



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

04-20-2015 @ 0900

**"It's Easy to 'Downgrade' God"**

Daniel 5:1-4

### Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Lord, I lift Your Name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises! I'm so glad You're in my life!  
I'm so glad You came to save us! You came from Heaven to earth to show the Way,  
From the earth to the Cross, my debt to pay; from the Cross to the grave,  
from the grave to the sky! Lord, I lift Your Name on high!

### Daniel 5:1-4

"One night, King Belshazzar invited a thousand noblemen to a great banquet, and they drank wine together. While they were drinking, Belshazzar gave orders to bring in the gold and silver cups and bowls which his father Nebuchadnezzar had carried off from the Temple in Jerusalem. The king sent for them so that he, his noblemen, his wives, and his concubines could drink out of them. At once the gold cups and bowls were brought in, and they all drank wine out of them, and praised gods made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever used "God" or the "things of God" as "talismans" or "good luck charms" to boost your own ego, justify your speech/actions, or help further your own agenda?
- Have you ever used a bit of profanity, gone someplace you should not have, hung with the wrong crowd, or skipped church just to show your independence or how "grown up" you were?
- What would the "gods" of our culture include? What personalities? What material items? What secular goals? What worldly principles? How do you see them "honored" today?

King Belshazzar is trying to fill some very big shoes. His father, King Nebuchadnezzar, enjoyed enormous fame as the most illustrious king of his day, the "Glory of Babylon", known far and wide as the greatest monarch among men. What a "tough act" to follow! The effort to prove that he is a worthy son and a legitimate king in his own right, (and not just a second-rate descendant of a *true* king,) must consume him. This may explain his blasphemous activities in today's passage; he's looking for ways to prove how mighty he is in his own right. (How many modern "believers" are guilty of doing the same sort of thing? How many "disciples" still want to be seen as "people of real worth" among their peers? What if those "peers" are not Christians? Is this when it's "politically correct" or "socially acceptable" to "tone down faith" or "walk a wiser walk" so as not to be seen as *too* religious? Do we, like Peter, "deny Christ" under pressure, curse, swear, or use a little profanity or "swap gossip" to show "we're with the 'in crowd'"? Do we pass on that juicy little joke that wouldn't be appropriate in mixed company "just for laughs"? Are these among the "minor faults" and "minimal compromises" so easily employed to show the world "God's not such a big deal" and "Church people keep such silly rules"?) This is what King Belshazzar is doing by calling for the cups and bowls of the Temple. His father may have been swayed or turned by the events surrounding this Supreme God, but he has not. He is "playing to the crowd" to "impress the impressionable" and garner the support of the strong. Big mistake! God, grant us the Grace of Wiser Sight! Help us appreciate Your Power and Wisdom, and treat Your Gifts of life, love, and laughter with an attitude of gratitude in humble and childlike hearts. Belshazzar missed the point of stories he had heard of Your Goodness and Truth. Help us profit from his example, learn from the Scriptures, and walk humbly with You in the Way of Righteousness!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

04-21-2015 @ 0900

**"It's Easy to Forget About God"**

Daniel 5:5-8

### Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Lord, I lift Your Name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises! I'm so glad You're in my life!  
I'm so glad You came to save us! You came from Heaven to earth to show the Way,  
From the earth to the Cross, my debt to pay; from the Cross to the grave,  
from the grave to the sky! Lord, I lift Your Name on high!

### Daniel 5:5-8

"Suddenly a human hand appeared, and began writing on the plaster wall of the palace, where the light from the lamps was shining most brightly. And the king saw the hand as it was writing. He turned pale, and was so frightened that his knees began to shake. He shouted for someone to bring in the magicians, wizards, and astrologers. When they came in, the king said to them, 'Anyone who can read this writing, and tell me what it means will be dressed in robes of royal purple, wear a gold chain of honor around his neck, and be the third in power in the kingdom!' ...but none of them could read the writing..."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever suddenly needed to figure out some mathematic problem, but could no longer remember how to do it, because you hadn't used those formulas in so long a time?
- Have you ever found yourself in a "real pickle", and the first name that came to your mind was "Mamma"? Was it because Mamma could always "make things better"?
- Who are some of the other "advisors" you consult when "life happens", and major issues arise in your life? How did you first learn they were "wise enough" to help...and worthy of trust?

