

Daniel 05-12-11a

This is Sunday, the 11th of December 2005. We continue our study this morning in the book of Daniel. Let's take a moment, as is our custom, to spend a few moments in silent prayer.

It gives us the opportunity to make sure we're squared away in our soul. That God, the Holy Spirit, has the freedom to teach us and to minister the Word of God to our hearts. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful that we live in a nation where we are free to assemble ourselves as Christians.

To gather with a focus on your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To spend time in fellowship, to receive the blessing of spiritual gifts that you've distributed to each one of us. To be built up and edified and encouraged and strengthened through the study of your Word.

We thank you for the type of government that we have. We thank you for our governmental leaders and we pray for them. In particular, the President and his cabinet and staff who are believers and who are seeking to honor you in the execution of their duties.

We pray the same for those in Congress and those in the judiciary who, as with all of our leaders, are facing opposition and criticism and denigration by those who do not understand divine principles of government. We pray for those who are overseas and those here at home who serve in the armed forces and the military and in all of those areas which secure and safeguard our freedom and our American way of life. We thank you for this church.

We thank you for all those who assemble here and all those who study with us, both near and far. We pray a special blessing at this time on each one who hears your Word. May each of us find in it those truths, those principles and promises and doctrines that will thoroughly equip us for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Our scripture reading this morning comes from the book of Isaiah.

It is related to what the disembodied hand wrote on the wall of the palace in Babylon in the last night of the Babylonian Empire's existence. This is Isaiah chapter 14. You remember this is one of two great chapters that give us some insight into Satan, into his fall from heaven.

We tend to focus on those aspects of both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that give us that view, that insight into angelic happenings. But it is important also to realize that Isaiah 14 deals with the king of Babylon and uses him as the symbolic value that stands in for Satan himself. The chapter begins, The Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will still choose Israel and settle them in their own land.

This is a promise. You remember that Isaiah, the book of Isaiah, is like a miniature Bible. How many books are there in the Bible? Sixty-six.

How many chapters are there in Isaiah? Sixty-six. How many books are there in the Old Testament? Thirty-nine. How many books are there in the New Testament? Twenty-seven.

For a total of sixty-six. Thirty-nine Old Testament. Twenty-seven New Testament.

Total of sixty-six. You're Christians now. The Bible is your sword.

You've got to know where the handle is. You've got to know which end is pointy. Thirty-nine books in the Old Testament.

Twenty-seven books in the New Testament. If you look at the book of Isaiah with its sixty-six chapters, and this is a helpful outline because you ought to have a little bit of knowledge, at least, about each of the books of the Bible, even the ones we haven't done verse-by-verse and chapter-by-chapter yet. The first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah carry the message of the Old Testament.

It is the message of sin and righteousness and judgment on the nation of Israel. And yet, scattered through these first thirty-nine chapters, you still find the promise of deliverance, the promise of salvation, the promise of restoration. You find such a promise here at the beginning of chapter fourteen.

By the way, just keep your finger in Isaiah chapter fourteen and turn to Isaiah chapter forty. This is the beginning of the last twenty-seven chapters. Remember, forty through sixty-six inclusive, that gives you twenty-seven chapters, right? Because the zero-one counts as a chapter.

Look at Isaiah chapter forty. What's the very first thing you find here? Comfort ye, it said in the old King James, comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, her iniquity is pardoned.

She has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The time of judgment is past. The time of grace and restoration is at hand.

And this is the message of the New Testament. And it starts right here in Isaiah forty. So, Isaiah is like your miniature Bible.

Old Testament, first thirty-nine chapters. New Testament, forty through sixty-six. You find all of the great messianic promises in those last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah.

You find the picture of the suffering servant. You find he is wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our transgressions. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all and by his stripes we are healed.

In that section of Isaiah, it's the great salvation, future hope section of the book. Well, we're reading chapter fourteen. We're not doing Isaiah this morning, but it never hurts to remember the context of what you're reading.

Think about the book. Think about its message. Think about its audience.

Anytime we look up scriptures, they're not just proof texts. They're not just quick tags that say, okay, I guess that is in the Bible. Each of these books, it's almost a shame to go and pull one passage out of a book.

