Sin is bad.
- Hell is hot.
- Heaven is offered.
- Jesus is Lord.
- Time is short.
- Eternity is long.
- Forgiveness is available.
- Choice is yours.

Babylon, both in Daniel's day and ours, poses **6 unique dangers** to the people of God. We are on #2:

Chapter 1: **Danger: Conformity.** **Decision: Character.** (1:8 *resolved in his heart...*)

*Babylon has a 3-fold agenda: *Eliminate, Indoctrinate, Assimilate.*

Chapter 2: **Danger: Confusion.** **Decision: Confidence & Clarity.**

A New Hope man: *"Your sermon...was exactly what I needed to hear for myself in this time...Action steps out of Daniel 2 was excellent for my soul. I know MANY other friends dealing with the same dilemma...I am praying for prudence and discretion as we all navigate the world through the Christian worldview."*

*When we **left the story** last week, we left Daniel **smack dab in the middle of crisis.**

*I left the story hanging midair because that's how life is; often days without resolve or answers.

1. Confusion rocks a nation, (v.1-16)

"Federal Mandate – Legal Sanctions – Cultural Confusion – Pending Execution."

*An unexpected knock came to Daniel's door and there stood the **Chief of Police** with an **executive order signed by the king**, ordering the immediate execution of all the 'PhD's' of the land.

*Issue? The king had dreams tormenting him, given by God. When the PhD's were unable to read his mind and tell him the dream, he ordered they be rounded up for execution.

*There were **many names** on the list, mostly **godless Babylon officials**, but most importantly to the story...there were **4 names on the list of Hebrew boys** who loved the Lord: **Daniel and his 3 friends.**

*These **4 godly young men** had done nothing wrong. They were merely **"Caught in the Crossfire of Cultural Confusion"** and faced the **same consequences as coworkers.**

*New Hope, this is **key** to understanding this chapter:

*In Daniel 2, these boys are not facing consequences **for their faith, but in spite of their faith.**

***A Great Reminder for us: There will be times** when we are singled out and opposed **for our faith**, like will happen in Daniel 3 (fiery furnace) and Daniel 6 (Lions Den)

*Those days are coming, and we must be prepared to stand firm in the grace of God.

*But **there are many times** we are **lumped in** with everyone else and go through crisis, simply because we are **“Caught in the Crossfire of Cultural Confusion.”**

That’s where we pick up where we left off. It’s bedtime and the boys are caught in the crossfire.

*The **execution date** was set. The **consequences of noncompliance** were coming. The **highest authority** on earth had commanded their death. And **not a single human** could help.

*For the **godless men** of Babylon, there was **no hope; no appeals process; no higher power.**

*For the 4 **godly teens** from Jerusalem, this was **a perfect opportunity for their God to show up.**

*They appeal to someone higher than the king; to the highest office of the universe; to the God who is over Babylon.

2. ...but the Lord gives clarity. (v.17-30)

- *Seek God as you need* (v.17-18)
- *Rest in God as you wait.* (v.19a)
- *Exalt God when He answers* (v.19b-23)
- *Point to God who deserves credit* (v.24-30)

*This will be as far as we get today. Picking up the story at the point of crisis...until God answers.

- ***Seek God as you need*** (v.17-18)
*“Daniel...made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to **seek mercy from the God of heaven** concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.” (v.17-18)*

When bad news came knocking, **Daniel’s first instinct is: “Pray.”** Appeal to the God of heaven.

*And Daniel didn’t just pray, he called his buddies to pray.

*These 4 boys were **spoon fed the Bible together**; they **went to the same synagogue**; they now **stand firm in Babylon** together; men of whom the world was not worthy.

Who are your Top 3 companions? Why ask your TOP 3 to pray?

