

THE OPEN WINDOW

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.

Daniel was a young man of nobility who was brought up to be faithful to the God of his fathers. He would have been born during the thirty-one year reign of King Josiah when the Law of Moses was rediscovered and implemented throughout Jerusalem and Judea. The places of idolatry, - the Canaanite altars of Baal and cult worship, - were removed ... and the Name of Jehovah was precious once again.

On the wider international scene, the power and influence of Assyria was on the wane, and Babylon was on the rise. Nineveh was the Assyrian capital, but Nebuchadnezzar captured it in 612 BC. The Assyrians then moved to Haran to make it their new capital, but Nebuchadnezzar captured it too in 610 BC ... so they moved again and declared Carchemish their capital.

Assyria, - formerly the great world-power, - called for the help of their ally Egypt, so the Egyptians travelled up through the land of Israel but were confronted by King Josiah at Megiddo (609 BC). In this battle Josiah was killed and his army defeated. Daniel was with him, and he was captured along with many others and taken prisoner by the Egyptians. When the Egyptians met up with the Assyrians they crossed the River Euphrates together to confront Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian. Another great battle ensued at Carchemish (605 BC, Jer. 46:2) ... and it was at this battle Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians and the Assyrians and he took their prisoners also ... including Daniel who he brought back to Babylon.

Such a young man and yet God had taken him through the 'wringer' of this terrible experience! During these times his faith in God had been tested and strengthened even though, from his early years, much of his life was spent as 'a stranger in a foreign land' in the courts of idolatrous and pagan rulers.

As a young boy, he was quickly promoted to high rank in the Babylonian kingdom (under Nebuchadnezzar) and then in the Persian kingdom (under Darius), for he was trained in the arts, letters and wisdom. As you can imagine, the foreign kingdoms had a process whereby they would integrate the foreign children into local customs and society.

In Daniel's case, they sought to 'scale away' his national and religious identity. Nebuchadnezzar sought to do this by changing Daniel's name to Beltshazzar ('prince of Bel', or, 'lord of the straitened's treasure'). You will recognise the first part of this name, 'Bel' ... and you would be partly right if you connected 'Bel' with

‘Baal’. ... This was how Nebuchadnezzar tried to lure Daniel away from the worship of Jehovah. ... Very subtle!

When the king would call for him ... it would be the name of Belteshazzar he would call. When the king spoke with him, the king would always address him as Belteshazzar, never Daniel. In the palace the king and his ministers tried to carefully, subtly, and gradually strip away the name and identity with which he was born, - the name of *Daniel*, ‘God is Judge’.

They were intent upon cleverly blocking his mind to how he had been brought up, - today we would call it ‘psychological conditioning/grooming’. ... However, when the subtle ways did not work, young Daniel saw how his friends Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego were dealt with, - Get rid of them! ... So he knew what was expected of him if he wanted to live a long and happy life.

Despite all their efforts, the knowledge and fear of God was ingrained within Daniel. For example, when the Babylonian king dictated he must eat meat the Law of Moses said was unclean and drink wine he was not allowed to drink he had to refuse (1:8ff.). In the will of God, it did not become a problem though, - but it could have!

Ironically, Daniel won the respect of Nebuchadnezzar and was chosen to interpret his dreams. In many ways, he became a friend and confidant of the king. Following a feast hosted by Nebuchadnezzar’s son, *Belshazzar* (the male equivalent of Daniel’s Babylonian name), - at which the finger of God wrote a message on the wall, - the Babylonians were defeated, and Darius the Mede became the leader of the next great world power.

There is a further ‘twist’ that comes in chapter six when many of the authorities in the new regime wanted ‘to sweep clean’ any ‘leftovers’ from the Babylonian days. They saw a prime opportunity in Daniel and he became the focus of their hatred. They reckoned on using his devotion to Jehovah to have him killed. Indeed, this chapter has been neatly entitled, *Liars, Laws, and Lions*, - the *liars* concocted their *laws*, and Daniel ended up in the den of *lions*!

The situation was *this*. King Darius the Mede (who had defeated the Babylonians) appointed one hundred and twenty princes to rule over the people. He also appointed three presidents with significantly more power. Daniel was one of those three presidents, and in fact, he was the leading president, i.e. the ‘chief’ president.

Not surprisingly, the other two presidents and the one hundred and twenty princes were not happy ... and, they searched for ways to unseat Daniel from his higher position. But it was a real problem to find something incriminating to bring to Darius to accuse Daniel, - he did not seem 'to put a foot wrong'. Everything he did was to the highest standard and beyond reproach. There was not a single rule or law they could bring against him ... so, they decided to make one up!

They decided to pressurise Darius to implement a new law that would make it illegal and punishable by death for anyone to worship any other God within a certain specified thirty-day period. Darius, not thinking about Daniel, duly signed the charter and 'handed on a plate' the opportunity these rascals were looking for!