Because it really needs to be seen in its context. I was reminded of this last night. I'm corresponding with a gentleman in Indonesia who is translating some of Dr. Criswell's sermons into the Indonesian language.

And his English is not great. It's pretty good. I'm hoping that he can understand English and translate it into Indonesian better than he can take his Indonesian thoughts and get them into English.

Because his English is somewhat broken. But bless his heart, he has already translated a half dozen sermons and put them on his website. And Indonesia is a place of great persecution of Christians.

He is pastoring a church and is president of a seminary that is training indigenous Indonesian men to be pastors in that nation. But he's located in West Java. And West Java is the center of Islamic extremism in Indonesia.

It's one of the hot spots in that region of the world. And he's right there in the middle of it. He doesn't get any outside funding.

He doesn't get any outside support. He teaches at two or three different universities in Indonesia and takes that money. His wife bakes cakes and sells them and takes that money.

And they plow all of that into the seminary and the church. There's no tuition for people at the seminary because people there just can't afford it. Anyway, I got an email from him this morning.

And as he's translating, if he hits a difficult phrase or a difficult word, he'll ask me and say, What does this mean? So he said, Please tell me the meaning of de-emphasizing church. De-emphasizing church. And so I wrote him back this morning and I said, Well, to de-emphasize something is to take away its importance or its priority or its normal assigned place.

It's to minimize it and to diminish it. And so I would think that wherever you ran across this, they're talking about people who no longer attend or participate or support their local church. But it's kind of tough.

When something is taken out of its context like that, where did he run across this? What was someone saying? De-emphasizing church. If that's all you have, which church? Roman Catholic Church? Local Church? The Body of Christ Church? De-emphasizing. Is this a group that's de-emphasizing it? A speaker that's de-emphasizing it? An individual member of a congregation or

some group or movement? Without the context, you can say de-emphasizing church and you get an idea.

But the context is what really tells you what's being said. So it's important for us to not proof-text. And if someone cites a passage and says, Well, this supports a great example is Romans 3.23. Remember the Roman road that's so often used for the gospel? For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And we say, look, everybody's lost, everybody has sinned. Yet if you study the book of Romans verse by verse, by the time you get to chapter 3, who are you talking about? Believers. All believers have sinned.

All believers have fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 6.23. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Who's being talked about in Romans 6? Well, surely that's unbelievers.

The wages of sin is death. Romans chapter 6 is talking about believers. And it's talking about operational death, fruitlessness, dead branches that are going to be broken out of the tree, not because they're unsaved, but because they're bearing no fruit.

And the eternal life that is the gift of God is the opportunity and the reward. It's life in the sense of its quality, not its duration. I was reading an interesting article.

I'm just rabbit trailing one after the other here, aren't I? But I read an interesting article talking about the Semitic and the Ancient Near Eastern idea of time and how it pertains in the tenses in Hebrew and even the tenses in Greek. And when you say La'olam in Hebrew, unto the ages, which is translated forever, in the Semitic mind, that doesn't necessarily mean into the eternal future forever and ever and ever. It says that the righteous king is going to rule in Israel forever, but that's actually a period of a thousand years.

La'olam, literally, if you go back and trace out the etymological roots, La'olam, unto the ages, basically means unto over the horizon, unto a point that I can't see right now is what it means, into the indefinite future. It doesn't necessarily mean that such a thing will never end. It just means it's going to go on long enough that I can't see the end from this particular perspective.

Well, this is important context. What is being said? And so when you say the gift of God is eternal life, this speaks of life that comes from eternity, life that comes from the eternal God. It talks of its quality.

The Ancient Near Eastern people didn't really have a lot of theological volumes written about eternity. They couldn't see beyond the fulfillment of God's promises to them. God says, I will bring you into the land.

You'll have your own vine and your own fig tree. And they said, okay, well, I can see that far, but what's after that? What's after that? What's after that? Well, people who are scratching a living

out of the land and trying not to get killed by the Amalekites and so on, or the Philistines or whoever the current enemy is, don't really have time to think about, well, where will I be a million years from now? They're concerned about, will I be here tomorrow? And is God going to fulfill his promises or not? So we, in our Western, clinical, sequential, serial, scientific, sort of technical, dot every I and cross every T, major in the minors type of thinking, don't always succeed in putting ourselves in the mindset of the people who wrote and read the original scriptures. The gift of God is life that partakes of the eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is a promise and a gift to believers. You can be a believer and not have your eternal life. Does that make sense? It doesn't mean you're not going to be resurrected and go on with God forever.