King Belshazzar was raised in the palace where his father had come to know the supremacy of God Almighty. He had grown up on the stories, (maybe even witnessing some of those events himself,) of all his father had seen/heard of God's interventions on behalf of the Hebrews who trusted in Him. Now he is the king, and in trying to manifest his own "control of the realm", chooses to "forget" the events of "bygone times". (How many "modern believers", who have grown up on the stories of God's faithfulness, do likewise, and choose to "forget" or otherwise marginalize them as "illustrations" or "myths"?) God is seldom the first factor the "secular" members of society consider, and certainly not the "most popular choice" of the "worldly powers" who insist on going their own merry way. In such an environment, it's easy to "forget" many of the "foundational blocks of faith" we were given as we grew. Then suddenly life shows up with a "test", which involves "judgement", and it's time to pay our dues. Where do we turn in these times? From whom do we seek help? What "life-saving measures" have we practiced? What "crisis intervention plans" have we prepared for those critical times of life? Are they "in place" and "ready to roll"? Most of all, are they "God-centered" and "God-powered"? If not, when we put them into practice, they "fall short" or "go down in flames", panic sets in, and we are left with "legs shaking" like "little king B"! Notice how he calls for everybody but the One who could actually help. God, grant us the Grace of Truer Wisdom and deeper Faith! You are so much more than a "myth", or a "secondary character" in a fanciful tale. All "Power" proceeds from Your Love, and "Wisdom" flows from Your Truth! Every Blessing, Grace, and Gift we treasure comes from You. All the people we trust, (mom, dad, friends, doctors, lawyers, or other counselors,) You have sent us. So remind us to turn to You FIRST, so You are our "Steering Wheel" instead of our "Spare Tire"!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

04-22-2015 @ 0900

**“Listen, and Hear The Testimony!”**

Daniel 5:10-12

### Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Lord, I lift Your Name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises! I'm so glad You're in my life!  
I'm so glad You came to save us! You came from Heaven to earth to show the Way,  
From the earth to the Cross, my debt to pay; from the Cross to the grave,  
from the grave to the sky! Lord, I lift Your Name on high!

### Daniel 5:10-12

“The queen mother heard the noise made by the king and his noblemen, and entered the banquet hall. She said, ‘May Your Majesty live forever! Please do not be so disturbed and look so pale. There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. When your father was king, this man showed good sense, knowledge, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the fortunetellers, magicians, wizards, and astrologers. He has unusual ability and is wise and skillful in interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining mysteries; so send for this man, Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar, and he will tell you what all this means!’”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever been completely sure your world was coming from “together” to “apart” right before your eyes? What event(s) made you so certain of doom?
- Were you convinced “there was no hope” until someone you trusted “stepped up” to share with you there was “a way out”? What made you sure you could believe this “news”?
- Did you ever face a “brutal-to-near-impossible” task/project/mission, until “a friend” showed you a simple little step that “cleared the way”? Did you wonder why you didn't see it yourself?

Fear's folly freezes fools! How often panic blinds us to awesome possibilities! We'd see them with ease from a different perspective. It's easy to ignore a simple solution “right in front of us”. Things we would do with ease in “normal” conditions we fail to achieve. People we'd gladly consult in the usual course of events go unrecognized, and options we'd naturally consider don't even occur to us. The enemy of our souls knows this, and uses it often to catch “the unprepared” off guard. So many “believers” use prayer so little, and turn to God so seldom, they make “easy prey”. When such shallow disciples do pray, it's with a fearful and uncertain spirit, usually about inconsequential issues and insignificant whims, without having first sought God's Presence or aligned with God's Will. This would indicate a stunted knowledge of “God”, and limited awareness of all that God can really do for “beloved children” who approach with humble faith, childlike confidence, and obedient spirit. King Belshazzar heard of Daniel from his own father; he should have known the One to whom he needed to turn. But pride and panic blinded him to his “road to renewal”. When “life happened”, he freaked out. So “Mama” stepped up to testify that “An answer is available; just get the right man to go to the true God, and all will be made plain!” That put “the ball” back in Belshazzar's “court”. The king now has a choice. He is listening, but will he *hear*? What about us? Will we learn from his example? Will we listen? Will we turn to God? Will we let go of all symbols of our power/pride, and go completely “all-in” for God? God, grant us the Grace of Deep Humility. Teach us to receive the testimonies You emplace all around us, to recognize them as Your Words, and accept them as Your Guidance, so we find in You our true birthright in the “Eternal Royalty” You establish and sustain!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

04-23-2015 @ 0900

**“Listen, and Hear the Testimony!”**

Daniel 5:18-23

### Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Lord, I lift Your Name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises! I'm so glad You're in my life!  
I'm so glad You came to save us! You came from Heaven to earth to show the Way,  
From the earth to the Cross, my debt to pay; from the Cross to the grave,  
from the grave to the sky! Lord, I lift Your Name on high!

### Daniel 5:18-23

“The Supreme God made your father, Nebuchadnezzar, a great king, and gave him dignity and majesty. ...But because he became proud, stubborn, and cruel, he was removed from his royal throne and lost his place of honor. He was driven away from human society, and his mind became like that of an animal. He lived with wild donkeys, ate grass like an ox, and slept in the open air with nothing to protect him from the dew. Finally, he admitted that the Supreme God controls all human kingdoms, and can give them to anyone he chooses. But you, his son, have not humbled yourself, even though you knew all this. You acted against the Lord of Heaven...”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever found yourself in a “real jam”, forced to listen to someone tell you, “You should have known better”, because you chose to ignore what experience had made plain?
- Have you ever gotten frustrated while watching people “mess up” after you had spent so much time and effort demonstrating proper technique and coaching their practice?
- What have you noticed about the times you “acted against the Lord of Heaven”? How would you say things “worked out”? How are things between you and the “Lord of Heaven” now?

