



Title: Enraging the Devil
Theme: Hell-shaking Prayer Warriors
Series: Grasping the Foundational Truths of Prayer

2 Corinthians 10: 4 says, “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

Hell-shaking prayers

In today’s message I will be referring a lot to the prophet Daniel. Few people in Scripture exhibit the faith, courage and prayerfulness seen constantly in the life of Daniel. This faithful prophet of God prayed hell-shaking prayers and set the example for us on how to be a Body of Christ that enrages the devil.

I would propose to you that the Word of God tells us to consider the life of great men and women of God who have lived a life of faith, ordinary people who did great things in the work of the Lord. (Hebrews 13:7; 11; Barnes Notes; The Expositors Bible Commentary)

Just what is seen in the life of Christians who exhibit the life of prayer that Daniel did?

A genuine faith in prayer

The first step to having a church that prays hell-shaking prayers is to have a pastor and spiritual leaders who are men that exhibit a genuine faith in prayer. Daniel 2:17-19 says, “Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends... He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery... During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision.

Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: ‘Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons; ...you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.’” (Daniel 2:17-23)

In this time of history God granted Nebuchadnezzar a remarkable dream that disclosed His plan for the ages to come until the final triumph of Christ. This king of Babylon was convinced that this dream was not just a passing fancy, but contained a message of the utmost importance. (The Expositors Bible Commentary; Who’s Who in the Bible) Like all people of the world Nebuchadnezzar puts his trust in other people. The Bible says he “...summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers...” (Daniel 2:2)

If they were able to tell him what the dream was and give him the interpretation of the dream, they would receive gifts, rewards and great honor. If not they would

be killed in a horrible manner. (Daniel 2:5-6) When the men told Nebuchadnezzar, “There is no man on earth who can do what the king asks...” and “What the king asks is too difficult...,” he became furious and ordered the execution of all the wise men including Daniel and his friends. (Daniel 10:10-13)

Daniel spoke with Arioch “...with wisdom and tact.” (Daniel 2:14) It is believed through proper channels Daniel was granted time. (Barnes Notes; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Thru the Bible) After receiving permission, “Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends... He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning the mystery...” of the dream.

The cohorts of hell were working through wicked men trying to do away with faithful men of prayer. Satan longs to destroy anything that has sweet fellowship with God and all that is being labored in towards the Lord’s perfect will. However, when two or three are agreeing, touching anything upon earth, God will be glorified. (Matthew 18:19) Churches that enrage the devil have men who agree and will unite in prayer expecting God to be merciful. (Thru the Bible; The Expositors Commentary; The Pulpit Commentary)

Daniel 2:19 says, “During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision.” Daniel’s response to the Lord’s revelation was an immediate prayer of detailed praise. His prayer to the Lord was no halfhearted thank you, but a prayer giving recognition to God’s Sovereignty, recognition of God’s willingness to give wisdom, knowledge and discernment to those who seek Him. Daniel praises God for knowing all things and revealing to him exactly what was in the dream of the king. (Daniel 2:20-23)

Daniel was taken to King Nebuchadnezzar. When the king asked Daniel if he could tell him the dream and interpret it, this prophet of God set the record straight. Daniel said, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he asks about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries...” Daniel goes on to explain, “As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation...” (Daniel 2:30) Here we see a truth that will keep men and women of prayer in a humble state as God gives them revelation. Christians who enrage the devil in prayer are Christians who know that their testimony about prayer is to bring glory to God.

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “The Great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy.” (Daniel 2:45) After Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar what the dream was and then interpreted it, the king became humble before God. The Bible says, “Then king Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate... The king said to Daniel, ‘Surely your God is the God of all gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.’”

Spiritual leaders and people of the church who engage in prayer which demolishes strongholds and defeats everything that sets itself up against the work of the Lord are Christians who spend the same amount of energy praising God for answered prayer as they do in petitions seeking God's intervention. They will be used of God to reveal to others that the Lord God is the only God.

Read the writing on the wall

Churches that enrage the devil have Christians who express a lifestyle that shows a genuine faith in prayer for God's glory, and they have spiritual leaders that can read the writing on the wall. Daniel 5:12 says, "...Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means." (Daniel 5:12)

At this time of history King Belshazzar was overseeing the city of Babylon. He chose to show contempt to the true God by bringing in the gold and silver goblets that were taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so he, his nobles, his wives and his concubines may drink wine from them while they praised their Babylon-idols. His purpose of heart was to insult the God of Israel while worshipping the gods of Babylon. (*Daniel 5:2-4; Matthew Henry's Commentary; The Bible knowledge commentary; Commentary on the Old Testament*)

Belshazzar well understood what crime he was committing. Among the heathens of his time it was considered religious irreverence to take a vessel that was dedicated to one god and use it to worship other gods or make common use of it. (Barnes Notes; The Bible Knowledge Commentary) Throughout Biblical history, the Lord has let frolic slide, but He often deals directly with that which attacks His honor. This irreverence caused God to give a visitation, thus setting the record straight.