What it does mean is you don't have the enjoyment, the capacity to appreciate, the possession of. Does the land in the Middle East belong to Abraham and his descendants? Yes, it does. Have they possessed it for the last 2,000 years? They have not.

They still have the title deed, but they got kicked out of it for disobedience. They lost their eternal possession. They still possess it eternally.

They still possess it la'olam, but they lose the enjoyment of it. They lose the possession of it. The wages of sin is death.

What happened to the nation of Israel? It died. It's not gone and it's coming back, but it died. The wages of sin is death.

You will be cut off. The gift of God is eternal life. Life that has the qualities of God.

Life that partakes of heavenly glory and heavenly peace and heavenly joy. Heavenly treasure. So, anyway, Romans 6 is misunderstood because people just yank that verse out by the roots and say, Well, look, you're going to hell.

Death is not hell. Hell is not death. They're two completely different things, aren't they? Anyway, so back again to Isaiah chapter 14 after a long diversion here.

Where are we in the book of Isaiah? We're in the Old Testament section. It talks about judgment. There's judgment on the people of God.

There's judgment on the nations that are used to judge the people of God. It's all about sin and righteousness and judgment. You have to impress people with a problem before they will value the solution.

If someone doesn't think they have a drinking problem, they will never go to AA, will they? If someone doesn't think they have a drug problem, they are never going to quit. If someone doesn't think they have a gossip problem, they're never going to stop. We have to be confronted and convicted of a problem before we can appreciate and go after and implement a

solution, right? If you don't have a headache, you don't take an aspirin.

You get the solution when you recognize the problem. So, that's why God put the Old Testament in front of the New Testament. That's why Israel with the law, by the law comes the knowledge of sin.

That's also Romans. Put it first. Then comes the Savior.

Then comes the church age. Then comes grace. Then comes capacity for life, love and happiness and all the great things that are ours in Christ.

He is divine. We are the branches. We abide in Him and we bear much fruit.

It's a whole new economy and we appreciate it because we are no longer under the law but under grace. Well, that's the context. That's the background when we dive into Isaiah chapter 14 and we haven't even gotten back to Daniel yet.

So, once again, Isaiah 14. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will still choose Israel and settle them in their own land. Even as God gives Israel this 39 chapters worth of conviction and reasons for judgment and the knowledge of their sin sprinkled through it is the promise.

Just as you find in the rest of the Old Testament. Even in the garden. The seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head.

And Abraham is told, through you all nations of the earth will be blessed. You will be a light to the Gentiles. And all the way through you have that hope and that promise.

And it's important for us to remember because there are times when we come under judgment. Maybe not in our entire life. We tend to look at our life as all one thing.

But sometimes you can be blessed in one area of your life and convicted and judged in another. And then that area perks up and you do well in that. And then the first area comes unglued and unraveled.

And you get judged over there when you're doing well over here. We have to look at the different aspects of our life. What about our personal relationships? What about our family relationships? What about our work environment? What about our social life? What about the way we spend our free time? You can be doing well in some areas and doing very badly in another.

It reminds me of some of the kings of Judah. Where it would say, well, he walked in the ways of his father David. But he didn't remove the high places.

Or he was diseased in his feet. Or whatever. And you have doing pretty well in some areas.

But this I have against you. The letters to the seven churches. You're doing well here, here, and

here.

But what about Jezebel? What about this? What about that? We have to look at ourselves and not just say, I'm okay, you're okay. We have to look at ourselves and say, well, I think I'm claiming the promises of God. And I'm walking in the light here.

But this area over here really needs some work. This is what the Old Testament does for Israel. The law measures.

If you're walking in obedience, if you're walking in faith, it's going to reflect. The Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will still choose Israel and settle them in their own land. Isaiah 14, verse 2 says, After strangers are joined with them and they will cling to the house of Jacob, then people will take them and bring them to their place.

