

THE OPEN WINDOWS

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Daniel was a young man of nobility, born during the reign of King Josiah when the Law of Moses had been rediscovered and revival spread across the people of Judah. During his teenage years he had been taken into exile to Babylon where he was brought into the palace of the emperor Nebuchadnezzar II.

Nebuchadnezzar was considered the greatest king of the Babylonian Empire. The Empire originated out of a Mesopotamian city on the banks of the Euphrates River ... not far from where Abram came from. Today Babylon lies in ruins fifty-five miles south of Baghdad. Its beginnings centred around the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) where it demonstrated its rebellion against anything to do with God. Initially, it was under the authority of the powerful Assyria and its king, Tiglath-Pileser. Gradually though, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire became sufficiently powerful to conquer and replace the Assyrians. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Jerusalem was captured and its people brought to Babylon in three stages, during 605, 597, and 586 BC. ... This was the punishment God had repeatedly warned the people through His prophets.

Even though Nebuchadnezzar was renowned for his cruelty and wickedness, God nonetheless used him as His agent of judgment against Judah's idolatry and rebellion. In fact, God described Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant" (Jer. 25:9 27:6; 43:10) which illustrated how God had overruled in the life of this evil ruler so the Divine plan would be realised.

You wonder why God sometimes permits bad things to happen to His people. ... Well, since being taken from Jerusalem, Daniel's faith had been tested, but at the same time, strengthened. ... As a young boy, with his aristocratic family, he was carried into captivity in the first wave of the exile, 605 BC. Shortly after arriving in Babylon, - as happened with all foreign children, - Nebuchadnezzar attempted to introduce them into Babylonian society and wean them away from the religion and customs of their country. This is what he tried to do with Daniel and the young Jews from Jerusalem ... to divert them from their Jewish roots, and from Jehovah ... to introduce them to Babylonian literature, and education, and training ... to influence their children so they would completely lose their identity and the faith of their fathers. The intention was to fill their young heads and minds with Babylonian indoctrination. ... They would be taught how the Babylonian gods had brought about the success of the Babylonian Empire, and over time their 'education' would 'scale away' their national and Jewish identity. He even changed their names from the Hebrew Daniel ('God is my Judge') to the Babylonian 'Belteshazzar' ('prince of Bel'), Hananiah ('Jehovah has favoured') to 'Shadrach' ('royal'), Mishael ('who is what God is') to 'Meshach' ('guest of the king'), and Azariah ('Jehovah has helped') to 'Abednego' ('servant of

Nebo’, [Nebuchadnezzar, ‘may Nebo protect the crown’, Nebo was one of the primary gods of Assyria and Babylon] ... Very subtly Nebuchadnezzar was trying to ‘recondition’ these young minds away from their Jewish roots.

Pray for our children as this same mode of education, in modern form, is indoctrinating them with teaching that which is contrary to how the Bible teaches. Instead of the one true God, they are being taught there are many expressions of God. Instead of God having created the man and the woman, children are being taught to the contrary, for example, “Most people ... are either male or female. But some people don't neatly fit into the categories of "man" or "woman," or “male” or “female.” For example, some people have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, or a gender that is different than either male or female. Some people don't identify with any gender. Some people's gender changes over time” [*National Center for Transgender Equality*]. Instead of the institution of marriage which God decreed between a man and woman, our children are being taught a multitude of false and abominable devilish deceptions. Even in evangelical churches the ‘progressive Christianity’ explains, “No matter your sexual orientation or gender identity, you are exactly who God created you to be” ... “the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life”. ... Our young people are being indoctrinated to accept these and many other anti-God concepts and attitudes which were also the driving-force within the ancient pagan Babylonian society, with which Daniel and his Jewish friends were forced to contend.

Despite all the efforts of the Babylonian tutors though, the knowledge and fear of God was ingrained within Daniel. For example, when the Babylonian king compelled him to eat food the Law of Moses condemned as unclean and drink wine he was not allowed to drink he had to refuse (1:8ff.). In the will of God, the problem was resolved, and Daniel went on to win the respect of Nebuchadnezzar and was chosen to interpret his dreams. This continued after Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian reign had ended, and into the Medo-Persian reign of King Darius. Similarly, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused the king’s decree to bow before the statue, they told him, *Dan. 3:18* be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up, ... they could not and would not ... and God blessed them by saving them from the fire, and also as a witness to the king who subsequently declared, *Dan. 3:29* 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. ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

That was the kind of society Daniel was living in. ... There is a further ‘twist’ in chapter six when the authorities in the new regime wanted ‘to sweep clean’ any ‘leftovers’ from the Babylonian era, - of which they considered Daniel was a part.

The situation was *this*. King Darius appointed one hundred and twenty princes to rule over the people throughout his vast empire. He also appointed three presidents with significantly more power to oversee the work. Daniel was one of those three presidents, and in fact, he became the ‘chief’ president (6:2). However, the other two presidents and the one hundred and twenty princes began to search for ways to unseat Daniel because of what he believed. But it was a real problem to find anything incriminating to bring to Darius to accuse him. Everything Daniel did was beyond reproach and to the highest standard. There was not a single rule or law they could bring against him ... so, they decided to change the law!

They put pressure on Darius to introduce a new law making it illegal and punishable by death for anyone to worship any other god within a certain thirty-day period. Darius, completely unaware and incredibly naive, signed a charter and ‘handed on a plate’ the opportunity for these rascals to get rid of Daniel. They simply wanted to catch him praying! ... I wonder how easy it would be to catch many of us praying! ... All the while, Daniel knew what they were up to ... and he also knew the king’s signature had sealed the new law, but he *kept on praying!* We read, ^{Dan. 6:10} Now 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. ... Let’s explore what was happening in that room, in the mind and heart of Daniel, as he kneeled before **the open windows**.