- It’s calming to know **others stand with you.**
- It’s cheering to know **prayer surrounds you.**
- It’s comforting to know **God has not left you.**

*New Hope, my prayer for every one of you is that you **stand firm**...and have others **standing side by side** with you in prayer. **I’ve been praying a passage for you:**

*“Remember those earlier days...when you **stood your ground** in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you **stood side by side** with those who were so treated.” (Heb 10:32-33)*

*New Hope, when **bad news comes knocking**, I hope you see how critical it is to have a **small community of brothers/sisters** who will join you in taking your request to the God of mercy.

Action Step: *When others are requesting, pause for prayer.*

*As 'fate' would have it, **I was studying this passage Tuesday** when I got a message (**SE Asia**)

"Just got news that Sister Yi was arrested this morning together with 3 of her leaders – we are not sure on what charges – please be in prayer for her and the team."

*My first thought: *"Oh man, that's hard."* And then I went back to studying – because *"Man, I'm busy and I have things to do!"*

*After 3 minutes, as I read about Daniel's **companions** standing side by side with him in prayer, I was convicted to the heart, stopped, and prayed for our sister. Then sent a text:

"Know that today I am praying Hebrews 10 for Sister Yi. Praying she stands her ground and knows that we stand side by side with her in the great contest of suffering."

What if someone asks you to pray?

- Pray!
- Pray immediately!
- Follow up and let them know you prayed!

*Here's an encouragement: If someone shares a crisis with you, and you say you're going to pray, then pray! And pray right then and there with them!

*You know, as well as I do, what happens when you say you'll pray. Life gets in the way, and 5 days later you think: *"Hmmm. I wonder what happened to Betty's crisis."*

- **Rest in God as you wait** (v.19a)
*"Then the **mystery was revealed** to Daniel in a vision of the night."* (v.19a)

*Don't miss the storyline. **BAD NEWS had come knocking. PRAYERS were offered.** And Daniel went to bed with the **ANSWER still pending.**

*This is a word nobody likes: **"PENDING."**

"Pending" a decision; pending an answer; conjures up anxiety and what-if's...

*Well that's where many of us are. Seasons of **"PENDING"** where a situation beyond our control

*Meanwhile, the clock is ticking. The execution is coming. The future is frightening.

*But don't miss it. Even with the **situation pending...Daniel** sets his alarm and goes to sleep.

*It's a marvelous storyline...and it's true.

*The **king of Babylon can't sleep even though** he sits in authority.

*The **child of God falls asleep even though** he awaits an execution.

Action Step:

When prayers are pending, pause for perspective.

*One man from New Hope sent a message this week on how he waits on God:

*“Our great and heavenly Father God already has **this entire mess** sorted out. He knows **when, where and how**...Our God has all our troubles taken care of, all our needs met, all our problems solved.*

*Of course **He has yet to share this information with us**. Yet, in faith, we must believe that a fully sovereign God knows the end from the beginning, and has already taken care of our desires, hopes, dreams, and every tomorrow that we will see.”*

Perspective when prayers are pending:

- *At the moment, God is at work.*
- *In the morning, God will be faithful.*
- *Whatever the outcome, God is still in charge.*

*And sure enough, as **Daniel sleeps**, the **God who never sleeps** goes about His work and answers the prayer by revealing the mystery to him in a dream.

• **Exalt God when He answers** (v.19b-23)

“Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ‘Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king’s matter.”

*it’s an explosion of praise because Daniel’s **appeal to the highest office in the universe worked**

*When he went to bed, execution was hanging over his head.

*When he woke up, God had revealed the mystery in his head.

*God did it for **Joseph** when Pharaoh had a dream. He did it for **Daniel** when Neb had a dream.

***It’s a unique and rare miracle** intended to show that God is King over Babylon!

*He has authority: **Over Time. Over Nations. Over Hearts. Over everything.**

*I gotta say, if this had happened to me, I would’ve RUSHED out the door, with barely enough time to grab a CLIF bar as I headed to the meeting with the King.

*Not Daniel. He gets on his knees and worships God with thanks and praise.

***I’m very proud of our staff.** We are really good at a lot of things. (The prep. The planning. The execution. The details. The evaluation. The high value of excellence.)