And the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the Lord. This is that great theme of reversal you see all through the scriptures. Here are the masters and lords and the people of Israel are the slaves.

They were slaves in Egypt. They're slaves to the Assyrians. They're slaves in Babylon.

They're going to be slaves to the Medes and Persians. They're going to be conquered by the Greeks. They're going to be conquered by the Romans.

They just sit there and one empire after another conquers them and beats them down. But God says, be patient. People will take them, Israel, bring them to their place.

The house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the Lord. They will take them captive, whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors. What's going on in our book of Daniel? Nebuchadnezzar came in 603 B.C., swept away the pathetic resistance in Israel, took the first set of captives that included Daniel and his three friends.

He's going to come back and get a second group that includes Ezekiel. He's going to come back a third time, many years later, and demolish the city of Jerusalem, knock down the temple, and there's going to be this great period of judgment in 586 B.C. Well, Daniel and his three friends, Ezekiel and the people by the river Kabar, they are captives to the Babylonians. But God says, be patient.

One of these days, those who were your masters will be your slaves. Now, which ones of the Babylonians are going to be their slaves? Will it be the unbelieving, pagan, godless types? No, because how can they be your slave when they're dead in the ground? There are believers. There are those who are converted in the same way that Rahab, in the same way that Uriah the Hittite, in the same way that Naaman the leper, and other Gentiles in Old Testament days, where God puts his people and where the light of God's gospel shines, people will respond.

And there are Babylonians like Nebuchadnezzar who are going to respond. Nebuchadnezzar is

a believer. Nebuchadnezzar is going to get raised with the Old Testament saints.

And guess what? He's going to be somebody's servant. The great king Nebuchadnezzar, with his face stamped on the coins, the great king Nebuchadnezzar, with his name stamped on 17 million bricks in the ziggurat in Babylon, is going to be washing dishes and carrying out the trash, and answering the phone, and driving and chauffeuring people around. He'll be a servant to, probably, Daniel.

And they'll be old chums, and they'll have a lot to talk about as he chauffeurs Daniel around the streets of Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom, why Daniel can say, well, you remember when you had that whole lycanthropy thing going on, and I had to hold the kingdom together for seven years while you were out there slobbering down your beard, and your hair looked like feathers, and your fingernails grew out. Remember when you threw my friends into the fiery furnace? I said, make a right here. And that's how it'll be.

They're going to be their servants. Those who respond. And they'll be grateful to be there.

They will be down on their knees thanking God that He put Israel in their land, and that they heard the good news of God, and responded. And they'll be grateful. What does David say? I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than be in charge of anything else.

And those people that are allowed to be servants are going to be down on their knees thanking God for His grace, and that He used Israel as a light to the Gentiles, even in the time of their judgment. Now, listen. You and I screw up, and we get judged.

But God can use us to be a light even as we're being judged. Don't think in terms of subjectivity. Don't think, well, it's all about me.

God is thumping me because I messed up. Be faithful. Pay attention.

If you're doing your time in judgment, if you're working through the issues of divine discipline, be faithful. Pay attention. Speak the truth in love, because even in judgment, God uses His people to spread the light.

That's what this verse tells us. That's what this passage tells us. That's what God is doing through Daniel.

How many generations have been blessed through Daniel and he's a slave? How many people have been blessed through Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah? And they were slaves. They were made eunuchs. I can't imagine anything more shocking to the system and it would be more likely to throw you off your rails and crash your train than to be yanked out of your land and mutilated.

And that's what happened to these four men. But they were faithful. They remembered who they were.

They remembered that God is in heaven. And God has blessed untold hundreds of millions of people through these four individuals because they were faithful, even in a time of judgment, even as their nation was being judged. They were faithful.

Israel, as a nation, always has a remnant that hasn't bowed the knee to Baal. And God works through that remnant. We need to have a remnant in our soul.

There's always going to be some area in our life that's fouled up. All of us. Don't be looking around and picking out Believer A or Believer B or Believer C and saying, that's what I want to be like.

They have no problems. Don't kid yourself. All God's people have problems.

You just can't see them. Always. Sometimes you can.

It's just like personalities. Some people, everything's on the surface. You can read what they're thinking in their face.