THE SOUNDS HE COULD HEAR Above and beyond any earthly king, Daniel worshipped the King of kings, and he regarded the sovereignty of God over all earthly sovereigns. He did not deny Darius as ruler over the empire, but as far as Daniel was concerned, Jehovah was his supreme Authority. This was a personal relationship with God he had, as he engaged in his daily tasks in Babylon where Daniel believed the Lord had placed him. ... The Lord had formed him into what he was, and his commitment to the Lord was of the greatest value to him! ... If a document was brought to him which contravened God’s law, he would not have added his assent to it for God’s Word and God’s Law were preeminent. ... It is not that he was trying to be awkward, but it was simply how he put God in front of everything. ... Even though he was Nebuchadnezzar’s servant, his priority was to serve Jehovah.

Three times every day, - without fail, regardless of how busy he was, or where he was, - he knelt before the Lord for from early childhood, that was how his parents had taught him. He believed God was present in every situation, and as he knelt at **the open windows**, he would have heard the ‘busyness’ of the people outside in the streets of Babylon, a wicked city which had no time for Jehovah ... a city built by those who had decided, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name *[for ourselves]* (Gen. 11:4).

Daniel would have heard all the noises, but they did not distract him from taking time with the Lord. He knew that with almost all the people's activities, they mocked God by their style of living. They cursed His name without giving it a second thought.

He would have heard sounds he never heard in Jerusalem as a boy. In Jerusalem, as a boy, he would have heard the people going up to the temple. In the temple he would have heard the priests and the people pray. He would have heard them singing the psalms of David and Korah. He would have heard the sound of the shofar. ... Now though, in a strange and foreign land, there were the many sounds coming from a thoroughly godless people and yet, it did not stop him kneeling before **the open windows**, looking towards his beloved Jerusalem, and all the sounds of Babylon faded until nothing but the holiness of God was heard in that room. ... This was the quiet place the lawmakers were trying to shut down.

The sounds he could hear. ... THE SIGHTS HE COULD SEE ... If he had kept his eyes on the inhabitants of Babylon, their *ungodliness* would have distracted him. What a testimony though, that he was so firmly fixed upon Jehovah ... and that was Daniel's experience as he sat praying at the windows facing Jerusalem! ... Daniel would not allow Babylon to come between him and God, and he knew no matter how difficult Babylon became, God was with him, and God would overrule the plans of men! ... From the open window, **the sounds he could hear, the sights he could see ...**

THE SITUATION HE WAS IN Beyond any shadow of a doubt, he could *feel* the hostility towards him for he knew his enemies were planning to 'catch him out' so they could get rid of him and bring in *their* laws, *their* programmes, and more of *their* people. ... Isn't it interesting Daniel didn't lock himself in his house, shut his windows, pull the blinds down, close Babylon out and become a 'hermit'. ... Was Daniel the only one left true to Jehovah? ... No, he was not ... there were others for God always keeps a remnant. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi all spoke about a remnant of God's people. ... And Daniel was not alone for he had God with him, and Meshech, Shadrach and Abednego and many others who were faithful. Through the pagan exploits of Babylon, the devil reckoned he could get rid of God's people ... *but he can no more get rid of God's people than he can get rid of God!!*

And despite **the sounds he could hear, the sights he could see, the situation he was in** ... three times every day Daniel continued to kneel at **the open windows** ...

THE STEADFASTNESS OF HIS FAITH Yes, he prayed, because he did not consider defeat inevitable ... and notice how when he prayed, he did not blame God for the predicament he was in. Instead, he kept on doing what he had always done, he

gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime (v.10). ... As he looked through **the open windows** into Heaven, he saw a God who was committed to him and his people. He saw the faithful God in control, and it gave him the confidence to contend earnestly for the faith. He *thanked* God for everything God had allowed in his life. His surroundings could not keep him from prayer or praise! **The sounds he could hear, the sights he could see, the situation he was in ... and the steadfastness of his faith.**

He gave thanks to God for he believed in the power of prayer, and that God would defeat the enemy ... Daniel trusted in the Word of God and there he found the enemy can only do what God allows it to do ... and he knew *God always wins!*

Turn to chapter nine, ^{9:1} In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; ² In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.... Jeremiah ... seventy years ... where did he read about that? ... Jer. 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years ... And after the seventy years, what? Is it all over for Jerusalem, or what is going to happen? The Lord of hosts gave Daniel through the prophet Jeremiah the assurance, ¹² And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. ... That is hard to believe, but this was *prophecy*, ¹⁰ For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place [*Jerusalem, v.1,2,4l.* ... And this was the great certainty Daniel was clinging to ... that after seventy (*literal*) years, God would bring His people out of Babylon and back to Jerusalem ... And Daniel was counting the days!

You can see where the Word of God is taking us ... Daniel trusted in God, and he knew what God had already promised He would bring to pass, and having read Jeremiah, Daniel also would have known how the Lord had previously spoken, ^{Jer. 6:16} Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Daniel walked in the old paths and never strayed from them! Being elevated to one of the most powerful positions in the empire did not change him ... and as he knelt before **the open windows** where God could see into his home and into his heart ... through those **open windows**, *the light* from God's promises *beamed* in.

Daniel still had to go to the lion's den, but he did not go alone ... and he did not stay there for God delivered him. He always believed God was working 'behind the scenes', achieving His own purposes ... May God encourage us to be like Daniel! ...

Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone!

Dare to have a purpose firm!

Dare to make it known.