*But here’s a secret **you can keep between you and I, and only tell 1 other person:**

*One thing we struggle with: **Schedules are so busy** and our **pace is so hurried**, that as soon as one thing is done we **move on to the next**, without nearly enough time to pause and give God praise for all He has done.

*It's a common disease many of us have: **R.U.S.H. Rapid, Urgent, Speedy, Hurried.**

*We **rush** to the next thing. **Rush** to the next person. **Rush** to the next meeting. **Rush** to the next event. **Rush** to the next crisis. **Rush** to the next need.

*We need to go from **RUSH TO HUSH**, and pause long enough to exalt God.

Action Step:

When God does answering, pause for praise.

7 Reasons to give God praise:

- His salvation of our souls.
- His protection of our leadership.
- His provision of resources.
- His expansion of missions.
- His direction of our Battle Plan conference.
- His relocation of our Youth Pastor.
- His navigation through cultural crisis.

- ***Point to God who deserves credit*** (v.24-30)

*"24 Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: **"Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."***

*Note, very briefly, how **1 righteous man** intervenes to **save the wicked**.

*My o my, **who does that remind you of?** Daniel didn't have to do that. He could've let the wicked die. But he is an **agent of mercy**, representing the **God of mercy** in Babylon.

*What a picture of what our **Lord Jesus did for us**. His cross intervened on behalf of sinful men and appealed to a holy God: *"Do not destroy the people whom I have saved."*

*25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah **a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.**" 26 The king declared to Daniel... **"Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"** 27 Daniel answered the king and said, **"No [one]...can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,** 28 **but there is a God in heaven** who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...30 But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, **not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king..."***

*Notice the contrast: The captain takes personal credit, while Daniel gives God credit.

*Self-glory is the way of **Babylon**. God's glory is the way of the **Bible**.

*Daniel had unexpectedly been given the **biggest platform** he ever had.

*The **day before**, he stood in his kitchen toasting **Pop Tarts** when the doorbell rang.

***Now**, he stands in the presence of a King **delivering news** that would save lives.

*If ever there was a time for **self-glory and self-promotion**, surely this was it!

*He could have taken credit or couched his response in a way that made him look good.

Instead, when the King asks if **he was able**, Daniel points all the glory to where it is due:

Daniel: *"No, I'm not able. But I know someone who is...the God of Heaven."*

Action Step:

When others are applauding, pause for pointing.

*New Hope, what do you do when God **gives you a platform? When people give you credit?**

*Listen: None of us will ever be given a **platform as big as Daniel's**.

*But God will give you platforms in this world to point the credit to Him.

*Don't **squander opportunities**. When a platform is given, be ready to give Him the glory.

*If it's **a speech at a graduation** – give Him glory.

*If it's **prayer before a family meal** – give Him glory.

*If it's **an award at a work conference** – give Him glory.

*If it's **an interview with a paper** – give Him glory.

*If it's **a friend thanking you for generosity** – give Him glory.

*Whenever someone applauds you for something, pause and point it all to Him.

"I'm not really that good. But I can tell you who is. There is a God in heaven."

When Confusion came knocking on Daniel's door, this is how he got Clarity:

Seek God. Rest in God. Exalt God. Point to God.

***A New Hope family sent a testimony. Walked through every level in the process: Confusion to Clarity**

*"The sermon series has been just what we needed. The topic of conformity and drawing a line in the sand...were very appropriate for this week...**Much prayer and crying out to God throughout the week and hard conversations with our kids about what the future would look like...***

We had moments of doubt but quickly remembered that **God can move mountains** and if He didn't do what we hoped for, He would have something much bigger and better in store for our future...

The meeting came and God moved, big...

Through this we have met new people, **wove Christ into every conversation** we could, and when people said "Look what you guys did for standing up for your beliefs", we are quick to say "It was God! He did it all"...One battle fought and won for our Lord, onto the next."

Action Step Summary:

- *When others are requesting, pause for prayer*
- *When prayers are pending, pause for perspective*
- *When God does answering, pause for praise*
- *When people are applauding, pause for pointing*