Others of us are inscrutable, like a sphinx. And you look and you can't tell that there's tribulation. You can't tell that there's great trial and that there's great heartache and judgment and temptation to worry and temptation to fear and temptation to fall apart.

But trust me on this. Jesus said, in this world ye shall have tribulation. And I promise you, it is true of every single believer that's drawing breath.

So don't look around and say, well, everybody's doing well but me. I'm the screw-up. I'm the bad egg.

I fouled up. Nonsense. Look at Israel.

God blesses people through Israel even when Israel's in judgment. That's why it says they will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the Lord. They can only do that if Gentiles are turning into believers as these people are servants.

Think about the Egyptians. Remember the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with Israel? How did they become the mixed multitude that got preserved by the Passover blood and walked out of Egypt where they had comfort and security and predictability into the unknown? Why would they do that? Because they believed in the God of Israel. And they marched out and they crossed the Red Sea and they ate manna for 40 years along with the rest of Israel.

And their children went into the land. And they only did that because God disciplined His people, Israel, under the hand of Egyptian taskmasters. So don't count yourself out just because you make a mistake.

All of us do. That's why God leaves us here. It's to learn to function under pressure.

It's to learn to think and recover and pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off and keep on marching toward that upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Don't think God is not using you just because you messed up. Sometimes it's right when you mess up that God uses you the most.

That's what He's doing with Israel. Now, they will possess them. They will take them captive whose captors they were and rule over their oppressors.

Isaiah 14, verse 3. It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow and from your fear and from the hard bondage in which you were made to serve that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon and say, How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city has ceased, the Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers. He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet.

They break forth into singing. Indeed, the cypress trees rejoice over you and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us. This, at the first blush, at the first instance, is the king of Babylon.

In symbolic terms, in spiritual terms, it's talking about Satan and it's talking about the millennial kingdom. Hell from beneath is excited about you to meet you at your coming. It stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth.

It has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. They shall speak and say to you, Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol and the sound of your stringed instruments, the maggot is spread under you and worms cover you. You get the idea this is a little bit of vindictiveness coming out here where people are saying, Aha! Thought you were hot stuff there as the king of Babylon.

Look at you now. You're laying down on a bed of maggots. Aha! How you are fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of darkness.

How you are cut down to the ground, you who weaken the nations. For you have said in your heart, And here are those five I wills. The sin of pride.

I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.

Those who see you will gaze at you and consider you saying, Is this the man who made the earth tremble? Who shook kingdoms? Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities? Who did not open the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house. But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to

the stones of the pit like a corpse trodden underfoot. You will not be joined with them in burial because you have destroyed your land and slain your people.

The brood of evildoers shall never be named. Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers, lest they rise up and possess the land and fill the face of the world with cities. They've got to be wiped out or they will proliferate.

This is the problem with failing to punish crime. If you do not eradicate it, it will proliferate. If you do not take these godless and slaughter them and their children, they will rise up and possess the land and fill the face of the world with cities.

This is why God told the Israelites, kill everything that has breath when you go into the land of Canaan. If you don't, they will rise up and proliferate and come back and overwhelm you. Well, what is being spoken of here? This is the fall of the king of Babylon.

When you go on to verse 22, I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and offspring and posterity. Who followed Belshazzar on the throne of Babylon? Nobody. The throne of Babylon goes away.

And you have the throne of the Medes and the Persians. I will cut off from Babylon name, remnant, offspring, and posterity. I will make it a possession for the porcupine and marshes of muddy water.

I will sweep it with the broom of destruction. There is a graphic picture for you. Sweep it with the broom of destruction.

Kind of reminds you of the Gulf Coast, doesn't it? The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so it shall come to pass. As I have purposed, so shall it stand. And then he goes on to talk about Assyria, who was the current threat.

Puts Babylon first and then Assyria. Well, this is God's prediction in the days of Isaiah, which is back in the 700s BC. It's 150 years before the time that we're looking at in Daniel.

And God said, I will take Babylon and destroy it. I will cut off its remnant and posterity. And people say, look, Babylon's the up-and-comer.

That's the new kid on the block. The Assyrians are already starting to worry about Babylon. And yet God says he's going to cut them off.

