

THE SPIRIT OF BABYLON AND OUR RESPONSE: PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Dearly Beloved of the Father,

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."
(Daniel 12:13).

As we continue to navigate the last days of earth's history, students of Scripture would no doubt pay attention to the great prophecies found in the book of Daniel. The Hebrew prophet—who was at the same time a highly respected statesman to multiple world-ruling monarchs—bore some of the highest responsibilities as he dwelt in Babylon about 500 years before Christ. Under the gift of prophecy, Daniel was told by the angel Gabriel that, though he would rest in the grave physically, his inspired testimony would speak in the last days. Daniel would "*stand in his lot* at the end of the days." The prophecies in this important book bearing Daniel's name—prophecies found in chapters 2, 7 through 9, and 11 through 12—definitely have their part in our time, and we must continue to study and trust their entire fulfillment. But what of the other chapters capturing Daniel's life, and the challenges besetting Hebrew believers under Babylonian rule? Can we find great depth of instruction in the practical tests which were faced by Daniel and his faithful contemporaries in ancient Babylon? Are there parallels between the workings of ancient Babylon, and the workings of modern Babylon? Is the *practical Christian response* to the spirit of Babylon equally necessary for us to consider, even as we look to the prophetic fulfillment of the final events?

To put it more distinctly, were the practical tests seen in Daniel's Babylonian era, object lessons to show that we must likewise pass these tests if we expect to stand in our lot in these last days, as Daniel has? In my humble summary analysis, I would say the practical tests revealed in Daniel's era, are *intrinsically* similar to what we are facing today. I ask us to prayerfully analyze these practical tests recorded in ancient Babylon, to see whether the same spirit is not being manifested in last-day Babylon. In the final analysis, let us examine ourselves to see what our own response should and will be, in order that we would be saved in the end.

The Faithful faced the Test of Health Reform in Babylon

DANIEL 1:5-6, 8 (KJV)>> ⁵And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. ⁶Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. . . . ⁸**But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.**

DANIEL 1:12-17 (KJV)>> ¹²Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. ¹³Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. ¹⁴So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. ¹⁵**And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.** ¹⁶Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse. ¹⁷As for these four children, God

gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Among the viands placed before the king were swine's flesh and other meats which were declared unclean by the law of Moses, and which the Hebrews had been expressly forbidden to eat. **Here Daniel was brought to a severe test. Should he adhere to the teachings of his fathers concerning meats and drinks, and offend the king, and probably lose not only his position but his life? or should he disregard the commandment of the Lord, and retain the favor of the king, thus securing great intellectual advantages and the most flattering worldly prospects?** {SL 19.2}

Daniel did not long hesitate. He decided to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8). {SL 19.3}

There are many among professed Christians today who would decide that Daniel was too particular, and would pronounce him narrow and bigoted. They consider the matter of eating and drinking as of too little consequence to require such a decided stand--one involving the probable sacrifice of every earthly advantage. But those who reason thus will find in the day of judgment that they turned from God's express requirements and set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They will find that what seemed to them unimportant was not so regarded of God. His requirements should be sacredly obeyed. Those who accept and obey one of His precepts because it is convenient to do so, while they reject another because its observance would require a sacrifice, lower the standard of right and by their example lead others to lightly regard the holy law of God. "Thus saith the Lord" is to be our rule in all things. {SL 19.4}

What if Daniel and his companions had made a compromise with those heathen officers and had yielded to the pressure of the occasion by eating and drinking as was customary with the Babylonians? That single instance of departure from principle would have weakened their sense of right and their abhorrence of wrong. Indulgence of appetite would have involved the sacrifice of physical vigor, clearness of intellect, and spiritual power. One wrong step would probably have led to others, until, their connection with Heaven being severed, they would have been swept away by temptation. {SL 23.2}

The Faithful faced the Test of Worship in Babylon

DANIEL 3:1-3,4-8,12-18, (KJV)>> ¹Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. ²Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. . . . ⁴Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, **O people, nations, and languages,** ⁵That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: ⁶And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. ⁷Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, **all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.** ⁸Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. . . . ¹²There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. ¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? ¹⁵Now if. . . ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and **who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?** ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, **O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.** ¹⁷If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

DANIEL 6:3-7,10-11,13 (KJV)>> ³Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. ⁴Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. ⁶Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. ⁷All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. . . . ¹⁰Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he 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. ¹¹Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. . . . ¹³Then answered they^[the conspirators] and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

Unswerving Obedience to God's Law was the True Safeguard

DANIEL 3:19-30 (KJV)>> ¹⁹Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ²⁰And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²²Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²⁴Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵He answered and said, **Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.** ²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.** Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. ²⁷And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. ²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, **Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.** ²⁹Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language,

which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. ³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

DANIEL 6:16-28 (KJV)>> ¹⁶Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, **Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.** ¹⁷And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. ¹⁹Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. ²⁰And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, **O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?** ²¹Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. ²²**My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.** ²³Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. **So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.** ²⁴And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. ²⁵**Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. ²⁶I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. ²⁷He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.** ²⁸So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

What does all this teach us?

1. The same Spirit of Babylon past is what we are called to endure in the end.
2. The tests are progressive. The earlier tests are given to be passed in order that we may be prepared for the greater ones.
3. The spirit of compromise results in the failing of the test, and reveals the unreadiness of our character. Barring a thorough repentance, we will be shaken off the narrow way to be left in darkness.

The tests are meant to be passed, having eternal consequences.

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: "God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people." Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. **Individuals are tested and proved a**

length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: "They are joined to their idols, let them alone," and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation. {1T 187.1}

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness. {5T 81.1}

Conclusion: An Uncompromising Response is required to overcome Babylon

REVELATION 14:8-12 (KJV)>> ⁸And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.** ⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,** ¹⁰**The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,** which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and **they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.** ¹²Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

We are to hold the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus as dearer to us than this temporal life. We are to make no compromise about those eternal principles—not even in the smallest particular—for this is very proof of our fidelity to God, and His faithfulness to us. "Them that honour me I will honour." (1stSam.2:30). Only that kind of Christianity will take us through the *Pharmakeia* Test, the *Mark of the Beast* Test, and the *Time of Trouble*. May God help us to take hold of the example of the Hebrew worthies who stood faithfully when thoroughly tested by Babylon. Amen.

Yours in the Faith,
Stone Cryer.
(*Luke 19:40*).

"And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40).

 AMEN.