Had Daniel stopped praying for thirty days, - or if he had prayed secretly, - they would have had to concoct something else with which to entrap him ... but Daniel did not disappoint them! He *knew* that the writing was signed, and he knew 'what they were up to' ... but it did not change one iota his responsibilities or relationship with God ... *he kept on praying!*

The purpose of our study is in verse ten, *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 try to consider what was going on in that room, in the mind and heart of Daniel. Let's 'look in' as he kneeled before **the open window**.

THE SOUNDS HE COULD HEAR Uppermost in his mind was approaching the throne of God in prayer as he had been doing since he was a boy. Above and beyond any earthly king, Daniel worshipped the King of kings. He believed in the sovereignty of God over all other sovereigns. This was not habit, or awkwardness, or trying to prove a point, or stubbornness. This was a personal relationship with God, seeking His help, wisdom, guidance and strength for each daily task in the ungodly courts of Babylon where Daniel believed the Lord had placed him. ... The Lord had made him into what he was!

Three times every day, - without fail, regardless of how busy he was, or where he was, - he took time out to come before the Lord. His time with the Lord was 'uninterruptible'. From early childhood his parents had taught him the importance of prayer. He had been instructed to believe God was present in every situation, regardless of how dire it was. He had been taught it was "a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!" ... and, despite the spiritual darkness all around him, he "should never be discouraged; [*but*] take it to the Lord in prayer."

As he knelt at **the open window** he would have heard the business of the people in the streets of Babylon, a wicked city, an evil city, a city that had no time for Jehovah ... a city that had substituted Him for idols of their own vain imaginations. A city that had been built many generations before by those who decided among themselves, *Gen. 11:4 let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name [for ourselves].*

Daniel would have heard the people rushing from place to place, and shouting at anyone who got in their way. 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 them praising the Name of God. He would have enjoyed the feast days in honour of Jehovah. And he would have seen King Josiah leading his people in worship before God.

But now, in a strange and foreign land, he is hearing sounds coming from a godless people, ... people who knew nothing of the faith he enjoyed, and which he treasured. How it must have made him long more for his own land! Even among his own people, there was great despair, *Ps. 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. 4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*

But I would suggest to you that as he knelt before that **open window**, - that **open window** pointing towards his beloved Jerusalem, - all the sounds that could have distracted his attention faded until nothing but the holiness of God was heard in that room. When he went into his house, and closed the door behind him, he drew into the quiet place with God ... *He kept on praying!* This was the quiet place the lawmakers were trying to keep him out of, ... but Daniel closed himself in with God so he could hear the voice of none other. **The sounds he could hear.**

THE SIGHTS HE COULD SEE

If he had kept his eyes upon the people among whom he lived he could well have despaired. He would have seen crime on the increase. He would have seen good people treated badly, and bad people enjoying 'the high life'. He would have seen the law being slackened, and the judges handing out the leanest of sentences for the worst of crimes. He would have seen rape, and murder, and violence ... he would have seen the weaker and the poorer being exploited. ...

If Daniel had kept his eyes upon the society around him he could have been hindered from coming to that **open window** where he would meet with God.

But Daniel would not allow Babylon to come between him and God. ... Daniel, is God with you in Babylon? Daniel, are you conscious of His presence, even in a place like that?! Daniel, do you believe God will overrule, despite the godlessness of the nation? ... To every question Daniel would answer a resounding **Yes**, God is with me in Babylon. *Yes*, I know He is with me even in such a place as this. *Yes*, I believe God is in control and He can overrule in all 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 great hostility towards him ... He knew his enemies were watching him. They were looking for opportunities to 'catch him out'. The sooner Daniel was out of the way, the sooner they could bring in *their* laws and *their* programmes. Daniel and his God were hindering their progress! ... *Their* agenda would further *their* own selfish aims, - financial and otherwise, - and the people of God were an obstacle!

Daniel could have gone into his house, locked his doors, shut his windows ... closed Babylon out ... and became a 'hermit' ... but God gave no such instruction. Was Daniel the only one left that was true to Jehovah? Was he the last remaining faithful member of the people of Israel? ... No, he was not. ... Did it all come down to him? No, there were others. God always keeps a remnant. Often it may seem His remnant is so small and so inadequate and so unable to do anything worthwhile ... but He always keeps a remnant ... and through that remnant His glory continues to shine.

The history of the nation of Israel has depended upon God preserving a faithful number. For example, Elijah thought he was the only one left who worshipped God ... but God told him there remained a remnant of seven thousand. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi all spoke about a remnant of God's people. Malachi prophesied, 3:16 *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

Daniel was not alone! He had God with him, and God had also kept Meshech, Shadrach and Abednego and many, many others faithful. Babylon reckoned they could get rid of God and His people ... and so the devil has fooled himself with such a thought throughout every century of every millennium. *He can no more get rid of God's people than he can get rid of God!!*

Looking in from the outside, though, it didn't appear to be very good for Daniel and the people of God, and yet Daniel had not given up. Three times every day he knelt at that same place, - at **the open window** facing towards Jerusalem, - and he prayed.