Well, back to Daniel chapter 5. Because all of this reflects on what is written on the wall. And we're going to talk this morning about the writing on the wall. Mene, mene, tekem, ufarsin.

Four words. The root of these words in Aramaic, the first one is mene. Now, at first glance, and the reason everybody was confused by this, these are all monetary units in the Babylonian Empire.

In Aramaic, when you talk about your money, these are the words you use. And mene is the word for mina. You talk about a mina.

A mina is a big hunk of monetary purchasing power. In terms of silver, a mina is like 600 grams of silver. Compared to a shekel, which is 10 grams.

So this is 60 times the amount of silver in a shekel. This is 60 shekels. This is like a... If a shekel is a \$10 bill, then this is a \$600 bill, relatively speaking.

It's the big chunk of currency. In our modern terms, if you just want to think of it this way, it's like the \$100 bill. It's the biggest denomination that anybody's likely to be carrying around with them, a mina.

And by comparison, a shekel is going to be like a \$2 bill, or like a dollar bill, somewhere between the two. Let's just say a \$2 bill. So you've got mina, mina, \$100 bill, \$100 bill.

Then you have takel. Now think about that, takel. The initial sound there, if you change that to SH, it becomes shekel.

And this is what it was used for in the Aramaic world. Takel is basically the shekel. So you have \$100 bill, \$100 bill, \$2 bill, and then you have peres, P-E-R-E-S, or ufarsin.

And peres, just as it is in Hebrew, when it ends in a Z, peres means to divide. And so if a shekel is a \$2 bill, then peres would be a dollar bill. The last one cut in half.

If it's a dollar bill, it would be a 50 cent piece. So if you're looking at the wall, you're having a big party, everybody's tanking down on beer, and it's dim, and there's lots of carousing and yelling and loud music, and a little sparkler ball in the middle, and it's all a big drunken revelry. Then you look up on the wall, and this disembodied hand starts writing, and everybody stops, and you know, 30 years ago, the needle on the record would have gone, and it would all quit.

Now they would have to turn off the CD player or something. And everybody looks at the wall, and it says, \$100, \$100, \$2, \$1. Then the hand goes away.

Well, this is what Belshazzar's looking at, and he's saying, what? You sent a disembodied supernatural hand to write three denominations of money on my wall? What does it mean? He's afraid the disembodied hand is definitely a supernatural manifestation. He knows that something from the realm of the gods has spoken, but he can't figure it out. He calls the Chaldeans, calls the wise men, and they have no clue.

Well, how much have you got in your pocket there, Belshazzar? I don't know what it means. And so, finally, his mother, the queen, calls and says, you know, you ought to talk to Daniel. So Daniel comes in.

Verse 26, this is where we pick up this morning. This is the interpretation of each word. Mene, God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.

Mene, mene. It's doubled. When you have the beginning and the end, that part's finished.

Tekel, you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. What is a \$2 bill compared to a \$100 bill? You're supposed to be the \$100 bill. You come up a \$2 bill.

Does it make sense? Nebuchadnezzar, \$100 bill. Evil Merodach, \$100 bill. None of them persecuted the Jews.

None of them oppressed the Jews. None of them yanked the golden goblets out of the treasury and drank out of them, as Belshazzar is doing. And this is really just a culmination of a lot of bad policies and a lot of bad operation that he has implemented.

But the first two menes talk about the first kings. Remember, the first generation is Nebuchadnezzar. The second generation is Evil Merodach.

And then you have a couple of kings who are sons-in-laws. They're all in that second generation. Mene, mene.

You were doing okay. You were doing okay. You're still the head of gold.

But you, you're a clinker. You're a bad egg. You're a \$2 bill.

Tekel. And because you're Tekel, guess what? Upharsin. Perez.

Kingdom is going to be divided into two parts. Perez literally means half or halves. Made into halves.

And what does this mean? Medes and the Persians. Kingdom is going to be divided. You've got the Medes and the Persians.

You've got the bear with the high shoulder and the three ribs in its mouth that we're going to see later on in this book. And that is the message that nobody can figure out because these words, remember I told you last week about how without the consonants, you don't know. Is it a verb? Is it a noun? But Daniel looks at it and God the Holy Spirit gives him, through his prophetic office, the understanding of what those words mean.