This visitation, a sign of judgment, came in a way that clearly showed the offender that this was not the work of some man attending the banquet, but was the work signed by the Divine hand, the One who Belshazzar was purposely degrading. (Barnes Notes; Dr. Lightfoot) This visitation struck such fear in Belshazzar that "His face turned pale... and... his knees knocked together and gave way." (Daniel 5:6)

The Bible says, "Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall..." (Daniel 5:5) Belshazzar knew this was a serious message and wanted to know the contents. He "...called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners..." Whoever could read the writing and give its meaning would be held in high honor and given the third highest office in the land. (Daniel 5:7)

When God's judgment is being observed by those involved in offending the Lord, people start looking for answers. When America was attacked by the planes being flown into the World Trade Center people were looking for answers. As we approach the last days before the second coming of Christ, people are going to naturally be drawn to different teachers to find answers.

They will call on people, just like Belshazzar did, people who they think might have some answers, but hearts will not be satisfied and peace will not come because those giving the answers do not have the heart of God nor Divine revelation.

The Bible says, "...the king's wise men could not read the writing or tell them what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew even more pale. His nobles were baffled." (Daniel 5:8)

Once God has given a message, he will raise up men who know Him and seek Him, people of God who will proclaim His message.

Daniel 5:10-14 tells us how Daniel, a real man of prayer was seen by those in key positions. The Bible says, "The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. '...Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale!'" She said, "There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. ...This man Daniel... [is] found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means." (Daniel 5:10-14)

Daniel was brought before the king and was promised honor and even the third highest position in the land. This true man of prayer showed no interest in the gifts and rewards by answering, "...You may keep your gifts for yourself and give rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means." (Daniel 5:17)

Daniel likely refused Belshazzar's gifts and offer of rewards not out of pride or rudeness but in order to destroy any misconception that God's service could be bought and to avoid any obligation to the king. By doing this Daniel would avoid, as a God enlightened proclaimer, every appearance of self-interest in the presence of authority, thus showing them that such a man of God did not regard earthly advantages. This heart of Daniel is a protection from having any hesitation of declaring truth. It shows all who hear the message of the Lord that truth will be proclaimed, whether it be pleasing or displeasing. (The New American Commentary; Commentary of the Old Testament;)

Churches who have leaders who are going to be used of God in these last days express the same heart as Daniel did as they serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The modern day praying church that enrages the devil and is victorious in what the Lord's calls her to do says, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God." (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)

There is a character trait found in the heart of Daniel that is wonderfully presented in Daniel chapter 5. This must be taken note of if the church is going to have spiritual leaders who are praying Holy Spirit led prayers that kick open the gates of hell. Daniel 5:24 says, "...the hand that wrote the inscription" came from God. Dr Lightfoot puts it this way, "That Divine hand which had written the two tablets for a law to his people now writes [His Word] to Belshazzar." (Matthew Henry Commentary)

Exodus 31:18 says, "When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God." (Exodus 31:18) At least two other places in the Word of God the Ten Commandments are referred to as coming by the finger of God or being referred to as the writing of God. (Exodus 32:15; Deuteronomy 9:10) "The finger of God" is synonymous with divine power or that of coming from Divine operation by which God is making His will known. (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; The Pulpit Commentary; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Daniel is a prophet of God who walked in step with the will of God. The Bible portrays him as being distinctly committed and humble. He rose to the highest governmental position in the administration of three empires and his lifetime spanned the entire period of Judah's captivity. The prophet Ezekiel lived at the same time as Daniel and Ezekiel referred to Daniel's righteousness and wisdom as being great. (Ezekiel 14:14,20; 28:3; The Teacher's Commentary)

Daniel had a great relationship with God and I believe he knew what his commission was before he even met with the king. In Daniel 5:18-28 we read of God using this faithful prophet of God to set the record straight and then pronouncing God's judgment. He reminded king Belshazzar who had given King Nebuchadnezzar authority, greatness and glory and splendor. He reminded Belshazzar how peoples and nations from every language feared Nebuchadnezzar. He told Belshazzar that when King Nebuchadnezzar became proud, the Lord God dwelt with him until he acknowledged that the Most High God is Sovereign over the kingdoms of men and can set over them anyone He wishes.

Daniel then rebukes King Belshazzar directly about the sin of pride and how he directly set himself against the Lord of heaven. Daniel then gives the meaning of the writings on the wall.

First - "Mene" God had literally numbered the years of his rule and it was now complete. Not only was his rule over the kingdom finished but also his life. Second - "Tekel" The Counsel of God had determined this and it was found that his moral character was deficient and he had no heart toward repentance. The Lord had pondered his actions, considered the merits of his case and found him unworthy to be brought into fellowship with Him. Third - "Peres" The kingdom would be divided and literally rent from him.