THE STEADFASTNESS OF HIS FAITH

Yes, he prayed, because he did not consider defeat possible, never mind, inevitable. Why was he so convinced? ... Notice how he prayed. He did not blame God for his predicament, or for abandoning the children of Israel in Babylon. Neither did he rhyme off a list of what he thought God needed to do to remedy the situation. No, he kept on doing what he had always done, ... he *gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime*. ... He did not give in or give up!

As he looked through **the open window** into Heaven he saw a God who was interested in him and his people. He saw God in control, and what he saw gave him a confidence to contend earnestly for the faith. He *thanked* God for everything God had allowed in his life. His predicament could not keep him away from either prayer or praise! Yes, **the sounds he could hear, the sights he could see, the situation he was in** ... they all seemed to say only *one* thing, "Daniel, roll over and die! The gods of Babylon have defeated the God of Israel".

But Daniel would not attend to the dictates of the ungodly. He was convinced of his hope in Jehovah. The only need in his life in those dark days was to *knelt and pray*, and give thanks to God ... no matter how dark it seemed. He believed *all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*.

What was there to give thanks to God for? Many things! ... I asked you why he was so convinced of the power of prayer, and how he was persuaded God would outshine the enemy. Daniel *knew* because he trusted the infallible Word of God. The enemy can only do so much, - only what God allows him to do, - *for God always wins!*

Daniel knew the Word of God, and he trusted in God's promise from God's Word, 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. God, in His Word promised Daniel that after seventy years the captivity in Babylon would come to an end and the Lord would bring him and his people home. Daniel kept the faith, even when it seemed the cause was lost. He had courage to believe against all the strategies of the enemy. He did not trust in what *he* was capable of, - and mind you, he was a clever man!

No, he was not trusting in himself, he was trusting in God. He could have compromised and found excuses to accommodate the enemy. He could have closed his windows and prayed silently three times a day until the month was over ... or he could have gone outside the city to somewhere more private where he could not have been discovered. ... But that would have been unbelief and cowardice ... and he would have been scheming, just like the enemy ... and the Lord would ultimately have withheld the blessing.

He was a busy man ... but his priorities in his 'busyness' was not in the matters of an earthly king, but the heavenly King of kings. ... And as he knelt before that **open window** facing Jerusalem three times every day he was interceding on behalf of God's people, for God's glory ... *and, oh, what a ministry!*

CONCLUSION ... **The sounds he could hear, the sights he could see, the situation he was in, and the steadfastness of his faith.**

You can see where the Word of God is taking us, can't you? You and I do not find it difficult imagining the sounds Daniel could hear, or the sights that he could see. We can understand so easily the situation he was in ... because all he could hear, see and feel is so vividly present in our own society.

The church is small, - I'm not necessarily speaking of local fellowships like our own, - the Church generally in our country is small. The Gospel of the Bible does not be preached in pulpits where it used to be preached, - it has been replaced with people-pleasing. God's Word is not upheld as it used to be, - infallible, inerrant and inspired.

Holy living is a concept long replaced with a much more attractive 'do whatever you like' form of Christianity for 'God will let you into Heaven anyway'! There are the ever-increasing 'itching ears', and 'the turning to the fables', and the chasing after the 'signs and wonders' (II Tim. 4). ... What we need is to listen to the Lord again, [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. But they said, We will not walk therein.](#)

Daniel walked in the old paths ... and he never strayed away from them! The old paths did not suit many ... but the Lord gave no command to Daniel and the people of Israel to walk anywhere else. It is where we also need to be found. Daniel knelt before **the open window** where God could see into his home and into his heart. Through that **open window**, *the light* came in, and the Lord saw Daniel kneel down upon his knees three times every day, - not just during that special month, - but throughout the whole of his long life.

He was consistent in approaching the throne of grace for the glory of God, even when it was unfashionable so to do. What an example! What an encouragement! **The open window** ... Pray for the light to keep shining through it. Pray for the fresh breeze of Heaven to come in and awaken us again, to revive us, and bring hope to God's people in our present generation.

We need to realise we are like the psalmist, [40:17 I am poor and needy; ... thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.](#) As the old chorus says,

The windows of heaven are open
The blessings are falling tonight
There's joy, joy, joy in my heart
For Jesus made everything right
I gave Him my old tattered garment
He gave me a robe of pure white
I'm feasting on manna from Heaven
And that's why I'm happy tonight.

Daniel still had to go into the lion's den, but he did not go in alone ... and neither did he stay there. God delivered him in his time of need. May God encourage us to have the same faith as Daniel! ... I'll finish with just one last chorus,

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm!
Dare to make it known.