“I told you so!” “What were you *thinking*?” Few things in life hurt more than such “friendly reminders” that we “know better” than to do what we just did. This is especially true in matters of faith, (or the lack of it)! In more “traditional” sectors of our country, people have “grown up in church”, or have had parents, grandparents, and other relatives or family friends for whom “religious expression” was as natural as breathing. In a variety of “issues” and “situations”, they had learned to “trust God” to meet or exceed every need. Through their example and testimony, we have seen prayer *work*, witnessed “broken” hearts healed, “lost” lives salvaged, wimpy “chumps” changed into champions, and seen the transformational effects of the Grace of God in shockingly awesome displays. But “life happened”, and “we grew up”. In a wide, largely secular world, we found it easier to “go along to get along” in a variety of ways which often didn’t involve continuing in the path of “devotion to God” we had learned. Pretty soon, “God” was a “part-time partner”, His Word, simply “one truth among many”, and our devotional response hardly more than a relationship of convenience, in which we may slow down and consider Him around Christmas or Easter. It’s time to “take a page” from the Book of Daniel. We need to remember the Divine Interventions and holy testimonies of the saints who experienced them. Then we must pause to reflect that the same Holy One still occupies the Throne of Mercy, and will still justify the trust of His Faithful! God, grant us the Grace of Holy Memory! Keep us grounded in mighty Promises You made of old: “I am with you! I am your Healer...Savior...Redeemer! I am Shelter in your every storm! I am your Champion in every battle, your Advocate in every case, and your Refuge in every crisis!” Teach us, Lord, to remember You, and STAND in faith on all You’ve revealed!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

04-24-2015 @ 0900

**"What 'God' do You Honor?"**

Daniel 5:22-24

### Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Lord, I lift Your Name on high! Lord, I love to sing Your praises! I'm so glad You're in my life!  
I'm so glad You came to save us! You came from Heaven to earth to show the Way,  
From the earth to the Cross, my debt to pay; from the Cross to the grave,  
from the grave to the sky! Lord, I lift Your Name on high!

### Daniel 5:22-24

"But you, his son, have not humbled yourself, even though you knew all this. You acted against the Lord of Heaven, and brought in the cups and bowls taken from His Temple. You, your noblemen, your wives, and your concubines drank wine out of them and praised gods made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone – gods that cannot see or hear, and that do not know anything. But you did not honor the God who determines whether you live or die, and who controls everything you do! That is why God has sent the hand to write these words."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Did you ever take an "oath of honor" you later broke when it became a bit too "inconvenient"? What does this say about the place of "honor" in your "scale of values" at that moment?
- Has anyone ever "dishonored" or "disgraced" a person, place, or thing that had serious emotional value to you? What response did you make to such mockery?
- Can you think of anyone you know for whom "honor" is a sacred trust, a value so precious this person would rather die than compromise a "debt of honor"?

**Honor Offers Purpose Everywhere!** Across ages and cultures, the "heroes" and "heroines" were admired more for their honor than their exploits. In the societies who documented their progress and accomplishments, the "movers and shakers" were "people of their word". They said what they meant, and they meant what they said. When they promised anything to anyone, they'd keep the promise, or die trying! Their "honor" was at stake! Less "worthy" and more "imperfect" characters in their stories were known to be "untrustworthy" and "treacherous". If they were also proud, greedy, and envious, they were viewed as "dishonorable"! This is about where Belshazzar finds himself. Even with his father's example to guide him, he decides to "go dad one better"! "Feeling his oats", he throws a party to "show off" before nobility of his realm. But that's still not enough; he's got to demonstrate that even Heaven bows to him! So he sends for the captured "temple-ware" to mock the "God of his father's captives". At the height of his mockery, the Lord delivers His "wake-up" Call, and "little King B" knows enough to be afraid...very afraid! But he's still not sure of the details, so Daniel spells it out for him here. Now what about us? Has God been feeling a bit "far away" of late? Do prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling? If we really want to "know God's Presence", are we ready to render "fitting honor" humbly and honestly? Note Daniel's warning: "You did not honor the God who determines whether you live or die, and who controls everything you do." God, grant us the Grace of True Honor! Rather than seeking it for ourselves, teach us to offer it to You...by the lives we live, the relationships we cultivate, the careers we pursue, and the conduct we engage, both at home and in business. You are the One who determines the boundaries of all we think, say, or do. Empower us to "honor" You first, then hold in honor all the other "gifts" You entrust to us to glorify Your Name & see to our needs!