The spiritual application for today from the Word is: This is death, judgment and hell. Those who have not surrendered to the Lordship of Christ through repentance will be found in great want of the Savior forever. (The truths to the teachings of the meanings of these words “Mene, Tekel and Peres” come from a studying Matthew Henry Commentary; Tyndal Concise Bible; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory and The New American Commentary)

The church that will be used of God has communion with the Lord in prayer, just like Daniel did and she will have spiritual leaders who will address sin. They are able to read the writing of God’s Word. They will know that even though Belshazzar’s particular sins may not be found in this country. God looks upon the average home in America, a nation that says “In God We Trust” and sees sins that fall under the same category as Belshazzar’s sins did.

The handwriting on the wall in the banquet of self-indulgence is first, “Infidelity to Accorded Revelations:” Just as Belshazzar knew of the God’s working in Nebuchadnezzar’s life. (Daniel 5:22)

People in proper authority have been well informed of the fact that this nation was founded and governed by men who had a reverent fear of God. Second, this nation “Sets Herself Up Against God.” Some of our governmental officials and even men claiming to be representatives of God are embracing homosexuality, an act that both the Old and New Testament say is a sin. The idols of inflations, profanity – the misuse of God’s Name, sensualism and the love for worldly views are being held higher than what God’s Word says. This breaks the heart of God just as much as the sins of Belshazzar. Thirdly, “Failure in Man’s Duty to Glorify God through His Life:” This is manifested through failure to consider God’s view as mankind lives out life.

Steadfast in prayer even if it may cost them their lives

The Church that enrages the devil can read the God’s warnings, disclose sin and proclaim God’s will through the written Word. She also has leaders who will be steadfast in prayer even if it may cost them their lives. Daniel 6:10 says, “...Three times a day [Daniel] got on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before.” Daniel’s prayer life got him in some hot water.

By this time in history “...Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators... by his exceptional qualities [the] king had planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this the other administrators... tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct in government affairs, but they could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. These men said, ‘We will never find any basis for charges against Daniel unless it has something to do against the law of his God.’” (Daniel 6:3-5)

Daniel's prayer life was well known, so Satan worked a plan through government officials to get a law out that said no one should pray to any god or man for thirty days except to King Darius. (Daniel 6:7) The penalty to be paid for breaking the law was to be thrown into the lions' den. (Daniel 6:7)

When Daniel learned of the law he went home opened his window that faced Jerusalem and prayed just as he had done before. His fellow administrators went as a group to the place where they knew they could find Daniel and there he was praying asking for help from God, so they turned him in. (Daniel 6:11) This was just as Jesus' fellow worker, Judas Iscariot, who had served with Him went and got officials so Jesus could be arrested in the garden of Gethsemane the place where our Lord usually prayed. (Luke 22:39-54)

In these times Christians are discovering the people who are most offended by prayer are public officials, those whom the Bible teaches the church is to have public prayer for. (1 Timothy 2:1-3) Even though we have public officials doing their best to make it illegal to pray publicly in Jesus' Name, Christians are still to pray in our Lord's Name. The true church has spiritual leaders who will pray in Jesus' Name and she is a church that enrages the devil.

Daniel paid the price for praying illegally and was thrown into the lions' den, even though King Darius was determined to rescue him through every effort that could be made. (Daniel 6:14) Darius was so aware of Daniel's prayer life to God that when he had Daniel thrown into the lions' den he said, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (Daniel 6:16) After losing sleep a second night and suffering the consequences for supporting such a horrible law, Darius runs to the lions den to see if God had rescued Daniel. (Daniel 6:18)

Daniel's answer to King Darius was, "...My God sent His angel, and shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me..." (Daniel 6:22) The gates of hell were kicked open and men who were the vessels of Satan were cast into the lions' den and crushed. (Daniel 6:24) "The king was overjoyed..." (Daniel 6:23) and the devil was enraged because King Darius issued a decree saying, "[in] every part of [his] kingdom people must fear and [show] reverence [to the] God of Daniel." (Daniel 6:26)

The church that has praying men such as Daniel come to the truth taught by Jesus Christ, "...the gates of Hades will not overcome [her]." (Matthew 16:18) "The gates of hell" can have a two fold meaning here. One interpretation is derived from the fact in Oriental cities the gate is a scene of deliberation and counsel. Hence "the gates" here may represent the evil designs planned by the powers of hell to overthrow the church or to at least hinder the work of the gospel. (The Pulpit Commentary)

This passage of Scripture can apply that the Body of Christ has enemies that fight against her and directly oppose the work of God. She has enemies who oppose the spread of the gospel, corrupt God's Word, and persecute faithful preachers and Christians. (Baker's Greek New Testament Library; Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Considering the fact that Jesus is building His church, she will be victorious. The application for us today through the life of Daniel is a praying church lays the foundation of a victorious church, thus enraging the devil and praying hell-shaking prayers.

A praying servant of God is the scourge of Satan and his demons. She is a church that 1.) Expresses a true faith in prayer. 2.) Points people to God's Sovereignty and addresses sin and 3.) Seeks God in prayer in Jesus' Name regardless of what the law of men says.

Let us pray!

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