Daniel looks at it and says, ooh, guess what? Keep your chain. Keep your robe. This night, the kingdom is going to be divided and taken from you.

Given to the Medes and the Persians. So, Belshazzar says, well, that certainly makes sense to me. And he gives the command and they clothe Daniel.

It doesn't say Daniel put on. Belshazzar says, well, I'm going to clothe you. I'm going to give you this stuff whether you want it or not.

So, they come and they wrap the robe around Daniel. They stick this ridiculous 70s big medallion chain around his neck. And they make a proclamation concerning him that he should

be third ruler in the kingdom.

Well, big whoop. That's going to last a couple of hours. And the Medes and Persians, even as we speak, draining the water out of the river and coming under the wall and taking over the city.

And so, Daniel gets to preside as third in the kingdom over the demise of the empire. Well, the idea here is that there is an expectation. There is an expectation of the king of the Jews.

Because he represents the Jews themselves. And if you conquered the Jews, then you better stand by because you have just taken on the symbolic role. You are the individual that represents the people.

We've talked about this many times with Herod and his treatment of John the Baptist. And Belshazzar, while he's laughing it up there in his feast, doesn't realize that ever since he took the throne from his father, who is away fighting the battles, he is the king of the Jews. And so, God says, where is the king of the Jews? There he is.

Okay, guess what? I have an expectation of you. You need to be a hundred dollar bill. You need to be mene, and you're not.

So, guess what? Your time is up. The things that you have and that you possess are going to be taken from you and given to another. This ultimately happens to the nation of Israel, doesn't it? Remember the parable of the Lord Jesus? The field, the vineyard, is going to be taken from you and given to those who will cultivate the fruits of it.

And you have a foreshadowing in Belshazzar of what's going to happen. Mene, mene, tekell, ufarsin. Why is mene doubled? Well, I've mentioned part of the reason.

It's the fulfillment idea. Beginning and the end of the golden phase. And then at the time of evaluation, you have the judgment that it's going to be split.

But count the words. There are four words. The monarchy in Israel basically lasts how long? It starts around 1000 B.C. with David and Solomon.

So, you have all of the 900s B.C., all of the 800s B.C., all of the 700s B.C., continuing down into Judah, after the northern kingdom goes away, and all of the 600s B.C., and then what happens after 400 years? The last king is cut off. And that's where they are right now in the book of Daniel, aren't they? The monarchy has been cut off, never to return. Who has legitimately sat on the throne of Israel as David's son since the last king of Judah, Zehoiachin, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, very last one, big Z. I just amalgamated those two names, didn't I? Zedekiah is the one I'm talking about.

The very last one that was sort of the puppet king. Nobody has sat on David's throne since then, have they? Almost exactly 400 years. Mene, Mene, David, Solomon.

You got a bunch of two dollar bills, and then the kingdom is divided and tossed asunder, given

to others. How many years from the foundation of the earth until the Lord Jesus Christ? How long did the Old Testament saints have to respond and to recognize the authority of God in heaven? 4,000 years, the four days that you observed the Passover lamb. Big four.

You have the age before the flood, Mene. You have the age after the flood with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then you have the time of the nation of Israel, Tekel.

David, when he ends his kingdom, he says, you know, there was a lot of stuff that was supposed to spring forth that never came to pass. We have to wait for the future. Upharsin.

Messiah is cut off but not for himself by the prince of the people who shall come, and so on. We'll see that later on in Daniel. 4,000 years, 400 years, any way you slice it, you see that God has an expectation.

Things start well but they go downhill and the kingdom is lost. We as individuals learn from what happens with national Israel and what happens with the Old Testament saints. God is offering us the kingdom.

Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Your citizenship is in heaven. Your opportunity is in heaven.

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. Don't fumble the ball. Don't be a \$2 bill when God is looking for a \$100 bill or it will be taken from you.

It's a responsibility. It doesn't matter where we are. Blessing, prosperity, adversity, judgment, trial, testing, calm waters, rough waters.

We have to pay attention to who we are and why we're here. Learn from the Old Testament example. Well, it's time to pause and take our break.

When we come back, we'll pick up here in Daniel chapter 6.